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On What Mutters: The Unnamable Subject of Practical Reason

Finnis..Raz...Beckett..Cha

Adam Gearey

Introduction

Why read Beckett's *The Unnamable* and Cha's *Dictée* alongside the philosophy of practical reason?¹ Such a reading does not seek to reject practical reason or to suggest that it can be replaced by thinking that draws on literary texts. The point is to make practical reason strange through its encounter with what mutters or murmurs, resists a name and, at the same time, obligates speech. If we address this peculiar concern, then we might be able to engage with the troubling sense of trauma and non being that haunts the subject of practical reason.² To put this slightly differently: we need to reckon with the significance of the unconscious for the subject of practical reason. Why is this project relevant? It suggests a new approach in law and literature scholarship; a way of reading between literary texts and the texts of philosophy that are of central importance in contemporary jurisprudence.³ What if a different sense of the thinking, acting subject might appear out of such an approach? How do we measure ourselves, or live the norms appropriate to our natures as rational beings?

But why read Beckett and Cha together? Cha's text has been understood as a work of the postcolonial imagination; its plural perspectives, juxtaposition of materials and shifting authorial voice, testament to the complexity of Cha's own position.⁴ Whilst Beckett has certainly been read as a postcolonial author, and claims have been made for the relevance of *The Unnamable* for postcolonial literature, the very real difference between these two authors means that reading them together requires justification.⁵ Cha draws on *The Unnamable* in the strategies employed in *Dictée*, but unlike Beckett, she deploys explicitly autobiographical elements in her work. These concern the Japanese occupation of Korea, the Korean war, the writer's relationships with her family, particularly her mother, and their experiences as immigrants to the United States. This does not necessarily make her work limited to the context of Asian-American or 'immigrant' literature. Recent research on *Dictée* has stressed the importance of 'avant-garde' writing, theatre and film making for Cha.⁶ *Dictée*, like *The Unnamable* could thus be seen as belonging to international currents in 'experimental' world literature. So, in turning to Cha, we can read a

continuation and transformation of the themes and concerns of *The Unnamable*. We will argue that this has distinct relevance to our reading of practical reading.

The Unnamable and *Dictée* write about what mutters. This muttering or murmuration appears to Cha as what “Stutter[s]. Starts. Stops/ starts.”⁷ We might also be able to hear this stutter in the awkward double ‘n’ in the title of Beckett’s text (and perhaps the double, murmuring ‘m’ in the original French Title: *L’Innommable*); or it may appear in the accent over the penultimate ‘e’ in *Dictée* that (at least to one unaccustomed to accents) seems to be a waving arm, a vector indicating elsewhere. What mutters is a demand that must be constantly attended to and figured so that it becomes sayable; part of the thinking, acting subject. Cha and Beckett thus compel us to think about the constitution of the subject as capable of bearing its own non being. In so doing, we encounter a radical indeterminacy that is inseparable from the productive work of the unconscious; its metaphorization of the inherent flaws in being. This ‘is’ the unnamable. In terms borrowed from Abraham and Torok we can see this figuring of a constitutive flaw as an endless, ongoing project of introjection.⁸ To make use of a psychoanalytic term like introjection is not to suggest that psychoanalysis offers a symbolic key that will unlock the secrets of the texts with which we are dealing. Rather, we are in pursuit of terms that will allow us to relate themes together in a productive way. To put this in Beckettian terms, we will be addressing an endless – and endlessly interrupted- desire to start again. To read again. Read differently.

This essay has a number of sections. The first two sections consider the subject of practical reason, and introduce notions of metaphorization and introjection from the work of Abraham and Torok. The third marks the appearance of *The Unnameable* and the fourth Cha’s *Dictée*. A final section locates this paper in law and literature scholarship, emphasizing the productive force of the ‘and’ as a way of studying the unstable relationship between literary and philosophical texts.

Don’t Fade Away

John Finnis and Joseph Raz figure in this paper as representatives of the philosophy of practical reason. Defining practical reason is difficult, and will not be attempted here; suffice to say that our concern is with a jurisprudential focus of a broader philosophical movement.⁹ Practical reason tends to stress the role of the actor in responding to reasons as a justification for acting on formal and informal norms.¹⁰ Finnis and Raz have different ways of understanding these themes, but their approach to jurisprudence takes the rational actor as central. We will examine Finnis’ distinctive themes and then turn our attention to Raz.

Finnis starts with the person and the notion of reflexivity; the ability to grasp oneself as such- as a person who acts – and commits to a goal to be achieved. The person, then, can ask questions of their action- and- more or less successfully interpret their goals and actions by the reasons that are given to justify them. The rational actor is a man who can look into himself. We must presume that the subject of practical reason is a man. Maybe not. But, whatever gender, the subject of practical reason appears as an adult. How the subject becomes competent – or the ‘primal’ conditions of competence- the movement from the inchoate babbling of the new born to the speaking, acting subject- are of no real concern for this philosophy. Although the family and nurturing social forms might appear, the way in which the child becomes a reasoning being remains well in the background. Subject, in this context, carries the sense of what is “brought under” or even thrown under the authority of itself. In the next section of this essay we will study the related term- introjection- to obtain a better idea of how subjectification produces a peculiar psychic residue. But, for the moment, we can only assume that this actor has unproblematically arrived at his, her or themselves. One assumes the status of practical reason without trauma; and the practice of reason giving manifests itself in non-pathological actions and more or less ‘normal’ relationship with others.

So, enter the man of action. His beard attests to the wisdom of his years: our “scholar father.”¹¹ In his maturity he knows that he is adept at self-examination. The insights that emerge from this process of self-testing constitute his ‘substance’. Practical reasonableness can be conceived as this reflective circularity: an “appeal” by those who are practically reasonable to their own practice.¹² Those skilled in this practice are “consistent; attentive to all aspects of human opportunity and flourishing.” In so framing the terms in which he think and acts, the scholar father knows that “moral obligations are difficult and must be asserted against the passions.” One must come to prefer the pleasure that results from the hard work rather than the quick fix of cheap pleasures. The scholar father knows that his maturity is achieved in this willing subjection to his own reason: “[s]elf-determination” requires attentiveness to a principle that is discovered in activity.¹³ This careful curating of one’s self as a rational actor is the animus of *Natural Law and Natural Rights*. The active thinker first discerns the nature of their own good, and then integrates it into the “commitments, projects and actions” that define a life.¹⁴ If one can interrogate oneself in such a way, one arrives at the “geometry” of the self.¹⁵ This metaphor elaborates the figure of the circle implied by self-reflection. Practical reason is an embrace of itself – a dialogue in the heart – about the “basic value of human existence.”¹⁶

So, reason enables us to arrive at ourselves. We can read this theme from Finnis to Raz. Consider Raz's essay: 'When We are Ourselves'.¹⁷ The 'When' of the title is this moment of reflexive access to a self that has taken a long time to work out how to achieve its goals. That "we are ourselves" signifies reflexive self-understanding; the geometry of the self-measuring itself. But the core of self-correspondence is not like a treasure buried in the self that somehow needs to be dug up. The geometry of the self does not reveal pre-existing shapes. Perhaps the metaphor is not quite right. We need to think of a form of measure that does not pre-exist, but comes out of how one sets and achieves one's goals. Failure to achieve goals would not be a reason for criticism provided that one had been committed to what one had sought to achieve. Thus, the fundamental element of the geometry of the self is contained in the 'meter' of geometry: the shape of the self is a measure developed by the self through its own reason guided actions.

