Ecological Entropy in Samuel Beckett's *Nohow On* (1989): An 'Ecosophical' Interpretation

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Abstract

Inspired by Felix Guttari's 'ecosophical' theory of the three ecologies (environment, society, and subjectivity), this paper is an ecocritical reading of Beckett's collection of three prose pieces entitled Nohow On (1989). Nature, like Beckett's characters in this collection, is mostly anonymous; it is equally silenced and hardly depictable especially in the first piece entitled Company and the last one entitled Worstward Ho. The story in the middle is entitled Ill Seen Ill Said where the pronouncement that there's "No more sky or earth" is made; it is a pure parody of nature through the decadent and disintegrating life of an unnamed old woman.

Keywords: Anthropocene, ecocriticism, ontology, subjectivity, Nohow On, Beckett.

الانتروبيا البيئية: قراءة نقدية بيئية لرواية نوهاو اون لساموئيل بيكات (1989)

ملخص

غالبا ما يتم اقصاء كتابات ساموئيل بيكات من الدراسات النقدية البيئية ودلك لصعوبتها البالغة من حيث الأسلوب والمضمون. تقوم هده الورقة البحثية بتطبيق نظرية الإيكولوجيات الثلاث لفيليكس قوتاري على الرواية الثلاثية نوهاو اون (1989) والتي بدورها تعطي صورة تخويفية عن مصير الفرد وسط الازمات المناخية المتأزمة والناتجة بدرجة أولى من التصرفات الفردية الغير واعية.

الكلمات المفاتيح: انثروبوسين، نقد بيئي، انتولوجيا، ذاتية، نوهاو اون، بيكات.

L'Entropie Ecologique et son Interprétation écosophique dans l'œuvre de Samuel Beckett « No How On » (1989)

Résumé

Inspiré par la théorie « écosophique » des trois écologies (environnement, société et subjectivité) de Félix Guattari, cet article propose une lecture écocritique de la collection de trois textes en prose de Beckett intitulée Nohow On (1989). La nature, tout comme les personnages de Beckett dans cette collection, est majoritairement anonyme ; elle est tout autant réduite au silence et difficilement représentable, notamment dans le premier texte intitulé Company et le dernier intitulé Worstward Ho. L'histoire intermédiaire, intitulée Ill Seen Ill Said, contient la déclaration selon laquelle il n'y a « plus de ciel ni de terre » ; c'est une pure parodie de la nature à travers la vie décadente et en décomposition d'une vieille femme sans nom.

Mots-clés: Anthropocène, Eco-critique, Ontologie, Subjectivité, Nohow On, Beckett.

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Introduction:

Many of the modern and postmodern literary productions flaunt obdurate images of death and disintegration, where nature, both as a space and place, is rendered as a site of outrageous human/inhuman embodiment. Samuel Beckett is often exempt from ecocritical discourses. His works assume an inaccessible nature at the discursive level, making them exemplary of postmodernist literary aporias**(1)**. Beckett's fiction falls more within the 'anti-literature' and absurdist travails whose comic cruelty surpasses the relief that natural images provide. In *The Literature of Silence: Henry Miller and Samuel Beckett*, Ihab Hassan classifies Beckett along with Miller as the best representatives of the 'Anti-literature' trend—a highly experimental and disintegrating form of literature where silence echoes louder than words. Hassan explains how: "Literature moves toward anti-literature and in doing so reinvents forms that become progressively crazy and disruptive: neo-picaresque, black burlesque, grotesque, gothic, nightmarish science fiction. In the end, the anti-forms of outrage and apocalypse blend in silence"**(2)**. This anti-literary stream is what Beckett's fiction falls into, and thus, the reader becomes an active participant in a 'nightmarish' meta-parody as these self-reflexive and narcissistic texts promote an everlasting '*mise-en-abyme*'**(3)**—more like a dystopian abyss—where the reader re-reads and re-writes through the texts without any clear way out.

