

Demystifying the Mysteries in the Works of Samuel Beckett: the Religious, the Mystical, the Supernatural, the Judgement, the Psychology of Aging and the Nihilistic

Emery A. Cournand

Is a research scholar and teaches English in Trinidad and Tobago

Abstract

This article is an effort to demystify the mysteries in the works of Samuel Beckett: the religious, the mystical, the supernatural, the judgement, the psychology of aging and the nihilistic. This article was originally presented as an assignment on a course about film as part of my studies for an MA in Philosophy at the University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, Trinidad.

Keywords: Mysteries, mystical, supernatural, psychology of aging, nihilism, Samuel Beckett

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All of Beckett's works could be said to be mysteries. The word 'mysterious' is defined in the *Collins Concise Dictionary* as characterized by being indicative of mystery, or something that is puzzling or curious. The word 'mystery' has its roots in the Greek word *mustērion*, which means 'secret rites', but however is generally used today to refer to any unexplained or inexplicable event, or phenomenon, or to anyone or anything that has the quality of being unknown, obscure, inexplicable, or enigmatic. Although linked to mystery and the mysterious; mysticism and the mystical have different connotations. The latter two originate from the word 'mystic', which in turn finds its origin in the Greek name for those who were initiates into the sacred rites—*mustikos*. The word 'mysticism' therefore is defined as (1) 'belief in experience of a reality surpassing normal human understanding or experience' or (2) 'a system of contemplative prayer and spirituality aimed at achieving direct intuitive experience of the divine.' As a result, one could logically conclude that while all mysticism and the mystical could be referred to as being mysteries, or described as being mysterious, to the extent that experiences attributed to the influence of an unknown reality or realities, or systems of directly channelling the

divine are often seen as being outside the realm of normal human understanding; all mysteries—all that are mysterious, enigmatic, obscure, strange or unknown; cannot be referred to as being mystical, or of being linked to mysticism. To the extent that they are attributed to the experiencing of another or other realities, or to the direct interaction with, or intervention of the divine, all that is mystical also separates itself from the merely mysterious or unknown. This, therefore, is the source of a basic conflict, contradiction or tension within the works of Samuel Beckett. The conflict, contradiction or tension exists between what is generally unknown; and what may be attributed to a direct experience of the divine, or of another or other realities. This conflict, contradiction or tension however, points to a deeper and more significant conflict, contradiction or tension. This is the conflict, contradiction or tension between what may be seen as being unknown or inexplicable because it seems at a glance to be absurd, irrational, meaningless or nihilist; and what may be seen as being mystical—inspired or caused by a phenomenon or an entity that seems to transcend or exist parallel to the physical. Simply put, one may refer to this deeper conflict, contradiction or tension, as the conflict, contradiction or tension between nihilism and mysticism. This paper tries to demystify the mysteries in some of the works of Samuel Beckett by identifying and examining some of its components, with a view to

showing, which components reinforce, or exist in conflict, contradiction or tension, with others.

Chris Ackerley opens his article entitled “‘Perfection is not of this World’: Samuel Beckett and Mysticism” by stating that Beckett’s agnosticism is offset by a curious fascination with the mystical traditions of the Western Middle Ages. (*Mystics Quarterly*. Vol 30. No ½. Page 28). It is my intention in this paper to show that Beckett’s fascination with mysticism and the mystical extended beyond a mere fascination with that bygone era of European history—that it extended into his works through his utilization of the religious symbolism and motifs of a broader Christianity; and into the philosophy of renunciation as extolled in both occidental and oriental religions such as Christianity, and Buddhism, and that such is exemplified in the works chosen to be the subject-matter of this paper.

One of the major devices used in many of Beckett’s works for instance, including *Quadrant I*, *Quadrant II*, *Waiting for Godot*, *Nacht und Träume*, *Eh Joe*, *Play* and *Film* just to name a few, is the device of repetition. The use of this device so often is meant not only to reflect the routines of everyday life, as in *Quads I* and *II* or also, when it is the spoken word; the silent narratives that sometimes take place within our heads, as in *Eh Joe*; but also at times the repetitive rituals and chants or mantras of both occidental and oriental

religion, tradition, and culture, as with the Christian symbolism in *Nacht und Träume*. It does not only reflect upon the seemingly absurd, as in *Waiting for Godot*, but also seems to imply or indicate that certain mystical or unknown processes or powers may lie hidden behind the repetition of certain actions and words, and that such processes or powers may even take precedence over the apparent purpose or meaning normally associated with such actions or words. In fact, on the surface, the repetition of such actions and words usually seem quite purposeless, futile and without meaning, absurd or nihilistic and at times forces us to look beyond the world of appearances and into the worlds of symbolism, the unconscious, and the mystical.

