

The London Consortium
Static. Issue 06 – Alarm

<http://static.londonconsortium.com/issue06/>

Thomas Mansell

Beckett's Alarm

Sections of this article have appeared in Thomas Mansell, 'Hard-to-Hear Music in Endgame', in Mark Byron (ed.), Samuel Beckett's Endgame (Amsterdam and New York, NY: Editions Rodopi B.V., 2007), pp. 1–21. The author wishes to thank the publisher and editor for permission to reprint them here in revised form, and also the A.H.R.C. for supporting his research.

http://static.londonconsortium.com/issue06/mansell_beckett.html

© Thomas Mansell / Static / London Consortium / December 2007

Static is the web resource of the London Consortium, a unique collaboration between the Architectural Association, Birkbeck College (University of London), the Institute of Contemporary Arts, The Science Museum, and Tate.

Aiming to initiate interdisciplinary intellectual debate about paradoxes of contemporary culture, Static presents contributions from an international team of academics, artists and cultural practitioners.

The materials, assembled for each issue around a theme, include analytical essays and articles, interviews, art projects, photographic images, etc.

Static welcomes feedback, argument and commentary from scholars, artists, and other readers, and will be regularly updated in order to communicate the most recent and relevant ideas and interpretations on the chosen topic.

<http://static.londonconsortium.com>

The London Consortium – <http://www.londonconsortium.com>
Architectural Association – <http://www.aaschool.ac.uk/>
Birkbeck College (University of London) – <http://www.bbk.ac.uk/>
Institute of Contemporary Arts – <http://www.ica.org.uk/>
The Science Museum – <http://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/>
Tate – <http://www.tate.org.uk/>

Sounds, signs, and symbols¹

Alarms occupy an ambiguous place between sound, sign, and symbol. Bells can convey a number of quite specific messages to a community, but the tocsin or alarm signal is the most easily recognised and responded to. In his history of bells in France, Alain Corbin writes that although the tocsin was not rung everywhere with precisely the same rhythm, 'it was defined almost everywhere by hurried, redoubled, and discontinuous strokes'.

This was an abrupt, irregular peal that was heard intermittently and was executed, whenever possible, with a small bell. The alarm bell was hurried. It seemed to urge on and instill anxiety. It is highly likely that it made hearts beat a little faster. Its pauses caused listeners to hold their breath and prick up their ears. By contrast with the other secular peals, the alarm transcended the territorial limits of the community.²

Originally an alarm was a call to arms: the word comes from the Old French, 'à l'arme', 'to the weapon'. If it no longer has this precise meaning, it still inevitably provokes the 'fight or flight' response. The word 'tocsin' also derives from Old French, 'touque-sain': 'signe' is modern French for 'signal', and the verb 'toquer' means 'to strike', though is closely related to 'toucher', 'to touch'. The ambiguity 'toquer/toucher', the juxtaposition of the most delicate with the most violent physical impact, encapsulates that of the alarm itself, which functions both as a mediated signifier and as a direct sonic assault on our nervous system. We set alarms to remind us of various things; but to be effective the sound itself must by-pass or short-circuit the filter of reason, causing the hearer themselves to become 'alarmed'. Corbin's description of the tocsin indicates the intimate relationship of the alarm and the alarmed: the hurried bell urges on whoever hears it; a symptom of the anxiety it instils is a quickening of the pulse. While the rapidity of the alarm bell is beyond that of human capability, the mechanism therefore has a real connection with the natural world

Unlike church-bells, which are rung with physical effort by a ringer pulling a bell-rope, modern alarms can be activated by a simple mechanical or electrical switch by a remote or unknown agency, which adds to their ominous nature. The alarm is relentlessly repetitive, resounding with an unpleasant hardness, sometimes creating the illusion of a single, constant tone. One of the reasons it is so difficult to ignore an alarm is that its second, third, fourth, twentieth stroke is as loud as its first, unlike, the '[f]aint single chime' of Beckett's *Footfalls* (1975):

*Faint single chime. Pause as echoes die.*³

*Chime a little fainter. Pause for echoes.*⁴

¹ The phrase 'alarming conviction' is taken from Samuel Beckett, *Murphy* [1936, pub. 1938] (London: Calder Publications Ltd, 1993), p. 125.

² Alain Corbin, *Village Bells: Sound and Meaning in the Nineteenth-Century French Countryside* [1988], trans. Martin Thom (London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd [Papermac], 1999), p. 192 (p. 358 n. 145).

³ Samuel Beckett, *Footfalls* [1975], in *The Complete Dramatic Works* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1986, paperback 1990), pp. 399–403: p. 399.

*Chime a little fainter still. Pause for echoes.*⁵

*Chime even a little fainter still. Pause for echoes.*⁶

If the echoes did not, like the chimes themselves, get fainter and eventually die, the result would be an alarm. The moment when the echoes finally merge with silence is virtually imperceptible; the entrances and the exits of a modern alarm bell, in contrast, are sudden. However, sometimes one continues to hear the alarm even after it has ceased to ring, continuing in the dinning and deafening tinnitus of the ears. This paper will focus on Beckett's alarms in two plays: *Endgame* (1957) and *Happy Days* (1961). Before considering them, it is necessary to sketch the background (noise) of language and music, meaning and sound.

In *Theories of the Symbol* (1977), Tzvetan Todorov documents and contrasts classical and modern accounts of the functioning of language. Aristotle believed that despite the differences in both written and spoken languages, they directly symbolized mental experiences, which were the same for all.⁷ Linguistic theories of the early eighteenth century, such as that of Abbé Dubos (1670—1742), had interposed various junctures in this apparently straightforward process centred around the arbitrary nature of verbal signs.

Literature would thus be distinguished from the other arts by its oblique, indirect mode of representation. Sounds evoke meaning; but the latter in turn becomes a signifier, whose signified is the world represented. In this sense, poetry is a *secondary* semiotic system.⁸

What at the time seemed to threaten the ontological status of literature came, in the early twentieth century, to be considered its most prized quality. In 1919, Roman Jakobson celebrated poetry (i.e. literature) as the form in which 'language is perceived in itself and not as a transparent and transitive mediator of "something else."' ⁹ Jean-Paul Sartre expressed very similar ideas in *What Is Literature?* (1948):

'Poets are men who refuse to *utilize* language.... The poet has withdrawn from language-instrument in a single movement. Once and for all he has chosen the poetic attitude which considers words as things and not as signs. For the ambiguity of the sign implies that one can penetrate it at will like a pane of glass and pursue the thing signified, or turn his gaze toward its *reality* and consider it as an object.'¹⁰

⁴ Beckett, *Footfalls*, p. 400.

⁵ Beckett, *Footfalls*, p. 402.

⁶ Beckett, *Footfalls*, p. 403.

⁷ See Tzvetan Todorov, *Theories of the Symbol* [1977], trans. Catherine Porter (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publisher, 1982), ch. 1 'The Birth of Western Semiotics', pp. 15—59: p. 16.

⁸ Todorov, *Theories of the Symbol*, ch. 5 'Imitation and Motivation', pp. 129—46: pp. 131—32.

⁹ Todorov, *Theories of the Symbol*, ch. 10 'Jakobson's Poetics', pp. 271—84: p. 272.

¹⁰ Jean-Paul Sartre, *What Is Literature?* [1948], trans. Bernard Frechtman – as quoted in Todorov, *Theories of the Symbol*, ch. 10 'Jakobson's Poetics', pp. 271—84: p. 273.

One could also approach this issue using Julia Kristeva's account of the 'symbolic' and the 'semiotic' in 'Revolution in Poetic Language' (1974). The 'symbolic' is the primary constituent of language used to articulate meanings by means of signifiers; whereas the 'semiotic' is the 'space underlying the written [...] rhythmic, unfettered, irreducible to its intelligible verbal translation; it is musical, anterior to judgement'.¹¹ '[S]o-called "natural" language', Kristeva argues, 'allows for different modes of articulation of the semiotic and the symbolic'.¹² In most discourses there is a 'necessary dialectic between the two modalities of the signifying process, which is constitutive of the subject'.¹³

Because the subject is always *both* semiotic *and* symbolic, no signifying system he produces can be either 'exclusively' semiotic or 'exclusively' symbolic, and is instead necessarily marked by an indebtedness to both.¹⁴

Kristeva's use of the terminology virtually inverts their historic meanings: what Todorov calls the 'semiotic' she calls the 'symbolic', with 'semiotic' now taking on a new role, representing the unrepresentable. Kristeva's ideas have been extremely influential, despite their complexity.

"Kristeva has thus divided language into two vast realms, the *semiotic* – sound, rhythm and movement anterior to sense and linked closely to impulses [that is, drives] ... – and the *symbolic* – the semantico-syntactic function of language necessary to all rational communication about the world. The latter, the *symbolic*, usually 'takes charge of' the semiotic and binds it into syntax and phonemes, but it can only do so on the basis of the sounds and movements presented to it by the semiotic."¹⁵

Indeed, the sense of language's becoming increasingly like music is one point where these differing theories converge – albeit from opposing directions. For Kristeva music is the clearest example of a 'non-verbal signifying system [...] constructed exclusively on the basis of the semiotic';¹⁶ and, as Daniel Albright explains in *Modernism and Music* (2004),

[t]he linguistics of Ferdinand de Saussure and the philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein [...] tend to cut the word free from any reference in the physical world; [...] as language becomes a deferentialized, self-enclosed system of signs – signs that point at other signs, never at concrete objects – speech becomes more and more like music.¹⁷

¹¹ Julia Kristeva, 'Revolution in Poetic Language' [1974], trans. Margaret Waller [1984], in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1986, repr. 1987), pp. 90–137: p. 97.

