Monadology: Samuel Beckett and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz

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Beckett called Leibniz: "a great cod, but full of splendid little pictures" (to MacGreevy, 6 Dec. 1933), but his interest in the German philosopher was profound. He read Leibniz in Latta's edition of the Monadology*, and in Windelband's* A History of Philosophy*, recording in the "Whoroscope Notebook" details that entered Murphy but which also underlie much of the later writing. I shall emphasise how crucial Leibnizian concepts (the Monad, petites perceptions, paradoxes of apperception) inform the structure of Beckett's conceptual world, partly as a critique of a common Cartesian heritage (Beckett's satire of pre-established harmony, for instance), but more lastingly as images of monadal development from "l'homme larvaire" through the varying degrees of consciousness and perception that characterise Beckett's struggle (both aesthetic and philosophical) with incipient form.*

Writing to Thomas McGreevy in 1933, Samuel Beckett noted of his recent reading: "Leibniz a great cod, but full of splendid little pictures."[1] The reference is to the *Monadology* (1714), in Robert Latta's edition (1898). Beckett's judgement was not unlike that of Bertrand Russell, who had famously recorded in the Preface to his critical exposition of Leibniz his initial impression that the *Monadology* was "a kind of fantastical fairy tale, coherent, perhaps, but wholly arbitrary."[2] Beckett's opinion would not change

[1] Samuel Beckett to Thomas McGreevy (5 December 1933), in Martha Dow Fehsenfeld and Lois More Overbeck, eds., *The Letters of Samuel Beckett*, *Vol. 1: 1929-1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 172.

[2] Bertrand Russell, *A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1900), xvii.

substantially, yet his skepticism does not explain why he, like Russell, was attracted to the thought of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, nor why he retained a deep respect for it, given its fundamental absurdity (above all, as it were, the claim that God *necessarily* exists). Once Russell had determined how Leibniz's metaphysics derived from a small set of coherent premises, the *Monadology* no longer struck him as arbitrary. Beckett's response was similar: a genuine respect for the Monad informs the "splendid little pictures" that manifest themselves (however ironically) in his prose works from *Dream of Fair to middling Women* to *How It Is* (indeed, into the later works for stage and screen), and by so doing dramatize the isolated "soul" (by which this essay understands the self conceived as an atomistic monad) as it accommodates itself (not always successfully) to a world that for Beckett - if not for Leibniz - was always contingent.

The first of the "splendid little pictures" appears in *Dream* when Lucien, the philosophical alter-ego of Jean Beaufret, cites from the *Monadology* (§67 & §68)[3] a passage that "compares matter to a garden full of flowers or a pool of fish, and every flower another garden of flowers and every corpuscle of every fish another pool of fish."[4] Leibniz's fascination with new worlds opened up by Leuwenhock's microscopy underlies the paradox of his monads: infinite in number, but each reflecting the whole universe, an infinity of parts (consciousness may have, or may be perceived as having, this monadic quality). Later, Beckett dismisses the characters of *Dream* as "a collection of Kakiamouni wops, scorching away from their centres" with the reflection: "What would Leibnitz [*sic*] say?" (179).[5] Something, doubtless, about the affront to pre-established harmony (the paradox of accord, given the independent nature of substance) in a fictional *kosmos*,

[3] Robert Latta, *Leibniz: The Monadology and Other Philosophical Writings*, translated with Introduction and Notes by Robert Latta (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1898), 256. Beckett's comment in his 1929 essay, "Dante…Bruno.Vico..Joyce," that "all things are ultimately identified with God, the universal monad, Monad of monads" (6), though echoed by Leibniz, was expropriated from Lewis McIntyre's *Giordano Bruno* (1903).

[4] Samuel Beckett, *Dream of Fair to middling Women* (Dublin: Black Cat Press, 1992), 47.

[5] "Kakiamouni" is a scatological variant of *Sakya-Muni*, Buddhist avatar of forgiveness and gentility; "wops" may imply the souls undone by death in Dante's *Inferno* (III).

which, since its denizens refuse to work in unison, cannot be the best of all possible worlds.[6] Nemo is the most monadic (unknown, impenetrable) character in *Dream*, but his calculated plunge ("saltabat sobrius") at Leixlip (182) disputes with Leibniz the contention that Nature never makes leaps (Latta, 376).[7]

Motion is a primary monadic force that shapes much of Beckett's early work. *Dream* ends with Belacqua enjoined by a higher authority to "move on" (241); in "Ding-Dong," he must be moving;[8] and the poem "Serena III" urges the cyclist to "keep on the move."[9] The solitary monad moves from *Murphy* into *Watt*, which offers (as *Murphy* does not) a sustained critique of Leibniz's central philosophical doctrine, pre-established harmony. My annotations of these two novels respected these matters, but a closer Leibnizian reading of them may complement other recent studies of Beckett and Leibniz: the *monade nue* in Garin Dowd's Beckettian baroque;[10] Windelband's "philosophy notes" as discussed by Matthew Feldman;[11] "Beckett's Leibniz" in Erik Tonning's study of the later works for stage and screen;[12] Katrina Wehling-Giorgi's application of Leibniz to Beckett and Gadda;[13] and my blueprint of the Monad in the Blackwell

[6] The narrator comments: "The only unity in this story is, please God, an involuntary unity" (132). The God of Leibniz would not be pleased.

[7] As in the classical tag, *Nemo enim fere saltat sobrius, nisis forte insani* [No-one leaps (*dances*) sober, unless he is insane].

[8] Samuel Beckett, "Ding-Dong," in *More Pricks than Kicks*, edited by Cassandra Nelson (1934; rpt. London: Faber, 2010), 31.

[9] Samuel Beckett, "Serena III," in *Samuel Beckett: Poems 1930-1989*, edited by David Wheatley (London: Faber, 2009), 29.

[10] Garin V. Dowd, "Nomadology: Reading the Beckettian Baroque," *Journal of Beckett Studies* 8 (1) (1998): 15-49; and Dowd, "Mud as the Plane of Immanence in *How It Is*," *Journal of Beckett Studies* 8 (2) (1999): 1-28.

[11] Matthew Feldman, *Beckett's Books: A Cultural History of Samuel Beckett's "Interwar Notes"* (New York & London: Continuum, 2006).

[12] Erik Tonning, *Samuel Beckett's Abstract Drama: Works for Stage and Screen, 1962-1985* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007).