It is indeed challenging to dig through the abysmal depths of Beckett's so-called difficult words and their extremely absurdist tempo. One of the articles on the Beckettian aesthetic unreadability is Jan Alber's "The "Moreness" or "Lessness" of "Natural" Narratology: Samuel Beckett's "Lessness" Reconsidered" (2002). Alber claims that the most convenient way to render the Beckettian texts readable is by narrativizing them, and applying what Monika Fludernik labels as 'natural narratology'**(4)**. What is meant by this natural narratological paradigm is the experiential reading of the Beckettian texts, which entails a postmodern deconstructive interpretation and a dissection of the text into possible narrativized sections; this equally necessitates a special emotional and analytical immersion in the text in order to arrive at valid detours in its discursive elements. As similar in their degree of unreadability to James Joyce's latest works, a rather phonetic and speculative reading of Beckett's works could lead somewhere; this means departing from a priori theoretical possibilities and prove their validity through interpretation and argument. In "Samuel Beckett's *Lessness*: An Exercise in Decomposition" (1973), J.M. Coetzee has already traced this dystopian structural attitude is the Beckettian fiction. *Lessness*, which translates as *Sans* in French, exposes the nakedness of some human figures**(5)**, and thus, introduces the ellipsis of nature and its own decomposition through the human factor. This work likens the natural crises to undressing the human being from clothes, values, and ethics; hence, when nature is omitted and undressed of its most important components, it metaphorically resembles a human devoid of an ethical veneer. In "Earth, World, and the Human: Samuel Beckett and the Ethics of Climate Crisis" (2020), Mark Farrant explores the Beckettian existential notions and their posthuman dynamics by exploring the Anthropocene in Beckett's "The End". Farrant's article traces the materiality of Beckett's fiction through the exploration of French philosophers, mainly Georges Bataille and Jacques Derrida, which offers an interesting commentary outlook on the climate crisis through the aesthetics of the 'closed earth'**(6)** as the character describes the sky, earth, and sea to be all cramped into a "mighty systole", hinting at the eminent stop of the earth in the yet metaphorical contracting mode that the climate crisis is generating—similar to a heart attack. Farrant's study offers lines of continuity as both the human and inhuman finitude represented in "The End" are matched with the worsening nature of the human in *Nohow On* (1989), where the ethics of disintegration are set forward by Beckett. *Nohow On*, in its turn features a "Slow systole diastole"**(7)**, the cramping and relaxing movement of an agonizing nature, analogous with that of a harrowing heart. The present paper continues to explore similar ethical, philosophical, and aesthetic routes within the Beckettian texts. It departs, however, into the scarcely explored text of *Nohow On*—a trilogy of three short prose pieces—and into the reliance on the new ontology of ecosophy. Ecosophy encompasses a rather philosophical approach in the study of ecology as

a science of its own. This philosophizing of ecology permeates its empirical views with ethical, emotional, and rational dimensions. This trend in thinking employs a new economy of ecological ideas, linking them primarily to the individual and his/her immediate environment. This study is an ecocritical reading of Beckett's trilogy through Felix Guttari's 'ecosophical' theory of the three ecologies: environment, society, and subjectivity. *Nohow On* is an outright metaphor of an ecosophy. The parody in this context is both an ironic and, at times, serious imitation of the real world's natural movement towards contracting chaos.

Nowhow On is one of Beckett's most coded texts; its linguistic difficulty accentuates the disastrous states of its main characters. This paper argues that instead of using natural images and their ecological disintegration in the pastoral and romantic fashions, Beckett gives nature a rather human personification. In *Nohow On*, Beckett parodies nature by giving its unnamed characters the attributes of a fading ecology. Therefore, ecological contempt allegorically screams through the quasi-inexistent nature. Beckett calls for an environmental awakening by displaying a terrifying quasi-apocalyptic malaise where nature is scarce, and humans are mortified. The text represents the Anthropocentric impact through analogical images between man and nature. In this specific world of Beckett's, nature is doomed to endure demolition as it broods among an earth with an "invisible nearby sea", and an earth that is "inaudible", and whose "entire surface" is "under grass"**(8)**. Hence, man changes along with the climate change and man withers in the same way nature does. This solid repositioning of nature as part and parcel of '*being*'**(9)** prompts the reader to re-imagine the disintegrating human condition in the form of nature-like parody of a dying nature. Beckett's text could be read as an allegory of a decomposed nature as he personifies nature and gives it human attributes. *Nohow On* features no apparent signs of life and human interaction. There is no continuity, nor there is a regular and mundane development of events. Everything disintegrates along with language in a repetitive circle within the void of action and the fragmented bodily images. There are no fully fledged human descriptions; there are rather "eyes", "hands", "legs", "voices", "skulls", and "ills". It is a disturbing piece that is shockingly psychological. Beckett offers no clear beginning and no clear closure; he rather pictures a terrifying collapse of the ecosystem and a more mortifying havoc in which human beings sicken and disintegrate.

1- The New Ontology of Ecosophy and the Underlying Natural Entropy:

In "What is Ecosophy?", Manola Antonioli explains the Guttarian ecosophical conception in terms of a "plurality of ecologies, environments, habitats, that do not 'surround' us as a container would envelop its contents"; she insists on it being a form of continually 'reconfigured' "networks of relations" that both defines and is defined by us**(10)**. Antonioli goes on to explain that ecosophy is larger than the 'managerial' ecology that acts through sustainable development strategies and ecological solutions. Ecosophy is a more radical notion which extends to the "manufacturing of infelicity"**(11)**, which highly depends on societal relations that suffer the repercussions of the technological advances and the extreme alterations in the modes of consumptions, human relations, and the environment. Ergo, ecosophy—eco-philosophy—goes beyond the simplistic definitions of ecological literatures and theories; it rather covers a larger scale as to configure the deepest layers of communal and individual relational aspects.