¹² Kristeva, pp. 92–93.

¹³ Kristeva, pp. 93.

¹⁴ Kristeva, pp. 93.

¹⁵ 'White, 1977, quoted in Hebdige, 1979, p. 164' – as quoted in John Shepherd and Peter Wicke, *Music and Cultural Theory* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997), p. 77.

¹⁶ Kristeva, pp. 93.

¹⁷ Daniel Albright, *Modernism and Music: An Anthology of Sources* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004), pp. 24–25.

If music's ability to incorporate these largely contradictory senses of language were not already confusing enough, the twentieth century also saw a transformation of the meaning of music itself. As Albright ponders,

[i]f the history of music is a story about the continual expansion of the idea of consonance, at first limited to fourths and fifths, then granted to thirds and sixths, and finally to tone clusters of seconds, what is the last chapter?¹⁸

Schoenberg's serial dodecaphony and Hába's microtonality were, in part, attempts to answer this question; but perhaps the most radical innovators in music of the early twentieth century were those who embraced noise.

Listen to a locomotive, a steel mill, a circular saw: these are the highest sorts of musical instruments, if dissonance is the criterion of excellence. If we want to be overwhelmed by sound, sound we can feel through our diaphragms, sound that so fills the mind that there is no room left for anything else, a boiler room can do more than Bruckner.¹⁹

The clearest statement of this idea is Luigi Russolo's Futurist Manifesto 'The Art of Noises' (1913) and the *'intonarumori'* or 'noisemakers' he devised.²⁰ Russolo argued that the established dualism between 'musical sound' and 'noise' was false:

[...]noise is differentiated from musical sound merely in that the vibrations that produce it are confused and irregular, both in tempo and in intensity. Every noise has a note – sometimes even a chord – that predominates in the ensemble of its irregular vibrations.²¹

This fact makes it possible to incorporate factory sirens, alarm bells, and any other noises into the musical fabric – but it is no less disruptive and destabilising for that. Certain sounds continue to strike us as 'unmusical': consider Primo Levi's experience of the 'infernal' music of the camps, recounted in *If This Is A Man* (1958):

[...] the reveille catches me in a deep sleep and its ringing is a return from nothingness. As the bread is distributed one can hear, far from the windows, in the dark air, the band beginning to play: the healthy comrades are leaving in squads for work. One cannot hear the music well from Ka-Be. The beating of the big drums and the cymbals reach us continuously and monotonously, but on this weft the musical phrases weave a pattern only intermittently, according to the caprices of

¹⁸ Albright, p. 172.

¹⁹ Albright, pp. 172–73.

²⁰ See Albright, p. 174.

²¹ Luigi Russolo, 'The Art of Noises: Futurist Manifesto' (1913), trans. Stephen Somervell – reprinted in Albright, pp. 177–83: p. 181.

the wind. We all look at each other from our beds, because we all feel that this music is infernal.²²

The infernal music is 'the perceptible expression of its geometrical madness, of the resolution of others to annihilate us first as men in order to kill us more slowly afterwards',²³ an effect intensified by the fact that it is the percussion instruments which can be most clearly and constantly heard. Furthermore, Levi not only distinguishes between the different instruments in the band, with the implication that 'continuous' and 'monotonous' instruments are not properly 'musical', but considers even this mingled yarn as qualitatively distinct from the mere 'ringing' of the reveille.

Other artists, however, were increasingly attracted to the non-musical aspects of music, even the notoriously noise-sensitive Franz Kafka. As Deleuze and Guattari comment in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (1975),

[i]t is certainly not a systematized music, a musical form, that interests Kafka (in his letters and in his diary, one finds nothing more than insignificant anecdotes about a few musicians). It isn't a composed and semiotically shaped music that interests Kafka, but rather a pure sonorous material.²⁴

Another writer who arguably produced a 'minor literature', albeit voluntarily, is Samuel Beckett (1906—1989). Despite Beckett's avowed love of music, particularly that of the classical and romantic periods, such music rarely appears in his works, and then only problematically. Instead, one finds passages such as this, from his early novel *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* (1932, published posthumously):

Plane of white music, warpless music expunging the tempest of emblems, calm womb of dawn whelping no sun, no lichen of sun-rising on its candid parapets, still flat white music, alb of timeless light. It is a blade before me, it is a sail of bleached silk on a shore, impassive statement of itself drawn across the strata and symbols, lamina of peace for my eyes and my brain slave of my eyes, pressing and pouring itself whiteness and music through blindness into the limp mind. It is the dawn-foil and the gift of blindness and the mysteries of bulk banished and the mind swathed in the music and candour of the dawn-foil, facts of surface. The layers of Damask fused and drawn to the uttermost layer, silken blade. Blind and my mind blade of silk, blind and music and whiteness facts in the fact of my mind. Douceurs...²⁵

In this passage, music, the most overtly formal of all the arts, has itself become 'warpless' – a stage beyond Primo Levi's later description of 'weft' of percussion on which the 'music' of the instruments was only

²² Primo Levi, *If This Is A Man* [1958], trans. Stuart Woolf [1969] in *If This Is A Man and The Truce* (London: Little, Brown and Company [Abacus], 1987, repr. 2000), pp. 17—179: p. 56.

²³ Levi, *If This Is A Man*, p. 57.

²⁴ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* [1975], trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p. 5.

²⁵ Samuel Beckett, *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* [1932], ed. Eoin O'Brien and Edith Fournier (London: Calder Publications Ltd, 1996), p. 182.

intermittently woven. This from a writer who in his pomp would tell an interviewer, "[t]o find a form that accommodates the mess, that is the task of the artist now."²⁶ One is minded less of 'white music' than of 'white noise' – a concoction of sounds of every frequency within the range of human hearing, in which all frequencies have an equal probability of being heard at any moment.

This 'music' is valued precisely for 'expunging the tempest of emblems' – language that recalls both Beckett's 1929 essay 'Dante...Bruno.Vico..Joyce' and his 'German Letter' of 1937 to Axel Kaun. In the former, commissioned by Joyce for a volume on his *Work In Progress*, Beckett summarised Giambattista Vico's (1668—1744) 'treatment of the origin of language':

[...] he rejected the materialistic and transcendental views; the one declaring that language was nothing but a polite and conventional symbolism; the other, in desperation, describing it as a gift from the Gods. As before, Vico is the rationalist, aware of the natural and inevitable growth of language. In its first dumb form, language was gesture. If a man wanted to say 'sea', he pointed to the sea. With the spread of animism, this gesture was replaced by the word: 'Neptune'.²⁷

When, on the following page, Beckett writes '[t]he root of any word whatsoever can be traced back to some prelingual symbol',²⁸ it is unclear whether the opinion is Vico's, Joyce's, or his own. Certainly this was the philosophy underpinning what would become *Finnegans Wake* (1939), a book which Beckett did much to help prepare and was one of the first to attempt to translate. As Beckett emerged from Joyce's life-changing influence, he eventually took a different path, telling an interviewer in 1956 that Joyce was "'tending toward omniscience and omnipotence as an artist'" whereas he was "'working with impotence, ignorance"'.²⁹ The Second World War marked a decisive phase in Beckett's development. In 1941, while on the run in Roussillon (and at around the time that Joyce died in Zürich), Beckett began work on the weird and wonderful *Watt* (1945), with its famous final addendum 'no symbols where none intended'.³⁰ The apparently simple motto is, of course, entirely impractical – how is the reader to recognise an intentional symbol? Presumably the ring of 'cymbals' is unintentional – yet is no less present for that, especially in the context of the relationship between language and music, signs and sounds. I must be one of the 'hard of hearing' people of whom Beckett complained in his 1937 'German Letter' to Axel Kaun:

²⁶ Tom F. Driver, 'Beckett by the Madeleine', *Columbia University Forum* 4 (Summer 1961) – quoted in J. E. Dearlove, *Samuel Beckett's Nonrelational Art* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1982), p. 12 and in John Fletcher, *About Beckett: The Playwright and the Work* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 2003), pp. 66–67.

²⁷ Samuel Beckett, 'Dante...Bruno.Vico..Joyce' [1929], in *Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment*, ed. Ruby Cohn (London: John Calder (Publishers) Ltd., 1983, repr. 2001), pp. 19–33: p. 24.

²⁸ Beckett, 'Dante...Bruno.Vico..Joyce', in *Disjecta*, p. 25.

²⁹ Israel Shenker, 'Moody Man of Letters', *New York Times*, 06 May 1956 – quoted in James Acheson, *Samuel Beckett's Artistic Theory and Practice: Criticism, Drama, and Early Fiction* (New York, NY: St Martin's Press, 1997). p. 6.

³⁰ Samuel Beckett, *Watt* [1945] (London: John Calder (Publishers) Ltd., 1976, repr. 1998), p. 255.