[13] Katrin Wehling-Giorgi, "'Splendid Little Pictures': Leibnizian Terminology in the Works of Samuel Beckett and Carlo Emilio Gadda," *Samuel Beckett Today / Aujourd'hui* 22 (2010): 341-54.

Companion to Beckett.[14]

The first principle of the *Monadology* is the doctrine of substance.[15] In his bachelor's dissertation, *De principio individui* (1663), Leibniz had defended the Nominalist position that individuality is constituted by the entirety or essence of a thing. This premise informs his definition of monads as the fundamental building blocks of the universe. Leibniz considered them simple substances and individual units of force, or motion, possessing neither parts, extension, nor figure: "They are metaphysical points or rather spiritual beings whose very nature it is to act."[16] This differentiated his monads from the indivisible units of Democritus, whose theory of atoms and the void had once "charmed his imagination" (Latta, 23); Leibnitz would later find in the monad an essence, independent of the physical atom, without being stuck in the "idealist tar."[17] Leibniz tried to reconcile the notion of substance as continuous with the contrary notion of substance as consisting of indivisible elements (Latta, 21). The problem arose from an inadequate conception of substance, and his response was to affirm, in contradiction to Spinoza whose "[d]etermination is negation"[18] amounted to saying that substance can have no real parts (Latta, 22), and in opposition to the Atomists whose affirmation of the reality of material atoms was to deny the infinite divisibility of matter (Latta, 23) - that substance is non-quantitative. Thus, a "simple substance" has no parts (no quantitative elements) and yet must comprehend "a manifold in unity" (Latta, 27). Consider, again, the flowers and fish of *Dream*: each "monad" (flower or fish) is an entity, a simple sub-

[14] C. J. Ackerley, "Samuel Beckett and Science," in *A Companion to Samuel Beckett*, ed. S. E. Gontarski (Oxford: Blackwell, 2010), 143-64. Representations of the monad as described in this and the present chapter are located at: http://www.otago.ac.nz/english/staff/ackerley.html

[15] Hereafter, with occasional wanderings into the Beckett country and other byways, I follow Latta's exposition of Leibniz's thought. Beckett's significant sources seem to have been Latta, Windelband, and Sorley on "Leibniz" in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*.

[16] William Ritchie Sorley, "Leibnitz," in *The Encyclopaedia Britannica* [Fourteenth Edition], vol. 13 (London & New York: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1929), 886.

[17] Samuel Beckett, *Murphy*, edited by J. C. C. Mays (London: Faber, 2009), 69.

[18] Beckett cites "[d]eterminatio est negatio" in his commonplace book, the "Whoroscope Notebook," with no comment nor any attribution to Spinoza.

stance (conceptually) that opens to disclose infinite worlds within.[19]

The problem was to find a unit of substance that reconciled or avoided the imperfections of the Cartesian and Atomist theories.[20] Spinoza's philosophy, Latta argues, asserts "the unity and continuity of the whole at the expense of the reality of the parts" (Latta, 22), whereas Atomism "endeavours to establish the reality of the parts at the expense of the whole" (Latta, 23). Enter the monads, as units of substance: "simple, percipient, self-active beings," but endowed with impulses of perception and appetition: "Every monad is a microcosm, the universe in little, and according to the degree of its activity is the distinctiveness of its representation of the universe" (Sorley, 886). Every monad, then, is a complete world: it has perception, but not necessarily as consciousness (Latta, 34); and appetition, an internal principle that produces change or passage from one perception to another (Latta cites the *Monadology*, §15), but not necessarily as conscious will or desire (Latta, 35). The major error of Descartes, Leibniz asserted, was that his insistence on "clear and distinct ideas" took no account of perceptions that were not apperceived (rendered fully conscious), "for it treats as non-existent those perceptions of which we are not consciously aware" (§14, 224). These are the *petites perceptions*, a term employed by Windelband in *A History of Philosophy*. Leibniz instanced the hundred thousand waves that together constitute the moaning of the sea, each in itself indistinguishable but together making up the unified whole (371).[21]

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[19] Consider Ezra Pound's Image as "that which presents an intellectual and emotional complex in an instant of time" ("A Few Don'ts by an Imagiste," in *Poetry* 1 (1913); rpt. in *Ezra Pound*, edited by J. P. Sullivan (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970), 41. That "complex" reflects a unified monadic awareness that may be composed, nevertheless, of infinite *petites perceptions*. A similar aesthetic underlies Bergson's *durée*, Proust's moment, Joyce's epiphany, Virginia Woolf's transparent envelope, and Beckett's "ideal real" as it persisted into his later stage images (these, for all their ironies, are grounded in an aesthetic that is ultimately Modernist).

[20] Compare the contemporary search for the Higgs boson.

[21] This finds frequent expression in Beckett as Zeno's *sorites* paradox: "Which kernel of grain by being added makes the heap? Which hair falling out makes the bald head?" In *Endgame*, this translates itself into human terms: at what point do the separate moments of existence mount up to a life? See C. J. Ackerley & S. E. Gontarski, *The Grove Companion to Samuel Beckett* (New York: Grove Press, 2004), 661, 175.

For Beckett, this point was crucial, for Leibniz's view that each monad acts as "a perpetual living mirror of the universe" could also be applied to the perceptual process. By demonstrating that consciousness is not the totality of mental reality, Feldman argues, Leibniz implied a link between philosophy and psychology (Feldman, 97). Since each monad is, with reference to others, a perfectly independent substance, the monad is not so much *physical* as *psychical* in its nature,[22] and the *petites perceptions* (for Leibniz, the infinitely small constitutive parts of the representative life of monads) may be identified with "*unconscious mental states*" (Windelband, 424; emphasis in the original). This insight facilitated Beckett's identification of the self as monadic, with every moment - however complex or confused its *petites perceptions* might be - constituting a unit of identity, without, however, committing him to either a physical or metaphysical Truth (until, that is, the *psychical* ground is further questioned, as in *Watt*).

In applying this formulation to Beckett's works, I first consider *Murphy*, rather than immediately pursue the *Monadology* toward its distant goals of pre-established harmony and best of all possible worlds (aspects of Leibniz that arise inexorably from the monad, but which elicited Voltaire's ridicule, Russell's bemusement, and Beckett's skepticism). One quality that distinguishes *Murphy* from *Watt*, despite their common matrix, is that the former enacts the Cartesian catastrophe of the solitary monad, whereas the latter rehearses the tragedy of the monad that tries to accommodate itself to the "establishment" (as Mr. Knott's Big House is called).