The 'when' must be kept in view to conceive of this subtle process of self-formation. It clearly requires an extended process of education and training: an apprenticeship in the practice of one's reason. We can pick on one theme: the scene of instruction. This is presented as a relationship between a father and his son:

"[I]t may have been wrong to promise to give my son fireworks, for they are too dangerous. But having made the promise it may now be my duty to give him the fireworks."¹⁸

A father reflects on a promise made as a reason for action and brings to mind the consequence of a too hasty gift of fireworks. Supervision would prevent disaster, and one might think that the imaginary son, as an apprentice to practical reason, would understand that his father was both honouring his promise and ensuring responsible firework detonation. The 'when' that this scene enacts attests to the activity of 'reason giving' and the assumption of responsibility. What might otherwise have been experienced as conflict is resolved. One might even imagine, much later on, the son recalling this scene to his own son, as they assume a safe distance after lighting the blue touch paper on a Catherine Wheel, or a Cherry Bomb. Maybe even a Roman Candle. The scene also illustrates another important feature of practical reason. To put this somewhat starkly: without fathers, no practical reason.

Practical reason thus requires the apprentice to incorporate the values of those who have been responsible for his education and upbringing. In another metaphor that appears in Raz's text, and which continues the study of the practice of reason, one has to be able to tell one's own story. The authorship of

the self requires narrative framing, an ongoing story with a unity of plot and the development of character over time. The hero of the story develops a reflexivity that allows him to determine the shape of the life he desires. Reason is active when we appear to ourselves in a certain way: when our past, present, and projections into the future make sense to us. We are engaged with a process of self-discovery, where the achievement of reason is an active working out of our own potential for flourishing.

But working out reasons for action that are authentic and compelling is no easy task. We constantly come up against difficult choices. This gives onto the notion of incommensurability. Incommensurability is inseparable from living in conditions of constant challenge and ambiguity. In short, we must take contingency seriously.¹⁹ Contingency does not mean that action is impossible. The moral actor can stand back from the choices they have made. However, the agonistics of decision making cannot be modelled on the basis of a neutral overview of one's life. Rather, one must live one's commitments. We can link this idea back to the fundamental sense of measure. Contingency does not commit us to the idea that the incommensurable is imperfect or incomplete, and that the discovery of a more "true" value is always to come. There is no such thing as a deep structure to commitment or of the resolution of the incommensurability of value. There are "simply changes in value" over the course of an actor's life and there is nothing behind this constant becoming. The mature actor accepts this as the mark of the authenticity of reasoning.

How to Say "I"

The subject of practical reason suffers certain traumas. These are many and various; in particular, Finnis' scholar father is a tormented self-accuser, always attempting to act to a standard that leaves him somewhat unhappy (whilst at the same time denying that he is so). The scholar father cites from a prayer of Thomas More: a plea to keep death in mind. There is a reality to "perpetual damnation"²⁰ and the "dreadful mystery of hell" is ever present.²¹ We are haunted by the coming judgement of one's soul in the afterlife and the inextinguishable sense of self criticism in this world. In Raz's version of practical reason, trauma is not described in such terms. But it is nevertheless inseparable from the measure of the self: "[a]nxiety, worry [and] disappointments [are] an integral part of many valuable pursuits [and] relationships."²² Inertia threatens as it is "painful" to change and transform oneself.²³ "[U]nknown" forces are at work in us. These are "dense" and we have difficulty describing them.²⁴ Indeed, the great fear of practical reason is that we remain unknowable to ourselves, victims of processes that we fail to understand and to discipline.

The absence of any engagement with the unconscious accounts of practical reason is interesting. How is the unconscious implicated in the philosophy of action? There is definitely something primal at stake in Raz's thinking of the "structural features of practical reason."²⁵ He is aware that something remains troubling to the conscious subject and manifests itself in "pointless and annoying thoughts"²⁶ and anxieties.²⁷ What can we make of these concerns?

Our achievement of ourselves as reasoning creatures rests on somewhat unsure foundations. This does not mean that we cannot act and justify our actions to ourselves. The absence of reason's guarantee seems to refer to something else; something that is at work within reason. This something can show itself through "body posture, manner or movement or speech."²⁸ These aspects of human experience are the symptoms in which the unconscious announces itself. They are part of us. But they are part of a realm that does not seem to be under reason's jurisdiction.

We could certainly call this realm the unconscious. The study of the unconscious requires its own specific methods. We will make use of the technical term introjection. Introjection will allow us to read unconscious processes. We will link introjection to subjectification, to a process of metaphorization that is- strangely like practical reason- a form of work on the creation of the self. As we will see, introjection is a protracted process that plays itself out over a lifetime. Whilst one can become conscious of the work of introjection, it remains shadowy and mercurial. We can imagine it as a process that ghosts practical reason, and is particularly concerned with metaphor.

So, how are introjection and metaphorization connected? Let us return to the metaphors of practical reason. Practical reason is the working through of something inherent. Its figures are those of a reflexivity, a circle or return. This is projected into the future, and linked to ideas of self-narration. None of these metaphors presuppose any of the cruder notions of a personal 'essence'; nor that the 'liberal subject' is so secure in itself as to lack "conflict, contradiction or ambiguity."²⁹ Quite the contrary: reason operates through conflict, contradiction and ambiguity, even if it cannot quite find the terms to make its ongoing trauma articulate. To grasp the real problems of the 'liberal subject' we need to examine the metaphors put forward to describe it. We need to ask what these figures presuppose and what remains unsaid or hidden within them. These hidden things are hard to name. One possible way of describing them, and one already sketched out, might be to think in terms of the subject who requires nurture to become an adult. This, then, presupposes something 'coming' to embodied being. A coming to being that requires a child able to speak and, eventually, to

become a master of language. This can be pushed further. There is a silence that surrounds speech. A silence from which we come; and a silence into which we will disappear.

