

■ Coercion and Docility in Samuel Beckett's *Rough for Radio II* and *What Where**

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Abstract

This article considers Foucault's disciplinary power to unravel complex dynamics of power through the exercise of explicit violence in Samuel Beckett's obscure plays *Rough for Radio II* and *What Where*. The discussion is twofold: first, I shall explore how coercion is employed in both *Rough for Radio II* and *What Where*, and how coercive devices, such as correct training, torture, or interrogation, demand obedience from the subjugated body for manipulation and control. The enforcement of coercion yields docility and aids in its production; therefore, I shall discuss Foucauldian productivity subsequently. If disciplinary power aims to acquire knowledge, then relieving Fox of his animality to restore his memory in *Rough for Radio II* or producing a confession for the subjugated characters in *What Where* would be the targeted production of power. Thus, I examine how both plays obtain (or fail to obtain) intelligibility from the subjugated in the employment of power. It is hoped that the attempt to interlace Foucault's theory with Beckett's work to explore complex relations in the tension of power may contribute to reading these plays in a different light.

Keywords: *Rough for Radio II*, *What Where*, Beckett, Foucault, coercion, docility

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“Restraint and coercion were sometimes unavoidable, but must always be exerted with the utmost tenderness.”

(Beckett, *Murphy* 91)

In an interview with Charles Ruas in *Death and the Labyrinth*, Michel Foucault declares:

I belong to that generation who as students had before their eyes, and were limited by, a horizon consisting of Marxism, phenomenology and existentialism. Interesting and stimulating as these might be, naturally they produced in the students completely immersed in them a feeling of being stifled, and the urge to look elsewhere. I was like all other students of philosophy at that time, and for me the break was first Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, a breathtaking performance. (176)

References to and quotations from Samuel Beckett at key points can therefore be found in Foucault's work. In “What is an Author?” he quotes “what does it matter who is speaking” from Beckett's *Texts for Nothing*, to reflect on the mode of expression in contemporary writing (205). Another example is the inaugural address he gave at the Collège de France, where he invokes one of the protagonists of Beckett's trilogy as he says: “I should like to have heard . . . the voice of Molloy” (“Discourse” 215). Such instances give a sense of Beckett as a pervasive and formative presence for Foucault, leading to Beckett specialist Richard Begam's provocative suggestion that “much of what we associate with poststructuralism, both in its thematic preoccupations and in its formal innovations, may be traced back to Beckett's five novels. This is most evident in Foucault's work on ‘cogito and madness,’ ‘the death of the author’ and the ‘end of man’” (11). However, I shall refrain from dealing with the issue of how Beckett influences Foucault any further, because the purpose of this article is to explore the exercise of violence in Beckett's work that informs the tension of power, while juxtaposing Foucault's conceptual notion of disciplinary power laid out in *Discipline and Punish* and *Power/Knowledge*.

A notable Beckettian paradigm that brings the employment of violence to the fore is the master-slave relationship between Pozzo and Lucky in *Waiting for Godot*, in which Pozzo mercilessly whips Lucky to get him to move on. An extended version of this conspicuous mode of coercion occurs when violence is inflicted not on a human being, but on an animal. For example, in Beckett's first radio play *All That Fall*, violence is enforced when Maddy suggests giving the hinny (a hybrid of a male horse and a female donkey) a harsh welt in order to make her move. Certainly, elsewhere in Beckett's works, implicit practices of violence are abundant;¹ how-

¹ Taking Beckett's radio plays for example, in *Word and Music* Croak, the coordinator, forces Words and Music to cooperate as an act of violence. Similarly, Voice and Music are dominated by Opener's orders for

ever, I shall restrict my concentration on its explicit form, because this is where power is straightforwardly implemented “as power, in the most archaic, puerile, infantile manner,” according to Foucault (“Intellectuals” 210). In fact, I shall demonstrate the practice of coercion onto the subjugated, and I shall focus on Beckett’s radio play *Rough for Radio II* and his theatre play *What Where*, because violence and physical punishment are so ubiquitous in these plays that hardly any other Beckett work can parallel.² It is hoped that comparing these texts with Foucault’s theory may help invigorate the reception of these enigmatic plays.