The origin of *Murphy* is indelibly grounded in the *Monadology*.[23] Although the novel is broadly a Cartesian satire (the failure to integrate body and mind) and/or an Atomist guffaw (the posthumous dispersal of Murphy's "body, mind and soul" in the "necessary house" [*Murphy*, 168]), the first entries in the "Whoroscope Notebook" relating to what would become *Murphy* concern the "Impetus" given by H (the horoscope) to X (later to become Murphy), "who has no motive, inside or out, available" (§1). This generates

[22] Wilhelm Windelband, *A History of Philosophy*, translated by James H. Tufts (New York & London: Macmillan, 1901), 423.

[23] See my Introduction to *Demented Particulars: The Annotated Murphy* (1998, 2004; rpt. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), 20-24.

the "[d]ynamist ethic of X. Keep moving the only virtue" (§2). As H "acquires authority of fatality" it becomes no longer "a guide to be consulted" but "a force to be obeyed" (§3). There follows (§4) an explicitly Leibnizian comment:[24]

> X. and H. clarified side by side. Monads in the Arcanum of circumstance, each apperceiving in the other till no more of the petites perceptions, that are life. So that H., more and more organic, is realised in X. as he [via] it, and they must perish together (fire oder was).

This conceives the Monad as attempting to "realize" itself in the "arcanum" (secret wisdom) of "circumstance" (the contingent world), with the horoscope (as in the novel) a "motive" force to replace the Cartesian God and regulate the machinery of the Big World.[25] X is therefore set in motion, to transform the "petites perceptions" of confused ideas into the clear and distinct insights of apperception. This is in accordance with Leibniz's sense of the individual monad rising from virtual to actual as it realizes more of its potential; the tragedy being that as H and X become increasingly integrated ("clarified side by side" … "more and more organic"), they reach a state of equilibrium (§3: "after stichomancy [X reading H] had given quietism oder was"), and perish together, by fire or whatever,[26] consumed by the Will

[24] Quoted from Beckett's "Whoroscope Notebook" (BIF 3000/1) as cited by Feldman, 64-65. I read Feldman's "If corpus of motives" as a "1/- corpus of motives" (i.e., the horoscope originally cost one shilling [later reduced to 6d]). Feldman's statement (65) that "petites perceptions" is not to be found in "standard translations of Leibniz's *Monadology*" is mildly misleading, as it appears throughout Latta's commentary (and the *New Essays*), though in the translated *Monadology* Latta prefers "little perceptions" (§21, for instance).

[25] Leibniz despised almost nothing, he said, "except judicial astrology and trickeries of that kind" (Latta, 154).

[26] Feldman, 68. Noting that Beckett initially structured "what becomes *Murphy*" around Leibnizian monads, Feldman usefully clarifies the fate of X and H by referring to Anaximander's concept of atonement, as mentioned in the "Whoroscope Notebook" [§6]: "Purgatorial atmosphere sustained throughout, by stress on Anaximander's individual existence as atonement"; and as clarified by Beckett in the arcanum of the "Philosophy Notes": the "doctrine that things must perish as an expiation for injustice pre-

(Leibniz giving way to Schopenhauer?). This remains obscure, but Knowlson clarifies its tenor by citing from the German Diaries (18 January 1937) Beckett's sense of the "necessary journey" (for Murphy, "the Necessary Staying-Put"), which he relates to the "fundamental unheroic" and real "freedom of choice" (in the quiet zone of the microcosm, which Murphy has not attained) "when the fire comes."[27]

Another echo of Leibniz in Beckett's "Whoroscope Notebook" which is directly applicable to *Murphy* is a curious comment (in English) before the account (in French) of Dives and Lazarus (Luke 16:22-26): "Dives–Lazarus, prayer from virtual to actual in entelechy … petites perceptions to be apperceived in monad–poem" (*Demented Particulars*, 39 [#5.7]). Yet the monad's presence can be "felt" (the pun enters the later making of Murphy's greatcoat) in several "splendid little pictures" through which the plot arises (from virtual to actual, if you wish). These include: (a) the hermetic sphere that contains Murphy's mind, (b) Murphy as Monad in motion, (c) pads and garrets of the Big World, and (d) Murphy's encounter with Mr. Endon. Despite their apparent diversity, these images are closely integrated.

Murphy's mind pictures itself as "a large hollow sphere hermetically closed to the universe without" (*Murphy*, 69). As such, it is a unit of autonomous substance, independent and self-sufficient, for "it excluded nothing that it did not itself contain" (69). A perpetual living mirror of the universe, it contains within itself – both potentially and ideally - the world without: "Nothing ever had been, or would be in the universe outside it but was already present as virtual, or actual, or virtual rising into actual, or actual falling into virtual, in the universe inside it" (69). In a word, the little world of the mind is a *microcosm* of the Big World, or *macrocosm*, existing outside it. In thus picturing Murphy's mind, and despite copious inpourings

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sents the first dim attempt to conceive the cosmic process as ethical necessity and the shadows of transitoriness" (TCD MS 10967/7v). Feldman is the first to document these matters, and despite minor quibbles I am indebted to his account.

[27] James Knowlson, *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett* (London: Bloomsbury, 1996), 247. The "fire" is best understood in the Heraclitan sense, which consumes all (compare "The Circular Ruins" of Borges).

from Spinoza, Descartes, Geulincx, Kant, and Schopenhauer,[28] Beckett follows Windelband's discussion (462-64) of Leibniz and the "*virtual innateness of ideas*." As this suggests, Murphy's mind differs crucially from that of Belacqua (*Dream*, 120ff), with which it is otherwise congruent, in that it is monadic - whereas Belacqua is far from apperceiving this potential.

