

METADRAMA, THEATRICALITY AND PERFORMATIVITY
IN SAMUEL BECKETT'S LATE PLAYS

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METADRAMA, THEATRICALITY AND PERFORMATIVITY
IN SAMUEL BECKETT'S LATE PLAYS

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ABSTRACT

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In this study six of Samuel Beckett's plays are analysed by concentrating on features that are considered within postmodern aesthetics. In doing so, the study is separated into three parts, being metadrama, theatricality and performativity. For each part two Beckettian plays are analysed. In the first section, *Catastrophe* and *Krapp's Last Tape* are investigated in terms of their use of the metadramatic devices outlined by Richard Hornby. In the second part, the theatricality in *Ohio Impromptu* and *Not I* is studied through Beckett's innovative strategies of staging. Lastly, in the third section the elements that make Beckett's *Footfalls* and *Rockaby* among the best representations of performative plays in general and of gender performativity in particular are analysed. Within the metadramatic analyses, the subversive quality of drama is put forward. The critical understanding of drama about drama and the versatile nature of drama are indicated. It is found that the metadramatic quality of *Catastrophe* and *Krapp's Last Tape* not only create multiple dimensions within the plays but also reflect the multiplicity of a human being as a subject. In *Ohio Impromptu* and *Not I*, there is a questioning of the qualities of a play that make it a theatrical piece. Also the plays are good examples of Beckett's use of stage against itself. Both *Footfalls* and *Rockaby* portray a challenge to authoritative masculine power through their criticism of politics of gender. As a result, in Beckettian theatre the elements of postmodern theatre are observed.

Key words: Samuel Beckett, metadrama, theatricality, performativity, postmodern theatre.

ÖZ

SAMUEL BECKETT'İN SON OYUNLARINDAKİ METADRAMA, TEATRALLİK VE PERFORMATİFLİK

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Bu çalışmada Samuel Beckett'in altı oyunu postmodern estetik yaklaşımları üzerinde durularak incelenmiştir. Çalışma üç bölümden oluşmaktadır, her bölümde iki Beckett oyunu incelenmiştir. İlk bölümde *Felaket* ve *Krappın Son Bandı*, Richard Hornby'nin metadramatic öğeleri ile incelenmiştir. Dramanın sorgulayan ve ters yüz eden yapısı ortaya çıkarılmıştır. Drama ile ilgili drama, yani kendini yansıtan bir drama portresi ortaya konmuştur. İkinci bölümde *Ohio Doğaçlaması* ve *Ben Değil*, Beckett'in yenilikçi sahneleme tekniklerinin yansıması olarak incelenmiştir. Bu iki oyunda da Beckett'in, bir oyunu tiyatro oyunu yapan şeyin doğası ile ilgili sorgulamalarını buluruz. Öyle ki, Beckett bu oyunlarda sahneyi kendisine karşı bir olgu olarak dizayn etmiştir. En son olarak da, üçüncü bölümde *Ayak Sesleri* ve *Ninni*, hem toplumsal cinsiyet performatifliği hem de genel anlamda performatiflik başlıkları altında incelenmiştir. Bu iki oyunda da Beckett toplumsal cinsiyet üzerindeki ataerkil otoritenin baskısını eleştirir. Sonuç olarak Beckett bu oyunlarında postmodern estetik yaklaşımlarıyla yazan bir yazar olduğunu ortaya koyar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Samuel Beckett, metadrama, teatrallik, performatiflik, postmodern tiyatro.

To My Family

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study investigates Samuel Beckett's theatre in terms of its reflecting the ideas of postmodern aesthetics. Beckett's theatre as an example of postmodern theatre is analysed throughout three key terms: metadrama, theatricality and performativity. The study covers both the historical and theoretical backgrounds of these terms since their definitions vary within different periods. In the first chapter Richard Hornby's metadramatic varieties are used in analyzing *Catastrophe* and *Krapp's Last Tape*. The chapter includes the detailed definitions of each of Hornby's six metadramatic varieties although not all of them are used in these two plays. Metadrama discloses the multiple layers of drama and it is important to cover each of them in order to unfold how this multiplicity works within seemingly unified structure of drama. In the second chapter the theatricality of *Ohio Impromptu* and *Not I* are investigated by means of their staging techniques which are shown to be challenges to any kind of representative production of theatre and to any possibility that theatre represents the original through conveying a particular meaning. Since Beckett's theatre, which is against itself, is simultaneously theatrical and anti-theatrical, in the second chapter various views on theatricality and anti-theatricality emerging as a reaction to it are provided. In the second chapter the theoretical background of theatricality is covered with a wide range of approaches since in today's world of theatre theatricality is defined differently by various critics. In the third chapter the performativity of *Footfalls* and *Rockaby* is analysed through their questionings of conventional understandings of the body and their emphasis on performance. The term *performativity* is used within various disciplines and this discloses the idea of a plurality underlying the term. In an overall attempt to categorize the approaches to performativity we can say that performativity is dealt with in the fields of linguistics, philosophy, sociology and literature. It is not possible for any one of these areas to consider the theory of performativity without being affected by the others. Thus the

third chapter refers to various uses of performativity in order to display the interactional quality of the term.

Beckettian theatre subverts the views of traditional and conventional theatre. Throughout this study, what is meant by traditional and conventional theatre is the kind of theatre that follows a regular plot and meaningful stage design which is meant to create a particular message for its reader/audience. In this study plot is used in the sense that E.M. Forster explains: according to Forster, “The king died and then the queen died” is story, whereas “The king died and then the queen died of grief” is plot (60). That is, plot has a causal sequence of events. Beckettian theatre as self-reflexive, multi-layered, and deconstructive is going to be analyzed by means of the metadramatic elements and staging techniques he uses in his plays.

There has been an ongoing critical debate about the writings of Beckett. Critics discuss whether his works are modernist or postmodernist. While some consider the playwright to be the last modernist, others announce him as the first postmodernist. Irving Howe, in his “The Culture of Modernism”, considers Beckett as one of the modernists in his art’s reflecting solipsism. Modernist interpretations of Beckett’s theatre take a particular sign system for granted in their approaches to his art. In considering Beckett’s theatre as belonging to the outlooks of modernism, critics evaluate Beckettian theatre as reflecting specific semiotic system of its own.

In the same way, while he has been considered one of the pioneers of the Theatre of the Absurd, reflecting the alienation of modern man, the absurdity that he reflects in his plays is also taken to be the beginnings of postmodernism. Moreover, as a result of a specific use of language in Beckett’s works, his works have been analyzed by various critics from poststructural approaches. As Abbott suggests:

From early in the 1960s, Beckett has been a site of the modernist/postmodernist turf war. Unlike Virginia Woolf (modernist) or John Cage (postmodernist), Beckett has remained a categorical rift, giving the lie to categories. Nonetheless, after a spate of early readings (often infected by Beckett’s connection with Joyce and Proust) casting him as a modernist or late

modernist or, at times, the “Last Modernist,” momentum has passed to the other side as the postmodernist categorizers have steadily gained the high ground. (23)

The postmodernist categorizers take Beckett’s works as reflections of indeterminacy, of a crisis of representation, of the full and determined subject in crisis; they find his works to be naming the unnamable and problematizing the concepts of drama, theatre, text and performance. In addition to these, the specific operation of time and space in his works are also taken to be one of the premises for his works to be considered as showing a postmodern attitude. Moreover, the self-reflexive nature of his works is investigated so as to display the metatheatrical, theatrical and performative approach in Beckett’s works.

Abbott likens the operation of the complete body of Beckett’s works to that of language, which reminds us that meaning is a matter of difference and deferral. The critic adds that, by means of opposing his art to classical modernism, Beckett is far from meeting the expectations of the modern period (30). Therefore, the works of the playwright are seen as outcomes of an expressed inaccessibility of definite meaning. As Abbott indicates:

Beckett’s oeuvre, then, operates like the life of Krapp, whose successive self recordings and transcriptions (like his author, Krapp works in more than one medium) alter as they recall what went before and are in turn recalled and altered by those to come. Pressing on, Beckett kept the shape of his oeuvre, and the relations of all its elements, at play. Such a going on is both a going back and also a kind of spreading out. His oeuvre itself transmutes the trope of onwardness. (40)

The works of the playwright can be seen as his struggle to give a name to the ‘play’ in which his oeuvre takes place. In other words, he writes “in the name of something which has no name, but to which he struggles to give a name” (Abbott 56). In her *Accommodating the Chaos: Samuel Beckett’s Nonrelational Art* (1982), Judith Dearlove elaborates on Beckett’s struggle with language in his works. She claims that “[i]nstead of belabouring the lack of associations between a speaker and his

world, Beckett explores the possibilities of a voice unrelated to any world, hence unrestricted” (5). In other words, rather than the separation of the mind from the external world, Beckett handles the multiple worlds that the mind creates and which can be considered as internal, arbitrary and self-conscious. This multiplicity leads to an absence of order and a collision of structure and content in his works (5). Language is not given the function of conveying intended speaker meaning in Beckett’s plays. Pattie believes that Dearlove’s analysis of Beckett is in line with deconstructive theory, since she examined in Beckett’s works the failure of language to describe the world and “the extent to which language itself created the things it set out to describe” (159).

For Pattie, the repetitive nature of Beckett’s plays displays the deconstructive quality of the playwright’s works. Connor analyzes the repetition that Beckett has dealt with and claims that repetition shows the radical instabilities within our experience and representation of that experience. That is why Samuel Beckett is preoccupied with repetition as a writer dealing with the issues of being, identity and representation. Just like the characters in his early works, later characters of Beckett are struggling to escape from habit but they are enslaved by it. As a result of this kind of repetition “our sense of individuality of characters in Beckett’s work becomes very difficult to sustain” (1).

Connor elaborates on the nature of repetition and indicates its dependency upon an “original”. However, he claims that if repetition is dependent upon a preexisting originality then it is also possible to consider the opposite argument, that originality is also dependent upon repetition: “If repetition requires something that is already fixed and finished, already constituted as an essence, then it is equally true that originality or essence can never be apprehended as such unless the possibility exists for it to be copied or reiterated” (3). Pattie is another critic who investigates the nature of repetition. He claims that repetition both confirms and undermines the original text in a classically deconstructive fashion. Since no copy can be made without an original, repetition confirms the original, whereas, it also undermines the original because it is indistinguishable from it. As a result, “[t]he presence of

repetition in a text [...] fatally destabilize[s] that text's claims to represent an unambiguous truth about the world" (165). Thus, the use of repetition in Beckett's works is the result of his undermining of "any notion of the authentic and the unitary: repetition in Beckett was never stale, because it drew attention to the process of writing and the process of reading" (166).

When this failure is considered, Beckett's artistic creations can be regarded as the results of the representation crisis and/or non-representation, as some critics say. Albright differentiates between the young Beckett and later Beckett and states that the playwright is immersed in artificialities and self-enclosed word games in his late works. In order to overcome this labyrinth of inexpressibility, as Albright suggests, Beckett displays two tendencies in his works:

First, in order to gain mastery over his art by describing the sheer cussedness of the artistic phenomenon he devised allegories of artistic frustration. Second, he proclaimed an art of non-representation, estrangement, and general failure, in order to arrive at some grasp of fact through an extremely indirect route. If it is true that art can do little or nothing, then to provide little or nothing is a form of facing the truth. (2)

Beckett's own statement on his understanding of art reveals a parallel consideration to Albright's observation:

But when the object is perceived as particular and unique and not merely the member of a family, when it appears independent of any general nature and detached from the sanity of cause, isolated and inexplicable in the light of ignorance, then and then only may it be a source of enchantment. (22)

In Beckett's works, the problem of representation is taken together with the problem of the representation of character. Anna McMullan, who thinks that especially Beckett's late plays are reflections of a representation crisis, analyzes Beckett's way

of representation as doubly framed. In his later plays Beckett conveys this double frame through the texts' constitution of the characters' attempts to represent themselves and "to bear witness to their existence through their narratives" (4). Neither the text's nor the characters' attempts to represent are successful. McMullan adds that "[t]he fictional world of the plays therefore revolves around the production and performance of narratives. In many of the plays, the performances occur on a stage which is primarily a scene of judgment, but in others, the performances constitute rites of passage or metamorphosis". Such performances, of course, resist the authority of the structure of identity and representation by dominant rules, and they lead them to draw attention to their own status as performances. The critic concludes that these attempts to create order and coherence fail on the parts of both the characters and the audience (5).

Beckett's later drama can thus be considered as a trial of the idea of theatre itself and of the self and of the real world. This trial of non-representation claims that theatre, self and the world "could be 'performed' (that is, that any representation could claim to describe and define that world)" (Pattie 171). This is why his writings are considered as attempts to represent the non-representable, as McMullan indicates:

Beckett's theatre can therefore be seen as the site of confrontation between the attempt to assume a position of control and judgment in relation to the visual and verbal representations of self and the laws of representation in general, and the opening up of spaces which challenge and disrupt the construction of the roles posited by representation, including those of the self and other, spectacle and spectator. Beckett's drama frames the operations of authority, but also stages the drama of a subjectivity which resists or exceeds the dominant codes of representation, questioning in the process the languages and limits of theatre itself. (9)

His questioning of the language and limits of theatre itself results in the theatricality that he reflects in his works. The theatricality in Beckett's works, which has a significant impact on his use of language, can be considered as a man talking to himself, "in the first place the author, and in the second place each individual member of the audience; and this 'outer' language between stage and audience

extends also to the ‘inner’ language of the stage itself, where the characters too are men or women talking to themselves” (Fletcher and Spurling 37). In disclosing the theatrical nature of his plays, the playwright makes use of the strategies of metadrama and/or metatheatre. Fletcher and Spurling consider Beckett’s plays as the stories he tells himself, which leads each member of the audience to tell her/himself the story “in the form of Beckett’s play, and within the play the characters tell themselves stories. What is on stage is an image of the dialogue between the author and himself as audience, between the member of the audience and himself as author” (38).

The self-reflexivity of Beckett’s plays creates a “perceptual disorientation” in his audiences, which is reinforced by his extensive use of the play-within-a-play or story-within-a-story. Moreover, his characters as well as the plays “reveal an acute consciousness of themselves as works of art. The characters’ search for perception and expression of self replicates the artist’s unending quest for vision and form” (Hale 155). Such a quest can also be seen in his problematization of the concepts of drama, theatre, text and performance. Both in his fiction and in his drama Beckett undermines the genres he is using. That is, he subverts fictional formulae in his fiction and dramatic conventions in his drama: “By making the literary form within that form, Beckett questions the boundary between art and life, between fiction and fact” (Cohn 298). Brater analyzes this questioning of the playwright in his late plays and states that there is a need for a new kind of vocabulary in the investigation of Beckett’s late style in theater. Brater claims that the conventional categorization of drama, narrative, and poetry that literary tradition has imposed is “tangential and inconvenient” in Beckett’s case. That is why, the genre is “under stress”:

The theater event is reduced to a piece of monologue and the play is on the verge of becoming something else, something that looks suspiciously like a performance poem. All the while a story is being told, a fiction closely approximating the dramatic situation the audience encounters in the theater. It is no longer possible to separate the dancer from the dance. Theater technology, too, is called upon to strut and fret its hour upon the stage- more likely, in this case, limited to fifteen or twenty minutes. Lighting, “Faint,

though by no means invisible,” and especially mechanical recording devices, frame the action, advance the plot, and function more like dramatic principals than incidental side effects. Something is taking course, but this particular course, in such efficient stage terms, is one that has not been taken before. (3)

Brater also claims that in Beckett’s “new” theater the performance becomes the play and he uses *Not I* as the prime example of such transformation. The physical (the mouth) rather than the metaphysical is the main concern of the playwright in this work. That is why it needs to create its own space in which we can observe the performance which is the play. Beckett has redefined the meaning of “text” with *Not I* which collapses our traditional way of thinking about drama “as something separate and distinct from performance” (4). As a result, Beckett’s writing indicates the lack of any acceptable boundaries distinguishing play from performance and this signals the breakdown of other generic distinctions as well (Brater 4).

Beckett’s operation of space and time also contributes to his handling of theatricality in his plays. It is not possible to talk about linear time and a kind of space that completes the dramatic action. In much traditional drama, time is linear, which makes the play easy for the audience to follow; likewise, the theatrical space is consistent with the events in the play. In Beckettian theatre, the indeterminacy and inexpressibility that surround his way of writing also affect his use of time and space. The general attributes of Beckettian time and space can be defined as emptiness, circularity, fragmentation, indeterminacy, boundlessness, and fluctuation.

Les Essif classifies the space in Beckett’s plays as empty space. The reduction in the empty space underlines things done rather than said, actions rather than words, and the presence of the spectator (Pickering 171). Essif’s consideration of the contributions of empty space to a metatheatrical tendency in Beckett’s plays is significant:

Unlike the bulk of their predecessors, the protagonists of Beckett’s dramatic corpus are more solitary and, like the stage space they occupy, more empty. They represent extreme, reductive cases of the dramatic figure as a metatheatrical human icon; they convey a

sense of personal emptiness that reflects and coincides with the emptiness of the stage space, becoming an empty space in their own right, a metatheatrical space within a theatrical space, which is arguably the most disturbing and theatrically effective stage image of all time. (2)

Essif emphasizes the effect that empty space has upon the characters in Beckett's plays. As opposed to a stage space which is full of objects related to the play, the empty space coincides with the characters within Beckettian theatre. In addition to this, he notes that empty space is a non-representational and non-referential space. Thus, in addition to its metatheatrical use, empty space can also be thought of as a reflection of Beckett's struggle to express the inexpressible. As Essif suggests, Beckett has changed the category of space:

in order to attain some realm of hyperspace. Likewise, by relating the emptiness of the stage to the character, they have established contact with a plane of human consciousness situated beyond the sclerosis of the referential and above the chaos of the non-referential, one that transcends familiar categories of subjectivity to attain the supra-referential realm of hypersubjectivity. These authors "point toward" non-referentiality in a profound way. (8)

Beckett's pursuit of the non-referential lies in the problem of seeing in an indeterminate world, that is why his characters do not occupy a stable and privileged point in space and time "from which they may visually organize, give meaning to, and institute relationship with other beings and objects" (Hale 1). Thus the disintegration of his characters is also available for his audience. As the audience moves along with the characters in their fragmented time and space and while the characters are seen from a different perspective than that of the characters' themselves, the vision of the audience is no more reliable or stable than that of the characters. In other words, the audience's perception of a stable time and space is collapsed by means of the formless time and space of the characters (Hale 18). Thus, Beckett makes his audience "adopt the mobile, partial vision of his characters," moreover, "he has drawn audiences further away from the concrete, stable space of the stage, and deeper into the abstract, fluctuating space of his characters' minds" (Hale 149).

Hale also indicates that as the mobility of time and space increases in Beckett's plays, the movement upon the stage is minimized. The decrease upon the stage space causes the increase in the imaginary mobility required of his spectators. Therefore, the stage space should be considered as an abstract stage space which contributes to the indeterminacy that surrounds Beckett's drama. It is impossible to "situate the exact time, place, and character alluded to by a given line of text, because images and phrases in Beckett's drama melt imperceptibly into one another, like disparate, unordered, repetitive, boundless, points of his time and space" (153).

Circularity and repetition are other issues that shape the time and space that Beckett uses. Almost all of his plays begin by breaking in upon the characters in the middle of a situation that seems to have been going on forever and/or make references to the ending from their very first lines. Thus, the spectator can never be sure about the beginning or the ending of the play and this "formalize[s] the indefinite boundaries of the time and space that inform them" (Hale 153). Hale adds that Beckett's use of nonsyntactical language can be considered as another device in revealing the lack of ending within circular time and space which stands opposed to the classical uses and concepts of language, perspective, and space-time (155).

As can be elicited from these analyses of time and space in Beckett's plays, the two concepts are not only the playwright's devices to express the inexpressible but they are also the reflections of a problematization of the relationship between the audience and the stage. As a result of this new attitude towards the audience and stage relationship, Beckett's use of time and space serves a postmodern approach, since Beckett, in some sense, poses the problem of meaning making and/or the transformation of meaning by means of his extraordinary operation of time and space.

The concepts of metadrama, theatricality and performativity have been among the most crucial issues in contemporary theatre studies. In the contemporary period, drama displays an innovative, challenging and experimental attitude not only in texts

but also in performances. The relationships between text, author, audience and even actor are problematized. Moreover, the idea that drama reflects life is rejected by claiming that drama operates on life rather than reflecting it (Hornby 17). As a result, postmodern drama presents drama on drama (metadrama), theatricality and performativity in order to reveal its understanding of aesthetics as being opposed to the autonomy of modern art. Samuel Beckett's plays can be considered as exemplifying such an approach since they are considered as a problematization of representation. That is, in his plays he attempts to present the unrepresentable which is a postmodern posture accepted by various critics. Therefore, in Beckett's plays, metadramatic devices, which serve to underline theatricality, can be considered as the performative acts working to demystify the idea of autonomy.

The metadramatic devices that are used in Beckett's plays do not serve to carry forward the plot. Indeed, they are the reflections of the playwright's attempt to present the absurdity that human beings are exposed to, which is unrepresentable itself. That is why, metadrama in his plays is one way of Beckett's expressing the problematization and questioning of the modern idea of autonomy. As Waugh declares, postmodernism can be understood as a "gradual dissolution of the modern idea of the separate autonomies of the spheres of art, science and morality or politics, and can be viewed as an increasingly pervasive aestheticisation of all spheres of knowledge and experience, from philosophy to politics and finally science" (291).

Beckett's plays, as outstanding products of this postmodern stance, utilize the varieties of metadrama suggested by Richard Hornby in his book *Drama, Metadrama and Perception* (1986), which are: play within the play, ceremony within the play, role-playing within the role, literary and real life reference, and self-reference. Moreover, as Pattie claims:

The inherent theatricality in Beckett's work comes from his revisioning of the central tension in the theatrical event between the stage and the auditorium. For Fletcher and Spurling, Beckett himself recreated this central tension in the structure and style of

his plays: he envisaged the plays as a series of dialogues between himself as author and himself as audience. (139)

It is obvious that Beckett's plays not only problematize the relationship between the text and its performance by his "revisioning of the central tension in the theatrical event between the stage and the auditorium" but also questions the idea of the unified self by being a series of dialogues between himself as author and himself as audience. Oppenheim reflects S. E. Gontarski's claim that the latter tendency of Beckett is the result of his "self-doubling". The critic claims that the domination of the idea of performance is with Beckett well before his inclination to theatre. The doubling of the self leads him to the notion of the "crisis of the subject" (194).

In dealing with postmodern aspects of Beckett's theatre, it is better to start with Patricia Waugh's understanding of "aesthetisation" in the postmodern period may be taken. Waugh claims that rather than Postmodernism, one should refer to various Postmodernisms engendered by diverse philosophers in Western thought. She underlines that there is, however, a common starting point for each of these Postmodernisms, stating that

[f]irstly, a common element in the bewilderingly diverse range of theoretical Postmodernisms is a recognition and account of the way in which the 'grand narratives' of Western history have broken down. Without such metanarratives (God, history as purposefully unfolding immanent dialectic, Reason), history itself becomes a plurality of "islands of discourse", a series of metaphors which cannot be detached from the various institutionally produced languages which we bring to bear upon it (Foucault), or a network of agonistic "language games" where the criteria are those of performance not truth (Lyotard). (5)

Lyotard defines postmodernism as incredulity towards metanarratives, resulting in a break for the boundaries of the authoritative tendencies of previous periods. Moreover, he defines the term from the perspective of aesthetics and states that

[t]he postmodern would be that which, in the modern, put forward the unrepresentable in presentation itself, that which denies itself in the solace of good forms, the consensus of a taste which would make it possible to share collectively the nostalgia for the

unattainable: that which searches for new presentations, not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unrepresentable. (82)

Baudrillard's contrast between representation and simulation can be taken as another postmodern approach. According to him, the lack of the "real" and the origin creates the production of simulation. As he states:

When the real is no longer what it used to be, nostalgia assumes its full meaning. There is a proliferation of myths of origin and signs of reality; of second-hand truth, objectivity and authenticity. There is an escalation of the true, of lived experience; a resurrection of the figurative where the object and substance have disappeared. And there is a panic-stricken production of the real and the referential, above and parallel to the panic of material production: this is how simulation appears in the phase that concerns us – a strategy of the real, neoreal and hyperreal whose universal double is a strategy of deterrence. (12)

Postmodernism, then, breaks all kinds of foundational concepts that were previously held and it tends to celebrate plurality, rhetoric, playful language and performativity. Therefore, as a result of such premises, postmodernism in general implicates the inseparability of truth from fiction and that is why "the aesthetic, rather than disappearing, has actually incorporated everything else into itself" (6). Waugh investigates this tendency of postmodern theory towards aesthetics and claims that such an inclination of the theory can be considered as an attempt to address social and political issues through an 'aestheticised' view of the world. As a result, "[t]he aesthetic has now entered the 'hard' core of the human sciences: philosophy, political theory, social science" (6). Moreover, she emphasizes that postmodernism privileges aesthetic modes over the modes of logic and method.

In order to deal with the postmodern consideration of aesthetics in detail, it is better to look through the process of the theory of aesthetics before postmodernism, briefly. In his book, *Introduction to Aesthetics: An Analytic Approach*, George Dickie analyzes the historical process that aesthetics has undergone and briefly explains that

[t]he questions included within the field of aesthetics have developed out of twin concerns in the history of thought: the theory of beauty and the theory of art. These two philosophical concerns were first discussed by Plato. The theory of beauty, however, underwent a drastic change in the eighteenth century. Whereas earlier philosophers had discussed only the nature of beauty, eighteenth-century thinkers began to be interested in additional concepts: the sublime, the picturesque, and so on. This new activity may be thought of as either breaking up beauty into parts or supplementing beauty with additional concepts. (3)

While these changes occurred within the field of aesthetics, philosophers, such as Burke and Kant, drew attention to the concept of taste. However, after the eighteenth century, theories about taste gave way to theories about aesthetics. As Dickie claims, “[t]he word “beautiful” then came to be used either as a synonym of “having aesthetic value” or as one of the many aesthetic adjectives on the same level as “sublime” and “picturesque,” which are used to describe art and nature” (4). From the end of the eighteenth century till the middle of the twentieth century theorists of aesthetics were interested in both the theories of aesthetics and the theory of art (4).

After this time, the postmodern idea takes its turn and, as it does in every field, it problematizes the previously held concerns on aesthetics. Postmodern assumptions about, as opposed to modern implications of, the theory of aesthetics can be described by Stuart Sim’s statement that

[t]he poststructuralist and postmodernist projects pose considerable problems for traditional ways of practicing philosophy and criticism. With their anarchic procedures, iconoclastic attitudes, preference for rhetoric over logic, and frequently counter-intuitive conclusions, they represent a direct challenge to some of the most fundamental assumptions of philosophical and theoretical discourse: for example, the assumptions that theories must be rule-governed, that rules and concepts must remain constant once defined, that arguments require proof, that proof be logically demonstrable... Thinkers like Derrida and Jean-François Lyotard have, by their rejection of conventional methods of constructing value judgments, called into question the validity of criticism and succeeded in problematising the whole area of aesthetics: traditionally the site of legislation regarding the art and practice of critical value judgment. (1)

In other words, he designates the writings of Derrida and Lyotard as anti-aesthetic in their intention which means that they aim at creating conditions for “a post-aesthetic realm beyond the reach of value judgment” (1).

The concept of anti-aesthetics needs further explanation here and it is best described in Hal Foster’s *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*. The critic suggests that an anti-aesthetic assertion cannot be accommodated with the modern idea of “negation of art” or of representation. “Negation” is the result of modernism which has an “anarchic hope of an ‘emancipator effect’ or in the utopian dream of a time of pure presence, a space beyond representation” (xv). However, the idea of the “anti-aesthetic” takes for granted that “we are never outside representation - or rather, never outside its politics”, in other words, it is “the sign not of a modern nihilism but rather of a critique which destructures the order of representations in order to reinscribe them” (xv). This approach is parallel to one of Lyotard’s definition of postmodernism, that is, “the unrepresentable in presentation itself” (82). Moreover, as can be understood from its name, anti-aesthetics also questions the very notion of aesthetics and its web of ideas. What it problematizes is the idea that aesthetic experience stands apart, “all but beyond history, or that art can now affect a world at once (inter)subjective, concrete and universal - a symbolic totality”. At that point it becomes obvious that the idea of the anti-aesthetic rejects any tendency towards categorization, like postmodernism. Its rejection of such categorization is the result of its denial of the existence of a privileged aesthetic realm, the existence of which was a modern idea rooted in the notion of the autonomy of art.

In the light of these, it is crucial to deal with the effects of such developments on postmodern drama, as it can clearly be said the postmodern idea of drama shares the same denial as postmodernism and anti-aesthetics. As Connor discloses, “the theatre [of the postmodern period], or theatrical form, encompasses many of the themes that we have already encountered in the postmodern debate, especially the refusal of notions of essential form, the dispersal of the identity of the work of art, and its immersion in social and political contexts” (133). What postmodernism celebrates as “fictionality” is reflected as the gratification of theatricality in postmodern drama,

not only in texts but also in performance. Connor underlines the notion of theatricality as:

Theatricality stands for all those falsifying divisions which complicate, diffuse and displace the concentrated self-identity of work of art, and so encompasses a number of different effects, including self-consciousness of the spectator, the awareness of context and the dependence upon extension in time. Theatricality is the name for the contamination of any artifact that is dependent upon conditions outside, or other than, its own. (133)

The concept of the dependence of any artifact on anything outside its own reveals that one cannot talk about the work of art as autonomous. That is why the “theatrical is taken up by theorists of postmodern as a positive refusal of the frozen abstraction of the idea of the work-in-itself in favour of the idea of work-as-a-process” (134).

When the impact of postmodern theory on drama is analyzed, it therefore inevitably has to deal with the concepts of drama, theatre and performance together. As it has been mentioned earlier, contemporary ideas on drama problematize the relationship between the text, its author and even the audience. As a result, the concept of drama, theatre and performance should be dealt with attentively. Mark Fortier, in his book *Theory/Theatre*, makes a detailed analysis of these terms in order to disclose the theoretical background for dramatic criticism and to reveal the relationship between literary theory and theatre. He emphasizes that drama is often taken, by those who study theatre, to be the language, namely the words ascribed to the characters, which is spoken by actors in the theatre. In addition to this, the critic adds, there is a close relationship between drama and literature which causes literary studies to be inclined to consider theatrical activity as drama rather than theatre (4). What is conceived as theatre is not words on a page, though “[t]heatre is performance (though often the performance of a drama text) and entails not only words but space, actors, props, audience and the complex relations among these elements” (4). As for performance, Fortier expresses that recently the term has been used with a number of meanings:

It can mean performance art, a certain paratheatrical activity... it can mean that aspect of theatre involved in actually putting on a show; it can mean the entire theatrical experience; it can expand to

include other theatre-like activities such as sporting events and religious rituals; it can mean just about any activity, including private acts such as getting dressed or walking down the street. (231)

The definition of Richard Schechner, who is one of the most famous theorists of performance theory, summarizes what Fortier indicates in his definition:

Performance is an inclusive term. Theater is only one node on a continuum that reaches from the ritualizations of animals through performances in everyday life- greetings, displays of emotions, family scenes, professional roles, and so on- through to play, sports, theater, dance, ceremonies, rites, and performances of great magnitude. (xvii)

Another critic who takes a look at the relationship between drama, theatre, and performance is Michael Vanden Heuvel. In his work, titled *Performing Drama/Dramatizing Performance*, he suggests that with the appearance of avant-garde theater there developed an “antagonistic” relationship between drama and performance. He defines drama as “that form of theatrical expression that is constituted primarily as a literary artifact, according to particular “dramatic” conventions, and empowered as text” (3). On the other hand, he notes the fact that dramas do not remain merely textual and/or literary, but they are often performed. According to him, this does not mean that there is a parallel relationship between them, that is, he insists that drama and performance are two separate notions in theatre studies (3).

When performance is conceived in the traditional sense, it is defined as “the staging of the literary artifact and is thus implicated in the reconstituting of determinate meaning and authorial power”, which is no longer acceptable (4). As a result, Heuvel claims that contemporary approaches to performance leads us to think that performance:

[C]an deconstruct Presence utterly, and empower Absence or powerlessness. Since it is activated by nonperiodic, nonlinear activities- improvisation, play, transformation, parataxis, game

structures- performance breaks down the illusion of rational control and power over meaning (and the structural metaphor of argument underlying the text), and substitutes a dispersal of order into disorganization. Its primary gesture is thus toward chaos or indeterminacy. (5)

On the other hand, Heuvel emphasizes that such a destructive definition of performance should not lead us to consider that there is no structure or system of reference for performance. He compares performance with chaos theory and suggests that they both have such a structure that “comprises a moderated randomness so complex that its underlying order cannot be recuperated entirely within rational systems” (5). Moreover, when contrasted to the text, performance has networks that may appear disorderly but include a kind of internal “order” (5).

Therefore, Heuvel summarizes the implications of the contemporary understanding of performance as follows:

Performance deconstructs authorial power and its illusion of Presence, and disperses its quanta of energies among the performers and the spectator as a potential source of a deferred, hypothetical, and immanent power. Performance is therefore initially the displacement of Presence or power, and the affirmation of Absence and powerlessness. In some instances, however, the deconstruction of an orderly system (like the text) by the intervention of disorder or turbulence can initiate evolution toward a higher order of complexity; and so as a secondary effect, performance has the potential to open up new systems, sometimes new levels, of meaning. (5)

As for theater, Heuvel restricts his use of the term to mean the event that is enacted before a spectator; the event may either be inscribed within a text or improvised by performers. Nevertheless, theater cannot be limited to that usage since it may conceal “the dynamic space that theater occupies today in our culture” (6). Its significance lies under its creating the ground for the “fruitful interactions between opposed categories like textuality and performance” (7).

The relationship between drama, theater, and performance acquires a different significance for contemporary theater studies. The changing attitude towards the relationship between drama and performance leads the productions of experiments in recent theater. As Heuvel suggests, as a result of these innovative tendencies and “in some cases, incongruous combinations between “literary” drama and nontextual, performance-oriented work have shown us that today, the relationship between drama and performance is not stable” (7). Heuvel states that critics today often deal with this unstable relationship in analyzing dramatic works and he adds:

The growing movement in contemporary drama and performance toward deconstructive aesthetics centered on the disruptive potential of performance and the creation of hybrid theatrical forms that problematize our traditional methods for creating meaning in the theater, have created just such a chaotic motion. In addition to producing some very provocative theater work, these experiments have disclosed theater as a decidedly schizophrenic entity that no single or stable hierarchical relationship between the text and performance can describe adequately. (7)

Heuvel underlines the innovations of recent drama and performance studies in their analysis of the transformation of meaning. Contemporary studies questions the possibility of creating a definite meaning and conveying that meaning to an audience in such a chaotic world. As a result, the problematization of the space between text and performance is a reflection of such ideas.

In the light of these, Beckett’s theatre as conveying postmodern features and elements are going to be analyzed in its problematization of the key issues in recent theory of theatre. The matters related to text, audience, performance their places within today’s theatre are going to be investigated in detail. As a starting point metadrama is regarded initially in order to display the multiple structure of Beckettian theatre which makes it impossible to limit his art to the outlooks of a particular school or movement.

CHAPTER 2

METADRAMA

2.1 History and Definiton

The terms metadrama and metatheatre have been used interchangeably after the term metatheatre was first coined by Lionel Abel in 1963 with the publication of *Tragedy and Metatheatre: Essays on Dramatic Form*. The distinction between the terms of drama and theatre is no more available when the prefix *meta* is added to them since the emphasis shifts to the self-reflexivity that *meta* creates as in the term metalanguage. When language is used in order to talk about language, it is metalanguage. Similarly, when drama is about drama itself, then it becomes metadrama. Then it can be argued that when metadramatic techniques are used within a particular play, the play offers more layers than a plainly organized play. In other words, the play becomes a play which serves to reflect itself by means of an other play or plays.

Abel describes his intention in writing on metatheatre as follows: “one, to explain why tragedy is so difficult, if not altogether impossible for the modern dramatist, and two, to suggest the nature of a comparatively philosophic form of drama” which he designates as *metatheatre*. The critic compares tragedy and metatheatre and claims that while tragedy deals with the real world, metatheatre deals with the world of imagination (v). According to this approach, tragedy deals with the “tragic sense of life” and that is why it has a distinct perspective of the real world. In addition to this, Abel claims, one cannot treat tragedy without accepting “implacable values”. However, modern dramatists are far from such acknowledgement, and thus, instead of tragedy, “we now have *metaplay*, a dramatic form for revealing characters whose self-consciousness creates their dramatic situations” (vi). In clarifying his definition of the term, Abel indicates the common character of the plays he calls metatheatre:

[A]ll of them are theatre pieces about life seen as already theatricalized. By this, I mean that persons appearing on the stage in these plays are there simply because they were caught by the playwright in dramatic postures as a camera might catch them, and because these characters already knew they were dramatic. They are aware of their own theatricality. (vi)

Since Abel claims that there is a distinct form of drama which he defines as metatheatre, he defines the common feature of the characters, who he calls “heroes”, of this new dramatic form. For him “[w]hat is essential for the hero of metatheatre is that he be conscious of the part he himself plays in constructing the drama that unfolds around him” (167). Abel defines this consciousness of the metatheatrical hero by exemplifying Don Quixote and Hamlet and states that these two characters’ consciousnesses can be seen in their madness which has method to it. “The value to a playwright of such a character is that, he is capable of inserting himself into a plot without ever consulting his author” (167). Thus, Abel’s definition of the metatheatrical hero underlines the problematization of the relationship between fact and fiction. As he states, “[t]ragedy, from the point of metatheatre, is our dream of the real. Metatheatre, from the point of tragedy, is as real as are our dreams” (183). The critic summarizes the features of metatheatre by comparing it to tragedy as follows:

Tragedy gives by far the stronger sense of the reality of the world. Metatheatre gives by far the stronger sense that the world is a projection of human consciousness. Tragedy glorifies the structure the world, which it supposedly reflects in its own form. Metatheatre glorifies the unwillingness of the imagination to regard any image of the world as ultimate. Tragedy makes human existence more vivid by showing its vulnerability to fate. Metatheatre makes human existence more dreamlike by showing that fate can be overcome. Tragedy tries to mediate between the world and the man. Tragedy wants to be on both sides. Metatheatre assumes there is no world except that created by human striving, human imagination. Tragedy cannot operate without the assumption of an ultimate order. For metatheatre, order is something continually improvised by men. (183)

Thomas Austin O'Connor claims that the theatricality emphasized by Abel's definition of metatheatre is reflected by means of the theatricalization of the characters within the plays. This attitude of metatheatre is principally disclosed in six ways: there is an essential illusoriness in life; there is a loss of reality for the world; the world cannot be proved to exist; there is a lack of implacable values; life is a dream; the world is a stage. O'Connor adds that "[t]he latter two are the manifestations we are most accustomed to seeing, but the former are the bases and premises upon which they are constructed (275).