Rough for Radio II is a radio piece written in French in the early 1960s as *Pochade radiophonique*, and subsequently it was published in English in Beckett’s own translation and broadcast on the BBC in 1976. The plot is replete with orders given and obeyed among four characters—Animator, Stenographer, Fox, and Dick. The play begins when Animator checks with Stenographer about the tools for documentation—a writing pad and spare pencils. Animator issues commands to Fox and the mute Dick, while Stenographer documents Fox’s monologues and reactions. Whenever Animator demands movement or speech from Fox, he thumps his ruler on his desk and then Dick, possessing a bull’s pizzle (an old English word for penis) as a whip, produces formidable thuds accordingly. When Animator’s direct order to Fox fails, he instructs Dick to whip Fox to ensure obedience.

Martin Esslin, actively involved in Beckett’s radio work as head of BBC radio drama between 1963 and 1977, offers an impressive interpretation in an article entitled “Beckett’s *Rough for Radio*,” in which he suggests that *Rough for Radio II* represents Beckett’s creative process:

we must regard [Animator] as the critical faculty trying to shape the utterances of the voice that emerges from the subconscious, while [Stenographer] is the recording faculty and, also, in her distress about the spurious sentence [Animator] inserts in the text, the artist’s conscience; Dick, the torturer, is the artist’s determination to stimulate his subconscious by suffering; [Stenographer’s] disrobing and kissing of Fox represents analogous attempts to stimulate the subconscious by erotic fantasies. (102)

Animator’s literary references to Purgatory in the *Divine Comedy* and to the works of Laurence Sterne enhance the meta-literary dimension of this play. According to Esslin, *Rough for Radio II*, together with Beckett’s later radio plays, enacts the process of the author’s creativity to such an extent that Esslin comments these works are “among Beckett’s most personal and revealing works,” in which “he deals with his own experience of the creative process both as a quest for fulfilment and release

performance in *Cascando*. The dominating subject coerces the conditioned object into obedience, and this oppositional relation clearly enacts the tension of power in these plays.

² For example, Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* has a single episode of coercion when Lucky is whipped.

and as a form of compulsion and slavery” (103). It is in this way that Beckett’s radio plays mirror the author’s creative struggle while imposing coercion on his creativity. In spite of Esslin’s discussion of Beckett’s works, I contend that scrutinizing *Rough for Radio II* as a reflection of the author’s creative process overlooks Beckett’s political engagements with the Second World War—by actively participating in the French Resistance during the war, or joining the reconstruction work at the war-stricken town of Saint-Lô in northern France afterwards—and other like affairs. However, this article will not pursue Beckett’s archival imprints that serve merely to imply violence in his literature; instead, I propose to reveal the dynamics, functionality, and performativity of power found in *Rough for Radio II*, where coercive violence operates and manifests in an undisguised form.

Rough for Radio II displays prominent practices of coercion that employ violent discipline, or “training” in Foucault’s term, to control Fox, and the enforced physical coercion highlights the tension among Animator, Dick, and Fox, to make the subjugated Fox docile (*Power/Knowledge* 198). We learn at the beginning of the play that Fox is regularly examined under Animator’s supervision, specifically when the latter encourages the former by stating “I hope you have had a refreshing night and will be better inspired today than heretofore” (Beckett, *The Complete Dramatic Works* 275; *CDW* hereafter). The duration of punishment is brought to a particular focus, as a time limit for the session is rigorously kept by Stenographer. She reminds Animator how much (or how little) time remains before the session with Fox terminates, and she cautiously announces to Animator that “you could not have waited a moment longer, time is up” towards the end of the play (283). The training programme in each session requires that Fox “obeys, responds, becomes skilful and increases its forces” (*Power/Knowledge* 166). This repeated procedure trains Fox’s body to “be subjected, used, transformed and improved . . . manipulated, shaped, trained”—the chief function of Foucault’s conceptual notion of disciplinary power—and produces docility over the course of its process (*Discipline* 136).

Coercion is unmistakably exercised on Fox when listeners hear his cries in response to Dick’s whipping: “Dick, if you would. [*Swish and thud of pizzle on flesh. Faint cry from Fox*]” (Beckett, *CDW* 278). Dick whips Fox in order to ensure the latter’s obedience to Animator’s orders. When Fox hears Animator’s command: “On,” Fox is expected to respond to his order and produce words accordingly (278).³ However, whenever Animator’s order fails, Dick is ordered to whip Fox in punishment. What happens to Fox responds indirectly to a warning given in the last episode of Beckett’s trilogy *The Unnamable* that “you’ll be punished, punished

³ We should note here that the term “On” has an overtone of switching on a radio.

for having gone silent" (*Samuel Beckett* 388). Fox values solitude dearly in the play, but to avert physical torture he has to obey Animator's command and break his silence. It is worth noting too that Animator's command is encrypted as a signal in the thumping of the ruler, a scaled-down version of the inevitable Beckettian stick or club, which is then reinforced by Dick's whipping. Fox fails at times to respond to the thudding sounds made by Animator's ruler; in contrast, the success rate is improved after Dick whips him—an immediate physical torment. The intensity of coercion thus guarantees docility, and this is in keeping with Beckett's writing in *The Unnamable* that one must "suffer enough to be able to stir" (405). The process of Fox's reactions to the thump of the ruler while, at times, receiving punishment from Dick's whip suggests a training process designed to make Fox a docile body.

