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“BORNE-ACROSS HUMANS” – THE MIGRANT EXPERIENCE AS A WAY OF VIEWING ARTISTIC PRACTICE

LUDZIE „PRZENIESIENI PRZEZ” – DOŚWIADCZENIE MIGRANTÓW JAKO
SPÓSOB NA POSTRZEGANIE DZIAŁALNOŚCI ARTYSTYCZNEJ

Abstract

In an essay on Günter Grass, Salman Rushdie suggests that the migrant experience is a triple disruption involving place, language and behaviour. Rather than being disabling, however, Rushdie [1992, p. 278] views it as empowering, where migrants become something magical, “borne-across humans – (...) metaphorical beings in their very essence.” In the first part of the paper it is suggested that Rushdie’s description of Grass as migrant not only gives a useful way of viewing the writer’s work, but also provides a tool for viewing other artists’ work. In doing so, the initial premise is extended to cover the existential alienation of which both Albert Camus and Jean-Paul Sartre write, as well as Gilles Deleuze’s examination of the event. In the second part of the article, in light of these considerations, works by the artist and theatre director Tadeusz Kantor are analysed – *Linia Podziału* [*The Dividing Line*, 1966]

Abstrakt

W swoim eseju o Günterze Grassie, Salman Rushdie proponuje, by uznać, że migrant doświadcza potrójnego zakłócenia, które obejmuje miejsce, język i zachowanie. Rushdie [2013, s. 284] uważa, że jest to doświadczenie upełnomocniające, a nie wyłączone, ponieważ imigranci stają się czymś magicznym – to „ludzie «przeniesieni przez» – (...) metaforyczne istnienia w samej swojej istocie”. W pierwszej części artykułu sugeruję, że Rushdie, opisując Güntera Grassa jako migranta, nie tylko przedstawia użyteczny sposób analizy dzieł pisarza, ale także dostarcza narzędzie, które wykorzystane zostać może do interpretacji prac innych twórców. Wstępna przesłanka zostaje jednocześnie poszerzona o tematykę alienacji egzystencjalnej, o której pisał zarówno Albert Camus, jak i Jean-Paul Sartre. Odnosi się do niej także badanie wydarzenia Gilles’a Deleuze’a. W świetle tych rozważań, w drugiej

and *Umarła Klasa* [*The Dead Class*, 1975], as well as the writer and playwright Samuel Beckett – *Watt* [1953], *Molloy* [1955] and *Waiting for Godot* [1955]. In the conclusion, it is suggested that even though there may be positive aspects to migrant experience these may not be (or want to be) understood.

Key words: migrant, alienation, event, Salman Rushdie, Günter Grass, Tadeusz Kantor, Samuel Beckett

części artykułu, analizowane są prace artysty i reżysera teatralnego Tadeusza Kantora – *Linia Podziału* [1966] i *Umarła Klasa* [1975], a także dzieła pisarza i dramaturga Samuela Becketta – *Watt* [1953], *Molloy* [1955] i *Czekając na Godota* [1955]. Podsumowując, nasuwa się wniosek, że, choć doświadczenie migracji przejawia pozytywne strony, to może ono nie zawsze zostać (lub też chcieć być) zrozumiane.

Słowa kluczowe: migrant, alienacja, wydarzenie, Salman Rushdie, Günter Grass, Tadeusz Kantor, Samuel Beckett

1. The migration of Grass according to Rushdie

In his essay about Günter Grass, titled simply *Essays*, Salman Rushdie [1992, pp. 277-278] outlines the elements that go to make up a migrant: *A full migrant suffers, traditionally, a triple disruption: he loses his place, he enters into an alien language, and he finds himself surrounded by beings whose social behaviour and codes are very unlike, and sometimes even offensive to, his own.* Further into his essay, Rushdie brings these ideas to bear upon Grass' situation and asks the question whether or not the writer can be considered a full migrant, progressively peeling away Grass' rights to that status, until in the end he asks the question of how *useful this notion of a half-migrant Grass a maybe-only-one-third-migrant Grass, really is* [Rushdie, 1992, p. 278].