Nacht und Träume, Beckett's final television play is loaded with religious motifs and symbolism. The name of the piece of music from Schubert, of which the last few bars are hummed by someone whom one is led to assume is the protagonist, and the name of the play, are the same, and translates as *Night and Dreams* in English. This reinforces two traditional symbols of the mystical and mysticism—that of the night and that of the dream. There is a white cloth and a chalice, both symbols of Christianity, which are used to offer some form of solace or comfort to the man, who although sedate, seems to be in the process of undergoing some sort of mental or emotional trauma. Their significance is highlighted by the fact that in the

very first scene of the television play, even before we see the man, we see the cloth and the chalice upon a table. They then fade as the man begins to take shape at a table. This to me seems to signify that although they are present, they are not of this material world. So too is the entity who offers comfort during the dream. All we see are a pair of hands, and at no time do we see a body. Although the hands, by being a pair—a left and a right, seem to imply that they belong to the same entity, the fact that no time do we see a body, makes them seem disembodied. This implies that the entity may not be a physical being, thus accentuating the spiritual or mystical overtones of the work. The hands also play an important role in providing comfort or solace to the man. The overall message seems to be that the man, who from his overall appearance—his unkempt hair, and the expression on his face in the dream, seems depressed and tormented, is offered comfort or solace by the dream. These seem to imply that although the dream is a process that takes place within the mind of the individual, the man receives solace and comfort from a source or sources that he perceives within the dream as being external, or, from the religious motifs and symbols, transcendental. In the dream, he is allowed to sip from the chalice; the cloth is used to wipe his face, as Veronica is said to have done for Christ as he carried the cross to his crucifixion; and a left hand touches the back of his head in a gentle manner,

while a right is offered to him upon his silent request, which he makes by extending his right hand to the unseen entity. He covers the second hand with his left hand and places the three hands on the table and rests his forehead on them. This process is repeated twice, thus reinforcing the mystical and ritualistic signification of the entire process. The deeper meaning seems to be that we, as individuals, have the resources within ourselves, to connect either with a deeper aspect of ourselves that lies within the unconscious, or with entities from the transcendental realm, or God, through the natural process of dreaming. There seems also to be subtle differences in the appearance of the protagonist, and the man in the dream. On the surface, they seem to be the same person by their attire, their hair and their general demeanour, although at no time we actually see the face of the protagonist. However, he, the protagonist, mainly due to the texture and shade of his hair and gait, seems to be more frail, or older than the man in the dream. This seems to imply that the being nourished and consoled, is the man's soul, or as some may say, his true identity, rather than his physical body. Some may argue because of the fact that the work ends with the man in the same state as when it began, there is no resolution, and that the nature of the work is nihilistic. However, this is not true. It is important here to state that this work is unique among those examined in this paper, in that it is the only

work where the protagonist, through his facial expression and actions, appears to be showing signs of regret, remorse, or contrition, and as a result, although the work started and ended with the man apparently sleeping, he is offered comfort, solace and spiritual nourishment by way of the dream, which should act to lift his spirits once he awakens. In my opinion, it is there is a positive resolution in the end. The fact that this was Beckett's last television play and amongst the last of his works, he says something about his state of mind in the latter stages of his life. It shows that his thoughts were more on the mystical or spiritual matters, than they were earlier in his life, when he seemed to be focused on directly confronting what he saw as the absurdities of everyday modern life.

According to Graley Herren in the essay 'Pacing to Byzantium', the critic Hans Hiebel sees *Quadrant I & II* as a critique of the nihilistic aspects of human life which according to him:

"...consists of continuous repetitions of the same compulsive activities, and that we deceive ourselves if we believe in freedom of will, individuality, spontaneity, etc. All human beings are alike, all human activities resemble one another, everything is done "un-consciously"—for generations, for centuries.