The difference concerns "the conception of *unconscious representations or petites perceptions*" (Windelband, 462). Leibniz distinguishes between states in which the soul merely has ideas (*perception*) and those in which it is conscious of them (*apperception*). This intimates "the process by which unconscious, obscure and confused representations are raised into clear and distinct consciousness" (463). Simple substances with perception but not consciousness are Monads, or Entelechies; those in which apperception is "clear and distinct" he calls Souls (*Monadology* §19; Latta, 230). Sensuous perception is confused thought; knowledge develops from the soul's activity. All ideas are innate, rising from virtual into actual as conscious knowledge; and so, to the scholastic aphorism appropriated by Locke, *Nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuerit in sensu* [Nothing is in the mind that was not first in the senses], Leibniz added: *nisi intellectus ipse* [except the mind itself] (Windelband, 464; this Latin phrase is recorded in Beckett's "Whoroscope Notebook" with the tag "Leibniz to Locke"). The aphorism shapes a splendid little picture in *Malone Dies*, when the dubious hero takes counsel of an Israelite (one Jackson, an avatar of Spinoza) who owns a pink and white parrot: the feathered biped can utter *nihil in intellectu*, but "the celebrated restriction was too much for it, all you heard was a series of squawks."[29]

The monad is self-sufficient: "Each monad is with reference to the rest a perfectly independent being which can neither experience nor exercise influence"; their "windowlessness" is an expression of their "metaphysical impenetrability" (Windelband, 423).[30] The phrasing derives from Leibniz: "The mo-

[28] Ackerley, *Demented Particulars*, 116-130.

[29] Samuel Beckett, *Malone Dies*, edited by Peter Boxall (London: Faber 2010), 44. This anticipates another "parakeet" jest, when Malone cannot finish his inventory: "a little bird tells me so, the paraclete perhaps, psittaceously named" (77).

[30] Beckett recorded these details in his Philosophical Notes (for example, in TCD MS 10967/191). See my *Obscure Locks, Simple Keys: The Annotated Watt* (2005; rpt. Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2010), 147 [#152.1].

nads have no windows, through which anything may go in or out" (*Monadology* §7; Latta, 219); hence the curious conceit in Part III of *Watt*, where Sam describes the "call" of their weather as yet reaching them, "in our windowlessness" (monadic insulation).[31] A still more obscure jest ends "The Expelled," when the narrator, trapped in a tiny cab - greatcoat and all - is "obliged to leave by the window";[32] unlike the narrator of *Company*, who remains alone in the dark: "The place is windowless."[33] Similarly, Murphy's desire is to retreat into the windowless little world, the third or dark zone of the mind where he is a missile without provenance amidst the tumult of non-Newtonian motion (*Murphy*, 72). To define this primarily in Atomist terms (*Demented Particulars,* 123-30) is not wrong, but it does not acknowledge the paradox of the monad as independent of the physical world while yet reflecting within itself all the elements of the macrocosm. What the Monad offers that the Atom does not, in short, is the synthetic unity of the manifold; or, more prosaically, the self apperceived as Monad, in principle free of the demands of the Big World: the Monad is an elementary unit of awareness and being.

In the Blackwell *Companion* to Beckett, I map Beckett's conceptual world, not as it really was ("that would be an extravagance and an impertinence," as Beckett wrote in *Murphy* [69]), but as it might have pictured itself to be. This is cast as a three-dimensional computer representation, now available online, a model of the monad that reflects the paradox of a consciousness finally denied its metamorphosis into the light and so destined to return to the realm of the mineral from which it inexplicably arose.[34] This template may be useful as a guide to the dichotomies that shaped the conceptual world of *Murphy* and *Watt*, to convey something of the curious conceit (the Monad) that structures this inner world.

The self-sufficiency of that inner world is repeatedly tested in *Murphy*,

[31] Samuel Beckett, *Watt*, edited by C. J. Ackerley (London: Faber, 2010), 129.

[32] Samuel Beckett, "The Expelled," in *The Expelled/The Calmative/The End & First Love*, edited by Christopher Ricks (London: Faber: 2009), 15.

[33] Samuel Beckett, *Company*, in *Company, Ill Seen Ill Said, Worstward Ho, Stirrings Still*, edited by Dirk van Hulle (London: Faber, 2009), 42.

[34] The model may be accessed on the University of Otago (English Department) website: http://www.otago.ac.nz/english/staff/ackerley.html My thanks to fellow monad, Karen McLean, for helping to design this splendid little picture.

and the outcome was not, perhaps, what Beckett expected when Leibniz first entered the "Whoroscope Notebook." *Murphy* may be read as a cautionary tale of one who tries to attain a state of self-sufficiency, but fails to achieve that goal. Images of Murphy as monad suggest why this might be. About to tread the Job-path, he asks Celia to give his coat "a bit of a dinge," which she does: "In vain, it filled out immediately, as a punctured ball will not retain an impression" (*Murphy,* 89). When Murphy leaves, irresolute, Celia hears him hissing, and his strange figure attracts derision from a group of boys playing football in the road. A football is the most common everyday embodiment of the Pythagorean dodecahedron, which of all solids "approaches most nearly to the sphere" (*Demented Particulars,* 71 [#47.9]). A curious image suggests itself: the Monad spiked by the exigencies of Job (allegiance to the Big World), with a hiss as the vital element of air escapes (142 [#143.1]).[35]

Murphy is an image of peripatetic motion, the monad as nomad. His greatcoat,[36] into the making of which much felt (sensation) and size (extension) has entered, allows no "vapours" (Cartesian or Occasionalist) to escape; he is completely self-contained (90 [#72.5]). Such is the idea he might form of himself, yet that image is undone not only by the exigencies of Job, but by his "deplorable susceptibility" (*Murphy*, 112) to Celia and ginger biscuits. These manifest the Proustian desire that undoes Neary quite; but, Murphy believes, they can be set aside. In chapter 10, when the Horoscope as a force to be obeyed (*oder was*) has led him to the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat, he believes (as the epigraph from Gide intimates) that, as one wishing to live "hors du monde" (99), he has found his kind.

In *Murphy*, the Beckettian monad assumes physical forms. Murphy's mew, in the beginning, is not among them, for the door hangs off its hinges and a telephone is still connected (6); these inhibit any attempt to enter the dark zone. Nor is Brewery Road much better, despite the "dream of Descartes" linoleum and walls distempered with a lucky lemon (42), for it is large (a word repeated), furnished, and subject to miscarriage; a cradle for

[35] C. J. Ackerley, "Samuel Beckett's Sibilants; or, Why does Murphy Hiss?" *Journal of Beckett Studies* 8.1 (1998): 119-20.

[36] No hyphen in "greatcoat," lest this violate the *monade nue* within.

the *vita nuova* of the body rather than the life of the mind. Small wonder, then, that the rocking-chair trembles. However, when Murphy is away Celia sits in his chair, and intimates something of the "larval" impulse (44), the stirrings of Leibniz's *monade nue*. Another room upstairs is rented by an "old boy" who spends his day "padding" to and fro (the motion of the monad). He has much in common with Murphy, and may even have attained a greater degree of monadic impenetrability (he is unknown, unknowable). His death upsets Celia, and after Murphy moves out she moves into his room, which is much smaller.

