

1 Introduction

Beckett's textual and audiovisual imaginings of ruined worlds on the edge of extinction are remarkably prescient for a twenty-first century confronting a global climate emergency, where many species have already become extinct, and, according to David Wallace-Wells, we are facing the prospect of 'the liveable planet darkening as it approaches a human dusk' (2019, 16). Beckett's post-World War II work was written in the shadow of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Cold War and the fear of global nuclear destruction, but the blasted earth of *Happy Days*, the external devastation outside the refuge of *Endgame* or the desiccated climate and bodies of *Imagination Dead Imagine* are also extraordinarily redolent of our damaged planet given the rapidly increasing effects of human intervention upon the earth's environment. Beckett's texts combine a relentless interrogation of the will to power of the human species with a poetic resonance that articulates the experience of loss, vulnerability and dispossession, and his work remains vitally relevant as we confront the contemporary ecological crisis.

Greg Garrard defines the burgeoning multidisciplinary field of ecologically concerned criticism, or ecocriticism, as 'the study of the relationship of the human and the non-human throughout human cultural history and entailing critical analysis of the term "human" itself' (2012a, 5).¹ According to Carl Lavery and Clare Finburgh, much contemporary ecocriticism 'consciously sets out to place the so-called exceptionalism of the human subject in crisis' (2015, 12). Without homogenising a diverse set of discourses and practices, we might say that ecocriticism includes the repositioning of humans, the *anthropos*, not as masters of the earth's inhabitants and resources, but as cohabitants of the planet with other species. However, (some) humans have dominated and exploited other creatures and resources to such an extent, especially since the technological advances of the industrial age, that they have caused major impact upon and indeed damage to the earth's environment. This impact is reflected in debates about whether we are now entering, or are in, a new age – that of the Anthropocene, rather than the Holocene age which began about 11,700 years ago at the end of the last ice age. The term was introduced initially by Eugene Stoermer and then Paul Crutzen,² and, although the International Union of Geological Sciences has not yet formally declared the Anthropocene as a geological time unit (Zalasiewicz et al., 2017),³ the concept has been taken up in critical debates in both the sciences and the humanities.

¹ The foundational text of ecocriticism is usually identified as Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring* published in 1962, which investigated the environmental impact of the indiscriminate use of pesticides in the United States.

² See Crutzen (2002).

³ The Working Group on the Anthropocene, set up in 2009, presented its interim report to the International Union of Geological Sciences in August 2016 (see Zalasiewicz et al., 2017).

Scholars such as Zoe Todd (Davis and Todd, 2017) and Isabelle Stengers (2014) warn that terms such as 'Anthropocene' or 'anthropocentrism' are potentially problematic as they may erase the many differences and inequalities amongst human individuals and populations, reinforce the focus on humans rather than on other inhabitants of the earth, and neglect the fact that humans are also animals. Nevertheless, given these important provisos, Timothy Morton (2014) suggests that the term helps us to shift scale, placing human history or even prehistory within a larger perspective in space (the planet or universe) and time (a temporality before and indeed beyond the human species).⁴ It has also become a useful critical tool for the analysis of the theological, scientific, philosophical, perceptual and representational systems which underpin anthropocentrism (David and Turpin, 2015), and, in particular, the rise of hierarchical systems of knowledge and classification rooted in European scientific, rational and colonial discourses and practices, which reasserted certain humans as masters of the rest of creation.⁵

Such a critique of humans as 'lords and possessors of nature', as Descartes puts it in *A Discourse on the Method of Correctly Conducting One's Reason and Seeking Truth in the Sciences* (Descartes, [1637] 2006, 51), chimes with Beckett's frequent comments on human indifference towards or drive to control others. For example, his 1957 radio play *All That Fall* conjures a remarkably diverse world of flora and fauna through sound effects and the reflections of the ageing and infirm Maddy Rooney as she walks to the station to meet her blind husband, Dan, on his birthday. Although the play is very specifically located in time (post-independence Ireland) and milieu (a small middle-class Protestant community in the environs of Dublin), much wider spatio-temporal frames are evoked that place the human in relation to the non-human or the more than human.⁶ Maddy encounters layers of human technology and intervention during her journey which enact a history of the Anthropocene from the invention of the horse-driven cart, to the bicycle, the motor car and, finally, the monstrous train associated with the Industrial Revolution. The text stresses the '*exaggerated station sounds*' that should herald the arrival of the train with 'great hissing of steam and clashing of couplings' (Beckett, 1986, 187). Each of these incrementally

⁴ See also Morton's concept of 'hyperobjects', such as global warming, which are ungraspable by humans because of their massive scale in space and time (Morton, 2013).