In a similar vein, the mute figure of Dick in *Rough for Radio II* is arguably docile too, for he reacts to the thudding sound made by Animator's ruler: "[Ruler.] On! [Silence.] Dick!" "[Ruler.] Silence! Dick! [Silence. *Musing*]" (Beckett, *CDW* 277). It is quite unusual to ask a human being to react to a thudding sound unfailingly in this way; however, this sort of response would make sense if the subjugated character had received former coercive training to ensure his or her docility. Such training involves meticulous moulding of an automatic response to the imposed signal, which "contained in its mechanical brevity both the technique of command and the morality of obedience" (*Power/Knowledge* 166). Therefore, Dick obeys Animator's instruction and responds to the thump of the ruler as a signal to whip Fox, and this reveals that Dick is thoroughly subordinated to Animator's authority, as power demands obedience from the subjugated body for manipulation and control. Although the enforced procedure of docility that Dick has undergone is unspecified in this play, his obedience to Animator is so evident that coercive discipline must have been exercised upon him.

At times, brutal affliction fails to facilitate docility in this play; therefore, Animator strategically alters his coercive method from violent punishment to a more humane approach. At first, Animator forces Fox to resume his monologue, involving reminiscences of his twin brother and a woman: "my brother inside me, my old twin, . . . Maud would say, opened up, it's nothing, I'll give him suck if he's still alive" (Beckett, *CDW* 279). When Fox stops responding to Animator's demand backed up by the usual stimulation of physical torture, the latter makes Stenographer kiss Fox: "[*Stenographer kisses Fox. Howl from Fox.*] Till it bleeds! Kiss it white! [*Howl from Fox.*] Suck his gullet!" The purpose of kissing here is to stimulate Fox "In his heart, in his entrails—or some other part" (282). For Fox, this humane approach is a more intense measure than physical affliction and causes him to faint. Stenographer's display of human affection turns out, paradoxically, to

be a more excruciating punishment than whipping, and this transition from brutal corporeal torture to a humane approach was predicted in Foucault's historical documentation of a shifting regime of punishment in *Discipline and Punish*, whereby the covert punishment of imprisonment replaces the open display of coercion as violent spectacle.

Why does Fox react so dramatically to human affections, and why does Animator or Stenographer pay such acute attention to Fox's human traits? According to the two officials, Fox is caught in an indeterminate state, detached from any human associations. His ability to withstand physical coercion may be seen as equivalent to the animalistic perseverance suggested in *The Unnamable*: "like a caged beast born of caged beasts born of caged beasts born of caged beasts born in a cage and dead in a cage, born and then dead, born in a cage and then dead in a cage, in a word like a beast"—a formulation that vividly evokes Foucault's conception of animality (Beckett, *Samuel Beckett* 380). For in *Madness and Civilization*, Foucault argues that the reduction to animalistic behaviour strengthens physical endurance because "animality . . . protected the lunatic from whatever might be fragile, precarious, or sickly in man. The animal solidity of madness, and that destiny it borrows from the blind world of beasts, inured the madman to hunger, heat, cold, pain" (74). Although Foucault's concept of animality is applied to the condition of the mad in general, Fox's reduction to animalistic behaviour resembles this notion—any sane human could hardly endure such harsh whipping, unlike Fox, whose physical capacity is intensified beyond human limits. However, it is impossible to confirm that Fox is actually insane in this play. When Stenographer has recorded Fox's "animal cries" in the exhortations of the report from the previous day, Fox's animal behaviour comes through in his bodily cries that sound like animal howls, and his connection to animality may also be inferred from his name (Beckett, *CDW* 276).

Coercion is exercised to condition Fox's animality because "unchained animality," according to Foucault, "could be mastered only by *discipline* and *brutalizing*;" thus Fox is tortured and punished like an animal to yield obedience in the training of docility (*Madness* 75). Due to his animality, Fox's human traits have been expelled, and the potential restoration of them proves unbearable. At times, Fox weeps and balks when he remembers the past, since memory is a distinctively human faculty. He reacts so violently to an agonizing reminiscence that he cannot help screaming: "Let me out! Peter out in the stone"—the climax of this play (Beckett, *CDW* 281).