Introjection provides a way of understanding embodiment: psyche and soma, body and mind. Or, more succinctly: the coming to speech in the child's relationship with the mother. More succinctly still: how do I say I? Stressing the relationship between the child and the mother is certainly important and provides a corrective to the stories of fathers and sons that we have been examining. But this is still not really the main point. Introjection is the foundation of reason giving speech. Furthermore, the theory of introjection asserts that prior to reason giving, or at least necessary for reason giving, is the creation of metaphors that allow being to appear to itself. Metaphor is understood in a specific sense. It describes a process that the child must internalise; a process of identification and transformation. The differentiation of the self from others rests on the creation of a 'core' identity around which a process of identification and transformation is articulated. One must be able to 'carry over' a sense of self to new identifications, which, in turn give some substance to a subject that bears or carries forward its projections of itself.³⁰ It is no surprise that the etymological root for metaphor is a word that carries the meaning of bearing children.³¹ Not only must the mother bear the child, but the child must be able to bear itself. We might say that this is the original- and ongoing- measure of the self: a self-measure through metaphor. To put this slightly differently: the "mouth's emptiness" is the beginnings of introjection.³² Objects must be requested. One must "learn to fill" the empty mouth with words.³³ In the extended analysis of introjection, the healthy ego must first attach itself to the mother and her body as a precondition for being able to identify and make use of other objects that will satisfy its needs as it matures.³⁴

So, introjection presupposes a body that is defined around its boundaries. Those limits where the body comes into contact with 'an outside' that must be negotiated and mediated for a viable sense of self to come into being. Moreover, a body is defined around its orifices, not least the voice which articulates what the child needs; and, later, articulates what one 'is' and 'names' those objects, people, choices and decisions that constitute an actor with a sense of self. This sense of self is, therefore, metaphorical. The self is always 'figured' or identified through something else, which is, nevertheless a 'part' of the self: essential for its self-identification.

The theory of introjection suggests that the process of defining the body around its boundaries and encounters with others and the 'putting into words' that this

requires never ends. It is the fate of the subject, even the more or less healthy subject, to be compelled to press into service those metaphors that both replace and continue the relationship with the maternal body: the “original detachment” from the mother must be constantly remembered, and constantly overcome.³⁵ It is as if there is a constant muttering in the back ground of one’s being – a “murmuration”- “voce velata veiled voice under breath.³⁶ This is a ‘something’- at the edge of hearing or vision that remains “wrapped in silence.”³⁷ Perhaps it remains unnamable. And there is certainly the sense in which introjection can fail. In the failure of introjection one experiences only “puppet emotions” of a failed self.³⁸ The interruption of the development of psychic processes leads to a death in life; a fading away from one’s self. Subjectivity is broken down – and through this “gap” one falls into non being.³⁹

However, it would also be true to say that this failure of introjection is implied in the process itself. It may even be that the process works through breaking down. The very act of identifications means that there is some ‘gap’ in one’s being that must be filled: the resemblance or analogy of the object to what one ‘is’ indicates that one’s own being is lacking. However, if this inner demand, this “veiled voice” does not articulate itself in metaphors, the subject can neither think nor act, nor become itself. Introjection is an endless process coterminous with a lived life; and with an ongoing sense of ambiguity; of the need to invent and to keep on inventing what one ‘is’.

This is a far more radical problem than grasped in practical reason’s account of indeterminacy and contingency. We may be able to give reasons for choices that remain indeterminate, but, the force of the argument thus far is that it is necessary to encounter a more profound and irresolvable sense of the indeterminate that is a condition of viability for the subject: the way it measures itself against other objects which it is not.⁴⁰

In this geometry of the ruined self, the not remains. This is because the subject ‘is’ not in its being subject. Introjection forces us to think about something indelible, ‘structural’ to the rational actor and therefore to the edge of reason and conscious choice; or, in a slightly more complex sense, ‘operative’ within reason but articulated in a language that practical reason cannot quite understand. We can perhaps glimpse this problem in outline through the conventional senses of metaphors as slippery, imprecise and inappropriate for certain forms of discourse. As indeed they are. Pushed a little further this conventional sense (and suspicion) of metaphor takes us to meanings that are poetic in the strongest of senses: a form of making that is constantly shifting, transformative and tricky. If, though, these shifting sands are the ballast around

reason's foundations, it might follow that we need texts that allow some insight into the timing and rhythms, the dark mechanisms of metaphor that (un) make us ourselves.

Unnamable

The Unnamable starts talking. But this is not the voice of the scholar father. Whatever else the Unnamable might name it is a flow of words whose density fills page after page of this novel- if it is a novel- lacking as it does plot, character, clear dialogue and any sense of development or resolution. The first words: "Where now? Who now? When now" mock the form of the conventional novelistic narrative, as well as echoing the title of Joseph Raz's essay.⁴¹ Suffice to say, that this text will introduce some problems to the 'when' the 'who' and the 'where' of the self at the same time as the equation of the self to the self appears: "I, say I". The I saying I is also, at the same time, the I scattering itself, cutting lose its normal coordinates, the geometry of practical reason. The "I, say I" is also the introjected I: the I who can take itself as the object of its speech, and in this sense, the 'successful' reasoning subject. As such it is the subject that can measure itself, but what is the measure that the flow of words introduces? It is something most peculiar: "[k]eep going, going on, call that going, call that on." This expression echoes "I, say I"- suggesting both a form of equivalence, and something – that in the saying- disrupts this equivalence. This is marked in the statement about keeping going: the first part of the sentence introduces terms, the second part questions them. And then, worryingly, it would seem that the paralysed subject of practical reason makes its appearance. The text addresses a "you"- who is also the "I": "you think you are resting, the better to act when time comes...and you soon find yourself powerless to do anything again." But we have to be careful with this powerlessness. Whilst it might seem to evoke the great fear of the actor, powerlessness will take on a different meaning in *The Unnamable*.

We are trapped in Raz's nightmare. The Unnamable mentions values once, if only to dismiss them. The structure of narrative time, which Raz's analysis of reason requires, is not present. What can one learn if one is trapped in an endless cycle of dumb repetition? In Razian terms, the Unnamable has failed the test of reason. Or cannot even be judged at all.