This done, and Rushdie being Rushdie, he then goes on to rebuild Grass' rights to migrant status by re-interpreting the original categories through a detailed and persuasive account of how they can be seen to apply to Grass. This involves, first of all, a re-examination of the term *migration* itself¹, so that it is now not only applicable across national frontiers and within nation states, from rural to urban [Rushdie, 1992, pp. 278]. There is also a reconsideration of the word in less “literalistic” terms – movement across, not only by way of the physical, but also, perhaps even more so, the mental:

because migration also offers us one of the richest metaphors of the age. The word metaphor, with its roots in the Greek words for bearing across, describes a sort of migration, the migration of ideas into images. Migrants – borne-across humans – are metaphorical beings in their very essence; and migration, seen as a metaphor, is everywhere around us. [Rushdie, 1992, pp. 278-279]

¹ In this re-evaluation, Rushdie builds upon the more commonly accepted idea of migration: see, for example, *Encyclopedia Britannica* [2016], in which migration is considered in terms of movement across physical space, while the principal current of modern migration is towards urban areas. Generally, too, migration is described in a negative light, as it is usually accompanied by *violence, destruction and human suffering* on a mass scale. Rushdie does not view migration in this way, although it may be argued that the changes he describes may be accompanied by a degree of personal suffering.

Through this reassessment, Rushdie opens up the categories of what a person might experience to actually qualify as a migrant. As a result, loss of place not only becomes a matter of relocation in space, but also in time, shifting the emphasis from a spatial to a temporal location. This relocation also takes on a qualitative shift, from safe to unsafe, and from good to bad. In terms of language too, it is no longer simply a matter of realising something is different, but rather that one's own language, which has become distorted in some way, is out of tune with existing reality. Nor, finally, is it a case of being surrounded by people whose moral codes are unlike one's own and perhaps offensive, but that one's own behaviour and codes are now somehow lacking. Rushdie writes:

The first dislocation, remember, is loss of roots. And Grass lost not only Danzig; he lost – he must have lost – the sense of home as a safe, “good” place. How could he retain that feeling in the light of what he learned about it at the war's end? The second dislocation is linguistic. And we know – and Grass has written often and eloquently – of the effect of the Nazi period on the German language, of the need for the language to be rebuilt, pebble by pebble, from the wreckage; because a language in which evil finds so expressive a voice is a dangerous tongue (...) And the third disruption is social. Once again we can argue that the transformation in German society, or, rather in the Germany that the growing Grass knew and experienced, was of the same order as the change in social codes that a migrant from one country to another experiences; that Nazi Germany was, in some ways, another country. Grass had to unlearn that country, that way of thinking about society, and to learn a new one [Rushdie, 1992, pp. 279-280].

In effect, as Rushdie has it, it is a shift from an old to a new self. However, this conclusion should not be taken as an end in itself, because what is important here is the fact that Rushdie opens up the categories of what it is to be a migrant, enriching the original premise, and this is something I would like to continue through the consideration of two more propositions in relation to migrant status – one is existentialist alienation and the other where divergence and incompleteness are perceived as part of the condition of being.

2. Migration in terms of existentialist alienation and an event

The state of migrant might be viewed in terms of an existentialist alienation. For example, the hero of Albert Camus' novel *The Outsider* is forced to live alone on the margins of society. In spite of this, however, Camus does not see Meursault as a reject but rather someone who refuses to behave like other people: that is, he is a person who is straight-talking and not afraid to show his emotions. And this, as Camus believes, makes him a danger to society:

(...) the hero of the book is condemned because he doesn't play the game. In this sense he is an outsider to the society in which he lives, wandering on the fringe, on the outskirts of life, solitary and sensual. And for that reason, some readers have been tempted to regard him as a reject. But to get a more accurate picture of the character, or

rather one which conforms more closely to the author's intentions, you must ask yourself in what way Meursault doesn't play the game. The answer is simple: he refuses to lie. Lying is not only saying what isn't true. It is also, in fact especially, saying more than is usually true and, in the case of the human heart, saying more than one feels. We all do it, every day, to make life simpler. But contrary to appearances, Meursault doesn't want to make life simpler. He says what he is, he refuses to hide his feelings and society immediately feels threatened. [Camus, 1983, pp. 118-119]