Richard Hornby, who also elaborates on the subject of metadrama, claims that metadrama occurs "when the subject of the play turns out to be, in some sense, drama itself" (31). However, there is much more to the issue of metadrama than a simple definition. When considered from the audience's perspective, "the metadramatic experience is one of unease", declares Hornby, claiming that by means of the metadramatic experience the perception of the audience is "dislocated". As a result of this fact, it becomes possible to talk about the "degree of intensity of metadrama which varies from very mild to an extreme disruption". The critic adds that "[a]t times, metadrama can yield the most exquisite of aesthetic insights, which theorists have spoken of as "estrangement" or "alienation." This "seeing double" is the true source of the significance of metadrama" (32). Moreover, the concept of metadrama is not a narrow phenomenon and cannot be limited to particular playwrights or periods in the history of theater.

The metadramatic devices used in plays can be considered as the attempts of playwrights' to alter and subvert the commonly held notions of truth. The use of metadrama, in other words, has an aim to attack. As Hornby states, "[g]reat playwrights tend to be more consciously metadramatic than ordinary ones, and their plays to employ metadramatic devices more obviously" (32). However, he adds, the metadramatic devices can be found both in great plays and in ordinary ones.

Hornby enumerates the possible varieties of overt metadrama as; the play within the play, the ceremony within the play, role playing within the role, literary and real-life reference, and self reference. These varieties are seldom found in pure form but rather they are treated together or blend into one another.

As a result, metadramatic devices may be conceived to have a paradoxical nature since they are used in order to emphasize fictionality or artificiality through theatrical presentations. This idea leads us to the notion of theatricality; the nature of theatricality, its functionality and its usage in plays. Thus, the relationship between metadrama and theatricality needs further investigation.

2.2. Metadramatic Varieties

2.2.a The Play Within The Play

Hornby suggests that there are two kinds of the “play within the play” as a metadramatic variety: the “inset” type and the “framed” type. In the inset type, the inner play within a particular play is secondary and/or there is a separate performance from the main action as in *The Mousetrap* performance in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*. However, when the inner play is the primary one and the outer play acts as a “framing device”, then it becomes the framed type like the Sly episodes in Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew*. In addition to this categorization, Hornby claims that these two types could be distinguished easily until modern times since “it was always obvious which of the two plays, the inner or the outer, was primary” (33).

Moreover, the degree of the link between the outer and the inner play can change with both the inset type and the framed type. In Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, as an inset type, there is an ongoing connection between the inner play and the outer one, i.e., “the characters in the outer play fully acknowledge the existence of *The Mousetrap* performance, preparing for it, watching it, and commenting upon it. Hamlet himself

breaks up the performance, thus actually intruding upon it” (33). The plays in which there is less integration between the inner and the outer play may contain interludes, choruses, songs, dances, dumb shows that are not actually part of the outer play. In addition to these, there are plays in which there are long stories, set speeches, reports of messengers, pageants, songs, or dances that are “capable of standing apart, yet which are still presented as fully part of the main action” (33). In such inset types the integration between the inner play and the main play is even stronger than the relationship between *The Mousetrap* performance and the main action of *Hamlet*. Although it seems the contrary, the course of the main action cannot be separated from the actions in the inner play. That is why there is much more connection in such plays.

As for the framed type, the outer play can either strongly or loosely be integrated with the inner play. When, for example, characters comment upon the inner play in the framed type, the integration is strong. However, if there is a narrator or a chorus employed as a frame then it is only loosely integrated with the main play. Richard Hornby claims that such categorization is essential in analyzing the use of metadrama in plays since it helps us to distinguish between the truly metadramatic use of play within the play and those that are not metadramatic. He adds that the metadramatic use of either the inset or framed type requires that

the outer play has characters and plot (although these may be very sketchy); that these in turn must acknowledge the existence of the inner play; and that they acknowledge it as a performance. In other words, there must be two sharply distinguishable layers of performance. (35)

Hornby considers the use of the play within the play device as a reflection or expression of its society’s cynicism about life. Because the idea behind the use of the play within the play proposes that the world is illusory or false. “The fact that the inner play is an obvious illusion (since we see other characters watching it), reminds us that the play *we* are watching is also an illusion, despite its vividness and excitement; by extension, the world in which we live is in the end a sham” (45). The

critic underlines that there is a projection of life itself by the use of the play within the play and it “becomes a means for gauging it” (45). Therefore, it is not surprising that the number of the examples of the use of this device is extraordinary in our own time. Hornby explains this tendency as a result of the contemporary understanding that the world is false. He adds that “[t]his feeling may be existential, as with Pirandello’s theatre or the Theatre of the Absurd, or political, as with the epic theatre; in either case, the world around us is a hoax” (46).

The difference between the use of the play within the play device in our own time and the previous ages is that there is a breakdown between the layers of the plays within the plays. Previously, the inner and the outer plays were distinguished clearly and the primary play could easily be recognized. However, today’s plays offer the same characters moving between the inner and outer play which makes the boundaries between inner and outer play blurred and sometimes disappear. Moreover, in some cases there is even confusion as to whether the inner or the outer play is the main or so-called “real” one. Hornby defines this quality of the contemporary plays as an expression of the cynicism of our time which is different from that of the previous ages. The world may have been an illusion too in the previous ages, “but there was something else framing it - nirvana, heaven, God, gods - that was the true reality. Today people often feel that there is nothing framing our illusory lives at all” (46). There is no more a premise that one can attain, which reminds us of the postmodern idea of chaos.

2.2.b The Ceremony Within The Play

Generally when the ceremony within the play is used, it involves a formal performance that is separate from the surrounding action. However, there may be a certain blurring when categorizing ceremonies within the plays. As Hornby clarifies, “dramatic events may have a ceremonial quality, without being full-fledged, formal ceremonies. Othello’s murder of Desdemona, with its high solemnity and incantations (“Put out the light, and then put out the light”) is an event of this type; its sacramental quality resembles that of religious rituals” (49).

Hornby analyzes the relationship between the ceremonies in real life and theatre and claims that ceremony operates in the same way as theatre. Because, they both employ sets of codes “that enable people to understand themselves and their world, through the medium of their culture”. However, there are significant differences between them such as the full-fledged characterization of the participants in plays as opposed to the participants of the ceremony. Moreover, a ceremony may have strictly prescribed roles and an overall structure that allows for no change which makes it more formal than a play. But this does not mean that the participants of the ceremony leave their former selves (52).

Another difference between ceremonies and theatre is that ceremonies are always performed in the same way. When there is a change at issue for ceremony and theatre, Hornby suggests:

Ceremonies can *be* changed from without (always a drastic matter), but they do not allow for change as part of their essential mechanism. Theatre is always changing from within; ceremony is only changed from without. Ceremony becomes theatre when, among other changes, numerous plays come to be performed within the original framework. (52)

The emphasis on *plot* in theatre creates the next difference between theatre and ceremony. In theatre the plot may not be an Aristotelian one with a definite beginning, middle, and end but it will in some way focus on a series of events. Ceremony, on the other hand, is never plot oriented but it is based on a plot which embodies a change from maiden to wife, from student to graduate, from pollution to purification. Ceremonies accompany the major turning points of personal life - birth, puberty, marriage, death and “in the ceremony itself, the focus is never on the process, or “plot” of the change, but rather on the eternal states of being that are seen as surrounding it” (53).

Hornby categorizes two kinds of ceremonies within plays: those which are fulfilled and those which are not due to ineptitude, interruption, or corruption. When they are fulfilled, whether onstage or in real life, this causes the feelings of harmony, peace, and happiness. On the other hand, ceremonies unfulfilled, for whatever reason, engender feelings of disorientation, discord, and sadness. That is why, it is significant to distinguish between the fulfilled and unfulfilled ceremony within the play in terms of the emotional effect it creates (55). These two kinds function differently within the play which is analyzed in detail further on.

The tragedies subsequent to Shakespeare are considered as having three important types of ceremony: the offstage ceremony, the anti-ceremony, and the quasi-ceremony (Hornby 58). Although the ceremony is “*absent* in some way” in all these types, it is of great importance since, as Hornby announces, “[t]he significance of what is not there, ‘the presence of absence,’ is a central idea in contemporary, poststructural criticism, following the ideas of Jacques Derrida” (58).

“The offstage ceremony occurs frequently in neoclassic tragedy when there was the restriction originally intended as prohibition against showing violence onstage. A result is that full-scale ceremonies on stage are relatively rare in neoclassic drama, but they remain important as offstage events” (59) Hornby also states that offstage ceremony becomes important again in modern naturalistic tragedy. He gives Ibsen plays as examples; the masquerade ball in *A Doll House*, the dinner and later the prayer meeting in *Ghosts*, and the bachelor party in *Hedda Gabler* (60). In these plays offstage ceremony occurs in order to display the conflict between what happens onstage and offstage.

As the next kind of ceremony within the play, Hornby discusses, the quasi-ritual which is one of the characteristics of the Theatre of the Absurd. He gives the examples of the “nonsensical incantations” at the end of Ionesco’s *The Bald Soprano*, the vicious games in Albee’s *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, the playacting scenes in Genet’s *The Balcony*, as quasi-rituals within plays. He adds that such ceremonies “have the air of being invented for nonce, which only adds to their

empty, grotesque qualities” (61). Moreover, the plays of Samuel Beckett are full of quasi-ceremonies as a result of his characters’ desperate attempts to make meaning out of their worthless, and restricted lives. Although in the Theatre of the Absurd the meaning of ritual and ceremony is lost, characters ineffectually try to invent them. As Hornby claims, “[n]ot only are the results cruel and perverted, but the very impulses behind them seem mindlessly obsessive”. In other words, there is an emphasis of the obsession of the need for ritual; man cannot live without ceremony, “but the traditional ones are dead, and the new ones he invents are meaningless” (61).

In contemporary drama there is also a tendency toward ceremony and Hornby likens the contemporary playwright to the characters of the Theatre of Absurd: they both try to create ritual although it is a futile attempt. That is why contemporary drama seeks a “ritualized” theatre. Hornby states that a call for such form of theatre can be traced as early as the 1930’s in the writings of Antonin Artaud. From that time on, playwrights either “ritualize the production style of an entire play, or occasionally even create an entire, original production in ritual form” (62). Hornby defines such kind of creating ceremony as “invented” and/or quasi-ceremony and states that

[c]eremonies that convey no meaning to an audience, that make no connections with a surrounding, stable culture, seem merely bizarre or exotic. Unlike true ceremony, which orients its watchers to a whole order of society and the universe, such quasi-ceremonies confuse and disorient, increasing rather than overcoming our feeling that the world is meaningless. (62)

Therefore, ceremony within the play cannot be limited to particular periods in the history of drama. It has been one of the indispensable parts of playwriting since the beginning. The reason for its necessity can be the result of man’s tendency towards order, since ceremonies “signify stability” (63). That is why, when there is an “invented” or quasi-ceremony within a play, it underlines the instability, chaos, disorder, and confusion in life. Hornby adds that contemporary playwrights and directors ‘invent’ personal ceremonies in their creations and even when the

ceremonies are fulfilled, it is a “neurotic kind of fulfillment, an obsessional or nostalgic attempt to create order where none exists” (65).

2.2.c Role Playing Within Role

As a metadramatic device role playing within the role is distinct in its attempt for delineating character, by showing not only who the character is but also what he wants to be. “When a playwright depicts a character who is himself playing a role, there is often the suggestion that, ironically, the role is closer to the character’s true self than his everyday, “real” personality” (67). Hornby compares the use of the play within the play to role playing within the role and states that just as the former creates existential questions, so use of the role playing within the role creates the questionability of human identity. Moreover, characterization of role playing within the role creates characters that are “fluid, shifting, mysterious, and hence fascinating” (68).

Hornby examines the function of role playing within the role and underlines the fact that it goes “beyond the usual exploration of specific roles; it exposes the very nature of role itself” (72). In other words, he emphasizes that role playing within the role cannot be limited to the portrayal of particular roles. However, it creates a more profound way to the analysis of ‘role’ on its own. Therefore, he adds, “[t]he theatrical efficacy of role playing within the role is the result of its reminding us that all human roles are relative, that identities are learned rather than innate” (72).

He categorizes role playing within the role in three types: voluntary, involuntary, and allegorical. In voluntary role playing, which is the most “straightforward” kind, the character’s taking on a different role other than his ordinary self is fulfilled consciously and willingly. The character’s willingness is the result of his having a specific goal in role playing within the role. In Ibsen’s *Ghosts*, as an example, Engstrand plays at being pious in order to deceive and manipulate Pastor Manders. Hornby declares that voluntary role playing within the role is the most metadramatic

type since it “creates a distinct uneasiness about role generally, especially since we cannot help but remember that the character himself is being feigned by an actor” (74).

Involuntary role playing within the role may not only be caused by outer factors but also by some inner weakness of the character, or caused by the combination of inner and outer factors. When the reason is the outer factors, the character may be made to believe by other characters that s/he has another character than s/he actually has. If the character has reasons inside for creating another role within his role, then it is caused by inner factors. In some cases these two are combined and the character makes use of role playing within the role as a result of both inner and outer factors. Hornby claims that in all these cases, “we feel less estranged than when the role playing within the role is voluntary, because we are more secure as to who the character really is. His false self has been forced upon him” (74).

As for the allegorical role playing within the role, it is more subtle than the voluntary or involuntary types. Furthermore, Hornby claims, it can be seen instead as an example of the fourth type of metadrama, which is the reference to other literature, rather than role playing within the role because allegorical role playing within the role arises whenever the play’s situation, action, or imagery attempts to relate a character to some well-known literary or historical figure (74).

Hornby states that the characters of modern drama and modern literature in general are “either depicted as being always “onstage,” or else their “backstage” personalities seem just as forced and artificial as their onstage ones” (81). Moreover, these characters are split, double and multiple. “It is thus impossible to say which are their true personalities, or, indeed, if they have any, since they may all be the imaginings of an unseen dreamer” (81).

2.2.d Literary and Real-Life Reference Within the Play

A play can refer to other pieces of literary works in many ways. The degree of metadramatic effect depends on the degree of the recognition of the literary reference by the audience. When the audience recognizes the literary allusion, the illusory atmosphere of the main play is broken and the play is considered as a literary construct. That is why; the effect of the literary reference within the play is like the effect of the use of the play within the play: they both disrupt the main illusion of the main play (88).

On the other hand, Hornby analyzes different plays from different periods in order to reveal how the degree of the metadramatic effect of the use of literary reference within a play may change. Moreover, he points out that the degree of emphasis given to the use of the literary reference within the play by the playwright is another effect on the metadramatic impact created by it. In other words, “how recent and controversial the literary work referred” to plays a significant role in the metadramatic effect (90).

Hornby emphasizes the conscious use of the literary reference within the play and categorizes four types of direct literary references that are metadramatic: *citation*, *allegory*, *parody*, and *adaptation*. When the playwright uses a quotation or another direct reference to another literary piece then it is *citation*. Characters may either cite directly or they may refer to specific events within other literary works. In some cases, the function of the use of citation may be literary criticism. Hornby suggests that “[w]hen literary citation within the play moves toward literary criticism, it also moves toward the play as self-reference. The audience cannot help but apply the same standards that are being propounded against the play itself” (92).

As for *allegory*, obviously there is a literary reference to a well-known literary or historical figure in the play. Hornby intensifies the allegorical way of role playing within the role and states that in literary reference within the play the use of allegory may not have a generalized nature as in the role playing within the role. Hornby

states that in some cases the use of allegory does not relate to some kind of stock figure like Christ, but it refers to a specific work. As an example to this, he compares Shaw's *Pygmalion* to the stories of Cinderella and the Ugly Duckling (92).

In *parody*, an archetypal character, situation, speech, or action is referred to in order to ridicule it. Just like the allegorical reference, parodic literary reference within the play may be more specific and recent so that it is "very much in the audience's consciousness" (93). Hornby categorizes two kinds of parody as a literary reference: a specific and an overall parody within a play. The kind of parodying which is immediate and potent for the audience is a specific one. However, specific parodying is less metadramatic than the plays of *burlesque* in which the parody is "not intruding on the main action, but is merely a part of the generalized ridicule and merriment" (93).

Adaptation within the play does not create a metadramatic effect if the audience is not aware of its use. In order for adaptation to be metadramatic, Hornby declares, the audience must be able to "see double"; they must not only perceive the current play but also the parodied play. Moreover, they must consider them as separate entities rather than as being blended within a single play. The use of adaptation is often seen in contemporary playwriting and, Hornby adds, "the updating kind of adaptation turned into a distinctly elite form of theatre" (94). Hutcheon defines adaptation as having the features such as an acknowledged transposition of recognizable other work or works, a creative and an interpretive act of appropriation/salvaging, and an extended intertextual engagement with the adapted work (8). Thus, when considered from the adapter's perspective adaptation is "always a double process of interpreting and then creating something new" (20). Although in adaptation there are the features of parody, the interpreter does not need to create something new in parody.

As for real-life reference, it is in many ways similar to the use of literary reference. In this case there is an allusion to real people, real places, real objects, and real events. Another similarity between literary reference and real-life reference is that

the metadramatic effect is in parallel with the degree of the recognition of the reference by the audience, with whether it is recent and unique (95). In the contemporary theatrical practice there are interesting examples of metadramatic real-life reference. The critic exemplifies avant-garde stage directors and states that they often delight in introducing “real” elements into the otherwise fictive world they have created. That is why the nature of the theatrical performance makes such “toying” with the dramatic illusion all the more fascinating. Moreover, it is possible to introduce reality into any literary or artistic work. In painting, Picasso, for example, “would paste bits of real objects, such as a matchbook cover, a rag, a piece of newspaper, or a torn playing card, into the midst of his paintings” (97). When this is done, the two modes of “so-called reality” intersect in the same work of art, both complementing and interfering with one another (97).

As in the example of Picasso, in the theatre the insertion of slides and films can be taken as the real-life references within the play. Nevertheless, in the theatre, there is always readily available a special type of real-life reference that does not require any insertion at all. “On stage, real life itself is omnipresent, as the ordinary ‘backstage’ reality of the actors, their costumes, properties, etc”. Furthermore, in painting, the paint on the canvas is “transformed into images, while in writing, words are transformed into concepts, but in the theatre, people are “transformed” into people and things into things” (97).

Hornby concludes that literary and real-life reference may seem less important as a type of metadrama than the other types. The reasons behind this idea is the fact that such usages are rarely metadramatic, and even when they are, the metadramatic impact varies with time, and even from an audience member to another audience member. Nevertheless, the critic underlines that the significance of literary and real-life reference should not be overlooked since such kind of reference within a play is probably the most important not so much in the literary playtext, but in performance. In addition to this, if we consider performance as an art form in its own right, rather than just as a means of putting across a text, which is a recent approach, then literary

reference and, even more important, real-life reference, have often been major dramatic elements (100).

2.2.e Self-Reference

As opposed to literary or real-life reference, self-reference is always strongly metadramatic since with self-reference, the play directly calls attention to itself as a play, an imaginative fiction (103). Moreover, although it seems that self-reference creates the same effect caused by the play within the play usage, there is a difference between them. Just like self-reference, the use of play within the play has the same ultimate effect of reminding the audience that what they have been watching is actually a play. However, such reminders are indirect in the play within the play, while self-reference is direct and immediate, “a splash of cold water thrown into the face of a dreaming, imagining audience” (104).

In addition to this, self-reference is also a literary reference since the play itself is also a literary piece. Moreover, self-reference is also an example of real-life reference, or, more specifically, real-life acknowledgement, since the ‘backstage’ reality of the play as an artificial construct is acknowledged whenever the play refers to itself. The difference is that real-life acknowledgement relates to the individual performance rather than to the play as a whole as in self-reference. Another difference is that real-life acknowledgement tends to be fulfilled only in performance, however, self-reference does not lose its metadramatic effect when the play is only read (104).

In addition to these, Hornby declares that we should distinguish between true self-reference and ‘mere acknowledgement of the audience’ which is fulfilled by the use of choruses and narrators, or with characters themselves in monologues or asides. These devices are conventions of a presentational style which means that rather than destroying the world of the play, they enlarge it to include the audience. In other words, they create such an atmosphere that the audience takes on momentarily the role of the characters’ confidants. Also, choruses and narrators do not stop the dramatic action, but instead function as a contribution to move it further (104).

On the other hand, prologues and epilogues are closer to dramatic self-reference than choruses, narrators, monologues, or asides, because they do literally refer to the play as a play, “but on the other hand they are not really part of the play to which they refer. Prologues and epilogues refer to the play, but not usually to themselves. Nor do they stop the action, which has either not yet begun or already concluded” (104). What they provide whenever they are used is that they supply “a gentle transition between the surrounding, real world and the inner world of dramatic illusion, rather than disrupting the dramatic world with a sudden reminder of its fictitiousness” (104).

Hornby concludes by disclosing the function of self-reference within the play and exemplifies the use of self-reference by the utterances of a character as, “I know you all,” or “no one dies halfway through the last act” (115). By such kinds of statements of the character the audience identification is prevented. Then, “[t]here is a sudden collapse of the ego boundary back to one’s everyday self,” and Hornby adds, such a collapse of the self was the main aim of Bertolt Brecht’s “alienation effect” (115).

2.3 Function of Metadrama in Postmodern Drama

The postmodern is, ostensibly, simultaneously the end of modern and the beginning of a new era, a position from which the observer can both evaluate the modernist tradition and assess the relation of the latest cultural products to that tradition. The concept is in short, a way of *historicizing* the contemporary, in the Brechtian sense of getting some distance on the world we live in and thus gaining a better understanding of it. (Auslander 6)

Since metadrama cannot be considered as limited to postmodern drama, it is important to analyse the function of metadrama within postmodern drama. The difference between the operation of metadrama in ancient theatre and postmodern theatre is of great importance. The impact and effect of postmodernism constitutes

the crucial point in determining the place of metadrama in postmodern drama. Since we are concerned with postmodern aspects of Beckettian theatre by means of analyzing metadramatic varieties in his plays, it would be better to investigate the function of metadrama in postmodern theatre.

As it was mentioned previously, there are many definitions of postmodernism and it is also the case when postmodern drama is concerned. However, there are several aspects which can be referred to postmodern plays. The critic Janelle Reinelt sums up these qualities under five items:

1. An emphasis on the plurality of performance texts (written, the playwright's; visual, the director's; hermeneutic, the actor's; provisional, the rehearsal's).
2. The presence of multi- sometimes contradictory- social codes invoked and carried in the signs of the various performance texts, resulting in the inevitable mapping of ideology.
3. A highly contingent and mercurial audience reception, which reads through the intertexts various socially constructed meanings, some shared, some oppositional.
4. The suspicion of textual closure as authoritarian and finally terrorist, whether of gender or race or class or narrative shape.
5. The recognition of the body of the actor in space as a sign among other signs, not as the privileged representative of meaning, authority, logos, unified subjectivity. (338)

Thus, when the function of metadrama is concerned within the field of postmodern drama, it can be seen that metadrama, as representing the problematic relationship between art and life and/or fact and fiction, reveals one of the propositions of postmodernism, which is the crisis of representation. When a play includes another play, either inset or framed type, it becomes multi-layered and multi-voiced. This multiplicity can be seen as a result of the impossibility of representing a unitary end. Moreover, when a play refers to itself or to other literary pieces, again it loses its position as a reflection of a determinate issue. In each of these, the concept of fictionality is underlined, therefore, metadramatic plays as such are attempts to disclose the illusory quality of life. Moreover, there is the 'suspicion of textual closure as authoritarian' which is again a postmodern approach in plays.

Moreover, when drama is considered in the traditional sense, it reflects the notion of time as linear. However, metadramatic works break this attitude by being multi-layered. Just as we cannot talk about a determinate plot, there is no definite consideration of time in such plays. In other words, one cannot be aware of the linearity of time within an 'illusion'. Thus, time as fragmented and non-linear is another issue that metadrama handles just like postmodern drama does.

Another quality of metadrama that serves the postmodern consideration is the unattainability of a unified self. When the metadramatic variety of role playing within the role is considered, this aspect can be clarified. The character who is role playing within his role actually demystifies the idea of the unified 'self'. By this variety of metadrama the concepts of 'identity' and even the 'role' are revealed as multi-layered. Therefore, metadramatic plays using this device lead to the "recognition of the body of the actor in space as a sign among other signs, not as the privileged representative of meaning, authority, logos, unified subjectivity" for the audience.

When Auslander's definition of postmodernism is taken into consideration, the close relationship between metadrama and postmodernism can be understood better. The critic suggests that the notion of postmodernism "is in short, a way of *historicizing* the contemporary, in the Brechtian sense of getting some distance on the world we live in and thus gaining a better understanding of it" (6). Namely, metadrama by referring to itself or by being a drama on drama, in a way 'historicizes' the primary play thus causing the audience to get away some distance from the present play in the Brechtian sense. As a result, metadrama, with its innovative attitudes towards representation and identity, serves as one of the outcomes of the postmodern scene.

2.4 What is Real? What Is Fiction?: The Play-within-the-Play and Self-Reference in *Catastrophe*.

Catastrophe, a one-act play which was written in French in 1982 and published in English in 1984, is about the rehearsal of the last scene of a play. The characters are a Director (D), his female Assistant (A), a Protagonist (P), and Luke, in charge of lighting and offstage (L). In accordance with the practice of critical writing on this play, they will be referred to in this chapter by their capitalized roles/names. Director is checking the last arrangements of a play that is going to be staged. He is giving directions to Assistant and Luke in order for the play to be presented. The play includes an intense use of metadramatic devices. The degree of self-reference is high because it not only consists of stage-related references but there are also references to the off-stage production through the character of Luke as well as references to the audience. Moreover, the references to the character of the play by means of the protagonist provide a rich ground for metadramatic analysis. Therefore, the play can be analyzed through the metadramatic devices of play-within-the-play and self-reference.

In *Catastrophe*, the first metadramatic device, the play-within-the-play, is what Richard Hornby classifies as the “inset type”. Director has just arrived at a rehearsal and Assistant consults him:

A: [*Finally.*] Like the look of him?

D: So so. [*Pause.*] Why the plinth?

A: To let the stalls see the feet.

[*Pause.*]

D: Why the hat?

A: To help hide the face.

[*Pause.*]

D: Why the gown?

A: To have him all black (457).

Director asks Assistant the details of the inner play and the audience of *Catastrophe* does not watch another distinct action from the main play. With the inset type of

play-within-the-play there is an inner play which is secondary to the main play as opposed to the framed type in which the inner play is the primary one and the outer play acts as a framing device. Hornby also suggests that there may be a separate performance apart from the main action of the play. In *Catastrophe* it is obvious that there are two plays on the stage although there is no display of action in the inner play. In other words, there are not two distinct performances on the stage when performance is considered as consisting action. The inner play is made known by means of the dialogues between the director and his assistant.

D: What has he on underneath? [*A moves towards P.*] Say it.

A: His night attire.

D: Colour?

A: Ash (457).

....

D: How are they? [*A at a loss. Irritably.*] The hands, how are the hands?

A: You've seen them.

D: I forget.

A: Crippled. Fibrous degeneration (458).

Director does not let Assistant show what he wants to learn about the inner play. The details of the inner play are told rather than shown on stage. Moreover, the inner play is the subject matter of the main play and this is an innovative and complex use of the-play-within-the-play device. Such an approach reveals how Beckett manages to mingle and combine various components to make the audience rethink and re-evaluate accepted notions. His use of the play-within-the-play in *Catastrophe* creates a “double” for its audience which is not only the viewer of the play *Catastrophe*, written by Samuel Beckett, but also becomes that of another play which is unknown through most of the play and told on the stage. Actually, Beckett's not creating a separate performance of the inner play causes an atmosphere of ambivalence. It is obvious that there are two plays within the play *Catastrophe*, however, the inner play is an “unknown” for the audience. The plot

and character(s) are not presented. This ambivalence can be regarded as the main point in using the play-within-the-play device within the period of postmodern drama: to blur the relationship between real and fiction. As it is clearly stated by Landfester, “[t]he perception of reality that is the subject matter of postmodern theatre does not allow for the secure knowledge of a sphere that is perfectly and unshakeably authentic, untouched by any infestation of fictional elements” (130). Thus, Beckett’s use of an unknown and unclear inset type play-within-the-play is a distinguishing feature which underlines the questionability of reality. Sheaffer-Jones clarifies the main function of the play-within-the-play:

In this theatre [where play-within-the-play is used], the borders of the stage, like the ‘house of illusions’, are certainly difficult to determine. What the play within the play shows above all is not a well-defined drama within another, but rather the transgression of the boundary between make-believe and reality; it redrafts the limits of the scene, drawing attention to the fragility of the separation between the stage and the auditorium. Both actor and spectator are part of a theatre in which the very possibility of representation is at stake. For this theatre is not about a work with a clear beginning or end, showing the ‘real’ world. It consists of the endless comings and goings, both on the stage and in the auditorium, of those who are at once actors and spectators. Changing roles, perhaps dying and reliving in another performance, is part of this ungraspable game. (58)

The blurriness of any line between reality and fiction is an important concept within the field of theater because it is made manifest in the relationship between the stage and the auditorium. When the play-within-the-play device is used, the subject matter is not only what happens on the stage. The position of the audience as both an actor and a spectator is emphasized when the play refers to itself as a product of artificiality. When the real audience of a particular play watches another audience within a play, then the audience realizes itself also as an actor of a larger play, like the audience it watches in the play. Thus, it can be argued that Beckett’s original way of utilizing the-play-within-the-play device in *Catastrophe* operates as one of the postmodern problematizations which undermine a clear cut line between reality and fiction.

The second metadramatic device used in *Catastrophe* is self-reference which makes it highly metadramatic since self-reference calls attention to itself as a play and self-reference is also a literary reference since the play itself is work of literature. By self-reference what is added to the metadramatic effect caused by the play-within-the-play device is the direct reference to the audience. The play refers to itself as an act of illusion within the realm of the reality of the audience. In other words, the real audience sitting in the auditorium is being referred to as one of components of the inner play in the play *Catastrophe* and this increases the metadramatic effect created by the play-within-the-play device. Moreover, the self referentiality is handled through various roles of Protagonist. Protagonist is portrayed through his three roles: the actor of the play *Catastrophe*, the protagonist in the rehearsal of an unidentified play, and the actor in person (his real self). In the outer play, through the references of both the audience and the actor highlight the fact that the audience of *Catastrophe* is watching a play in which they are also included.

At the beginning of *Catastrophe*, the reference to the audience is an implied one in *Catastrophe*. Director asks, “Why the plinth?” and Assistant replies “To let the stalls see the feet” (457). This reference to the audience suddenly cuts the imaginary effect of what the players present on the stage. Although the director refers to the audience of the inner play, the audience of *Catastrophe* is directed to remember that in a play there are techniques and strategies. The plinth is there in order for the audience at the front row to see the feet of the protagonist. Everything is planned and designed before the play is presented in front of the audience. This reference not only prevents the audience from identification with the play but also undermines an understanding of theatre as a finished product without any outer effect other than itself. Samuel Beckett’s self-referential drama includes “reflexivity, medium-awareness and notions of an implied author, as well as audience” (Levy 2). As might be seen from these components, *Catastrophe* draws heavily on the techniques that reveal the artificiality of the norms that have been constructed before. By doing this, it becomes the critique of playwriting; a quality which makes Beckett canon special and still discussable with contradictions and paradoxes. By means of references to the audience, the effect and inevitable inclusion of an audience in the presentation of

a play is underlined. Moreover, these references underline the paradox of theatre as an art form that does not avoid depicting its own artificiality.

The next reference to the audience comes through the end of the play, when the director gives directions to his assistant and to Luke:

D: A shade more. [*A advances, bows the head further.*] Stop! [*A steps back.*] Fine. It's coming. [*Pause.*] Could do with more nudity.

A: I make a note.

[*She takes out pad, makes to take her pencil.*]

D: Get going! Get going! [*A puts back the pad, goes to P, stands irresolute.*] Bare the neck. [*A undoes top buttons, parts the flaps, steps back.*] The legs. The shins. [*A advances, rolls up to below knee one trouser-leg, steps back.*] The other. [*Same for other leg, steps back.*] Higher, The knees. [*A advances, rolls up to above knees both trouser-legs, steps back.*] And whiten.

A: I make a note. [*She takes out pad, takes pencil, notes.*] Whiten all flesh.

D: It's coming. Is Luke around? (460)

Then he gives directions to Luke about the lighting and after he finishes he says:

D: Stop! [*Pause.*] Now ... let'em have it. [*Fade-out of general light. Pause. Fade-out of light on body. Light on head alone. Long pause.*] Terrific! He'll have them on their feet. I can hear it from here.

[*Pause. Distant storm of applause. P raises his head, fixes the audience. The applause falters, dies. Long pause. Fade-out of light on face.*] (461).

What the director refers by saying "It's coming" is nothing other than the applause from the audience. Here the director's reference to the audience is direct and clear as opposed to the previous implied reference. The play ends with lines above. Thus, the ending is not only the end of the main play but also that of the inner play. By not drawing a separating line between the endings of the two plays, Beckett again creates a degree of ambivalence. In this way the audience of *Catastrophe* becomes also the audience of the inner play. Thus, what Director refers to as "them" in his directions to Assistant is also the same audience watching *Catastrophe*. Therefore,

Beckett not only points to the role of the audience within the performance of the *Catastrophe*, but also underlines the indeterminacy of this role. The idea of the indeterminacy of the role of the audience rejects the idea of a passive audience and celebrates a mixing of the roles of audience, actor and director. Thus, the audience may become the actor just as the director and/or the actor may become audience. As Levy suggests:

The high degree of indeterminacy in Beckett's works is enhanced by the self-referential elements of the text and other theatrical means. Such self-referential manifestations may seem to exclude the audience because they happen to and between fictitious dramatic characters. Yet, the very act of performing them in front of an audience is in itself an implicit invitation for the audience to participate, at least vicariously, in someone else's reflection and self-reference. (13)

As we have seen, Beckett's play's self-referentiality does not suggest two distinct worlds (that of the stage and that of the audience) within the theatre building during the act of presentation. The audience is strongly invited to join the procedure of the illogical, absurd and indefinable process of what is presented on stage by means of the indeterminacies Beckett offers in his plays. However, this invitation must not be considered as the equivalent of the classical understanding that allows for audience identification with a play. Rather, it is audience participation in a recent sense which denies any separation between real and fiction and/or theatre and life. As Levy indicates, "Beckett does not describe a human situation on stage, he creates one in front of an audience and, implicitly at least, demands full and real partnership and cooperation from the audience" (16). In this play the audience is considered just as it is considered in "real life", the audience is not a visitor from outside that has to identify itself with the play and create another world.

Catastrophe also pluralizes the roles of the director in the production and presentation of the play. The director sits in a space that represents (although is not, in fact) the auditorium:

D: I'll go and see how it looks from the house. [*Exit D, not to appear again. A subsides in the armchair, springs to her feet no sooner seated, takes out a rag, wipes vigorously back and seat of chair, discards rag, sits again. Pause.*]

D: [*Off, plaintive.*] I can't see the toes. [*Irritably.*] I'm sitting in the front row of the stalls and can't see the toes.

A: I make a note.

[*She takes out a pad, takes pencil, notes.*] Raise pedestal.

D: There's a trace of face.

A: I make a note.

[*She takes out pad, takes pencil, makes to note.*] (459).

Beckett makes Director, who is one of the characters of *Catastrophe*, pretend to be a member of the audience of the inner play. Thus, the role of Director and director (as being the manager of a play) is pluralized. Through this multiple layering, the idea that sees the roles of the participants of the theatre production as determined and fixed is further undermined.

As a result of Director's sitting in the place of the audience, it becomes clear that the initial intentions of him have not attained their purpose. The plinth is there in order for the front row to see the toes of Protagonist; however, when Director sits there he cannot see the toes. Also, Protagonist is made to wear a hat with the intention of hiding his face, but as Director mentions a trace of face can still be seen. Thus, what Director intended does not coincide what the audience sees and this is experienced by the director himself. This can be taken as the rejection of any idea of definite and intended transfer of meaning from stage to auditorium. In other words, the possibility of a unified meaning which meets the director's and /or the playwright's intention within theatre production is problematized. The phrase "theatre production" is chosen to include all of the components of a presentation of a play extending from its playwright to its audience.

The references to the protagonist of the play also underline this plurality of the roles and the meaning transfer. In *Catastrophe*, the director mentions that he does not

want the protagonist to clench his fists during the presentation of the inner play. The assistant takes her note to remind her that the protagonist will not clench his fists:

A: I make a note [*She takes out pad, takes pencil, notes.*] Hands limp. [*She puts back pad and pencil.*]
D: Light. [*A returns, relights the cigar, stands still. D smokes.*]
Good. Now let's have a look. [*A at a loss. Irritably.*] Get going. Lose that gown. [*He consults his chronometer.*] Step on it, I have a caucus. [*A goes to P, takes off the gown over her arm. P submits, inert. A steps back, the gown over her arm. P in old grey pyjamas, head bowed, fists clenched. Pause.*] (458)

Although the protagonist is not supposed to clench his fists, later the stage directions show that he clenches his fists. Here, the self-referentiality of *Catastrophe* gains another dimension with the importance of the stage directions. The importance of the contributions of the stage directions both to the text and the presentation of a Beckett play is emphasized by Levy:

Beckett's self-consciousness reveals itself in his plays through self-referential utterances, in patterns of behavior (both verbal and non-verbal), and through elements such as sets, lights, etc. All these elements are found in the dramatic text, in the dialogue and in the stage directions. (4)

Therefore, there are two references to the protagonist here: the first one is the protagonist of the inner play who is prevented from clenching; the second one who does not obey this rule is the actor in the play *Catastrophe*. Thus, the audience witnesses the presentation of two different actors by the same actor simultaneously. Moreover, in the play there is also a reference to the actor as a real person:

A: Like him better without? [*Pause.*] He's shivering.
D: Not all that. Hat. [*A advances, takes off hat, steps back, hat in hand. Pause.*]
A: Like that cranium?
D: Needs whitening.
A: I make a note. (458).
...
A: He's shivering.
D: Bless his heart. (459)

The one who is shivering is the actor as a real person. The act of shivering belongs neither to the on-going actions of the main play nor to the inner one. The one who is shivering is the real person in the rehearsal of the inner play. Likely the cranium that needs to be whitened is that of the actor in real person. It will belong to the protagonist of the inner play after it is whitened. Therefore, the notion of the actor is also made plural by the presentation of the co-existence of the multiple roles of the same actor.

