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Tracing the Elements of Absurdism Fear and Despair in Samuel Beckett's the Unnamable: A Foucauldian Historical Study

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Abstract:
It is the nexus of contextual streams of a society which give ground to production of any work of literature, the streams which, in Foucauldian terminology are called the episteme. The episteme of each epoch is its interrelation of the social, economic.... components comprising it, and which do not necessarily follow a chronological order. In better words, it is the picture of all the content of all the parts of a community at a given moment to be scrutinized. Samuel Beckett, the postwar writer, is known to have written works which fit into standards of the literature of the absurd, so in the present study, the elements of fear and despair are put into practice to determine if The Unnamable is an absurdist work and if yes, what has been the historical ethos which has led to this production. Michael Foucault does see history as a set of events one succeeding the other, he examines each phenomenon regarding the elements existing in the episteme it is formed in, meaning all the factors which connect to each other like a net, and it is of essence to mention that elements are all interrelated. To have proved the work's being an absurdist one, examples from the contemporary works has been mentioned in the study.

Keywords: Absurdism, despair, episteme, fear, history, the unnamable

1. Introduction
Having the concepts of fear, despair and histoire elaborated in the previous chapter, analyzing the presence of fear and despair in Beckett's work, *The Unnamable* is intended in this one. This presence signifies an absurdist work as such which is also meant to be scrutinized in the view of a Foucauldian historical approach. Doing this lays the premise for a comparison which will be done with that of chapter four, in which a similar study is going to be applied on Sadeq Chubak's *The Last Day of the Grave*, consequently, the question of this absurdity's being a local or universal phenomena will be taken into account.

2. Historical Decay of Meaning
Traversing a history of meandering challenge and encountering of myriad human thought attitudes and experiences and the paths he has walked through has led him to the point in which, after a massive belligerent destruction of all what he had made, the modernism project, he has to accept a meaning-estranged world he has thrusted himself into. The refuge of a narration gave its position to the soliloquy of a non-narrative being, all options are ruled out and a mere existence is what is remained for him. He is entangled in the dire fear of a past he has built and then so pugnaciously destructed and a future which literally no longer seems to exist, he has to go on without even affirming or comprehending the reason, not heeding to the point that even comprehension is not the tangible and applicable concept it used to be. *The Unnamable*, being a mere voice in itself, is an ongoing stagnancy of an 'I', undulating and oscillating between various supposed 'I's to Be, and to Become, to let the discourse go on.

What, then, of this history, which alone can give some credit to the existence of a narrator? To see it construct itself in shreds because there is the history of Mahood, then the history of Worm, and, in the dispersion of these data, that of the speaker, one can only be surprised by the strange similarity of successive accounts; all of them come to say, in curling up one upon the other, the same enclosure and the same solitude, in the gray or black, the same painful body, a head with exorbitant or revulsed or haggard eyes, where the tears stream, a mutilated trunk, a face that is no more than the hole of the orbits or the mouth. History of a decay, and a story itself dilapidated, enclosed in a word that overflows it on all sides. Stalking history, devoted to the static imposition imposed by the absence of a coherent schema: time stopped "I am here, (...) always", a motionless personage 'Here', and repeating speech, itself tempted by the onset of the repetition and the whirling of affirmations immediately reversed.

What has been explicated above is a concise look at the world known as The Absurd and the fiction infixed in it, one in which there is no meaning, all human attempts go in the direction of no direction, an ever existence of fear of a complete annihilation and a superimposition of despair which is the direct ramification of his past experience.

He has built a history, in end of which the narrative who has recited it, seems to have come to an end. The absurd world indicates no progress and no receding, a constant self-destructive narration is presented. A voice is observed which only utters and utters, it is disabled to go on and yet it goes, as its confession, for the fear of silence. "At no moment do I know what I'm talking about, nor of whom, nor of where, nor how, nor why, but I could employ fifty wretches for this sinister operation and still be short of the fifty-first, to close the circuit, that I know, without knowing what it means" (Beckett 2009: 332).

What matters is mere talking, because nothing else can even matter, no content exists, no meaning exists and what we are left with is the absurdity of a continuum.

To approach the novel from the point of view of the narrative voice, is not only, in order to define its act of narration, but also to focus the gaze on the productive instance of discourse, it is also, passing from discourse in general, in one of its modalities, 'narrative discourse', to identify from the traces of the narrative the textual presence of a narrator, the origin of the narrated story. It is known that Beckett's novels, without ceasing to be part of the world of fiction, are characterized by the production of a very subversive romantic discourse. And the disintegration of the narrative poses the crucial problem of the identity and identification of this 'productive instance' since the discourse that gives it the status of existence is no longer strictly speaking narrative. Such is the difficulty of the reading of *The Unnamable*; this text in which the destruction of the springs of narrative is effected, is also the one which, by promoting the word 'voice' and by its semantic questioning, Testifies from the beginning to the end of Beckett's interest in verbal activity, an activity that extends beyond the borders of the narrative. How, then, can we name the productive instance of discourse? Enunciative instance? Instance based on the ruins of the narratorial instance? Or simply 'this talking voice' as Beckett does? A question of this importance cannot be avoided because it is, with the terms of enunciation and narration, the relations of speech and narrative that are at issue. And if we can rightly note that it is difficult to separate in this book the fictional slope of the critical field that serves as its commentary, and in the absence of what Greimas called the 'disengagement of discourse', the fact remains that the holder of the word, fully assuming his role as master of verbal play, cannot be confused with the figure of a narrator whom he denounces or revokes.

One crucial clue to the absurdity imposed on human is his undesirability, not knowing which direction to follow and what path to avoid, even a deeper hesitation between the desire to exist, and the urge to self-annihilation. The expression that there is nothing to express, nothing with which to express, nothing from which to express, no power to express, no desire to express, together with the obligation to express.