Whoever or whatever is talking is out of joint and awry with itself, but the Unnamable is not *not* the subject of practical reason. The whole cast of the first few pages of the text is that of something trying to take responsibility for itself, trying to understand and to find reasons for why it has become what it is. And to

work out where it is: a kind of purgatory. The Unnamable asks itself questions: “what is the correct attitude to adopt towards things”; it is obsessed with the structure of reasoned argument: [if] “you admit the former you must also admit the latter.”⁴² As the text continues it appears that whoever is talking is something of a scholar, obsessed with a method, even if the method that it seeks constantly falls apart as it tries to define it: “affirmations and negations invalidated as uttered.”⁴³ There are some twisted reflections on the end of filiation, or, rather the murdering of a family (Mahood’s family? Mahood is one of the names that the Unnamable gives itself) with poisoned sausage meat. There is even a suggestion at the beginning of the book that the Unnamable is either sat or walking on the remains of his family; but it later seems that the Unnamable may have been “gelded” or that his “sex” has shrivelled up. Whilst it feels some flickering desire at the site of a horses’ arse and considers masturbation, it is soon distracted. The Unnamable appears to be the very “sterility” that Finnis so fears. The disaster has already happened to the Unnamable.

At the same time, one might say, the Unnamable continues with his sterile invention: inventing character and names that endlessly cycle before him; a parody of the visions of the souls in hell that appear to Dante and Virgil. Instead of the mighty dead of *The Divine Comedy*, there are the derelicts and tramps of Beckett’s own fiction: Malone, Molloy, Watt. Yet invention continues. A character called Worm, who might also be called Mahood appears. There is no sense of a stable identity; no sense of an ‘actor’ who is coherent over the course of the novel. Are Molloy and the other “bran dips” names for something that cannot find a metaphor for itself?⁴⁴ At this point of the greatest sterility, the possibility appears of a different reading. Beckett is writing from a position of ‘the greatest health.’ *The Unnamable* is performing the process of introjection.

For all the decay of the text, it defines a method or a process that keeps going, that longs to stop; and that stops and keeps going in attempting to define an obligation or demand to which it appears to be subject. Keep talking. Keep going on. The obligation compels the voice:

“Possessed of nothing but my voice, the voice, it may seem natural, once the idea of obligation has been swallowed, that I should interpret it as an obligation to say something.”⁴⁵

The Unnamable is obliged to keep speaking, to keep subjecting itself to reason, to keep offering reasons (sometimes contradictory) to explain how it finds itself and how best to account for its condition. However, the obligation to speak also occasions a desire, or a more profound obligation to be silent, to stop talking. To never talk again. The Unnamable is aware enough to know that is it constituted

by an aporia.⁴⁶ The obligation to speak, to become responsible and the desire to keep quiet are bound up together. We might even say that the Unnamable is trapped in its own incommensurability. It cannot correspond with itself through the reasons it gives itself about its own contradiction. No wonder it is constitutively anxious, as it cannot stop and must keep talking:

“And yet I am anxious...I greatly fear, since my speech can only be of me and here that I am once more engaged in putting an end to both. Which would not matter, far from it, but for the obligation, once rid of them, to begin again, to start again from nowhere, from no one and from nothing and win to me again, to me here again, by fresh ways to be sure, or by the ancient ways, unrecognisable at each fresh faring.”⁴⁷

The obligation is to be rid of speech, or of ‘me’, and then to “start again” in such a way that is “unrecognisable”. However, this ‘unrecognisable’ will, presumably, one can surmise, repeat this obligation to stop, and then to start again: that ‘my say can be said’ becomes “my say” can be said again: the ‘fresh ways’ are “ancient ways”- but- this doubling or the story of this doubling, is a story that will itself lead to another story: hence the rather peculiar passage towards the end of emptying and filling vessels, which leads to the problem of the lost cork, which we lack the space to consider.

Amongst its many names, the Unnamable names itself as Worm:

“We know it....it’s the awakening, the beginning of Worm, for now we must speak, and speak of Worm. It’s no longer he, but let us proceed as if it were still he, he at last, who hears, and trembles, and is delivered over, to affliction and the struggle to withstand it....Yes let us call that thing Worm...let us proceed with the method....I’m Worm, that is to say I am no longer he, since I hear...But I’ll forget that in the heat of misery, I’ll forget that I am not longer Worm, but a kind of tenth-rate Toussaint L’Ouverture, that is what they are counting on.”⁴⁸

Worm names, first of all, the moment that one must speak. An imposition. This moment is also one in which something – which is, at it were, going along with taking about Worm- “trembles” and is “delivered over” to “affliction”. The becoming Worm, adopting the name of Worm, is this ‘giving over’ but it is also the “struggle to withstand it”. This in turn names a process- a method; which, to simplify a complex argument, is the working of *The Unnamable* itself: a text which names and un-names: the speaking voice becomes Worm, allows the delivery of this identity- but- knows that it is something else. In this process, as soon as Worm tries to name itself, and to know that it is Worm naming Worm, his substance – his wormness- crawls away; a crawling away towards a kind of

sovereign figure: Toussaint L'Ouverture – an opening, an aperture, a beginning- if Worm is L'Ouverture, he names himself as his own worm hole.

But what is the silence that is so desired? Is it prior? Not really. It is bound up with speech; the silence is present within speech, and at the same time indicates what is unsayable- what is outside speech; perhaps an outside within speech. This is a most ambiguous concern. It seems to suggest that any end is provisional; speech could always start again; and, once again, be interrupted. It is a torment, and a longing for point of rest- of escape from the self-imposed obligation.

As the text progresses words and silence become a rhythm, the rhythm of the speaking voice that is scoring itself with its own pauses which become invitations to speak again; voids, silence which are “too light” to leave “a mark”⁴⁹ because “there is nothing to mark.”⁵⁰ In the last few pages of the text, this silence has entered into the words themselves to the extent that they are effectively rendered non signifying and become rhythmic counters: the “I” “go” and “on” become percussive markers, as, indeed, does the word “silence”. One might even say that silence becomes un-silent, and functions as a counter in a rhythmic figure that becomes the way in which the book returns to its own beginning: “keep going, going on”. The text is playing with us. Silence, the desire to stop, has propelled a new beginning, or an endless recycling of itself as both the demand to remain silent and the demand to go on.