As a result, the metadramatic devices of the-play-within-the-play and self-reference are the tools of Beckett in his attempts to subvert the ideas concerning the art of theatre in the period of modernism. The notions of a stable identity, the autonomous text, and the definite meaning are being subverted through the metadramatic devices in *Catastrophe*. The self-conscious nature of Beckett's theatre reveals that theatre is a means to express the inexpressible for Beckett. As Levy agrees:

When an act of self-consciousness is externalized and expressed in a play it can itself be the object of expression. Sincerity and emptiness are inseparably linked. Because the self-reflective author makes his own consciousness the object of his writing, he usually avoids making clear-cut statements about the situation of Man, society or the world. (11)

Neither the reader nor the audience can be sure about the message and/or the theme (if there is one) of *Catastrophe*. The play is far from making its witnesses reach a definite and meaningful conclusion. It just shows the emptiness of doing so and it achieves this aim by the emptiness it has. The play mirrors itself, refers to itself and against itself. The self-referentiality of the play is also the denial of itself because it is "beyond the power of language, according to Beckett's incessant self-referential statements, to reflect anything but the inability to reflect, thus reflecting inability in a very able way and indulging it yet another paradox" which is the inevitability of an endless reflection (Levy 12).

2.5 The Investigation of the Death of the Unified Subject through the Unfulfilled Birthday Ceremonies in *Krapp's Last Tape*

In Beckettian drama there are ceremonies and/or rituals within the plays which cannot be thought of as full events with particular beginnings, developments and endings. As may be recalled from the background information on metadrama, Richard Hornby classifies Beckett's plays as plays with quasi-rituals. This refers to the fact that Beckett does not portray ritualistic events that have specific aims or functions as means to reach these specific aims. Rather than simply being rituals, they are events that are ritualized. That is why the plays are categorized as quasi-ritualistic. As Burkman declares, Beckett's plays continuously show the ways in which habit, "as it fails to deaden, takes on ritual aspect; and ritual in these dramas moves always toward the meanings that linger in the mythical fragments that abound – and even toward the creation of new myths" (13). In Beckett's texts the use of myth and ritual not only subvert the idea of reality but also underline the fragmentary quality of what is taken to be real.

Beckett's process of ritualization is the result of the fact that these events are taken to be vehicles in the characters' striving to live. The characters' business with daily events have long lost their significance and meaning as a result of the absurdity of life. However, man is doomed to struggle with this meaninglessness and to try to seek a solution (despite premonitory failure). During their struggle with life, ritualized events become means for Beckett's characters. Thus, ritual is re-defined in Beckett's drama. As Burkman defines it, ritual is "an obsessive repetitive activity" in Beckett's oeuvre (14). When viewed from this perspective, rituals in his plays are the signs of what the play wants to put into question. In Beckett's plays rituals are taken to be symbolic procedures which are systems of object and act symbols that share a common psychological base (Burkman 14).

In addition to this, in Beckett's plays characters are generally trying to manage their journeys through life by using their created rituals. One of the strategies that these

characters use in forming these rituals is an insistence on repeating their habits. As Burkman states, “[t]he slight changes in the enactment of these habits turn them into ritual” and by means of these habits the characters are trying to create a link between past and present (14). *Krapp’s Last Tape* (1958) is one of the best examples of such an operation of ritual and ritualization in Beckett’s plays. Not only does the play take birthday ceremony as a subject matter but it also exposes the repetitive activities of Krapp. That is why this play provides so much data about the operation of ritual and its function in Beckettian drama. Krapp, who is 69 years old, is celebrating his birthday, “the awful occasion” (217) in his words. The way he celebrates his 69th birthday is extraordinary: he listens to tape recordings of his previous birthday ceremonies.

The ritualistic characteristic of the play shows itself not only through the birthday ceremony within the play but also by means of the repetitive actions (mimics and gestures) of the character. Before Krapp starts to utter his first words, the stage directions require him to perform a chain of non-verbal actions on stage. These actions are defined as a pantomime within the play. When the meaninglessness and aimlessness of these actions are considered, it is possible to consider them as the reflection of ritualized events born out of Krapp’s habits. The repetitiveness of these actions emphasizes Krapp’s dissatisfaction in doing them and his failure in attaching a meaning to these actions. There is neither connection nor causal relationship between his actions. Krapp begins his performance thus:

[He] remains a moment motionless, heaves a great sigh, looks at his watch, fumbles in his pockets, takes out an envelope, puts it back, fumbles, takes out a small bunch of keys, raises to his eyes, chooses a key, gets up and moves to and front of table. He stoops, unlocks first drawer, peers into it, feels about inside it, takes out a reel of tape, peers at it, puts it back, lock drawer, unlocks second drawer, peers into it, feels about inside it, takes out a large banana, peers at it, locks drawer, puts keys in his pocket. He turns, advances to edge of stage, halts, strokes banana, peels it, drops skin at his feet, puts end of banana in his mouth and remains motionless, staring vacuously before him.(216)

Krapp's pantomime does not end here; however, in general the above actions form the basis of his repetitive ritualized actions in the play. In addition to these actions, the acts of *staring blankly front, peering at the boxes and the ledger, loading spools on the machine, rubbing his hands, brooding, and going backstage into darkness* are the other ritualistic behaviors. It is obvious that these actions have neither a specific cause nor a definitive end. As stated by Jeffers, "we see that these interruptions and repetitions cause one Krapp to displace another Krapp in an endless series of unsystematic production of difference" (76). In addition, this practice of repetition destroys the idea of hierarchy and origin. Among these meaningless repetitive actions, one cannot talk of a primary or supreme action that dominates the others. Krapp's repetitive actions neither affect something nor cause any other thing to happen. In other words, as Jeffers indicates, the "infinite regress in repetition is one in which the skill to discern a causal relationship is lost or put into question" (73). The regress which is born out of the aimlessness of the actions prevents the integration of any cause-effect relationship between the actions.

Krapp, as a man who is aware of the impossibility of knowing or mastering oneself, inevitably displays repetitive actions since "repetition dissolves and disperses the identity. It is the hopelessness of being ever further removed from the possibility of a true knowing of one's own identity that troubles Krapp" (Jeffers 73). He narrates the past into the present and wishes to repeat himself or keep the repetitions going. With the help of his recordings, he celebrates the glory of repetition throughout his birthday ceremonies. As a result of this, the idea of a Krapp with a definite and full identity is subverted, "Krapp in the play is nothing more than an effect created by endless displacement in which the identity of Krapp is an 'empty slot, a place without an occupant'" (Jeffers 78). In the play, the repetitiveness is not limited to the actions of Krapp at 69. The recorded voice of Krapp who is 39 years old says: "Have just eaten I regret to say three bananas and only refrained from the fourth" (217). Therefore, we understand that the repeated actions on the 69th birthday ceremony were also repetitions of earlier birthdays, and this foreshadows that they will be repeated on future birthdays. Therefore, the name Krapp refers to a man who is the sum of his repeated past and future actions. For Laughlin this infinite cycle of

repetition “suggests that the ‘truth’, of the characters’ lives, or indeed of anyone’s life, can never be fully known or spoken” (206). Laughlin elaborates that the postmodern quality of *Krapp’s Last Tape* is the result of its “destabilizing of time and history” through the repetitive use of Krapp’s previous birthday recordings (207).

The tape, which is used to listen to the recorded voice of the younger Krapp, functions as much as Krapp on the stage. Beckett’s idea of presenting both the character and his tape-recording simultaneously throughout the whole play is innovative. It also represents the death of the idea of a unified self. Tape recordings are just as important and central as the character of Krapp himself is. They are not used as mere props or as secondary elements in the play. This not only subverts the necessity of the existence of a human character on stage but also questions the idea of a full and single subjecthood. The audience sees Krapp at 69 but hears Krapp at 39. Actually, in the speeches uttered by the voice on the tape, the stage directions are not only for Krapp at 39 but they also show the actions of Krapp at 69. The stage directions and script for the first speech of the tape are as follows:

Tape: [*Strong voice, rather pompous, clearly Krapp’s at a much earlier time.*] Thirty-nine today, sound as a – [*Settling himself more comfortably he knocks one of the boxes off the table, curses, switches off, sweeps boxes and ledger violently to the ground, winds the tape back to beginning, switches on, resumes posture.*] Thirty-nine today sound as a bell, apart from my old weakness, and intellectually I have now every reason to suspect at the ... [*hesitates*] ... crest of the wave – or thereabouts. Celebrated the awful occasion, as in recent years, quietly at the Winehouse. Not a soul. Sat before the fire with closed eyes, separating the grain from the husks. Jotted down a few notes, on the back of an envelope. Good to be back in my den, in my old rags. Have just eaten I regret to say three bananas and only with difficulty refrained from a fourth. Fatal things for a man with my condition. [*Vehemently.*] Cut’em out! [*Pause.*] The new light above my table is a great improvement. With all this darkness round me I feel less alone. [*Pause.*] In away. [*Pause.*] I love to get up and move about in it, then back here to ... [*hesitates*] ... me. [*Pause.*] Krapp. (217)

The recording does not end here and Krapp at 39 goes on together, with the actions of Krapp at 69:

Tape: I close my eyes and try to imagine them. [*Pause. KRAPP closes his eyes briefly.*] Extraordinary silence this evening, I strain my ears and do not hear a sound. Old Miss McGlome always sings at this hour. But not tonight. Songs of her girlhood, she says. Hard to think of her as a girl. Wonderful woman though. Connaught, I fancy. [*Pause.*] Shall I sing when I am her age, if I ever am? No. [*Pause.*] Did I sing as a boy? No. [*Pause.*] Did I ever sing? No. [*Pause.*] Just been listening to an old year, passages at random. I did not check in the book, but it must be at least ten or twelve years ago. (218)

The first stage direction in the above quotation shows us that Krapp at 69 repeats what Krapp at 39 has done before: closes his eyes. Thus, although the speech belongs to the recording the stage directions are written for Krapp at 69. Moreover, the recording informs us that Krapp at 39 has also listened the recording of an earlier (ten or twelve years ago) birthday ceremony. Therefore, while listening the recording of Krapp at 39 the audience is led to think of another Krapp who is 29 or 27 years old. The above quotation of the tape goes on with Krapp at 39 defining Krapp at 29 or 27:

Tape: At that time I think I was still living on and off with Bianca in Kedar Street. Well out of that, Jesus yes! Hopeless business. [*Pause.*] Not much about her, apart from a tribute to her eyes. Very warm. I suddenly saw them again. [*Pause.*] Incomparable! [*Pause.*] Ah well ... [*Pause.*] These old P.M.s are gruesome, but I often find them – [*KRAPP switches off, broods, switches on.*] – a help before embarking on a new ... [*hesitates*] ... retrospect. Hard to believe I was ever that young whelp. The voice! Jesus! And the aspirations! [*Brief laugh in which KRAPP joins.*] And the resolutions! [*Brief laugh in which KRAPP joins.*] To drink less, in particular. [*Brief laugh of KRAPP alone.*] (219)

Therefore, the first presentation of the voice from the tape reveals much information about the play's rejection of an idea of a unified self. The above speech of Krapp at 39 has a design which gathers more than one Krapp together and thus emphasizes the plurality of the self. It includes stage directions that show the actions of Krapp at 69 and it reveals information about Krapp at 29 or 27. In addition to this, the play

presents a character who listens to and comments on his previous selves. At the beginning of the play Beckett informs us that the play takes place at “[a] late evening in the future” (215). Krapp that the audience sees on the stage is 69 years old and he listens the voice of Krapp who is 39 years old. Therefore, the audience is exposed to the idea of the simultaneous existence of multiple Krapps (future Krapp at 69, past Krapps at 39-29 or 27 and present Krapp unknown of age). Thus, no one knows how old the present time Krapp is. “[T]he Krapp that we see or hear on stage is never the ‘essential’ Krapp – Krapp never stops ‘krapping’ – and so, Krapp is a holding slot, an ‘empty slot, a place without an occupant’ (Jeffers 8). The indefiniteness of the present Krapp can be taken as exemplification of the rejection of Cartesian self who is considered to be able to exist as a result of thinking. The concept of self in Cartesian sense is considered to be known and made definite through rationality. As indicated by Jeffers,

Krapp is taken out of his traditional role as a person who seeks to record the past and recoup [*sic.*] lost experience so that he can profitably gain a sense of self or identity; instead, Krapp is displaced so that we can read the play more for what it gives us – not a singular individual – but rather multiple Krapps which are sometimes corporeal, yet are more often incorporeal. (8)

In addition to this innovative presentation of multiple selves, the play questions the very possibility of the idea of the “self”. Krapp at 69 says, “Just been listening to that stupid bastard I took myself for thirty years ago” (222). He says of himself at 39, ‘I took myself’, as if Krapp at 39 is an illusion, as if Krapp at 39 is just a product and fabrication of Krapp at 69. This definition not only pluralizes the idea of the self but also discloses self-fictionalization. Krapp at 39 is defined as a fiction by Krapp at 69 and this proposes that Krapp at 69 will be the fiction of an older Krapp. This fictionalization process will go on as Krapp states, “And so on. [*Pause.*] Be again, be again. [*Pause.*] All that old misery. [*Pause.*] Once wasn’t enough for you” (223).

The play can thus be accepted as the revelation of the inevitability of self fictionalization through the use of a dramatic presentation of different selves. The concept of the self as fictional leads us to investigate the relationship between language and self. The self as a fictionalized linguistic construct is reflected through the ledger of his tape recordings that Krapp keeps. The ledger contains a written record of all of the recordings that Krapp has made previously. In other words, it contains the written form of younger Krapps that shows the way to reach. The subject is fragmented just as is language itself. This fragmentary quality of the subject is revealed by two forms in the play: first by the fragmented use of language and secondly by the fragmented presentation of Krapp: that is by the interruptions of the tape recordings. These interruptions can be considered as the rejection of the view that considers human subject as a full and unified being.

The idea of a human as a construct created within language is reinforced when Krapp at 39 talks about his mother:

Tape: - back on the year that is gone, with what I hope is perhaps a glint of the old eye to come, there is of course the house on the canal where mother lay a dying, in the late autumn, after her long viduity. [*KRAPP gives a start*] and the – [*KRAPP switches off, winds back tape a little, bends his ear closer to machine, switches on*] – a dying, after her long viduity, and the – [*KRAPP switches off, raises his head, stares blankly before him. His lips move in the syllables of 'viduity'. No sound. He gets up, goes backstage into darkness, comes back with an enormous dictionary, lays it on table, sits down and looks up the word.*]

Krapp: [*Reading from dictionary.*] State – or condition – of being – or remaining – a widow - or widower. [*Looks up. Puzzled.*] Being – or remaining? (219)

Krapp at 39 uses the word 'viduity' when he defines his mother and Krapp at 69 looks up a dictionary and reads the meaning of the word. The only thing that is known about Krapp's mother is her viduity and the meaning of the word explains whole self of Krapp's mother. Her condition and self is nothing other than what is defined in the dictionary.

Krapp's Last Tape, makes the reader re-think about the question of identity. It destabilizes the idea of unitary subject hood. The fragmentary construction of the meaning throughout the play mirrors the fragmentary conception of the subject. As a result of the interruptions of several Krapps, the play is far from following a meaningful design. The questions of who Krapp really is and what qualities he has remain unanswered. The reactions of Krapp at 69 to the tape seem to provide answers to these questions but “we cannot make these connections into a blueprint that will allow us to interpret Krapp” (Jeffers 65). Through the interruptions and repetitions, a unified meaning escapes. Therefore, any reference for the identity of Krapp cannot help mingling with the references created by multiple Krapps throughout the whole play (i.e. by the tape and the real Krapp on the stage).

Krapp can be defined as any possible reference that can be made for him. Maybe that is why Krapp says, “[w]ith all this darkness round me I feel less alone” (217). When thought of as an opposition to lightness, darkness brings forth the idea of *possibility*. In the light everything is seen, but darkness creates a space for possibilities. Possibilities produce the idea of multiplicity and this is what makes Krapp feel less alone. Darkness, for him, provides a space for the co-existence of multiple Krapps. In other words, darkness prevents the adherence of any definite and explicit identity to Krapp. This is why Krapp is less alone, he is with all of the possible Krapps within this darkness.

Krapp's Last Tape explores the idea of the self as fiction. Krapp is the combination of various Krapps, whether on tape or at his various ages. The multiplicity of the self, reflected through tape recordings, is accompanied by the multiplicity of the birthday ceremonies. Thus, the ideas of stability and presence are subverted through the play. The need behind the act of ritual, which functions as compensation for Krapp, is disclosed as inevitable for the humanbeing, who is fragmented.

CHAPTER 3

THEATRICALITY

3.1 Historical Process

The understanding of the notion of theatricality is of crucial importance since it enriches the way that theatre is understood. When theater is the subject matter, life is under investigation. That is why approaches to theatricality reveal their outlook not only on issues concerning theatre but also on life. As a result of this, the conditions of theatricality have been the subject of theatre criticism for a long time. Since it underlies the relationship between theater and life, the question of what theatricality is remains open: today theater theorists still go on to deal with different aspects of theatricality, and the richness of the notion discloses itself within these debates. The issues concerning representation and its ingredients provide a rich ground for debates over theatricality. In addition to these, the stage, as a medium of transference and signification, offers a wide range of perspectives. Theories of theatricality extend from the specific handling of visible components such as setting and costumes, to particular techniques in directing and/or acting. Moreover, with the emergence of poststructuralist philosophy, the notions of theatricality and performance are re-evaluated. As a result of this, the components of what is theatrical are like chains of signifiers that endlessly lead us to other related subject matters.

Definitions of the term *theatricality* show themselves differently in different periods; they are even sometimes used in opposition to previous understandings of the term. In the traditional view, theatricality has been thought of as an outcome of *mimesis*. According to this view, theatricality emerges from the act of representation on stage. The act of representation is thought of as the imitation of an original: thus *mimesis* occurs as a result of the relationship between an image and its original. Moreover,

the link this view constructs between an original and an imitation can be likened to the view that sees the possibility of a meaningful relationship between a subject and an object, a cause and an effect, a word and a definite meaning. This idea of theatricality draws a separating line between real and fiction. The analysis of the term *mimesis* is crucial in understanding the nature of theatricality since the shifts in the understanding of theatricality base their premises on the first definitions of the term. Potolsky analyzes *mimesis*:

The word has been used to describe the imitative relationship between art and life, as well as the relationship between a master and a disciple, an artwork and its audience, and the material world and a rational order of ideas. Mimesis takes on different guises in different historical contexts, masquerading under a variety of related terms and translations: emulation, mimicry, dissimulation, doubling, theatricality, realism, identification, correspondence, depiction, verisimilitude, resemblance. (1)

In this case, theatricality refers to a representation in fiction which is born out of reality. In the traditional view of theatricality, there is an effort to establish two distinct spheres of life: the one which is represented (real life) and the one which represents (fictional world). This distinction causes an understanding of theatricality that is dependent on what it represents. Thus, theatre becomes an entity that has to refer to something outside of itself in order to exist as a field of art. This idea is generally rejected by experimental theatre within the period of modernism which sought to create a distinct sphere for theatre as an art form. Theatricality becomes a copy of what is not theatrical and this is the result of a binary understanding. In this approach, there are two concepts that are subverted under the influence of poststructuralist notions. The first one is the traditional idea of representation and the second one is the understanding of the theatre stage as a medium. The idea of representation as an imitation of reality and consideration of the theatre stage as distinct from life have now reached an end. As a result, in our present world, theatricality comes to be understood as an inherent quality of life and it is accepted that theatricality has long been fused into daily practice of life.

Theatricality, when considered as an outcome of the representation of an original, has recently been received as a negative view of theatricality in which what is theatrical reveals itself as something inferior to what is real. Thus, life as an origin of theatrical representation is considered as being somehow superior to what is represented on stage. This negative view is based on the same reasoning that made Plato exclude the poets from his ideal republic. Both agree that there are two distinct spheres of life: one being real and the other deceiving. In addition to this, in this negative view, the situation of the stage and its audience constructs a web of determined rules and regulations. Theatre as a copy of life has to comply with the regulatory forces of life. The places of both the stage and the audience are fixed and stable. The stability of the place of audience is also nourished by the one way transmission of messages from stage to audience. As Weber highlights, “the spectator is locked into place by a system that produces a high degree of acquiescence” (11). As a result of this systematic consideration, theatricality is made just to belong to the realm of the theatrical space.

The analysis of the need to name the concept of theatricality gives us clues about the nature of the term. Theatricality’s coinage in English has a short history, which starts in 1837. However, its denotations and connotations have a long history differing in various cultures. As Tracy C. Davis and Thomas Postlewait state, “theatricality has been identified with both the Greek idea of *mimesis* and the Latin idea of *theatrum mundi*” (2). Mimesis, in its original sense, stands for the translation of some other reality “whose representation depends on the schematic binarisms of inside versus outside, nature versus copy, presence versus absence, truth versus mimesis, and signified versus signifier” (Murray 10). However, by means of the modern understanding of the individual subject, who has the ability to oversee the end of such representation, the idea of mimesis is changed due to the awareness of the fusion of art and reality. Therefore, the modern understanding of the subject is capable of establishing itself through “sight and language on the empirical borders of inside and outside” (Murray 10). Thus, mimesis exceeds its definition as an imitation of an outer world and it is no longer considered as the product or copy of

nature. In contrast to this it becomes “reproduction of the production of understanding through which subjects define themselves in specular and linguistic relation to objects” (Murray 10). Thus, the understanding of theatricality shifts as the idea of the subject has been changed.

The historical development of the subject of mimesis until the emergence of French poststructuralist thought discloses important turning points. According to Murray, mimesis, “ha[s] turned insistently to the figure of theatricality as a self-reflexive supplement to the models of language and image that shape the untroubled binarisms of structural linguistics, poetics, and psychoanalysis” (2). Therefore, the concept of mimesis as a subject related to imitation has turned into the notion of theatricality as the problematization of representation. The result of this shift created another turning point in the understanding of the relation between theatricality and performativity and/or performance. The studies concerning theatre find themselves obliged to separate the different handlings of the terms of theatre and performance. Within the latter discipline the issues concerning the art of theatre have been re-analyzed, re-interpreted and re-defined.

In addition to mimesis, the historical process of theatricality witnesses another term which is the Latin concept of *theatrum mundi*. *Theatrum mundi* is defined as “[t]he idea that human life is like a play scripted and directed by a mighty producer (God, Fortune, Fate), a play in which each player is given an allotted role, goes back to Greek philosophy” (Hoffmeister 1). When viewed from the history of literature this image of theatricality “developed from a metaphor to a recurrent formula (*topos*) and, mocked early on because of overuse, experienced a vibrant revival in the late Middle Ages as an all-encompassing portrayal of the universe, culminating as powerful emblem of the spirit and art of an entire age, the Age of the Baroque” (1). The development of theatricality throughout the history of art has a relational nature which brings various themes and subject fields into sharp relief. Analyzing the relationship between theatricality and *theatrum mundi*, Davis and Postlewait claim that the *theatrum mundi* topos “articulates God’s judgment: death unmask[s] everyone. The vanity of earthly shows is balanced by the hope that life here is but a

mere shadow of true existence” (9). In addition to this, the topos also “suggests that human beings are required to act out their social identities in daily life...Selfhood disappears or is remade as the mimetic impulse transforms identity” (10). Davis and Postlewait liken the force of the mimetic impulse in transporting identity to the Bakhtinian carnivalesque: “the world of topsy-turvy where boys are bishops, women rule, or commoners are kings – that the *theatrum mundi* finds its limits, for at the end of the day the prevailing hierarchy is restored” (10). By means of such an idea it becomes obvious that behind the urge to transform, there is an inherent quality in humankind, and theatre is one of the best fields in which the desire to change can be exercised. However, the determined, hierarchical, representative, and autonomous consideration of theatricality is also available in the middle ages. As reported by Ragnhild Tronstad, because of the strong influence of religion upon society, throughout the Christian Middle Ages “the notion of theatricality is defined by the world being the stage and God being its director and spectator” (216). Since representation is the main concern within the studies of theatricality, the ways that this representation is handled and the norms that dominate the theatrical production form an important area of study. The force behind the urge to represent and the desire to originate this force become inevitable during the analysis of theatricality. However, recent studies have shown that it is a failure to connect and relate a definite and particular originator to theatre. As Derrida emphasizes, “[t]he origin of theatre, such as it must be restored, is the hand lifted against the abusive wielder of the logos, against the father, against the God of a stage subjugated to the power of speech and text” (301). When the hierarchy led by the omnipotence of the word and/or the text is subverted, theatricality would find its proper place within life.

Considerations of theatricality consisting of the relationship between theatre and religion take their premises from the idea of theatre originating from religious rituals. Such an understanding of theatricality “appears repeatedly in the philosophical, religious, social, and artistic commentary of the classical age (e.g., Plato, the Stoics, Cicero, Seneca, Juvenal, Lucian, Tertullian, and Plotinus), and it carries forward through the medieval and renaissance periods” (Davis and

Postlewait 8). According to this understanding a shaman and an actor seem to be similar figures for which they share the signs and codes of theatricality (mask and costume; gesture and voice). “But this apparent similarity is complicated by, on the one hand, the nature and belief and rite within religious practices and ritual action and, on the other hand, the nature of play and imagination in theatrical representations” (Davis and Postlewait 8). It is obvious that the performative practices within religious ceremonies and theatrical entertainments create different effect upon their spectators. Thus, as Davis and Postlewait underline, “an all-inclusive and singular idea of theatricality may easily mislead us when we are considering these two different practices” (8).

Bearing this in mind, antitheatricalism emerges as a reaction to the idea that makes a close connection between theatricality and religion. The idea of antitheatre creates “a central place in the attitudes, values, and commentary of many people in the West. During the Reformation, it contributed to the suppression of vigorous traditions of religious drama and radically changed the secular theater” (Davis and Postlewait 6). In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there has been a great effort to recover - and “sometimes to romanticize in sentimental or nostalgic ways – the performance heritages of the disappearing folk cultures (e.g., folk dramas, songs, and festivals), a number of people celebrated folk culture as the lost, true voice of uncontaminated performance” (Davis and Postlewait 8). By means of such attempts, theatre and performance are considered not as mediums in the service of a particular concept but as an entity which has an integrated position in human life. Moreover, the connection between theatre and culture is underlined and this gives way to further analysis of the performative quality of mankind within different cultures.

In the twentieth century, various people in the modern theatre (e.g., Jerzy Grotowski, Peter Brook, Richard Schechner, Ariane Mnouchkine) attempted to “revitalize theatrical performance by evoking the supposed ritualistic elements of theatre or by returning theatre to its ritual base” (Davis and Postlewait 8). This return in the idea of theatre to combine it with its ritual base creates a specific

theoretical space for the theatrical experience. The art of theatre is considered as an independent art form which has its origins in rituals.

In addition to these, as McGillivray states, in the first decades of the twentieth century by means of the European avant-garde movement theatricality has been seen as a metaphor for life itself (103). Thus, rather than working on a unified definition, a set of relational descriptions emerge from the notion of theatricality within the history of theater. As a result, in all of these developments, expanding “from the search for theatre’s origins to the fascination with folk festivals, the idea of theatricality haunts the historical investigations and inhabits the theoretical models” (Davis and Postlewait 8).

The various outlooks on the issue of what theatricality is create new debates about theatre’s perennial. This is the question of the extent to which the theatre stage can be considered as a reflection and/or a representation of the real world and it has become the predominantly challenging topic within theories of theatricality. Moreover, theorists are interested in eliciting the specific techniques in establishing the theatricality of the stage. The antitheatrical consideration in the modern period is considered as a “realist-theatricalist polarity, whereby realist conventions sought to erase the apparent operations of theatricalism” (Davis and Postlewait 11). In modernism the concepts of realism and theatricality are figured as binaries with “realism aligning itself within the idea of ‘artless’ art” (12). With the rejection of the codes and logic of realism by the modernist outlooks such as Futurism, Dadaism, and Surrealism, “[n]ot only the styles but also the ideas that defined modernism came to be identified as theatricality” (Davis and Postlewait 12). Thus the term “had become, in great measure, positive in denotation and connotation. And it had attained an aesthetic aura and justification apart from its long (im)moral heritage” (Davis and Postlewait 12).

The idea underlying the realism-theatricalism distinction covers the traits and purposes of theatrical representation. The main question of this debate is, “[d]oes dramatic performance refer beyond itself to the world or does it serve to make

explicit the theatrical aspects of presentation?” (Davis and Postlewait 13). One side of this debate is the naturalistic idea of theatre whereas the series of antirealist alternatives (such as symbolism, surrealism, and expressionism) takes the other side. By the middle of the twentieth century, with the triumph of modernism in the arts, the distinction between realist and nonrealist theatre was also described as an alternative between “representational” and “presentational” styles (13). For all modernists in the theatricalist mode, “theatre [was] only acceptable if it acknowledge[d] and [strove] to overcome its own confinement within the mimetic traditions of performance” (14).

Martin Puchner investigates the antitheatricalism within modernism and, unlike Davis and Postlewait, he claims that theatricality is viewed negatively within the tradition of modernism. In analyzing this anti-theatrical hold of modern thought he reports that the negative attitude and the rejection “inherent in the term *anti-theatricalism* is not to be understood as a doing away with the theater, but as a process that is dependent on that which it negates and to which it therefore remains calibrated” (2). According to Puchner, what the modernist approach of anti-theatricalism refuses “is a particular form of mimesis at work in the theater, a mimesis caused by the theater’s uneasy position between the performing and the mimetic arts” (5). Thus, Puchner argues that modernism discloses this contradictory nature of theatre in its reaction to theatricality. He defines the paradoxical nature of theater in the following words:

[a]s a performing art like music or ballet, the theater depends on the artistry of live human performers on stage. As a mimetic art like painting or cinema, however, it must utilize these human performers as signifying material in the service of a mimetic project. (5)

The presence of the human performer in the theater becomes the main issue in the modernist anti-theatrical stance and various modernists agree on one thing, which is that “the theatre’s reliance on human actors is its greatest liability, and a modernist theater can arise only out of an attack on them” (Puchner 6). For the modernists the inherent quality of the theater as a “collaborative production” is a problem which

resulted in the modernist celebration of what Puchner calls “the modernist closet drama” and “it is only through the closet drama that we can begin to understand how modern drama relates to theater” (13). However, it is wrong to consider modernist closet drama as a negation of the theater. “On the contrary, we must ask what the closet drama wants from the theater, how it feeds off its critique of the theater, and how this necessary relation leads the closet drama, not to do away with the theater, but to transform it” (15).

Moreover, the insistence on the antitheatrical understanding within modernism is the result of an aim in ‘playing off’ its own literariness against theatricality (Puchner 20). The literariness can be observed in the elaborately descriptive and narrative stage directions of modern drama. This quality underlines the fact that modern dramatic conventions rely heavily on “language that mediates, describes, prescribes, and interrupts the mimetic space of the theater” (Puchner 20). The use of narrativity in modern drama and its main aim are indicated by Puchner:

Pointing to these strategies does not mean taking sides in the endless struggle between text and performance. However, it means recognizing, on the one hand, that theatrical performance is part of the horizon of any dramatic text – even the closet drama is concerned with the mimesis of the stage, is largely in a negative manner – and, on the other hand, that a theatrical performance often inserts textual mediations between the viewer and theatrical mimesis. I propose a term to designate the descriptive and narrative strategies through which modern drama tries to channel, frame, control, and even interrupt what it perceives to be unmediated theatricality of the stage and its actors. This term is *diegesis*. (21-22, emphasis original)

Thus, for Puchner, by using narrativity modern drama has sought to include the performance aspect of theatre in its analysis. Moreover, the absolute power of the text is subverted. Modern drama, as being diegetic problematizes the relationship between the text and the performance. Marvin Carlson summarizes the causes and effects of the negative view of theatricality in the following quotation.

The parallel observations from sociology, art, film, and literary theory, and even certain major theater theorists like Artaud, all contributed to a distinctly restricted and decidedly negative view

of theatricality in theoretical writings of the late 1970s and 1980s a view that associated the term primarily with formal, traditional and formally structured operations, potentially or actually opposed to the unrestricted and more authentic impulses of life itself. (242)

When theatricality is considered as a formally structured web of signs in representation, it is approached negatively. Within such an understanding of theatricality, the main aim is to provide a certain kind of establishment that distinguishes the art of theatre from real experience. Moreover, this kind of conception of theatricality expands the distance between life and theatre. As a result of this, antitheatricalism offers a close connection between life and theatre. However, it is still discussable as to whether it is necessary to name this approach antitheatricalism. In other words, the question of whether it is possible to cover both the artificiality of theatre and to continue to name it theatrical is still open to discussion.

Among the arguments that seek an answer to this question are some ideas relating to those who see theatricality as making use of the concept of theatricality while legitimizing their other ideas. As one of those who seek the answer to this question, McGillivray claims that such people “utilize metaphors of theatricality to reinforce the truth claims of something else” (105). When the term is used ambiguously, it is aimed to “de-theatre it so that it can serve other purposes” (McGillivray 104). The ideas behind these purposes are the primacy of modernist art and the supremacy of performance over theatre (105). What McGillivray suggests is that we should not stand for or against theatricality but rather:

[I]nterrogate the terms in which particular arguments are couched. Rather than enter into debates concerning art versus theatre, theatricality versus performativity, or reality versus (theatrical) simulation, an attempt to assert a “truth” – contingent or otherwise – for the ideas clustered under the umbrella of theatricality; it is better that we critically appraise just how metaphors of theatre and theatricality are used in a particular argument and for what ends. (113)

Marvin Carlson pays attention to the similar point with McGillivray's idea. He also analyzes the opposing views of theatricality and underlines the shifting understanding in the notions of 'subject' and 'social behavior'. Thus, it is inevitable for theatricality to be analyzed with different considerations. He concludes with the mixture of these different approaches on theatricality:

When one focuses upon pleasure in the display of the exceptional ability [theatricality] instead of on emotional identification and sympathy, the valences of identification and distancing reverse. When sympathy is sought, identification is privileged, and distance becomes a barrier. When the goal is display of exceptional ability, identification is useful only to establish a base line, and all the joy arises from the distance (I am a human being like that actor, that gymnast, that circus performer, and yet how great a distance between the achievements they display and what I am presently capable of). Theatricality, viewed from this perspective, can admit to all those qualities that have historically been cited against it – that it is artificial, removed from everyday life, exaggerated, extreme, flamboyant, distracting. Yet despite – indeed because of – these qualities, it can still be recognized as an essential element in the continued vitality and enjoyment of both theater and performance beyond that, as a positive, indeed celebrative expression of human potential. (249)

What Carlson adds to McGillivray is the viewpoint of the spectator. A negative or positive value of theatricality is chosen by the spectator himself/herself and therefore theatricality embraces both the negative and the positive references attached to it. Indeed, by referring theatricality as the "celebrative expression of human potential", Carlson underlines the positive quality of the term.

As opposed to the negative view of theatricality, many drama critics and theatre scholars attempt to reconfigure the term with a positive understanding. According to Davis and Postlewait, this tendency towards the positive view of theatricality is a "recovery project" which aims at searching for the "essential features that make the theatre recognizable as itself, as a performed art form" (21). In order to achieve this, critics and scholars tend to do two things. Firstly, they "set aside the moral connotations of antitheatricalism". Secondly, they designated the idea of

theatricality as a “descriptive term that could be used to identify the essential performance qualities of any dramatic performance at any time or place” as opposed to limiting of the idea of theatricality to the new modernist developments (Davis and Postlewait 21). As a result, the term theatricality gains a new description which designates those traits of performance that meet a minimum standard of “stageability” (Davis and Postlewait 21). With the emergence of such theories, the term gains other and new dimensions. Rather than determining a lack or the existence of a distance between life and theatre, theatricality is now considered as the totality of the traits of staged performances. Thus, the term theatricality regains its positive connotation as an art form.

The new identification of the term theatricality with the concept of performance leads theorists to consider the nature of performance. The latest tendencies in theatre studies result in a distinction between theatre and performance art. When viewed historically, performance art is claimed to have traces within the ideas of the Futurists, the Dadaists, the Surrealists, and certain turn-of-the-century cabaret performers. The differentiation between theatre and performance art created another question related to their theatricality. If performance art is defined as opposed to theatre, what can be said about the theatricality of performance art? Davis and Postlewait claim that this distinction can be partially considered to be just as the same as the difference between realism and antirealism in modern theatre; however “it carries the avant-garde and semiotic distinctions further towards a system of self-referencing signs that articulate the performer’s presence, the performer’s body” (27). Thus, notions of the body and the materializing approaches within the field of theatre arise. The body and its function in theatre will be one of the major points in discussions of performativity.

The preceding discussions have shown that understandings of the term *theatricality* have ranged from a negative and positive handling to an acceptance of its relational nature. The multiplicity of the attempts to define theatricality shows that it is not suitable to draw definite lines in the understanding of theatricality. Recent studies have shown that the extent to which theatricality can be elicited from life itself is not

clear. Therefore, the question and quest for the origin and nature of theatricality supply a versatile ground for theoretical approaches to the term.

3.2 Theoretical Assumptions on Theatricality

“Life is the nonrepresentable origin of representation” (Derrida, *Writing and Difference* 294).

Theatre criticism has been dealing with the conditions of the notion of the theatrical. From the time of Plato and Aristotle there have been different and varying views about theatricality. The questions underlying these perspectives arise from problems related to the constituents of theatricality and from the problematic relationship between theatre and life. The common starting point in defining theatricality is related to the subject of representation. In the established sense, theatricality belongs to the realm of theatre and refers to the aesthetics of theater in representing real life. On the other hand, there are views which draw theatricality away from its grounds in theater and expand use of the term to everything concerning humanity. In order to overcome the resulting over generalization of the term, various scholars have attempted to redefine the terms drama, theater and performance. By redefining these terms, the theorists aim at positioning theatricality in its proper place. What qualities sustain theatricality and what kind of limits theatricality has are under investigation.