Murphy, meanwhile, has found his place, in a genuine garret "twice as good" as one he had known in Hanover, because half as large (102). The "garret in Hanover" entered the text only after Beckett, on his necessary journey, visited on 5 December 1936 Leibniz's house in the Schmeidestrasse.[37] In a letter to Brian Coffey (in French, in homage to the original *Monadologie*) from the Leibniz-Haus, already an Arts and Crafts museum, Beckett noted that here, for fifty years, Leibniz "formed distinct ideas, or, worse, let them form in him" (*Letters*, 395).

More hermetic than the garret are the MMM's padded cells, which surpass all that Murphy could have imagined in the way of "indoor bowers of bliss" (*Murphy*, 113). These are "windowless, like a monad" (114); saving the shuttered Judas peephole, the "pads" are the visible embodiment of the ideal monad. And in one of them Mr. Endon abides. Drawn to Mr. Endon, "as Narcissus to his fountain" (116), Murphy cherishes the illusion that he has found his ideal other, "perfect in every detail." Their climatic chess game, however, has a calamitous consequence: Murphy, his pieces in disarray but poised to force Mr. Endon into a move that would finally make the latter acknowledge his opponent, lays down his "Shah" (153); he then looks long into the eyes of Mr. Endon, only to see "himself unseen by him" (156), in the latter's immunity from seeing anything but himself. In the 1964 *Film*, Beckett would return to *Murphy* for not only the Berkeleyan theme of *percipere* and the setting of the room as monad from which all perception is excluded, but also for the

[37] This is more explicit in the French translation of *Murphy* (Paris: Bordas, 119), where the street is specified and Leibniz's death noted (*Demented Particulars*, 148 [#162.1).

"angle of immunity"[38] from the anguish of perceivedness that arises from the failure to extinguish apperception (*Demented Particulars*, 201 [#250.2a]). Murphy, looking into Mr. Endon's eyes, sees that the latter does not perceive his own existence, let alone that of another; then, with equal certainty, appreciates that the cost of such inner freedom is the abnegation of awareness, or in a word *insanity*. In an ultimate irony Murphy discovers, to his chagrin, that he is sane, and the loss of apperception is a price, he now understands, that he is not prepared to pay (202 [#250.3]).

The consequences are stark: if Murphy is sane, it follows that his attempts to attain self-sufficiency are misguided, and that his appropriation of Leibniz's Monad, for all its attractions (a bathysphere, perhaps christened "The Great Cod," in which to plummet the inner depths), is not so much cranky as crazy: given monadic awareness as an elementary unit of being, one cannot both extinguish apperception yet be aware of so doing. The immediate consequence, for *Murphy*, is a provisional return to Atomist convictions (for what follows can only be described as a Democritean guffaw) that accommodate, as the Monad cannot, the fundamental irrationality of the microcosm (to say nothing, for the moment, of the macrocosm beyond). What Beckett's flirtation with the *Codology* attains, then, is not consummation, however devoutly wished, but the ambiguous recognition that dalliance with monadic impenetrability is itself absurd. Beckett's fiction to come would engage this theme, in the (finally vain) attempt to penetrate the paradox.

Watt restates the monadic themes of *Murphy*, and the fate of its eponymous protagonist is equally a Cartesian catastrophe: the failure to reconcile an inner self to the contingencies of a contingent world.[39] Watt shares with Murphy not only his outer garb,[40] but the impulse to a self-sufficiency that cannot be sustained. Just as Hamm and Clov are Vladimir and Estragon, but further down the road, Watt is a Murphy figure *in extremis*. Unlike

[38] Samuel Beckett, "Film," in *All That Fall and Other Plays for Radio and Television*, preface and notes by Everett Frost (London: Faber, 2009), 98. "Eh Joe," borrowing much from *Film*, improves upon that monad with a setting that is almost bare.

[39] C. J. Ackerley, *Obscure Locks, Simple Keys: The Annotated Watt* (2005; rpt. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 14.

[40] On departure, however, Watt wears a waistcoat, which Murphy does not (it makes him feel like a woman), and a hat (which reminds Murphy of the caul).

Murphy, however, he does not go out with a bang, but has time to contemplate a rapprochement between his world and that of his master, Mr. Knott. This does him little good, for instead of enacting the rational consciousness that apperceives itself in rising to a clear and distinct understanding of the Monad of monads, Watt's *petites perceptions* become more confused, and finally drive him into the asylum. Whatever the monadic qualities of the mansions there, his is not obviously the best of all possible worlds.

Whereas Murphy endeavors to attain the freedom of the microcosm, Watt attempts to accommodate the monad to the macrocosm. Latta defines the difficulty: "if the universe consists of an infinity of Monads, each independent of the rest, impenetrable and unaffected by them, and each containing within itself the principle of all its changes, how is it possible for a change to take place in any one of them without destroying the continuity of the series?" (Latta, 40). To circumvent this philosophical objection, Leibniz famously invoked "the system of the pre-established harmony between substances" (Latta, 41). This doctrine holds that while the succession of changes in each monad is different from that in every other, all are in metaphysical harmony: "One Monad influences another ideally; that is to say, not *ab extra*, but through an inner pre-established conformity" (Latta, 42).[41] When the Expelled's head, for instance, reaches its maximum dimensions, his father says, "Come, son, we are going to buy your hat, as though it had pre-existed from time immemorial in a pre-established place" (*The Expelled*, 48). As in every monad each succeeding state is the consequence of the preceding, and the nature of every monad is to mirror or represent the universe, it follows that the perceptive content of each monad will be in "accord" with that of every other. This arises, Leibniz believed, from the very nature of the monads as percipient, self-acting beings, and not from an arbitrary determination by God: "The whole is potentially present and seeks its realisation in each of the parts. Consequently, the pre-established harmony is not arbitrary, but rational: no *Deus ex machina* is invoked" (Latta, 44).

Latta discusses two images that Leibniz used to illustrate this precept: clocks and choirs. Two clocks may keep perfect time in three different ways

[41] This is implicit in *Murphy* in the iterated conviction that "all things hobble together for the only possible" (*Murphy*, 141; *Demented Particulars*, 183 [#227.4]).