In fact, Guttari's ecosophy unearths the rhizomatic causes behind the ecological crises and warns against an eventual natural destruction. Natural entropy—entropy is the scientific concept that emphasizes the degree of chaos and disorder that could interfere in the irreversible movement of a particular system—and its quasi-apocalyptic and /or apocalyptic consequences cannot be fought against through the sole calls for sustainability; it equally depends on the consciousness of individuals and the way it shapes and is shaped by its surroundings. Ecosophy depends on shaping a new consciousness which links the individual to the communal, without eliminating the natural environment as a vital sublime space. This new ontology was first outlined by Arne Naess in *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy* (1989).

Naess explicates this new ontology which links humans with nature. Naess stresses the importance of 'eco-philosophy' in the creation of an "international deep ecology movement,

which includes scientists, activists, scholars, artists, and all those who are actively working towards a change in anti-ecological political and social structures" **(12)**. This purports to the fact that environmentalism should not be separate from a set of ethics and ideals of individualism and human relations. Ecosophy suggests a revisional introspection of human behaviors and relationships in the face of imminent ecological catastrophes. Naess states:

> This discussion of the environmental crisis is motivated by the unrealised potential human beings have for varied experience in and of nature: the crisis contributes or could contribute to open our minds to sources of meaningful life which have largely gone unnoticed or have been depreciated in our efforts to adapt to the urbanised, techno industrial mega-society**(13)**.

Naess focuses on the many ways through which environmental visions have failed against the highly individualized and urbanized world order. The mass consumption and its ironical mass-subjectivity and individual lifestyles hindered the efforts towards sustainable life models, where nature is protected and cherished.

In "The shallow and the deep, long-range ecology movement. A summary" (1973), Naess stresses the vitality of a deep ecology movement against the shallow ecology movements. The shallow warning and dystopian calls against pollution should be replaced by a deeper level of action as to awaken the 'man-in-environment' awareness—being—which replants man within nature away from the agonizing master/slave narratives that further separates the natural human connection with Nature**(14)**. By allowing the individual to experience the pleasurable bonds with the environment without the alerting restrictions of anthropocentrism and its calamitous consequences, human and natural entropies could be reversed. Therefore, an ecological philosophy and an ecological thinking with concrete future goals at subverting the Anthropocene and/or reversing its dynamics promise a more reassuring and sustainable environment.

In *The Ecological Thought* (2010), Timothy Morton defines ecological thinking as something that surpasses the limits of ecology. Morton introduces a counter idea that deals with the dark side of the environment against the green and bright environmental portrayals. He includes "negativity, irony, ugliness and horror"**(15)** and argues that anti-pastoral imageries, ecological horror, and dark nature can also contribute to a renewed thinking about ecology. Nature's absence leads to questionings and revisions through the malaise that anti-natural descriptions create.

Morton advances his ideas about dark nature and a philosophy that thinks and re-thinks natural abjectness as an alarming sign that prompts natural abundance. The negativity that comes with portraying the realistic and shocking images of natural entropy reverses the usual romantic and reminiscent portrayals of a nature that used to exist. Morton counters environmentalism with ecology. He claims that "environmentalism is often apocalyptic" while "the ecological thought thinks forward"**(16)**. For Morton, Ecological thought presupposes an eco-apocalypse, yet it encourages a future based on ethical awareness and individual and communal responsibility towards nature and the species. Beckett's text offers a speculative ground for analysis by displaying in its structure Guttari's tripartite ecosophical divisions and by emphasizing the dark side of man and nature in its characters' horrific descents. In as much as *Nohow On* lacks overt natural images, it awakens some ecological responsibility in the minds of its readers.

2- The Three Ecologies as Portrayed in the *Nohow On* Trilogy:

In his tripartite division of ecologies, Guttari warns against an ecological suicide generated by human actions and urges the necessity for an intellectual and mental ecology to avoid the human's captivity in the endless loop of technological enslavement and modernity. Guttari's philosophy, in its core, relies on the aesthetic and artistic explication and renderings of life in art. Human subjectivity, the environment, and society are the three ecologies, with the human as a central-individualistic force and a thoughtful ecologist of some sorts.

Beckett's *Nohow On* is a work of art that traces individual decline along the loss of meaning

and direction. The malaise and angst the characters go through echo against the larger environment, and the symptoms of an ecocide are displayed in the metaphorical personalization of nature. In the first book, *Company*, the man lays on his back and chronically suffers from memory attacks as he recounts his life story to a made-up hearer, but he discovers that he is eternally alone. The second book, *Ill Seen Ill Said*, is the story of an old woman who awaits death in a cabin; this book is the most abundant in terms of natural images as her memories feature snow, lambs, and flowers. The third book, *Worstward Ho*, is a highly experimental and rather metafictional narrative, where Beckett manipulates the reader's mind through his coded language; the protagonist is a disturbed and speculative reader.