Not knowing if he means to exist or not, how would he reckon if the option is being and existing, how would he be able to decide what way suits him better, to touch the tinge of euphoria and translate absurdity as observing no form and being happy and unrestrained or experience the nausea of the labor of choice and decision making at the very moment of being. The time-state of attainment eliminates so accurately the time-state of aspiration, that the actual seems the inevitable, and, all conscious intellectual effort to reconstitute the invisible and unthinkable as a reality being fruitless, we are incapable of appreciating our joy by comparing it with our sorrow.

- Have you not done tormenting me with your accursed time! It's abominable! When! When! One day, is that not enough for you, one day he went dumb, one day I went blind, one day we'll go deaf, one day we were born, one day we shall die, the same day, the same second, is that not enough for you? (Beckett 2010: 66)

It's as if we are stranded here, one leg on the earth and the other on a void we are not aligned with, we cannot be sure that the probable alternatives lead us anywhere near prosperity, we are on earth. There is no cure for that.

Time and duration are two concepts explained by Bergson, who introduces 'Time' as a universal clock and 'Duration' as longevity and what is known as Time is a collection of constant nows which come concurrently together and make a bigger concept known as history. Narrative is the execution and application of intellectual and lingual concepts in passage of time. Accordingly, a collection of these narratives form a discourse and consequently the confluence of discourses construct a history of discourse. Fear as the source of verbiage, works as the means to go on and not lose what is known as mind, it keeps us in the game. This continuous game produces narratives for without the presence of narrative and lingual production, Time would lose its meaning and this would be the initiating step towards absurdity and madness.

3. Fear and Despair

The absurd in postmodernity is to be forced to live on in a discourse of continuous monotonous voice, and that is for all the hope is lost. You can only and merely Be, and Becoming does not take place. There is a coercion to continue, but to what end? The big problem appears as not having an actual answer to any questions, so one can never know to what end, but one knows, and doesn't even know why he knows, I, of whom I know nothing, I know my eyes are open, because of the tears that pour from them unceasingly. The necessity to continue in the so called discourse, he is certain of one thing though, the ball must not drop, the mere voice must keep on at any cost due to the fear of a lost about which he is not conversant, all he is sure of is that he cannot and must not experience another loss.

Let us quickly recall the 'vocal choice' of which *The Unnamable* is the subject: a text with a single voice, presented as a soliloquy, which leads to the present and in the indefiniteness of this time - When now? or self-contained monologue. Assumed more and more by the pronoun I, and delimited by a series of exclusions – I seem to speak, it is not me, of me, it is not of me – it is a novel that locks itself up in someone's word, and this person speaks in speaking of himself:

- I who am here, who cannot speak, cannot think, and who must speak (and therefore perhaps think a little), cannot in relation only to me who am here, to here where I am; but can a little, sufficiently (I don't know how, unimportant), in relation to me who was elsewhere (who shall be elsewhere) and to those places where I was (where I shall be). (Beckett 2010: 39)

Everything in this preamble would allow the reader to wait for a narrative of a personal type, were not the reticence and their insistent repetition: "I am going to have to talk about things that I cannot speak (...) however I am obliged to speak"(Beckett 2010: 2). This reticence, in fact, already refers, by the nesting of the verbs of speech, to another project which is no longer that of telling a story, but that of speaking of that saying that is to speak. And through the play of modal verbs – duty, not power – they also refer to the confinement of speech in a conflict that undermines it. Listen to the speaker of *The Unnamable*, who in his 'rage to say' is in search of

the means to 'pursue' the discourse since it is necessary that the discourse should be made, it is therefore to meet a multiple text, distorted between opposing projects – talking about oneself but also talking about the impossibility of speaking – and haunted by the paradox of failure, unable to speak, that violently contradicts the fact of speaking.

If, therefore, the narrative comes to take its place in this context, it is by constructing itself on the principle of a convocation-revocation, of which the incipit has firmly traced the program, without thinking of it. "That, say that, without knowing what"(ibid.: 3).People with things, people without things, things without people, whatever, I intend to be able to sweep all that in a very short time. The reader knows, moreover, and Ricardou has clearly reminded him that one cannot, in the textual order, destroy the narrative without taking it as the springboard of destruction, so much it is true that to denounce is still to state to show that they give up. Follow the text of the subversive activity of a speaker who conducts the process of his narrative according to a very conscious and calculated strategy to find behind this speaker a Beckett attached to destabilize the base of the ideas on which has arisen, with The subjectivist thought, a whole romantic literature imbued with humanism is a fascinating undertaking that Beckettian criticism has conducted with passion. Our purpose, much more limited, will be to link this subversion to a problem that is that of the narrative voice.

The insistence on saving the voice from stoppage even destructs the concept of the 'I' and forces the pronoun to jump from nominative to nominative to snatch their voice so that continuation survives and silence does not occur, the means justifies the end of consistency and there is no content to hang on to.

A massive ilk of tormenting fear is that of an identity which is either lost or is prone to it. It is assumed that the reason to this destruction is the pervading silence, so silence must be broken at times, the sole and only type of expression left to him is mere talking, words are all he has and the pronoun 'I' talks and talks so that he does not get lost or obscured. He draws forth memories of the bygone

"Memories are killing. So you must not think of certain things, of those that are dear to you, or rather you must think of them, for if you don't there is the danger of finding them, in your mind, little by little." (Beckett 1967: 9)

Hallucinates in illusions and dreams of a future he doubts will arrive, The memory came faint and cold of the story I might have told, a story in the likeness of my life, I mean without the courage to end or the strength to go on.

It does not seem possible to more effectively undermine the power of the 'narratorial authority' than to subject it thus to manipulation, to reduce it to the role of mask or nominee and return it to all the alias of the nomination: "Tiens, is maybe wanting to be Worm that I will finally be Mahood. Then I'll just have to be Worm. This I will no doubt achieve by striving to be Tartempion. Then I shall have only to be Tartempion. Stop there (...) Worm, Worm, the three of us, and sail the galley" (ibid.:21). Vogue the galley of narrative under the aegis of this narrator who, from simulation to dissimulation, is no longer, in the indetermination of his identity, only an 'agent', to refocus late, and by effect of Dilation, on the pronoun I, a pronoun which, in this history of self by itself, is at once source and object of the word. "Just under the surface I shall be, all together at first, then separate and drift, through all the Earth and perhaps in the end through a cliff into the sea, something of me. A ton of worms in an acre, that is wonderful thought, a ton of worms, I believe it" (Beckett 2010: 100).