I know there are people, sensitive and intelligent people, for whom there is no lack of silence. I cannot but assume that they are hard of hearing. For in the forest of symbols, which aren't any, the little birds of interpretation, which isn't any, are never silent.³¹

In the forest of Beckett-interpretation, the 'symbols' are as noisy as the birds. John Hollander hears the complementary echo, 'the secret tinkle of "symbols"', in the phrase "'secret cymbals round'" in Wallace Stevens's 'Notes Towards a Supreme Fiction' (1942).³² Stevens himself would later comment that "'there has been a change in the nature of what we mean by music"':

'If occasionally the poet touches the triangle or one of the cymbals, he does it only because he feels like doing it. Instead of a musician we have orator whose speech sometimes resembles music. We have an eloquence and it is that eloquence that we call music every day, without having much cause to think about it.'³³

Charles Krance is just one of many critics who have attempted to define 'Beckett Music':

What Beckett 'listened for' in the writing and sounding of his own works was a music that would compel his reader/perceiver/auditor to a particular form of listening, a form that could 'accommodate the mess,' enabling one to hear, as if refracted through the process of listening, the silence within: a purified, residual resonance of the din without, caught in a fleeting moment of grace, sounding the *harmonic* wherein the '[ear] of mind' and the '[ear] of flesh' may be one.³⁴

In Beckett's works, instead of 'music' itself, one more often finds an intense concentration on sonorous material, both natural and mechanical. Like Stevens's Canon in 'Notes Towards A Supreme Fiction', Beckett

[...] chose to include the things
That in each other are included, the whole,
The complicate, the amassing harmony.³⁵

Among the sounds to which Beckett gave voice were footsteps, frogs, tides, thuds, murmurs, bells – and alarms.

-
- ³¹ Samuel Beckett to Axel Kaun, 09 July 1937, trans. Martin Esslin, in *Disjecta*, pp. 170—173: p. 172.
'Ich weiss, es gibt Leute, empfindsame und intelligente Leute, für die es an Stillschweigen gar nicht fehlt. Ich kann nicht umhin anzunehmen, dass sie schwerhörig sind. Denn im Walde de Symbole, die keine sind, schweigen die Vögeln der Deutung, die keine ist, nie.' (Samuel Beckett to Axel Kaun, 09 July 1937, in *Disjecta*, pp. 51—54: p. 53).
- ³² John Hollander, *Vision and Resonance: Two Senses of Poetic Form* (London and New Haven, CT: Oxford University Press, 1975, 2nd edn 1985), p. 133.
- ³³ Wallace Stevens, 'Effects of Analogy', in *The Necessary Angel* (1965) – quoted in Hollander, p. 8.
- ³⁴ Charles Krance, 'Beckett Music', in Mary Bryden (ed.), *Samuel Beckett and Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 51—65: p. 56.
- ³⁵ Wallace Stevens, 'Notes Towards A Supreme Fiction' [1942], in *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1945, repr. 1959), pp. 380—408: p. 403.

Alarm

Many of the above themes are at play when Beckett attends to alarms, as he does in the stage-plays *Endgame* (1957) and *Happy Days* (1961). Beckett's relationship with alarms goes right back to his days as a postgraduate exchange-student at the *École Normale Supérieure* in Paris, where he and his colleagues staged a parodic adaptation of *Comeille's Le Cid* called *Le Kid*. Beckett's biographer James Knowlson relates that Beckett played the part of Don Diègue, sporting 'a long white beard in imitation of Old Father Time', and 'carried an umbrella instead of a sword and, like Clov, in Beckett's 1956 play, *Endgame*, an alarm clock'.³⁶

It was Beckett's own idea to bring an alarm clock on stage with him for Don Diègue's monologue in the first act: he knelt down, placed the clock very carefully on the floor and was midway through his famous 'Ô rage! ô désespoir! ô vieillesse ennemie!' speech when the alarm went off infuriating him and waking up the man on the ladder. This, combined with the speeded-up movements of the hands of the big clock, forced him to go faster and faster until he built up a wild, crazy momentum, producing a torrent of sound that has been aptly compared with the effect of Lucky's extravagant monologue in *Waiting for Godot*.³⁷

This episode also links with the following strange scene during rehearsals for *Happy Days* in London in 1962.

Allowed by [George] Devine more or less to take over as director, he [Beckett] became increasingly unhappy as Brenda Bruce struggled with a text that she had had far too little time to learn, let alone fully absorb, and with lines that Beckett tried to induce her to speak to a metronomically strict rhythm; at one stage he even brought a metronome into the theatre and set it down on the floor, saying 'This is the rhythm I want'. To the actress's astonishment, he then left it ticking relentlessly away.³⁸

However, these effects owe more to the clock than to the alarm – whereas the following exchange in *Endgame* concerns the alarm itself.

'[H]e was not alarmed, unduly'³⁹: *Endgame* (1957)

Clov has threatened (not for the first time, we gather) to leave Hamm, his blind and immobile master. To Hamm's question how will he know that Clov has left him, Clov at once answers 'you simply whistle me

³⁶ James Knowlson, *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing plc, 1996), p. 124 (p. 727 n. 21).

³⁷ Knowlson, pp. 124–25 (p. 727 n. 21).

³⁸ Knowlson, p. 501 (p. 799 n. 115).

³⁹ Beckett, *Watt*, p. 27.

and if I don't come running if means I've left you'.⁴⁰ Hamm's subsequent question, however, proves a greater challenge: how will he know, when Clov doesn't respond to his call, whether Clov has indeed left him or has instead merely died in the kitchen. After a good deal of pacing to and fro with his '*[s]tiff, staggering walk*',⁴¹ Clov finally has an idea.

CLOV: Wait! [*He meditates. Not very convinced.*] Yes... [*Pause. More convinced.*] Yes! [*He raises his head.*] I have it! I set the alarm.

[*Pause.*]

HAMM: This is perhaps not one of my bright days, but frankly –

CLOV: You whistle me. I don't come. The alarm rings. I'm gone. It doesn't ring. I'm dead.

[*Pause.*]⁴²

Even in the world of *Endgame*, where all is 'corpsed',⁴³ the alarm nevertheless continues to accrue potential significations. The scene Clov conjures is somehow both ruthlessly cruel and yet almost tenderly imagined: the alarm ringing in the silence would be the last sound Hamm would ever hear, as he is utterly dependent on Clov. The pause that follows allows one to imagine the alarm ringing in the silence – and allows Hamm to come up with possible objections to the plan.

HAMM: Is it working? [*Pause. Impatiently.*] The alarm, is it working?

CLOV: Why wouldn't it be working?

HAMM: Because it's worked too much.

CLOV: But it's hardly worked at all.

HAMM: [*Angrily.*] Then because it's worked too little!⁴⁴

This irritable and irritating conversation is typical of their dialogue throughout the play. Both men are at once insensitive and over-sensitive: Clov seems to take offence at Hamm's doubtful questions, which themselves seem to be prompted by fear that the alarm – and the plan – will indeed work.

CLOV: I'll go and see. [*Exit CLOV. <Brief ring of alarm off.> Enter CLOV with alarm-clock. He holds it against HAMM's ear and releases alarm. They listen to it ringing to the end. Pause.*]

⁴⁰ Samuel Beckett, *Endgame* [1957 (pub. 1958)], in *The Complete Dramatic Works* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1986, paperback 1990), pp. 91–134: p. 114. After Samuel Beckett, *Fin de partie* [1950–1957] (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1957).

⁴¹ Beckett, *Endgame*, p. 92.

⁴² Beckett, *Endgame*: p. 115. Cf. Beckett, *Fin de partie*, p. 66:
CLOV. – Attends. (*Il se concentre. Pas très convaincu.*) Oui... (*Un temps. Plus convaincu.*)
Oui. (*Il relève la tête.*) Voilà. Je mets le réveil.
Un temps.
HAMM. – Je ne suis peut-être pas dans un de mes bons jours, mais –
CLOV. – Tu me siffles. Je ne viens pas. Le réveil sonne. Je suis loin. Il ne sonne pas. Je suis mort.
Un temps.

⁴³ Beckett, *Endgame*, p. 106. The word in the original is '*Mortibus*' – a dead language for a dead world (Beckett, *Fin de partie*, p. 46).

⁴⁴ Beckett, *Endgame*: p. 115. Cf. Beckett, *Fin de partie*, pp. 66–67:
HAMM. – Est-ce qu'il marche? (*Un temps. Impatient.*) Le réveil, est-ce qu'il marche?
CLOV. – Pourquoi ne marcherait-il pas?
HAMM. – D'avoir trop marché.
CLOV. – Mais il n'a presque pas marché.
HAMM (*avec colère*). – Alors d'avoir trop peu marché!

Fit to wake the dead! Did you hear it?

HAMM: Vaguely.

CLOV: The end is terrific!