(Latta, 45). Firstly, they may be linked so that there is a mutual transference of the vibrations between them, resulting in perfect agreement; this corresponds, he suggests, to the Cartesian doctrine of *influxus physicus*, the interaction of the animal and vital spirits.[42] Beckett first read this in Windelband, where it is ascribed to Geulincx. The obvious difficulty of this position - that identifying *where* the transubstantiation takes place does not explain *how* it takes place - led two other post-Cartesian philosophers, Malebranche and Geulincx, among others, to a second option: the clocks are kept in time by the agency of an artisan. This requires the clockmaker's intervention at every moment, and hence a continuum (rational rather than incoherent, one piously assumes) of infinitesimal miracles that even the calculus of Leibniz could not integrate. In the 1960 *How It Is*, for example, the dog with a sudden yip sets off in perfect synchronicity with its master: "no reference to us it had the same notion at the same instance Malebranche."[43] Finally, the two clocks may have been so perfectly constructed that they keep time of themselves, without any mutual influence or assistance (Latta, 46). This was the option Leibniz advocated, from which it follows that the relations between the clocks or monads are metaphysical or ideal, thus intellectually apprehended. This image, Anthony Uhlmann believes, Beckett took from Geulincx, where it is more prominent.[44]

The better analogy, Latta argued, was Leibniz's comparison of the monads to independent musicians playing in perfect choral harmony: "a real harmony formed out of the complementary movements of several self-acting units" (Latta, 47). Watt, resting in the ditch en route to Mr. Knott's house, hears the sounds, indifferent in quality, of a mixed choir, voices that "really" seem to come "from without" (*Watt*, 26). The question as to whether such "voices" are internal (schizophrenic?) or external (divine?) recurs incessantly in Beckett's writings over the next thirty years. Other choirs are heard in the post-War prose, under like conditions of extremity, in

[42] Murphy's conarium, having shrunk to nothing, affords no facility for the two to have commerce (*Murphy*, 6).

[43] Samuel Beckett, *How It Is,* edited by Édouard Magessa O'Reilly (London: Faber, 2009), 24.

[44] Anthony Uhlmann, *Samuel Beckett and the Philosophical Image* (Cambridge; Cambridge University Press), 78.

Mercier and Camier, *Molloy*, and *Malone Dies* - each intimating a distant prospect of salvation (as in Goethe's *Faust*) immediately offset by a distrust or rejection of that promise. In *How It Is*, for instance, the considered possibility of a choir gives way to megaphones, prompting the comment: "something wrong there" (93).

The doctrine of pre-established harmony, with its consequent affirmation of optimism and the assertion that this is the best of all possible worlds, is, for the satirist, a sitting "runner-duck," as Voltaire (1757) had demonstrated in *Candide* ("che sciagura"), and Denis Diderot (1773) had confirmed in *Jacques le fataliste* ("comme il était écrit là-haut"). Arsene's "short statement" repeats the "celebrated conviction" that all is well, or at least for the best (31). He then refers to "Lisbon's great day," 1 November 1755 (All Saints' Day), when an earthquake struck at 9:40 a.m., when many were at church, wreaking devastation across Portugal. Like Voltaire and Diderot, Beckett could not accept this as part of a divine plan able to be explained by a principle of sufficient reason, however unclear that principle (from our limited and serial perspective) might seem. Nor could he see suffering as potentially redemptive, whatever Leibniz might argue. In Beckett's paraphrase of Leibnizian thought, taken from his "Philosophy Notes," 1932-1933 (his major introduction to post-Cartesian thought):[45]

> physical evil consequence of moral evil, which arises in finiteness of the creature (*metaphysical evil*); motives to sin in the petites perceptions of finite monad; problem of theodicy reduced to why did God permit evil? Answer: finiteness inseparable from conception of created beings, & imperfection from that of finiteness; a world of perfect beings is a contradiction in terms; thus world without sin unthinkable … impossible. But goodness of God reduces it to a minimum; world is contingent (i.e., may be thought other); of the infinite number of possible worlds variously evil, God has created the one with as little evil as possible; the world is not a metaphysical necessity, but a choice among

[45] These notes are from Beckett's summary of Windelband (491-92) in the "Philosophical Notebooks" (TCD MS 10967/212); they are also cited by Tonning (213).

> possibilities made by the all-good will of God, & therefore the best; God's goodness would have welcome[d] a world without evil, but his wisdom, bound to metaphysical law, allowed him only the best among possible worlds.

Thus optimism, Windelband concludes, arises "from supposition of metaphysical necessity of evil" (213).

Watt (largely written during the brutal Nazi era) offers further "splendid little pictures" (rather, extended paradigms) to interrogate that metaphysical necessity. The parable of the famished dog, while mocking the pre-established harmony, identifies the conceptual crux at its heart (*Obscure Locks*, 108):[46]

> This, the most outrageous parody of scholasticism in an impossible treatise, derives from the simple premise that if a dog's dish is put outside at evening full or partly so, and is brought in the next morning, empty, then someone or something must have wrought that change. A dog. A famished dog. A dog kept famished to eat the food. A family that owns the dog. A family that (necessarily) must breed dogs so that there is always a famished dog. And so on, each premise yet fresh premises begetting, until, from the simple statement that "it was necessary" that a dog from outside call at the house and several hypothetical propositions, there finally comes into being (95) an empirical declaration that the name of this dog "was" Kate, and that the family necessary for her being "was" the Lynch family (84). The reification of this is purely linguistic, Nominalist, but by the end of the sequence the image of Kate eating from her dish with the dwarfs standing by (99) *is* substantive: the conditional has become the indicative. In like manner, ~~perhaps,~~ have countless human societies reified their nominalist "gods."

[46] The discussion in *Obscure* Locks is more extensive, and indicates Leibniz as Beckett's target. References are changed to the Faber text (a new order), and I delete the craven "perhaps" that once qualified the final sentiment.