From the outset, revolving around a diegetiated 'I', a story begins which is already disintegrating, woven with questions and hypotheses before being brutally dismissed: "Lies all that". A little farther away, however: Decidedly, said the speaker, "I must really lend myself to this story a little longer, there may possibly be a grain of truth in it" (Beckett 2010: 28). But the source of the story is attributed, not without circumlocutions, to a certain Mahood. And to recount is to 'recite', what the speaker does before delegating his role to a certain Worm. "Here is the voice of Worm which begins […] To Worm to defeat, one passes his hand to him, I wish him much pleasure" (ibid.: 47-48). Now it is to declare, but much later, that after having "tasted Mahood and other Worms, now it is I who disguises" and finally to acknowledge that Mahood,

- It is I invented him (him and so many others, and the places where they passed, the places where they stayed), in order to speak (since I had to speak) without speaking of me. I couldn't speak of me, I was never told I had to speak of me. I invented my memories, not knowing what I was doing: not one is of me. (ibid.: 88)

But this I too will prove to be elusive, because it is caught in the ambiguities of the narration, that narrative in which each of the supposed narrators is projected as a character under the control of the same I and under the identity of a the same self. There is nothing to distinguish the name Mahood from the name Worm, from the non-named I, all of which have become interchangeable in the narrative, as the speaker points out when he gives himself as master of the game:

- I will have to give him a name, To this loner. Without proper names, no salvation. I will call him Worm […] It will be my name also, at the right time, when I will not have to call myself Mahood […] The essential is never to arrive anywhere, never to be anywhere: neither where Mahood is, nor where Worm is, nor where I am (it little matters thanks to what dispensation). 'And to add more abruptly, and more decisively for sure:' I am the one we will not have. (ibid.: 40-41)

It can be seen that whether it is the origin of speech or that it is inscribed in the history of this speech, the personal pronoun is no more than a floating term, deprived of any semantic consistency. Unstable and pluralized, for any baptismal name, it is referred to its grammatical status of pronoun, pure availability within the logos that opens it to all the vagaries of the benchmark. But it is also and at the same time decentered, and the loss of its hierarchical position makes it the place where the dissolution of the subject is played in the philosophical sense of the term. A 'subject' reduces to its syntactic function, negationized as consciousness and as thought, and condemned to the thought of aligning empty words of meaning. I am here and there is no way out, neither is a way in

- 'Do they think I'm talking?' That's theirs too. To make me believe that I have an ego of mine and that I can talk about it, like them of theirs' […] 'I say I knowing that it is not me.' Emerges from this pronoun only the cry of the end: 'There I am far again, there I am absentee again: it's his turn now, he who neither speaks nor listens, who has neither body nor soul. […] But he has no story, he hasn't been in story? It's not certain. He's in his own story, unimaginable, unspeakable.' (ibid.: 102)

This is a narrative, which proceeds without progression of information, without the construction of an intrigue, without the psychic creation of the character, except the sarcastic presence of the playmaker who tries to deregulate the narrative by submitting it to a system of variation to which none of the parameters of the canonical model escapes. Thus, as is always the case with Beckett, it is richly modulated, since here it will be in the course of the text a place in the dark, a courtyard surrounded by high walls, a deep jar in a street not very busy near the slaughterhouses, A carefully closed enclosure, a sort of dungeon, all associated with the formula "I am here which does not vary. In me there have always been two fools, among others, one asking nothing better than to stay where he is and the other imagining that life might be slightly less horrible a little further on" (Beckett 2009: 57).

The narrative then appears as a paradoxical narrative in which, from narrative version to narrative version, pronouns, verbal times, spatio-temporal adverbs, and the thematic words themselves are the object of an identification of the opposites by the game of a semantic investment operation where one is worth the other so that everything vanishes by resorption of the difference in similarity and plurality in unity.

A repetitive recount of several interrogations about the place this subject 'I' exists is observed throughout the text, "This place! If I could describe this place! Portray it! I've tried. I feel no place, no place round me. There's no end to me. I don't know what it is: it isn't flesh, it doesn't end. It's like air"(Beckett 2010: 91).

So is a constant shift of identities, Mahood, Worm and….this can raise a question, being why is the 'I' doing this? Is the insistence on the word here signifying the assumption that the concept of place as well as Time is destructed? What the reason of insisting on this non-moving movement? Has history stopped from going on?

4. The Absurdist Writing

And if it were necessary to doubt this reading in which the narrative disintegrates itself as an artifact, the narrator's comments would soon dispel any uncertainty on this point. For all his remarks concur, by denouncing the arbitrariness of fiction, to emphasize the principle of this annihilation by equating opposites.

- Here is my life, why not, it is one, if you like, if you must, I don't say know, this evening. There has to be one, it seems, once there is speech, no need of a story, a story is not compulsory, just a life, that's the mistake I made, one of the mistakes, to have wanted a story for myself, whereas life alone is enough. (Beckett 1967: 93)

Thus, from the pronoun, "Bah, no matter the pronoun, provided that one is not duped" and, still more vigorously, "I will not say I again, I will never say it again, it is too stupid, I will put in the place […] the third person, if I think about it […] it will not change anything." Similarly, for the chosen time: "Yes, sometimes it is the past, sometimes the present […] the scope of the terms yesterday and today escapes rather" (Beckett 2010: 55). As for the variation to which the narrative data are subjected, it arouses sarcasm: "This version of events has been restored, it remains only to note that it is not worth more than the other." Moreover, "there is nothing more, there has never been anything, to draw from these stories" (ibid. 29). And the implosion of the narrative will be sanctioned by the verbal gesture of a more radical effacement "who speaks, it is not I who speak […] it is the others who speak […] I hear them, I am dumb" and even further "I have never spoken. I seem to speak" (ibid.: 13). According to Zizek, human is not capable of producing his own verbiage, what he utters is a sum total of others' voices from which one I borrows and projects as that of his.