⁵ Terms such as 'technocene' or 'capitalocene' have been proposed to account for the role of technology and capitalism in enabling some sectors of the human species to become dominant through increasing exploitation not only of the Earth's resources, but also of 'the exchange networks, the financial networks, extraction practices, wealth creations, and (mal)distributions in relation to both people and other critters' (Haraway, 2015, 259).

⁶ The phrase 'more-than-human', sometimes though not always hyphenated, was coined by David Abram in *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-than-Human World* (1996) and is now frequently used in ecological discourses to refer to the non-human living world.

more powerful machines proves increasingly disastrous for the more than human species, from the hinny that Christy wallops, to the hen run over by Mr Slocum's car, and also for humans, since the reason for the delay of the twelve-thirty train is that a child was killed by falling under its wheels (the reason for the child's fall is never confirmed). Moreover, the other humans Maddy meets on her journey are mostly unsympathetic and indeed violent. Although Christy with his cart and Mr Tyler on his bicycle are friendly enough, Mr Slocum regrets offering Maddy a lift in his motor car, and Miss Fitt has to be shamed into lending Maddy a helping arm in order to ascend the steep path leading to the station: 'Your arm! Any arm! A helping hand! For five seconds! Christ what a planet! ... Pismires do it for one another. [Pause] I have seen slugs do it' (Beckett, 1986, 183). In addition to the attempts of everyone else on the platform to ignore or get away from Maddy, there are acts of human-on-human violence: in a sound cue that might be overlooked (see Frost, 1997, 217–18), Mr Barrell delivers a '*backhanded blow in the stomach*' to young Tommy the station porter after several earlier threats (Beckett, 1986, 184), and, on their journey from the station, Maddy and Dan hear the cries of Mrs Tully, whose husband 'is in constant pain and beats her unmercifully' (193). In general, although Maddy herself is sympathetically attuned to the living world around her, humans come across as a species indifferent or destructive towards other creatures, and are unlikely to come to the aid of their fellow beings unless compelled to. In Beckett's later work, such a diverse environment has dwindled to an enclosed, regulated space only barely able to sustain life, where human bodies are the only inhabitants. I refer to these closed worlds as ecosystems.

Features of ecosystems, which may be tiny (a rockpool) or immense (the planet), include the interrelated networks that define the conditions of life in the system: '*An ecosystem is the interacting system made up of all the living and non-living objects in a specified volume of space*' (Weathers, Strayer and Likens, 2013, 3; italics in original). However, ecosystems are also constructs whose boundaries are defined by the scientific observer:

The study of an ecosystem requires defining boundaries. Thus, ecosystems are places defined by investigators [...] The ultimate goal of ecosystem research is not to reduce or isolate specific components but rather to understand the system that results from the interactions of the components as a whole. (Weathers, Strayer and Likens, 2013, 181)⁷

⁷ The acknowledgement of ecosystems as units of analysis defined by the scientist goes back to the first use of the term 'ecosystem' by ecologist Arthur Tansley in 1935: 'The whole method of science [...] is to isolate systems mentally for the purposes of study [...] The isolation is partly artificial, but is the only possible way in which we can proceed' (Tansley, 1935, 299–300).

I argue that this concept of a system whose boundaries are externally determined in order to create a microcosm with human specimens that can be inspected is relevant to much of Beckett's work across different media. His microcosms, however, are not slices of the living world, but models of alternative worlds in which the *anthropos* is placed under observation. It is therefore not only the conditions of the ecosystem that are of interest, but also how the ecosystem is defined, created and observed.⁸