The microcosmic illustrations of the three suffering beings and the metafictional schizophrenic attacks that the text launches on the reader reflect the larger macrocosmic dilemma as regards the larger community, and consequently, the larger environment. Similar rhizomatic links are made by Guttari and Deleuze in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), where they categorize segmentary divisions between molar and molecular entities and where nature is described as "a body without organs"**(17)**. In "Schizoanalysis and Ecosophy: Scales of History and Action", Anne Querrien and Andrew Goffey explore the shift from psychoanalysis to schizoanalysis that both Guttari and Deleuze advance in *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. They explain that "schizoanalysis aims not only at untangling individual difficulties in everyday life but equally at fomenting the collective adoption of attitudes able to generate development in the directions indicated by new social movements"**(18)**. Ecology is at the heart of the new social movements, and its philosophical implications extend to transversally bind the individual segments with the collective ones. Thus, environmental, mental, and social ecologies from "three plateaus" intersect with the individual ecology**(19)**. Like the rhizome, individual ecology grows roots that spread out nodes and entangle with collective ecologies.

In *Company*, this schizophrenia persists as a voice is addressed to one who 'reasons ill' and who "could go out no more. Out no more to walk the little winding back roads and interjacent pastures now alive with flocks and now deserted"**(20)**. The voice duplicates into voices and the addressed gets more ambiguous as the ultimate goal becomes an indefinite personification of a voice, a sound; "Let the hearer be called H."**(21)**. Other voices emerge: "Till feeling the need for company again he tells himself to call the hearer M at least. For readier reference. Himself some other character. W. Devising it all himself included for company. In the same dark as M when last heard of"**(22)**. M, here, refers to the many M's in Beckett's fiction— "L'insaisissable Moi: Les M de Beckett"**(23)**. These voices are untrack-able, unnamable. Eugene F. Kaelin explores John Fletchers analysis of Beckett's novels and the fact that Beckett's M's "do recur, and they are unseizable, indeed unnamable, since they portray no essences to be grasped intellectually outside of their own limited worlds"**(24)**. In fact, the M's and W's and H's that recur throughout the text of *Company* are more of an invented hearer that the protagonist creates, only to figure out that he's been addressing himself all the time. H or Haitch as mentioned in the text endures the tribulations of being secluded from the outside world. The character faces his own interiority and the voices arising from memory.

Ill Seen Ill Said portrays how the old woman moves from appearing amidst the pastures to withering among the stones. The trembling woman appears "Unalloyed. This old so dying woman. So dead. In the madhouse of the skull and nowhere else"**(25)**. The agonizing woman in her personification of nature, and in her disappearing state, becomes 'no more' and urges the questions: "Is it to nature alone it owes its rough-hewn air? Or to some too human hand forced to desist?"**(26)**. The narrative voice insists on entropy: "She is vanishing. With the rest. The already ill seen bedimmed and ill seen again annulled. The mind betrays the treacherous eyes and the treacherous word their treacheries"**(27)**. The dying woman sends her farewells and so does nature through the innumerable signs and warnings of its demise: "No more tear itself away from the remains of trace. Of what was never. Quick say it suddenly can and farewell say say farewell. If only to the face. Of her tenacious trace"**(28)**. This extremely poetic passage works

as a crying eulogy to lament the dissolution of flowers into stones and the disappearance of natural abundance into nothingness. The absurdly dying woman expresses strong bonds with natural images in their 'no more' state. This state, however, is not completely absurd. Her apocalypse becomes the entropy of her natural surroundings. The pastoral images, the grass, the lambs, and the flowers all turn into stones the way the old woman turns into bones and life starts leaving her ashen body "gently, gently"**(29)**.

Where this woman exists, "Stones increasingly abound"**(30)**. The narrative voice emphasizes the meager pastures around the woman's lone cabin and implies that the human factor is the "culprit" and the "evil core" since at the time of its building there existed growing clover around its walls, but then "the evil spread" has not urged the demolition of the cabin. The sheep are also gone as they remained shepherded, and the flowers faded with the woman's fading movement. The old woman's condition is analogous with the earth's; her figure "trembles faintly without cease. As if here without cease the earth faintly quaked"**(31)**. The narrator insists on the centrality of this woman as an allegory for the earth:

> She forgets. Now some do. Toward but never nearer. Thus they keep her in the centre. More or less. What then if not her do they ring around? In their ring whence she disappears unhindered. Whence they let her disappear. Instead of disappearing in her company. So the unreasoning goes. While the eye digests its pittance. In its private dark. In the general dark**(32)**.