The second half of Beckett's novel *Murphy* is situated in the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat, a mental hospital, and its disciplinary procedures can offer some insight here. As already suggested in the epigraph to this paper, Murphy observes that the

doctors “would never on any account be rough with a patient. Restraint and coercion were sometimes unavoidable, but must always be exerted with the utmost tenderness” (91). This attention to tenderness anticipates Stenographer’s kisses, even though they cause Fox to faint; his loss of consciousness, I suggest, results from rejection of human affection. Fox is clearly withdrawn from humanity, and therefore he withstands the violent blows as would a wild beast. Thus, when Animator urges Fox to be “reasonable” by continuing the process of remembering the past, the endeavour fails because the notion of reason is beyond him due to his self-banishment from humanity (Beckett, *CDW* 281). This is also why Animator’s alternative approach of enforcing human affection backfires. Fox’s present animalistic state as a “living dead in the stones” is dissociated from his former condition as a human being when Fox says: “lived I did” (279, 277). His animality has depleted his human characteristics and subsequently prevents him from returning to his former human life. It is no wonder that Animator and Stenographer are keenly enthusiastic when they spot an occasional revelation of human traits from Fox in the play. For example, Stenographer is astonished that Fox smiles at her regarding the observation of his “permanence and good repair” (276). Both are struck when Fox alludes to “a life all his own,” and later when he “*named*” Maud for the first time, which, according to Animator, is a landmark improvement of his memory (278, 280). They single out his ability to smile, to gag or weep, and most significantly, to remember someone as signs of the possibility that Fox might return as a rational human being. However, whether he can finally “be free”—and what this might mean—is indeterminable (284). In the light of the employment of disciplinary power shown here, the tasks—of relieving Fox of his animality, and of resurrecting his memory of the seasons, his brother, Maud, or “the one . . . thing [that] remain[s] unsaid”—would become the productivity of coercion, if it succeeds (281).

In order to comprehend manifestations of power to produce words or confessions for Beckett’s characters in both plays, Foucault’s productivity may lend a useful gaze in my argument here. According to Foucault, “power produces . . . reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth”; simply put, productivity aims to acquire the knowledge of truth, and this is similar to the way that these plays feature recoveries of words and confessions (*Discipline* 194). Foucault goes on to clarify in the following:

[Knowledge] is that of which one can speak in a discursive practice, and which is specified by that fact: the domain constituted by the different objects that will or will not acquire a scientific status (the knowledge of psychiatry in the nineteenth century is not the sum of what was thought to be true, but the whole set of practices, singularities, and deviations of which one could speak in psychiatric discourse). (*Archaeology* 182)

We humans are concerned with the knowledge of truth in relation to power, and we are driven “to produce the truth of power that our society demands, of which it has need, in order to function” (*Power/Knowledge* 93). Interestingly, the attention to “function” is also noticeable in *Rough for Radio II*. When Animator inquires of Stenographer if “Dick functioned,” the functionality on Dick’s part may refer to his action to coerce Fox into articulating memory of his past upon Fox’s withdrawal into solitary silence (Beckett, *CDW* 277). This attention to acquiring knowledge or the truth resonates with the way that “we *must* speak the truth; we are constrained or condemned to confess or to discover the truth” (*Power/Knowledge* 93). We are bound to the question of knowledge because we are enclosed and enveloped in its relation to power. Therefore, knowledge is the aim of disciplinary power, and that disciplinary power responds to the unconscious compulsion to know the truth, to acquire the knowledge that is veiled from conscious awareness by employing coercion to aid in its production. We can see such coercion at work in *What Where*, whose characters are tied to the procurement of “what” has been said and “where” it has been said—Foucauldian productivity to know is key to the employment of power.

Turning to the stage play, *What Where* was written firstly in French as *Quoi où* in 1983, and then published in English in the same year. It features a rotating series of interrogations among four characters—Bam, Bem, Bim, and Bom—to establish “what” has been said and “where” it has been said. Voice of Bam (in the shape of a small megaphone appearing on a different stage level from the other four characters) narrates the setting and the objective of the interrogation, and he monitors the process among Bam, Bem, Bim, and Bom. Interrogations fail to produce answers to the questions of “what” and “where,” and it appears that these questions (without contexts) are unanswerable. The obscurity of this play prevents audiences from fathoming when these episodes of interrogation actually occur; only the passing of seasons from spring to winter is acknowledged. Coercion is used to produce answers, but the procurement of knowledge fails in this repeated and circular process. We should note, in relation to the curious names of the characters, that two of them—Bom and Bim—had already appeared in Beckett’s novel *Murphy* to denote the sadistic male nurse and his twin brother at the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat.