Beckett's work is being increasingly explored from an ecocritical perspective which focuses on the interrelationship between humans, other creatures and the environment in his writing. In her introduction to a special issue of *Samuel Beckett Today / Aujourd'hui* on Beckett and the non-human, Amanda Dennis argues that 'attending to the nonhuman enhances our understanding of the limits and responsibilities of the human vis-à-vis a planet in crisis' (Dennis, 2020, 152). Mary Bryden refers to Beckett's 'species consciousness' (2013, 3),⁹ and she and other scholars have examined how Beckett often 'animalises' his human creatures, emphasising their material, embodied existence, refocusing attention from the human towards a range of more than human species (horses, rats or fleas, for example) that cohabit the narrative worlds of his texts, or, in the later work, portraying humans as objects of observation within their often restrictive habitats.¹⁰ Scholars have also examined the elements that constitute the biospheres in which Beckett's creatures exist, including the atmosphere (Connor, 2003) and the weather (Davies, 2006). Paul Davies draws attention to the absence of the natural environment in the closed mindscapes or 'womb-tombs' of the later work – what he calls 'the condition of human alienation from the biosphere' (2006, 74). Greg Garrard (2012a) and Joe Kelleher (2015) acknowledge the overt references to a historically devastated environment in *Endgame* and *Happy Days* respectively.

Scholars approaching Beckett's work from an ecological perspective agree that such readings need to go beyond the literal level of representation or

⁸ Important studies of the operation of systems in Beckett's work include, for example, Garin Dowd's *Abstract Machines: Samuel Beckett and Philosophy after Deleuze and Guattari* (2007), Enoch Brater's article on Andy Warhol and Samuel Beckett, which focuses on the operation of seriality in Beckett's work (1974), and Harry White's discussion of musical serialism (1998). I use the concept of systems in a more ecological sense, though at times I draw on complementary scholarship on Beckett and confinement (Little, 2020), medium-specific systems (Pattie, 2018) and technology (Kiryushina, Adar and Nixon, 2021).

⁹ *How It Is* makes several references to 'loss of species' (Beckett, 1964, 29) or having 'clung on to the species' (52).

¹⁰ See Weller (2008) and (2013). Joseph Anderton's *Beckett's Creatures: Art of Failure after the Holocaust* (2016) challenges anthropocentric uses of the term 'human' in his discussion of 'creaturely life' in Beckett's work, though the focus of the book is primarily on how 'the Second World War and the Holocaust transformed, or rather revealed, the idea of the human as people had witnessed its creaturely potential' (20).

content. Beckett was evidently not an eco-activist concerned with saving the planet – indeed, salvation of any kind is always a myth in Beckett's work – but his texts might be aligned with what Timothy Morton has called the ecological way of thinking (Morton, 2010), which decentres the place of the human and emphasises rather the interconnectedness of all elements in the planet's ecosystem. Carl Lavery has argued that Beckett's theatre performs such a repositioning of the human. Lavery offers a detailed assessment of Beckett's approach to the medium of the theatre as an enclosed space cut off from the 'chaos of everyday life', not to 'eject or deny the world in an act of spurious aesthetic autonomy, but to find another way of engaging with it' (2018a, 17). This other way is attentive to the expanded experience of both time and species that Beckett's work offers: 'In Beckett's hands, theatre is no longer a space where the essence of the human appears; on the contrary, it is a site where the human dis-appears, subjected, as it is, to a series of "more than human" flows and processes that challenge its much-vaunted exceptionalism and apparent omniscience' (11).

This monograph takes its point of departure from Lavery's interest in Beckett's creation of worlds that recalibrate our experience of time and space in relation to the human.¹¹ I am interested in Beckett's use of each medium in shaping the conditions of production, communication and reception of these worlds, whether reading or hearing / watching. I focus on those works that evoke an (apparently) hermetic environment, a motif that is usually analysed in relation to what scholars have termed Beckett's 'closed space' texts, referring to a series of prose texts from the 1960s, including *All Strange Away*, *Imagination morte imaginez* / *Imagination Dead Imagine*, the 'Faux départs' fragments, 'Bing' / 'Ping', *Fizzle VIII* 'Endroit clos' / 'Closed Space' and *Le Dépeupleur* / *The Lost Ones* (written in various stages from the mid-to-late 1960s).¹² However, this Element explores Beckett's closed spaces from a transmedial and intermedial perspective,¹³ tracing the motif back to an unpublished

¹¹ See also Steven Connor's discussion of Beckett's work as 'short of world' in relation to Heidegger's concept of worlding in Connor (2006, n.p.). Connor argues that 'Beckett has a strong sense of what Heidegger might call "worlding", the creation of worlds. But his characters and narrators live, not within "the world" or worlds as such, but within *Umwelts* that they constitute from themselves, or are constituted from themselves, not voluntarily, but unavoidably.'