Another perspective is offered by Arsene's moment in the sun – recounted in his "short statement" - when everything seemed to slip, the grains of sand accommodating themselves like monads to the movement of the whole. This testifies to the momentary sense of existence off the ladder (*Watt*, 36), an experience both real and ideal, and not an illusion, though Arsene is buggered if he can understand how it could have been anything else (37). Later in the novel, the meticulous paradigm of the Frog Song (117-18) exposes the transcendental machinery behind the experience: three frogs, Krak, Krek, and Krik (in principle, a Leibnizian choir), croak at intervals pre-determined by the Fibonacci series (bars of 3, 5, and 8 respectively), beginning in unison and, after 120 bars, resolving the independent notes in a final chord. Were the intervals to be increased, by adding a fourth frog, Krok (intervals of 13), that resolution would take 1,560 intervals; add Kruk (intervals of 21) to the choir, and total harmony would require 32,760 intervals (*Obscure Locks,* 138 [#136.5]). Membership of the choir is open to all, but even if one assumes that (unlike those of *Dream*) the independent singers will behave the mathematics quickly become impossible.[47]

In like fashion, Part III of *Watt* ends with several paradigms of increasing complexity, with these "series" culminating in lists that are devoted to Mr. Knott's physical appearance. These derive from four simple categories {figure, stature, skin, hair}, each with three terms {fat, thin, sturdy}, {tall, small, middlesized}, {pale, yellow, flushed}, and {dark, fair, ginger}; but the exhaustive enumeration of the 81 sets covers two full pages (*Watt*, 181-82; *Obscure Locks*, 181-84 [#209.7]). Were the categories extended, as they might be infinitely (carriage, expression, shape, size; frail, stocky, freckled, bleached), there would not be room in the entire universe to list all possible variants. The process is obsessively rational, and logically represents the machinery of pre-established harmony, but in the end invites the question: is the pre-established harmony finally distinguishable from the "pre-established arbitrary"?

The latter term is used explicitly in *Watt* (114), after series of series concerning the coming and going of Mr. Knott's servants (he abides; they

[47] Indeed, the figures given in *Obscure Locks* are wrong, and should be corrected.

come and go),[48] the feeling of absurdity followed by that of necessity, and vice-versa (113-14). Bruno's identified contraries – as noted in Beckett's 1929 essay, "Dante…Bruno.Vico..Joyce" – suggest one resolution, maximal order (entropy) implying its identified contrary, total disorder (chaos); consequently, the greatest necessity (harmony) would be identical to the greatest absurdity (arbitrary), and all things ultimately identified with God, "the universal monad, Monad of monads."[49] This quickly becomes circular, but the paradox may be seen from two perspectives, from above and below (as it were), the two meeting in the middle, on the perceptual ground where the philosophical encounters the psychical.

As Latta notes (177), looking from above (as Mr. Knott might do):

> … if God is one of the Series of Monads, it seems impossible to regard Him as the sufficient reason, as choosing to create the system of which he is an element. And on the other hand, if the essence of the Monads is to represent the Universe, and if He (*actus purus*) perfectly realises the universe within Himself, what place is there for a system of Monads apart from Him?

One response raises a further paradox of Berkleyan *percipi*, namely, that Mr. Knott cannot exist unless he is witnessed, the "place" of the Monads being to do precisely that. Yet that way greater madness lies. The other way, from the serial perspective of "Tom, Dick, and Harry" (*Watt*, 113-16), asserts that because the movements of Tom are not *dependent on* or *because of* those of Dick or Harry (each a separate monad, and cannot therefore affect the others), the very notion of the pre-established harmony entails an impossible contradiction. Richard Coe explains:[50]

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[48] Windelband contends (73) that the central problem of Greek ethics, as of physics, concerned the relationship between the unchanging order of things (*ousis*) and the world of change (*genesis*).

[49] Samuel Beckett, "Dante...Bruno.Vico..Joyce," in *Our Exagmination round his Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress* (London: Faber, 1929), 5.

[50] Richard Coe, *Samuel Beckett* (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 52.

> For either Tom is temporal, in which case his whole existence is determined by his place in the series; or else he is a-temporal, a-spatial, and independent of the series–he cannot very well be both. *And yet* says Beckett, *this is precisely what he is*. Human existence is a logical impossibility. It belongs to the series and yet evades the series; it is at once in time and out of time.

The "Tomness of Tom" (*Watt*, 116), and hence the Wattness of Watt, is an absurdity (in the strict sense of a rational incompatibility), leaving the individual in much the position Watt had earlier found himself, unable to reconcile (if only by a hairbreadth) a particular pot with the idea of Pot (67). Nor will Watt's enumeration of the *accidents* of his master define his *essence*: a gulf remains between the particular and the universal, with the monadic mind so curiously constituted as to perceive itself on both sides simultaneously, but lacking a sure foothold on either. Where does this "logical impossibility" lead the enquiring mind, "always on the alert against itself"?[51] Into the Frogpond, perhaps, where a Leibnizian choir reconciles seriality with essentiality; but, as noted above, the mathematical harmonies quickly assume the lineaments of disorder. For even if one admits the experiential reality of the chord, a transcendental validation of its harmony does not necessarily follow (consider Arsene's "buggered" sunlit moment). One might endlessly rehearse this, or simply agree with the Ottolenghi in Beckett's short story, "Dante and the Lobster," when Belacqua annoys her with inquiries of similar metaphysical urgency: "Where are we ever? … where we were, as we were."[52]

As Garin Dowd has argued, Beckett in the great works of his middle period returned to the *Monadology*, not systematically to work "a Leibnizian thematic" into his fiction, but rather to revisit "a conceptual detritus" in which "Leibniz's architechtonic resounds."[53] Malone, completing his inventory, acts as an archivist setting out to tabulate "those vaguely perceptible prolongations" of the series of which (dimly) he feel himself part (Dowd,

[51] Samuel Beckett, *From an Abandoned Work*, in *Texts for Nothing and Other Shorter Prose, 1950-1976*, edited by Mark Nixon (London: Faber, 2010), 59.

[52] Beckett, "Dante and the Lobster," in *More Pricks than Kicks*, 13.

[53] Garin Dowd, "Nomadology: Reading the Beckettian Baroque," 22-3.

26). This anticipates *The Unnamable*, with its depiction of *l'homme larvaire* at the threshold that marks the distinction between the possession of mere consciousness (*petites perceptions*) and their translation into apperception. Worm (for it is he) embodies the *monade nue*, or "bare monad" of the *Monadology*, the naked or degenerate form at a low level of representation, invoked as being always "in a state of stupor," for "this is the state in which the bare Monads are" (*Monadology* §24; Latta 1898, 231), and so denied his metamorphosis into the light.[54] The incompossible protagonist of Beckett's post-War *Trilogy*, unable to raise his little perceptions to the level of apperception and thus enter the clear zone, must instead "go on" in the dark.