In *What Where*, Bam conducts interrogations with Bim, Bem, and Bom to discover if their endeavour to extract a confession from the tortured person has been successful. Since they have failed, they in turn receive punishment by doing “the works” (Beckett, *CDW* 472). The punishment involves not only the violence meted out, but also the process of weeping, screaming, begging for mercy, passing out, and not being able to revive after fainting. This is the procedure of coercive torture, the productivity of which is the confession of “what” has been said and “where” it was said. The passage of the four seasons, as well as the scheduled time with Fox in

Rough for Radio II, is a regular timetable imposed on the confined objects. The drill of task-giving, observation, examination, and economized time control to exercise disciplinary power with regularity aims ultimately at obtaining individual intelligibility. Unfortunately, the excruciating drill is doomed due to two considerations: Bim, Bem, and Bom respectively fail to produce answers when being tortured, and reciprocally when they become torturers, they are equally unsuccessful in making their tortured objects confess; such is also clearly the case for Bam when he leads Bem out to punish the latter into confessing.

The process of interrogation, together with the torture sequences directed at confession in *What Where*, often provokes a political reading; for example, Graley Herren suggests that a “Kafkaesque trial against unanswerable charges generates a continuing cycle of torture” (324). Some critics relate the play to the performance of memory: S. E. Gontarski calls it “a memory play,” and Herren elaborates on this point, arguing that “not only is this a play about V’s shadowy recollections, but it is also a play replete with Beckett’s remembrance of things past” (Gontarski 12; Herren 325). Herren also points out that Beckett’s literary characters from *Murphy* and *How It Is* reappear, and he suggests that the author’s personal involvement in war comes into play too (325-26).⁴ If the notion of punishment or confession in the torture chamber is linked to the war as suggested by Gontarski and Herren, then Fox’s hood, gag, blind, and plugs in *Rough for Radio II* may suggest a tortured prisoner of war in a similar vein. Other critics consider *What Where* a play of the mind in that Bam, Bem, Bim, and Bom all look alike, and because the location of the play does not represent a real place. Herren argues that “the striking similarities in names and appearances suggest that *all* of the players are fragments or ‘shades’ of the same character” (327). We may invoke Foucault here and suggest that the Voice of Bam exhibits “an internal dynamic” representing “the unceasing effort of a consciousness turned upon itself, trying to grasp itself in its deepest conditions” (*Archaeology* 13). The stage positions of Voice of Bam and the four other characters also underscore the possibility that this is a mind play. According to the stage directions, Voice of Bam is on a different level from the others, monitoring their conduct and dialogue from an elevated observational position. Voice of Bam always stays above with the megaphone, whereas the remaining four come and go on ground level. The main task for Bam is to conduct interrogations among Bim, Bem, and Bom, and to allocate punishment when confession fails. Moreover, the ground level for Bam, Bem, Bim, and Bom is the

⁴ Despite the fact that the link between Beckett and the historical event of the war is intriguing, I will not plunge in the archives to excavate Beckett’s personal involvement during WWII for fear that such a discussion will distract and even take over the focus of this article.

milieu for Voice of Bam to supervise the episodes of interrogation and torture.

The forum where the interrogation takes place among Bam, Bem, Bim, and Bom in *What Where* clearly reveals the dominance of Voice of Bam. Occupying a higher position than the other four characters, Voice of Bam seemingly controls the play and manages to “switch on,” “switch off,” or even “start again” as he pleases, in contrast to the confining enclosure that chains the other characters in rotating interrogations until they confess (Beckett, *CDW* 470). However, as Bam, Bem, Bim, and Bom do not confess, the interrogation relentlessly continues. The concluding statement of Voice of Bam—“Make sense who may”—leaves all questions unanswered, because they are unanswerable (476). Coercion at this current level fails to produce confession, and thus interrogation and punishment will continue well after the play draws to a close.