This disappearing state is contrasted with the white stones that abound in plentiful fashion every year along with the sepulchers among the pastures. Hence death is always linked to an invasion of stones within the pastures. In addition to the fading colors and the overwhelming black and white static images, physical decay is juxtaposed with ecological decay. *Ill Seen Ill Said* offers a bleak vision of a dissolving consciousness in the midst of natural disarray. The stones are the main remaining background against which the woman, nature, hallucinates, sickens, and dies.

Worstward Ho is the most complex piece in Beckett's trilogy. Its language itself suggests doom and cataclysm. The point of view in this prose piece is confusingly second person mixed with third person. The voice addresses the reader and pretends not to address the reader as it shifts to omniscient third person at intervals in the text. The voice commands: "Say a body. Where none. No mind. Where none. That at least. A place. Where none. For the body. To be in. Move in. Out of. Back into. No. No out. No hack"**(33)**. The voice then follows an old man and a child, probably Beckett and the reader, through the apocalyptic atmosphere where there's "No bones. No ground. No pain"**(34)**. As everything in the setting is worsening, the narrative portrays how everything disappears and loses essence: "Say child gone. As good as gone. From the void. From the stare. Void then not that much more? Say old man gone. Old woman gone. As good as gone"**(35)**. *Worstward Ho* mentions once again the dying woman, the man, the skulls, and the stones. This proves that probably Beckett came at the conclusion that without company everything is ill seen and ill said and eventually headed worst-ward. This last metafictional narrative acts as a warning voice that speaks directly to the reader, positioning him/her in a state of horror within the anarchy of unnatural structures. It works as a call to the consciousness of the reader—an alarm against the disorderly disjunction between man, community, and the environment.

In *The Unhappy Consciousness: The Poetic Plight of Samuel Beckett, An Inquiry at the Intersection of Phenomenology and Literature*, Eugene F. Kaelin states that Beckett always succeeds in capturing the tragedy of human existence. Relating the Dantean four levels of vertical structures, Kaelin qualifies the Beckettian text to fit within all four levels, the literal, the moral, the allegorical, and the anagogical**(36)**. Kaelin further declares:

> Beckett is a master of the comic ironic effect; in the tone of his surfaces, in the tragi-comic reversals of meanings at the level of image and idea, and in the paradoxical play of surface tone against a first level meaning that itself constitutes meaning at the next higher level**(37)**.

Mastering surface and deep levels of discourse, Beckett creates meaning through his texts even when their postmodern inaccessible nature does not offer a fully delineated closure. These levels intersect with the layers of ecosophy, which are mainly connected to horizontal structures. The vertical and horizontal movements into time and within narrative could be explained through the Bakhtinian mathematical chronotopic conception for the time-space connectedness in the narrative, by chronotope, Bakhtin defines "the intrinsic connectedness of temporal and spatial relationships that are artistically expressed in literature"**(38)**. The horizontal movements occur within the natural time-line and the vertical movements are mystical and mythical timeframes which disrupt the horizontal trajectory. Beckett merges the literal and the spiritual with the casual and simple acts that the characters go through. In *Company*, for instance, the voice plays within structures of repetitious accounts where the axes of narrative are hardly recognizable.

In fact, the vertical and horizontal movements can be related to Guttari's elements of social relations where different components take part in defining human ties. Guttari names 'signifying semiological components', which are the immediate result of family, education, religion, and the surrounding environment; these components are automatically extended to encompass elements created by the overall cultural ideology through the media and cinema. Guttari links these to levels to another 'signifying semiological dimension', which is diffused through the "informational sign machines"**(39)**.

Gutarri's *The Three Ecologies* (2001) offers a new insight into understanding ecological decay. By giving special attention to the subjectivity of man, the private world of their thoughts, and their road towards aging and withering, this article tries to understand the link between this reconceived subjectivity and its close relation to the environment and society. In *Company*, for example, the voice that reminds the man of the hedgehog he once captured as a young person brings awareness to human interference in the ecological system, which often results in a negative impact. The voice recalls:

> You take pity on a hedgehog out in the cold and put it in an old hatbox with some worms. … A suspicion that all was perhaps not as it should be. That rather than do as you did you had perhaps better let alone and the hedgehog pursue its way. Day s if not weeks passed before you could bring yourself to return to the hutch. You have never forgotten what you found then. You are on your hack in the dark and have never forgotten what you found then. The mush. The stench**(40)**.

This passage draws on human forgetfulness and irresponsibility; this minor behavior of capturing an animal in nature and putting it in a box to die mirrors bigger behaviors towards natural disequilibrium. This rather minor and fleeting event simulates the modern physics' explanation, where the entropy of an object is affected by the tiniest interference in its irreversible movement. In another instance in the book, natural abjection is recalled as the voice addresses the character saying: "That is all of nature you have seen"**(41)**. The voice then commands the character to listen to the leaves in an attempt to awaken his consciousness to the sound of nature—to voices and sounds outside of his mind.