When theatricality is taken as a concept related to stage, its origins must inevitably be sought on the stage, that is, in analysis of the constituents of the stage. Eli Rozik claims that acting is the producer of theatricality on stage whether it is achieved by the actor [the human body] or the materials [props etc] (110-124). Moreover, she argues that “[h]uman acting is the real act of imprinting images on stage or formulating such a description. The actor is the producer of signs; the text is the imprinted set of signs on his body and the character the described fictional entity”

(122). With such an approach theatricality arises from the materiality of the stage. Theatre has its own sign system and theatricality is the way that this system operates. Acting, as one of the ways that serves the materiality of the stage, is considered as one the determinants of the degree of theatricality. Rozik argues that in theater “the principle of acting is more widely materialized than usually thought, and includes human and non-human actors, readymade objects and even conventional signs”. Thus, she concludes, “it is *acting* or *enacting* a fictional entity coupled with similarity on the material level that constitutes the essential quality of theater or theatricality” (123). When viewed from this perspective theatricality is understood as a specific aesthetic (an art form) way to establish a relation between life and stage.

The conditions of theatricality and its dependence on the materiality of the stage are not to be considered by themselves. In other words, what is important for the investigation of theatricality is the extent to which the materiality of the stage serves the metaphorical level of understanding. Tronstad analyzes theatricality in relation to metaphor. He claims that the transfer of meaning in metaphorical use is like the transfer between real life and the fictional world in theatricality (217). For Tronstad, the occurrence of theatricality as a metaphorical relationship between the theater and the world is best described by the Shakespearean metaphor “all the world’s a stage” (216). When defining theatricality with metaphor, he claims that, one can talk about the degree of theatricality just as in the case of metaphor. Thus, something can be more theatrical or less theatrical. “When what is performed deviates from the experience of ‘real life’, then the degree of theatricality is high” (221). The consideration of theatricality in a relational position with metaphor hints that there is a gap between the fictitious and the real. Indeed this gap is the fundamental point in theatricality since it creates a blurring of the relations between reality and fiction (223). Theatricality, thus, emerges within this gap and this quality makes it impossible to define and impossible for it to adhere a singular meaning.

The idea that offers the world as stage and the men and women as player on it is a step towards blurring the line between real and fiction. When this line is blurred, theatricality is something that cannot be seen as belonging just to the realm of theatre. Davis and Postlewait underline the inclusive nature of theatricality in terms of its application to everything concerning humanity. Thus, it acquires an empty meaning to be filled in with the subject under concern. This feature of theatricality discloses how much theatre and life intersect and even combined:

One thing, but perhaps only one, is obvious: the idea of theatricality has achieved an extraordinary range of meanings, making it everything from an act to an attitude, a style to a semiotic system, a medium to a message. It is a sign of empty of meaning; it is the meaning of all signs. Depending upon one's perspective, it can be dismissed as little more than a self-referential gesture or it can be embraced as a definitive feature of human communication. Although it obviously derives its meaning from the world of theatre, theatricality can be abstracted from the theatre itself and then applied to any and all aspects of human life. (1)

Even when the term is taken into consideration only within the limits of theater, its potential meanings are astonishing: "it can be defined exclusively as a specific type of performance style or inclusively as all the semiotic codes of theatrical representation" (Davis and Postlewait 1).

The versatility of theatricality and its opening itself outside the realm of theater means that the term is always useful and up to date. This quality comes from its close connection with the human subject. As Davis and Postlewait reports:

[I]t is a mode of representation or a style of behaviors characterized by histrionic actions, manners, and devices, and hence a practice; yet it is also an interpretive model for describing psychological identity, social ceremonies, communal festivities, and public spectacles, and hence a theoretical concept. It has even attained the status of both an aesthetic and a philosophical system. Thus, to some people, it is that which quintessentially the theatre, while to others it is the theatre subsumed into the whole world. (1)

The tendency to consider theatricality within the field of theater resulted its inclusion in the area of theatre semiotics. Theatre semiotics has contributed much to construct an interpretive model for understanding theatricality. The center for the discussion of theatre semiotics has been “an analytical model based upon the relation between the dramatic text and the performance text” (Davis and Postlewait 23). Until the emergence of the study of theater semiotics, the autonomy of the written text was accepted as absolute. Theater semioticians, however, underlined the sign systems within theater in making meaning. Thus, the performance text (produced in the theater) and the dramatic text (composed for the theater) have been separated (Elam 3). As a result of these developments what is “theatrical” is understood to be “what takes place between and among performers and spectators” (Elam 2). The relationship between the written text and the performance text is clarified:

The written/performance text relationship is not one of simple priority but a complex of reciprocal constraints constituting a powerful *intertextuality*. Each text bears the other’s traces, the performance assimilating those aspects of the written play which the performers choose to transcodify, and the dramatic text being ‘spoken’ at every point by the model performance...This intertextual relationship is problematic rather than automatic and symmetrical. Any given performance is only limited degree constrained by the indications of the written text, just as the latter does not usually bear the traces of any *actual* performance. It is relationship that cannot be accounted for in terms of facile determinism. (Elam 209)

As a result of this problematic relationship between the written and the performance text, Elam questions the constituency of semiotic analysis in understanding theater and drama. He emphasizes the interactions between the semiotics of theater “working on the performance and its codes” and poetics of drama whose main interest is in the dramatic text and its rules (210).

Theatricality, as belonging to the theatrical system, is defined as:

[t]he special position occupied by theater among aesthetic systems and the specific organizational form of its internal code are

mutually determining and each provides the basis for the other. The specificity of theater is constituted in this dialectic, namely “théatralité,” as French semiotics have termed it, drawing an analogy with the notion of “litéralité.” Theatricality can consequently not be equated with aestheticity, even if it is always partially defined as aestheticity. (Fischer-Lichte 139)

Unlike the scholars considering the limitations of such an approach, Fischer-Lichte puts forward the system behind theater aesthetics.

Theater puts its aestheticity into practice in a particular way unique to it, something described by the term theatricality. For it enables a regrouping of meanings attributed to signs created by a particular cultural system in the everyday reality of that culture by using these signs – in other words, heterogeneous elements of cultural reality, such as the human body or objects from its surroundings – as its own, as theatrical signs. This means that theatricality permits a regrouping of the significative structure by undertaking in the stage space a quasi-factual restructuring of the material structure of signs in that culture and presenting this to the audience. Theater thus generates meaning by using the materiality of the signs produced by the heterogeneous cultural systems and in this manner changing, regrouping, and recombining these “primary” signs into theatrical signs according to its own rules. (141)

Theater creates its own sign system in an interaction with the cultural signs in creating theatricality. The cultural signs are considered as the primary signs to which theater refers. Therefore, according to Fischer-Lichte theatricality occurs as a result of its own systematic aesthetics:

Theater would thus appear to be the possibility forever latent in the “primary” sign of a culture of, as it were, an “originary” practice of sign generation that refers from the outset to the respective culture as a whole. For, by using the material products of that culture as its own signs, theater creates an awareness of the semiotic character of these material creations and consequently identifies the respective culture in turn as a set of heterogeneous systems of generating meaning. (141)

What theater adds to the primary sign is its making the audience become aware of these signs. By means of the dynamic relationship between cultural signs and theatrical codes, the audience makes sense of the cultural signs.

The aim of theatre semiotics is to describe, in detail the various theatrical codes that make up performance. The dramatic text is thus a source of potential performance codes, and each production is an articulation of the full theatricality of both the dramatic text and performance text (Davis and Postlewait 23). The common idea held by theater semioticians is that “meaning is located not only in the playwright’s text but also in the complete register of signs in each performance (including gestures, facial expressions, make-up, costume, set design, stage properties, actor’s bodies, and movement patterns)” (23). Such attempts try to provide a definitive and particular handling of theatricality. However, by the 1990s theatre semioticians generally acknowledged that no systematic model accounting for the entire mechanism of theatricality could be established (25). There can be no absolute standards that apply to theatricality when the concepts of reality and fiction are being questioned.

Therefore, any attempt to adhere a meaning and classification to theatricality would fail. The paradox of the attempts of theatre semiotics results from its assuming that “the dramatic and performance texts, with their thousands and thousands of signs, could be described as if there were one ideal spectator who would (or should) see and read all of the signs (in accord with the semiotician’s model)” (Davis and Postlewait 25). However, each spectator perceives a performance in an “idiosyncratic manner” and that is why “the grand semiotic project of total description” must be abandoned (Davis and Postlewait 25). The theoretical celebration of theatricality has delivered the defeat of theatricality and this shows the paradoxical nature of the concept. As Davis and Postlewait underlines, it is inevitable to try to construct a theatrical semiosis, even though this struggle leaves us with another lack (25). This desire can be likened to the inevitability of representation when representation has lost its primary meaning and function within recent literary and theatrical theories.

As an alternative to theater semiotics, with the rise of the new tendencies in the fields of art and theater, the emptiness of theatricality becomes again remarkable

within postmodern thought. “Some people claim that it is the definitive condition or attitude for postmodern art and thought; others insist that it already achieved its distinguishing features in the birth of modernism” (Davis and Postlewait 1). The juxtaposition of the modernist and postmodernist debates on the notion of theatricality is of great importance. The direct relation of theater with representation creates the significance of this debate. According to Davis and Postlewait theatricality discloses some of the most impressive issues of our age such as “the aspects and nature of performance, the history of aesthetic styles, the means of modes of representation, the communicative power of art and artistry, the formation of subjectivity, and the very operations of public life (from politics to social theory)” (2). That is why, the critics draw our attention to the fact that when the term ‘theatricality’ is used within a context, it is important that the user clarifies what s/he means since the meaning of the term cannot be taken for granted (2).

When dealing with the recent understanding of theatricality, Bernard indicates that, “[t]heatricality thus challenges textuality; the dramatic-fictional text becomes a performance text” (937). The theories of performance studies give way to a versatile idea that theatricality can be enlarged and applied to politics, “whereby political behavior and its defining rhetoric are seen as theatrical. In addition, the ideas of national identity and imagined history are constructed as modes of performed identity. The public realm is the performative realm” (Davis and Postlewait 29). Thus, by means of emptying the traditional view of theatricality, recent theories point to the lack of border between daily life and what is represented on stage.

In addition to these, in the realm of the theatrical, the function and place of the spectator are also questioned. Josette Feral and Ronald P. Bermingham analyze theatricality within the world of theater and disagree with the semiotic understanding of theatricality. What they reject is the idea that the stage is full of signs that are to be transferred and are determined by the authority of the text. They claim that “theatricality does not emerge passively from an ensemble of theatrical objects whose properties one could enumerate at a glance, but as part of a dynamic process belonging to both the actor and the spectator, who takes possession of the

action he watches” (102). Thus, the theatrical cannot be regarded as a one way transmission of the theatrical vehicles. The critics evaluate the inclusive nature of theatricality as a result of the nonexistence of a particular “place” to which we can attach theatricality:

If the notion of theatricality goes beyond the theater, it is because it is not a “property” belonging to the subjects/things that are its vehicles. It belongs neither to the objects, the space, nor to the actor himself, although each can become its vehicle. Rather, theatricality is the result of a perceptual dynamics linking the onlooker with someone or something that is looks at. (105)

As a result of an understanding that covers both the stage and beyond the stage has become popular in the recent handling of the term. The interactions between actors and spectators has started to be the subject of analysis in the emergence of theatricality. With this new thinking, the modern idea of antitheatricalism is subverted by demolishing the earlier notion of the autonomous text which assumes that theatricality is created by means of the text’s narrativity. Thus, theatricality becomes a dynamic notion which needs the gaze of the onlooker. “[T]heatre is possible only because theatricality exists and because the theatre calls it into play. Once evoked, theatricality takes on specifically theatrical characteristics that are collectively valued and socially meaningful” (Feral and Bermingham 99) Therefore, the negative attitude towards theatricality emerged within modernism is shifted by the positive and inclusive understanding within postmodern thought. Feral and Bermingham, investigating the conditions that create theatricality on stage, claim that there have to be some conditions in creating theatricality. A representational act that transforms the reality, the subject, the body, space and time must be at work. This representational act is a creative act that cannot be limited by the borders of daily life. Moreover, there must be “an ostentatious act of the body, a semiotization of signs” and “the presence of a subject who, through the use of his body structures the imaginary” (107). Then it is important to distinguish the theatricality of the stage and to question the features of stage-related theatricality. When viewed from this

perspective, theatricality is an act of representation and the construction of fiction. Moreover, “theatricality is the imbrications of fiction and representation in an “other” space in which the observer and the observed are brought face to face. Of all the arts, the theater is best suited to this sort of experimentation” (Feral and Bermingham 105). The space of the theatrical is a kind of hybrid place which consists of multiple qualities simultaneously. Nicole Boireau also underlines this quality of theater and theatricality:

Theatricality reveals the truth. The reality of the theater lies in artifice. Drama posits the artificiality of its own conventions within the framework of those conventions. Drama and theater are forced to mediate on the validity of their own medium within the limits imposed by that medium. (xii)

The postmodern investigations of theatre reveal the paradoxical nature of theatre which strives for the traditional understanding of representation by utilizing the representation itself. The negation inherent in theater is indicated by Jean-François Lyotard:

A theory of theatrical signs, a practice of theatrical signs (dramatic text, mise-en-scene, interpretation, architecture) are based on accepting the nihilism inherent in representation. Not only accepting it: reinforcing it. For the sign, Peirce used to say, is something which stands to somebody for something. To Hide, to Show: that is theatrality [theatricality]. (282)

Thus, theatricality is the undecipherable realm of the theatre. For Lyotard, Brecht’s notion of distancing is the “extreme case of nihilism, the actor performs such and such an action in such and such a situation, but his text, his acting, and the whole mise-en-scene take hold of this action in order to show that it could be another: to act out all the scenes in terms of other possible scenes” (286). In this process of acting one can neither adhere himself/herself to the action nor can one identify oneself with the actor. “This is a process that reduces its object to nothing, much as the recounting of a witness on the street corner, far from actualizing the accident distanciates it through discourse” (286).

As previously stated, the relationship between theatre and performance has gained a crucial place within the debate about theatricality. Feral analyzes the relationship between performance and theatricality in order to disclose the differences between stage-related theatricality and inclusive theatricality (theatricality concerning human life). While relating performance with theatricality, Feral, points to three characteristics of performance. The first is the manipulation of the body; the second is the manipulation of space, and the last is the relation that performance institutes between the artist and the spectators, between the spectators and the work of art, and between the work of art and the artist (290).

For the critic the manipulation of the body is fundamental and indispensable to any performing act. Within the performance the performer “explores it, manipulates it, paints it, covers it, uncovers it, freezes it...[t]he body is made conspicuous: a body in pieces, fragmented yet one, a body perceived and rendered as a *place of desire*, displacement, and fluctuation, a body the performance conceives of as repressed and tries to free” (290). With such an exploration of the body completed in performance by the subject, “repressions have been brought to light, objectified and represented, they are frozen under the gaze of the spectator, who appropriates them as a form of knowledge. This leaves the performer free to go on new acts and new performances” (290).

The performer also manipulates the space within the performance by “[c]arving out imaginary or real spaces...the performer never settles within these simultaneously physical and imaginary spaces, but instead traverses, explores, and measures them, effecting displacements”, meanwhile, “he plays with the performance space as if it were an object and turns it into a machine”, so the performer becomes the conductor (291). Thus, we cannot observe any occupation or limitation of the space by the performer. “It [the space] no longer surrounds and encloses the performance, but like the body, becomes part of the performance to such an extent that it cannot be distinguished from it. It *is* the performance” (292). That the space become indistinguishable from the performance discloses why performances “can take place only within and for a set space to which it is indissolubly tied” (292).

The specific space created within the performance becomes a specific place for the subject in exploring himself/herself. Within such a space the performer seems to be a living creature in slow motion. “Time stretches out and dissolves as ‘swollen, repetitive, exasperated’ gestures seem to be killing time... [f]rom then on, there is neither past nor future, but only a continuous present – that of the immediacy of things, of an *action taking place*” (292). This immediacy of the performance makes it, in a way, devoid of any meaning:

Performance is the absence of meaning. And yet, if any experience is meaningful, without a doubt it is that of performance. Performance does not aim at a meaning, but rather it makes meaning insofar as it works right in those extremely blurred junctures out of which the subject eventually emerges. And performance conscripts this subject both as a constituted subject and as a social subject in order to dislocate and demystify it. (292)

Feral, by suggesting “[p]erformance is the death of the subject”, claims that there is a death drive inherent in performance and this death drive makes the body function like so many part-objects. This fragmentation of the body and the death wish within performance is the result of the performance’s escape from representation at all costs, the escape “which marks both its fulfillment and its end” (292). Therefore, performance offers a conflicting space in which any attempt to define it fails. The performance is the mixture of the experiences of the performers and the spectators. As such, the theatricality of a performance is highly complex, has no end and can be changed according to the perspective that one has in analyzing it.

Feral, disagrees with the idea that theatre and performance have similarities. Instead, he claims, the two complement each other and there are things that theatre can learn from performance. Performance reveals theatricality in slow motion by means of its exploration of the body and its specific handling of time and space. Today’s theatre is that kind of theatre which has multiple layers. “Performance explores the underside of that theater, giving the audience a glimpse of its inside, its reverse side,

its hidden face” (295). Therefore, within performances both sides of the same coin can be observable.

In order to achieve this effect, the traditional way of acting is considered to be changed. The shifting idea of acting, which is taken to be one of the most important conditions in creating theatricality, is underlined by Feral. The traditional way of acting which creates a kind of illusion is subverted by the Brechtian acting style that “called for distancing of the actor from his part and distancing of the spectator from the stage. When he is faced with this problem, the performer’s response is original, since it seems to resolve the dilemma by completely renouncing character and putting the artist himself onstage”. The new technique of acting causes the artist to take “the position of a desiring – a performing – subject, but is nonetheless an anonymous subject playing the part of himself on stage. From then on, since it tells of nothing and imitates no one, performance escapes all illusion and representation” (296).

Therefore, there is no determined way of approaching performance. Its immediacy and fragmentation of the subject do not allow for such an understanding of performance. Having “neither past nor future, performance *takes place*. It turns the stage into an event from which the subject will emerge transformed until another performance, when it can continue on its way. As long as performance rejects narrativity and representation in this way, it also rejects the symbolic organization dominating theater and exposes the conditions of theatricality” (296).

By referring to the “conditions of theatricality”, Feral implies the traditional view of theatricality created by the actor in an illusory convention. Performance destroys this illusory approach and theatricality is created by means of the “endless play and of these continuous displacements of the position of desire, in other words, of the position of the subject in process within an imaginary constructive space” (296). Therefore, as Feral argues, theatricality also includes performance within itself:

[t]heatricality can therefore be seen as composed of two different parts: one highlights performance and is made up of the *realities of the imaginary*; and the other highlights the theatrical and is made up of *specific symbolic structures*. The former originates within the subject and allows his flows of desire to speak; the latter inscribes the subject in the law and in theatrical codes, which is to say, in the symbolic. Theatricality arises from the play between these two realities. From then on it is necessarily a theatricality tied to a desiring subject, a fact which no doubt accounts for our difficulty in defining it. Theatricality cannot *be*, it must be *for* someone. In other words, it is *for the Other*. (297, emphasis original)

Within the realm of performance we see a subject desiring to speak and within the realm of theatricality we see the play of the desiring subject in theatrical codes. The notion of theatricality as being in-between these two realms is closely related to the unidentifiable and undetermined playful subject. Therefore, by revealing the fragmented subject and/or death of subjectivity, theatricality demystifies the unified subject. Thus, theatricality is subversive and transformative in its nature. As a result, theatricality finds its proper place when analyzed in relation to what performance is. The techniques and the implications of performance imply an undefined theatricality. As Carlson states, such analysis of theatricality in relation to performance suggests a positive view of theatricality in emphasizing the deconstructive quality of theatricality that has not been regarded before (243).

Philip Auslander, is another scholar who analyzes the relationship between theater and performance. He pays attention to the role of the spectator in the emergence of theatricality. Moreover, the discursive quality of theatricality is emphasized by the fact that theatricality occurs when the audience makes use of what performance transmits to him/her. Therefore, in order for theatricality to rise there must be a specific context which includes both the spectator and the performance. Auslander claims:

Theatricality efficiently encompasses considerations of that concept as an aspect of performance, a relationship between performance and audience, an affective, and a unit of discourse. It is a bracing read that should provoke fresh discussion of

fundamental issues in theatre and performance studies. (166, emphasis original)

In trying to elicit the features of theatricality some attempts to analyze theatricality in connection to performativity have been made. In these attempts, theatricality exceeds the borders of theatre and becomes an all encompassing concept that has to be noticed. Virginie Magnat approaches theatricality from the performative perspective and in identifying the features of theatricality she considers theatricality separately from the theatre's imitative and subversive nature. She claims that theatricality should not be included within the qualities of theater; rather, it has its own techniques and strategies beyond the realm of theater.

[T]heatre is often thought either to *imitate* the currently accepted notion of reality too poorly, or to *transform* it and *subvert* it too artfully. Yet, theatricality is not bound to the necessity of faithfully representing an "objective reality;" nor is it bound to the rejection of such "objective reality" – that is to say, limited to a position that might lead to a set of conventions, forms and techniques designed to produce a purely self-reflexive, separate reality. (149)

For Magnat the inclusiveness of theatricality is the crucial point since it leads us to consider theatricality outside the theater. The artistic practice is the result of the search of the artists for the unknown and here what is the most important are the goal, impact and way in which this goal is achieved. When this procedure is related to theater, it would suggest that "theatricality can be perceived as a process providing 'a way of life and cognition,' the result being at once inherent in and comprised by the act of performing". As a result of this, theatricality "can never be fully encompassed by result-oriented types of theoretical analysis limited to and dependent upon a system of signs, codes, forms, conventions, and other aesthetic considerations" (164). Thus, Magnat stands for the post-structuralist approach to theatricality in her consideration of the term not just belonging to the text.

The rejection of the autonomy of the text is best described by Roland Barthes. In his analysis of Baudelaire's theater, he claims that theatricality is,

theatre-minus-text, it is a density of signs and sensations built up on stage starting from the written argument; it is that ecumenical perception of sensuous artifice – gesture, tone, distance, substance, light – which submerges the text beneath the profusion of its external language. Of course, theatricality must be present in the first written germ of a work, it is a datum of creation not of production. (26)

Therefore, what Barthes draws attention to is the consideration of theatricality not as originating and ending within the autonomy of text, but as a concept that covers everything starting from the written text to its production on stage. The struggle for attention to be paid to the non-textual elements has been one of the major promotions of the European avant-garde.

In recent years, some considerations suggesting the juxtaposition of theatricality and performativity have been made. McGillivray evaluates the turn to the concept of theatricality in recent years as a reaction to performativity and argues that, rather than favoring one or the other, “theatricality is critically formed by this struggle” (101). The opposing views of theatricality are summarized as “[t]heatricality, formed through such discourses [discourses of the traditional view], becomes a cipher that, in nostalgic interpretation, comes to stand for inauthenticity of something else; or else, when used for affirmative interpretation, stands for contingency, plurality, process and play” (104). Thus, there are two kinds of approach to theatricality; the first one is nostalgic and the second one affirmative. “Strategically positioned as ambiguous, theatricality can be nostalgic when it refers to theatre as an originary Form *and* it can be affirmative when interpreted as semiotically playful and not concerned with producing ultimate meaning” (111). Such opposing ideas about theatricality result in various evaluations of this nostalgic vs. affirmative debate. Anne-Britt Gran argues that “modern self-perception understands ‘the modern’ as non-theatrical, while postmodern self-perception views ‘the postmodern’ through theatrical metaphors” (252). Moreover, she analyzes the reasons behind these two approaches and claims:

What characterizes the use of the concept of theatricality in different discourses today is that theatricality is viewed in a relational and procedural manner, rather than in a manner that is substantial and essential. Theatricality as a primary substance (Latin *substantia*) in the philosophical sense, which implies viewing it as an independent entity is rejected. Theatricality will not be located in the world in this fashion. Nor is the theatrical viewed as a set of ‘qualities’ of a thing. Theatricality does not comprise the essence of things. (254)

Thus, there is a break from essence to relation in the understanding of theatricality. “Theatricality has been connected to different types of relationships: that between two rooms/spaces, the actor’s or spectators’ relationship to the space, the relationship between two worlds, the relation between the metaphor and the literal language and the relationship between the beholder and the work of art” (255). In this statement, Gran, in a way summarizes the starting points of different views of theatricality and claims that all of them connect theatricality with something else depending on the beliefs of their advocates. However, she adds:

What distinguishes the modernist and postmodernist attitudes in questions of theatricality is solely their evaluation of *the same* thing – the fall of theatricality. Thus in conclusion I have also introduced the beginning of the story of how the modern and postmodern address the return of theatricality in a postmodern world. But I doubt that it is the return of *the same* theatricality. (262, emphasis original)

Alter classifies the features of traditional understanding of theatricality and theater design, which are subverted by avant-garde theories, as the reliance of theater performance on a prior verbal text, story, action that must be carried out by an actor, autonomy of the performance space centrality of the Word in the form of dialogues (6-11).

For Alter, theatricality is defined by the theater’s transformational process that is the transition from text to stage inherent in theatrical production. The transformational process of theater has a problematic nature since one can claim many other phases of

transitions in the production of theater. Indeed, there are other circular processes starting from the playwright to the director, then to the spectators, and the readers of the theater texts. Apart from these, what Alter underlines about theatricality is that regardless of the kind of the transition process, theatricality emerges from the transformation of the text to stage (149).

The postmodern tendency of theatricality, as a kind of rejection of all the previously held notions, is clarified by Steven Connor:

[T]he theatre, or theatrical form, encompasses many of the themes that we have already encountered in the postmodern debate, especially the refusal of notions of essential form, the dispersal of the identity of the work of art, and its immersion in social and political contexts...Theatricality stands for all those falsifying divisions which complicate, diffuse and displace the concentrated self-identity of work of art, and so encompasses a number of different effects, including self-consciousness of the spectator, the awareness of context and the dependence upon extension in time. Theatricality is the name for the contamination of any artifact that is dependent upon conditions outside, or other than, its own. (133)

Connor emphasizes the rejection of the idea that theatricality is limited to the realm of theater and it has a determinate nature. When considering theatricality the relation between the spectator and the theater is as crucial as the consideration of the context of theatricality. Thus, “the theatrical is taken up by theorists of postmodern as a positive refusal of the frozen abstraction of the idea of the work-in-itself in favour of the idea of work-as-a-process” (134). In this sense, it can be argued that each theatrical piece has its own handling of theatricality and it changes according to the aim of the work. The postmodern rejection of the theatrical as a frozen limitation suggests that theatricality opens itself within the inclusive experience that theatre offers. It is not possible to limit this experience since it includes the performer, the playwright, the text, the performance and the spectator. That is why theatricality cannot be generalized and discloses itself differently within the realm of theatre.

The common tendency in recent notions of theatricality is defined by John Bernard, “[i]n the context of current academic debates, it [theatricality] functions as a counterforce to ‘textuality,’ suggesting how appropriating agents query, contest, and sometimes subvert established ideologies, thus effecting cultural change” (934). Bernard indicates the subversive force behind theatricality as opposed to the set of ideas dealing with theatricality in a one-way relationship with life. Theatricality thus should not be considered just as the component of theatrical art which has a closed system of its own. In our age theatricality has gained a crucial position not only within theater criticism but also within art criticism in general and within other fields of social sciences such as sociology. It is not a coincidence that critics make use of the term of theatricality in dealing with society. Rather, this shows how theatre has a particular function or how it operates within life not outside of it.

Thus, it is possible to reach the conclusion that theatricality is a process which cannot be identified with a singular and definitive meaning. It is a process that is experienced whether consciously or not, but unidentifiable. It is between the Imaginary and the Symbolic belonging neither of them. It is the stimulus to represent its own in-betweenness which is unrepresentable. It cannot be adhered to a single authority whether that be the playwright, the spectator or to text.

In this way, Beckett’s theatricality should not be regarded as anti-theatrical in the modernist sense, since it does not create a distance (between theater and life) between the spectator and the stage. However, his theatricality can be considered as a reaction to the traditional understanding of the term as reflecting the world in a realist way (mimesis). It is obvious that anti-theatricalism in modernism also rejects the realist representation of life, but in denying it modernism offers a systematic mechanism of its own, as defined by Puchner (with his exploration of a *diegetic* theater).

Beckett, in rejecting theatricality in the mimetic sense, does not offer an alternative solution to the traditional operation of theatricality. Rather his theatricality displays

the paradox of representation by means of utilizing the unrepresentable. The theatricality of Beckett can be considered, using parat of Lyotard's definition of the postmodern, as the display of the "unpresentable in presentation itself" (15). Charles Campbell analyzes the notion of the unrepresentable in presentation with reference to Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* and claims that "[a]n investigation of Beckett's practices reveals the textures of a surface that was thought to be empty. If this emptiness is allowed to remain so, without the imposition of our interpretive stance, this surface reveals the textures created by the force of the unseen. This emptiness is a testament to the power and weight of an unrepresentable" (63).

Beckett's theatricality underscores and de-theatricalizes the accepted notion of theater as a representation of life. His theatre does not reflect real life in that sense; on the contrary, he is reflecting the problem of representation. His use of voice (as in *Krapp's Last Tape* and *Footfalls*) shatters the primary demand of theater - the presence of a human actor; his use of body organs as the main actor shifts the main understanding of the necessity of the existence of the body of the actor on stage (as in *Not I*); his subversion of the master-slave relation damages power relations (as in *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*); his reflection of the artist's problematic relation with language not only destabilizes the autonomy of the creator of an art work but also puts forward the problematization of character as human within theater production (as in *Catastrophe*); and his design of the text-performance relation underlines the problematic relation between the text, the performance and the spectator (as in *Ohio Impromptu*). Consequently, both Beckett's dramatic and his performance strategies take the notion of representation in theatricality away from its safe relation with real life in a commonly accepted sense. His dramatic innovations are taken to be content-related issues of his plays, while performance strategies are seen as technical tools within his theatre. Indeed, Beckett's theatricality is theatricality against itself, theatricality that deconstructs theatricality as a product of mimesis in a traditional sense. His is the theater of non-representation by using the strategies of theatricality in rejecting theatricality. Therefore, we can consider a Beckettian theatricality, standing among the debates of theatricality, as the disclosure of the in-betweenness that theater is caught up in: the

in-betweenness resulting from the ambiguous relationship between reality and fiction.

3.3 Breaking the Conventions of the Theory of Theatricality: *Ohio Impromptu*

The rise of ideas of related to loss of faith in language as a medium of communication and to alienation of the modern individual which results in an emphasis on the body have affected understandings of the notion of theatricality. Since considerations of humanity and its ways of communication have changed their grounds, human actions need to be re-evaluated. As a result of this change, the stage and its operation within art and life have been re-interpreted by many theatre scholars. Recent understandings of the relationship between theatre and life have resulted in the notion of the theatricalization of life. The theatricalization process reveals itself after the anti-theatrical approaches that reject the strict and conventional rules that are constructed to draw a line between life and theater. As opposed to this monolithic idea, investigations of theatricality as an interdisciplinary field have predominated in recent scholarship.

As well as being a theory of theatre, theatricality is also considered as the operation of the conventions of staging. From this perspective it becomes obvious that its subject matter is the ingredients of theatre. The actor, lighting, setting, costumes and space of the stage are under investigation when theatricality is concerned. Most recently theories of theatricality have explored ideas of the inclusion of the audience within the theatricalized space and of the plays being representations of the death of representation. In these theories theatricality becomes more than that which pertains and relates to what is happening on stage. As a result of these new approaches theatre is re-defined as an art form which has long had an operative as opposed to imitative function in life. However, the term still carries all indeterminacies that also exist within life. That is why there is no consensus among theatre theorists about the meaning of the term. This inherent indeterminacy of definitions itself carries significance in the deconstruction of the conventions of the staging process. When

one cannot decide on the nature of theatricality, neither can one be sure about its definite rules.

Samuel Beckett, as one of the best subversive playwrights of his period, exemplifies this indeterminacy by breaking the rules of conventionality in theatre. His plays cannot be thought of as displaying cause-effect relationships or regular plot constructions. They are the representations of an awareness of their own artificiality and paradoxicalities. *Ohio Impromptu* (1980) is one of the best examples of how Beckett creates self-reflexive and self-deconstructive plays. The death of character, an extra-ordinary use of space, lack of dialogue, the idea of the inclusion of audience into theatrical space, and the problematization of theatre as a genre with conventional rules are preeminent qualities of the play.

In this play two men, Listener (L) and Reader (R) “as alike in appearance as possible” in Beckett’s words, are sitting at a plain white table. Before Reader there is a book open at the last pages. Reader reads a story which is about someone’s last attempt to obtain relief. At several points Listener interrupts Reader’s reading by knocking on the table. The story in the book does not give any detail about either its own characters or the on-stage characters. What is emphasized within the story is that there is little left to tell and there is a sad tale which is told last time. There is no information about the background of the story read by Reader; neither within the story itself nor in the stage directions of the main play is a particular introduction or exposition of the story provided. The only progressive information about the story, which lacks a cause-effect sequence, is given through the end of the play:

R: ...One night as he sat trembling head in hands from head to foot a man appeared to him and said, I have been sent by – and here he named the dear name – to comfort you. Then drawing a worn volume from the pocket of his long black coat he sat and read till dawn. Then disappeared without a word.

[*Pause.*]

Some time later he appeared again at the same hour with the same volume and this time without preamble sat and read it through again the long night through. Then disappeared without a word.

[*Pause.*]

So from time to time unheralded he would appear to read the sad tale through again and the long night away. Then disappear without a word.

[*Pause.*]

With never a word exchanged they grew to be as one. (447)

As admitted by Acheson,

[w]hile there may be other ways of interpreting the arrival of the stranger, Beckett denies us with [*sic.*] the possibility of a single, definitive interpretation by restricting the amount of information Reader makes available to us. Why the stranger appears “from time to time unheralded ... to read the sad tale through again and the long night away”; [w]ith “never a word exchanged [he and the story’s character grow] to be as one”; and why the stranger arrives one night to say, “I have had word from – and here he named the dear name – that I shall not come again” (OI 287) are questions to which we are denied the answers. (203)

Since the story does not supply any practical information that may elicit progress within the play, the play can be taken as the theatricalization of Listener’s listening to a sad tale last time told by means of Reader’s reading it. As the story cannot be a medium for action in the play, the actions of Listener and Reader are the main processes of the play. However, their actions are so limited and repetitive that it is not possible to follow a regular development in the play. The repetitive actions are Listener’s knocks, Reader’s re-reading and pauses. These repetitions have a significant place within the play; they are as dominant as the other ingredients of the play.

The beginning of the play gives us all we need to understand what Reader and Listener do throughout the whole play,

R: [*Reading.*] Little is left to tell. In a last – [*L knocks with the left hand on the table.*] Little is left to tell. [*Pause. Knock.*] In a last attempt to obtain relief he moved from where they had been so long together to a single room on the far bank. From its single window he could see the downstream extremity of the Isle of Swans. [*Pause.*]

...

In his dreams- [*Knock.*]Then turn and his slow steps retrace.[*Pause. Knock.*] In his dreams he had been warned against this change. Seen the dear face and heard the unspoken words. Stay where we were so long alone together, my shade will comfort you. (446)

Thus, Listener does not act passively during the time of his listening. Rather he actively affects the progression of the story with his interruptions. Through these interruptions, Beckett again portrays his rejection of single and meaningful definitions of concepts of staging. Through Listener's knocks, used in manipulating Reader, the audience-stage relationship is problematized. The interruptions of Listener reveal the fact that Reader's reading depends on Listener. Thus, Reader is not the reader in its main sense, neither is Listener the listener. Listener becomes the prompter for Reader with his knocks and Reader is like Listener's actor. As suggested by Witt, "Listener seems a shadow of a director and Reader a shadow of an actor in that the former, with his knocks, tells the latter when to repeat his lines and when to continue" (166). The words "reader" and "listener" are not enough to define what Reader and Listener do within the play. There is no referential relationship between word and action on the stage.

In a general sense, this is another play within the play in which Listener becomes the director and Reader the player arises. Here again, Beckett undermines a single approach to a play and he demonstrates the plurality of levels within a play. Thus, the play collapses "the Cartesian division between watcher and watched" (Davies 87). The subversion and mixture of the traditional roles of the spectator, director and player within the play deny any possible coherent understanding in the designation of a theatrical piece. Moreover, the design of the play discloses how the conventional procedures of theatricality are up-ended by Beckett. The play states that nothing remains to be designed for the scene. The most important thing is the scene itself or the urge that leads to the creation of the scene. This emphasis on the scene itself, rather than any underlying meaning, is reflected in Beckett's insistence on the visual aspects in his plays. Such an emphasis,

reorients our attention away from questions about what a text might “mean” to the arrangement and materiality of the words on the page. There are no hidden truths to be uncovered, no depths beneath the surface of the text that it is our task to appropriate ... His texts are therefore defined not by what they mean, but by our sense of the difference between meaning and non-meaning, significance and noise. (Williams 609)

The spectator (who can be understood as portrayed by Listener) acts actively within the theatrical experience of *Ohio Impromptu*. Thus, the role of the spectator is made active and is not silent. The fourth wall constructed between the stage and the auditorium has been damaged. The border that is drawn by this wall can no more be considered as a limitation to the relationship between the spectator and the actors on the stage. The one-way transmission of actions from the stage is transformed into a complex web of interaction. Therefore, theatricality, defined as the conventions of the staging techniques in its classical sense is subverted.

It may be argued that in *Ohio Impromptu* the theatre stage is reflected as a place that is also available to the audience to direct the actors on stage. Davies defines how space is used in Beckettian theatre:

The audience's anonymous space becomes part of the performance space, a penumbral anti-stage invading the stage, making the audience inhabitants of Beckett's universe whether we like it or not. What we cannot be sure of is whether this offstage world is inhabited by the living or by the dead, and whether those inhabitants are benevolent or cruel. (83)

The relationship between Listener and Reader best exemplifies such a kind of Beckettian theatre space. According to Davies in Beckett's plays the inclusion of the audience space in the performance space results from the invading on-stage darkness, language reduced to silence, and characters resembling creatures. These outstanding features turn his plays into *dramaticules*. Under these circumstances, Beckett's audiences cannot experience an identification process and such an ignored audience “become[s] an audience involved, implicated and, ultimately, liberated”

(Davies 82). *Ohio Impromptu*, defined as a *playlet* by Beckett, reveals the kind of space use the Davies defines, the kind through which the audience's sense of place is subverted.