- But he had hardly felt the absurdity of those things, on the one hand, and the necessity of those others, on the other (for it is rare that the feeling of absurdity is not followed by the feeling of necessity), when he felt the absurdity of those thing of which he had just felt the necessity (for it is rare that the feeling of necessity is not followed by the feeling of absurdity). (Beckett 2012: 133)

The story is obvious, a story is there, but it is a 'vain' story and its narrator has a voice only to emphasize its inanity, at the moment when it parasites and obstructs it by his critical remarks. An episodic, narrator, moreover, and prompt to pose as a fabulator who erases an error by another error, and who, from cancellation to annulment, becomes the gravedigger of his own narrative.

- To go on means going from here, means finding me, loosing me, vanishing and beginning again, a stranger first, then little by little the same as always, in another place, where I shall say I have always been, of which I shall know nothing, being incapable of seeing, moving, thinking, speaking, but of which little by little in spite of these handicaps, I shall begin to know something, just enough for it to turn out to be the same place as always, the same which seems made for me and does not want me, which I seem to want and do not want, take your choice, which spews me out or swallows me up, I'll never know, which is perhaps nearly the inside of my distant skull there one I wandered, know am fixed, lustful tininess, or straining against the walls, with my head, my hands, my feet, my back, and ever murmuring my old stories, my old story as if it were the first time. (Beckett 2010: 12)

It is in overhang of this narrator that we must situate the only fixed point of the text. Someone is there who speaks and speaks and keeps talking to each other, asserting that he invents, that he is mistaken, mistaken, will be deceived again. He does not say, he will perhaps say it and that on the whole he does not know what he says. It does not really matter, since what happens are words, that this whole story is a story of words to say, and that we say only one thing, the same as always, namely that one is forever nobody. Therefore, it is only a matter of "All that is needed is to wander and let wander, be this slow boundless whirlwind and every particle of its dust. (It's impossible.) Someone speaks, someone hears: no need to go any further. It is not he, it's I. (Or another, or others - what does it matter?)" (ibid.: 93)

In this speech, which refuses to coincide with the narrative, a word without frontiers, which haunts the only question worth 'I'. Who is that?, what is forcefully imposed is the presence of a voice, the voice of an anonymous speaker, attentive to the words he says, these words that must be said, both that there are, these are words, I have only that, words that he scrutinizes because it is they who carry his story; but also attentive to the voice from which these words come, that voice "which is not mine, but which can only be mine" (ibid.:

16). My voice, his voice, his voice, his voice "But his voice continued to testify for me, as though woven into mine - preventing me from saying who I was, what I was (so as to have done with saying, done with listening)" (ibid.: 18), an obsessive term for the speaker who haunts the need for reflection on this point: "Unfortunately it's a question of words, of voices (one must not forget that, one must try and not forget that completely), of a statement to be made (by them, by me)" (ibid.: 79). The disaster of yesterday has been so horrific which does not relent to any attempt to forgot, when a thing cannot happen, taking pain to do it is absurd, so preserve, at least in words, words are all our asset.

- Yesterday is not a milestone that has been passed, but a daystone on the beaten track of the years, and irremediably part of us, within us, heavy and dangerous. We are not merely wearier because of yesterday; we are other, no longer what we were before the calamity of yesterday. (Beckett & Auster 2006: 13)

The voice that speaks. There is in *The Unnamable* the true presence, that which, rising on the ruins of the narrative, carries the text from end to end, and well beyond its narrative enclaves, to the point of constituting its dynamic focus, especially to give substance to one of the major themes of the book.

A dynamic home, certainly, the dramatist Beckett knows, projecting in writing all the powers of morality, ensuring the staging of the voice. Multiple voice of the speaker, carrying irony, sarcasm, gravity or anguish, provocation and derision; distress and violence always. And in this writing aloud, the richness of verbal inventiveness is such that, through the dialogue of enunciative postures, the text is represented in the theatrical sense of the term: representation or role play, a complex game and subtle between locution and meta-locution, narration and meta-narration, voice in act of the speaker and verbalization of the staging of this voice. And as the Beckett behind his speaker always precedes his reader, it is not surprising to hear this speaker introduce himself as "But it's more likely the same foul brute all the time, amusing himself pretending to be a many, varying his register, his tone, his accent and his drivel. Unless it comes natural to him"(Beckett 2010: 52), not without immediately adding "A bare and rusty hook I might accept. But all these titbits!"(ibid.: 52) As the text emphasizes, the voice in the richness of its inflections can be given as a spectacle; then it plays, recites or improvises, but it can also, casting the mask of the actor, interpret the contradictions of being, express in particular the tearing of the self, that "(No, I forgot, it's impossible: it's myself I hear howling behind my dissertation)" (ibid.: 22)

There is more, to be a living presence, the voice is nevertheless an object of reflection. Evoked sometimes as the organ of the word, coming from the body, a sound production that breaks the silence and which is understood, and which 'alters', 'murmurs' or 'vociferous', sometimes as the expression of the self , a mark of identity, and that voice should be silenced, or else removed from its power by lending it to others. Evoked above all as the compelled companion of thought, inseparable from the quest for meaning, and it matters little whether the voice is sound or mute, since it is always in the words that it slips:

- Knowing itself useless and its uselessness in vain. Not listening to itself but to the silence that it breaks and whence perhaps one day will come stealing the long clear sigh of advent and farewell. (Is it one? I'll ask no more questions: there are no more questions, I know none anymore.) It issues from me, it fills me, it clamours against my walls. It is not mine. I can't stop it, I can't prevent it, from tearing me, racking me, assailing me. It is not mine, I have none: I have no voice and must speak, that is all I know. It's round that I must revolve, of that I must speak - with this voice that is not mine, but can only be mine, since there is no one but me. (ibid.: 16)

It is this thought, groping in the dark, that the personification of the last pages will say: "A voice like this, which can control it, it tries everything, it is blind , She seeks me in the dark, she seeks a mouth, where to put […] she is the only one, it would take a head, it would require things, I do not know, I look too […] the voice will tell me everything, what I need, she has already told me, she will repeat it to me, all that I need, Little snatches." The torment and whirling of thought, which seeks to give meaning to the world and to life, and to "that out of life which, in the long run, long vain life means that one has not ceased to be" (ibid.: 48) By making their way, blindly, in the precariousness of language.