In fact, the *Nohow On* trilogy moves along the three ecologies of Guttari. This ecosophical perspective could be illustrated and applied on the three prose pieces under study. *Company* portrays a rather declining portrayal of the three ecologies where there is the old man awaiting death, the environment, and the social relations all brought up through the point of view of a voice—the voice that reminds the man of his deeds throughout his life. *Ill Seen Ill Said* presents two ecologies through the character of the withering old woman and her surroundings. *Worstward Ho* has one ecology—the ecology of a disturbed individual's mind.

This tripartite ecology leads to the idea that in addition to its being environmental, ecology is closely related to social relations and to the individual. In fact, Guttari's ecosophy tends to rely more on artistic groundings rather than on psychological and scientific theories. Guttari quotes Gregory Bateson's remark that "There is an ecology of bad ideas, just as there is an ecology of weeds"**(42)**. This very specific remark drives the enterprise of this article and prompts

its detours into rather 'ecosophic-criticism' in an attempt to bring some connection between ecocriticism, the philosophy of subjective behaviors, and literature and/or art. Therefore, the aforementioned ideas prompt one, once again, to dig through Beckett's complex art to understand the complexities of subjective ecology, and eventually its direct impact on the environmental and societal ecologies.

In *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm* (1995), Guttari explains his ecosophical ideology and its close relation to subjectivity, ethics, and ecology. Guttari states that:

> Beyond the relations of actualised forces, virtual ecology will not simply attempt to preserve the endangered species of cultural life but equally to engender conditions for the creation and development of unprecedented formations of subjectivity that have never been seen and never felt. This is to say that generalised ecology -or ecosophy will work as a science of ecosystems, as a bid for political regeneration, and as an ethical, aesthetic and analytic engagement. It will tend to create new systems of valorisation, a new taste for life, a new gentleness between the sexes, generations, ethnic groups, races**(43)**.

This ecosophic ideology tends to relate the ecological disasters to subjectivity. It equally offers the solution through a newly established ecosystem which binds a multiplicity of engagements between politics, aesthetics, ethics, the human part, and the environment. Beckett's oeuvre, in this respect, unravels the intricacies of the subjective factor and its relational consequences towards the surrounding environment. Much of Guttari's theory relies on a deeper understanding of the societal and individual reactions and their impact on the larger ecological bindings. The character of the man in *Company* displays a behavior that is very akin that of a patient undergoing some clinical analysis. The character is attached to a bed and hears a voice that "tells of a past. With occasional allusion to a present and more rarely to a future as for example, You will end as You now are"**(44)**. The character is conditioned to the command of the voice the way a patient obeys the command of a psychoanalyst: "You are on your back in the dark and have no mental activity of any kind. The voice alone is company but not enough"**(45)**. This inert and helpless situation of the character portrays the conditioning that individuality goes through under the influence of the voice. A similar example is used by Guttari in *Chaosmosis,* the example of a patient half-etherized and stuck in a bed. In this case, the character is told that the voice on its own is not enough company, and hence it is essential for the individual to break out from the cramping situation and to pursue an existential route that is better explored in a more social environment and where the singularity of the human ecology could be redefined. The reworking of singularities, according to Guttari, would result in a collective social awakening. Guttari contends that the link between the mental ecology, the social ecology, and the environmental ecology rests on the "essence of an 'eco'-art, and that it is closely related to "intimate modes of being, the body, the environment or large contextual ensembles relating to ethnic groups, the nation, or even general rights**(46)**.

By portraying a parodic representation of nature through a tripartite model of individuals, Beckett's *Nohow On* serves as a reader through the ecological entropy and its tight link with anthropocentric actions. The emotional dystopian malaise that the protagonists, along with the reader, endure in the three short prose pieces warns against a similar natural predicament. The darkening nature should incite some action to avoid the eventual consequences of a disparaging connection between the three ecologies: man, society, and the environment. Once man loses communication with nature and community, the anarchic results would preside. Therefore, even when the nature Beckett portrays in his text is a parody of humans on their deathbeds, lost and incomprehensible, *Nohow On*, if read as an ecology of action, brings awareness to the gravity of the climate situation.

3- The 'Worsen' Nature in the *Nohow On* Trilogy:

Nohow On is a purely experimental text which presents an ironic parody of nature as a body on its own. This personification, of course, is interpreted through the ecology of ideas that the text generates through the three texts it encloses. This reading rests heavily on Guttari's

philosophy of mental, environmental, and social ecologies. These ecologies and their underlying dynamics prompt the parodying enterprise in *Nohow On* as each text in the trilogy consists of a singularity and/or singularities which amend to the overall ecocritical rendition of the text.