Given that Voice of Bam seemingly controls the procedure of interrogation for the other characters, this may appear to suggest that he is in possession of a power beyond them. Foucault maintains that there is a dynamics of power in which it “is always exerted in a particular direction, with some people on one side and some on the other,” even though “[n]o one, strictly speaking, has an official right to power” (“Intellectuals” 213). Joseph Rouse argues that “Foucault’s understanding of both knowledge and power [is] *dynamic*,” and this dynamic reveals the binary roles of enforcers and receivers (96). The opposing roles are evident in *Rough for Radio II* when Fox, Dick, and Stenographer obey Animator’s orders. Dick’s obedience to Animator’s orders reflects the latter’s superiority in the hierarchical chain of power, just as Dick is above Fox in their relation of power. More interestingly, there are different levels of coercive punishment in the hierarchical power-relation: Dick’s whip trumps Animator’s ruler, and Stenographer’s touch of human kindness trumps them all. A hierarchy of coercive discipline is employed and this stratified power disciplining the docile body mirrors Foucault’s suggestion that “the disciplines create complex spaces that are at once architectural, functional and hierarchical” in the organization of “ranks” (*Discipline* 148).

This ranking system in the structure of power is also evident in *What Where* because the authority of power comes directly from Bam to Bem, Bim, and Bom respectively. Bom is a torturer as the play starts, and then Bom is tortured by Bim. As the play ends, Bim is about to be tortured by Bem, and Bem by Bam. Beckett informed Nicholas Zurbrugg that the play was “a puppet play” precisely due to its distinctive display of hierarchical power (Zurbrugg 152). We might feel that the same is true of the master-slave relation between Pozzo and Lucky in *Waiting for Godot*, because hierarchical power is evidently employed there too. However, Beckett dismisses a hierarchical interpretation when he remarks: “I don’t like the suggestion and the attempt to express it of a hierarchy of characters” (*Letters* 431).

Such negation in hierarchy will now be explored more fully in these texts.

I want to argue, however, that instead of refuting the dynamics of power altogether, we may see the monotonous trajectory of the hierarchy as the object of Beckett's attack. As a case in point, *What Where* is replete with rotated torture, whereby the torturer can in turn become the tortured. In the process of interrogation, Bem, Bim, and Bom all experience dual positions and equal obligations as both torturer and tortured. All three of them obey their superior Bam's order, to both enforce torture and to be tortured in the process of confession. Therefore, the direction of power is not singular, as Foucault puts it: "disciplinary power became an 'integrated' system," and "its functioning is that of a network of relations from top to bottom," or even "from bottom to top and laterally" (*Discipline* 176).

In view of the complex chain of relations, an individual no longer adopts "a fixed position"; thus, the interchangeable role of torturer and tortured can reverse the relation of power (Foucault, *Discipline* 146). In fact, the position in the network of power as torturer or tortured in *What Where* is not absolute, but relative and complementary. Graley Herren also notices such reversibility in power relations based on his observation of *Voice of Bam*: "V's paradox is that he is at once master and victim of this darkness. On the one hand, he exercises complete imaginative control over his dark field of memory. On the other hand, he is losing his own tenuous grip on any phenomenal reality, as darkness and silence progressively enshroud him" (332).

When Foucault states that "power means relations, a more-or-less organised, hierarchical, co-ordinated cluster of relations," we should note that the dynamics of power does not maintain a singular form because it has multiple or reversible relations (*Power/Knowledge* 198). According to Foucault and worth quoting at length below, power is ubiquitous:

One doesn't have here a power which is wholly in the hands of one person who can exercise it alone and totally over the others. It's a machine in which everyone is caught, those who exercise power just as much as those over whom it is exercised. This seems to me to be the characteristic of the societies installed in the nineteenth century. Power is no longer substantially identified with an individual who possesses or exercises it by right of birth; it becomes a machinery that no one owns. Certainly everyone doesn't occupy the same position; certain positions preponderate and permit an effect of supremacy to be produced. (156)

The authorities of power are variable because every individual is caught in the web of power relations and is affected by it. Having demonstrated the erratic dynamics and interchangeability of disciplinary power in *What Where*, we can take this model across to *Rough for Radio II*. First, Dick embodies a dual role due to his twofold-task: on the one hand he obeys Animator's commands, and on the other he administers

physical punishment to produce speech and movements from Fox. I have suggested above that Dick must already have endured discipline exercised by Animator, but he also takes the role of the punishing enforcer; his position in the dynamics of power is therefore interchangeable. Fox receives direct punishment from Dick's whip, but Dick himself is at the beck and call of Animator. Thus Animator's sovereign power is above both Dick and Fox, for he controls Dick's actions directly and tortures Fox as well. Unlike the situation in *What Where* in which all the suffering characters will have their turn to be torturers, in *Rough for Radio II*—apart from the ambivalent Dick—Animator is the absolute torturer while Fox is the emphatic sufferer.