Whatever the anchor point of the reading, and whether one looks at the narrative side or the speech side of this speaker fascinated by the word 'voice', and by the games of the voice, one does not leave Never the domain of a reflection on the universe of words. By the fiction of a speaker to whom he entrusts the task of elaborating a story which, in the fable's fashion, is disintegrating and extenuating, in turn parodic and ridiculous, Beckett inscribed the trial of the narrative into a much more radical, that of language, its insignificance, and the emptiness of words, worn or vain and false. Then, in this text, so narrative and so violently denouncing its medium, is it still possible to speak of narrative voices?

Certainly, if it is a question of characterizing the productive instance of discourse. But such is the voice, the irony of his speech, which claims to slip into the help of the fable only to prolong without drying up, and also his rebellion against the old world of literary conventions, That the discourse that she holds, in a vaguely circular wandering, is resolutely placed under the sign of anxiety and distrust: opaque or deceptive are words, vain stories, impasse the reasoning, Imposts the logic of the distinction which would like to be the opposite of no and that one cannot speak if one is mute or notoriously aphorism.

To the holder of this discourse, a lucid speaker and lucidly aware of the ambiguities, misunderstandings and contradictions or illogisms of speech, what status to confer in terms of narratology?

To designate him as the narrator, what he is only sporadically in the text, would be to betray an overall posture that disorients the authorizing schemes of the narrative and while exposing them to better subvert them, builds on their decay to show that to speak is to pay oneself for words in the face of an inaccessible reality.

To remain to him as a character, and except to render to this term the value of his etymon, would be to ignore the refusal several times proclaimed to "endorse an old state of fact" and its incomprehensible gibberish, And to ignore the vigorously affirmed will to give to the ego, or person, or subject, the only possible definition by the void of a semantically silent term or the negation of any form of positivation.

To find refuge in the notion of an enunciative instance would imply a clarification of a concept which, in its unifying globalism, designates at the same time the origin of speech, the situational data of this speech and the act of communication. Such a concept, moreover, would hardly apply to a speaker without an identity card or a fixed home, and moreover carrying a cryptic speech.

5. History

Privilege of romantic fiction: by delegating to a speaker unfit for time or space, and unidentifiable, the care to represent it, the author is absent, but to advance masked, absent always and yet present. Figure of the double, or of the shadow cast, in which the problem is not to distinguish the false from the true but the latent from the manifesto, in order to better hear, caught by the fascination of the simulacrum, A writing obsessed with the need to break with the past, and henceforth worked by doubt with regard to its own powers, it demands a break with the past not aiming at any certain destination, resembling how man is functioning in the world, moving around in search of nothing, desiring to find a path he knows he will not do. "When a man in a forest thinks he is going forward in a straight line, in reality he is going in a circle, I did my best to go in a circle, hoping to go in a straight line" (Beckett 2007: 115).

Better to return to the author whose figure in the text implicitly takes shape. And the density in the Unnamable of the network of the indications indicative of the Beckettian presence cannot, from the irony to the generalized play on polysemy, and from the theatricalization of speech to the projection in the narrative of the creatures Anterior work, than to reinforce this point of view, even if it should lead us to rethink, in its relation to discourse, the notions of narrative and of fabulation.

The analysis of our contemporary societies by Gilles Deleuze begins with the observation of a generalized crisis, that of the confinement milieu, which is reflected in the transformation of disciplinary societies into control societies. We might think that this change is a passage from Foucault, thinker of the disciplines, to Deleuze, thinker of control. The latter, however, warns us against this idea, by showing that Michel Foucault was already himself aware of this transformation.

- For Foucault, a discourse is not a set of utterances which is stable over time; he tries to work against the notions of progress and development which dominate many liberal ways of thinking. Instead of viewing history, for example, as a simple progression towards greater civilisation or, as Marxists have done, as a series of class conflicts which lead to greater equality, Foucault has argued that history is discontinuous; there is not a seamless narrative which we can decipher underlying history, nor is them any continuity at all. (Mills 2006: 26)

We are no longer in the throes of discipline, but are not yet in control. This moment of change is characterized by the maintenance of residual disciplinary techniques, as for example in schools or in prisons, alongside new trends that are directed towards the techniques of control. Two visions of society currently coexist, causing numerous clashes within the system. The changes we experience seem to us to be essentially characterized by a transformation in the conceptions of space, time and their relations, and it is in this light that we will approach the question of the passage from discipline to control.

The problem of postage explicitly sought in relation to a traditional type of inquiry perceived as continuous and linear is recurrent in Foucault since the mid-1960s: it accompanies the publication of *The Order of Things* and in many respects it represents the real stake. In reality, the themes of change and transformation, when they are pushed to their extreme, cannot but imply a redefinition of what is meant by rupture, leap, discontinuity; and, conversely, it is because the analyzes of the History of Madness or *The Order of Things* seem to imply a periodization entirely constructed from a discontinuous reading of history that the problem of The transition from one period to another – or, to put it more expansively, from one episteme to another – becomes an essential subject of debate.

The question seems to be as follows: beyond the relevance of the historical divisions made by Foucault-which have indeed been sometimes hard-pressed by historians themselves-that is to say, for example, the historiographic consistency of a The notion of classical age or the definition of what is meant by "modernity", from what theoretical presuppositions did Foucault construct the legitimacy of an approach that implies the violent criticism of History as a continuum and, by the same token, the introduction of scansions which take the form of a rupture?

Samuel Beckett is known as the prophet proselytizing the detached era of postmodernity, an era which brought with it, de-centeredness, and discontinuity. Modernism, the offspring of humanist movement, took any kind of center down and replaced it with Multiple I s which float about, dragging chains of language tracking them. Beckett's voices suffer from losing their past, their God and their source of nostalgia. Beckett's world is the example of a transformed and transited world, one which has been peeled and now so directly faces the brutal truth of his time. Beckett's resembles his world; it is devoid of any adornments of classic literature, no climaxes, no endings and characters even, a rambling speech of the baffled type.