HAMM: I prefer the middle. [*Pause.*]⁴⁵

There is something distinctly incongruous in Clov's asking Hamm if he heard this alarm which he has already said is '[f]it to wake the dead'. If Clov's praise is somewhat exaggerated, it is actually Hamm's more measured response which really strikes us as odd – especially since he would only admit to having heard it 'vaguely'. Just as in his tour of the room, Hamm states 'I prefer the middle'. On one level, this could be bitterly sardonic, denying Clov's remark (and attendant pleasure) what small legitimacy it had. However, Hamm's comment suggests that he can distinguish amidst the uniformity and insistence of the alarm's hammering some ebb and flow, some variety. The alarm is the very epitome of a uniform, insistent, hammering, mechanistic sound, whose effectiveness as a tool relies entirely on its being heard as a noise rather than listened to as music. Hamm's perverse attitude threatens the established categories of noise and music, of sign and symbol, and even of the tragic and the absurd. As Nell (knell) says, '[n]othing is funnier than unhappiness':⁴⁶

NELL: Yes, yes, it's the most comical thing in the world.
And we laugh, we laugh, with a will, in the beginning. But
it's always the same thing. Yes, it's like the funny story
we have heard too often, we still find it funny, but we
don't laugh any more. [*Pause.*]⁴⁷

Nell's attitude contrasts with Hamm's reaction to the alarm: beneath the multifarious accidents of human unhappiness Nell detects the same fundamental form, whereas Hamm hears in the relentlessly repetitive sound of the alarm an implausible variety. These are the poles of perception: perceiving difference *as* the same, and difference *in* the same. Both, one suspects, is voluntarily adopting a perverse position to defend themselves from the recognition of deeply uncomfortable truths – which paradoxically means that both extreme attitudes are true.

The dark humour of the alarm-clock continues to resound throughout the play even if the alarm itself does not:

[*Pause. CLOV starts to move about the room. He is looking for a place to put down the alarm-clock.*]

⁴⁵ Beckett, *Endgame*: p. 115. Cf. Beckett, *Fin de partie*, p. 67:
CLOV. – Je vais voir. (*Il sort. Jeu de mouchoir. Brève somnolence du réveil en coulisse. Entre Clov, le réveil à la main. Il l'approche de l'oreille de Hamm, déclenche la sonnerie. Ils l'écoutent sonner jusqu'au bout. Un temps.*) Digne du jugement dernier! Tu as entendu?

HAMM. – Vaguement.

CLOV. – La fin est inouïe.

HAMM. – Je préfère le milieu. (*Un temps.*)

(The passage in angled brackets is printed in *The Complete Dramatic Works*, but was cut during production.) Ruby Cohn cites this passage as evidence of 'Clov's innocence about the language that Hamm and Nagg can manipulate playfully': '[h]e sees nothing incongruous in [...] designating the sound of the shrill alarm clock as "inouïe" [unheard].' (Ruby Cohn, *A Beckett Canon* (Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2001), p. 229).

⁴⁶ Beckett, *Endgame*, p. 101. Cf. Beckett, *Fin de partie*, p. 33: 'Rien n'est plus drôle que le malheur'.

⁴⁷ Beckett, *Endgame*, p. 101. Cf. Beckett, *Fin de partie*, pp. 33–34:
NAGG. – Si, si, c'est la chose la plus comique au monde. Et nous en rions, nous en rions, de bon cœur, les premiers temps. Mais c'est toujours la même chose. Oui, c'est comme la bonne histoire qu'on nous raconte trop souvent, nous la trouvons toujours bonne, mais nous n'en rions plus. (*Un temps.*)

HAMM: [Soft.] What'll I do? [Pause. In a scream.] What'll I do?

[CLOV sees the picture, takes it down, stands it on the floor with its face to wall, hangs up the alarm-clock in its place.]

What are you doing?

CLOV: Winding up.⁴⁸

Beckett's translation adds an extra twist to the French original, where Clov's answer was '*Trois petits tours*':⁴⁹ Clov's winding-up of the alarm-clock also signals both the winding-up (and the winding-down) of the play itself. Incidentally, Conor McPherson was also looking for a place to put down the alarm-clock when he directed *Endgame* for the 'Beckett on Film' project in 2001. He settled on the lid of Nell's urn – resulting in a continuity error pointed out (unhappily, funnily) by a member of the audience at the film's premiere.⁵⁰

That the episode with the alarm is a key structural moment in *Endgame* is indicated by Beckett's division of the play into sections for rehearsal purposes: parts 1 to 8 form what Beckett called the 'exposition', the culmination of which is marked by the alarm.⁵¹ The alarm also underlies or illustrates many of Theodor W. Adorno's main arguments in his 1958 essay 'Trying to Understand *Endgame*'. For Adorno, *Endgame*'s importance lay in its determined acceptance of the lack of meaning in the modern world.

The less events can be presumed to be inherently meaningful, the more the idea of aesthetic substance as the unity of what appears and what was intended becomes an illusion. Beckett rids himself of this illusion by coupling the two moments in their disparity.⁵²

All that remains is 'sensuous immediacy' ('*sinnliche Unmittelbarkeit*'),⁵³ a subject which Heinrich Rickert had considered in his posthumously published work *Immediacy and the Interpretation of Meaning* ('*Unmittelbarkeit und Sinndeutung*' (1939)), from which Adorno later quotes.⁵⁴

⁴⁸ Beckett, *Endgame*, p. 127. Cf. Beckett, *Fin de partie*, pp. 94–95: *Un temps. Clov commence à tourner dans la pièce. Il cherche un endroit où poser le réveil. HAMM. – Qu'est-ce que je vais faire. (Un temps. Hurlant.) Qu'est-ce que je vais faire? (Clov avise le tableau, le décroche, l'appuie par terre toujours retourné contre le mur, accroche le réveil à sa place. Qu'est-ce que tu fais? CLOV. – Trois petits tours.*

⁴⁹ Beckett, *Fin de partie*, p. 95.

⁵⁰ Irish Film Centre (now the Irish Film Institute) 2001.

⁵¹ '8. 'I'll leave you.' To "Silence!" (Mother Pegg-Boathook-mad painter-alarm clock).' (Dougald McMillan and Martha Fehsenfeld, *Beckett in the Theatre: The Author as Practical Playwright and Director*, Vol. 1: From *Waiting for Godot* to *Krapp's Last Tape* (London: John Calder (Publishers) Ltd, 1988), ch. 4. *Endgame*, pp. 163–240: pp. 188 and 189.)

⁵² Theodor W. Adorno, 'Trying to Understand *Endgame*' [1958], trans. Shierry Weber Nichol森, in *Notes to Literature*, vol. 1, ed. Rolf Tiedemann (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1991), pp. 241–75: p. 242. (The essay is also reprinted in Jennifer Birkett and Kate Ince (eds), *Samuel Beckett: Longman Critical Readers* (Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2000), pp. 39–49.)

⁵³ Adorno, p. 243.

⁵⁴ Adorno, p. 253 (p. 280 n. 7).

Understanding it can only mean understanding its unintelligibility, concretely reconstructing the meaning of the fact that it has no meaning.⁵⁵

The object of Adorno's sentence is *Endgame*— but he could be speaking of the alarm itself, which represents in microcosm the play as a whole.

Endgame contains rapid-fire [*Zug um Zug*] monosyllabic dialogues like the play of question and answer that once took place between the deluded king and the messenger of fate. But whereas in *Oedipus* that served as a medium for a rising curve of tension, here it is a medium in which the interlocutors slacken.⁵⁶

Adorno's comparison of the different effects such stichomythia can produce and induce is illuminated by the possibilities of preferring the end or the middle of a monotonously ringing alarm, and also the paradoxical synonyms of 'winding up' and 'winding down'. The back-and-forth banter of Hamm and Clov may be compared to the clapper of the alarm-clock shuttling from bell to bell to produce its unwanted but necessary din. When Beckett directed *Endspiel* in Berlin in 1967, he instructed his actors,

'[s]ay it in monotone and rhythmically, please. The words are blows, dry blows. One hammerstroke is like the next one.'⁵⁷

The request was noted by Michael Haerdter in his rehearsal diary, as were the remarkable results thereby achieved:

It is incredible how many subtle nuances of diction and action Beckett can work out of a few minutes of dialogue exchanged by two unmoving heads in monotone. Here instead of small hammerstrokes of rectification one must rather speak of a watch-maker's technique: the precise adjustment of a miniature movement.⁵⁸

The 'two unmoving heads' correspond to the stationary bells of the alarm-clock – a parallel Beckett stressed when Clov held up the clock between his head and Hamm's. However, Haerdter flinches from the full force of his own logic: there is no need to speak of 'a watch-maker's technique' 'instead of small hammerstrokes of rectification', since these are precisely the means by which a watch-maker fashions his intricate pieces. Beckett's insistent repetitions raise (or lower) the audience's sense-perception to the level of Hamm's: they too perceive difference in the same, meaning in the merely material.

Instead of trying to liquidate the discursive element in language through pure sound, Beckett transforms it into an instrument of its own absurdity, following the ritual of the

⁵⁵ Adorno, p. 243.

⁵⁶ Adorno, p. 260 [German pp. 192—93].

⁵⁷ Dougal McMillan and Martha Fehsenfeld, *Beckett in the Theatre: The Author as Practical Playwright and Director*, Vol. 1: From *Waiting for Godot* to *Krapp's Last Tape* (London: John Calder (Publishers) Ltd, 1988), ch. 4 'Endgame', pp. 163—240: p. 225.