(Graley Herren. 'Pacing to Byzantium' 5)

In my opinion, nihilism is fostered by the mechanical aspects of modern life, where the individual becomes sexless and faceless, and is forced into a repetitive and meaningless lifestyle by dehumanizing economic systems, encouraged and facilitated by a wanton application of technology. In my interpretation, the two aspects normally associated with mysticism and the mystical; the cowl, and the use or repetition with regards to the motion of the individuals, are seen accentuating the facelessness of the individual, and the coercive nature of such systems, respectively. However, the critic Phyllis Carley, in the typical postmodernist tradition, as inspired by Nietzsche, lumps these aspects of mysticism and the mystical along with religion, as part of the coercive forces of human civilization:

The ritual of movement circumscribing patterns around an unknown centre implies a controlling fear, an erratic but rigid dance to appease the gods; the monk-like cowls and the repetition of processions constitute a wordless prayer.

(Graley Herren. 'Pacing to Byzantium'. 5)

Both reason and imagination create the figments that in turn become controlled determiners of human behaviour. The ritual of Quad dramatizes the rational and imaginative constructs humans have projected, which, in turn, have enslaved them.

(Graley Herren. 'Pacing to Byzantium'. 6)

Therefore, whereas in *Nacht und Träume*, mysticism and the mystical overrides the coercive power of religion by offering solace, comfort and spiritual nourishment to the individual subjectively through the act of dreaming, in *Quadrant I* and *II* these same forces may be interpreted by some, like the critic Phyllis Carey, as a contributor to the enslavement of humanity, and also as a contributor to the augmentation of nihilism in human civilization. I do however agree with both critics that both *Quads* are basically nihilistic in outlook, and wish to further add that the nihilism in *Quadrant I* is confirmed and reinforced by what I see as the implied impending doom, and the apparent negative, degenerative, destructive and determinist resolution in *Quadrant II*. The slower movement of the characters, which appear to more laboured and deliberate, the absence of sound, except for the rat-like shuffling of the feet, and the total absence of colour in *Quadrant II* implies that the characters now occupy a post-atomic wasteland bereft of all that makes life interesting and beautiful. The laborious movement of the characters also reinforces the idea that things can't continue like that for long and that the end is not far away. According to Herren, Beckett's only comment about *Quadrant II* is that it takes place ten thousand years in the future. Here I tend to disagree with Beckett because this desolate resolution, if it is indeed a metaphor for the

predicament of human civilization, in my opinion, is more likely to take place within the next hundred years.

The television play *Eh Joe* reinforces another dimension to the mysterious nature of Samuel Beckett works, which has been introduced but not discussed in *Nacht und Träume*. This work begins with the aging and decrepit protagonist feeling as though he is being observed by someone. He looks out of the doors, and under the bed but finds nothing. He then sits on the bed with an uneasy expression on his face, while an accusing female voice tauntingly interrogates him about his previous relationships and the choices that he has made during his lifetime. The attitude of Joe, the man, is not one of despair, sorrow, or regret like that of the protagonist in *Nacht und Träume* but instead one of evasion. Joe has been avoiding voices for quite some time. He has been 'squeezing' them out of his mind and ignoring them. This voice, which identifies itself as the voice of a previous lover, accuses him of practicing 'mental thug-e' upon the dead, which according to it, refers to his attitude towards the voice of his father, which he has also heard in the past. In Freudian analysis, these voices may represent the repression of unresolved guilt from his previous relationships that rises to haunt the protagonist from his subconscious mind. In Jungian psychology, they may represent the lateral interconnectivity of beings at the level of the collective unconscious, whereas the experiences in *Nacht und*

Träume would represent the hierarchical interconnectivity between the individual and the divine. There is a consistency or correspondence between the two that works as Joe apparently has not claimed responsibility for his actions and seems to be still in a state of denial or evasion. As the voice insinuates, he is neither ready nor prepared to face the divine, in spite of being at a fairly advanced age, or as the voice puts it, in spite of his being so 'near home'. As a result, he has not received the consolation or grace extended to the protagonist in *Nacht und Träume* since he does not deserve it. This aspect or dimension of the mysteries that the television play *Eh Joe* reinforces, was really introduced in the earlier discussion in relation to *Nacht und Träume* and is the dimension of the unconscious or subconscious mind, and the ramifications and implications of Jungian and Freudian psychology.