The description Camus gives of Meursault has parallels with Rushdie's of Grass as a migrant. Both men exist outside of the societies in which they live and their respective languages are "in opposition to" what has gone before or surrounds them at the present time. However, there is a difference between Grass and the protagonist of Camus' novel, and that is while Meursault is a victim of his alienation, Rushdie sees Grass as using it as the basis for his work. And in this respect he is perhaps more like Sartre's man who does not want to remain 'walled in', 'caged in', 'imprisoned', 'trapped' in those 'given' images of the self proposed by others or by society [Bree, 1974, p. 95]. On the contrary, Sartre's man wants to *unmask this self-deception so as to induce the move from false to authentic awareness, thus preparing the advent of fully conscious, therefore 'free', human beings* [Bree, 1974, p. 95].

Grass, then, is as proactive as Sartre's man. As a result, the alienation which Rushdie describes for Grass is, if not the same, at least similar to Sartre's, in that it pushes the writer into action, making him suspect *all total exploitation, all systems of thought which purport to be complete* [Rushdie, 1992, p. 280].

This suspicion of totalising narrative leads to the second possibility for migrant status that I want to propose, one in which the systemic and the possibility of completeness are to be mistrusted. This in turn equates to Gilles Deleuze and his consideration of the event.

Essentially, Deleuze sees an event as a non-static occurrence which, although defined at certain moments is constantly open to change and interpretation, something which is "en route" or "coming about": *"a temporal modulation of a continuous variation of a world in the process of making itself (...) that which is always and already en route (...) becoming like a stranger to one's language, to one's nations* [Lomax, 1998, pp. 56-57]². It is, in effect, process: *that at once affirms impossibilities and passes through them*", as a result of which *"Beings are pushed apart, kept open through divergent series and impossible totalities that pull them outside, instead of being closed upon the compossible and convergent world that they express from within (...) It is a world of captures instead of closures* [Deleuze, 1993, p. 81]. This dynamic world, I would suggest, is the world of the migrant. It is also the world of the artist *cum* migrant.

Both these possibilities: an alienation that is empowering and a constant and critical stance towards system and completeness, I would suggest, engender artistic

² This extract comes from an article by Yve Lomax in which the writer considers the work of the performance artist Gary Stevens. In these few lines Lomax summarizes quite succinctly an aspect of Deleuze's philosophy and that is why I am including them here.

practice (as well as being a way of viewing it) – and I now want to explore this in relation to the artist Tadeusz Kantor and the writer Samuel Beckett.

3. Migrant Kantor – *The Dividing Line* and *The Dead Class*

Kantor and his work certainly displays characteristics that would make him, to use Rushdie’s words, *a borne-across human*. In developing this idea I will now look at two of Kantor’s works more closely: *Linia Podziału* [*The Dividing Line*, 1966], and *Umarła Klasa* [*Dead Class*, 1975].

In creating *The Dividing Line*, Kantor was definitely involved in introducing a new language onto the Polish art scene. This was the avant-garde practice of happening which, according to some histories [Goldberg, 1990], had its beginnings in the USA in the late 1950’s, and by the time of Kantor’s piece, was a worldwide phenomenon. As a performance practice it was multidisciplinary, ranging anywhere between visual arts and/or theatre, or neither of these, being, as Allan Kaprow would have it *the difference between watching an actor eating strawberries on stage and actually eating them yourself at home. Doing life (...)* [Kelly, 2003, p. 195]. This connection with real life, the *here* and *now* of everyday existence, is especially important when viewing *The Dividing Line*, for, although Kantor and those involved in the happening may have proposed it as primarily a challenge to an existing aesthetic, other interpretations definitely saw it as a provocation, and not only in the realm of art. In this case, what occurred in the happening and how the communist authorities in Kraków viewed it is illuminating.