⁵⁸ McMillan and Fehsenfeld, p. 211.

clown, whose babbling becomes nonsense by being presented as sense.⁵⁹

The very structure of *Endgame* challenges our sense-making capacities. Of the play's conclusion, Adorno writes that '[a]side from differences which may be decisive but may also be completely irrelevant, it is identical with the beginning', and uses another image that refers to domestic time-pieces.

No spectator, and no philosopher, would be capable of saying for sure whether or not the play is starting all over again. The pendulum of the dialectic has come to a standstill.⁶⁰

In *Endgame*, writes Adorno, '[t]houghts are dragged along and distorted, like the residues of waking life in dreams, *homo homini sapienti sat*'⁶¹ – much as dreamers are sometimes able to weave the interruption of the alarm into the fabric of their dream. Adorno quotes Marie Luise Kaschnitz's description of Hamm as, "[o]f all Beckett's bizarre instruments, [...] the one with the most tones, the most surprising sound [*Klang*]",⁶² extending her thought to all of the play's characters.

Subjects thrown completely back upon their own resources, worldlessness [*sic*] become flesh, they consist of nothing but the wretched realities of their world, which has shrivelled to bare necessity. They are empty *personae*, truly mere masks through whom sound merely passes [*hindurchtönt*]. Their phoniness is the result of the disenchantment of spirit as mythology.⁶³

The word/world relationship which necessitates double-checking is not present in the original German, though the German language has its own version of this trope in the verbs '*schein*' and '*sein*' (the theme of appearance and reality). The characters' 'deadliest fear' 'is the fear, disguised as humor, that they might mean something':⁶⁴ in being reduced to mere vessels of sound, the characters are exposed as truly 'phony'. Indeed, according to Adorno, the whole of *Endgame* is constructed on the basis of its key prop:

There is a constant monitoring to see that things are one way and not another; an alarm system with a sensitive bell indicates what fits in with the play's topography and what does not.⁶⁵

It is only fitting, given Beckett's exacting economy, that Adorno's metaphor for the system by which the metaphor of the alarm is maintained should itself be an alarm.

⁵⁹ Adorno, p. 262 [German p. 195].

⁶⁰ Adorno, p. 269. [*Von Unterscheidenabgesehen, die entscheiden mögen oder ganz gleichgültig sein, ist sie identisch mit dem Anfang. [...] Dialektik pendelt aus.* [German p. 205].]

⁶¹ Adorno, p. 244.

⁶² Adorno, p. 269 (p. 280 n. 17) [German p. 205]. Incidentally, Kaschnitz's essay is collected in the volume *Zwischen Immer und Nie* ('Never', perhaps?) – a wonderfully suggestive description of the paradoxical but mundane place of the alarm in time.

⁶³ Adorno, p. 251.

⁶⁴ Adorno, p. 261 [German p. 194].

⁶⁵ Adorno, p. 248.

Adorno saw in the following rapid-fire exchange 'a belated legitimization of Fichte's free activity for its own sake'⁶⁶ – albeit in the form of an ironic *reductio ad absurdum*.

HAMM: Open the window.
 CLOV: What for?
 HAMM: I want to hear the sea.
 CLOV: You wouldn't hear it.
 HAMM: Even if you opened the window?
 CLOV: No.
 HAMM: Then it's not worth while opening it?
 CLOV: No.
 HAMM: (*Violently*) Then open it!⁶⁷

When he writes of 'the senselessness of an action [having become] the reason for doing it',⁶⁸ Adorno refers both to non-sense and to that of the eventual removal of even our most basic capacities to perceive 'sensuous immediacy'.⁶⁹ Hamm hears nothing, which leads him to doubt whether in fact Clov has done as he was asked – a paranoia exacerbated by his blindness. The stage directions indicate that Clov has indeed ascended his ladder and opened the window; †Though there is nothing to indicate that the sea becomes audible even to the audience. The ensuing discussion of the incredible calmness of the sea and the lack of navigators has a certain morbid plausibility – but again, as with the alarm, it is possible that the audience is simply in a similar sensory situation to Hamm. The theme of sensory deprivation is developed in the exchange that immediately follows.

HAMM: Father! [*Pause. Louder.*] Father! [*Pause.*] Go and see did he hear me.
 [CLOV goes to NAGG's bin, raises the lid, stoops. Unintelligible words. CLOV straightens up.]
 CLOV: Yes.
 HAMM: Both times?
 [CLOV stoops. As before.]
 CLOV: Once only.
 HAMM: The first time or the second?
 [CLOV stoops. As before.]
 CLOV: He doesn't know.
 HAMM: It must have been the second.
 CLOV: We'll never know.
 [*He closes lid.*]⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Adorno, p. 265.

⁶⁷ Beckett, *Endgame*, p. 124. Cf. Beckett, *Fin de partie*, pp. 86–87:

HAMM. – Ouvre la fenêtre.
 CLOV. – Pour quoi faire?
 HAMM. – Je veux entendre la mer.
 CLOV. – Tu ne l'entendrais pas.
 HAMM. – Même si tu ouvrais la fenêtre?
 CLOV. – Non.
 HAMM. – Alors ce n'est pas la peine de l'ouvrir?
 CLOV. – Non.
 HAMM (*avec violence*). – Alors ouvre-là!

⁶⁸ Adorno, p. 265.

⁶⁹ Adorno, p. 243.

⁷⁰ Beckett, *Endgame*, pp. 124–25. Cf. Beckett, *Fin de partie*, pp. 88–89:

HAMM. – Père! (*Un temps. Plus fort.*) Père! (*Un temps.*) Va voir s'il a entendu.
 Clov va à la poubelle de Nagg, soulève le couvercle, se penche dessus. Mots confus. Clov se redresse.
 CLOV. – Oui.
 HAMM. – Les deux fois?

Even to cite, never mind comment on, such ridiculous exchanges implicates one in the senseless sense-making described by Adorno. The above passage receives less attention than the old music-hall joke which, according to Ruby Cohn, Beckett only added in the final draft.⁷¹

NAGG: Can you hear me?
 NELL: Yes. And you?
 NAGG: Yes. [Pause.] Our hearing hasn't failed.
 NELL: Our what?
 NAGG: Our hearing.
 NELL: No. [Pause.]⁷²

Echoes of both passages can be heard in *Happy Days* (written a few years after *Endgame*, in 1961), to which we now turn our attention.

'[M]ore alarm, more pain':⁷³ *Happy Days* (1961)

WINNIE: Can you hear me? [Pause.] I beseech you, Willie, just yes or no, can you hear me, just yes or nothing.
 [Pause.]
 WILLIE: Yes.
 WINNIE: [Turning front, same voice.] And now?
 WILLIE: [Irritated.] Yes.
 WINNIE: [Less loud.] And now?
 WILLIE: [More irritated.] Yes.
 WINNIE: [Still less loud.] And now? [A little louder.] And now?
 WILLIE: [Violently.] Yes!⁷⁴

Beckett referred to this passage as the '[a]udibility test'.⁷⁵ It is followed by a monologue delivered in a '[n]ormal voice', but 'gabbled',⁷⁶ realising a scene imagined by Hamm in *Endgame*:

HAMM: Breath held and then... [he breathes out.] Then babble, babble, words, like the solitary child who turns

[Clov se penche. Mots confus. Clov se redresse.]

CLOV. – Une seule.

HAMM. – La première ou la seconde?

[Clov se penche. Mots confus. Clov se redresse.]

CLOV. – Il ne sait pas.

HAMM. – Ça doit être la seconde.

CLOV. – On ne peut pas savoir

Clov rabat le couvercie.

⁷¹ See Ruby Cohn, *Just Play: Beckett's Theater* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 183–84.

⁷² Beckett, *Endgame*, p. 99. Cf. Beckett, *Fin de partie*, pp. 30–31:

NAGG. – Tu m'entends?

NELL. – Oui. Et toi?

NAGG. – Oui. (*Un temps.*) Notre ouïe n'a pas baissé.

NELL. – Notre quoi?

NAGG. – Notre ouïe.

NELL. – Non. (*Un temps.*)

⁷³ Beckett, *Watt*, p. 157.

⁷⁴ Beckett, *Happy Days*, Act One, pp. 147–48. For reasons of symmetry, Beckett would later cut the last exchange, leaving 'three "Yes" answers from Willie' (Knowlson (ed.), *Happy Days*, p. 173 n. 3).

⁷⁵ James Knowlson (ed.), *Happy Days: The Production Notebook of Samuel Beckett* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1985), Page 41, p. 95.