Another interpretation of the television play *Eh Joe* may be that it is a supernatural or ghost story. However, since there is no external evidence of such phenomena outside of the accusing voice, which in spite of his search in the opening scenes, is strongly implied throughout the play to be a process taking place within of Joe's head, this conclusion seems both unlikely and irrelevant. The conflict or tension in Beckett's work therefore now extends to include the conflict between the rational, mystical, supernatural, or Jungian-Freudian aspects of Beckett's

works, to the extent that such aspects can be explained; and the irrational, nihilistic—Freudian, or mystical supernatural aspects, to the extent that such aspects cannot be explained. At this juncture, things become rather complicated. This is due to the fact that Beckett never explained much about the mystery, or the mysterious nature of his works, and there is a lot of mystery that still escapes analysis—that refuses to be pinned down and labelled. One may conclude however, that due to the lack of resolution within the work on the part of the role played by the protagonist Joe, its basic and overall outlook is nihilistic.

In the play *Play*, one is faced with three protagonists in funeral urns side by side with only their heads showing. Each face appears to be partially decomposed or damaged. At the distance, they seem to be speaking simultaneously but when the light shines upon one, we can only hear what that particular one is saying. After a while, one realizes that they are speaking about the events that happened in their lives in which the other two were involved. These events relate to a love triangle in which the two women at the extremes were involved with the man in the centre. They are here in this dark place and each seems oblivious to the presence of the other two. In the first part of the play, their speech focusses on the sequence of events of the love triangle as told from their individual perspectives. It ends with a fire, which was lit by

the presumed mistress, with the aim of destroying the man's—her lover's—clothes and belongings, but it is implied that more were lost than just the clothes or belongings. The fire symbolizes the end of each of their lives. The facts that they are each in funeral urns, which are normally used to gather the ashes after a cremation; and that their faces appear to be partially damaged or decomposed; and finally, that even in the afterlife, these events still appear to be fresh upon their minds, help to reinforce this point.

In the second part of the play, their speech focusses on their current state or predicament; the nature of the only 'other' of which they are conscious, which is the source or controller of the light, and also probably controller of their destinies; and speculates about what the other two are doing, and whether they are together, and still in the physical world. The man also fantasies about how wonderful things might or would have been, if they all had acted in a more 'civilized' manner, and achieved an amicable coexistence. As they are restricted to a state of helplessness, since they lack limbs or any power of mobility, it is the most that they can do. This play focusses on the concepts of the afterlife as it relates to the Christian tradition, where the individual finds himself or herself in a sort of suspended state, which perhaps represents the Christian concept of Purgatory, where the individual is forced to reflect upon his or her life. The light

serves two purposes. One is to help us to focus on what each individual is saying, and the second is it fills the role as witness, and maybe controller of their situation. To some the light may represent God, and yet others may say that it may represents the Devil. However, in the mysteries, as in religion, light usually represents positive spirituality, so I would tend to lean towards the former—that is unless one takes the unorthodox view as implied in the book of *Job*, one of the books of the *Old Testament*, that Lucifer is not evil after all, but is an angel doing the work ascribed to him by God. This thus brings the nature of this state of limbo into focus—whether it is temporary or permanent—whether they are in Purgatory or Hell. The process is repeated twice and starts for a third time when the play ends, suggesting that they—the three characters—are languishing for an extended period of time.

This is the second work being examined in this paper that relationships with, or amongst the dead are taken into consideration, and once again there are reasons that one might consider this work a supernatural or ghost story. The first work being *Eh Joe* where the relationship seems to be between the living but aging Joe and a previous lover, whose own words imply that she is now dead. Although in that work other dead persons are mentioned like Joe's father, and another lover who committed suicide, the original accusing voice is the only other

protagonist. In *Play* however, the relationship is between each of the three apparently dead protagonists and what appears as an unknown controlling supernatural force. However, this controlling force does nothing except to focus the light on each of the protagonists in turn. In this work, there is a conflict between what I may choose to refer to as the conflict or tension within the mystical. This work is totally set within a non-physical dimension or space, without ever intruding upon the physical or natural world. Should it then be considered to be a mystical piece, or just a supernatural or ghost story? The implication is that the protagonists are experiencing an ordered or ordained process. When and where there is order and process, there may be also positive or even redemptive aspects of the mystical operating, and even if there is no redemption—if the characters are in Hell, the implication of due process points towards the deeper and more profound aspects of the mystical. The fact that the play is set totally within another world or dimension reinforces these mystical aspects and gives them precedence over the concept that the work could simply be labelled as being a supernatural or ghost story, since in most instances of the latter, the way in which the non-physical intrudes, impinges or infringes upon the physical world is unusually highlighted in such a dramatic way, that it becomes the main focus of the story. At this stage, we can clearly identify two aspects of the mystical: one being an