The fact that Kantor had imported an art form from the capitalist USA into Poland in the first place, was seen to be questionable. However, there were also many references within the happening itself which were seen as attacks upon the communist regime. As Anna Baranowa and Bernadeta Stano [2006, 116, translation – MB] comment on the different events within the happening:

It turned out, that... the covering of the girl lying on the sofa with coal was a symbol of Poland defiled by mining... that the Janiccy brothers eating macaroni from a suitcase was a symbol of the lack of availability of anything else to eat in the shops; while, similarly, the wrapping of Marysia in toilet paper, was also a visualization of its lack in the shops (...) (however) the greatest outrage was caused by the bricking up of the doorway by Marek and the statement by Igor that the window is barred. – This, of course, demonstrated the situation in socialist Poland.

In addition to this, as Joanna Mytkowska [2000, p. 60] reports:

Kantor joined individual events with an anti-institutional and anarchistic speech given during the action. Bricking up the door to the room of the action enhanced the effect of tension and suspense.

Here therefore, the effect of the happening is seen both as an avant-garde challenge to existing artistic practices as well as a provocation to a totalitarian regime that is unable to provide for its people. As a result, much like the young boy in Hans Christian

Anderson's, *Emperor's New Clothes*, who points to the naked king and thereby reveals the lie of his supposedly ever so fine clothes, Kantor and his fellow happeners, through their enactment of the happening, purportedly showed up the sham of the communist system.

Of course, Kantor's "borne-acrossness" is not limited to the use of a "new" language to question existing aesthetic practices, or a political system that is failing. He is also able to use that language to question the form he is using – in this case happening³. In addition to *The Dividing Line*, a number of other happenings by Kantor are enactments that call into question happening as a practice of everyday life and the *here* and *now*. With *Anatomy Lesson According to Rembrandt* [1969], for instance, and *Meeting with Durer's Rhinoceros* [1968], there are definite references to the tradition of art; happening, as it were, paying allegiance to a (its) visual art heritage. With the four-part *Panoramic Sea Happening* [1967], in the part titled *The Raft of the Medusa* after Gericault, the art reference is obvious, while the present tense and everyday of the beach at Osieki, where the happening took place, became the past tense of an event in French history that occurred many hundreds of kilometres away: Kantor, therefore, trades in the everyday for art, *here* and *now* for *there* and *then*.

Kantor as metaphorical being did not restrict himself to provocation *with* (and *within*) happening; a form of activity, anyway, that Jerzy Limon [2006, p. 131] positions as a provocation⁴. Kantor's work in the theatre, especially in the final phase of his creative output also saw him questioning the theatre and its traditions to produce something that uses personal experience, memory and loss, as well as a tradition of non-conformism to challenge existing theatre practices.-

In his text, *The Theatre of Death* [1975], which is one of a number of manifestos for his own theatre, Kantor places together Gordon Graig and the Dadaists, as well as a rejection of the avant-garde (goodbye happening, or by this time conceptual art), in favour of a side-road, which as the artist himself put it, offered him: *more chances of the UNKOWN!!!* [Państwowa Galeria Sztuki, 2004, p. 20]. This is a side-road too, that although it rejects what has gone before does use some of its tools, all of which can be found in Kantor's (later) theatre: Graig's mannequins, Dada's bringing together of disparate elements, happening's determination not to tell a story in terms of the devel-

³ Jarosław Suchan [2000, pp. 95-96] believes Kantor adopted a heretical stance towards all forms of convention. As a consequence, Kantor was critical of the rules and norms that are seen to be part of the practice of happening. A number of his happenings, therefore, make direct reference to paintings in contravention of the rule that happening will not involve itself with the arts [see Kaprow in Harrison and Wood, 1994, p. 706]. In Kantor's happenings, however, paintings do not function as works of art but as *ready-mades*, objects to be entered into dialogue with and exploited by the artist during the performance. In addition to this, in Kantor's happenings, a form of participation where audience and performers work together, which was a norm for the original happenings (although Oldenburg opposes this notion – see Ayres, 2012), is replaced by a form of involvement where the audience are told what to do by the artist. A situation which leads Suchan to believe Kantor's true aim was not to promote a more active and egalitarian working relationship between artist and audience but to examine the nature of the participation itself (Suchan, 2000, p. 99).