⁷⁶ Beckett, *Happy Days*, p. 148.

himself into children, two, three, so as to be together, and whisper together, in the dark. [*Pause.*]⁷⁷

Beckett himself referred to Winnie's monologue as the 'Babble'.⁷⁸ Like Lucky's speech, it can be traced back to his own performance as Don Diègue in *Le Kid*, accompanied by alarm clock. In his production notebook, Beckett wrote, '[b]abble: 7 x 16—20 + 50',⁷⁹ which he explained to James Knowlson as follows:

'The 1st section of babble consists of phrases of roughly equal length, i.e. from 16 to 20 words each. Followed after 3 single words by an unbroken babble of 50 words (51 actually if I count right).'⁸⁰

The '3 single words' which puncture the gabbled babble ('Doubt', 'Here', and 'Abouts') act like chimes and are accompanied with an unusual gesture resembling those of the hands of a clock: '[Places index and second finger on heart area, moves them about, brings them to rest.]'⁸¹ When he directed the play at the Schiller-Theater in 1971, 'Beckett had stressed that [Winnie's] awakening should not be played realistically, but should follow the principle of grace and economy of movement'.⁸² 'Straightens slowly. i.e. hands to mound & bust vertical. Single movement.'⁸³ noted Martha Fehsenfeld in her diary. The smooth, mechanical action recalls Michael Haerdter's description of 'the precise adjustment of a miniature movement'⁸⁴ with which Beckett directed *Endgame*. One might have thought that a major difference between that play and *Happy Days* is that the alarm-clock in *Endgame* is visible and that of *Happy Days* is not; indeed, at the bottom of his page of notes on the bell, Beckett wrote 'Whence? High above stage.'⁸⁵ – in other words, out of sight of both the play's characters and its audience, a mysteriously absent presence. The closest object to an alarm-clock on stage is Winnie's wind-up musical box – or is it? Winnie's strange gestures and mechanical way of moving suggest a time-piece, the gently sloping scorched grass in which she is increasingly buried resemble a sand-timer, Beckett even suggests she has an hourglass figure.⁸⁶ If Hamm and Clov sometimes resemble an alarm-clock, Winnie is perhaps time itself. There is a similar situation in *Malone Dies* (French 1948, English 1956).

In the old days I used to count, up to three hundred, four hundred, and with other things too, the showers, the bells, the chatter of the sparrows at dawn, or with

⁷⁷ Beckett, *Endgame*, p. 126. Cf. Beckett, *Fin de partie*, pp. 92–93: HAMM. – Le souffle qu'on retient et puis... (*il expire*). Puis parler, vite, des mots, comme l'enfant solitaire qui se met en plusieurs, deux, trois, pour être ensemble, et parler ensemble, dans la nuit. (*Un temps.*)

⁷⁸ Knowlson (ed.), *Happy Days*, (Page 41) p. 95.

⁷⁹ Knowlson (ed.), *Happy Days*, (Page 41) p. 95.

⁸⁰ Samuel Beckett to James Knowlson, 2 December 1983 – quoted in Knowlson (ed.), *Happy Days*, (Page 41) pp. 173–74 n. 4.

⁸¹ Beckett, *Happy Days*, p. 148.

⁸² Knowlson (ed.), *Happy Days*, p. 159 n. 2.

⁸³ Quoted in Knowlson (ed.), *Happy Days*, (Page 36) p. 85.

⁸⁴ Michael Haerdter on *Endgame* – quoted in McMillan and Fehsenfeld, p. 211.

⁸⁵ Knowlson (ed.), *Happy Days*, (Page 14) p. 51.

⁸⁶ 'Embedded up to above her waist in exact centre of mound, WINNIE. About fifty, well-preserved, blonde for preference, plump, arms and shoulders bare, low bodice, big bosom, pearl necklace.' (Beckett, *Happy Days*, Act One, p. 138.

nothing, for no reason, for the sake of counting, and then I divided, by sixty. That passed the time, I was time, I devoured the world.⁸⁷

Dividing by sixty only makes sense if Malone was counting at the rate of one per second (or less plausibly, per minute), in which case 'I was time' ceases to be hyperbole. Though her life is ruled by the bell, Winnie has no conception of time. As Beckett wrote in his production notebook at the Schiller-Theater, "'her time experience, incomprehensible transport from one inextricable present to the next, those past unremembered, those to come inconceivable'".⁸⁸

In *Happy Days*, there is another 'Shower' – the name Winnie gives to an imaginary spectator:

WINNIE: Shower – Shower – does the name mean anything – to you, Willie – evoke any reality, I mean – for you, Willie.⁸⁹

Winnie is unsure she has the name right and soon suggests an alternative, seeking confirmation from Willie with an interesting idiom:

WINNIE: [*Turning a little towards WILLIE.*] Cooker, Willie, does Cooker strike a chord? [*Pause. Turns a little further. Louder.*] Cooker, Willie, does Cooker ring a bell, the name Cooker? [*Pause.*]⁹⁰

The metaphor of the ringing bell encompasses both a successful act of intellection and recollection and its opposite: to have one's bell rung is to have received such blows as to be unable to make sense of the world. Winnie's struggle to remember these unusual names has encouraged clever critics to hear in them echoes the German verbs *schauen* and *gucken*, which both mean 'to look [at]'. Apparent arbitrariness is therefore made to contribute to the sum of meaning, highlighting the play's theme of seeing and being seen. However, the punchline of Winnie's anecdote undermines such efforts. Winnie imagines Shower (or Cooker) looking at her and asking rhetorically '[w]hat's it meant to mean?';⁹¹ and goes on to imagine his wife's devastating response:

WINNIE: [*Stops filing, raises head, gazes front.*] And you, she says, what's the idea of you, she says, what are you meant to mean?⁹²

Mrs Shower/Cooker's retort short-circuits the search for meaning, triggering a sense of alarming uncertainty. The sonic material Beckett serves hovers ambiguously between meaningful music and sensuous immediacy. Just as in *Endgame*, the issue of sense (perception and coherence, and the perception of coherence) is explored in *Happy Days* by means of an alarm-bell.

⁸⁷ Samuel Beckett, *Malone Dies*, in *Trilogy: Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable* (London: Calder Publications Ltd., 1994), pp. 177–289: p. 202.

⁸⁸ Knowlson (ed.), *Happy Days*, (Page 22) p. 150 n. 1.

⁸⁹ Beckett, *Happy Days*, Act One, p. 156.

⁹⁰ Beckett, *Happy Days*, Act One, p. 156.

⁹¹ Beckett, *Happy Days*, Act One, p. 156.

⁹² Beckett, *Happy Days*, Act One, p. 156.

The most prominent alarm of *Happy Days*, however, is the 'piercing' bell which opens both acts and closes the play, and forms the subject of so much of Winnie's thinking-aloud. In his edition of Beckett's production notebook for the play, James Knowlson's 'Note on the Design',⁹³ the 'Set', 'Lighting', and 'Make Up', but says nothing about the bell, despite the fact that Beckett devoted the whole of page 14 to it.⁹⁴ After a long pause, it is the bell which announces the start of the action of *Happy Days*:

*Long pause. A bell rings piercingly, say ten seconds, stops. She [Winnie] does not move. Pause. Bell more piercingly, say five seconds. She wakes. Bell stops. She raises her head, gazes front. Long pause.*⁹⁵

In one sense, the audience cannot know that the bell rings 'piercingly' – but in another, the fact is inescapable. It is confirmed later in the play by Winnie's description:

WINNIE: The bell. [Pause.] It hurts like a knife. [Pause.] A gouge. [Pause.] One cannot ignore it. [Pause.]⁹⁶

Beckett insisted on this point in correspondence with the American director Alan Schneider, specifying on 17 August 1961 '[t]he bell as shrill and wounding as possible'.⁹⁷ It is therefore surprising that 'ignore it' is precisely what Winnie manages to do at first: '[s]he does not move'. Of course, one can become inured to anything, no matter how painful. Nevertheless, when Beckett himself came to direct the play at the Royal Court in 1979, he made a significant alteration:

After the first bell, contrary to the text, which states, '*She does not move*', Beckett introduced a spasmodic twitch of her right hand, noted as *slight start 1st bell – RH* [right hand] (Page 37).⁹⁸

Though Beckett tinkered with the duration and volume of the bell, their variability did not change (so to speak).⁹⁹ The bell rings '*more piercingly*', Winnie wakes up, and the bell stops – a sequence from which the audience concludes that the bell *means* 'wake up, Winnie!'.¹⁰⁰ This inference is supported by what Beckett said in rehearsals, noted by Martha Fehsenfeld in her diary: "'She has three seconds to obey the

⁹³ Knowlson (ed.), *Happy Days*, pp. 21–22.

⁹⁴ See Knowlson (ed.), *Happy Days*, (Page 14) p. 51.

⁹⁵ Samuel Beckett, *Happy Days* [English 1961, French 1963], in *The Complete Dramatic Works* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1986, repr. 1990), pp. 137–68: Act One, p. 138.

⁹⁶ Beckett, *Happy Days*, Act Two, pp. 162–63.

⁹⁷ Samuel Beckett to Alan Schneider, 17 August 1961; in Maurice Harmon (ed.), *No Author Better Served: The Correspondence of Samuel Beckett and Alan Schneider* (Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1998), p. 94.

⁹⁸ Knowlson (ed.), *Happy Days*, [Page 36 and 37] p. 159 n. 1. In his summary of 'Cuts and Changes', Knowlson therefore notes '[a]dd "except for a slight twitch of her right hand"' (Knowlson (ed.), *Happy Days*, p. 189).

⁹⁹ 'This duration is considerably shorter than the English and American texts prescribe (i.e. bell 1, 5 seconds [actually 10]; bell 2, 10 seconds [actually 5]) and shorter than the modified French text (i.e. bell 1, 5 seconds; bell 2, 3 seconds). It would be unbearably hard on the ears of the audience to combine the longer ring and the cutting quality that Beckett wanted.' (Knowlson (ed.), *Happy Days*, p. 142 n. 3.)