In as much as the text strikes as unreadable and complex, it offers the necessary imitative allegory of a destructed and destructible environment. The disturbing pace of the non-linear, illogical, and inexistent narrative stream creates a state of entropy. Fragmented, short, and grammatically deliberate sentences emphasize the "Not endurable.", "Unremittent.", "Over the stones.", "At the tomb.", "To death."**(47)**, and many other dark images conveyed through bits of sentences and words. The sentences equally disintegrate and get shorter the more the reader advances with the text. Hence, the so many 'anti-literary' forms support the plentiful anti-natural depictions.

In this collection of three novellas, Beckett presents a 'worsen' world in *Company*, where the Anthropocene is clearly translated into the actions of the main character, and in *Ill Seen Ill Said*, where there's "no more sky earth or earth"**(48)**. The reader, thus, follows through the loss of meaning that the three central and single characters suffer to place. Beckett chooses old and agonizing characters, which parodies the state of the earth and the environmental degradation. Like the title of the last piece of prose in the collection, *Worstward Ho*, nature is headed worst-ward; it is dying, "failing worse"**(49)**. The unclear setting suggests a postapocalyptic land, deserted, dimly lit, and full of the remnants of what once used to be life. The following lines best illustrate the overall mood of the text:

> What were skull to go? As good as go. Into what then black hole? From out what then? What why of all? Better worse so? No. Skull better worse. What left of skull. Of soft. Worst why of all of all. So skull not go. What left of skull not go. Into it still the hole. Into what left of soft. From out what little left**(50)**.

This suggests that in addition to the loss of life and the skeleton shaped residues of both man and nature, language is also lost and the ability at full expression is equally disarrayed. *Worstward Ho* gives the impression that the whole text should be read in reverse, backward, and line to line because it is very probable that Beckett meant for it to take this 'worstward' sense. There is more relief and a rather poetic resonance when the last line becomes the first and the reader reassembles the direction of the ideas. One instance is this passage that is fully repetitive and bleak: "So leastward on. So long as dim still. Dim-undimmed to dimmer still. To dimmost dim. Leastmost in dimmost dim. Utmost dim. Least-most in utmost dim" **(51)**. When read casually, these lines hardly make sense, which is akin to the whole text of this last piece in the *Nohow On* collection. The story goes up and down between 'least' and 'most' and 'utmost' and between 'better' and 'worse', giving the impression that some external trigger is controlling the pace, the volume, and the direction of words. The text seems to be following some musical language that calls to be translated by music specialists.

The silence of the words echoes through the lines of the three pieces as Beckett orchestrates the texts to tap on deeper levels of enunciation. In "Beckett's "Beckett": So Many words for Silence", Enoch Brater unveils the anti-literary devices in the Beckettian texts. Brater gives special attention to the play of silence and metaphorical noises. He states:

> Beckett's groundbreaking late fiction introduces us to the verbal equivalent of solitude, a mysterious atmosphere everywhere empowered by the new lines for "recited" silence previously authorized in the dramas written for the mechanical media where, as he has shown, it knows full well how to pull the pin from the grenade. Especially in the first two volumes of a second trilogy comprising *Company*, *Ill Seen Ill Said*, and *Worstward Ho*, "silence" and "stillness" demand to be read aloud, since much of their emotional resonance lodges in their tonality**(52)**.

It is through these tonalities and 'recited silence' that the three texts can draw a parody of nature. The text, thus, mirrors nature in its unpredictability, noises, pauses, and fluidity, which

are not necessarily interpretable or comprehensible. The characters' silent and loud lamentations are generated against a strikingly austere nature. The characters are lone and bored sufferers whose predicament is auto-generated. The three pieces portray an almost apocalyptic silence of three individuals. Human decay becomes equivalent with ecological decay as individual ecologies reach their entropies.

Conclusion:

Despite the variety of botanical references in the Beckettian tradition, images of doom are recurrent through the infinite portrayals of human frivolity and futile quests. This article gives special attention to one of Beckett's later works—the *Nohow On* trilogy. The interconnectedness of subjective, individual, and social factors within the text lead to the undeniable bonds that link human ecologies to the environmental ecologies. An urgent call for a sustainable 'community reordering' strikes imminent through the outcries of chaotic and schizophrenic silences. Hence, Beckett's trilogy is read as a tripartite ecology of ideas. Its philosophical resonance serves as a contingent space for parody and subjective questionings.