Although Animator tortures Fox in order to help liberate him from his trapped animalistic state, I want to argue that Animator and Stenographer are themselves reciprocally confined by Fox's condition, just as Foucault points out that there is a reversal of power in the hierarchical relation—since at one point, necessarily, the coerced “were ‘subjected as pupils to the discipline that, later, as instructors, they would themselves impose’” (*Discipline* 295). Inferring from an episode when Animator says to Stenographer, “Tomorrow, who knows, we may be free,” we notice how they are reciprocally conditioned by Fox's progress (or lack of it) (Beckett, *CDW* 284). In Animator's meticulous analysis of Fox's soliloquy, he eagerly points out Fox's unprecedented act of naming Maud, which inspires him to ask, “Can it be we near our goal?” (281).

Animator admits that he and Stenographer “do not know, any more than [Fox], what exactly it is [they] are after, what sign or set of words”; thus Animator (if we consider his role to be that of a kind of psychiatrist) is also trapped by not clearly knowing how to treat Fox (Beckett, *CDW* 282). On this reading, the coercive procedure inflicted on Fox is a measure aimed at curing him, and the goal of productivity here is arguably to retrieve his traumatic memory or memories. Though we can hardly see Fox as any kind of torturer, Animator is nonetheless tormented by his failure to treat Fox. Thus, Animator is also confined and conditioned by the coercive discipline he executes upon Fox, and this plight echoes Foucault's words: “he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection” (*Discipline* 202-03). Furthermore, Animator is affected by Fox because he claims to be astonished by the latter's monologue, and the sniffing and snivelling accompanying his sentimental comment on that monologue is also tied to Fox's progress. Drawing from Stenographer's exhortations, she cautions against recording Fox's animal cries for fear that “they serve only to indispose [them],” and this statement further buttresses my point that the coerced conversely makes an impact on the coercers (Beckett, *CDW* 276). Moreover, since Stenographer recounts that Dick “functioned” twice in response to Fox's

twitching, even Dick is in a sense also conditioned by Fox (277). Though physical punishment is enforced by Animator and Dick on Fox, the latter's words and actions reciprocally effect a metaphorical torturing of Animator and Dick; the hierarchy of power is thus to a point reversible in *Rough for Radio II* as well as in *What Where*.

Elsewhere in Beckett's work we can observe a state of mutual bondage in the master-slave relation. In *The Unnamable*, for example, the subjugated protagonist reveals that "my good master, perhaps he is not solitary like me, not free like me, but associated with others, equally good, equally concerned with my welfare, but differing as to its nature" (Beckett, *Samuel Beckett* 307). Whatever their role is, coercer and coerced are conditioned by one another. There is an interchangeable relation in the power machine whereby one can be the tormenter on one occasion and the tormented on another, just as the perplexing endings of both plays themselves refuse closure.

Invoking Beckett's famous concept of the pseudo-couple from *The Unnameable*, we can apply this term to the reversible power relations that I have been focusing on here. The relationships between Fox and Dick, and Stenographer and Animator in *Rough for Radio II*, or between Bam and Bem, Bem and Bim, and Bim and Bom in *What Where*, are examples of binary pairings that play out a complex web of power-relations. Such figures "cannot do without a partner," according to *nouveau romancier* Nathalie Sarraute, because each character is co-dependently bound up in their relationship with the other:

movements are set in motion, the obstacle that gives them cohesion, that keeps them from growing soft from ease and gratuitousness, or from going round and round in circles in the monotonous indigence of ruminating on one thing. [The partner] is the threat, the real danger as well as the prey that brings out their alertness and their suppleness, the mysterious element whose unforeseeable reactions, by making them continually start up again and evolve towards an unknown goal, accentuate their dramatic nature. (95)

Just as in *The Unnamable* one is both "the teller and the told" of a story, both halves of the binary opposition must coexist (Beckett, *Samuel Beckett* 303).