¹⁰⁰ One of the most significant 'Cuts and Changes' noted by Knowlson is that Winnie now wakes 'only after the bell stops.' (Knowlson (ed.), *Happy Days*, p. 189).

bell. If she hasn't obeyed, it goes again," stated Beckett.¹⁰¹ The audience is relieved that by the opening of Act Two, Winnie has, like a rat in one of B. F. Skinner's behaviourist experiments, apparently learned her lesson:

*Bell rings loudly. She opens eyes at once. Bell stops. She gazes front. Long pause.*¹⁰²

By opening her eyes Winnie is able to put an end to this painful stimulus. However, it could be that by submitting to this painful physical prodding Winnie is able to avoid the psychic wounds which might result from stepping outside the rules of the game. Jean-Paul Sartre, who was a year senior to Beckett at the *École Normale Supérieure*, wrote the following in *Being and Nothingness* (1943):

[t]he alarm which rings in the morning refers to the possibility of my going to work, which is *my* possibility. But to apprehend the summons of the alarm as a summons is to get up. Therefore the very act of getting up is reassuring, for it eludes the question, 'is work *my* possibility?'¹⁰³

Nevertheless, however much we may complain and put up a show of resistance when we hear the alarm, ultimately the routine it establishes, the implied lack of choice and overriding of the individual will, is somehow reassuring. This is the reverse of the situation in Beckett's late prose-work *Stirrings Still* (1987), where the striking clock is 'in a sense at first a source of reassurance till finally one of alarm'.¹⁰⁴ In *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621), which Beckett read in the 1930s, Robert Burton included a section on the dangers of 'overmuch Study' and 'the Misery of Scholars': a circumstance with which both Burton and Beckett were familiar:

*Hoc est cur palles? cur quis non prandeat hoc est? [Is it for this we have pale faces and do without our breakfasts?] Do we macerate ourselves for this? Is it for this we rise so early all the year long, 'leaping' (as he saith) 'out of our beds, when we hear the bell ring, as if we had heard a thunderclap?'*¹⁰⁵

Why *does* Winnie carry on? She cannot actually 'get up', of course, since she is buried up to the waist (then neck) in the earth. Some find Winnie's indefatigability an inspiration; to examples of human courage in the face of overwhelming futility or pain Beckett was less likely to respond with an expression of admiration than with 'a gesture of helpless compassion'.¹⁰⁶ Furthermore, in Beckett's opinion Winnie

¹⁰¹ Knowlson (ed.), *Happy Days*, [Page 36 and 37] p. 159 n. 1.

¹⁰² Beckett, *Happy Days*, Act One, p. 160.

¹⁰³ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology* [1943], trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York, NY: Washington Square Press, 1966, repr. 1969), pp. 75–76.

¹⁰⁴ Samuel Beckett, 'Stirrings Still' [1987], in *The Complete Short Prose 1929–1989*, ed. S.E. Gontarski (New York, NY: Grove Press Grove Atlantic, Inc., 1995), pp. 259–265: p. 262.

¹⁰⁵ Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy* [1621], ed. Holbrook Jackson (New York, NY: The New York Review of Books, 2001), 1.2.3.15, p. 312. ['E lecto exsiliences, ad subitum tintinnabuli plausum quasi fulmine territi.' (Notes, p. 501).]

¹⁰⁶ Samuel Beckett, *Not I* [1972], in *The Complete Dramatic Works* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1986, paperback 1990), pp. 375–83: p. 375.

had not even attained the dubious distinction of a stoic: "[s]he's not stoic, she's unaware," he commented at rehearsal.¹⁰⁷

The bell of *Happy Days* is hence both an intrusive, incisive shard of sound, and a kind of aural envelope marking the limits of Winnie's world. The fanciful paradoxes of *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* have here been realised: '[i]t is a blade before me, it is a sail of bleached silk on a shore [...]'.¹⁰⁸ Just as Beckett's 'German Letter' of 1937 had sought a means to 'represent this mocking attitude towards the word, through words', bells can be used both to bind together a community, and to slash it in two. Nor is this the only way in which Winnie and the alarm fulfil some of the aspirations of the 'German Letter'.

Is there any reason why that terrible materiality of the word surface should not be capable of being dissolved, like for example the sound surface, torn by enormous pauses, of Beethoven's seventh Symphony, so that through whole pages we can perceive nothing but a path of sounds suspended in giddy heights, linking unfathomable abysses of silence? An answer is requested.¹⁰⁹

Critics tend to cite this fascinating letter as early evidence of Beckett's later commitment to pauses and silence. However, it is important to note that these are the means of dissolving or tearing the *sound* surface; the *word* surface can be punctuated just as effectively by sounds and noises.

Let us hope the time will come, thank God that in certain circles it has already come, when language is most efficiently used where it is being most efficiently misused. As we cannot eliminate language all at once, we should at least leave nothing undone that might contribute to its falling into disrepute. To bore one hole after another in it, until what lurks behind it – be it something or nothing – begins to seep through; I cannot imagine a higher goal for a writer today.¹¹⁰

The antithesis of sound is silence; the paradox of language is that it consists of what is also its antithesis, namely sounds and noises. At this point it is worth returning to Deleuze and Guattari:

¹⁰⁷ James Knowlson, 'Introduction', in Knowlson (ed.), *Happy Days*, pp. 11–18: p. 17.

¹⁰⁸ Beckett, *Dream*, p. 182.

¹⁰⁹ Samuel Beckett to Axel Kaun, 09 July 1937, trans. Martin Esslin, in *Disjecta*, pp. 170–173: p. 172.
'Steckt etwas lähmend Heiliges in der Unnatur des Wortes, was zu den Elementen der anderen Künste nicht gehört? Gibt es irgendeinen Grund, warum jene fürchterlich willkürliche Materilität der Wortfläche nicht aufgelöst werden sollte, wie z.B. die von grossen schwarzen Pausen gefressene Tonfläche in der siebten Symphonie von Beethoven, so dass wir sie ganze Seiten durch nicht anders wahrnehmen können als etwa einen schwindelnden unergründliche Schlünde von Stillschweigen verknüpfenden Pfad von Lauten? Um Antwort wird gebeten.' (Samuel Beckett to Axel Kaun, 09 July 1937, in *Disjecta*, pp. 51–54: pp. 52–53).

¹¹⁰ Beckett, 'German Letter', trans. Martin Esslin, in *Disjecta*, pp. 171–72.
'Hoffentlich kommt die Zeit, sie ist ja Gott sei Dank in gewissen Kreisen schon da, wo die Sprache da am besten gebraucht wird, wo sie am tüchtigsten missbraucht wird. Da wir sie so mit einem Male nicht ausschalten können, wollen wir wenigstens nichts versäumen, was zu ihrem Verruf beitragen mag. Ein Loch nach dem andern in ihr zu bohren, bis das Dahinterkauernde, sie es etwas oder nichts, durchzusickern anfängt – ich kann mir für den heutigen Schriftsteller kein höheres Ziel vorstellen.' (Beckett, 'German Letter', in *Disjecta*, p. 52)

What interests Kafka is a pure and intense sonorous material that is always connected to *its own abolition* – a deterritorialized musical sound, a cry that escapes signification, composition, song, words – a sonority that ruptures in order to break away from a chain that is still all too signifying.¹¹¹

In calling the alarm in *Happy Days* 'the bell for waking',¹¹² Winnie (and the audience) retain the comfortable assumption that sounds have meaning. However, by naming the same sound 'the bell for sleep',¹¹³ Winnie drives a wedge in the functioning of language. How can the same sound have two contradictory meanings? One could instead choose to render the bell's signal as 'if you are asleep, wake up; if you are awake, sleep!' – but this would be to attribute agency to the bell, an equally troubling consequence. While using a piercing bell to say 'wake up!' makes sense both in terms of convention and natural instincts, the notion that the same sound could be employed to send someone to sleep creates a distinct 'dissonance between the means and their use'.¹¹⁴ On the other hand, it is precisely this potential to interpret sounds according to arbitrary convention which distinguishes specifically human language. It is the instinctive, the animal in us that responds to a lullaby, its rhythms and tones inducing a corresponding relaxation and slow regularity in our breathing and pulse; whereas only the human can even attempt to respond to this 'bell for sleep', the bell thereby operating not as sound but sign. In any case, all Winnie's talk of a 'bell for sleep' is probably just wishful thinking: from what we observe of her situation, her world consists of unremitting light; and whenever she closes her eyes, a bell sounds that makes her open them again: either the 'bell for sleep' is wholly ineffectual, or there is no such thing. To take Winnie at her word is to protect ourselves from the truth that Winnie is trapped in a world of unforgiving repetition, like that of *Play* (1963).¹¹⁵ Winnie mentions the 'bell for sleep' far more frequently than the 'bell for waking' – inevitably, one might say, since her day did not begin until the 'bell for waking' had already sounded, and she spends the entire day anticipating its end. When he came to direct the play, Beckett cut one of the bells, just after Winnie once again 'call[s] to the eye of the mind... Mr Shower – or Cooker',¹¹⁶ to place further emphasis on the bell at the end of the play. When it finally rings, it is indistinguishable from the 'bell for waking', both in sound and meaning. Despite Winnie's anxieties about singing too early, or too late, just one pause separates the end of her song from the onset of the bell:

¹¹¹ Deleuze and Guattari, p. 6.