Linking the agonizing solitary agents in *Company*, *Ill Seen Ill Said*, and *Worstward Ho* to the ecosophical world view would lead to some questions as regards the possible impact of these characters on their environment. Would these three absurdly dying humans be able of conceiving any thoughts related to sustainable ecological goals? Between their subjective economies, 'consciences malheureuses', their inability of full expression, and their irreconcilable beings, could these characters contribute in any manner to stop their own entropies, let alone the larger ecological apocalypses around them? Beckett's text is coded, at times 'un-readable'. In *Nohow On*, Nature is instrumentally played against the boundless words, gaps, and pauses. Beckett recreates nature through its decaying human parodies and anthropocentric silence.

Notes and references:

1- Aporia is a form of theoretical dilemma. Check Jacques Derrida's *Aporias*.

2- Hassan, Ihab. (1967). *The Literature of Silence: Henry Miller and Samuel Beckett.* New York: Alfred A Knopf, p.24.

3- *Mise en abyme* translates as into the abyss. It is a form of mirroring of images within images with an endless depth.

4- Alber, Jan. (2002). The "Moreness" or "Lessness" of "Natural" Narratology: Samuel Beckett's "Lessness" Reconsidered. *Time, Music, and Textuality*, Penn State University Press, p.54.

5- Coetzee. J.M. (1973). "Samuel Beckett's *Lessness*: An Exercise in Decomposition". *Computers and the Humanities*, 7(4), 195–198. http://www.jstor.org/stable/30199556, p.195.

6- Farrant, Mark. (2020). "Earth, World, and the Human: Samuel Beckett and the Ethics of Climate Crisis". *Brill*, 207-22, p.217.

7- Beckett, Samuel. (1989). *Nohow On*. London: Hohn Calder, p.75

8- Ibid, p.59.

9- *Being* here means the philosophical dimension of existence.

10- Antonioli, Manola. (2018). "What is Ecosophy?". In C. V. Boundas, *Schizoanalysis and Ecosophy: Reading Deleuze and Guttari*. Bloomsbury Academic, p.75.

11- Ibid, p.76.

12- Naess, Arne. (1989). *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy.* New York: Cambridge University Press, p.4.

13- Ibid, p.24.

14- Naess, Arne. (1989). *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy.* New York: Cambridge University Press, p.28.

15- Morton, Timothy. (2010). *The Ecological Thought.* England: Harvard University Press, p.17.

16- Ibid, p.98.

17- Guttari, Félix. (2001). The Three Ecologies. London and NEW Brunswick, NJ: The Athlone Press, p.10.

18- Querrien, Anne, and Andrew Goffey. (2018). Schizoanalysis and Ecosophy: Scales of History and Action. In C. V. Boundas, Schizoanalysis and Ecosophy: Reading Deleuze and Guattari. Bloomsbury Academic, p.88.
19- Ibid, p.89.
20- Beckett, Samuel. (1989). *Nohow On*. London: Hohn Calder, p.50.
21- Ibid, p.25.
22- Ibid, p.35.
23- Kaelin, Eugene. F. (1981). *The Unhappy Consciousness: The Poetic Plight of Samuel Beckett, An Inquirey at the Intersection of Phenomenology and Literature*. USA: D. Reidel Publishing, p.2
24- Ibid, p.4.
25- Beckett, Samuel. (1989). *Nohow On*. London: Hohn Calder, p.67.
26- Ibid, p.81.
27- Ibid, p.88.
28- Ibid, p.96.
29- Ibid, p.58.
30- Ibid, p.65.
31- Ibid, p.69.
32- Ibid, p.60, p.67, p.88.
33- Ibid, p.101.
34- Ibid, p.108.
35- Ibid, p.125.
36- Kaelin, Eugene. F. (1981). *The Unhappy Consciousness: The Poetic Plight of Samuel Beckett, An Inquirey at the Intersection of Phenomenology and Literature*. USA: D. Reidel Publishing, p.284.
37- Ibid, p.288.
38- Bakhtin, M.M. (1981). *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*. University of Texas Press, p.84.
39- Guttari, Félix. (1995). *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm.* Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, p.4.
40- Ibid, p.29.
41- Beckett, Samuel. (1989). *Nohow On*. London: Hohn Calder, p.23-24.
42- Guttari, Félix. (2001). *The Three Ecologies.* London and NEW Brunswick, NJ: The Athlone Press, p.27.
43- Guttari, Félix. (1995). *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm.* Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, p.91-92.
44- Beckett, Samuel. (1989). *Nohow On*. London: Hohn Calder, p.5.
45- Guttari, Félix. (2001). The Three Ecologies. London and NEW Brunswick, NJ: The Athlone Press, p.27.
46- Ibid, p.7.
47- Ibid, P.74.
48- Ibid, p.75.
49- Ibid, p.102.
50- Ibid, p.128.
51- Ibid, p.119.
52- Brater, Enoch. (2011). "Beckett's "Beckett": So Many words for Silence". In H. Bloom, *Bloom's Modern Critical Viwes: Samuel Beckett-- New Edition.* New York: Infobase, p.125.