¹² See Pilling (2006, 166–85) for dates of composition of these texts. Scholars who have used the term 'closed space' to group these texts include Ruby Cohn (2001, 285) and Stan Gontarski (2017, 62–74). I generally use the English titles of Beckett's works except when the era of composition or the French text is specifically mentioned. In such cases as here, the title is given in French where the work was originally composed in French, followed by the English translation.

¹³ The prefix 'trans' is taken here to refer to the recurrence of the trope or recreation of closed worlds across the different media in which Beckett worked, whereas the term 'intermedial' is used primarily as Christopher Balme defines it: 'the attempt to realise in one medium the

dramatic fragment from the early 1950s, 'Espace souterrain', and investigates Beckett's interest in mime during the 1950s and 1960s as an imaginative technique for envisioning or modelling the relationship between human figures and a highly regulated environment.¹⁴ I then analyse a selection of the closed space prose texts of the 1960s, which have often been described as 'wombtomb' or skull spaces. James Little's monograph *Samuel Beckett in Confinement: The Politics of Closed Space* (2020) also takes a cross-disciplinary and interdisciplinary approach to Beckett's closed space texts, emphasising the deeply political dimensions of Beckett's closed space aesthetic and its embodied and institutional resonances. However, the focus of this Element is the argument that Beckett's closed space texts combine qualities of confined interior space with the sense of a cosmological or ecological system: we might think of these texts as evoking damaged, exhausted or entropic habitations, cosmologies or biospheres, where the systems of heat and light have become polarised and extreme: *All Strange Away*'s '[s]ame system light and heat with sweat more or less, cringing away from walls, burning soles, now one, now the other' (Beckett, 1995, 171); the 'passage from heat and light to black and cold' (183) of *Imagination Dead Imagine*, or the oscillation of the temperature between hot and cold in *The Lost Ones*.

I argue that the confined space systems of these works continue to metamorphose across other texts and media throughout the next years and indeed right up to the strict patterns of movement in *Quad* (a televisual reworking of the abandoned 'J. M. Mime' from 1963) and the 1983 stage play *What Where*, subsequently revised for television. As part of their trajectory, the qualities of these closed spaces also shift in emphasis, from the sociopolitical resonances of some of the early dramatic fragments and mimes to the exhausted biospheres of *Imagination Dead Imagine* and *The Lost Ones*, to the observation chamber of *All Strange Away* and some of the television plays. Such a perspective draws attention to the role of the medium itself in the construction and reader or spectator perception of those environments, as well as suggesting ways in which they begin to be crafted intermedially. In other words, Beckett translates his experience of working in one medium into his exploration of the boundaries of another and how it creates a world.¹⁵

aesthetic conventions and habits of seeing and hearing in another medium' (2004, 7). See, for example, Chapple and Kattenbelt (2006), Pethö (2011) and *Samuel Beckett Today / Aujourd'hui* 32.1 on Beckett and Intermediality (McTighe, Morin and Nixon, 2020).

¹⁴ University of Reading Beckett Collection, MS 2931 and MS 2932.

¹⁵ Although this Element occasionally refers to Beckett's radio plays, it does not include a specific section on radio. This is partly because I have written in detail on *All That Fall* from an ecological point of view elsewhere (forthcoming, 2021), for reasons of space, and also because Beckett's

These texts intensify the pervasive rejection or parody in Beckett's work of the concept of a sovereign, human, rational subject or agent who exercises control over the external environment through technology or *technè* (a will to make or create). Yet these subjected bodies have been brought into being through the agency of their author, and indeed, in the case of Beckett's drama for stage and audiovisual media, by their creative and technical teams. Beckett's closed space texts both model worlds in which the human is reduced to an exhausted species in a shrunken environment, and reflect on the modes of authority which produce them, drawing attention to their own mechanisms of generation and control. The concept of ecosystem therefore relates not only to the fictional environment invoked by narrative or audiovisual means, but also to the material and technological affordances and constraints of the medium itself. Frequently, the works turn the drive to observe and control creation, which would be attributed to divine or supernatural beings in non-secular cultures, against humans themselves. Indeed, the framework of a world whose creation and laws may be regulated by an external power, whether divine or infernal, is posited in several works, and often linked back to Dante's cosmology, as in *How It Is*, opening up 'vast tracts of time' beyond that of human history (Beckett, 1964, 7). However, the nature of who or what regulates the environment that Beckett's creatures inhabit most often remains unclear or beyond cognition, though ultimately the works reflect on their own increasingly depleted conditions of creation or imagining. How these works then position their readers or spectators engages them in confronting ways of seeing and responding to both human and more than human creatures that question the histories, knowledges and technologies of anthropocentric agency.