execution of ordered or ordained process or processes through rituals, usually with the possibility of redemption, and another being more superficial, and usually highlighting to the point of exploitation, the contrast between the non-physical and physical—the supernatural and the natural, in a dramatic and often shocking manner. One could also give a Jungian interpretation to work. In such an interpretation before re-joining the universal, the individual consciousness needs to, or is made to, reflect upon the events of its life. During the period of 1962 and 1963 when Beckett, was occupied with the writing of *Play*, he was reputedly himself involved in a love triangle, of which the other parties were his romantic partner of many years Suzanne Dumesnil, who he eventually married in March 1961, and the literary critic Barbara Bray. This association appears to have lasted the rest of his life—a total of more than thirty years. Despite the ominous and morbid nature of the work compared to eternal nature of this particular love triangle in real life, and the fact that the relationships between Beckett and each of the women appeared mutually beneficial both from a professional and a personal point of view, *Play* appears to be autobiographical in nature. This is another source of mystery, or contradiction in Beckett's work. The mystery, or contradiction of judgement. What is good or desirable in the long run and who is there to judge? Does anyone actually win, or does everyone lose, sooner or

later? If *Play* is indeed autobiographical, to the outside observer, taking into consideration the apparently fruitful and mutually benevolent nature both relationships, why is there such a morbid representation? One is left to assume that Beckett saw some ominous clouds or sinister implications in the apparently mutually benevolent love triangle. The theme of judgement also applies to *Eh Joe*, and in addition to being an aspect of mystery, is also one of the reoccurring themes in Beckett's work.

Like in *Eh Joe*, in *Play* there is no resolution because there is no apparent contrition or repentance. In fact, each character expresses irritation, more than any other sentiment, at the intermittent intrusions of the light. The presumed wife continues to hold the perspective that she was as innocent in life, as she is helpless in death; the man holds the view that 'civilized' people would have behaved differently, implying that in his opinion, his transgressions were not so terrible after all; and the presumed mistress states that if given another chance she would probably act similarly. The work also serves to show the futility of the love triangle by highlighting the possibility that the emotional and mental anguish—the torment and the insecurity—which were very evident to those involved, if not to friends and acquaintances, during the individuals' lifetimes, could possibly continue to exist in the afterlife, after all the physical benefits have already been extinguished. As a result, like *Quadrant I* and *II*, and *Eh*

Joe, the work *Play*, from the point of view of the main protagonists, is also nihilistic in outlook.

There are many similarities between the role of the accusing voice in *Eh Joe*, and that of the eye or eyes in *Film*. Both entities seem to be constructs of the protagonists' imaginations. They both are perceived by the protagonists as censoring or judging their actions in some way. Once again, as in *Nacht und Träume*, *Eh Joe*, and *Play*, the theme of judgement is present. Both the entities are the sources of profound disquiet and unease for the protagonists, who try their best to escape their inquiry or examination. However, while the protagonist in *Eh Joe* seems to have limited success in blocking out, or nullifying the effects of the voice through the use of 'mental thug-e', the one in *Film* fails to do so. In this way in *Film* the resolution is negative, destructive and determinist, as in the combination of *Quads I* and *II*. Perhaps the main difference, apart from the fact that in one, the accuser or examiner, is a voice, and the other, it is an eye, or a pair of eyes, is that while the accusing voice in *Eh Joe* relates to specific events, the observing eye or eyes in *Film* cannot be so easily pinned down because it is more based on a general feeling of being censored or disapproved of, rather than relating to specific actions or events that took place in the past. In *Film*, the eye or eyes represent the censor of society, which over one's lifetime exerts tremendous pressure on one's sense of self-esteem. If