The innovative use of space in Beckett's late plays is defined as his attempt at creating a "theatrical (or televisual) uncanny, seeking to render a physical, quasi-tangible art form more immaterial by opening up the dramaturgical space between presence and absence" (Maude and Feldman 159). *Ohio Impromptu*'s main space, in which what is dramatic takes place, is best defined by Gontarski. For him "[t]he difference between narration and stage action defines the space within which the drama occurs. Only the visual images suggest identity" (Gontarski 1). Since there is neither background information nor a cause-effect relationship within the play, it seems like a piece of a previous and a future play. Thus, the work that the audience sees on the stage is nothing but a fragment. As emphasized by Popova, "[w]hether this is the very last time that we are witnessing, or just another rehearsal, becomes a pertinent question for the spectator" (456). The stage space of the play provides nothing for the audience/reader on which to adhere a particular meaning. That is why the relationship between the narration and action is important. What is dramatic seems to take place somewhere within the story, but it is not read by Reader.

The last sentence Reader reads, "[w]ith never a word exchanged they grew to be as one", reminds us of the relationship between Reader and Listener. We recall that Beckett defines them "as alike in appearance as possible". Moreover, they do not exchange a word. Reader reads and Listener both directs and listens to what Reader reads. They are not portrayed as characters with defining features in the play. They are in some ways not even like humans, but seem, rather, to be just the representations of the acts of reading and listening. As defined by Popova,

[p]urged of any psychological detail, free of any traditional dramatic coordinates of time and location, the characters are not even named but instead given the generic descriptions of Listener and Reader. They are called that because that is what they do as actors on stage: they listen and read, respectively. (461)

With its extra-ordinary stage operations, the play problematizes the generic qualities of theater. It is even difficult to gather the qualities that make it a theatrical work. “At first glance, the very short (11-minute) piece seems to have nothing to do with theatre in theatre or theatre on theatre” (Witt 165). Stan E. Gontarski, the organizer of the Ohio Beckett symposium, noticed this generic ambiguity of the play in his review of the opening performance, “What we witness may be repetition, performance, theatre. A play within a play. Listener audience to his own telling, to himself. The play poses the problems of origins and audience. Whose voice are we listening to? Who is watching what?” (1). The play does not permit its readers and/or spectators to reach a meaningful conclusion due to its complex design. As Gontarski stated, “[t]he play contains almost no movement, yet the final impression was balletic, precarious, the gesture suspended, the play balanced on its margin” (1).

In addition to these, the multiple layers of the play are drawn with the mixture of the narration and action in the play. Along with the drama that is going on between Listener and Reader, there is a narration that survives throughout the whole play. As underlined by McMullan,

[t]he verbal component of the play is regressed into the narrative field and held distinct from the staged, visual effect. As several critics have observed, this division establishes a contrapuntal dramatic movement in which reading acts against playing, fiction against drama, ear against eye and in which the juxtaposition of the stage and textual levels creates various levels of ambiguity. (27)

The ambiguity explained here renders the theatrical work a combination of various ingredients. Traditionally, a theatrical work can be taken as a combination of narration and action in a meaningful way. However, in *Ohio Impromptu* we cannot determine a definite line between the narration and action. It is not possible to define a logical procedure between the knocks of Listener and the readings of Reader. Who it is that decides on the process of what is read by Reader is left unknown. Moreover, Listener’s interruptions do not follow a regular pattern. Neither the places of Listener’s interferences in the reading process nor the places of Reader’s starting

points follow a regular line. Thus, the two processes of theatre, narration and action, intermingle in a random way.

The narration within the play is limited to the story that is read by Reader. Thus, the narration cannot be thought of as the speech and/or utterance of Reader. Rather it is a pre-written text. That is why it is possible to say that not only Listener but also Reader as a character is silent in the play. The words that Reader utters do not belong to him as a character of a play. As a character, Reader is just the person who reads from a text. Therefore, in the play there is also an ambiguous revelation of speech and narration. Reader does not speak but narrates. That is why he can be considered as silent as Listener although his voice can be heard by the audience. The emphasis on the silence of the characters in the play can be considered as a representation of the death of character.

Although the meaning of the word “impromptu” refers to a performance without any preparation, the play deconstructs itself since the text is read on the stage, in front of an audience. It is not even a memorized speech (which would seem closer to improvisation since there is at least the appearance of spontaneous speech). The play is the combination of a text read by the actor and interruptions from the listener. As Brater explains,

[a]s a theatrical form, an impromptu should appear light, improvised, almost extemporaneous, even if these effects are achieved through premeditation. Beckett’s impromptu, however, is really none of these things. It is “on the spot,” etymologically, only in the sense that it lies *in prompt*, in readiness, before the spotlight. In *Ohio Impromptu* the framework is comic while the drama that takes place within it is, as comedy often is, totally serious. (127)

Thus, in the juxtaposition of the title of the play and its content, Beckett once more uses theatricality against itself. In other words, he subverts any absolute meaning that might adhere to the notion of theatricality. In contrast to its title, the play does not represent the dramatic sub-genre of impromptu, thus it is a subversion of an impromptu, and the play becomes a representation of non-representation. It denies

the possibility of having a particular meaning that any kind of representation (whether it be an impromptu, play etc.) can achieve on the stage. Moreover, in the play just as the genres of drama and prose co-exist, so do the features of the tragic and the comic. This can be considered as another level that makes the play an exemplification of theatricality in an indefinite way.

The play's refusal to reveal the conventions of mainstream theatre lies also within its lack of dialogue. In *Ohio Impromptu* there is no dialogue, no exchange of words. The play's not being dependent upon dialogue is explained as Beckett's drawing heavily on his experience as a writer for film and video and the play "makes us rediscover that there are moments even in the live theater when the spoken word is not needed" (Brater 136). This is another subversive message, because one of the main components of conventional theatre is its emphasis on dialogue. In most cases dialogue requires the agency and involvement of at least two participants who are able to communicate by means of language.

In the "drama" of speech exchange the roles of speaker and hearer are played by actual participants and the roles are exchanged during the course of dialogue. The speaker switches role to that of listener while the erstwhile listener becomes the speaker without any necessary change in place or setting, only of "person". The switch from attendant non-speech to speech, the change of role from listener to that of speaker, is undertaken in response to another's speech, since response is predicated by the nature of the form. The temporal progression of such alternations and interchanges constitutes the structure and course of dialogue. (Hermann 2)

In *Ohio Impromptu*, the idea that "little is left to tell" is nourished by a lack of dialogue. Since the existence of dialogue provides a ground for more and more telling, it has nothing to do within a Beckettian play in which Beckett "aims to do more and more with less and less" (Brater ix). Brater indicates that in the play stage directions are contextually written as dialogue, which will "develop and contain the rising action as well. Usually one searches for elements of structure, such as exposition, introduction, rising action, and recognition, in the dialogue rather than in the stage directions" (111).

The structural and contextual innovation that the play displays are the foundations of its freedom from the limitations of the conventional rules of theatricality. The play is described as monologue but there are two characters on the stage. Although there are two characters, one is verbally silent throughout the whole play. However, his silence is not just a simple silence. Therefore, there is no direct proportion between what is seen and what is happening on the stage. The actions are not only repetitive but also simple and uncommon. There is no change in lighting. Moreover, the play does not reflect any kind of dramatic question that the audience should elicit from what is happening on the stage. There is no connection between what is told in the story and what is happening on the stage. Thus “it is we who must postulate harmony between what we see and the sad tale a last time told“ (Brater 128).

Such a fragmented style of the play is the representation of the fragmented self. Seelig claims that *Ohio Impromptu* is a heavily autobiographical play in which Beckett reflects a kind of self fragmentation. For Seelig, in writing the play Beckett’s stimulus is the fragmentation of his selfhood. In the play,

[t]his fragmentation occurs in three basic steps, converting the heavily autobiographical monologue of (1) “I” into a monologue about (2) “he,” and finally evolving into a story about (3) “they”. The author’s self-fragmentation diffuses into his writing, so that the play he writes contains a deranging impetus that carries on this process within the play. That is, just as Beckett transformed himself into the “they” (Listener and Reader) of *Ohio Impromptu* through the process of writing, Reader or Listener becomes the two people through the narrative within the drama. (386)

Thus, Beckett’s separation of reader and listener together with his separation of narration and action represent the fragmentation of the self. This fragmentation is complex since, as we have seen, the roles of Reader and Listener are complex. Their existence as reader and listener is mingled with the roles of director and actor. This reflects the idea of a multiple self.

For all the reasons explored above, the audience becomes frustrated if it seeks a single design in *Ohio Impromptu*. The play is like a puzzle, in which every element is mixed with every other. The concepts of narration and action are intermixed in an indefinite way. Not only concepts but also physical components are subverted: the functions of roles, the necessity of dialogue and interaction, and the regular story line are all subjected to this form of questioning. In other words, the play is another gift of Beckettian style that is self-aware and paradoxical at the same time.

3.4 The Death of Representation: The Notions of Character and Acting in *Not I*

The “characters” of *Not I* are MOUTH and AUDITOR. Except for MOUTH, the stage is full of darkness and AUDITOR has nothing to do throughout the play apart from four movements where indicated. It is difficult to categorize, define and determine the qualities of such a play in relation to theatre. The technique Beckett utilizes here not only makes the form challenging but also makes the play emotionally and conceptually demanding. Brater even admits that it is not easy to tell whether *Not I* is “primarily spectacle or literature” (Brater 18).

The stage directions of the play are extra-ordinary:

Stage in darkness but for MOUTH, upstage audience right, about 8 feet above stage level, faintly lit from close-up and below, rest of face in shadow. Invisible micropohone. AUDITOR, downstage audience left, tall standing figure, sex undeterminable, enveloped from head to foot in loose black djellaba, with hood, fully faintly lit, standing on invisible podium about 4 feet high shown by attitude alone to be facing diagonally across stage intent on MOUTH, dead stil throughout but for four brief movements where indicated. See Note. As house lights down MOUTH’s voice unintelligible behind curtain, 10 seconds. With rise of curtain ad-libbing from text as required leading when curtain fully up and attention sufficient into. (376)

The rest of the stage directions consist of pauses, silences, brief laughs, good laughs, screams and the four movements of AUDITOR after four pauses. Both the stage directions and the “Note” within the text of the play make the play a versatile and multidimensional theatrical piece. The detailed stage directions “provide the proper cues to widen the resonances of the play” in which Beckett attempts to translate “an idea for a dramatic image into scenic space and patterns of speech and sound” (Brater 27). The Mouth in the play is an image and it is turned into a phenomenon that inhabits the center of the theatre stage. This is like putting an idea at the center of stage. In addition, the role of Auditor creates another level within the play. Auditor functions just like the audience of the play. In fact, the presence of the Auditor can be interpreted as an attempt to make *Not I* seem more like a play. According to Brater,

[t]he presence of Auditor onstage [...] makes firm theater sense, providing those other auditors in Beckett’s audience not only with a human witness to Mouth’s suffering, but also an indispensable focal point from which to “see” the action of the play unfold. It is the eye, therefore, the rich itineraries of the audience’s eye, which makes the full text of *Not I* emerge in performance. (34)

Although the inclusion of the Auditor is an attempt to make the play seem more like a play, *Not I* is paradoxical in itself. The text of the play does not resemble any kind of theatre work. It consists of the speech of MOUTH which asks questions without receiving answers, thus, it is a kind of speech which does not fulfill its aim in conveying a particular meaning. Neither its syntax nor its grammar fit into a coherent design. As stated by Tubridy, in *Not I* speech is a product of the body and “it is an involuntary and uncontrollable corporeal excretion. The physicality of speech is emphasized by the speed of its delivery, a pace which emphasizes the sonority of the word over its signification” (Tubridy 113). The words of MOUTH form chains of meaningless screams from a hysterical subject. MOUTH starts its speech in what appears to be in the middle of a fragmented discourse:

out ... into this world ... this world ... tiny little thing ... before its time ... in a godfor- ... what? ... girl? ... yes ... tiny little girl ... into this ... out into this ... before her time ... godforsaken hole called ... called ... no matter ... parents unknown ... unheard of ... he having vanished .. thin air ... no sooner buttoned up his breeches ... she similarly ... eight months later ... almost to the tick .. so no love ... spared that ... no love such as normally vented on the ... speechless infant ... in the home ... (376)

MOUTH describes something about a tiny little girl who came into this world before its time. MOUTH's statement is like the synopsis of a kind of life this little girl spends "a few steps then stop ... stare into space ... then on ... a few more ... stop and stare again ...so on ... drifting around ... when suddenly ... gradually ... all went out" (376). Just like the words it uses, MOUTH is fragmented and is composed of pieces. MOUTH, who has unknown parents, does not seek "a coexistence with its authentic first person singular but is instead frantically running away from such an encounter" (Brater 23). The "not" in the name of the play foreshadows the sense of rejection underlying the play. In the play there is a resistance to subjecthood, to any kind of combination of the subject "I" with an embodiment. The representation of MOUTH as separated from its body is also a denial of body seen as a whole. The idea of the whole body is erased by means of the voice of the mouth in the darkness. Thus, not only emotionally but also bodily, MOUTH is the representation of the negation and rejection of fullness and meaningfulness. "Disembodied, suspended in space, and throbbing with a constant pulsation of lips, teeth, tongue, and saliva, Mouth gives shape to words and phrases as segmented as itself" (Brater 18).

The theatricality of the play is produced by its being able to represent paradoxical issues on the theatre stage. MOUTH as the disintegration and rejection of "I" occupies the center of the stage, but it does not seem to be in control of the performance itself (Jeffers 13). Its speech is interrupted by several pauses and silences, at which points it seems as if MOUTH is waiting for some direction to go on. Since there is no command during the pauses and silences, MOUTH bursts into hysterical laughter and screaming.

In *Not I* theatricality as a representation of the death of representation, reveals its self-deconstructive properties by the paradoxical representation of a disembodied mouth at the center of the stage and by its denial of being a character or an actor on a stage. Theatricality arises in accordance with the acting style of the play. It is common knowledge that conventionally an actress or an actor puts himself/herself in the role of the character that s/he is going to play, and an actress/actor can experience a kind of identification with the character. However, as Levy suggests, Beckett's self-reflexive plays "force the actors to post their selves in front of a live audience, in a live theatre space, in order for the reference to be worked out" (141). As a result of this extra-ordinary demand, in Beckett's plays actors need to "relate their Beckettian texts directly to themselves, and not only to their roles" in order for the play display its self-referentiality (Levy 141). Moreover, through MOUTH Beckett manipulates a character that has already lost its ties with the concepts of body and language. It is impossible for an actress to identify herself with MOUTH in the play. Billie Whitelaw, who acted in *Not I*, reports her first impression of the play in these words: "All I knew was that it would have to go faster than anything I'd ever heard in the theatre, if possible as fast as the speed of thought, and that of course is impossible" (112). The impossibility, unrepresentability, and non-identificatory properties of *Not I* are denials of the conventional frame that is drawn for both its form and content.

Discussions of what consists of the notion of theatricality propose that acting is the key element in the rise of what we call theatricality. In *Not I*, Beckett's style demands an extraordinary way of acting. As Lyons states,

[t]he theatrical energy manifest in *Not I*'s questioning of the subject, within the presentation of theatrical performance that both exploits and subverts the presence of the human actor, provides a paradigm of character and the questioning of the character that (1) foregrounds drama's need for the human actor and the problematic practices of discussing dramatic language outside of the contexts of fictions of speech; (2) exposes the reductiveness of mimetic

arguments that would ground dramatic speech as the work of some “inner coherence” on the part of the actor or the character; and (3) reveals the need to assimilate both the recognition of *character* as a dramatic function and the problematic of assigning *subject* to character as anything other than an aesthetic field in which language asserts itself as speculation. (119)

Thus the play can be seen as one of the first representations of the death of the character. This death covers not only the physical existence of the character in its fullness but also the language that s/he uses on the stage. Since MOUTH is the “character” of the play, it is impossible to attach any kind of characteristics that normally belongs to an actor/actress. In *Not I*, MOUTH is nothing but a figure, an image and it can even be considered as merely a blurry visual object. As Uhlmann analyzes, Mouth is an “autonomous mental image...It is offered to us as something which must be interpreted but which will resist easy interpretation and lacks an intended interpretation” (62). The actors’ difficulty in interpreting MOUTH as a character results in unfamiliarity. Levy says:

Presented with a self-negating, self-avoiding or self-rejecting, and almost fully disembodied dramatic character, actors of *Not I* must indeed ‘drag up the past’ and make it present in and for the here and now of a unique, never-the-same performance. Further, they are required to learn about their roles primarily from the physically immediate and often painful and confining whereabouts on stage while initiating a hermeneutic search for real or fictitious selves by means of their own ‘I’ or ‘not I’. (141)

Therefore, acting MOUTH requires a close analysis of such concepts as irony, in-betweenness (or the simultaneous existence of “I” and “not I”), self-reference, self-negation and paradox. As can be inferred from this, it is impossible to reach an authentic and meaningful conclusion in defining MOUTH as a character. For Levy, the “threshold situation is expressed in the correlation between the text and situation of the character in space... In order to be truly self-referential, the actors must, in fact, be completely themselves” (147). Thus, the only possible way of interpreting

MOUTH resides in its performance. Through being “only themselves” the actors of *Not I* interpret their roles during its performance on the stage and this property of the play is another way in which it may be seen as an attempt in representing the unrepresentable.

The idea of putting a mouth at the center of the stage is a challenge to the idea of presence on the theatrical scene. Mouth in *Not I* is seen as separated from its body. The existence of the body within the darkness of the stage makes the appearance of MOUTH blurry because MOUTH belongs to the body and not to the body. This ironic strategy is of great importance since it represents Beckett’s undermining and eroding of the physicality and concreteness of theater while being comforted by these features (Gontarski 169). Beckett’s underlying of the rejection of the *thereness* of theatre makes his audience question what is seen on the stage. The audience of *Not I* would experience such a questioning process since what is seen on the stage is not actually there. Connor argues that in *Not I*, Beckett places “the speaking body on stage and then effaces it, leaving on the voice” (111).

In the play the death of “I” stands for the death of everything in representation. In fact, MOUTH is aware of its theatricality and its being fragmented from a full body. As Levy underlines, the lines of MOUTH reflect her awareness of being an aesthetic object rather than a character and,

are delivered from the straights of particularly agonized Beckettian space, from which both actor and character call in doubt the authenticity of ‘a self’, be it the character’s, the implied author’s self, or frequently, as we have seen, even the actor’s. Character and actor are thereby paradoxically negating and confirming ‘selfhood’ at the same time. (147)

When “I” is dead, there is nothing left to represent of his life, thus, it is not “I” what is represented on the stage. The only inevitable duty is to represent the unrepresentable. *Not I*, with all of its ingredients, is Beckett’s fulfillment of inevitable duty as being a playwright. The rejection of the theatrical conventions

makes itself seen within the disembodied voice of MOUTH. “By refusing to say ‘I,’ Mouth both denies her position as a speaking subject within language and denies the possibility of language” (Tubridy 117). The play is Beckett’s insistence on art’s resistance to any kind of modeling imposed on it. Thus, in *Not I* (as in his art in general) “instead of imposing purposes and templates upon art, he experimented with the notion that an artistic medium itself might be made to speak, if approached with a sort of intelligent humility” (Albright 2).

Through Mouth, it is not the human subject who speaks; it is the theatre itself as a medium for representation which speaks. The lack of full body of human actor on the stage and the use of fragmented language reveal the rejection of MOUTH’s saying “I”. However, Beckett gives voice to MOUTH through the body of an actor on the theatrical stage rather than a character in prose. It is not the imagination of the reader of prose that gives voice to MOUTH, it is a human actor. As Tubridy reports, “[i]t speaks in the temporal immediacy of the theatre rather than from the temporal duration of the printed page” (128). This paradoxical feature of the play makes *Not I* one of the best plays for an analysis of theatricality. Such a conflict could only be reflected through theatre which consists of the real audience in the auditorium.

In addition to these, the use of space in *Not I* is far from traditional understandings of theatre stage. The space with its emptiness reveals Beckett’s subversion of the conventions of theatre. As Essif admits, the more the stage is made empty, “the more it becomes self-conscious and about itself” (70). The emptiness of Beckettian stage is considered as his attempt to get rid of any attachments to the theatre stage that are accepted by rationalism. The self-awareness of the empty space is the result of this rejection. The empty stage does not provide a ground for the audience to see a distinct world on the stage with which to identify. The empty stage cannot be a medium for a theatre piece that conveys sense and meaning. The stage space, most of which is formed by darkness, can be taken as including both on-stage and off-stage simultaneously. The off-stage that is the subject matter is the “big darkness”

that is available throughout the whole play, which also covers the audience. In a conventional theatre space, the stage is being lighted leaving the audience in full darkness throughout the whole play. However, in *Not I*, there is an insistent emphasis on MOUTH through lighting while the body remains in darkness. This creates multi-layers of space: that of the mouth, the body of the actor and the audience. Thus, what is conventionally considered as on-stage becomes the off-stage in darkness. Moreover, on-stage and off-stage are combined while also being separated by darkness. As Brater analyzes,

[i]n the theater Beckett makes us desperately conscious of the agonizing limitations of seeing, hearing, and speaking. Yet before *Not I* such constraints never seemed so theatrically enticing ... Beckett sets into motion a multidimensional, multimedia extravaganza. (35)

As a result, *Not I* with all of its ingredients is like a counter manifestation to the traditions of mainstream theatre. Not only its text but also its representation on stage deconstructs the ideas of meaning, design, body, character and space. Beckett's choosing of stage to represent such a "character" makes the play the voice of postmodern theatre that represents the death of these concepts. The play represents the death of representation and the paradoxical inevitability of representing this death.

CHAPTER 4

PERFORMATIVITY

4.1 Austinian vs. Derridian and Butlerian Performativity

The concept of performativity forms a multi-layered context within various fields of study. The connection between performance studies and performativity prepares a rich ground for a reconsideration of the open ended questioning of man and his life. Different views of language, performance and subject are investigated within the theory performativity. “A *performative* understanding of discursive practices challenges the representationalist belief in the power of words to represent preexisting things” (Barad 802, emphasis original). Originally investigated in speech act theory, the concept of performativity gives way to the combination of various ideas with performance. Underlying these combinations, there is an investigation and criticism of Austin’s theory of performativity. The relationship between the terms performance and performativity is still debated among theatre theorists. While some people find it difficult to make a connection between them, some others think that recent investigations in performance studies open the way to a theory of performativity. In *Performance and Performativity* (2009), Mehmet Şiray underlines the intersection of performance and performativity. He states that “[o]ne essential question is whether we (human subjects) essentially play an active or a passive role in our acts, or simultaneously both, a question which seems to underlie all discussions of performance or performativity” (11). Thus, both terms lead us to an investigation of the human as a *subject* on the one hand and to his/her acts on the other.

As a term *performativity* was first used by John L. Austin in *How to Do Things with Words* (1955), which is the published form of a series of lectures at Harvard University. This influential work has been claimed to inspire not only theories of modern linguistics but also studies in literature and philosophy, performance and cultural studies. As time passed, the term lost some of its influence within the

discipline of linguistics, but it gained a second life within the discipline of cultural studies and cultural theory in the 1990s. Due to its influence, the study of culture “as structured webs of signs waiting to be deciphered” gave way to the investigation of culture through its performative traits, and at the same time the term “was given a theoretical reconsideration in order to accommodate explicitly bodily acts” (Fischer-Lichte 26). The theory of performativity has thus had an impact within various disciplines and has led them to investigate relationships between the body, language and everything concerning human life and behavior. As Barad notes, “performativity has become a ubiquitous term in literary studies, theater studies, and the nascent interdisciplinary area of performance studies, prompting the question as to whether all performances are performative” (808). Despite the inevitable difference between their approaches to language, the general frame that performativity portrays within the field of linguistics is taken to be the primary material for one of the art forms, which is theatre.

What makes Austin’s theory of performativity an innovative tool for investigations is that it discloses the relationship between saying and doing. The idea is challenging and new, since it has to move beyond traditional considerations of language in combining saying and doing. Traditionally, utterances are viewed from as functioning to describe some state of affairs or to state some facts which are thought to be true or false. Austin, however, claimed that not all true or false statements are descriptions. Moreover, “[w]e very often also use utterances in ways beyond the scope at least of traditional grammar” (3). In clarifying such kinds of utterances, Austin claims that utterances can be found satisfying the conditions of traditional grammar, but still they may not “describe or report or constate anything at all” and they may not be verifiable, or true or false (5). Moreover, there may be some situations in which “the uttering of the sentence is, or is a part of, doing of an action, which again would not *normally* be described as saying something” (5, emphasis original). Therefore, Austin differentiates what he calls constatives, which can be claimed to be true or false, from performatives. The following are the examples that Austin provides in his analysis of performative utterances;

‘I do (sc. Take this woman to be my lawful wedded wife)’ – as uttered in the course of the marriage ceremony. ‘I name this ship the *Queen Elizabeth*’ – as uttered when smashing the bottle against the stern. ‘I give and bequeath my watch to my brother’ – as occurring in a will. ‘I bet you sixpence it will rain tomorrow’.
(5)

Austin reports that such sentences, when uttered in the appropriate circumstances, are not functioning as describing what is being done nor are they used to state that something is done by someone. Rather, when they are stated in suitable conditions, they are actually being done. In other words, in uttering these statements people are doing them. Another feature of such utterances is that none of them are either true or false. For this new type of utterance, he suggests the term *performatives*; “[w]hat are we to call a sentence or utterance of this type? I propose to call it a *performative sentence* or a performative utterance, or, for short ‘a performative’ (6). The word performativity is derived from ‘perform’, “the usual verb with the noun ‘action’: it indicates that the issuing of the utterance is the performing of an action – it is not normally thought of as just saying something” (Austin 6-7).

Austin questions whether it is genuinely possible to consider “saying” as an equivalent to “doing”. There may be some situations in which “it is possible to perform an act of exactly the same kind *not* by uttering words, whether written or spoken, but in some other way. For example, I may in some places effect marriage by cohabiting” (Austin 8, emphasis original). In order to avoid this confusion and to exclude this kind of paradox, Austin claims that

[s]peaking generally, it is always necessary that the *circumstances* in which the words are uttered should be in some way, or ways, *appropriate*, and it is very commonly necessary that either the speaker himself or other persons should *also* perform certain *other* actions, whether “physical” or “mental” actions’ or even acts of uttering further words. Thus, for naming the ship, it is essential that I should be the person appointed to name her, for (Christian) marrying, it is essential that I should not be already married with a wife living, sane and undivorced. (8, emphasis original)

Therefore, there are some factors that have to be completed in order for an utterance to be the part of the performing of an action. When these circumstances are not met, the intended action fails to occur and the utterance is unhappy or in other words they are infelicities (Austin 14). Thus, as Austin admits, although performatives are far from being verifiable, they are still subject to criticism. That is why he has to make a distinction between the happy and unhappy performatives. As Austin claims, in order for an utterance to be accepted as performative, “[t]here must exist an accepted conventional procedure having a certain conventional effect, the procedure to include the uttering of certain words by certain persons in certain circumstances” (26). In addition to this, “[t]he particular persons and circumstances in a given case must be appropriate for the invocation of the particular procedure invoked” (34). As for the participants of these procedures, they must be the part of the performative procedure “correctly” and “completely” (35-36). As can clearly be understood, Austinian performativity requires some particular contextual factors to be completed, which is a condition criticized by Derrida, as will be explained in detail later.

Although it seems that Austin creates two opposite poles: the constatives on the one hand and the performatives on the other, he claims that “the performative is not altogether so obviously distinct from the constative” and the same sentence, on different occasions of utterance, may be used as both constative and performative (67). Therefore, with performative speech acts, he aims at adding another dimension to the traditional understanding of the true/false distinction of constatives. The performative utterances’ requirement to accomplish certain procedures is the result of this new way of analyzing speech acts.

The more recent shift of focus within the understanding of performativity owes much to the writings of Jacques Derrida and Judith Butler. Both of them are critical of the contradictions they find within Austin’s theory of performativity. The paradoxical points that Derrida and Butler disclose are related to the matters of

writing and subject. What Austin emphasizes in his theory is that performative utterances are uttered by a subject who is considered as fully responsible for the utterance. In addition to this, performatives are considered to be the only way of communication. Therefore, the notion of subject and his/her speech, as the only way of communication as suggested by Austin, are further investigated through the claims of Derrida and Butler. In addition, the two later philosophers' conceptions of the performative are opposed to the view that speech acts universalize and totalize the conventions that are formed through a progressive scheme. The rules and regulations that are enumerated by Austinian performativity manifest the normative structure of the speech acts. This kind of perception is the result of an approach that sees language as a closed system.

Derrida identifies four points in Austinian performativity which make it worthy of discussion. Firstly, Austin considers speech acts as only acts of communication and "is led to consider every utterance worthy of the name (i.e., intended to communicate)". Secondly, this kind of communication is a new one which suggests that communicating means communicating a force through the "impetus [*impulsion*] of a mark". Thirdly, Austinian performativity does not have its referent outside of itself as opposed to classical assertion. Performatives do not describe something that is outside of language or prior to it. The effect of the performative lies under its production and is the transformation of a situation. Lastly, Austin frees the analysis of the performative from the authority of the "truth *value*, from the true/false opposition" (13, emphasis original). Therefore, how Derrida defines Austinian performativity can be stated as a new way of communication through a force, which has no referent outside of itself and is free from the authority of the true/false distinction. As Derrida elaborates, "[t]he performative is a 'communication' which is not limited strictly to the transference of semantic content that is already constituted and dominated by an orientation toward truth" (13).

In addition to the above mentioned innovations, Austin's performativity displays some paradoxes. Derrida questions the performativity of speech acts by disclosing

two failed notions in Austin's theory. The first one is Austin's offering the use of performative speech acts as a way of communication which is driven by the intentions of the speakers. The second is the subordination of writing to speech in Austinian performativity. As Şiray agrees, "[s]peech act theory presupposes that the subject who utters is the source of the speech act; that is why written utterances (and writing in general) are always subordinated" (129). Therefore, Derrida's criticism of Austin's performativity identifies critical issues about the subject and the notion of writing. The Austinian subject is considered as capable of communicating through speech, which must be questioned for Derrida.

In addition to these, Derrida argues that Austin's theory requires "a value of context and even of a context exhaustively determined, in theory or teleologically" (14). For example the performative "I now pronounce you husband and wife", requires a wedding ceremony. The context is teleologically determined since consciousness is taken for granted according to the Austinian theory of performativity. In other words, the consciousness of the performative subject is taken as one of the elements that affect the performativity of the utterance, which means that the value of the context is also determined by consciousness. As Derrida states "the conscious presence of the intention of the speaking subject in the totality of his speech act" is at work and as a result "performative communication becomes once more the communication of an intentional meaning, even if that meaning has no referent in the form of a thing or of a prior or exterior state of things" (14). For Derrida, this is one of the shortcomings of Austinian performativity since it does not allow multiple meanings; rather it is determined, fixed and totalitarian. "The conscious presence of speakers or receivers participating in the accomplishment of a performative, their conscious and intentional presence in the totality of the operation" hints that there is no escape from a teleological totalization (Derrida 14).

Furthermore, the exclusion that Austin suggests in his theory is another problem which causes it to be paradoxical. Austin claims:

[A] performative utterance will, for example, be *in a peculiar way* hollow or void if said by an actor on the stage, or if introduced in a poem, or spoken in soliloquy. This applies in a similar manner to any and every utterance ... Language in such circumstances is in special ways – intelligibly - used not seriously, but in many ways *parasitic* upon its normal use - ways which fall under the doctrine of the *etiolations* of language. All this we are *excluding* from consideration. (22, emphases original)

The dismissal of “non-serious” performatives from Austinian performativity shows the handicap that Austin falls in when defining performativity. According to this understanding, there is a kind of language that “we should strenuously distance ourselves from and resolutely ignore” (Derrida 16). Derrida asks “[I]s this general possibility necessarily one of a failure or trap into which language may *fall* or lose itself as in an abyss situated outside of or in front of itself? What is the status of this *parasitism*?” (17, emphasis original). The paradox that Derrida underlines, with this questioning of Austinian exclusion of non-serious language, shows that Austin tries to create a kind of distinct language which is privileged and “serious” as opposed to non-serious. This subordination is rejected by Derrida and he further states that a non-serious performative on stage, in a poem or a soliloquy, “is the determined modification of a general citationality – or rather, a general iterability” (Derrida 17). Since language of such a kind (non-serious language as Austin defines it) is the transformed and repeated type of serious language, Austin’s exclusion is once more rejected.

The presupposition of the speech act theory, which is that by uttering performative sentences meaning is transferred to a receiver from a sender, is criticized by Derrida. For him, it is not possible to guarantee a unified, stable and fixed meaning within any kind of medium (whether speech or writing) transported by an addresser to an addressee.

One writes in order to communicate something to those who are absent. The absence of the sender, of the receiver [*destinateur*], from the mark that he abandons, and which cuts itself from him and continues to produce effects independently of his presence and of the present actuality of his intentions [*vouloir-dire*], indeed even after his death, his absence, which moreover belongs to the

structure of all writing – and I shall add further on, of all language in general. (*Limited Inc.*, 5)

The mark has long escaped from both the receiver and the sender. Moreover, the receiver and the sender have already abandoned it. However, that mark still goes on producing its effects on them. The effects of the mark show themselves both in writing and language in general. The mark actually is the communication itself that is never fully achieved. Şiray indicates that “[i]f the absence of the receiver is essential to every communication, and if it is carried through repetition of a code, then this rupture makes pure presence in representation impossible” (131). Therefore, the concept of communication is conceived inextricably from the notion of representation. “The concept of *representation* is here indissociable from those of *communication* and of *expression*” (Derrida: *Limited Inc.*, 5, emphases original). Writing as one of the ways of communication has some features for Derrida,

If men write it is: (1) because they have to communicate; (2) because what they have to communicate is their "thought," their "ideas," their representations. Thought, as representation, precedes and governs communication, which transports the "idea," the Signified content; (3) because men are *already* in a state that allows them to communicate their thought to themselves and to each other when, in a continuous manner, they invent the particular means of communication, writing. (*Limited Inc.*, 4)

The concept of writing, from Plato onwards, is “conceived of as a supplemented communication in that speech has a priority to writing in representation” (Şiray 129). By classifying the properties of writing, Derrida not only subverts the classical subordination of writing to speech, but he also emphasizes the combination of writing and representation. What urges men to “speak” also available for him to “write” and this is also the case with representation. Writing and representation cannot be thought of independently from each other since they share the same goal which is to communicate. On the other hand, it is impossible for both to achieve their desired goal. Moreover, writing as a means of communication cannot be thought of as “innocent, primitive, or natural” (Derrida 3). As Derrida claims,

“communication is that which circulates a representation as an ideal content (meaning); and writing is a species of this general communication” (6). The circularity of representation is the result of the repeatability of any kind of communication, whether written or spoken. Below Derrida underlines the repeatability of writing:

My communication must be repeatable-iterable-in the absolute absence of the receiver or of any empirically determinable collectivity of receivers. Such iterability-(*iter*, again, probably comes from *itara*, *other* in Sanskrit, and everything that follows can be read as the working out of the logic that ties repetition to alterity) structures the mark of writing itself, no matter what particular type of writing is involved (whether pictographical, hieroglyphic, ideographic, phonetic, alphabetic, to cite the old categories). A writing that is not structurally readable – iterable - beyond the death of the addressee would not be writing. (*Limited Inc.*, 7)

Iterability discloses the fact that the repeated concept is imitated and therefore is detached from the idea of origin. When it is imitated, repeated or represented the concept multiplies itself by damaging an idea of singularity, individuality, selfhood and full identity. That is why Derrida emphasizes the feature of multiplicity in writing as a communication. Writing, as a species of the communication in representation, gives way to ideas concerning what representation is. Derrida’s ideas about representation are related to the paradox that representation as an imitation of an original is impossible, while there is no escape from representation. In other words, for Derrida, the so-called “original” is also a kind of representation. “Representation is death. Which may be immediately transformed into the following proposition: death is (only) representation. But it is bound to life and to the living present which it repeats originarily” (*Writing and Difference*, 286).

Therefore, representation, by its nature, nourishes the idea of iterability and the denial of the original. Such assumptions by Derrida stand in opposition to the earlier perspectives that see representation as man imitating life. Unlike this, representation

has already begun and it has also been closed in the classical sense as a copy of the real. Derrida points out:

Because it has always already begun, representation therefore has no end. But one can conceive of the closure of that which is without end. Closure is the circular limit within which the repetition of difference infinitely repeats itself. That is to say, closure is its playing space. This movement is the movement of the world as play... To think the closure of representation is thus to think the cruel powers of death and play which permit presence to be born to itself, and pleurably to consume itself through the representation in which it eludes itself in its deferral. To think the closure of representation is to think the tragic: not as the representation of fate, but as the fate of representation. Its gratuitous and baseless necessity. And it is to think why it is fatal that, in its closure, representation continues. (*Writing and Difference*, 316)

Thus, with its closure, representation creates a space for itself as a repetition of life. Such kind of space does not form an autonomous space detached from life, it results in the idea that the split between life and representation is a blurry one. That is why this kind of outlook is called “the movement of the world as play”. Moreover, representation is a self-contradictory concept, where representation continues in spite of its closure in a conventional sense. For Derrida, the same kind of approach is also at work in ideas concerning theater. As he states, “[t]he theater is born in its own disappearance” (*Writing and Difference*, 293).

Such an understanding of representation (taking life as an originator of representation) has long been closed and this closure is manifested through the work of Antonin Artaud in his book *The Theater and Its Double*. Artaud subverts the metaphysics of the traditional idea of *mise en scene* and/or theatricality. For Artaud, there are no longer any masterpieces of the discursive theater as accepted by the classical tradition anymore. Civilization and culture are in collapse and theatre, as their “expression in space”, should be the first place to show this decay by subverting itself (89). In doing so, theatre is not given a representative function; i.e. it is not considered as an art form which represents life. Artaud claims that “[i]f confusion is the sign of the times, I see at the root of this confusion a rupture

between things and words, between things and the ideas and signs that are their representation” (7). Artaud’s emphasis on the cleft between things and words can be considered as forming the basis of the postmodern idea of unrepresentability. The linkage between words and things is no longer guaranteed and that is why confusion arises. There can no longer be a consensus on definite meaning.