What possible sense can we make of this? We might summarise our argument so far by saying that *The Unnamable* can be read as a parody of the subject of practical reason. It is a parody, though, that accepts as part of The Unnamable's dilemma the condition of practical reason. Could we further this argument by returning to the notion of introjection? Is the babbling failure of *The Unnamable* a study in failed introjection.⁵¹ Whilst this might allow some traction, it would remain an incomplete reading. We need to work more closely at the knotty relationship between being a subject and introjection- words related by the root meaning *iacere* "to throw."⁵² Etymological study might allow us to grasp the sense in which the subject is somehow impaled and revolving around itself- fixed like Mahood in his jar. We are also coming upon the sense in which the subject of reason is thrown as much ‘into’ itself as under the authority of itself; where the ‘thrown into’ suggests the presence of something disruptive ‘within.’ But what if we are missing something? *The Unnamable* figures a productive unconscious that will not stop talking. *The Unnamable* is a constitutive incompleteness- not so much a void filled with words- as the re-opening of the mouth to keep talking- to keep sating a kind of being that cannot be said. That must be said.

Make Swarm

In turning from Beckett to Cha, we can elaborate a new set of themes to think through practical reason. Cha's text is concerned with an obligation to talk and a desire to fall silent and to speak again:

“It murmurs inside. It murmurs. Inside is the pain of speech the pain to say. Larger still. Greater than is the pain not to say. To not say. Says nothing against the pain to speak. It festers inside. The wound, liquid, dust. Must break. Must void.”⁵³

Can we read this paragraph as *The Unnamable* speaking in someone else's text; as if the speech that tried to stop has overflowed the boundaries of the book. Developing this argument means engaging with critical readings of *Dictée*. The passage above can certainly be read as a comment on the painful acculturation of the colonial subject: the imposition of Japanese, English or French on Koreans. But is there not something else going on? The dilemma of this voice in the passage seems similar to the aporia of *The Unnamable*: unable to stop the pain of speech, yet unable to ‘not say.’⁵⁴ Might we even read the passage as the statement of an artistic initiation? Cha is taking on – at the very beginning of her text- the pain of writing; and Beckett himself. She has borrowed (or summoned ?) the voice of the Unnamable. But Cha's text does not appear anything like *The Unnamable*. Whilst certain sections of the book achieve the density of Beckett's prose, the text as a whole is open to the white spaces of the page. A provocation to keep writing ? To begin again? To begin differently? To push Beckett's experiment in a different direction ? Cha's use of images is quite distinct from the world of *The Unnamable*. We cannot do justice to these features of Cha's work. A proper study would involve an engagement with Beckett's late work for stage, film and television. The main point: how does Cha make Beckett different ?

Finding the starting point of *Dictée* is difficult. It seems to begin with two untitled images, a dedication “TO MY MOTHER AND FATHER”, an invented fragment from Sappho and a list of muses also in capitals. There is an acknowledgement of filiation, of origin and the borrowing of voices. Cha is speaking through Sappho. She has given herself a second birth, and one inseparable from her text. She has assumed the obligation to give herself metaphors. This is bold. Bolder than Beckett:

“May I write words more naked than flesh,
stronger than bone, more resilient than
sinew, more sensitive than nerve”⁵⁵

The absence of page numbers is significant. This is the textual space where Cha gives herself the authority to become a metaphor of her choosing. The obligation to write the Sapphic self is the conditional ‘may’ rather than the imperative ‘must’. ‘May’ is a form of obligation given by Cha to Cha, to invite something to come if it will come. The conditional ‘may’ resonates with the etymological root of the word muse which relates to keeping something in mind (and even, perhaps to the root of the word project).⁵⁶ We are surely licenced to see this as an appropriation of Finnis’ attentiveness: an attentiveness to metaphors.

What will come? Who is talking? Is it Sappho? Cha’s invented Sappho? Different voices can, of course, exist at the same time in the narthex of a text that never becomes a cathedral – that never completes itself. But just as The Unnamable becomes interpellated by his own memories and fictions, a persona appears to be present in Cha’s text who talks of a traumatic experience. We need to relate this to the very title of the book: dictation. Cha is attentive to what escapes an imposition: a ‘must’ imposed on Cha’s ‘may’. The ‘must’ issues from the voice of legal obligation. Whilst for Beckett the law is present in images of judgment and punishment, it emerges in *Dictée* as a dictating voice. In most immediate terms, this is the law that the Japanese invader imposes on the Koreans: “nothing is too great, and nothing too contradictory for these constitution mongers.”⁵⁷ This imposition is linked with an extended consideration of a politics of language. The obligation is related to a ‘they’ who mark the self. But, something survives. Cha as writer inscribes the scene of dictation in her own text. She dictates the terms of dictation. She becomes the *dicteuse*. A *dicteuse* creating the *disease* (in whose self-entitling it is possible to hear a certain dis-ease or dis-use; decreation, even).⁵⁸

These first mysterious pages of the *Dictée* are records of the imposition of law and language, and the initiation of a writer ; the initiation of a voice that will invent itself. Cha’s gives two texts. One in English, the other in French. Commentaries on *Dictée* have rightly drawn attention to these passages, reading them as emblematic of Cha’s concern with the imposition of language.⁵⁹ Reading this passage with *The Unnamable* opens up a slightly different perspective. Beckett chose to write in French because his French was worse than his English. He made an aesthetic choice to limit his vocabulary and to make things more difficult for himself. Beckett erased his own fluency. Can we not read these passages in *Dictée* as animated by similar textual strategies?

Cha, the writer, takes on the creation of her own language. She acknowledges, though, that this comes from a negativity. Cha, as writer and *disease* mobilises a number of metaphors: that of waiting; of the remembered words of a song and

its echoes; of stones being laid one by one; of writing- and of a kind of writing to which things stick: “bits of sound and dust” – “scatterings” that somehow cohere or ink and blood that stains⁶⁰ -the movements of the tongue in the cavity of the mouth:

“ From stone, A single stone. Column. Carved on one stone, the labor of figures. The labor of tongues. Inscribed to stone. The labor of voices.”⁶¹

A productive negativity; a doubling, a doubling doubling. This doubling doubling is the doubling of the obligation. Sappho’s may. Worm’s muscle. Wriggling inside. Worm’s central ‘o’ is the ‘o’ that concludes Sappho- but- it is also the ‘o’ of the open mouth, and the double ‘o’ of obligation; the may and must; the ‘o’ of the mouth articulating- the muscle of the tongue lying flat in its cavity; the mouth, the cave, the space of worm; or a worm knotting itself; a saying not unrelated to worms own twisting—“uttering again, uttering to revive”. There is no single metaphor. Metaphors, in *Dictée*, come in swarms. This figuring process or power is the assertion of the broken measure of itself. Cha’s text is – at one and the same time- the work of a Korean woman who is an immigrant to the United States, and a study in a constitutive ‘not-ness’. The articulation of ‘not-ness’ provides the punctus that allows Cha (and an inheritance from Beckett) to resonate in the philosophy of practical reason.ك