¹¹² Beckett, *Happy Days*, Act One, p. 145.

¹¹³ Beckett, *Happy Days*, Act One, p. 145.

¹¹⁴ Beckett, 'German Letter', trans. Martin Esslin, in *Disjecta*, p. 172. 'Selbstverständlich muss man sich vorläufig mit Wenigem begnügen. Zuerst kann es nur darauf ankommen, irgendwie eine Methode zu erinden, um diese höhnische Haltung dem Worte gegenüber wörtlich darzustellen. In dieser Dissonanz von Mitteln und Gebrauch wird man schon vielleicht ein Geflüster der Endmusik oder es Allem zu Grunde liegenden Schweigens spüren können.' (Beckett, 'German Letter', in *Disjecta*, p. 53).

¹¹⁵ Samuel Beckett, *Play* [1963], in *The Complete Dramatic Works* (London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1986, repr. 1990), pp. 307–20.

¹¹⁶ Beckett, *Happy Days*, Act Two, pp. 164–65; see Knowlson (ed.), *Happy Days*, pp. 141–42 n. 2.

(Pause. Happy expression off. She closes her eyes. Bell rings loudly. She opens her eyes.[...])¹¹⁷

When he was not communicating with her by means of a metronome, one of the things Beckett actually told Brenda Bruce, who played Winnie at the Royal Court in 1962, was this:

"I thought that the most dreadful thing that could happen to anybody, would be not to be allowed to sleep so that just as you're dropping off there'd be a 'Dong' and you'd have to keep awake; you're sinking into the ground alive and it's full of ants; and the sun is shining endlessly day and night and there is not a tree... there'd be no shade, nothing, and that bell wakes you up all the time and all you've got is a little parcel of things to see you through life." He was talking about a woman's life, let's face it. Then he said: "And I thought who would cope with that and go down singing, only a woman."¹¹⁸

'Dong'? One might render the 'piercing', 'wounding', 'gouging' bell any number of ways, but 'Dong' is not one of them. Has something been lost in transmission, somewhere along the chain of communication from Beckett to Bruce to Knowlson, from whom I take this story? The first entry made by Beckett on the page of his production notebook headed 'Bell' is the unnerving '[w]rong word.'¹¹⁹ but Beckett's attempt to render in syllabic sound the alarm he heard and saw so acutely is truly alarming.

Works cited

- Acheson, James. *Samuel Beckett's Artistic Theory and Practice: Criticism, Drama, and Early Fiction*. New York, NY: St Martin's Press, 1997.
- Adorno, Theodor W.. 'Trying to Understand *Endgame*' [1958], trans. Shierry Weber Nichol森. In *Notes to Literature*, vol. 1, ed. Rolf Tiedemann. New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1991: pp. 241—75.
- [Adorno, Theodor W.. 'Trying to Understand *Endgame*' [1958], trans. Shierry Weber Nichol森. In Jennifer Birkett and Kate Ince (eds). *Samuel Beckett: Longman Critical Readers*. Harlow: Pearson Education Limited, 2000: pp. 39—49.]
- Albright, Daniel. *Modernism and Music: An Anthology of Sources*. Chicago, IL and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004.
- Beckett, Samuel. 'Dante...Bruno.Vico..Joyce' [1929]. In *Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment*, ed. Ruby Cohn. London: John Calder (Publishers) Ltd., 1983, repr. 2001: pp. 19—33.
- . 'German Letter' [to Axel Kaun, 09 July 1937]. In *Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment*, ed. Ruby Cohn. London: John Calder (Publishers) Ltd., 1983, repr. 2001: pp. 51—54 (trans. Martin Esslin, pp. 170—73).
- . *Company* [1979]. In *Nohow On: Company, Ill Seen Ill Said, Worstward Ho*. London: John Calder (Publishers) Ltd, 1989: pp. 5—52.

¹¹⁷ Beckett, *Happy Days*, Act Two, p. 168.

¹¹⁸ Quoted in Knowlson, p. 501 (p. 799 n.114).

¹¹⁹ Knowlson (ed.), *Happy Days*, (Page 14) p. 51. As Knowlson explains, in Beckett's shorthand 'A' stands for Act One, and 'B' for Act Two (p. 125 n. 2).

- . *Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment*, ed. Ruby Cohn. London: John Calder (Publishers) Ltd., 1983, repr. 2001.
- . *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* [1932], ed. Eoin O'Brien and Edith Fournier. London: Calder Publications Ltd, 1996.
- . *Endgame* [1957 (pub. 1958)]. In *The Complete Dramatic Works*. London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1986, repr. 1990: pp. 91—134.
- . *Fin de partie* [1950—1957]. Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1957.
- . *Footfalls* [1975]. In *The Complete Dramatic Works*. London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1986, repr. 1990: pp. 399—403.
- . *Happy Days* [English 1961, French 1963]. In *The Complete Dramatic Works*. London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1986, repr. 1990: pp. 137—68.
- . *Malone Dies*. In *Trilogy: Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable*. London: Calder Publications Ltd., 1994: pp. 177—289.
- . *Murphy* [1936, pub. 1938]. London: Calder Publications Ltd, 1993.
- . *Nohow On: Company, Ill Seen Ill Said, Worstward Ho*. London: John Calder (Publishers) Ltd, 1989.
- . *Not I* [1972]. In *The Complete Dramatic Works*. London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1986, repr. 1990: pp. 375—83.
- . *Play* [1963]. In *The Complete Dramatic Works*. London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1986, repr. 1990: pp. 307—20.
- . *Stirrings Still* [1987]. In *The Complete Short Prose 1929—1989*, ed. S.E. Gontarski. New York, NY: Grove Press Grove Atlantic, Inc., 1995: pp. 259—265.
- . *The Complete Dramatic Works*. London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1986, repr. 1990.
- . *The Complete Short Prose 1929—1989*, ed. S.E. Gontarski. New York, NY: Grove Press Grove Atlantic, Inc., 1995.
- . *Trilogy: Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable*. London: Calder Publications Ltd., 1994.
- . *Watt* [1945]. London: John Calder (Publishers) Ltd, 1976, repr. 1998.
- Bryden, Mary (ed.). *Samuel Beckett and Music*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998.
- Burton, Robert. *The Anatomy of Melancholy* [1621], ed. Holbrook Jackson. New York, NY: The New York Review of Books, 2001.
- Cohn, Ruby. *A Beckett Canon*. Ann Arbor, MI: The University of Michigan Press, 2001.
- Corbin, Alain. *Village Bells: Sound and Meaning in the Nineteenth-Century French Countryside* [1988], trans. Martin Thom. London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd [Papermac], 1999.
- Dearlove, J. E.. *Samuel Beckett's Nonrelational Art*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1982.
- Deleuze, Gilles and Félix Guattari. *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* [1975], trans. Dana Polan. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.
- Fletcher, John. *About Beckett: The Playwright and the Work*. London: Faber and Faber Limited, 2003.
- Harmon, Maurice (ed.). *No Author Better Served: The Correspondence of Samuel Beckett and Alan Schneider*. Cambridge, MA and London: Harvard University Press, 1998.
- Hollander, John. *Vision and Resonance: Two Senses of Poetic Form*. London and New Haven, CT: Oxford University Press, 1975, 2nd edn 1985.
- Knowlson, James. *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett*. London: Bloomsbury Publishing plc, 1996.
- Knowlson, James (ed.). *Happy Days: The Production Notebook of Samuel Beckett* London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1985.
- Krance, Charles. 'Beckett Music'. In Mary Bryden (ed.). *Samuel Beckett and Music*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998: pp. 51—65.

- Kristeva, Julia. 'Revolution in Poetic Language' [1974], trans. Margaret Waller [1984]. In *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. Toril Moi. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1986, repr. 1987: pp. 90—137.
- Levi, Primo. *If This Is A Man* [1958], trans. Stuart Woolf [1969]. In *If This Is A Man and The Truce*. London: Little, Brown and Company [Abacus], 1987, repr. 2000: pp. 17—179.
- Mansell, Thomas. 'Hard-to-Hear Music in *Endgame*'. In Mark Byron (ed.). *Samuel Beckett's Endgame*. Amsterdam and New York, NY: Editions Rodopi B.V., 2007: pp. 1—21.
- McMillan, Dougald and Martha Fehsenfeld. *Beckett in the Theatre: The Author as Practical Playwright and Director*, vol. 1 (From *Waiting for Godot* to *Krapp's Last Tape*). London: John Calder (Publishers) Ltd, 1988: ch. 4. *Endgame*, pp. 163—240.
- Russolo, Luigi. 'The Art of Noises: Futurist Manifesto' [1913], trans. Stephen Somervell. In Daniel Albright. *Modernism and Music: An Anthology of Sources*. Chicago, IL and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2004: pp. 177—83.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology* [1943], trans. Hazel E. Barnes. New York, NY: Washington Square Press, 1966, repr. 1969..
- Shepherd, John and Peter Wicke. *Music and Cultural Theory*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997.
- Stevens, Wallace. 'Notes Towards A Supreme Fiction' [1942]. In *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens*. London: Faber and Faber Limited, 1945, repr. 1959: pp. 380—408.
- Todorov, Tzvetan. *Theories of the Symbol* [1977], trans. Catherine Porter. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Publisher, 1982.