The second section draws on the concept of the stage as the model of an ecosystem. Citing the work of Bonnie Marranca in *Ecologies of Theatre*, Clare Finburgh and Carl Lavery argue that 'theatrical texts or productions can be like ecosystems – collectives of interrelating and interdependent scenic elements on stage' (2015, 15). When directing *Endgame* for the Schiller Theater in 1967, Beckett famously commented to Michael Haerdter: 'There for me lies the value of the theatre. One turns out a small world with its own laws, conducts the action as if upon a chessboard' (McMillan and Fehsenfeld, 1988, 231). Chess here operates as a metaphor for a self-contained fictional microcosm. This section relates the

experimentation in the radio medium was concentrated into a relatively short time frame: 1956 to the early 1960s. Although the radio plays parallel the increasing concern with the perceptual conditions and technical affordances of the medium itself characteristic of Beckett's work in other media, I wanted to focus on Beckett's shift into the visual media of film and television in the mid-1960s. However, an ecologically inflected investigation of space, time, technology and the human in Beckett's radiophonic worlds would certainly be a rewarding project. As I argue at the beginning of Section 4, Beckett continued to incorporate acousmatic sound and an intense focus on listening into his work in other media.

concept of a microcosm to the tradition of the *theatrum mundi*, however unlikely that trope may seem to Beckett's minimalist stages. Yet the *theatrum mundi* places the human in an observed arena that is simultaneously a stage, a stratified social system and, especially in medieval versions of the trope, the habitation of all earthly creatures under the benevolent or judgemental gaze of a divine being. This section briefly summarises the relevance of this trope to Beckett's early full-length plays, *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*, but focuses on selected mimes and abandoned dramatic fragments from the 1950s and 1960s ('Espace souterrain' / 'Coups de gong', and *Act Without Words I* and *II*), as laboratories or models for ecosystems in which humans find themselves constrained, inspected or taunted in a tightly regulated habitat.

The third section focuses on the closed space prose texts of the 1960s, though it also places these texts in the context of the relationship between the human protagonists and their environment in some of the earlier prose, and in relation to the Dante-saturated *How It Is*. The analysis focuses on *All Strange Away*, *Imagination Dead Imagine* and *The Lost Ones*, looking at how the theatrical model of a restricted and inspected place of play becomes complicated by a visual regime of perception following Beckett's work in film and television in the mid-1960s.

The fourth section examines the mediated environments of Beckett's plays for television and the televisual adaptation of the stage play *What Where*. This section considers the abstracted and meta-televisual qualities of these plays which do not feature external locations but take place within enclosed studio spaces or delimited playing areas. While all traces of living plants or animals have been erased, the world of humanly mediated 'nature' emerges through traces of Romantic literature and music, often associated with women. This section looks at the poetic quality of some of these later teleplays which attempt to wring some comfort from the ghosts of the Romantic tradition, in cases where vision is associated with longed-for apparitions or visitations rather than with inspection. Yet the desire of the dreamer for a lost other or solace constructed through these poetic and musical remains is framed as illusion. This section investigates the representation of gender as a highly acculturated sign system in these plays, and concludes with a discussion of Beckett's final play and televisual work, *What Where*, which is perhaps Beckett's most minimal evocation of an anthropocentric system destroying itself.

2 The *Theatrum Mundi* as Ecosystem: Beckett's Mimes and Dramatic Fragments

The stage has long been conceived as a model of the world and the world as a stage, exemplified by the ancient concept of the *theatrum mundi*. The origins of the trope are theological, where a divine being looks down on the