Artaud’s protest is “against the idea of culture as distinct from life as if there were culture on one side and life on the other, as if true culture were not a refined means of understanding and *exercising* life” (10, emphasis original). Life and theatre, at this point, are considered to be one and the same. The culture which finds its disclosure within theatrical practices cannot be conceived as distinct from life, just as the idea that life is nothing distinguished from theatre. Artaud suggests, “[t]he theater, which is in *no thing*, but makes use of everything - gestures, sounds, words, screams, light, darkness - rediscovers itself at precisely the point where the mind requires a language to express its manifestations” (12, emphasis original). The desired functionality of theater within life is possible when theatre discloses itself with its own language. As Artaud states,

[w]e must believe in a sense of life renewed by the theater, a sense of life in which man fearlessly makes himself master of what does not yet exist, and brings it into being. And everything that has not been born can still be brought to life if we are not satisfied to remain mere recording organisms. Furthermore, when we speak the word "life," it must be understood we are not referring to life as we know it from its surface of fact, but to that fragile, fluctuating center which forms never reach. And if there is still one hellish, truly accursed thing in our time, it is our artistic dallying with forms, instead of being like victims burnt at the stake, signaling through the flames. (13)

Just like the inevitability of representation that Derrida mentions, life, as it is commonly accepted on the surface meaning, is considered to be unreachable since it has not got a center. Although it can be elicited that what Artaud suggests can be understood as another kind of referential mark concerning theater, it should be noted that his view of the theater does not aim to establish strict and unchangeable rules; what he suggests is looking at the concept of theater with naked eye and realizing its

inseparability from life. By using the word *cruelty* Artaud does not necessarily mean the representation of physical violence and blood on stage. As he explains,

"[T]heater of cruelty" means a theater difficult and cruel for myself first of all. And, on the level of performance, it is not the cruelty we can exercise upon each other by hacking at each other's bodies, carving up our personal anatomies, or, like Assyrian emperors, sending parcels of human ears, noses, or neatly detached nostrils through the mail, but the much more terrible and necessary cruelty which things can exercise against us. We are not free. And the sky can still fall on our heads. And the theater has been created to teach us that first of all. (79, emphasis original)

The Theater of Cruelty deals with cruel forces that are within life and surely they will keep on their trial to dominate unless man faces them. In this kind of theatre, nothing controls and restricts the stage from outside. In the theater of cruelty, what is represented on stage is just the same as in life. For Artaud, “[e]verything that acts is a cruelty. It is upon this idea of extreme action, pushed beyond all limits, that theater must be rebuilt” (85). Such an understanding can be considered as the base of recent theories of performativity, which offers a new kind of consideration of theater as life and life as theater. In this kind of theater, Artaud reports, the play “disturbs the senses’ repose, frees the repressed unconscious, incites a kind of virtual revolt (which moreover can have its full effect only if it remains virtual), and imposes on the assembled collectivity an attitude that is both difficult and heroic” (28), thus including spectator within the theatrical production.

The specific language that is offered by Artaud with this new theatre is different from the previous understandings of the use of language. Speech is no longer considered as the dominant part of the play. The parts that exist apart from the text, generally thought of as the minor parts of a play, gain much more importance. Gestures, intonations, wordless pantomime and attitudes have been regarded as just belonging to the production of the play, however Artaud suggests that these parts are “theatrical” parts of the text, and theatre will reach its aim when these parts are understood as necessities of what makes theater (40-41). Moreover, Artaud claims that Western theatre is verbal and is “unaware of everything that makes theater, of

everything that exists in the air of the stage, which is measured and circumscribed by that air and has a density in space-movements, shapes, colors, vibrations, attitudes, screams” (56). However, it should be noted that the function of speech within Artaud’s theater is not to be suppressed. The role of speech is changed and its position is reduced. Artaud remarks,

To change the role of speech in theater is to make use of it in a concrete and spatial sense, combining it with everything in the theater that is spatial and significant in the concrete domain; -- to manipulate it like a solid object, one which overturns and disturbs things, in the air first of all, then in an infinitely more mysterious and secret domain but one that admits of extension, and it will not be very difficult to identify this secret but extended domain with that of formal anarchy on the one hand but also with that of continuous formal creation on the other. (72)

Therefore, the art of theatre is reconciled with all of its parts and made into something solid. Its spatial features (the features that inhabit its space) are combined with its use of speech. This causes theatre to be an integral part of life as opposed to a reflection of life. This approach to theater considers theatre not as a reflection but as a simulation. The theater, “far from copying life, puts itself whenever possible in communication with pure forces. And whether you accept or deny them, there is nevertheless a way of speaking which gives the name of “forces to whatever brings to birth images of energy in the unconscious and gratuitous crime on the surface” (82). Furthermore, the forces are given names within such a theatre because it recovers “the notion of a kind of unique language half-way between gesture and thought” by means of physical language (89). Artaud summarizes,

I say that the stage is a concrete physical place which asks to be filled, and to be given its own concrete language to speak. I say that this concrete language, intended for the senses and independent of speech, has first to satisfy the senses, that there is a poetry of the senses as there is a poetry of language, and that this concrete physical language to which I refer is truly theatrical only to the degree that the thoughts it expresses are beyond the reach of the spoken language. (37)

Clearly, Artaud underlines the physicality of theater in his claims. Such an idea of the physicality of theater is also suggested by Derrida when he claims that “whatever can be said of the body can be said of the theater. Theatricality must traverse and restore “existence” and “flesh” in each of their aspects.” (*Writing and Difference* 293). Therefore, what theatre consists of has gained another dimension in these approaches. As Artaud analyzes,

It must be said that the domain of the theater is not psychological but plastic and physical. And it is not a question of whether the physical language of theater is capable of achieving the same psychological resolutions as the language of words, whether it is able to express feelings and passions as well as words, but whether there are not attitudes in the realm of thought and intelligence that words are incapable of grasping and that gestures and everything partaking of a spatial language attain with more precision than they. (71, emphasis original)

Here Artaud draws attention to the inexpressibility of some attitudes with words. This physical language that Artaud offers is a way of trying to express that which is inexpressible. The language of theater is, therefore, extended from the written words of the text in order to take a step further towards this aim. It is the “obligation to express”, in Beckett’s words. For Artaud,

All true feeling is in reality untranslatable. To express it is to betray it. But to translate it is *to dissimulate it*. True expression hides what it makes manifest. It sets the mind in opposition to the real void of nature by creating in reaction a kind of fullness in thought. Or, in other terms, in relation to the manifestation - illusion of nature it creates a void in thought. All powerful feeling produces in us the idea of the void. And the lucid language which obstructs the appearance of this void also obstructs the appearance of poetry in thought. That is why an image, an allegory, a figure that masks what it would reveal have more significance for the spirit than the lucidities of speech and its analytics. (71)

Therefore, theater is considered not as a reflection of a written text but as a much more complex and multi-layered event. It is the projection of the so-called minor parts upon the stage. “This active projection can be made only upon the stage and its consequences found in the presence of and upon the stage; and the author who uses

written words only has nothing to do with the theater and must give way to specialists in its objective and animated sorcery” (Artaud 73). The specialists that Artaud refers to can be considered as the spectators of the play and in the “theater of cruelty the spectator is in the center and the spectacle surrounds him” (81). By Artaud’s innovations not only the minor parts but also the spectators regain their importance. In addition to these, his emphasis on gestures and actions leads the way to the materiality of theatre. Artaud calls for a kind of theatre with “immediacy”, one in which the themes arising from the conflicts between man and his life “will be borne directly into the theater and materialized in movements, expressions, and gestures before trickling away in words”. (123-124). As a result of this suggestion the text is not primary nor is its author its dictator. Moreover, there will be an overlap between images and movements when the images are re-filled with movements, silences, shouts, and rhythms (ibid. 124). Therefore, it is not only the images, arising from the words that the author has written and that the actors give voice to in their speech, that the presentation of a play creates but also the movements and their relationship with the images that are presented on stage.

As Şiray indicates, by means of the rejection of the narrative, discursive and mimetic structure of traditional theatre, there has been a growing interest in the non-mimetic and non-discursive performance which is thought of as an “experience of ‘the’ event” (15). The theatrical experience, which consists of series of events from ticket buying to acting with the characters on stage, is seen as an event by itself. However, it was considered in the past to have a particular place distanced from real life experiences and the outer world. By means of considering theatre and performance as events, 20th century approaches within theatre studies create a “real” space for theatre within “real” life. Since it is an event, it is not possible to consider it far from functioning within life. It has its own effects once it is presented.

Derrida, in his essay “The Theatre of Cruelty and the Closure of Representation”, analyzes the major points of the new theatre that was first theorized by Antonin Artaud. Derrida states, “[t]he theater is born in its own disappearance, and the offspring of this movement has a name: man” (293). The theater, in Derridian sense,

is born as a result of the extinction of thought which considers theater as the representation of life. This does not mean that the theorists of this new theatre (such as Artaud and Derrida) do not consider theater as representation. On the contrary, representation is unavoidable but its older forms have reached an end. Since representation has already started and is inevitable, the new theater can be considered as representation in life. As Derrida points,

The theater of cruelty is not a representation. It is life itself, in the extent [*sic*] to which life is unrepresentable. Life is the nonrepresentable origin of representation... This life carries man along with it, but is not primarily the life of man. The latter is only a representation of life, and such is the limit - the humanist limit - of the metaphysics of classical theater. (*Writing and Difference*, 294-95)

The limit that the older considerations of theatre worked results from taking man as the centre of its representation. According to these considerations, the theater is taken as a place where representation is possible by reflecting man and his life. However, as Derrida argues,

Theatrical art should be the primordial and privileged site of this destruction of imitation: more than any other art, it has been marked by the labor of total representation in which the affirmation of life lets itself be doubled and emptied by negation. This representation, whose structure is imprinted not only on the art, but on the entire culture of the West (its religions, philosophies, politics), therefore designates more than just a particular type of theatrical construction. This is why the question put to us today by far exceeds the bounds of theatrical technology. (295)

For Derrida, the understanding of theatre as an imitation creates a kind of autonomous realm for theatre. However, the repetition of life on stage should be taken as emptying the meaning that has been adhered to life. Therefore, the stage of the new theatre not only puts theatre within life, but also makes us think about the meaning and value of life as previously mentioned. Artaud agrees with this idea and underlines:

The theater as we practice it can therefore be reproached with a terrible lack of imagination. The theater must make itself the equal of life-not an individual life, that individual aspect of life in which CHARACTERS triumph, but the sort of liberated life which sweeps away human individuality and in which man is only a reflection. The true purpose of the theater is to create Myths, to express life in its immense, universal aspect, and from that life to extract images in which we find pleasure in discovering ourselves. And by so doing to arrive at a kind of general resemblance, so powerful that it produces its effect instantaneously. (116, emphasis original)

The emphasis on universality of the new theatre damages the old understanding of a drama which is constructed upon cause and effect relationship. Namely, the universal reflection of life upon stage does not pay attention to the specific conditions of man that resulted from particular conflicts within his life. Rather, the stage functions within life and life is expressed in its universal aspect. As a result of the universalizing idea of humanity and life, the cause loses its significant place on stage since life as it is takes its place. If theatre is taken to be a reflection and/or an effect of something that exist outside of it, then the stage would be theological for Derrida.

The consideration of speech as governing the stage and the status of the author as the creator of the play are strongly rejected by Derrida. For him, these factors are what make theatre distanced from life. When speech is the domineering factor of a play, it is the result of the idea that speech carries the thoughts of its creator, who is the author himself. The author, in such a premise, “lets representation represent him through representatives, directors or actors, enslaved interpreters who represent characters who, primarily through what they say, more or less directly represent the thought of the creator” (296). Moreover, he argues, “a stage which does nothing but illustrate a discourse is no longer entirely a stage. Its relation to speech is its malady” (297).

Within the classical tradition there is an idea of transference of a particular discourse by utilizing the interpretations of the directors, actors and/or spectators. The result of

this creates a presentation rather than a performance on stage. The stage is just used as a medium under the service of this transference of meaning. However, when we think of Beckett's plays, we can see that his plays are opposed to this idea. Beckett, in his writing, does not see the stage as a medium in which characters' speech functions to convey meaning. The spectator who is exposed to his plays is not considered as seated, passively consuming and enjoying what is on the stage.

His plays are considered as performative performances. Not only the characters but also every detail concerning his plays (such as gestures, objects, and stage directions) acts upon the stage. These ingredients are not just matters of the systematic construction of his plays; their functions are just as important as the characters'. Moreover, Beckett as director of the plays was criticized severely by many people including the actors taking part within these plays. As Abbott states, "Beckett is famous for his exactitude, for the precise realization of his will on stage" (82). Beckett gave no chance to the actors to interpret the characters they impersonate. He was criticized for trying to be an "author-god" in directing his plays. Actually the word "impersonate" does not suit Beckett's understanding of acting, rather what actors should do on stage is just to "embody" Beckett's characters. In impersonation there is a suggestion of the combination of two (sometimes more) people, who are identifiable and therefore can be combined. However, in embodiment the actor on stage is just the body that gives voice to the character that is portrayed by the playwright. As Fischer Lichte points "[t]he concept of embodiment is of key importance to the aesthetics of performative" (90). Therefore, it is thought that Beckett's main aim in emphasizing embodiment was to prevent his actors from identifying themselves with the characters and interpreting the features of the characters. Since in the case of impersonation the characters on the stage would be no longer Beckett's, but interpretations of the actors. For Beckett, his plays are not mediums for such identification, nor should they be for the actors.

The deconstructive emphasis in the theory of performativity is also suggested by Judith Butler. Butler's criticism of Austinian performativity results from her

rejection of any kind that considers the concepts of language, performing and subject as existing in a closed and definite system. Butler considers that there can be no single definition and stable exercise of these concepts. For her, in Austin's theory the subject, who speaks, speaks "*conventionally*, that is, it speaks in a voice that is never fully singular. That subject invokes a formula (which is not quite the same as following a rule), and this may be done with no or little reflection on the conventional character of what is being said" (25, emphasis original). As a result, Butler asks, "Who speaks when convention speaks? In what time does convention speak? In some sense, it is an inherited set of voices, an echo of others who speak as the "I" (25). By remarking on the set of voices inherited within the subject's speech, Butler, in a way, deconstructs the totalitarian idea of the subject. In addition to this, the speech that is spoken by the conventional voices within the subject is a repetition. As Butler points, "the language that the subject speaks is conventional and, to that degree, citational...The speaker assumes responsibility precisely through the citational character of speech...Responsibility is thus linked with speech as repetition, not as origination" (39). As opposed to Austinian performativity, there is no origin or power of the performatives. The speech, which can also be named as the voices of the conventions, is citational and by means of repetition it loses its effect as an origin. The speech act that is used by the subject cannot be considered as belonging to the subject originally. Rather his/her speech is the repeated version of the speech. Thus, for Butler, Austinian theory considers that both the language and the subject who speaks the language are in full responsibility in the process of acting. The sentences that the subject utters are thought to transfer the intention of the speaker and through speech acts this intention is understandable for the listener. As a result, in Butler's understanding of performativity, the safe and protected places of speech and subject (that are determined by the rules and conditions of the speech act theory) are demolished.

According to the general frame that Austin draws for his theory of performativity, the subject has to have a kind of dominance over his/her speech in order for a performative utterance to be successful. For example, the performing of a command

can be possible only when the subject has a domineering manner. On the other hand, for Butler, “[a]lthough the subject speaks, and there is no speaking without a subject, the subject does not exercise sovereign power over what it says” (34). In other words, the subject cannot be considered as the “originator of such [performative] speech, for that subject is produced in language through a prior performative exercise of speech” (39). Thus, the subject cannot be considered as a person who is in full control of what s/he says since s/he is one of the constructions of that speech.

When it is considered that the subject acts in uttering performatives, it becomes obvious that the act is limited to the language that is used. As Butler remarks, “[t]he one who acts (who is not the same as the sovereign subject), acts precisely to the extent that he or she is constituted as an actor, hence, operating within a linguistic field of enabling constraints from the outset” (16). Austin’s linking of saying and doing is, therefore, limited. Butler elaborates,

A speech act can be an act without necessarily being an efficacious act. If I utter a failed performative, that is, I make a command and no one hears or obeys, I make a vow, and there is no one to whom or before whom the vow might be made, I still perform an act with no or little effect (or, at least, not with the effect that is figured by the act). A felicitous performative is one in which I not only perform the act, but some set of effects follows from the fact that I perform it. To act linguistically is not necessarily to produce effects, and in this sense, a speech act and action is not necessarily to say that speech acts efficaciously. (17)

Austin’s consideration of speech as the dominant determinant of the notion of performativity is criticized by Butler. The subject, who acts, is as crucial as the performative use of language at the moment of the act. Just like Derrida’s attempts to put forth the importance of writing as a way of communication, Butler attempts to underline the position of the subject in performativity. Moreover, the degree of efficacy concerning the speech act on the one hand and the action itself on the other in the use of performatives cannot be guaranteed. What Butler underlines is the fact that speech acts may not produce the desired effect and this discloses the paradox within the idea that we act when we speak. As Butler notes, “speech is always in

some ways out of our control” (15). Therefore, Austinian performativity as a closed systematic construction is problematized.

Butler also criticizes Austin’s idea of language as a dominant concept in the performatives from the perspective of naming. For Butler, the construction of a subject in language is a “selective process in which the terms legible and intelligible subjecthood are regulated” (41). The subject is called a name through this selective process but who the subject is “depends as much on the names that he or she is never called” (41). Thus, naming the subject is another way of limiting the subject. As indicated by Butler, the naming of the subject is “a kind of unofficial censorship or primary restriction in speech that constitutes the possibility of agency in speech...this view suggests that agency is derived from limitations in language, and that limitation is not fully negative in its implications” (41). Since, when there is a limitation, the emergence of the possibilities becomes inevitable. Thus, the subject is not only the name that has been given to him or her by the selections from language but also the possible names free from the limitation that language forms. That is why naming the subject does not mean providing the full data that is necessary to understand who the subject is. In this sense to name is a kind of censorship and a creation of possibilities simultaneously. For Butler, these possibilities are celebrated and the kind of speech that is closer to the “unsayable” and which has not been defined before in a conventional manner, suggests disclosing the dependency of the traditional kind of language on something outside itself (41).

The subject formation within language and the adherence of the subject to the name that is provided for him or her is the result of a normative understanding of both the subject and language. This kind of limitation should be subverted by means of evaluating the normativity in a deconstructive manner. The conventional subject cannot be considered as full and determined subject since it is the convention, which is born out of repetition that speaks when the subject utters. Thus, the idea of unified subject is deconstructed. Moreover, conventions cannot be thought of as origin since they are citational. The idea that suggests an image of defined subject who is named fails since naming is a limitation which brings the possibilities together with it.

Thus, the traditional view of language is established as a coded, systematic, sayable, definable, and coherent way. It has to be created in a secure position since “to move outside the domain of speakability is to risk one’s status as a subject” (Butler 133). In this way the Austinian theory of performativity nourishes the norms of what is speakable and nameable. What he offers in his theory forms the essences of the speaking subject within the boundaries of determined rules of language.

On the other hand, Butler’s handling of the subject of performativity is a deconstructive one. The relationship between saying and doing is a multi-layered entity which is worthy of a profound analysis. As she claims,

The performative is not a singular act used by an already established subject, but one of the powerful and insidious ways in which subjects are called into social being from diffuse social quarters...In this sense the social performative is a crucial part not only of subject *formation*, but of the ongoing political contestation and reformulation of the subject as well. The performative is not only a ritual practice: it is one of the influential rituals by which subjects are formed and reformulated. (159-160, emphasis original)

As a result, Butler underlines the hidden authoritative approach behind the normative analysis of performativity. Moreover, she problematizes the construction of a speaking subject within the rules of a strict language formation. The language that is conceived of as coded setoff norms is strongly rejected. The risk that resides in the realm of the unspeakable is much of Butler’s concern, since this risk creates possibilities as opposed to stable identities.

The linkage of saying something and doing something results in the further investigations of the words “performance” and “performativity”. As a starting point, Austinian performativity has led to the reconsideration and re-evaluation of the ideas concerning the nature of performance and its place in human life and formed the roots of the ongoing debates on the subject of performativity. Originally dealing with the speech act theory, the concept of performativity gives way to various ideas

combined with performance such as language and performance and gender and performance. Underlying these ideas, there is an investigation and criticism of Austin's theory of performativity.

Richard Schechner is one of the leading figures on the subject of performance theory. He claims that it is difficult to define what exactly performance is and the difficulty arises from the arbitrariness of the "boundaries separating it on the one side from the theater and on the other side from everyday life" (87). Moreover, it is not easy to design the limitations of what can be considered as performance. That is why, the suggestions concerning the definitions and features of performance varies greatly due to the premises that one has in analyzing it. Schechner takes his starting point from the relationship between drama, theatre and performance and explains that "drama is the domain of the author, the composer, scenarist, shaman; the script is the domain of the teacher, guru, master; the theater is the domain of the performers; the performance is the domain of the audience" (70). Further, Schechner explains, "the drama is what the writer writes; the script is the interior map of a particular production; the theater is the specific set of gestures performed by the performers in any given performance; the performance is the whole event, including the audience and performers (87). Thus, in forming his structure of performance theory, Schechner pays attention to the relationship between what is presented on the stage and the people who witness it. He elaborates that,

Drama is tight, verbal narrative; it allows for little improvisation; it exists as a code independent of any individual transmitter; it is, or can easily be made into, a written text. A script – which can be either tight or loose – is either a plan for a traditional event ... or it is developed during rehearsals to suit a specific text ... The theater is the visible/sonic set of events consisting either of well-known components or of a score invented during rehearsal, as in the west. To some degree the theater is the visible aspect of the script, the exterior topography of an interior map. Performance is the widest possible circle of events condensing around theater. The audience is the dominant element of any performance. Drama, script, theater, and performance need not all exist for any given event. But when they do, they enclose one another, overlap, interpenetrate, simultaneously and redundantly arousing and using every channel of communication. This kind of behavior characterizes many human activities, from ritual to art. (94)

The relationship between drama, script, theater and performance is difficult to decompose when they all exist in a specific event. Since there may be some situations in which all of these may intermingle with each other in such a way that it is impossible to put them in categories. This is the case when we think of rituals; it seems not to be possible to classify them as dramas, scripts, theaters or performances. In addition to this, Schechner emphasizes the quality of human behavior as including all of these intermingled pieces existing together which leads to the idea that the relationship between art and life is also inextricable. As he reports “the boundary between the performance and everyday life is shifting and arbitrary, varying greatly from culture to culture and situation to situation” (70).

What makes Schechner’s analysis a crucial and recent development within the theory of performance is that it points to a place which has long been thought of as dark, silent, motionless and passive: the place which the audience inhabits. One may think that the statement that “the performance is the domain of the audience” is paradoxical since there is the realm of the performance and the realm of the audience are separated from each other. In other words, when we speak of an audience watching a performance how can be the performance be the domain of the audience? The performance becomes the domain of the audience when it does not aim to control, direct, change, manage and/or heal its audience. In this sense, the only thing that can be thought of as the management of performance is its force to claim itself as being under the control of its audience. Rather than separating its realm from that of the audience, performance encompasses its audience. Its audience may be its performer and its performer and author may be its audience just as much as the particular people who come to see the performance.

Performance is an inclusive event which is considered as a series of procedures. The procedures may change from culture to culture which makes performance to be conceived as a dynamic process. Schechner explains,

When people “go to the theater” they are acknowledging that theater takes place at special times in special places. Surrounding

a show are special observances, practices, and rituals that lead into the performance and away from it. Not only getting to the theater district, but entering the building itself involves ceremony: ticket-taking, passing through gates, performing rituals, finding a place from which to watch: all this – and the procedures vary from culture to culture, event to event – frames and defines the performance. (189)

Therefore, what performance offers is a kind of public ritual which has some particular procedures. The urge to this public ritual is the desire to be the part of the ritual. The emergence of this urge results in the idea that “[p]erformances can get at, and out, two sets of material simultaneously: 1) what was blocked and transformed into fantasy; 2) stuff from other channels that otherwise might have a hard time getting expressed at all. Seen this way, performing is a public dreaming” (Schechner 265). At this level Schechner discloses the relationship between the unconscious and performance. Within performances the inexpressible, that has been repressed, comes out. That is why “[i]t is no accident that many cultures link performance to dreams: vision quests, hallucinations, trances, dreamtime, surrealistic automatic creation, and so on. Fantasy is interiorized display and performance is exteriorized fantasy” (Schechner 265-66). This idea will become clear when Todorov’s definition of the fantastic is considered:

In a world which is indeed our world, the one we know...there occurs an event which cannot be explained by the laws of this same familiar world. The person who experiences the event must opt for one of two possible solutions: either he is the victim of an illusion of the senses, of a product of the imagination-- and the laws of the world then remain what they are; or else the event has indeed taken place, it is an integral part of reality--but then this reality is controlled by laws unknown to us... The fantastic occupies the duration of this uncertainty....The fantastic is that hesitation experienced by a person who knows only the laws of nature, confronting an apparently supernatural event. (25)

The audience of a performance is exposed to an uncertainty that s/he cannot manage to identify. His/her place is not safe as in the traditional theater. Within a performance the line between what is on stage and real life is a blurry one. This feature of performance also signifies why performance is the domain of the audience. Performance cannot be what it is unless the dreams of its audience are exteriorized. When this is achieved, the notion of multiple meanings and layers become inevitable; we cannot talk about linear, sensible chronology of events; we may not even consider the concept of human being as it has been thought before. The hesitation experienced by the audience explains why performance escapes from a single and meaningful definition. As Phelan argues, “[p]erformance art usually occurs between the “real” physical matter of “the performing body” and the psychic experience of what it is to be em-bodied” (167). Therefore, in performances it is not easy to differentiate and decompose the ‘subject’ who is acting on the stage. Such a conclusion affirms that performance art includes many different and sometimes unidentifiable features within itself. For this reason research on the nature and features of performance is on-going.

Performance, as occurring within the relationship between the spectator and the stage, has a dynamic quality. Fischer-Lichte, in defining this process, claims that by means of their physical presence, perception, and response, spectators become “co-authors that generate the performance by participating” (32). When likened to a game, the rules of the performance are negotiated by both the actors and the spectators. “The concept of performance proposed here ... by no means suggests an essentialist definition. Rather, it describes the underlying factors that...must be given when applying the term performance” (32). In such a process, it is impossible for the spectator to stay within the realm of their traditional position as a distanced and empathetic observer. Unlike this, the performative construction of performance forces each audience member “to reposition themselves with regard to the actors and other spectators. As a result of this active mobility, the performance literally occurs “*between* the actors and spectators and even between the spectators themselves” (33, emphasis original)

In addition, the varying procedure of performances from culture to culture leads to the intercultural study of human communication. Since performance is the outcome of human behavior it changes from culture to culture and this results in the interdisciplinary studies of performance and culture. As Diamond reports, performance has freed itself from theater precincts since 1960s and it has come to describe an enormous range of cultural activity. Performance can be considered as referring to popular entertainments, speech acts, folklore, political demonstrations, conference behavior, rituals, medical and religious healing, and aspects of everyday life” (2). Fortier agrees, saying:

In recent theatre theory, performance is a term with number of meanings. It can mean performance art, a certain paratheatrical activity...; it can mean that aspect of theatre involved in actually putting on a show; it can mean the entire theatrical experience; it can expand to include other theatre-like activities such as sporting events and religious rituals; it can mean just about any activity, including private acts such as getting dressed or walking down the street. (231)

The expansion of the term is produced by various theorists who reject the modern idea that there is a fully self-present cogito (Diamond 2). For them, to study performance is to “become aware of performance as itself a contested space, where meanings and desires are generated, occluded, and of course multiply interpreted” (Diamond 4). The poststructuralist decentralizing of the human subject by language and unconscious desire, and “the postmodern rejections of foundational discourses (especially totalizing conceptions of gender, race, or national identity) have all made performance and performativity crucial critical tropes” (Diamond 4). Moreover, the effect of the poststructuralist thinking can be seen the shift of focus within the theory performance “from authority to effect, from text to body, to the spectator’s freedom to make and transform meanings” (3). Thus, the perception of performance today

damages authoritative approaches to the text, to illusion and to the “canonical actor in favor of the polymorphous body of the performer. Refusing the conventions of role-playing, the performer presents herself/himself as a sexual, permeable, tactile body, scourging audience narrativity along with the barrier between stage and spectator (Diamond 3).

An emphasis on materiality is also one of the main points in the studies concerning performance. The turn on the subject of performativity in the 1960s leads performance art studies to develop a range of methods concerning theatre and action. The emphasis on action results from the attention on the materiality of theater which has its roots within Artaud’s manifestos in his theory of the new theatre. “Much like a scientific research laboratory, these performative events have made it their aim to stress and isolate various crucial factors and experimental processes that partake in the act of generating materiality onstage” (Fischer-Lichte 76). These new experimental techniques underline the substantiality of performance in which the specific uses of space and tone also affect its materiality.

The body, which is used as aesthetic material on stage, has the central place in focusing the physicality of the stage. “The emphasis lies in the tension between the phenomenal body of the actor, or their bodily being in- the-world, and their representation of the dramatic character” (Fischer-Lichte 76). As a result of this new focus, a new kind of dramatic acting technique, which is called “embodiment”, emerged in the eighteenth century. Before embodiment technique, the actors are considered to identify themselves with the characters they represent on stage; they

are required to become those roles. However, with the new kind of acting they just embody the dramatic characters. As Fischer-Lichte states,

What did this term [embodiment] mean? German theatre witnessed some significant developments in the second half of the eighteenth century: first, the emergence of literary theatre; second, the development of a new – realistic and psychological – art of acting. The two are closely connected. A number of bourgeois intellectuals attempted to weaken the actor's predominance in the theatre in order to elevate the dramatic text to a level of overarching authority. The actors were no longer to be guided by their whims and fancies, their talent of improvisation, sense of humor, genius, or vanity. Rather, their function would be limited to communicating to the audience the meanings expressed by the poets in their texts. The art of acting in its particular performativity would serve as a vessel for expressing only the meanings contained in the poetic text. (77)

The idea that supports the domineering function of the text has also utilized the actors by imposing its supposedly “determinate” meanings on them. However, with the shift of focus to the body as a material object on stage, this idea is corrupted. The performativity of the performance, which resists the performance's transitory effect, discloses the power of anything that tries to authorize the performance. The performative turn within the discipline of theatre results from the proclamation of theatre as an art form which “no longer satisfied with expressing textually predetermined meanings. This performative turn also affected acting that brought forth new meanings on its own” which emphasizes “reflecting the human body's material nature” (Fischer-Lichte 80).

What is interesting about the technique of embodiment is stated by Fischer-Lichte as “[f]or the body to be employed in the art of acting at all, it must first be stripped of its corporeality and undergo a process of disembodiment” (78). The process that has to

be undergone by the body as disembodiment arises from the traditional idea of the body as a material as a whole. In other words, it is the idea that body is a full sign by itself. Therefore, by means of the disembodiment process, the body will not be considered as a whole but with its multiple parts. As a result of this process of “embodiment as disembodiment”, “[w]hile the actors’ gestures, movements, and sounds are transitory, the meanings they bring forth continue to exist beyond these fleeting signs” (79). Therefore, the body, which has been seen as a whole sign with a full meaning, is now considered as carrying multiple meanings. Moreover, the multiple meanings do not depend on the spectator’s ability to decipher the signs reflected in the actors’ movements; rather “the actor’s malleable body itself” has an immediate effect on spectators’ body (Fischer-Lichte 81). In addition to these, in some performances technical and electronic media by means of creating the impression of human presence dematerializes and disembodies the human presence. Beckett’s *Krapp’s Last Tape*, in which the tape is the disembodiment of the body of Krapp on stage, can be an example to this kind of performative construction of performance.

Finally, it can be argued that performativity as an analysis of a dramatic text aims at finding the deconstructive parts of it. Moreover, the qualities that are suggested by the recent theories of performance are also under investigation. Recently, the approaches to performance cover not only the subjects related to theatre but also the issues of man in daily life. As Barad indicates, “[w]e are not outside observers of the world. Nor are we simply located at particular places *in* the world; rather, we are

part of the world in its ongoing intra-activity” (829, emphasizes original). Therefore, Beckett’s dramatic pieces are the products of such an approach. They occupy a performative performance space within the realm of theatre. They are the deconstructive parts of theatre including the spectators as their creators.

Beckett, as one of the great discoverers of this understanding, establishes a new approach to theatre and life. His plays are far from being simple reflections of life and of man in life. Rather, they represent his rejection of the classical approach to theatre as the representation of life. The recent theory of performativity clearly problematizes what has already been embodied and questioned within the Beckett canon. The notions of representation and/or non-representation, the rejection of full subject consciousness, and the exploration of language and meaning are among the subject areas reflected in Beckett’s plays.

4.2 The Stylized Repetition of an Act: Footsteps of May in *Footfalls*

The theory of performativity forms an all-inclusive and versatile platform in the discussions of the notions of language, sex, gender and sexuality. Apart from its linguistic background, performativity reveals itself within the ideas of queer theory. Queer theory can be understood as the combination of the feminist theory and politics of gender (Loxley 112). Judith Butler, one of the leading figures of queer theory, re-thinks and re-evaluates feminism and challenges the pre-determined

consideration of identity by means of an analysis of the body as a challenge to regulatory forces. In *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990) Butler criticizes feminists by asserting that feminism is trying to group and categorize woman through common features which turns feminism into a part of the regulatory understanding of gender. In *Bodies That Matter* (1993), Butler criticizes the understanding of the body as an indication of some other world beyond itself (ix). For her, the materiality of the body should be re-considered by subverting these imposed references. In addition to this, she investigates the theory of performativity and asserts that the idea of iterability should be considered as a way of resistance rather than as an ingredient of normalisation process. Beckett's *Footfalls* can be seen to embody of Butler's criticism of feminism and her re-evaluation of the body.

Butler's *Gender Trouble* investigates the notions of sex, gender and desire. She questions the binarism of sex as male and female, which causes an understanding of gender formation as categorized into feminine and masculine. As a result of this system, the notion of desire, in which each half of a binary desires the other, is at work. For Butler, feminism reinforces the normative power relations of the heterosexual matrix as the inscription of a binary system of man and woman. Butler's indeterminate view of gender and her re-evaluation of the status of woman in feminism display the problems of theories of feminism that assumes a stable female identity.

In *Footfalls* (1975), Beckett presents us with May (M) and Woman's Voice (V), which is the voice of May's mother. May is in her forties and her mother is "eighty-

nine, ninety” (240). The play consists of a dialogue between May and her mother’s voice from dark upstage. The dialogue is accompanied by the “clearly audible rhythmic” steps of May. Within the written text, as in other Beckett plays that have been discussed in this thesis, the character of May is represented by the truncated form of May, as M, and her mother’s voice as V.

The play is considered as one of the best examples of women’s writing in Beckettian theatre. Beckett does not portray M and V in terms of conventional understandings of woman. In other words, there are no signals or any kind of background information that make M and V to be considered as subjects constructed with the traditional idea of woman. At the beginning of the play, M asks her mother,

M: Would you like me to inject you again?

V: Yes, but it is too soon.

[*Pause.*]

M: Would you like me to change your position again?

V: Yes, but it is too soon.

[*Pause.*]

M: Straighten your pillows? [*Pause.*] Change your drawsheets?

[*Pause.*] Pass you the bedpan? [*Pause.*] The warming-pan? [*Pause.*]

Dress your sores? [*Pause.*] Sponge you down? [*Pause.*] Moisten

your poor lips? [*Pause.*] Pray with you? [*Pause.*] (240)

As the word “again” indicates, these actions of M are repetitive. May, the daughter of an ill mother, has been once exposed to do these repetitive actions before. These practices can be considered as the categorized actions that are generally supposed to be done by women. Although M offers her mother to do them again, V refuses. Beckett’s not allowing May do these actions again on the stage during the performance can be taken as his criticism of the conventions of female identity. In other words, the forming of M’s asking but not doing these actions can be

considered as Beckett's rejection of categorizing and classifying the acts that are generally taken as characteristics of female.

By making M verbalize these conventional practices but not fulfill them, Beckett frees M from the restrictions of female identity. May says that she began to walk "when she was quite forgotten" (242). When she is forgotten she is no more under the control and restrictions of the established norms. She is freed from the regulatory norms, then she begins to walk. Her walk is her performance of a gender that is resistant. Her repetitive steps, thus, can be taken as her attempts at forming her gender as female. By her repetitive actions she begins to act, to perform her femaleness.

Butler distinguishes between expressive and performative gender attributes. For her, the expressive gender assumes some pre-existing roles and identifying features that are supposed to belong either to male or female identity. Butler defines what she means by performative gender in the following words:

[T]hat the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality. This also suggests that if that reality is fabricated as an interior essence, that very interiority is an effect and function of a decidedly public and social discourse, the public regulation of fantasy through the surface politics of the body, the gender border control that differentiates inner from outer, and so institutes the "integrity" of the subject. In other words, acts and gestures, articulated and enacted desires create the illusion of an interior and organizing gender core, an illusion discursively maintained for the purposes of the regulation of sexuality within the obligatory frame of reproductive heterosexuality. (*Gender Trouble* 136)

May's pacing is much more than a simple action. The way she paces throughout the whole play is defined by Beckett in detail: "starting with right foot (r), from right (R) to left (L), with left foot (l) from L to R" (239). Butler further defines gender as an identity constituted in time and "instituted in an exterior space through a *stylized*

repetition of acts” (*Gender Trouble* 140, emphasis original), and Beckett’s detailed specification of how May paces can be considered as an example of this.