The real power of this opening sequence of Cha’s text becomes apparent in its final paragraph:

“Begins imperceptibly, near-perceptible. (Just once. Just one time and it will take.) She takes. She takes the pause. Slowly. From the thick. The thickness. From weighted motion upwards. Slowed. To deliberation even when it passed upward through her mouth again. The delivery. She takes it. Slow. The invoking. All the time now. All the time there is. Always. And all times. The pause. Uttering. Hers now. Hers bare. The utter.”⁶²

This passage brings together the opening moment of the text (which is separated from the next section by a blank page: a space before a space that words will fill) with the pain of saying, and what could be read as labour: the labour of producing a text, a child, metaphors. An ongoing process: a word once said leads to another word; and moves from hesitancy to a kind of flow or fluency, where the pain of enunciation will always be present in what is said. Cha is providing us with a metaphor for introjection: a metaphor for metaphor. How else could we conceive of the impossible conversation that she has initiated with her mother at this threshold of her book: the verb to ‘utter’ returns repeatedly as

linked with Cha's mother, with the way in which her mother has uttered her, and her own uttering of her mother in her uttering of herself: "Hers bare". This compressed and almost unreadable expression is the core of the text. Her, heard as here and her 'made bare' what must be born. Utter- as intensifier- carrying the sense of total or complete: a quintessence or core; what takes places within muttering. An intensifier with an opposite meaning to the sense of speaking or uttering: a not, a creative nothing, a saying into (non) being.

Hers Bare

The Unnamable and *Dictée* enact, in different ways, the drama of introjection and the becoming subject. In the terms of practical reason, the subject is uniquely responsive to reasons. The 'lessons' of Beckett and Cha suggest that an understanding of the subject as that which can bear itself requires an engagement with non being: what if creative non being was the very mark of the subject; the constitution of the subject of practical reason, and the subject of law?⁶³

How might this thinking be continued? Arguably, it is the work of law and literature scholarship.⁶⁴ There are many ways of pursuing law and literature, and the field is constituted by various agendas and thematics. The approach that might be most helpful stresses the 'and': this marker of conjunction and doubling. Read through law and literature, practical reason is both doubled and made strange to itself. The subject of practical reason – still perhaps somewhat disembodied- becomes visible as a subject in a particular context. Thus the postcolonial subject, or the Asian American subject are instantiations of the reasoning subject: non being born into specific moments of culture and history. If we follow this line of thinking, we might be able to open our ears to murmurings; to disruptive echoes within reason's constitution.

The Unnamable and *Dictée* are exercises in how one can speak of Worm or Sapphothese names for the endless method; a rhythm. Speak, fall silent, speak again; a stumbling forwards; an orbit around a central nothing: "it murmurs inside. It murmurs."⁶⁵ The scholar father encounters the *disease*. Rather than abandon muttering texts or the texts of practical reason, keep reading. Create new metaphors. New ways of reading the muttering or swarming within the texts of legal philosophy. Background static. The measure of measure. Muttering.

¹ The presentation of practical reason in this essay is admittedly impressionistic and seeks to catch the sense of a theme shared between Joseph Raz and John Finnis rather than provide an exhaustive study of the field. There are, of course, significant differences between Raz and Finnis, and other important contributors to the contemporary philosophy of practical reason. For a pioneering study of Finnis and Raz's similarities and differences, see Leora Batnitzky, 'A Seamless Web? John Finnis and Joseph Raz on Practical Reason and the Obligation to Obey the Law', *Oxford Journal of Legal Studies*, 15 (2) 1995, 153–175. However, for reasons of space, this essay does not engage with these broader concerns. To avoid confusion it is also worth noting that neither Raz nor Finnis use 'subject' in a consistent way. To describe the actor of practical reason as a subject is to import a term from different philosophical traditions in the hope that it can help reveal the constitution of the practical actor. Any further elaboration on muttering in practical reason would also have to engage with Derek Parfit *On What Matters* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011). Such a project would have to work its way through Levinas' "il y a" as well as Blanchot's notion of the neutral voice. See Evelyne Grossman, *L'Angoisse De Penser* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 2008). Grossman provides a compelling account of notions of swarming, and is a fundamental point of reference for any working with, or between, Beckett, Blanchot and philosophy. For reasons of space, this essay does not engage in the extensive literature on the relationship between Beckett and Blanchot, but see Suzie Gibson, 'The Work, The Neutral and the Unnamable', *Samuel Beckett Today / Aujourd'hui*, 14 (2004), pp. 293-305.

² Non being in this essay refers to the troubled nature of the rational being as one 'organised' around a peculiar and persistent 'nothingness'. In one sense, this relates to the dialectical nature of thought as an expression of reason: thought negates 'what is' and through this negation posits a 'what is not'. We might also suggest that the dialectical nature of thought is 'embodied' in a being that must confront its own death: its own 'not-ness' - part of a much broader problematic of 'coming from' and 'returning to' nothing. These problems are inseparable from the disruptive presence of the unconscious in the psyche of the thinking, acting being. It is not possible in this essay to elaborate in detail these concerns: what mutters are the anxieties, doubts, even the provocations to action that emanate from this complex. Practical reason acknowledges this complex and, at least to some extent, suppresses in its own understanding of what it means to be autonomous or to bear one's self. A starting point for a proper examination of such themes would be Maurice Blanchot's "Literature and the Right to Death" in P. Adams Sitney (ed) *The Gaze of Orpheus* (Barrytown, N.Y.; Station Hill Press, 1981), pp. 21-63.

³ The idea of what a literary text might be is not straightforward. The texts of Cha and Beckett are literary in the sense that they are included in the genre of literature, even if they are bracketed as experimental, avant-garde or 'difficult'. In a more interesting elaboration of this concern, Cha and Beckett's texts pose the question of what literary writing might be. For both, in different ways, this has meant that their work has been taken up by scholars and critics working in certain kinds of philosophy or critical theory open to such questions. Practical reason, whilst not closed to literary texts, is not a 'literary' form of philosophy. This 'resistance' to literature is a challenge that this essay addresses. Suffice to say that this problematic picks up Blanchot's question of literature as a 'relationship' to language (and speech) that is contradictory, uneasy and insecure. See Blanchot, *Literature and the Right to Death*, 44.