As always, in Foucault, the influences are complex. The theme of discontinuity seems to appear at the same time under a threefold determination, at once literary, epistemological and historical, before receiving a more explicitly philosophical formulation.

Foucault writes: "At the discontinuity of things seen in repeated fragments is substituted continuity of a subject which its present constantly pours out of itself but which flows smoothly in its own dispersed thickness. Through the changes of chronology, scale, and characters, an identity is maintained whereby things communicate.(Foucault 1984: 83) " Strange enough, then, it seems that at first Foucault, far from taking the side of discontinuity and of fragmentation, on the contrary opposes a certain subjective continuity; but it is at once to make of this continuity a place of dissolution of identity (out of itself) and of dispersion (dispersed thickness); a place where identity and coherence are guaranteed only by change; a place where the only possible continuity is that of a discontinuity that is no longer simply understood as the consequence of a necessary limitation (we are doomed to discontinuous because we do not have access to the absolute continuity of a sovereign consciousness) but lived as positive as the possibility of redefining the subject from its incessant mobility, as a continuous process of modification. In short, the opposition between continuity and discontinuity is here transformed by Foucault into an opposition between two models of continuity: a first model in which continuity is guaranteed by the absence of change, that is to say by absolute permanence of a form everywhere identical with itself, and a second model in which the

only possible continuity would be the very form of change, the constancy of its ineluctable movement. And what interests Foucault is precisely that the only possible continuity is that of metamorphosis, which amounts to saying that the only imaginable constant is that of a discontinuity understood as continuous change, as continuity in movement. A metamorphosis takes place for the 'I' in *The Unnamable*, it changes places, names, tones, but at the end the very changing and continuity does not alter, the discourse goes on, as does the weeping and the horror.

The analysis then proceeds by focusing more on the text of Thibaudeau. Foucault takes up many elements which were already clearly apparent in the work done a few years previously on Raymond Roussel and which form the general framework of the literary analyzes to which the philosopher engages before the publication of *The Order of Things*: The fascination with a literature that makes the dissolution of the traditional anchorages of narration, the introduction of randomness into the structure of narrative or disappearance of the subject (be it the author, the narrator, or any idea of character) the field of his own experimentation ling Uticism is indeed the recurring motif of many Foucauldian texts of the first half of the 1960s, all of which is recurrent in the work of Beckett taken the following example: Here's my life, why not, it is one, if you like, if you must, I don't say no, this evening. There has to be one, it seems, once there is speech, no need of a story, a story is not compulsory, just a life, that's the mistake I made, one of the mistakes, to have wanted a story for myself, whereas life alone is enough.

But what it is necessary to understand is that beyond the apparent insistence on the incompleteness, Interruption, suspension, and more generally all forms which seem to undermine the possibility of a traditional unity, we are dealing with something which is no longer satisfied with mere aesthetic fascination: a real attempt at the re-founding of unity As a process of endless differentiation, a redefinition of continuity as a continuous discontinuity. This unity can be demonstrated in limitless types, even the urge for silence due to an escape from absurd continuation can be counted as moving toward unity, an attempt to find a locus:

- Ah if only this voice could stop, this meaningless voice which prevents you from being nothing, just barely prevents you from being nothing and nowhere, just enough to keep alight this little yellow flame feebly darting from side to side, panting, as if straining to tear itself from its wick, it should never have been lit, or it should never have been fed, or it should have been put out, put out, it should have been let go out. (Beckett 2010: 68)

In a formidable shortcut, Foucault had asserted in a text of 1964 about Roussel's writing methods: "It is the labyrinth that makes the Minotaur: not the reverse." This is what is happening Also for the continuity to be defined here: to a traditional conception of continuity which ensures the continuum by the permanence in time of an element not susceptible of change (the Minotaur makes the labyrinth possible, as the Foucault opposes a conception in which the very form of change becomes the only constant possible (the labyrinth allows the Minotaur because it is the differentiation that allows the emergence of identity, not the opposite). It is the deterministic ever changing which dominates the 'I' and the I has been subdued by the reins of an unstoppable force which makes it indifferent to the bearer of the destiny what is going to happen or even is anything going to happen? "What can it matter to me that I succeed or fail? The undertaking is none of mine, if they want me to succeed I'll fail, and vice versa, so as not to be rid of my tormentors. The sun shone, having no alternative, on the nothing new" (Beckett 2010: 49).

5.1. Michel Foucault and the Concept of Episteme

The work of Michel Foucault is discontinuous. The focus here is on the period which can be roughly situated between 1965 and 1975, during which he developed and used the episteme concept. This concept has had a short career; appeared in *The Order of Things* in 1966, it was abandoned after ten years, because Michel Foucault considered that its use culminated in a dead end.

Michel Foucault defined his intention: I seek to "grasp the transformations of a both within the general domain of science and within the somewhat vertical domain of a society, culture, or civilization at a given moment (Foucault 2006: 93)". The episteme of an epoch refers to a way of thinking, of speaking, of representing the world, which would extend widely to all culture.

The origin of this idea of episteme comes from the conjugation of two contemporary contributions of French epistemology: the idea of epistemological rupture advanced by Gaston Bachelard (reprinted and accentuated by Louis Althusser) and the method of Georges Canguilhem which aims at finding epistemic coherences at a given period, for he does not believe in the continuous evolution of science and reason.

In *The Order of Things* (1966) and *The Archeology of Knowledge* (1968) Michel Foucault describes three successive epistemes: that of the Renaissance, that of the classical period, and finally that of the modern period. The research undertaken by Foucault combines general philosophy, history and epistemology. In a structuralist approach, he tries to account for the conceptual system that produces the knowledge of an epoch. But, with the *Archeology of Knowledge*, the subject is already modified and Foucault insists on discourse, to the detriment of thought and practice.