In *Footfalls*, the repetitive actions that are produced under the influence of the normative idea of gender are expressed by May, but not performed. In other words, they are not done by May since they belong to a regulatory female identity formation. On the other hand, May’s performative gender attribute is that of her pacing, her footsteps. It is not a coincidence that Beckett designs May’s repetitive act as pacing. The act of pacing cannot be considered as belonging either to woman or man. It is a general attribute that is beyond the construction of gender. As Butler claims,

[i]f gender attributes and acts, the various ways in which a body shows or produces its cultural signification, are performative, then there is no preexisting identity by which an act or attribute might be measured; there would be no true or false, real or distorted acts of gender, and the postulation of a true gender identity would be revealed as a regulatory fiction. That gender reality is created through sustained social performances means that the very notions of an essential sex and a true or abiding masculinity or femininity are also constructed as part of the strategy that conceals gender’s performative character and the performative possibilities for proliferating gender configurations outside the restricting frames of masculinist domination and compulsory heterosexuality. (*Gender Trouble*, 141)

There is no conventional categorization for the act of pacing as belonging either to male or to female. May’s performative act of pacing is itself free from any kind of gender categorization. Rather, her footfalls are the results of her resistance to the conventional idea of gender identity, which reveals itself in her questioning of her given name. Her mother calls to the audience and talks about May,

V: Till one night, while still little more than a child, she called her mother and said, Mother, this is not enough. The mother: Not enough? May – the child’s given name – May: Not enough. The mother: What do you mean, May, not enough, what can you possibly mean, May, not enough? May: I mean, Mother, that I must hear the feet, however faint they fall. (241)

The given name, May, is not enough to describe May. The idea of naming, which is criticized by Butler in terms of its being a form of censorship and imposing limits on the subject, is subverted by May's demanding "more" than being named. May says it is not enough for her to be called as May, but she "must hear the feet, however faint they fall" (241). Since May is a performative person, she needs to act and witness the effect of her act in the process of becoming herself. Naming is one of the borders drawn by heteronormative power relations for the subject. Butler exemplifies the inscription of naming through an example of medical language that

shifts an infant from an "it" to a "she" or a "he," and in that naming, the girl is "girled," brought into the domain of language and kinship through the interpellation of gender. But that "girling" of the girl does not end here; on the contrary, that founding interpellation is reiterated by various authorities and throughout various intervals of time to reinforce [*sic.*] or contest this naturalized effect. The naming is at once the setting of a boundary, and also the repeated inculcation of a norm. (*Bodies That Matter* 7)

May's dissatisfaction with being called May can be considered as her rejection of being limited within the norms of language. Her steps are representations of her challenge to that kind of an understanding of subject formation. Her steps have to be repeated in order for May to construct her force to perform May. That is why she cannot stop "revolving it all". Who May is, is her footfalls in repetition. She *is* and *is being* herself by means of creating effect of her existence by the movements of her body (her footsets). In a way, her footfalls fall for herself only, to fulfill the process of becoming, rather than being. Moreover, she is the sequel to her mother's story. She is herself the repetition of the endless and inevitable repetition. After May's mother finishes talking about her, May starts telling the story of herself, using the word "sequel" (242),

M: Sequel. [Pause. Begins pacing. Steps a little slower still. After two lengths halts facing front at R. Pause.] Sequel. A little later, when she was quite forgotten, she began to – [Pause.] A little later, when as though she had never been, it never been, she began to walk (242).

May's being a sequel signals her being as a subject-in-process. She is her mother's continuation, she is one of the links in the chain of the concept of female gender. Her walking is the performative force behind her gender performativity. The significance of her walking is underlined by the use of light in the play. The lighting reinforces the message that the footfalls are the main action by being "dim, strongest at floor level, less on body, least on head" (239). The act of pacing is what the play puts forward and this act belongs to a female who fulfills this act in performing her gender.

The performativity of *Footfalls* reveals itself not only in relation to the Butlerian idea of gender performativity. The play is also performative play in relation to ideas concerning performance studies. In *Footfalls*, the emphasis on the action is an exemplification of the problem of presence of the character. It is not the character, with her defined and evident qualities, that is made to fill the stage. It is the action of that character. This strategic element of the play, indicates another issue related to the idea of presence on stage. May is on stage not with definitive features that make her a character, but with repetitive actions. Her being on stage without displaying a definitive self, thus, paradoxically indicates her absence. "The gradual diminution creates a strong impression of cyclic progression. The pacing figure becomes steadily more memorable as she is seen to be fading, so that the echo of her presence exists strongly for the audience in her final absence from the stage" (Pountney 284). Thus, it is not May who is present on the stage, it is her footfalls; the impacts of her action.

The play is performative since it operates the action itself. If we try to define this performativity of the play with the traditional theatrical terminology, we may consider that the act of creating footfalls is the main 'character' of the play. In other

words, the play can only create effect through the performance of this act. As Ben-Zvi asserts,

[m]aking no appeal to any reality outside of itself, *Footfalls* is, instead, a synthesis of those visual and verbal harmonics we see and hear in the theater as performance takes place ... *Footfalls* is a constant becoming because, as drama, its essence lies in the process of its being staged ... Objects, motivations, exposition, and even explanation, the paraphernalia of a once realistic theater, have been cancelled and omitted. What remains is an immense landscape of potentiality, infinite possibility on the finite dimensions of a stage. No two encounters with this play, like no two stagings of this play, can ever be exactly the same, for the multiplicity and simultaneity of interpretations forever compete for our attention. The adventure of experiencing this play, then, is a continual temptation. (66)

May is nothing as a character, she is just the actant (used as the participant of action) of the performance. May's absence as a character allows the emergence of the performance itself. Thus, *Footfalls* is also performative because it constructs itself only in its performance.

As a result, in *Footfalls* Beckett illustrates a gendered performative body through the footsteps of May. She is not identified as a female through her traditional gender attributes. Beckett hides her body to emphasize not the body but the effect of it, that is her footsteps. In other words, May's body is not represented in a way that leads the audience to consider her body beyond itself, to attach any meaning or design to May's body other than itself. May is the representation of the conflict between identity and body. She is not on the stage as the portrayal of the female identity as biologically constructed. Her footfalls are the voices of her resistance to such an imposed idea of gender. Moreover, May's footsteps are not only the form but also the content of the play. This means that the play has to be performed in order for it to be realized. This quality of *Footfalls* makes it as a performative plays that reveals itself only in its performance.

4.3 The Rejection of Bodily Performatives and the Function of the Motionless Body in *Rockaby*

Rockaby (1981) is a play written for Billie Whitelaw and it is first performed under the direction of Alan Schneider in New York. The play presents a woman (W) seated in a rocking chair on a dark stage. The play consists of W as the woman in the chair and V as her recorded voice. W is “prematurely old” with grey hair and has huge eyes in a “white expressionless face” (Beckett 433). There is spot on her face which stays constant throughout the whole play. Beckett describes the attitude of W as “[c]ompletely still till fade out of chair. Then in light of spot head slowly inclined” (433). The characterization of the play is innovative in fragmenting the female body from its voice. In this play Beckett, who is considered as obsessed with the idea of the prerecorded voice, creates another dimension to the fragmented body: the body of a female character. Therefore, *Rockaby* is considered as a play which exemplifies Beckettian subversion of the traditional understanding of the female subject and gender in general.

Beckett’s interest in female representation in theatre began with his *Happy Days*, which is considered as his first female-centered play. In the play Winnie, half of whose body is seen by the audience, interacts with the items in her handbag. According to Jeffers, Winnie is a “gendered-female mirror image of Krapp” (135) and the play starts a new process in Beckettian theatre in which female characters speak not for themselves but “for a community and a site of memory” (136). Thus, beginning with *Happy Days*, Beckett deals with the subversion of the traditional understanding of the female subject as socially constructed. In doing so, Beckett either fragments or hides the female body, thus, the female body does not serve to the requirements that are traditionally constructed. In other words, the female body is not used either as a sexual object or as a representation of pain that a female suffers. Like the language in his plays, the body does not do anything. As Jeffers explains,

Beckett denaturalizes the image of an ideal Western woman in order, not to “woman speak,” but in order to destroy a normative idea of women, men, and gender performatives. Through his female characters’ often grotesque performances, Beckett shows that gender is imitative and predicably conforms to a patriarchal heteronormative. (139)

In *Rockaby*, the body of W is hidden under a black “high-necked evening gown” with long sleeves (Beckett 433). Her posture throughout the play is still and constant, she does not even move to rock the chair. The chair is rocked mechanically without assistance from W; therefore her body is not used. This motionless body presents W’s body as inanimate which is why W’s body cannot be taken as a sign of her being recognized as a female subject. Not only is her body hidden under the black gown but it is also made motionless. As Jones has noted,

[t]he body plays a unique role on Beckett’s stage as the contestory site of the subject’s very possibility and simultaneously as the performance of its dissolution. Inasmuch as spectacle foregrounds the materiality of the body, it provides Beckett with a space within which to perform subjectivity in its corporeal presence. (179)

The hidden and motionless body of W proposes the materiality of the body. When the body is not represented in the way it has traditionally been represented, it starts to be more than what it has been understood. In *Rockaby*, this being more of the body is achieved through the nothingness of the body. W’s body *is* and *does* nothing. The only thing that is noticeable about the character W is that she is white and old. As Jones claims, “*Rockaby* is a particularly powerful example of the role of presence in staging absence. In this piece, the actor, like the lights, the sound, the costume, is part of the larger body of performance rhetoric” (184). The use of the body in the play is ironic because it presents absence. Since the body does not fulfill its function (it does not even move) the existence of the character itself is questioned. In addition to the lack of reference of W’s body, we have no idea about her inner qualities. Neither physically nor psychologically does W exist on the stage as a theatrical character. Although she is defined as a woman by Beckett in the

written text, “[a]ll of the gendered affections hung upon the actor’s body conspire to upstage it, or cover and negate it” (Jones 186). W’s body does not allow us to impose a female identity on this character. In fact, her body challenges the traditional view of the female body.

As has been previously mentioned in the earlier discussions on performativity, Derrida sees a strong relationship between the body and theatre. What is available for the body is also available for theatre. In *Rockaby*, the materiality of the body indicates the physicality of the theatre. When both the body and the theatre are considered materially, any metaphysical projection upon the stage becomes impossible. The stage becomes something as it is, rather than a medium for presenting anything beyond itself. Since Beckett’s materiality underlines nothingness, it also forms the rejection and erasure of the idea of the original. W’s body cannot be considered in relation to any original body. Her body is made empty as much as the stage and the language she uses. The play can also be seen as the theatrical presentation of Artaud’s idea of a theatre of cruelty. Artaud claims that in order for an expression to be true it must hide what it makes manifest (71). Beckett hides W’s body paradoxically by calling attention to its materiality. The performative quality of the play is the result of these deconstructive approaches.

In *Rockaby*, Beckett’s way of deconstructing the female body denies the audience the restricted representation of that gender. The play’s rejection of any adherence to determined fixations of the body, and its materialization of the body can be analyzed using Butler’s idea of “evacuated femininity” (*Bodies That Matter*, x). In *Bodies That Matter*, Butler analyzes the borders that are drawn around the body by heteronormative power relations. According to Butler,

[t]he category of "sex" is, from the start, normative ... Thus, "sex" is a regulatory ideal whose materialization is compelled, and this materialization takes place (or fails to take place) through certain highly regulated practices. In other words, "sex" is an ideal construct which is forcibly materialized through time. (*Bodies That Matter*, 1)

Butler questions the issue of the materiality of the body in relation to the performativity of gender. She argues that the materiality of the body should be re-evaluated in its relation to the regulatory norms of power relations. The force behind the regulation of normative imperatives is the result of its being repeated through time. Thus, the fixity and the materiality of the body is thought of as an effect of power. When the material body is considered, the materiality of the regulatory norms that are imposed upon it becomes inseparable from it. "Sex is, thus, not simply what one has, or a static description of what one is: it will be one of the norms by which the "one" becomes viable at all, that which qualifies a body for life within the domain of cultural intelligibility" (ibid., 2). Thus, Butler indicates that the materiality of the body which must be understood as the materiality of the regulatory norms and she considers the idea of performativity not as an act achieved by the subject through what it names but as the "reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constraints, the construction of sex as a cultural norm (ibid., 3).

The matters of sex and gender are evaluated in terms of their being the effects of norms that are culturally constructed. Therefore, subjectivity is seen by Butler as an ongoing process that is reiterated continually through the effects of codes of sexual identity. Butler uses Foucault to investigate the increasing instability of the notion of "woman" as a category within feminist theory. A fundamental aspect of her argument is that the relationship between gender and identity is actively constructed in addition to being both variable and historically contingent. For Butler, it does not seem possible to speak about a full, unified and finished subjectivity. When the key points of norms, culture, and reiteration are considered it becomes clear that gender is an issue which should be taken as performative.

The performativity of *Rockaby*, is disclosed not only through the body of W, but also through her use of language. In the play, V (woman's recorded voice) is the main "character". W (woman) speaks only four times and she utters only one word, "More" on each of these four occasions. The Voice in the play can be taken as the representation of iterability. Voice is the representation of the representation. It is

Woman's recorded voice, in other words, it is the woman herself within another medium (within the recorder). The play can be described as Woman's play with her prerecorded voice. The play's actions belong to Woman, on the other hand, the words of the play mainly belong to Voice. It can clearly be considered as the minimal actions of Woman and the fragmented words of her recorded voice. Actions and words are separated under the characterization of the same woman. The stage direction "*Rock and voice together*" gives us necessary information about both the separation and unification within the play. Woman rocks and her recorded voice speaks. This is the best effect created by the play. Through making Voice the dominant "actor" in the play, Beckett not only subverts the unified idea of self but he also questions the function of language. It is not the woman herself who mostly occupies the stage space, it is her recorded voice. Woman just functions as a moderator for Voice. Voice, which would normally be taken as being off stage, fills the stage.

There are also moments in which V and W speak together. As in other Beckett play, *Krapp's Last Tape*, the idea of a unitary self is subverted by creating V and W as two distinct spheres, but off stage and on stage they are united by their collaborative utterances. In *Rockaby*, the female subject is split into two and the speech is also separated into actions and words. Since the speech in the play cannot be considered as dialogue, it also subverts the unitary idea of performativity in Austinian sense. For recent theories of performativity (Derrida and Butler) language can neither describe a preexisting thing nor perform an act through its utterance. Butlerian and Derridian performativity does not take the power of words for granted. Words are not considered as conveying a particular pre-existing meaning. Similarly, in *Rockaby* the idea that words can *do* something is subverted, through a Beckettian operation of language. The words from the recorded voice can be explained as representing the powerlessness of the words. It is not the woman who speaks in the play. The voice belongs to a preexisting realm and the words that the voice uses are fragmented and nonsensical. Therefore, by separating the words from the deeds, Beckett questions the idea that assumes the possibility of full authority of the subject over his/her speech and/or acts. This idea is elaborated by Butler in her critique of

Austinian performativity. As opposed to the idea that a subject exists within the performative speech act, Butler proposes a subject that is plural and in-process rather than full and progressed.

In *Bodies That Matter*, Butler analyzes the notions of performativity and gender performativity. According to Butler, the force of performativity lies under its being repetitive. The ideas of persistence and instability within this repetitiveness are crucial to an understanding of performativity. Through the notion of performativity, Butler subverts the norms established by convention and history. In destroying the effects of conventionality, Butler emphasizes the repetitiveness of these conventions. She is critical of the idea that norms and regulations are sources and origins of human action in general. As gender is also considered as a human act, it is also understood through its performativity. Thus, gender is also a result of repetitive human action. For Butler the idea of construction is not originary and cannot be thought of as a cause of human identity. As she states,

construction is neither a single act nor a causal process initiated by a subject and culminating in a set of fixed effects. Construction not only takes place *in* time, but is itself a temporal process which operates through reiteration of norms; sex is both produced and destabilized in the course of this reiteration. (*Bodies That Matter* 10)

For Butler gender is not biologically constructed, it is formed by means of repetitions of acts. In *Rockaby*, we cannot identify W as female through her physical appearance. Rather her femininity is her insistence on being in a rocking chair. She is performing an effect of being female through sitting in the chair. Thus, her being female is constructed by and during the performance of the play. Prior to the repetitive action of rocking the chair, W cannot be considered primarily as female. The inanimacy of her body reveals this. Thus, *Rockaby* can be considered as the subversion of the idea that gender is a predetermined element in human life. As Bryden claims, Beckett's later drama,

introduces females who are only dubiously 'present' and yet who speak and move. Their being is simultaneously denied and affirmed by Beckett's theatrical practice ... In this intermediate stage, however, absence and presence co-exist in male and female personae who are often all too aware of bodily baggage. Yet the female body is not a source of narcissism or fund-raising, as it so often is in the early fiction. It is, rather, as is the case with the male body also, a wearisome burden from which absence is to be welcomed. (102)

The presentation of W's body as far from "a source of narcissism or fund-raising" and its being free from the chains of language illustrate Butler's, understanding of the gendered (female) performative body. W's performative body not only displays itself through its inanimacy but also through the detailed description of the motions of her eyes. Beckett writes at the beginning of the play, "Eyes: Now closed, now open in unblinking gaze. About equal proportions section 1, increasingly closed 2 and 3, closed for good halfway through 4" (433). Thus, not only W's body as a whole but also her eyes, as parts of her body, are made to perform.

Finally, *Rockaby* is a performative theatrical work in both Derridian and Butlerian senses. It displays a Derridian understanding of performativity in representing materiality through W's body. The play represents the materiality of Beckett's theatre through the materiality of the body of W. Beneath this, the play is also performative in the Butlerian sense since Beckett represents the force behind the performative gender formation (that of repeatability) and the body as free from the established norms of language. The representation of the body of woman does not meet the requirements of traditional portrayal of the body of woman.

CONCLUSION

I want to qualify the categorical distinction that is usually drawn between philosophy and literature, between theory and text, and I am therefore interested not only in reading Beckett through the discourse of poststructuralism, but also in reading the discourse of poststructuralism through Beckett. (Begam, 3)

In this study, it is concluded that Beckett's late plays are the representations of postmodern aesthetics since they reflect absence rather than presence, which is emphasized by the approaches of postmodern theatre. What are absent in his late plays are: plot; characterization; background information of the play; authority of text, of its author and of its director; obligatory existence of the body of the actor onstage; the relationship between the signifier and the signified. In Beckett's texts it is not possible to reach a consensus of what he signifies. Beckett's art in his later plays, both textually and in performance, subverts the outlooks of modernism. In his late plays, he is totally rejecting the idea behind the Cartesian motto "I think therefore I am". The assumption of the possibility of a whole subject who owes his sense of existence to his rationality and logic is rejected in Beckett's theatre of the absurd. The existence of the cause effect relationship underlying in Cartesian understanding is also refused for the sake of the loss of a more general causality. Jeffers notes that

[i]f Beckett is indeed the first postmodern, then he may be so for the very reason that all of his characters lack a subjective core and the actor agency. In Beckett's world nothing happens and nothing ever properly ends, it simply stops. Similarly, the bodies on the stage move and sometimes speak – though not always both – but the play affords them no volition of their own: they are not even 'aware' enough to be bodies on Brechts's stage of alienation. Beckett's world signals the end of Modern protagonist and the end of Humanist regime. (14)

In the first chapter, how Hornby's metadramatic varieties work in *Catastrophe* and *Krapp's Last Tape* was investigated. Beckett's use of the metadramatic varieties was shown to display his challenge to any unitary understanding of theatre and subject. In *Catastrophe*, self-reflexivity in the play is designed to show how multiple layers

operate within a theatrical work and how it is possible to make them seen onstage. Likewise, in *Krapp's Last Tape*, Beckett's use of ritual within the play creates other Krapps who are ritualizing the rituals, apart from Krapp on the stage. The use of ritual within the play is not a tool for designing the plot in the play. Rather it is a technical strategy that Beckett utilizes in creating multiple selves. As a result, the metadramatic varieties used in *Catastrophe* and *Krapp's Last Tape* were shown to be representations of the postmodern idea of plurality that is inherent in Beckett's theatre.

In the second chapter, the notion of theatricality was analysed through *Ohio Impromptu* and *Not I*. In the first play, theatricality is utilized in such a way that the play can be considered as a rejection of itself as a work of theatre. The conventional ingredients of action, narration and characterization are all dismantled. In *Not I*, neither is the stage the familiar theatre stage nor is the mouth the character. On the other hand, Beckett reveals these anti-theatrical approaches on the theatre stage and this makes it crucial to investigate both *Ohio Impromptu* and *Not I* through theatricality. As a result, it is seen that in these two plays theatricality functions so as to disclose the postmodern idea of indeterminacy.

In the last analytic chapter *Footfalls* and *Rockaby* were investigated through their use of performativity. There are two main issues in the plays that lie under their performativity: the first is their uses of language and the second is their portrayals of female characters. In *Footfalls* Beckett destroys Austin's performativity. He makes his character, May, say but not do. In addition to this, Beckett reflects May as a gendered female who is aware of the constructedness of gender. In the same way, in *Rockaby* the main character does not speak except for uttering "More" four times and her body is reflected in such a way that it emphasizes materiality of the body. The idea of materiality of the body nourishes the performative idea that gender is a performative act. Finally, both *Footfalls* and *Rockaby* are representations of Beckettian theatre that typically employs a subversive characterization against foundations of grandnarratives, the negation of which is one of the premises of postmodernism.

It is inevitable to consider the effects of the innovations of Brecht's and Artaud's theatre on Beckett's theatre. The difference of Beckett is that he is not seeking to create innovation; at the same time his theatre is inherently innovative. Within a universe full of absurdity, Beckett does not aim at making his art new and original and this makes Beckett's art newer and more original than Brecht and Artaud. There are political aspects in Brecht's and Artaud's theatre, however, there is an aesthetization of politics in Beckett's theatre. The innovations of Brecht and Artaud are within the realm of the theatrical world and thus they assume the separate sign system that theatre art has. However, Beckett's theatre reflects an awareness of the effects of social, cultural, historical, political and scientific codes on the theatrical sign system. That is why Beckett's theatre does not perceive and reflect itself as a distinct realm from real life. Brecht's and Artaud's aesthetics have a particular aim to change the world of their times, but Beckett's theatre does not consider itself separate from the world that Artaud and Brecht want to change.

This study covers a wide range of theoretical perspectives. The theoretical underpinnings can nevertheless be gathered under an umbrella term, for it is possible to determine *postmodernism* as the key word covering the other theories under investigation. The elements of metadrama, theatricality and performativity have been taken into consideration in their relation to postmodernism. This point needs to be clarified since the terms have more than once been re-defined in different periods of the history of theatre, and lately they have totally shifted under the influence of postmodern approaches. The use of metadramatic varieties and theatricality can also be seen in Ancient Greek Theatre. However, in their analysis the discussion would not go further than the analyses of the choruses, the plays within the plays, and the specific staging techniques that make them theatrical pieces. In other words, all of the metadramatic and theatrical techniques have been seen as the parts of the larger circle which is the main play. Today however, the understanding of what is being referred to the main play has changed: today it has become life itself.

What is added and/or changed with the rise of postmodernism to the understanding of these terms can be referred as the "play effect". Conventional definitions of the

origin of drama and theatre state that man has an instinct to imitate. The word “imitate” presupposes that there are two things involved: the original one and the imitating one. Moreover, within this imitation process there has to be a true representation. As a result, theatre has been considered as the secondary and the imitating one. In order to save it from its secondary position, within the period of modernism there were attempts to provide a particular place for theatre as an art form distinct from life itself. Thus, the modern man was considered to reveal his instinct to imitate within the borders of the theatrical stage. On the theatre stage the mission of the modern playwright was to “make it new” and original. This making of new required a challenge to the conventions of the theatre. With the rise of postmodern challenges that offer an all-inclusive approach, the postmodern man is considered to have an instinct to “play”. Actually, this play effect cannot be thought of as a feature of man that can be learned. Rather it is inherent to mankind. When viewed from this perspective the idea that life and play cannot be separated from each other emerges. That is why it is not possible to think of theater as an art form separated from the process of life.

This study aimed to investigate the ingredients of Beckett’s theatre as one of the leading theatre works in postmodern aesthetics. In observing these features, the subject of metadrama formed a starting point since it causes theatre to become a multi-layered art form in opposition to its being considered as a closed system. With the rise and development of metadrama, the world of theatre is revealed as aware of its self-reflexiveness. Theatre starts to take its subject from itself. If we liken metadrama to a human being, it is a man or woman who has a strong sense of self-awareness. When theatre comes to be understood as a self-reflexive mode of art, it becomes inevitable to be able to evaluate theatre with its various sides. Thus, the art of theatre starts to be perceived as consisting of the operation of various chains of systems. The function of where the drama takes place in the theatrical work is seen as a web of versatile actions. That is why Hornby’s analysis is one of the most crucial contributions to metadrama. His analysis of metadramatic varieties combines the form and content of a play which were more usually seen as two separate subjects in the analysis of a theatre work. Through de-composing the actions in a

play and combining them with the play's formal qualities, metadramatic varieties display the versatile ground that theatre art presents to its audience. Not only does the theory of metadrama add multiple dimensions to our understanding of theatre art but it also creates rich space for the criticism of theatre as one of the fields of performance art.

Such an innovation in approaching theatre art led theorists and critics to make a new beginning, re-evaluating the notion and nature of theatre through various and differing views under the title of "theatricality". In this re-interpretation the ingredients of theatre (character, actor, author, audience, use of time and space) are evaluated separately in order to find the source of theatricality. Thus, in theories of theatricality staging techniques and their functions are investigated in detail. As theatre is one of the performance arts, theories of theatricality also re-evaluated the position of the audience in the theatrical experience. The nature of performance art includes not only art itself but also its perceivers since there is a representation in front of a particular group of spectators. As a result of this, the relation between the performance and its audience becomes a far from a stable entity.

The idea of the inclusion of audience in a theatrical work provides an enriched space for the association of life and theatre. Thus, not only does the audience become part of the stage but also the stage becomes part of the space that the audience shares in life. The contribution of the theory of performativity to theatre art should be seen in a two-dimensional way. It evaluates the stage from the outside world and also evaluates the world from the stage. This double-vision of performativity causes an understanding of self-awareness that has its roots in the emergence of metadrama. Thus, beginning with metadrama, theatre studies completes its circle with the contribution of performativity. This process in the criticism of theatre art theoretically erased the border between life and theatre.

In the light of this information, it becomes clearer as to what is meant by metadrama, theatricality and performativity in the analysis of Beckett's plays. Beckett's handling of these issues is what he shares with what postmodern aesthetics

offers. In addition to these, the plays that are analyzed in this study are appropriate for analysis that covers all of theories of metadrama, theatricality and performativity. In other words, it is surely possible to deal both with the metadramatic varieties of the plays that are analyzed under the theory of theatricality and/or the plays that are analyzed through their performative aesthetics and these can be investigated through the perspectives of metadrama and theatricality. Thus, the analyses part of this study can be enlarged by applying all of the three terms (metadrama, theatricality and performativity) to each of the six plays.

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Advanced English, Intermediate German

PUBLICATIONS

1. Krillova, Tatyana and Hatice Emre (Eşberk), “Neo-naturalism and *The Rainbow* by D.H. Lawrence”. 11th METU British Novelists Seminar: D.H. Lawrence and His Work, December 2003. Ankara, Turkey (presented).
2. Eşberk, Hatice, “Two Tragic Evil Characters: Camus’ *Caligula* and Shakespeare’s *Richard III*”, VII. International Language, Literature and Stylistics Symposium, Selçuk University, May 2007, Konya, Turkey (published).

3. Eşberk, Hatice, “Multiple Voices of Hybrid Identities in A Postmodern Text As Opposed to Muted Victorian Characterization: Jean Rhys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea*” Fourth International IDEA Conference. Celal Bayar University, April 15-17, 2009, Manisa, Turkey (presented).

4. Birlik, Nurten and Hatice Eşberk, “The Uncanny in *A Burnt-Out Case*: Dialogizing Psychology and Literature”. The 5th International Conference on Interdisciplinarity in Education ICIE’10 June 17-19, 2010, Tallinn, Estonia (published)

5. Eşberk, Hatice, “The Border Subject in Transition in Brian Friel’s *Philadelphia Here I Come!*” International Conference on the Border and its Relationship to the Performing Arts in Europe. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. March 1-4, 2012, Barcelona, Spain (published).

TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu çalışmada Samuel Beckett'in altı oyunu postmodern estetik yaklaşımları üzerinde durularak incelenmiştir. Çalışma üç bölümden oluşmaktadır, her bölümde iki Beckett oyunu incelenmiştir. İlk bölümde *Felaket* ve *Krapp'ın Son Bandı*, Richard Hornby'nin metadramatic öğeleri ile incelenmiştir. Dramanın sorgulayan ve ters yüz eden yapısı ortaya çıkarılmıştır. Drama ile ilgili drama, yani kendini yansıtan bir drama anlayışı ortaya konmuştur. İkinci bölümde *Ohio Doğaçlaması* ve *Ben Değil*, Beckett'in yenilikçi sahneleme tekniklerinin yansıması olarak incelenmiştir. Bu iki oyunda da Beckett'in, bir oyunu tiyatro oyunu yapan şeyin doğası ile ilgili sorgulamalarını buluruz. Öyle ki, Beckett bu oyunlarda sahneyi kendine karşı kullanmıştır. En son olarak da, üçüncü bölümde *Ayak Sesleri* ve *Ninni*, hem toplumsal cinsiyet performatifliği hem de genel anlamda performatiflik başlıkları altında incelenmiştir. Bu iki oyunda da Beckett toplumsal cinsiyet üzerindeki ataerkil otoritenin baskısını eleştirir. Beckett'in oyunları incelenirken, onun oyunlarının geleneksel tiyatroya bir başkaldırı ve karşı çıkış oldukları belirtilmiştir. Bu çalışmada geleneksel tiyatrodan kasıt, sahneden seyirciye belirli bir mesaj aktarma amacıyla, sebep-sonuç ilişkisi kurularak oluşturulmuş bir dizi olay örgüsüdür. Beckett'in oyunlarında bu yaklaşımların varlığından söz etmek mümkün değildir. Sonuç olarak Beckett'in bu oyunları onun postmodern estetik yaklaşımlarıyla yazan bir yazar olduğunu ortaya koyar.

Beckett'in modernist mi yoksa postmodernist mi olduğu konusunda hala tartışmalar devam etmektedir. Bazı eleştirmenlerce en son modernist olarak görülen yazar, kimilerine göreyse ilk postmodernisttir. Aynı şekilde, Beckett bir yandan, modern insanın yabancılaşmasının yansıtıldığı Absürt Tiyatro'nun önde gelen isimlerinden biri olarak düşünülürken bir yandan da onun oyunlarında yansıttığı bu absürtlük postmodernizmin başlangıcı olarak görülmektedir. Bunlara ek olarak, Beckett'in yazınında kullandığı parçalanmış dil kullanımı, dilin belirli bir anlamı konuşandan dinleyene taşıma özelliği olması düşüncesine karşı olup, onun eserlerinin post-yapısalcı yaklaşımı da yansıttığını gösterir. Beckett'in yazını postmodernist olarak inceleyenlerin odak noktasında, onun eserlerindeki belirsizlik, temsil krizini

yansıtması ve bütüncül bir kimlik anlayışına karşı duruşu vardır. Beckett, bu bakışla, adlandırılmayanı adlandıran temsil edilemeyeni temsil eden bir yazardır.

Bunlara ek olarak, onun oyunlarının hem kendini tekrar eden hem de kendini yansıtan bir yapıya sahip olduklarından söz edilebilir. Beckett, belirli bir sebep-sonuç ilişkisi doğrultusunda kurgulamadığı olayları oyun içinde tekrar eden bir şekilde yansıtır. Tekrarın onun oyunlarında ısrarcı bir şekilde kullanımı, Beckett'in tiyatronun, orijinal olanın kopyası şeklinde değerlendirilmesine bir tepkisidir. Eğer sahne orijinal olanın kopyası olarak algılanırsa, orijinal olanın orijinal olması için o kopyanın varlığına ihtiyacı vardır. Dolayısıyla, Beckett'in tekrar tekrar aynı şeyleri yansıtması orijinal ve kopya ikiliğini yok etme çabasıdır. Öyle ki Beckett yazınında orijinal olgusundan bahsetmek mümkün değildir. Ona göre, yazılacak her şey yazılmış, söylenecek her söz söylenmiştir. Dolayısıyla, Beckett tekrar eden yazınında orijinal kavramını ters yüz eder.

Beckett tiyatrosu *drama*, *tiyatro* ve *performans* terimlerinin yeniden tanımlanmasında önemli bir yer tutmaktadır. Postmodernizmin etkisiyle yeniden değerlendirilen metadrama, teatrallik ve performativite kavramları yalnızca tiyatronun kendisi için değil ayrıca hayat ve insan konularında da yeni bakış açılarının ortaya çıkmasına sebep vermiştir. Bu kavramların yeniden incelenmesi *drama*, *tiyatro* ve *performans* terimlerinin de yeniden tanımlanması gerekliliğini ortaya çıkarmıştır. Gerek kavramların taşıdığı çoğulcu bakış açısı gerekse onların tiyatro alanında yeni kapılar açması, sahne üzerinde olan biten her şeyin yeniden mercek altına alınmasını sağlamıştır. Postmodern tiyatro kendisini yalnızca yazılı olan oyun metni olarak değil, çoğulcu bir bakışla, tiyatroyu yazar, yönetmen, oyuncu, sahne, metin ve seyirci arasındaki karmaşık ilişki olarak tanımlamaktadır. Dolayısıyla postmodern tiyatro hem çoğulcu hem karmaşık hem de keskin tanımlamalardan uzak bir bakışa sahiptir. Artık oyun metni, yazar tarafından belirli bir mesaj iletme kaygısı güdülerek yazılan bir şey olmaktan çıkmıştır. Yönetmen, daha önceki gibi, oyunun sahnelenmesi konusunda tek otorite sayılamaz. Oyuncunun, klasik yöntemlerle,

oynadığı karakterle özdeşleşmesi ve kendini onun yerine koyma çabası hem gereksiz hem de olması mümkün olarak görülmemeye başlamıştır.

Tiyatronun, belirli bir oyunun sunumu öncesinde ve esnasında, seyircisini de içine alan ve hatta ondan ayrı olarak düşünülemeyecek bir olgu olduğu postmodern tiyatro ile hayat bulur. Postmodern tiyatrodaki artık sadece koltuğunda oturup oyunu sessizce izleyen pasif bir seyirciden bahsedilemez. Seyirci gerek oyuna gelirken yaptığı hazırlıklarla gerekse oyunu izlerken aktif olarak ona katılımıyla ele alınır. Seyircinin bu şekilde algılanması tiyatronun performans çalışmaları altında bir tür olarak kabul görmesinin altında yatan sebeplerden biridir. Postmodern anlayışın etkisiyle, tiyatro tanımı, hem seyircisini hem de oyunun sunumu esnasında tecrübe edilen her şeyi içermektedir. Bu da onun performatif özelliğinin altını çizmektedir.

Beckett tiyatrosu postmodern sanat anlayışının birebir yansımasıdır. Her ne kadar Beckett'in oyunlarının postmodern olarak incelenmesine karşı çıkan eleştirmenler olsa da, onun oyunları gerek çoğulcu gerekse tanımlanamayan yapılarıyla postmodern incelemeye çok açıktır. Bütün bunların ışığında, bu çalışmada Beckett'in *Felaket* ve *Krapp'ın Son Bandı* adlı oyunlarında metadramatik öğelerin nasıl kullanıldığı incelenmiştir. Richard Hornby tarafından ortaya koyulan metadramatik öğeler, Beckett'in bahsi geçen iki oyununda da etkili bir biçimde kullanılmıştır.

Metadrama sözcüğü ilk kez 1963'te Lionel Abel tarafından türetilmiştir. Metadrama, dramının kendini yansıtan bir sanat dalı olma özelliği üzerinde durur. Drama ve tiyatroya bu tarz bir bakışta, modern insan için artık trajedi türünün yeterli olamayacağı ve tiyatronun kendine dönmesi gerekliliği ön plandadır. Abel, metadramayı trajedi ile karşılaştırarak, trajedinin gerçek hayatla, metadramanın hayal gücüyle ilgili olduğunu belirtir. Abel'e göre metadrama, zaten çoktan teatralleşmiş olan bir hayatın yansımasıdır. Dolayısıyla, metadramada hem yazar, hem yönetmen, hem de oyuncu kendini yansıtan bir dünya içerisindedirler. Bu da, aslında, gerçek ve kurgu arasındaki ilişkiyi net olmaktan uzak olarak gösteren bir durumdur. Metadramaya göre, insanın hayal gücünün dışında olan başka bir gerçek dünyadan bahsedilemez. Düzen ve kurallar, trajedi için vazgeçilmez birer öğe iken,

metadramaya göre düzen sürekli insan tarafından doğaçlama şeklinde üretilen bir kavramdır. Dolayısıyla metadrama, hayatın geçiciliği, gerçekçiliğin geçersizliği, varolmanın belirsizliği, değer yargılarının göreceliği, hayatın bir rüyadan dünyanınsa bir sahneden ibaret olduğuna inanması gibi özellikleriyle ön plandadır.

Richard Hornby, metadramatik altı özellikten bahsetmektedir. Bunlar, oyun içinde oyun, oyun içinde ritüel, rol içinde rol yapma, edebi bir esere atıfta bulunma, gerçek hayata atıfta bulunma, kendine atıfta bulunmadır. Nadiren tek başlarına bulunabilmelerinin yanı sıra, bu özellikler, oyun içerisinde genellikle birbirlerine karışmış olarak bulunurlar.

İlk metadramatik öge olan oyun içinde oyun, kendi içinde ikiye ayrılır. Bunlar: ana oyunun içine eklenmiş oyun içinde oyun ve çerçevelenmiş türde olan oyun içinde oyundur. Ana oyunun içine eklenmiş oyun içinde oyun ana oyuna göre ikincil plandadır. Buna karşılık, ana oyunun sadece çerçeve rolü oynadığı ve ana oyun kadar temel olarak sunulan oyun içinde oyun çerçevelenmiş türdür. Bütün bu özellikleri belirtmesine rağmen, Hornby, oyun içindeki oyun ile ana oyun arasındaki bağlantılılığın kolaylıkla görülebilir olmamasına işaret etmiştir. Özellikle çağdaş oyunlarda oyun içinde oyun ile ana oyun arasındaki bağlantıyı kesin ve belirgin hatlarla belirlemek mümkün olamayabilir. Bu da oyun içinde oyun metadramatik ögesinin oyun ile gerçek arasındaki ilişkiyi sorunlaştıran bir yapıya sahip olmasından ileri gelmektedir.