Returning to the Foucauldian productivity, the precise task demanded of Fox in *Rough for Radio II* is that he articulates the right words, while in *What Where* Bam, Bem, Bim, and Bom have to find answers to "what" has been said and "where" it has been said. However, productivity is not guaranteed, since in both plays all of the characters are rotating in an endless series of torture, literal or metaphorical. Fredric Jameson suggests that this unknown agenda in its unforeseeable journey is "mere repetition; while it is the cyclical closure of the pseudo-agon [the Hegelian Master-Slave relationship] that generates all of the violent impulses" (61). That is, audiences are watching a repetitious movement performing what Beckett calls in *The Unnamable* "labyrinthine torment" (*Samuel Beckett* 308). Both *Rough for Radio II*

and *What Where* fail to produce, or, at best, have yet to produce: what remains instead is a labyrinthine succession of coercions. In a conversation with Foucault, Jean-Pierre Barou observes that “one has the feeling of confronting an infernal model that no one, either the watcher or the watched, can escape,” and this feeling surely governs both of these plays (qtd. in Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 156). Such endless coercion may recall both Dante’s *Inferno* and Jean-Paul Sartre’s *No Exit* (*Huis Clos*), where all the characters are trapped in their confining milieu and are conditioned by one another. It is worth noting that the highly literate Animator, who at one point harks back to his “days of book reviewing,” does indeed allude to Dante in the course of *Rough for Radio II* (Beckett, *CDW* 280).

When Beckett remarks of *Waiting for Godot* in a letter, “Do try and see the thing primarily in its simplicity, the waiting, the not knowing why, or where, or when, or for what,” his words mirror the situation of both plays I am examining here (*Letters* 610). The questions asked in *What Where* are not intended to be answered, and the words and images tortured out of Fox are not meant to be intelligible. What then, we may ask, is the purpose of performing these puzzling sequences of coercion? We may invoke Graley Herren’s observation that in *What Where* “V seems less concerned with soliciting answers from his ‘defendants’ and more concerned with controlling the pace and pattern of the proceedings”—to the point where, “in the absence of answers, he can at least find consolation in the *form* of questioning” (327). Herren argues that *What Where* parodies “any attempt to impose intelligibility upon their stubborn [un]intelligibility” and he stresses that “Beckett’s primary focus is on the process and form of interpretation, not on its result” (334). If Beckett does indeed focus on the process without actually finding answers from the characters, then this emphasizes the exhaustion of circular torture in the plays. Without a proper beginning or satisfying resolution to Beckett’s plays, the unsettling condition that Beckett has depicted in both *Rough for Radio II* and *What Where* forever traps characters in the middle of a no-man’s-land.

For a last piece of observation to conclude this article, it is worth pointing out that resistance to conformity is evident in *Rough for Radio II*. For example, Stenographer, submissive to Animator’s direction as she mostly is, nonetheless first suggests a more gentle approach towards Fox, and then protests about the accuracy of the transcript, though both of her endeavours fail in view of Animator’s dictatorship. As for Fox himself, though he knows that he will be punished for going silent, he at times keeps his silence, and this, I consider, is another example of resistance to power. These practices of resistance are clearly the product or by-product in the mechanism of power, and they go hand in hand with Foucault’s conceptual notion of resistance to power. Foucault points out that “[w]here there is power, there is resistance,” and he goes on to clarify that the existence of the “re-

lational character of power relationships . . . depends on a multiplicity of points of resistance" that are "present everywhere in the power network" (*History* 95). Since power is omnipresent as argued before, resistance is also ubiquitous. In short, power operates in multifaceted dynamics and tensions in Beckett's plays, and it inevitably includes opportunities for resistance to it.

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探論貝克特《粗略的廣播劇二》與《何事·何處》中的脅迫與順服

摘要

山謬·貝克特 (Samuel Beckett) 《粗略的廣播劇二》 (*Rough for Radio II*) 及《何事·何處》 (*What Where*) 兩齣極為隱晦的劇作中，充斥糾正訓練 (correct training)、酷刑或審訊的暴力運行。本文取徑米歇爾·傅柯 (Michel Foucault) 提出的規訓權力 (disciplinary power) 理論，以展示劇作中人物錯綜複雜的權力關係。論文分為兩個步驟：首先，探究《粗略的廣播劇二》與《何事·何處》，透過何等暴力規訓的脅迫 (coercion) 手段，強制執行身體上的順服 (docility)，以強化產出 (productivity) 的功用。再者，探討傅柯式觀點中的權力運作核心與汲取知識的目的，與《粗略的廣播劇二》劇中關鍵人物福克斯 (Fox) 的動物性 (animality)、記憶，及《何事·何處》劇中所有人物所欲得到的供詞之間有何關聯。本文旨在透過分析文本使用暴力的橋段，一窺權力運作的樣貌，以期能提供不同的觀點剖析貝克特這兩齣極其曖昧不明的劇作。

關鍵字：《粗略的廣播劇二》、《何事·何處》、貝克特、傅柯、脅迫、順服