actions of the world below, but, as Ruby Cohn has argued, it abounds throughout Shakespeare and Renaissance drama, and was revived in the twentieth century by Bertolt Brecht, Jean Genet, Peter Weiss and Samuel Beckett (Cohn, 1967). The concept of an enclosed environment inhabited by humans whose patterns of behaviour are scrutinised by some external observer (if not diegetically then by the reader or spectator) recurs throughout Beckett's work in different media. This section examines the concept of the *theatrum mundi* as a way of approaching Beckett's metatheatrical presentation of the stage as a place of inspection in a number of his earlier plays, mimes and dramatic fragments from the later 1940s to the 1950s. One of these fragments in particular, 'Espace souterrain', is examined as a model for the highly regulated closed spaces inhabited by human creatures that feature in the prose works of the 1960s and beyond. While Beckett's earlier drama can be linked to the *theatrum mundi* in its satirical view of human social organisation and mores, as portrayed, for example, through Winnie's futile though determined attempts to shore up middle-class etiquette and manners far from any society in *Happy Days*, his mimes in particular frequently position human figures in a spatio-temporal perspective where their activity is de-individualised, so that their position and behaviour in the overall system of their habitat is foregrounded.

Versions of the *Theatrum Mundi*

The history of the *theatrum mundi* trope constitutes a palimpsest of theological, philosophical and artistic representations of the place of the human in creation. The concept of the world as a stage on which humans act out their lives derives initially from ancient Greek philosophy: Ernst Robert Curtius' *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* gives an overview of how the trope evolved from its Greek origins to its re-emergence in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Europe (Curtius, 1953). Plato describes man as a puppet of the gods which may be 'their plaything only, or created with a purpose' (2012, 167), an image then taken up in early Christianity, with Augustine declaiming that 'the whole life of the human race, a life of trial and temptation, is no more than a show played out on stage' (2004, 113). As Björn Quiring argues in the introduction to a more recent survey of the concept, the *theatrum mundi* then became a frequent image in the European theatre of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, in works by Calderon and Shakespeare, as in the famous lines from *As You Like It*: 'All the world's a stage / And all the men and women merely players' (Shakespeare, 1986, 717). Quiring notes the ambiguity of the trope as it encompasses both divine and secular visions of the cosmos:

On the one hand, the metaphor of the *theatrum mundi* can portray life as the constant flux of roles, players and plots, thence as contingent, frail and deceitful. On the other hand, it can lend stability to life by the idea that the fortunes of each actor derive from the power of a transcendent director and proceed according to eternally prescribed instructions. The metaphor may denigrate or elevate the world, depending on whether one likes the resultant cosmic play or not. The decisive question is whether the world-theatre is in fact limitless: is a director and some stage machinery all that exists beyond the stage itself? (Quiring, 2014, 2)

The *theatrum mundi* therefore plays on theatre's focus on the here and now (the actions of plays and players on the stage before an audience), but the trope as metaphor or allegory transforms this small bounded scene into a 'world', whether an anthropocentric comedy of manners or a tragedy of human weakness, or a perspective on the ephemerality of human affairs in the context of eternal time or timelessness.

During the Renaissance, the 'world' is frequently envisaged as a perfect system designed by the Christian God. Thomas Browne's *The Garden of Cyrus*, originally published in 1658, presents the natural world as a garden arranged by God in the shape of a quincunx.¹⁶ Nature is portrayed here as subject to the same symmetry and order as the spheres. The figuring of the *theatrum mundi* as a chessboard in a play by Thomas Middleton, *A Game at Chess* (1624), derives from this sense of the cosmos operating according to a preordained pattern. However, such concepts of a changeless *mise en scène* whose signs can be decoded by the faithful begin to be modified by new discoveries in technology and science such as the telescope, which Galileo invented in 1601, as Beckett noted.¹⁷ The world is no longer viewed from the stable point of view of an external creator, but through technologically enhanced and mediated human inspection, which fractures the field of vision as it magnifies a section of it. Anselm Haverkamp argues that, by the seventeenth century, 'the *theatrum mundi* had turned from a coherent allegory of divine action into a mixed metaphor of observation, a laboratory of epistemological concerns' (2014, 141). The *theatrum mundi* trope therefore combines contradictory perspectives on humans as part of a divinely ordained cosmological order, as players in a stratified social and class system, or as scientific (male, European) observers whose technologies turn the world into an object of knowledge. In each case, however, the concept implies a microcosm or delimited system which is under external inspection, observation or control. This section argues that

¹⁶ See Peter Murphy (1982) on Beckett's frequent use of the quincunx image as found in Browne's *The Garden of Cyrus*.

¹⁷ See Beckett's *Dream Notebook* (Beckett, 1999, 146).