⁴ In Limon's book, *Piąty wymiar teatru*, the third chapter, which is about the performance arts, is titled *O prowokacji w teatrze i sztuce* (*On provocation in the theatre and art*).

opment of narrative or character. However, and as the artist himself states, these are not elements that are taken up blindly as a matter of conformism so as to guarantee a place in the avant-garde, which shields: *alike the wise and the stupid* [Państwowa Galeria Sztuki, 2004, p. 20], rather it is to start afresh, to do again the *unthinkable* [Państwowa Galeria Sztuki, 2004, p. 19]), which was indeed the starting point for the avant-garde.

This being the case, Kantor decided upon a path which as he describes: *is bound to begin with activities of little significance, hardly noticeable, incidental, having little to do with the recognised trend – the private, intimate, I would even say: embarrassing renderings* [Państwowa Galeria Sztuki, 2004, p. 20]. In fulfilling this, meanwhile, which I would argue is a “migration of ideas into images” that defies written description, that defies, in fact, any attempt at recording whatsoever, it is difficult to give an (THE) idea of what the *The Dead Class* actually is. For example, it can be Isabel Tejada [2004, p. 85] giving us glimpses of the spectacles as they were enacted, where Kantor’s *arms directed and conducted the rhythmic movement of the actors under the sound of an old Viennese waltz, his hand on his chin, wondering what is happening.* And where

Kantor’s elderly, the dead, cannot do away with what they have been; therefore they accumulate all their past and attach it to children’s cerulean flesh – the man who was a soldier, the woman who was a prostitute, the woman who had a baby and became a mother, who carried on her back a small school body wearing a shiny black uniform. All the elderly carry their childhood on their backs as if It (sic) were like a swinging rucksack that cantilevered over the wheel of their old bicycle and hung from their necks. The elderly also keep an object that represents and summarizes the story of their lives. (...) Kantor’s object jogs the memory and preserves the hallmarks of its owner and the traces of his energy. It is an object from a second-hand shop, which is almost useless and piled up on a rubbish tip (...). [Tejada 2004, p. 85]

It can also be a script of sorts:

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Or, finally, it can be either Tadeusz Kantor's *The Dead Class* or Andrzej Wajda's filmed version of *The Dead Class* [Wajda, 2007, 1976], but NOT both. The two versions being a *confrontation of two realities: the reality of the basement cellar* (the staged production – MB) and *the reality of natural space* (the filmed version – MB) that should not have been done. [Dziewulska, 2007, p. 17].

4. Migrant Beckett – *Watt, Molloy* and *Waiting for Godot*

Samuel Beckett might be described as a self-imposed exile. An Irishman by birth, after the Second World War he set up home in France. Also, after the novel, *Watt* [1953]⁵, which was written in English, he started to write in both English and French, translating from either language depending on his audience⁶. In a very real sense then, in terms of both language and place, Beckett put himself in the position of literal migrant as outlined by Rushdie, although his social situation is much harder to speculate upon. This position of literal migrant is seen in Beckett's characters too.

In his study of Beckett, *The Long Sonata of the Dead*, Michael Robinson places Beckett's heroes firmly in the tradition of wanderer(s). Equating different stages of the journey to the different works that make up Beckett's oeuvre:

The narrative which they successively tell is that of a rootless, detached and ineffectual young man at Trinity College who, after failing miserably in human intercourse (the stories), turns his back on his place of birth (Echo's Bones). He wanders for some time on the continent and in London (Murphy), and, looking back on Ireland, discovers within himself a series of mental preoccupations which are to concern him for the rest of his days (Watt). He travels for a while with a friend (the jettisoned Mercier et Camier) but leaves him to go in search of his mother (Molloy). He does not find her but makes his way, in a condition of ever increasing decay, to a room where he settles down to die (Malone Dies). Shortly after arriving at the impasse of a death which his consciousness survives (The Unnamable) he discovers a need for companionship, and there is slight shift in the direction of the writing towards the plays and How It Is. [Robinson, 1969, p. 61].