⁴ Norma Alarcón, Hyun Yi Kang and Elaine H. Kim, *Writing Self, Writing Nation: A Collection of Essays on Dictée* by Theresa Hak Kyung Cha (Berkeley: Third Woman Press 1994).

⁵ See David Lloyd, *Anomalous States: Irish Writing and the Post Colonial Moment* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993) and "Writing in the Shit: Beckett, Nationalism, and the Colonial Subject," *Modern Fiction Studies*, 1989, 35 (1): 71–86. On *The Unnamable* as a postcolonial work, see Mark Quigly, 'Unnaming the Subject: Samuel Beckett and Colonial Alterity', *Samuel Beckett Today / Aujourd'hui*, 2005, 87-100. For a collection of more recent scholarship, see Gabriel Quigly, "Beckett in the Postcolony: Introduction" *Interventions*, 2023, 1–10.

⁶ See Jose Felipe Alvergúe, 'Poetic Seeing/ Beyond Telling', *College Literature*, 43 (2), 2016, 427-456.

⁷ Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Dictée* (Berkeley: Third Woman Press 1995). See also Hyo K. Kim, 'Embodying the In-Between: Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *Dictée*' *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal*, 46 (4) 4, 2013, 127-143 and Michael Stone-Richard, 'A Commentary on Theresa Hak Kyung Cha's *Dictée*', *Glossator*, 1, 2009, 145-210.

⁸ Freud's major texts on introjection are 'The Instincts and their Vicissitudes' (1915) and 'Negation' (1925). See Sigmund Freud, *On Metapsychology*, The Pelican Freud Library Vol. 11 (eds.) Angela Richard and Albert Dickson, (London: Penguin, 1984), pp.105-113 and 435-443. Abraham and Torok credit Sandor Ferenczi with an important early development of the term which went on to influence Freud. Ferenczi's 'Introjection and Transference' was first published in *The Jahrbuch der Psychoanalyse* (1909) and re-printed in *The International Psychoanalytic Library*, 'First Contributions to Psycho-Analysis', 45, (1952), pp. 35-93. For Freud, introjection emerges in a distinction between the ego and the world outside the ego: the former attempts to bring into itself from the latter what is pleasurable and to reject or project what causes displeasure. Introjection appears, first of

all, in the oral mode; and, as Abraham and Torok suggest, relates to both the acquisition of language, nourishment and eating. This theme is developed in the main text, but see also footnotes 30, 50 and 53 below. Freud also linked introjection to melancholia in ‘Mourning and Melancholia’ (1917). See Freud, *On Metapsychology*, pp. 245-269. The importance of ‘Mourning and Melancholia’ for an account of introjection is a theme that runs through Abraham and Torok’s work, and that of Derrida also. Introjection is developed further by Melanie Klein and related to good and bad objects. See below, footnote 29. Laplanche and Pontalis provide other essential coordinates for the theory of introjection, suggesting that “the bounds of the body” define psychoanalytic notions of inside and outside. Introjection is to be distinguished from incorporation. Incorporation describes the physical body, whilst introjection refers to both the psychic apparatus and a more general sense of interiority. See J. Laplanche and J.B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, (London: the Hogarth Press, 1983), pp. 229-231. The distinction between incorporation and introjection is a matter of much dispute. Derrida makes a great deal of this distinction in his reading of Abraham and Torok. In order to avoid over-burdening the argument of this essay, we will not refer to this debate as such; rather, to capture its spirit in an understanding of introjection as inherently precarious. For similar reasons, the distinction between introjection and projection will not be dealt with other than obliquely. This theme is taken up below in footnote 62 where introjection and negation are related to a theory of action in which subjects project themselves into the future. More generally, introjection certainly plays its role in Beckett scholarship. See, for example, Phil Baker, ‘Ghost Stories’, *Journal of Beckett Studies*, 5 (1 and 2), (1995), pp. 39-66. Introjection does not appear to be a marked theme in studies of Blanchot, Cha or in law and literature scholarship.

⁹ The best introduction to practical reason is Ruth Chang and Kurt Sylvan (eds.) *The Routledge Handbook of Practical Reason* (London: Routledge, 2021).

¹⁰ The philosophy of practical reason is a very broad field relating to a number of debates in the philosophy of mind and the philosophy of action. In the crudest of overview, these become relevant in jurisprudence with Raz’s arguments that Hart’s understanding of rule following as a practice was incomplete. It was necessary to develop an account of reason giving and practical reasoning. Thus, Raz’s work, and that of John Gardner and others, comes out of context that can be traced, at least in recent terms, to Elizabeth Anscombe and Donald Davidson. Anscombe and Davidson offered rival accounts of the best possible way to understand rational action: Anscombe favouring explanation by reference to reasons, and Davidson an account that privilege causes. The contemporary philosophy of practical reason also draws from debates between Humeans and anti-Humeans. The former, including Davidson, link together desire and beliefs for action, whilst the others stress the fundamental importance of beliefs. Variations in positions are also articulated around the role of psychologism in accounts of motivation, versus non psychological accounts focused on the motivating nature of states of affairs. Concerns with what motivates practical reason can be linked (or decoupled) from accounts of normative practical reason that focus on the justification of actions through reasons. In turn, these debates are linked to the Humean questioning of the nature of ethics. This emerges into jurisprudence via Mackie’s influence on Hart. However, it would be fair to say that Hart’s position can now be contrasted with recent accounts of the normative nature of reason giving that find particularly influential exponents in Thomas Scanlon and Derek Parfit. In different ways, Scanlon and Parfit show how ethics is a source of normative reason. The main conclusions to be drawn from this overview, at least with reference to jurisprudence, is that many of the ‘old’ debates are being recast in the terms of practical reason. Thus, the question of the relationship between a recast canonical jurisprudence and critical traditions becomes live. To what extent can critical traditions engage with the jurisprudence of practical reason?

¹¹ John Finnis, *Natural Law and Natural Rights* (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1980).

¹² *Ibid.*, 15

¹³ *Ibid.*, 36.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 31.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 67.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 59.

¹⁷ See Joseph Raz, *Engaging Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). *When We are Ourselves* is the title of Chapter 1.ك

¹⁸ Joseph Raz, *The Morality of Freedom* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2009).

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 150.

²⁰ John Finnis, *Collected Essays Volume V, Religion and Public Reason* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2013)

²¹ *Ibid.*, 368.

²² *Ibid.*, 303.

²³ Raz, *The Morality of Freedom*, 317.

²⁴ Raz, *The Morality of Freedom*, 311/12.

²⁵ Raz, *The Morality of Freedom*, 288.