Michel Foucault writes in *The Order of Things*:

- I am not concerned, therefore, to describe the progress of know-ledge towards an objectivity in which today's science can finally be recognized; what I am attempting to bring to light is the epistemological field, the episteme in which knowledge, envisaged apart from all criteria having reference to its rational value or to its objective forms, grounds its positivity and thereby manifests a history which is not that of its growing perfection, but rather that of its conditions of possibility; in this account, what should appear are those configurations within the space of know-ledge which have given rise to the diverse forms of empirical science. Such an enterprise is not so much a history, in the traditional meaning of that word, as an 'archaeology'. (Foucault 2005: 19)

This archaeological survey revealed two major discontinuities in western culture: that which inaugurated the classical age (towards the middle of the 17th century) and that which, at the beginning of the 19th century, marked the threshold of our modernity. Michel Foucault, in an interview in 1972, says: "What I called in *The Order of Things*, episteme has nothing to do with historical categories. I

mean all the relations that existed at one time between the different fields of science. […] It is all these phenomena of relations between sciences or between different discourses in the various scientific sectors that constitute what Episteme of an epoch." (Interview 1972).

Subsequently, it will give a new definition of the episteme as:

- the strategic device which makes it possible to sort out, among all the possible utterances, those which will be acceptable within, I am not saying a scientific theory, but a field of scientificity, and of which one can say: this one is true or false. It is the device that makes it possible to separate, not the truth from the false, but the scientifically unqualified from the qualifiable." (Interview of 1977).

It is a question of highlighting and understanding how the epistemological norm, moreover implicit, which produces its effects in scholarly thought at a given time.

The demonstration of an episteme is the search for a network by a slow and laborious technique which requires great and attentive erudition. Foucault has remained vague about his method which we propose to reconstitute, subject to all reservations, for he will forever fail his approval. The concept was forged by combining the structural point of view with the point of archaeological view.

Foucault defends the idea that what determines the production of knowledge is an underlying order, a structure that governs different knowledge. These are the fundamental codes of the culture in which we participate, those which govern its language, its perceptual schemes, and the hierarchy of its practices. These codes determine the empirical content that participants in this culture will be able to access. This structure constitutes an underlying formal order that escapes individuals and constitutes an imperceptible network of constraints. The rules and structures are unknown to the scientists of each domain of knowledge, they are unconscious, not explicit.

The traditional way of conceiving the history of ideas is profoundly questioned. We move from a temporal path to a vision in discontinuous epistemic epochs. At a given moment, a stable system is formed, an episteme, which will later be transformed into another. This is why Foucault prefers the term archeology to that of history. It is not a question of tracing a path, but of exhuming buried shapes, of foundations. Michel Foucault, in an interview by the philosopher Fons Elders in 1971, says that in *The Order of Things* he used the archaeological method of comparing different domains of knowledge (biology, economics, linguistics from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century) and show how these domains obey common laws or rules that make them communicate with one another.

In total, each cultural epoch is definable, according to Michel Foucault, by its episteme that is to say by a set of problematics, hypotheses and methods of research, which constitute an invariant for this epoch. For example, the search for similarity presided over thought going from the Renaissance to the Classical Age, while it was the search for order that would organize the modern era. For Michel Foucault, there is no progress in the cultural process throughout history, changes are produced by the passage from one episteme to another. These passages are not due to the improvement of knowledge but depend on quite indeterminable cultural events (in any case the author does not elucidate them).

"Such an analysis does not reveal the history of ideas or sciences: it is rather a study that tries to find out from what knowledge and theories have been possible" (Foucault 2005: 13). Michel Foucault, beyond the history of ideas or the sciences, seeks the conditions of possibility, the unthought cultural matrix that forges them. According to him, an episteme determines the knowledge and the mode of being of what is to know. (ibid.: 68).

It was with Kant that the age of modernity opened. In this episteme, life, work, and language have become objects of study. We have gone from natural history to biology, from the analysis of wealth to economics, from philology and grammar to linguistics. New objects of knowledge have been developed: production has replaced exchange (for economy), life has substituted for living beings (for biology) and language has replaced speech (for philology). Man, through the human sciences (which are part of the modern episteme), appears as an object of knowledge. All these new sciences have changed in nature and form, there is a break with the preceding.

The modern episteme is that of a rabble strewn path in which man is frozen in the frame of the calamities he has brought upon himself, a presence in which even history suffers from desperation, not knowing what direction it should, what parts of its net of concepts it should underpin and what it should pass by, if it is able of course. The hope is that of continuation, keep on to point in which a probable light may appear, a Godot may wave the magic wand and save us all.

- Let us do something, while we have the chance! It is not every day that we are needed. Not indeed that we personally are needed. Others would meet the case equally well, if not better. To all mankind they were addressed, those cries for help still ringing in our ears! But at this place, at this moment of time, all mankind is us, whether we like it or not. Let us make the most of it, before it is too late! Let us represent worthily for one the foul brood to which a cruel fate consigned us! What do you say? It is true that when with folded arms we weigh the pros and cons we are no less a credit to our species. The tiger bounds to the help of his congeners without the least reflexion, or else he slinks away into the depths of the thickets. But that is not the question. What are we doing here, *that* is the question. And we are blessed in this, that we happen to know the answer. Yes, in the immense confusion one thing alone is clear. We are waiting for Godot to come (Beckett 2010: 19)

But, especially in modernity, man appears as an object of study and this is a new and major epistemological stake. For Foucault, the human sciences occupy the ground that philosophy has abandoned, for it has been taken in the impasse, that of the subject. As it was conceived by philosophy, the subject is led, during his study, to be transformed into an empirical object, and thus to split between transcendental subject and empirical subject. The sciences of man would enable us to go beyond this problem. Michel Foucault assigns them three domains: the psychological region, the sociological region and the region of literature and myths. But later,

Foucault accused the human sciences of a desire for mastery which would be the mask of power. He then developed the idea of a subordination of knowledge to power, which led him to abandon the notion of episteme.