Hornby'nin ikinci olarak belirttiği metadramatik öge olan oyun içinde ritüelde, genellikle oyunun içinde belirgin bir ritüel seçilenir. Bununla beraber, bu ritüel ya da ritüeller oyunla bir bütün halinde de sunulabilir. Oyun içinde ritüelin işleyişi gerçek hayatta ritüelin işleyişi ile aynı görülmektedir. Her ikisinde de, kendini ve yaşamı anlama çabası içinde olan insanın, kültürün etkisiyle bir takım kodlamalar kullanarak eyleme geçme düşüncesi vardır. Ritüeller ile tiyatro arasında da belirgin bağlantılar bulunmaktadır. Öyle ki ritüellerin tiyatronun ortaya çıkış aşamasındaki yeri ve önemi büyüktür. Tiyatronun değişime açık olması ve belirli bir olay örgüsü yansıtma çabası onu ritüelden ayıran özelliklerindedir. Oyun içinde ritüeller,

tamamlanan ve tamamlanamayan ritüeller olmak üzere iki başlıkta düşünülmektedir. Oyun içinde tamamlanan ritüeller, belirli bir başlangıç, gelişme ve sonuç gelişimi gösterirken, oyun içinde tamamlanamayan ritüeller kesitler halinde ve sürekli bir başka şeyin araya girerek bu gelişimi göstermeyen ritüellerdir. Çağdaş tiyatrodaki ritüeller insanın nafile bir şekilde belirli bir anlam ve kimlik arayışı içinde olmasını yansıtmada bakımında fazlaca yer almaktadır. Bir bakıma bu tür bir çaresizlik içinde olan insan için ritüel bir alışkanlık halini alır ve dolayısıyla insan hayatı ritüelleşmeye başlar. Sonuç olarak, oyun içinde ritüel bir anlamda insanın, postmodernizmin öne sürdüğü kaos algısıyla başa çıkma yöntemlerinden birini yansıtan bir metadramatik öğedir.

Üçüncü olarak belirtilen rol içinde rol yapma, oyundaki karakter ve aktör kavramlarının yeniden sorgulanmalarının bir temsilcisidir. Rol içinde rol yapan karakter için orijinal bir karakter tanımından söz edilemez. Çünkü rol içinde rol yapan karakter bir karakteri oynamamakta ve çoğul bir karakter temsili sunmaktadır. Aynı şekilde bu çoğulcu yaklaşımda olan aktör için de kendisi için belirgin ve tek bir kimlik tanımlaması yapması zorlaşır. Dolayısıyla rol içinde rol yapma metadramatik öğesi, doğası gereği, insanın çoğulcu bir yaklaşımla ele alınmasını öngörür.

Oyunda bir edebi esere atıfta bulunma olan bir diğer metadramatik öğede, metadramatik etkinin yoğunluğu seyircinin bu atfı yerli yerinde algılayabilmesine bağlıdır. Atıfta bulunulan edebi eser seyirci tarafından da biliniyor olmalı ve dolayısıyla atıf esnasında metadramatik etki yoğunlaşmalıdır. Oyun içinde başka bir edebi esere atıfta bulunma seyirci için ana oyunun illüzyonunu kıran bir etkiye sahiptir.

Gerçek hayata atıfta bulunmaya baktığımızda, bu metadramatik öğenin de aynı şekilde seyircinin sahnede izlediği oyuna yabancılaşmasına sebep veren bir özellikte olduğunu görürüz. Gerçek hayattan kişilere, yerlere ve olaylara atıfta bulunulduğunda seyirci için metadramatik etki artmakta ve izlenen oyun bir farkındalık içinde algılanmaktadır.

Son olarak, bir diğere metadramatik öge olan oyunun kendisine atıfta bulunarak sergilenmesi, metadramatik etkinin oldukça yoğun olduđu bir ortam yaratmaktadır. Seyirci bu ögenin kullanıldıđı oyunlarda sahne ile özdeşleşme kuramaz. Bu metadramatik ögede seyirci, oyun içinde oyunda olduđu gibi, dolaylı olarak deđil de doğrudan, izlediđi oyunun hayali bir kurgu olma özelliđini hisseder. Seyircinin bir yabancılaşma içinde olması en çok bu dramatik öge ile sağlanır.

Metadramanın postmodern drama alanındaki işleyişi ve görevi, onun oyun ile gerçek, ve sanat ile hayat arasındaki ilişkiye ayrıştırıcı deđil de birleştirici bakması yönüyle deđerlendirilebilir. Postmodernizmin önermelerinden biri olan gerçek ile kurgunun arasında keskin bir çizginin varolmaması, metadramanın kendisini yansıtma özelliđi ile de ön plana çıkmaktadır. Gerek oyun içinde oyunla, gerekse oyunu çok katmanlı bir şekilde sunan diğere metadramatic ögeler vasıtasıyla, metadramanın postmodern dramadaki yeri ve önemi büyüktür. Metadramanın bu çođulcu yaklaşımı aynı zamanda onun oyun metninin süregelen otoritesini de yok ettiđi anlamına gelmektedir. Bir diğere özelliđiyle metadrama, tek düze bir zaman algısını yansıtmaz. Oyun içinde kurulan diğere bir oyun, ana oyunun zaman ve uzam algısını tamamen deđiştirir. Seyirci, böylelikle, çođulcu bir zaman ve uzam algısını oluşturur. Metadrama, aynı zamanda, bütüncül ve tanımlanabilir kimlik anlayışını da reddeder. Rol içinde rol yapan bir karakter, bir anlamda aynı anda sunulan çođul kimlikler ortaya koymaktadır. Bu özelliđiyle metadrama, bir yandan bir sanat dalı olan tiyatro içinde karakter yapılanmasını deđiştirirken diğere yandan da o karakteri canlandıran aktör için çođulcu kimlik algılamasına sebep verir. Bu da metadramanın postmodern drama alanına sağladıđı bir diğere katkıdır. Genel olarak bakıldıđında metadramatik ögelerin çelişkili yapılarından bahsedilebilir. Çünkü bir yandan bir oyun içerisinde kendilerini ortaya çıkarırken bir yandan da kendilerinin de birer kurgu ürünü olduklarını yansıtırlar. Bu da metadramanın teatrallik konusuyla ne kadar bağlantılı olduđunu gösterir.

Felaket adlı oyunda oyun içinde oyun ve kendine atıfta bulunma metadramatik öğeleri kullanılarak, tiyatro tekil bakış açısıyla algılanmaktan kurtarılmaya çalışılmıştır. Oyunda bir yönetmen, asistanı ve bir de oyun içindeki oyunun kahramanı vardır. Yönetmen, sergilenecek olan oyun içindeki oyunun son provasını yapmaktadır. Asistanına oyun içindeki oyunun detaylarıyla ilgili bilgiler vermekte ve ona yapmasını istediği değişiklikleri belirtmektedir. Oyun içindeki oyun asıl seyirciye (*Felaket*'in seyircisine) asla sunulmaz. Seyirci oyun içindeki oyunun detaylarını yönetmen ve asistan arasında geçen diyaloglar vasıtasıyla öğrenir. Oyun içindeki oyunun kahramanı seyirci önünde rolünü oynamaz. Dolayısıyla oyun içindeki oyun, yönetmen ve asistan arasında olan ana oyuna göre ikincil plandadır. İkinci metadramatik öge olan kendini yansıtma ise ana oyunda verilmektedir. Yönetmen ve asistan arasında geçen oyunun teknik sunumu ile ilgili olan detaylar, ana oyunun kendisini yansıtmasına sebep vermektedir. Böylelikle seyirci oyunla arasında bir özdeşleşme kuramaz ve oyunu öz-farkındalığı artarak izler. Dolayısıyla Beckett bu oyunda tiyatronun kendini yansıtan ve çok katmanlı yapısını açığa çıkarmıştır. Seyircinin sahne ile ilişkisi, sahneden seyirci koltuklarına giden tek yönlü bir ilişkiden uzaklaşmış, seyircinin de oyunun içindeki çok katmanlılığa katıldığı bir tür alışveriş içeren bir hal almıştır.

Krapp'in Son Bandı adlı oyunda ise oyun içinde ritüel metadramatik ögesi kullanılmıştır. Beckett'in oyunları yarı-ritüel özelliği taşımasıyla değerlendirilmektedir. Buna göre, anlamsız ve amaçsız bir dizi alışkanlık ve eylemi yansıtan Beckett karakterleri, bu davranışları bir tür ritüel halinde sunarlar. Öyle ki, bu eylemler onlar için artık kaçınılmaz aktiviteler olmuştur. Oyun içinde ritüeller, gerçekleştirilen ve gerçekleştirilemeyen ritüeller olmak üzere ikiye ayrılır. Bu ikisinin ayırt edilmesi oyunun algılanmasında çok büyük öneme sahiptir. *Krapp'in Son Bandı* oyununda, 69 yaşını kutlayan Krapp sahne üzerindedir. Krapp'in 69'uncu yaşını kutlama yöntemi oldukça ilgi çekicidir. Krapp daha önceki doğum günlerinde doğum gününü kutlarken kendi sesini teybe kaydeden diğer Krapp'lerin kayıtlarını dinlemektedir. Oyunun tamamında 69 yaşındaki Krapp'in bu ses kayıtlarına tepkileri, ses kayıtlarını ileri ve geri sarması ve kendi sesini kaydetmesi izlenmektedir. Hem daha önceki doğum günü kutlamalarında hem de 69. yaşını

kutlarken Krapp'ın eylemleri birbirinin aynısıdır. Dolayısıyla bu eylemler Krapp için birer ritüel halini almıştır. Beckett'in oyunda birden fazla Krapp'i yansıtması, onun tanımlanabilir ve tamamlanmış benlik algısından ne kadar uzak olduğunu gösterir. Oyunda belirli bir geçmişe sahip ve belirgin özellikleri olan bir Krapp'ten söz edilemez. Tam aksine, Krapp, bütün o ses kaydında dinlediğimiz ve aynı zamanda da sahne üzerinde gördüğümüz Krapp'lerin hepsidir. Sonuç olarak, Beckett bu oyunda, oyun içinde ritüel metadramatik tekniğiyle, postmodern bir yaklaşımla, bütünsel ve tekil benlik ve kimlik anlayışını sorunsallaştırmıştır.

Beckett'in oyunlarındaki teatrallik tiyatroyu sadece hayatın yansıması olarak kabul eden yaklaşımlara bir karşı duruştur. Beckett oyunlarına baktığımızda, ne karakterler ne de olaylar gerçek hayatın yansıması olarak görülemez. Tam aksine onlar hayatın teatrallığının altını çizen ve buna dikkat çekmeye çalışan bir durum içindedirler. Beckett'in tiyatrosu bu yönüyle temsil krizinin birebir yansımasıdır. Oyun içinde dış ses kullanarak, sahne üzerinde aktör bedeninin zorunlu olarak bulunması gerektiği düşüncesini yıkar. Öyle ki, insan bedenini parçalanmış olarak temsil etmesi, bütüncül bir beden algısını da yok eder. Beckett tiyatrosu kendini tekrar eden ve kendini yok edip tekrar var eden bir yapıya sahiptir. Geleneksel anlamda teatrallığı anti-teatrallığıyla yıkarken, kendini yansıtan özelliğiyle de kendine has bir teatraalılık yaratır.

Teatrallik kavramı, genel olarak bakıldığında, sahneleme tekniklerini içeren yaklaşımlar ve tanımlamalar dizisidir. Teatrallik kavramının içeriğinin algılanması, sahne ve yaşam arasındaki bağlantıyı ortaya çıkarması bakımından son derece önem taşımaktadır. Bir eseri tiyatro eseri yapan şeyin ne olduğu ve onun teatral etkiyi nasıl ve hangi yöntemlerle sağladığı konuları tiyatro çalışmalarında çok çeşitli yorumlara ve yaklaşımlara sebep olan bir konudur. Bu sebeple, teatrallik için belirli bir tanım yapmak ve onu sınıflandırmak oldukça zordur. Tiyatronun, sahne yoluyla seyircisine canlı bir temsil sunması onun gerçek hayatla tam da iç içe olan bir sanat dalı olma özelliğini yansıtmaktadır. Gerçek hayatı tanımlamak ve sınıflandırmak ne kadar mümkünse, tiyatro ve teatrallik söz konusu olduğunda onları tanımlamak da o derece mümkündür. Dolayısıyla teatrallığın tanımı ve muhteviyatı hala tiyatro

kuramcılarını ve eleştirmenleri tarafından mercek altındadır ve günden güne değişiklik gösterebilmektedir.

Teatrallığı, tiyatro sahnesinin hayatın bir yansıması olarak düşünüldüğü *mimesis* terimi ile algılayanların yanı sıra onu her dönemde sürekli değişen ve oyunun sahnelenmesinde kullanılan tekniklerle tanımlamaya çalışanlar bulunmaktadır. Teatrallığın *mimesis* terimiyle açıklanabilir olduğunu ileri süren düşünce onu hayatın bir kopyası olarak görür. Bu da bu düşünsel yöntemin ikili bir sisteme bağlı olarak teatrallığı algıladığını gösterir. Çünkü bu yaklaşıma göre teatrallik bir orijine bağımlı olmak durumundadır. Oysa post-yapısalcı düşüncenin etkisiyle ikili düşünce sisteminin çöküşü teatrallığın yeniden değerlendirilmesine sebep olmuştur. Bu yeni bakışın temel olarak iki geleneksel düşünce sistemini yıktığı görülmektedir. Bunlardan birincisi geleneksel temsil algısı değilse sahnenin tiyatro için bir araç olarak kullanıldığı fikridir. Her iki geleneksel yaklaşımda da tiyatro ve yaşam arasına onları birbirinde ana hatlarla ayıran kesin çizgiler çizilmiştir. Temsil krizi, temsilin mümkün olması, ve sahnenin tiyatro için araç olma özelliğinden de öte bir kavram olması bu geleneksel yaklaşımları ters yüz etmiştir. Bu yeni algıya göre, geleneksel anlamda bir temsilden söz etmek mümkün değildir. Aynı zamanda sahne sadece tiyatronun araç olarak kullandığı bir mekan değildir. Temsil çoktan sona ermiş, sahneyse hayatın ta kendisinin bir içeriğidir.

Post-yapısalcılığın yok ettiği ikili karşıtlık düşünce sistemiyle, tiyatronun hayat ile olan bağlantısındaki ikincil pozisyonu reddedilmiş, tiyatro kendini yansıtan ve bunu yaparken seyircisini de içine alan bir sanat dalı olarak tanımlanmaya başlamıştır. Tiyatro sahnesi, izleyicilerinin ve oyuncularının dâhil olmadığı bir dış dünyayı yansıtan bir öge olarak görülmemiş, tam aksine seyircisini de oyuncusuna içine alan ve geleneksel tiyatro ve yaşam bağlantısını sorunsallaştıran bir sanat olması öne çıkmıştır.

Teatrallığın kuramsal olarak tarihi gelişimine baktığımızda, onun Plato ve Aristo'dan başlayarak günümüze kadar ne kadar değişken bir tanımlanma süreci geçirdiğine şahit oluruz. Geleneksel olarak temsil yönüyle algılanan teatrallik

günümüzde daha çok sahne üzerinde olan bitenin sunum teknikleriyle açıklanmaya başlamıştır. Bazı yaklaşımlarda teatrallik rol yapmayla ortaya çıkan bir olgudur. Buna göre sahne üzerinde rol yapan oyuncunun yaratmaya çalıştığı etki teatralliğin ortaya çıkmasına sebep olur. Teatralliğin tanımlanmasında, tiyatronun bir sanat dalı olarak işlevi ve işleyişinin ortaya koyulduğu tiyatro semiyotiği önemli bir yere sahiptir. Tiyatro semiyotiğine göre, tiyatro kültürel işaretlerle etkileşim içinde olarak kendine has bir sistem oluşturarak teatralliğin oluşumuna sebep olur. Tiyatronun kendine has doğasının ve işleyişinin incelenmesi teatral olanın algılanmasında önemli rol oynar. Tiyatro semiyotiğinin asıl amacı teatralliğin kodlamalarını inceleyerek onu bir performans (gösteri) sanatı yapan şeyin ortaya konmasıdır. Buna göre dramatik metin (yazılı metin) ve performans metni olarak tiyatronun içeriği yeniden tanımlanmıştır. Bu yeni yaklaşımlarda tiyatro ve teatralliğin durağan, değişmez ve belirgin kurallar çerçevesinde tanımlanmalarının olanaksızlığının altı çizilmiştir. Oyun metni artık oyunun sergilenmesinde bir tam bir otorite olmaktan çıkmış, teatralliğin ortaya çıkışında oyunun sahnelenme yöntemi de seyircinin algısı da birer etken olarak görülmeye başlamıştır. Teatrallik, böylelikle tiyatronun deşifre edilemeyen alanı olarak görülmüştür.

Tiyatro ve performans arasında kurulan bağlantı, teatralliğin tiyatro eserinin sahnede sunumu esnasında kendini göstermesinin altını çizmektedir. Sunum esnasında ortaya çıktığı düşünülen teatrallik seyirci faktörünü de içine almaktadır. Seyirciyi de içine alan teatrallik kavramı tanımı, bu yaklaşımda teatrallikle performatiflik arasında bir ilişki kurulmasına sebep olur. Buna göre, teatrallik sadece tiyatro sahnesiyle sınırlandırılmamış, kendine has bir işleyişi olan ve hayatın içinde olan bir kavram olarak görülmeye başlamıştır. Teatralliğin bu şekilde yeniden tanımlanmasıyla ve sadece sahne yoluyla ortaya çıkan bir kavram olduğunun reddedilmesiyle, onun kendine has ve tanımlanamayan doğası ön plana çıkmıştır. Tiyatro sahnesinin sınırlarından kurtarılan teatrallik kavramının yeniden tanımlanması performatiflik kuramları üzerinde etkili olmuştur. Teatrallik kavramı, tiyatro salonundan bağımsız olarak algılandığında, onun tanımlanması mümkün olmayan ve tecrübe edilen bir kavram olduğu ortaya çıkar. Sadece tiyatro salonunda değil hayatın içinde de kendini gösteren teatrallik algısı insanın performatifliği konusuna işaret eder.

Ohio Doğaçlaması adlı oyununda, Beckett geleneksel teatrallik kavramını ters yüz etmiştir. Klasik anlamda, sahne üzerinde bir ya da birden çok karakterin belirli bir olay örgüsüne uygun olarak, özel bir mesaj içeren eylem ve sözlerinden oluşan sahneleme anlayışı yok edilmiştir. Oyunda bir Okuyucu bir de Dinleyici vardır. Bu iki karakter olabildiğince birbirinin aynısıdır. Oyunun başlangıcında Okuyucu önünde açık bulunan bir kitaptan bir hikâyeye okumaya başlar. Umulanın aksine Okuyucu'nun okuduğu hikâyeye başlangıcından itibaren okunmamaktadır. Hikâyeye ile ilgili bilinen tek şey, onun son olarak anlatılan bir hikaye olmasıdır. Dinleyici ise bazı noktalarda Okuyucu'yu duraklatmak ve/veya yeniden okumaya başlatmak için eliyle masaya vurmaktadır. Oyunun tamamı bu şekilde devam etmektedir. Oyunda ne sebep sonuç ilişkisi bulunan bir olay örgüsünden ne de geleneksel karakter betimlemesinden bahsedilemez. Okuyucu ve Dinleyici klasik karakter tanımına tamamen ters şekilde yansıtılmıştır. Bunlara ek olarak, oyunda anlatım ve eylem birbirine paralel şekilde ilerlememektedir. Tam aksine, Okuyucunun okuduğu hikâyeden oluşan anlatımla Okuyucu ve Dinleyicinin eylemleri arasında bir bağlantı yoktur. Geleneksel tiyatro anlayışında anlatım ve eylemin birbiriyle doğru orantıda olması bu oyunda reddedilmiştir. Dolayısıyla Beckett *Ohio Doğaçlaması*'nda postmodernizmin etkisiyle sorgulan teatrallik kavramını keskin ve net olarak kendini ortaya koyan bir özellik olmaktan uzaklaştırarak teatralliği yeni bir bakış açısı getirmiştir.

Ben Değil, Beckett'in teatralliği sorguladığı bir diğer oyunudur. Oyunda tamamen karanlık olan bir sahnede lokal ışıkla aydınlatılmış bir AĞIZ, belirli bir başlangıcı ve sonu olmayan bir takım sözler söylemekte, bazen de isterik çılgınlıklar ve kahkahalar atmaktadır. Oyunu geleneksel sahneleme teknikleri doğrultusunda incelemek imkansızdır. Öyle ki, *Ben Değil* bazı eleştirmenler tarafından bir tiyatro oyunu olarak görülmemiş, sadece bir temsil ya da görüntü olarak yorumlanmıştır. Edebi bir tür olan tiyatro ile oyun arasında bağlantı kurmak mümkün değildir. Oyun bu özellikleriyle, postmodern bir anlayış olan temsil krizini yansıtmaktadır. AĞIZ bir karakter olarak algılanamaz, çünkü geleneksel karakter tanımından çok uzaktadır. AĞIZ kadın bir oyuncuya aittir fakat bu kadın oyuncunun vücudu karanlıktadır. Beckett geleneksel karakter tanımını, vücudundan ayrı bir şekilde gösterilen AĞIZ

sayesinde sorunsallaştırır. Vücutuyla birlikte yansıtılmayan AĞIZ hem “Ben” demeyi reddetmekte hem de karakter olmayı reddetmektedir. AĞIZ’ı oynayan bir aktör için, geleneksel karakter çalışması olan özdeşleşme mümkün değildir. Bir insanın kendisini vücudun bir parçası olan ağızla özdeşleştirmesi söz konusu olamaz. Dolayısıyla, *Ben Değil* oyunu teatralliği oluşturan geleneksel olguların hiçbirini taşımamaktadır. Klasik anlamda orjinalin kopyası ya da taklidi olarak algılanan bir temsil anlayışından söz etmek mümkün değildir.

Beckett’in oyunlarındaki performatiflik, Derrida’nın ve Butler’ın performatifliğe yaklaşımlarını yansıtır. Derrida’nın, dilin belirli bir anlam taşıma gibi bir özelliğinin olmadığı fikri, Beckett’in oyunlarında dilin parçalanmış halde kullanmasında kendini göstermektedir. Bunun yanı sıra, Derrida performatifliğindeki özne ve birey algısı, çoğulcu, ikili karşıtlıklar sisteminden uzak, kendi eylemleri üzerinde tam bir otoriteye sahip olarak görülmeyen bir şekildedir. Beckett’in oyunlarında da karakterleri tam da bu tür özellikler sergilerler. Austin performatifliğini eleştiren bir diğer düşünür olan Butler’ın yaklaşımlarını da Beckett oyunlarında portre edilmiş olarak buluruz. Butler’a göre özne ya da birey, tek ve değişmez bir tanımlamayla sınırlandırılmaz. Özne, kültürün, toplumsal normların ve düzenlemelerin etkisi altında sürekli bir oluşum içindedir. Geleneksel özne tanımlamaları özneyi yine bütüncül olan dil ile tanımlarlar. Dolayısıyla özne de tıpkı dil gibi toplumsal bir yapıdır. Butler performatiflik konusuna, toplumsal cinsiyet performatifliği ile ilgili yeni fikirler ortaya koyarak katkıda bulunmuştur. Beckett’in oyunlarında toplumsal cinsiyet performatifliği kendini gösteren bir kavramdır.

Performatiflik dilbilim alanında, felsefe alanında ve performans çalışmaları alanında olmak üzere üç akademik alan başlığı altında incelenebilir. Performatiflik ilk olarak modern dilbilim alanında, John L. Austin tarafından kullanılmıştır. Austin’in teorisi yalnızca dilbilim alanına değil edebiyatta ve felsefede performatifliğin tanımlanmasında etkili olmuştur. Bunlara ek olarak, kültür çalışmaları ve kültür teorisi alanlarında da performatiflik, kültürün bir dizi kodlar ve işaretler içeren bir kavram olmasının altını çizerek, bu alanlarda da etkisini göstermiştir.

Austin'in teorisinin farklı disiplinlerde bu denli etkili olmasının altında, bu teorisinin *söylemek* ve *yapmak* arasındaki bağlantıya işaret etmesi yatmaktadır. Austin'e göre bir şey söylemek bir şey yapmaktır. Bu da dilin performatifliği anlamına gelmektedir. Dilin bu şekildeki algısıyla beraber, dil yalnızca doğru ve yanlış bildirimler yapan bir şey olarak değerlendirilmekten uzaklaşmıştır. Dil yoluyla bir takım eylemler de yapabiliriz. Austin dilin performatifliği üzerinde detaylı bir inceleme yapmış, dilde performatiflikten bahsedilmek için bir dizi durum ve kural belirlemiştir. Zaten Derrida'nın ve Butler'in Austin performatifliğine karşı duruşlarının altında genel olarak bu kurallar zinciri yatar.

Derrida'nın ve Butler'in bu reddedişlerinde iki temel unsur vardır. Bunlar Austin'in dilin performatif özelliğini vurgularken sunduğu özne ve yazma ile ilgili görüşleridir. Derrida'yı Austin'den ayıran birinci fark şudur: Austin dili performatif olarak kullanan bir bireyin, kullandığı dil üzerinde tam bir otoriteye ve kontrole sahip olduğunu belirtir. Buna karşın Derrida'ya göre dilin konuşandan dinleyene anlamlı bir mesaj iletme gibi bir görevi yoktur. Anlam sürekli kendini yok eden bir zincir halindedir. Dolayısıyla, bir bireyin konuşması üzerinde tam bir otoritesi olduğundan söz edilemez. İkinci olarak, Derrida Austin'in dilin performatifliğini incelerken, konuşma dilini yazı dilinden ayrıcalıklı bir pozisyonda düşünmesine karşı çıkar. Austin yapmak ve söylemek arasındaki bağlantıyı ortaya çıkarırken bir yandan da yazı dilini gözden kaçırmaktadır. Derrida'ya göre insanı konuşmaya iten şeyle, onu yazmaya iten şey aynıdır. Her ikisinin altında da insanın iletişim kurma ve temsil etme çabası yatmaktadır. Dolayısıyla, Derrida'ya göre Austin performatifliğindeki bu yaklaşım onu çoğulcu yaklaşımlardan uzak tutar. Dilin performatifliğinin bir dizi kurala ve şarta bağlanması onun en büyük çelişkisidir. Derrida'ya göre sözlü iletişim tekrar üzerine kuruludur, sürekli kendini tekrar eder. Aynı zamanda sözlü iletişimde belirli bir alıcıdan ve deneysel olarak belirlenebilen alıcılar topluluğundan söz edilemez. Yazı dili için de aynı şey geçerlidir. Derrida'ya göre temsil ölüdür ve ölüm tek temsildir; temsilin olabilirliliğini kabul etmek orijinal ve temsil edilen olmak üzere ikili karşıtlık sistemi oluşturmak anlamına gelir. Dolayısıyla ne yazı dilinde ne de konuşma dilinde insanın anlamlı bir temsil etme içinde olduğundan söz edilemez.

Butler da Austin'in performatifliğini, onun konuşma esnasında konuşanın tam bir kontrol içinde olduğu konusunda eleştirir. Butler'a göre söyleyenin söylediği şeyler tamamen onun kontrolünde ve etkisinde değildir. Aynı zamanda Austin'in performatifliğindeki adlandırma, Butler'a göre özne için bir sansür ve bir sınırlamadır. Özne sadece adlandırıldığı isimle sınırlandırılmayacak kadar çoğul bir yapıya sahiptir. Bunlara ek olarak, Butler, Austin performatifliğindeki söyleme ve yapma ilişkisini sorunsallaştırır. Ona göre bu ilişki kesin ve net kurallarla belirlenebilecek türden değildir. Austin'in performatifliğindeki bir tür toplumsal performatifliktir. Yani Austin performatifliği toplumun üzerinde etki ettiği ve dolayısıyla da toplumsal bir özne oluşumunu destekler bir yapıdadır. Dolayısıyla Butler Austin performatifliğinin altında yatan bütüncül ve otoriter yapıya, çoğulcu bir yaklaşımla karşı durur. Derrida'dan farklı olarak Butler toplumsal cinsiyet performatifliği üzerinde durur. Ona göre cinsiyet biyolojik olarak belirlenen bir şey değildir. Cinsiyetin biyolojik olarak verilmiş bir özellik olduğunu savunan görüşleri, Butler toplumsal cinsiyet performatifliğiyle yıkmaya çalışır. Performatiflik, sürekli bir tekrar etmeyi gerektiren ve bunu içeren bir kavramdır.

Performatifliğin performans çalışmaları üzerindeki etkisine bakıldığında, ikisi arasındaki ilişkinin temel noktasını insanın kendi hayatı üzerinde ve gerçekleştirdiği eylemler üzerinde ne derece bir kontrol yetkisine sahip olduğunun sorgulanması oluşturur. Richard Schechner, performans ve performatiflik arasındaki ilişkiyi inceleyenlerden biri olarak, performansın hayatla ayırt edilemeyeceğini ve tam bir tanım getirilemeyeceğini iddia eder. Drama, tiyatro ve performans arasındaki farkları ortaya koymanın önemine işaret ederek, dramanın yazarın, senaristin ve düzenleyenin alanı, tiyatronun oyuncuların alanı ve performansın seyircinin alanı olduğundan bahseder. Bununla beraber, bunların tiyatro deneyiminde hepsinin bir arada bulunmasından dolayı aralarında karmaşık ve sarmal bir ilişki olduğunu söyler. Schechner'in analizini önemli kılan ana unsurlardan birisi onun geleneksel seyirci algısını değiştirmesidir. Seyirci artık sadece karanlıkta sahne üzerinde sergilenen oyunu pasif bir şekilde izleme konumundan uzaklaştırılmış, sahne ve seyirci arasındaki mesafe yaklaştırılarak ikisi arasındaki görülmez duvar yıkılmıştır.

Performans söz konusu olduğunda bir dizi prosedürün birbirine karışmış ve belirgin hatların yok olmuş olduğunu görürüz. Performansın seyircinin alanı olması, onun seyircinin oyunu izlemeye gelmeden önceki halini, oyun esnasında oyuna katılımını ve oyun sonrasında seyircinin içinde bulunduğu etkiyi ifade eder. Böyle bakıldığında performans bir anlamda sürekli bir devinim içinde olan bir ritüeldir. Performans bir kültürden diğer bir kültüre değişim gösteren ve seyirciyi aktif bir katılımcı haline getiren bir yapıdadır.

Ayak Sesleri, adeta Beckett'in toplumsal cinsiyet eleştirisidir. Oyun May (M) ve Ses (V) arasında geçen diyalogları içermektedir. Bu diyaloglardan anlaşıldığı üzere, V May'in annesidir. Oyun May'in adımları üzerine kuruludur. Beckett bu adımların hangi ayakla başlayacağından, hangi yöne kaç adım atılacağına kadar hepsini detaylı bir şekilde oyunun metninde vermiştir. Oyunun başlangıcında May annesine birtakım sorular sorar: "Sana tekrar iğne yapmamı ister misin?", "Pozisyonunu tekrar değiştirmemi ister misin?", "Yastıklarını düzeltmemi?", "Çarşafını değiştirmemi?". Bu sorulardan anlaşılacağı üzere May bu eylemleri daha önce de yapmıştır. Fakat Beckett May'in bu eylemleri sahne üzerinde yeniden yapmasına izin vermez. Bu eylemler geleneksel olarak kadına mal edilen eylemlerdir. Beckett'in kadın odaklı görülen bu eylemleri May karakterine sahne üzerinde yeniden yaptırmaması, onun kadını bu geleneksel bakışla görme anlayışını reddetmesi olarak algılanabilir.

Ayrıca Beckett'in bu yaklaşımı, Butler'in feminizm akımını eleştirmesiyle incelenebilir. Butler'a göre feminizm, kadını kategorize edip, ona ayrı bir sınıf ve seçkin bir yer vererek, kadın ve erkek olarak ayrılan ikili bir sistem yaratmaktadır. *Ayak Sesleri*'nde May tarafından tekrar edilen eylemler toplumsal cinsiyeti oluşturan düzenlemelerin ve normların baskısıyla ve etkisiyle yapılan eylemlerdir. Çünkü bu eylemler yalnızca kadının yapması gereken ve hatta yalnızca kadının yapmak zorunda olduğu eylemler olarak kabul görmektedir. May'in bu eylemleri sahne üzerinde yinelememesi onu toplumsal cinsiyet oluşumundan ne kadar uzak bir karakter olduğunu işaret etmektedir. Bunun yanı sıra, Butler'in toplumsal cinsiyeti oluşturan

şeyin biçimlendirilmiş eylemlerin tekrarı olarak tanımlaması, May karakterinin cinsiyet oluşumuyla ilgili bize yol göstermektedir. May kendini sürekli tekrar ettiği ve tekrar etmekten hiç vazgeçmeyeceği adımlarıyla oluşturmaktadır. May'ın ne toplumun oluşturduğu kurallarla ve düzenlerle ne de toplumsal cinsiyetin düzenleyici kurallarıyla bir bağlantısı yoktur. O bütün bunların ötesinde bir karakterdir. May'ın kendisini oluşturma çabası ve toplumsal kategorizasyonu reddedişi, kendi adıyla ilgili annesine yaptığı yorumda da açıktır. May annesine “Yeterli değil” der, “May, yeterli değil”. Butler adlandırmanın sınırlayıcı ve sansürleyen bir eylem olduğundan bahseder. May de tıpkı bu sınırlamayı reddedercesine May adının kendisi için yeterli olmadığını söyler. Onun için önemli olan, “Her ne kadar az duyulsa da, ayak seslerini duymaktır”. Dolayısıyla May toplumsal ya da anlatımda değil, performatif bir kadındır.

Oyundaki performatiflik yalnızca toplumsal cinsiyet performativitesi ile sınırlı değildir. Aynı zamanda performans çalışmaları ile bağlantılı olan performatiflik anlayışı doğrultusunda da oyun incelenebilir. Oyunda May karakterinden çok onun adımları sahneyi doldurmaktadır. Beckett, May ile ilgili bir geçmiş ya da sahnedeki durumunu açıklayıcı herhangi belirgin bir bilgi vermez. Oyunun ana odağı karakterin kendisinden çok onun adımlarıdır. Dolayısıyla oyun yalnız ve ancak sahne üzerinde sunulduğunda kendi anlamını bulmakta ve oyun olmaktadır. Bu da oyunun, başka bir açıdan daha, performatif olduğunu gösterir.

Ninni oyununu da Butler'ın performatiflik yaklaşımları doğrultusunda incelemek mümkündür. Oyunda W olarak temsil edilen bir kadın ve V olarak adlandırılan onun daha önceden kaydedilmiş sesi yansıtılmaktadır. Beckett W'yi ‘vaktinden önce yaşlanmış’ olarak gösterir. Oyun boyunca W'nin yüzünde lokal ışık bulunmakta vücudunun geri kalanı karanlıkta kalmaktadır. Beckett bu oyununda parçalanmış vücut temsiline bir şey daha ekler: bu vücut bir kadına aittir.

Kadın vücudu Beckett'in oyunlarında klasikleşmiş şekliyle yansıtılmamaktadır. Buna göre, Beckett'in kadın karakterlerinin bedenleri ne izleyicisi için arzu uyandıracak şekilde ne de kadının acı ve ızdırap içinde olduğu bir şekilde

yansıtılmaz. *Ninni* oyununda kadının vücudu siyah bir gecelik içine saklanmıştır. Kendi kontrolünde olmayan, sallanan bir koltukta oturan kadının vücudu oyun boyunca hareketsizdir. Beckett W'nin vücudunu hem saklayarak hem de hareketsiz bırakarak, onu adeta cansız bir varlık gibi göstermektedir. Bu da kadın vücuduna kendi materyalliğinden öte anlamlar yükleyen geleneksel bakışa karşı çıkan bir durumdur. Derrida'nın tiyatro ile ilgili olarak, vücutla ilgili ne geçerliyse, tiyatro için de o geçerlidir şeklindeki yaklaşımı, *Ninni* oyununda kendini göstermektedir. Derrida'nın benzetmesiyle incelediğimizde, W'nin bedeninin materyalliğine vurgu yapılan oyunda, tiyatronun materyalliğinden ve dolayısıyla tiyatronun kendisinden öte bir referansla tanımlanamayacağından da bahsedilmiş olur.

Oyunda performatiflik yalnızca toplumsal cinsiyet performatifliği açısından değil aynı zamanda oyunda kullanılan dil açısından da incelenebilir. W oyunda yalnızca dört kez konuşur. Oyun boyunca dinlediğimiz V'nin sesi, oyunun ana karakteri gibidir. Beckett oyunda W'nin bedenini ve sesini birbirinden ayrı bir şekilde göstererek orijin fikrini yıkar. Geleneksel olarak baktığımızda W'nin bedenine ait olan ses, oyunda neredeyse ayrı bir karakter halini almıştır. Bunlara ek olarak oyundaki eylemler W tarafından sözler ise V tarafından gerçekleştirilmektedir. W ve V aynı kişinin yansıması olmasına rağmen, oyunda söylemek V'ye aitken yapmak W'ye aittir. Bu da tıpkı Derrida'nın ve Butler'ın Austin performatifliğinde eleştirdiği nokta olan, öznenin söyleminde hem söyleyen hem de yapan ve dolayısıyla bir kontrole sahip olan bir şekilde algılanmasını yıkan bir temsildir.

Sonuç olarak, bu çalışmada Beckett'in oyunlarının postmodern estetik yaklaşımlarının birer yansıması olmaları ve bunu yaparken sebep-sonuç ilişkisini, akılcılığı, tanımlanabilir özneyi ve belirgin kimlik algısını, tiyatro ve hayat arasında ayırıştırıcı bir çizgi çizilmesini, tiyatronun hayatın yansıması olduğunu, insanın konuşurken aynı zamanda yapan bir varlık olduğu düşüncesini reddeder. Beckett tiyatrosu, kendinin bir sanat dalı olarak varoluşunun farkında olan ve aynı farkındalığı seyircisine de sağlayan bir tiyatrodur. Beckett'in oyunlarındaki kaotik ve çelişki işleyiş postmodernizmin karmaşık yaklaşımlarının bir yansımasıdır.

Bunun yanı sıra Beckett'in oyunları kendilerini yalnızca sahne üzerinde sergilendiklerinde bulurlar. Bu da onun oyun metninin geleneksel otoritesini yıkan bir tiyatro yazını olduđu anlamına gelir. Aynı zamanda Beckett tiyatrosunun bu özelliđi onun seyircisini de içine alan ve sahneyi seyirci alanı seyirci alanının da bir sahne üzerinde olduđunu gösteren bir özelliktir.