²⁶ Raz, *The Morality of Freedom*, 337

²⁷ Raz, *The Morality of Freedom*, 75, 303.

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- ²⁸ Raz, *The Morality of Freedom*, 334.
- ²⁹ Toril Moi, *Sexual Textual Politics* (London: Routledge, 1986).
- ³⁰ A useful account of introjection is provided by Paula Heimann, 'Certain Functions of Introjection and Projection in Early Infancy' in *Developments in Psychoanalysis*, ed. Melanie Klein, Paula Heimann, Susan Isaacs and Joan Riviere (London: the Hogarth Press, 1952), 122-169. Abraham and Torok's use of the term is somewhat different, but, can be read alongside Heimann's Kleinian schema.
- ³¹ Julius Pokorny *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Bern: Francke, 1959, 1989), 128.
- ³² Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok, *The Shell and The Kernel* (Chicago : University of Chicago Press, 1994).
- ³³ *Ibid.*, 127-8.
- ³⁴ Introjection thus describes the various encounters with people and things that are 'brought into' the self in order to constitute it. The ego can dispense with an object once it has been introjected. The loved object can be set aside, and the ego's libido directed towards other objects that it requires.
- ³⁵ Nicolas Abraham, 'Seminar on the Dual Unity and the Phantom', *Diacritics*, 2016, Vol. 44, No. 4 (2016), pp. 14-39 , 14.
- ³⁶ Cha, *Dictée*, 127.
- ³⁷ Abraham and Torok, *The Shell and The Kernel*, 189.
- ³⁸ Abraham and Torok, *The Shell and The Kernel*, 180.
- ³⁹ Abraham and Torok, *The Shell and The Kernel*, 171.
- ⁴⁰ *The Unnamable* enables the word "I" to be used in all its ambiguity (Abraham and Torok 1994, 180). It is an intensification and radicalisation of contingency and indeterminacy. Failed introjection prevent the subject thinking metaphorically. "Demetaphorization" occurs, so that words only ever have a simple meaning and "figurative representation" is resisted (Abraham and Torok 1994, 132). Words cannot be allowed to indicate anything other than a 'clear' sense. This becomes a crippling "dependency" on objects that are only ever themselves (Abraham and Torok 1994 132).
- ⁴¹ Samuel Beckett, *The Unnamable* (London: Faber and Faber, 2010), 1. In this essay *The Unnamable* as title will be distinguished from The Unnamable as a 'character' within the book of the same title.
- ⁴² *Ibid.*, 2.
- ⁴³ *Ibid.*, 1.
- ⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 108.
- ⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.
- ⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 1.
- ⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 12.
- ⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 63.
- ⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 69.
- ⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 79.
- ⁵¹ Introjection certainly gives us a way of understanding some of Worm's troubling statements: " Quick, give me a mother and let me suck her white" (Beckett 2010, 51). Have we stumbled upon a failure to create those "imagined ties" that are tokens of a desire that cannot separate itself from the maternal body (Abraham and Torok, 1994 114)?
- ⁵² Julius Pokorny *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch* (Bern: Francke, 1959, 1989), 502.
- ⁵³ Cha, *Dictée*, 3.
- ⁵⁴ It would also be possible to read this passage through the account of introjection: the paralysis is that of a failed achievement of a sense of substantial being: there is no viable 'inside'- no substance- nothing even to 'void'
- ⁵⁵ Cha, *Dictée*, no page number.
- ⁵⁶ Julius Pokorny *Indogermanisches etymologisches Wörterbuch*, 726, 730, 732.
- ⁵⁷ Cha, *Dictée* , 29.
- ⁵⁸ On decreation in poetics and its relevance to law and literature, see Adam Gearey, 'Saying Unsaid: Law Transformed in Annemarie Ni Churreáin 's Bloodroot', Adam Hanna and Eugene McNulty, (eds.) *Law and Literature: The Irish Case*. (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2022), pp. 45-58.
- ⁵⁹ Lisa Lowe, 'Unfaithful to the Original: The Subject of *Dictée* in Alarcón, Kang and Kin, *Writing Self, Writing Nation*, 40-1)
- ⁶⁰ Cha, *Dictée*, 65.
- ⁶¹ Cha, *Dictée*, 161.
- ⁶² Cha, *Dictée*, 5.
- ⁶³ Creativity is understood in two senses. From Abraham and Torok, the key idea is that the unconscious is productive; and the task of analysis is to work out how to read the metaphors and symbols it produces. This relates to the theme of introjection. Read through a thematic developed from Blanchot, introjection is creative as it can be linked with the "wonderful power" of negation (or non being), Blanchot, *Literature and the Right to Death*, 46. Literature, as a force of negation and profound ambiguity expresses or enacts the creation of unstable

meanings in the movement from existence to being which is itself always precarious. The precarity of literature therefore carries a dark relationship with the ongoing process of introjection. If this is written into the texts of Beckett and Cha, then this disturbance can be set uncomfortably against practical reason; and it is precisely this discomfort that law and literature might be able to study. To what end? If practical reason is concerned with the actor then literature appears to ruin the “hope of doing anything”, Blanchot, *Literature and the Right to Death*, 58. However, if this hope is understood in a speculative or dialectical sense, its negation of action suggests the contradictory sense in which action might be ‘possible in its impossibility’. To put this slightly differently: action requires introjection, and introjection is inherently unstable. Therefore one must act. And continue acting in the absence of secure foundations. As suggested in this essay, such an approach would engage with and intensify notions of contingency and indeterminacy in Raz’s philosophy. Development of this argument would require an engagement with Ruth Chang’s understanding of the creativity of reason giving. See Ruth Chang ‘What is it to be a Rational Agent’ in *The Routledge Handbook of Practical Reason*, 95-111. Again, to what end? If legal reasons ‘guide’ the subject of practical reason and both norms and actions are radically indeterminate, we revisit many of the themes of critical legal studies in such a way that its legacy both connects and disconnects with that of the philosophy of practical reason and ‘theory’. Perhaps law and literature is the midwife to the appearance of this as yet unnamable hybrid; something both dead and alive: the Malonification of jurisprudence.

⁶⁴ Beckett has received some attention in law and literature scholarship. See Anthony Uhlmann, ‘Same and the Other: Beckett’s the Unnameable, Derrida and Levinas’, *Law Text Culture*, 3, (1996) pp. 127-147. Uhlmann’s article shows just how productive an encounter between philosophical and literary texts can be in framing questions of justice. Cha’s work has, to date, not been taken up in law and literature scholarship.

⁶⁵ Cha, *Dictée*, 3.