the pictures that the protagonist tears up are momentous from his past, he seems to have lived a fairly normal and relatively conservative life. He seemed to have had loving parents, loving pets, success with his education. He seemed to have married, served his country during the war, and most probably had a family of his own. The music, which was not in the original piece, but was added in 2004 by V. Grossi, changes from being eerie and shrill, and becomes beautiful and melodic during the sequence where he is looking at the photographs, which seem to represent the different stages of his life. It does not even change drastically when he arrives at the photograph that reflects his current appearance. The fact that he tears them all up anyway suggests that the judgement is coming from his own self-scrutiny. A clue could be that fact that he tears them all up after coming to the most current photograph of himself. It is interesting to note that the protagonists in *Nacht und Träume*, *Eh Joe*, and *Film* are fairly advanced in years. They were also made when Beckett was fairly advanced in years. *Eh Joe* was written in 1965 and *Film* was made in 1964 when the writer was 59 and 58 years old respectively. *Nacht und Träume* was made in 1982 when he was 76. All three films seem to suggest that the 'weight' of, or the toll of time or experience on, one's conscience or sense of self-esteem, tends to increase with age to the point of making life almost unbearable as one gets older. The other three characters in *Film* also

seem to be quite advanced in age. The fact that they all react in horror when the camera or the 'eye' focuses on them; the most extreme reaction being that of the elderly lady on the staircase, reinforces this point. To this extent all three works, like *Play*, could also be described as being autobiographical. To the extent that this work implies that no matter howsoever one succeeds in life, at the end we all have to face the same inevitable fate of becoming decrepit and old, and like the protagonist, with a strong possibility of being alone, and that this most likely may be the best-case scenario, in addition to being determinist, the outlook of *Film* is fundamentally nihilistic. It could also be defined as being a black comedy. The fact that the protagonist in the original version of the work is played by the great comic actor of the silent movie era Buster Keaton, reinforces this point.

Hence, the first aspect of the mystery that was identified and examined was mysticism or the mystical. It was also shown that the mystical or mysticism is usually also associated with the religious, and at a more superficial level, the supernatural elements. The next aspect was nihilism, which has been shown to consist of at least three different types: the apparent or false nihilism of *Nacht und Träume*, where the nihilism really only seems to exist on the surface; the inescapable determinist nihilism of the combination of *Quadrs I* and *II*, and also of *Film*; and the nihilism associated with the continued wrong decisions

being made by the protagonist or protagonists as in *Eh Joe* and *Play*. The determinist nihilism of *Film* is particularly interesting and intriguing because it has rarely ever been examined. While in *Quadrs I and II* the focus is on nihilism is at the societal level, in *Film* the focus is on the individual. However, it is the expectation, censor or scrutiny of the society that the individual automatically and deterministically assumes in *Film* that is the cause of his undoing. It is due to the effects of the ageing process upon Sisyphus of the famous Greek myth, that he will be eventually and inevitably overcome and crushed by the rock. This in itself could be another aspect or example of the mystery within the works of Beckett—the psychology of the aging process. This aspect of the mysteries is usually combined with that of judgement, and along with judgement, is also one of the reoccurring themes in Beckett's work. He has been quoted by the journalist John Gruen as having said 'the only sin is the sin of being born' ('Samuel Beckett Talks about Beckett'. *Vogue*. December 1969. P 210), and has also inspired the modern mantra 'fail better', which has been appropriated, by many an ambitious artist and entrepreneur, from his prose piece 'Westward Ho' (1983). The fact that these two statements maybe at times compatible, and yet at times totally contradictory, not only reinforces the mystery of Beckett's work, but also shows the complexity and the diverse range of attitudes and emotions that can be attributed to his

character and personality. In their compatibility, the two statements could be interpreted as representing the nihilist renunciation normally associated with Christianity, and Buddhism, and in their contradiction the latter, 'fail better' could be interpreted as being life embracing. He is also reputed to have referred to *Film* as being an 'interesting failure' ('That Time When Beckett Made a Movie, and Other News'. *'On The Shelf'. The Paris Review*. Dan Pipenbring. 18 September 2015).

Perhaps the solution to Beckett's determinist brand of nihilism at the level of the individual could be found in Jungian psychology, or within the mysticism of *Nacht und Träume*, where the reinforcement of the inner spiritual being of the protagonist by the divine or unconscious, acts to counter the negative psychological consequences that come with the aging process. Finally, as we have seen in the works examined, all of these aspects of the mysteries combine and overlap, as they also seem to do in real life. Unravelling, identifying and interpreting them therefore becomes an important factor not only in gaining a better understanding and appreciation of the work of Beckett, but also in gaining a better understanding and appreciation of the very life experience itself.

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Based in Trinidad and Tobago, **Emery Anthony Cournand**, is a Retired Public Servant and currently a pensioner and caregiver for his mom who is bedridden with arthritis. He teaches English as a second language as part-time. He is preparing to pursue postgraduate diploma in this field to further his career.