5.2. The Episteme Is Neither an Epoch, Nor a Civilization

The concept of episteme is certainly criticized, but less contentious than the classically used spirit of an era. The word spirit, even when used metaphorically, is always suspect of idealism, which is open to criticism. The term 'period' is a historical term which individualizes a period of time by associating social aspects with the maintenance of a particular political regime. Historical epochs do not necessarily correspond to the evolutions of thought. The spirit of an era is a vague notion of a socio-cultural nature. The term period is interesting to situate a moment of history, but that of mind has a meaning too vague to serve in the history of thought.

An episteme is not a moment of civilization (although Foucault alludes to it), a notion that has an even greater meaning than that of the historical era. For Norbert Elias, "the process of civilization consists in a modification of sensitivity and human behavior in a definite sense" (Elias 1978: 181). This process would come from the fact that the interdependence between men gives birth to a specific order. The episteme, on the other hand, is limited to the way of thinking, insofar as it takes a particular form at a given time. It is included in the civilizational process, but it goes beyond it. Foucault's approach can be compared with that of the philosopher and sociologist Norbert Elias, for whom abstract thought must be historicized, for it participates in society as a whole. This brings us back to the principle of epistemological precaution consisting in restoring the civilizational context in which the philosophical and scientific thought of an epoch is formed.

It would seem useful to focus the concept of episteme on ideological, philosophical and scientific aspects, as literary and artistic manifestations are more polymorphic and less responsive to the idea of episteme. Social aspects, customs, arts and fashion are not necessarily homogeneous and consistent, and it is difficult to show that they respond to an underlying common structure. By restricting the extension of the concept, it becomes easier to use. However, even so, an episteme is not necessarily homogeneous and contains contradictory aspects with the principles that dominate it.

The idea of structure remains interesting, in the sense that it can be associated with the systemic point of view in epistemology, that every concept is part of a set within which it takes its meaning. On the other hand, the structuralist point of view implies, if applied dogmatically, radical discontinuities between epistemes, which is questionable. It is true that it seems clear that from the empirical point of view distinct epochs can be identified in which, although not shared by all, a set of ideas is diffused, imposed, and manifested clearly and strongly in society and in its evolution. But there are some restrictions and criticisms:

There are problems that go through all the ages. For example, the question 'what is man?' is a permanent question of philosophy since Aristotle. It cannot be said that man is "As the archaeology of our thought easily shows, man is an invention of recent date. And one perhaps nearing its end" (Foucault 2005: 337). The question of man passes through the ages. It would be better to say that, according to the current episteme, the question of man will be answered by mobilizing different conceptual resources and research objects. What appears with modernity are new objects of knowledge concerning man.

There are currents of thought which are not homogeneous to the episteme of an epoch. This objection is obviously correct, but it is not unacceptable. There is also homogeneity and epistemic originality for a time within Western culture. Most authors of a period and of a culture think according to concepts which constitute a kind of basis for thought. This ensemble is a dominant current (even if it is conflicting, because authors, and sometimes the same author, participate in the mainstream and its contestation). Post war literature utilizes literature as a means of conveying its meaning – estranged spirit of the time. That of the absurdist conditions remained for man in his universe and the literature of the absurd is the direct outcome of the dominating theme of the time. It was Albert Camus who focused on the concept so obviously in his works, not to ignore other contemporary authors who produced literature in tailing the elements of the absurd so comprehensively, for instance Jean Paul Sartre, James Joyce and others. Samuel Beckett seems to have been the archetype of the genre.

- […] in regard to absurdism, Samuel Beckett is sometimes considered to be the epitome of the post-modern artists […] in fact he is the aesthetic 'reductio ad absurdum' of absurdism: no longer whistling in the dark, after Waiting for Godot, he is trying to be radically silent, wordless in the dark. Beckett tries to be speak a failure of the logos that never quiet succeeds in being a failure. For to speak the failure would be a kind of success. (Desmond 1990: 363)

Episteme implies that any scholarly author of the period under consideration, whether he is conscious of it or not, reasons from concepts and a view of the world which define the necessary problems. To describe an episteme is to find and summarize the coherence of those ways of thinking which saturate the intellectual space, so that it is radically impossible to escape from them, especially since they are implicit. The episteme thus conceived associates a set of notions, principles, concepts, methods, which support and respond. We can distinguish the ontological and metaphysical, philosophical and scientific aspects, and finally the ideological ones. Taken together, they present a strong coherence, they form a homogeneous structure.

To use a very generalizing formula of Jürgen Habermas, which emphasizes the ontological aspect, one could say that the episteme is the form of knowledge which determines "for the sciences, the insurmountable horizon of categories, Could also say: who determines the historical a priori of the understanding of Being" (Habermas 2015: 305).

6. Conclusion

One of the roles of philosophy is to question how knowledge is constituted. In this context, Foucault makes an interesting proposition, that of bringing together epistemic ensembles that are homogeneous and structuring for different knowledge, which he calls episteme. Philosophy does not escape this epistemic dynamic and its own development lies within the episteme in which it is situated.

The notion of episteme imposes a principle of epistemological precaution which consists in not naively ascribing meanings to the writings of the past. If there are many distinct epistemes, this implies that the same notion does not mean the same thing in antiquity, in the Renaissance and in our own day. This means that it is misleading to interpret the discourses of the past according to the concepts of the present. The Foucauldian attitude implies a historicization of concepts and even more the search for a structure or at least a coherence between them.

One avoids one of the pitfalls on which philosophy sometimes stumbles, which, by constantly reinterpreting its past, produces an involuntary systematic falsification of its content. We should not project our current understanding of concepts on authors of the past or on the philosophies of other cultures. On the contrary, we must try to reconstitute the use of concepts by placing them in the midst of their episteme. Many historical skills are required to understand how the cultural coherence of an era is shaped.

Michel Foucault proposes a specific historicization of a structural type. It indirectly joins the holistic point of view in epistemology that every concept is part of a whole in which it takes its meaning. If we change the set (episteme), then the concepts play differently. Revealing the historicity of a concept does not avoid discussing it. That a concept is the result of an epistemic structure in relation to the period and the socio-historical context does not avoid having to judge its validity and its usefulness.

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