Dowd continues this analysis into *How It Is*, with respect to what he calls the "vigilance of the threshold."[55] Offering the intriguing suggestion that the "archival subject" of *Krapp's Last Tape* represents Leibniz's God, Dowd considers *l'homme larvaire* of *How It Is* as bearing witness before the Tribunal of Reason ("Mud," 2). The mud is "an amorphous plane," apparently ordered from "above"; this raises the question of the ordering principle. Again, this is considered from the perspective of the *monade nue* ("Mud," 4), whose life in the mud is one of stupor, dimly lit by the stirrings of apperception. *How It Is* may therefore be viewed as representing a final attempt to break through the paradoxes of perception that had informed *Murphy* and *Watt*, but remained unresolved in *The Unnamable*; here, as in the novel's predecessors, the protagonist fails again (not even "better") in his attempt to break free, or, in the implicit Leibnizian terms, to realize within himself the *petites perceptions* that might lead into the light. The enterprise is doomed, for though he establishes with reasonable conviction that he is "sole elect" (*How It Is*, 9), such monadic certainty allows no escape from the prisons of language and being (equally the inconclusive conclusion of Beckett's *Texts for Nothing*).

Instead, in the third part of the narrative ("after Pim"), the protagonist considers the old conundrum of the "sacks" - "a possible thing in this world so little possible" (91) - in terms that again question Leibniz's pre-

[54] Leibniz rejects metempsychosis, but offers metamorphosis as the way that the body of the substance, or soul, continually changes by gradual removal of or addition to its parts.

[55] Garin Dowd, "Mud as Plane of Immanence in *How It Is*," 1.

established harmony: "more sacks here then than souls infinitely" (97); and "if we are to be possible our couplings journeys and abandons need of one not one of us an intelligence somewhere a love who all along the track at the right places according as we need them deposits our sacks" (120). Dowd identifies this loving intelligence with Leibniz's God and the "formula of monads" that expresses "the divinely ordained entirety of existence" ("Mud," 21). Dowd then shows why this conclusion must be finally unsatisfactory for the poor creature in the mud, who arrives at "another solution more simple by far and far more radical" (*How It Is*, 126). That is to say, as the narrator does, that "all this business of sacks deposited" (127) is "unthinkable"; that it is "all balls" (the monad's spherical perfection reduced to a fundamental sound). What remains is the mud, that "plane of immanence" finally "free of the plane of transcendence," one from which any loving intelligence is excluded ("Mud," 22): "no not even a sack" but "only me yes alone yes with my voice" (*How It Is*, 128).

Erik Tonning notes Beckett's "residual dream of a complete transcendence of the *principium individuationis* first formulated in *Proust*" (Tonning, 49). Simply put, though Leibniz was a great cod and that dream of transcendence "all balls," something enduring emerges from the detritus of the *Monadology*. In his later works for stage and screen, Tonning argues, Beckett used specific early sources, such as Leibniz, in "submerged form," as a kind of "scaffolding" that underlies narrative structure to create form (16). Leibniz allowed him to rework such topics as "the self's hermetic solitude, porous insubstantiality, and ineluctable involvement in an inhuman, non-rational system" (17-18), often unexpectedly. The legacy of the Monad, Tonning argues, referring to comments in the German Diaries about Karl Ballmer (22), was what Beckett called the *metaphysical concrete*, that element of abstraction without which there was only "photography" (18).[56]

Beckett relates the "metaphysical concrete" to the sense of the work as totally self-contained: "I think of Monadologie and my Vulture."[57] The "Ex-

[56] Tonning cites the German Diaries (23 January 1937), where Beckett states that the *will* to escape from abstraction is "senseless" (but the wish to indulge it totally even more so).

[57] Details from the German Diaries (26 November 1936), as cited by Tonning (22) and Knowlson (240).

traordinary stillness" of the Expressionist painter Ballmer's work, he claimed, makes anything else irrelevant: "Thus Leibniz, monadologie, Vulture, are by the way." In a later Diary entry (24 March 1937), he further asked, with respect to Ballmer's sense of creating out of himself: "Where does this differ from the Monadology?" (Tonning, 24). These entries intimate that Beckett here conceived the artistic mind, and his own in particular, as monadic; its chief aim, he recorded in the Diaries (18 February 1937), was "light in the monad," by which is to be understood the aim of increasing within the soul-monad of the self the awareness of the ineradicable "dark zone" at its center (210). Beckett's poem "The Vulture" is the first of many works of stillness and the unsaid set within the skull, blending the metaphysical with the concrete "simplicity" of its being. This constitutes the lasting aesthetic legacy of Leibniz to Beckett,[58] more important even than the "closed space" settings of so many of the later writings or the more obvious images of the Monad and/or pre-established harmony in serial works such as "Quad" where characters (independent, unknowable) circle enigmatically about a center that might be the All or equally the Nothing (204).

Beckett acknowledged few eschatological certainties, but these included: the incoherent continuum; suffering as unredeemable; irrationality; chaos; nothingness; the senseless, issueless predicament of existence; and the conviction that there was finally no way out. All that could be known, he recorded in the German Diaries (15 January 1937), after his visit to the Leibniz-Haus, are the "straws" and "flotsam" of understanding, which "is at least amusing" (Knowlson, 244). Individual consciousness, in these terms, is an absurdity, an "epiphenomenon of this primary chaos" (Tonning, 33), which rejects Reason as the governing principle of reality. And yet, as Tonning insists, Beckett's intellectual and literary development was shaped by "a continuous *agon* with Christian beliefs," of which the Leibniz Monad was one of the more fascinating and formidable expressions. He notes the paradox implied by Beckett's attraction to Leibniz's world of teleology and

[58] Tonning indicates (215), that "so dark in his windowless self that no knowing whether light or day" (from the manuscripts of *Stirring Still*) "incontestably" references Leibniz; while "[n]o such thing as no light" (from *A Piece of Monologue*) implies virtual perceptions below the threshold of consciousness.

theodicy: despite its radical difference from "philosophies that saw reality as at bottom incoherent, chaotic and utterly alien to the epiphenomenon of human consciousness" (205), let alone Beckett's intense dislike of anthropomorphism, Leibniz was for him a natural and even "obvious" point of resistance, with genuine affection and respect retained for the residua of beliefs that he could not bring himself to share.[59]

[59] Beckett's attraction to the Monad is like that to other systems (Dante, Descartes, Freud, Jung), which offer splendid little pictures that (like Christianity) finally will not do. A final frivolity: I am small, round, and bouncy; but occasionally I go flat, so they stick a needle in me and pump me up again. What am I? Answer: Diego Monadona.