But it is not only in the literal sense that this wandering takes place, Robinson also places it in the 'greyer', less literal arena, where the movement is also spiritual, moving through and across the characters of Beckett's writing, where characters from

⁵ The date given here is the date of its first publication, although it was written between 1942 and 1944.

⁶ See Szuba (2012, 83-92) for a consideration of this aspect of Beckett's working practice.

earlier books appear in later ones, and where characters can call upon the experiences of their predecessors. This in turn creates a situation in which the hero's *condition is not only one of exile from the life around him which by definition should be timeless, dimensionless and motionless* [Robinson, 1969, p. 22]. In addition, as far as Robinson is concerned, the alienation that Beckett feels and the factor which motivates him to produce his work is an awareness of the difference between what we are, our actual existence, and the desires that we have. The understanding that we are all bound by the same material existence – a sealed series – from which we long to escape, to return to a nothingness where we do not have to think or actually do anything [Robinson, 1969, p. 44]. This sealed series is the deadening routine of modern industrial life and values, and the futility of an age in which God is dead. In his work, Beckett uses various means to convey these ideas. These include descriptions of physical actions or acts of vaudevillian comedy or sickening grotesqueness, characters in the guise of tramps or clowns, and language which ranges from “sublime declaration” to “childish insults”.

In a comic interlude from his novel, *Watt*, Beckett describes the hero leaving a romantic encounter in terms of a mechanical ballet, in which arms, legs, and body move in a series of opposing directions that would seem to impede movement rather than facilitate it:

Watt's way of advancing due east, for example, was to turn his bust as far as possible towards north and at the same time to fling out his right leg as far as possible towards the south, and then to turn his bust as far as possible towards the south and at the same time fling his left leg as far as possible towards the north, and then again turn his bust as far as possible towards the north and to fling out his leg as far as possible towards the south, and then again to turn his bust as far as possible towards the south and fling out his left leg as far as possible towards the north and so on, over and over again, many, many times, until he reached his destination and could sit down. [Beckett, 2009, p. 30]

In another description, meanwhile, this time from the novel *Molloy* [1955]⁷, love-making is brought down to a series of grotesque moves:

She had a hole between her legs, oh not a bunghole I had always imagined, but a slit, and in this I put, or rather she put, my so-called virile member, not without difficulty, and I toiled and moiled until I discharged or gave up trying or was begged by her to stop. A mug's game in my opinion and tiring on top of that, in the long run. [Beckett, 2009, p. 51].

In addition to the above, Beckett's amalgamation of tramp and clown⁸ is an appropriate figure to convey his own sense of alienation, of the futility of trying to do

⁷ *Molloy* was originally written in French and published in 1951. The date given here is for the English publication, which was translated by the author and Patrick Bowles.

⁸ Leszek Kołakowski reveals the important role the clown plays in society. He writes: *The clown is he who, although moving in high society, is not part of it, and tells unpleasant things to everybody in it; he, disputes everything regarded as evident. He would not be able to do this, if her were part of society himself; then he could at most be a scandal-monger. The clown must stand outside and*

anything, as it is a figure which has to turn its *incapacity in the art of living into a ... parody of that art performed well* [Robinson, 1969, p. 38]: in effect putting on a mask of succeeding where it is impossible to succeed. The figure of the clown is also used to good effect here, in that by engaging in these acts, which he finds impossible to succeed in, he questions the assumptions of the audience, who are themselves *travelling the same limited series of cause and effect from birth to death* [Robinson, 1969, p. 39].

The final area to be looked at in terms of Beckett's alienation, lies in his use of language. Beckett's technique in writing was to write first of all in either English or French and then translate where necessary into the second language. This extra scrutiny after the original writing process, perhaps lending to the sparseness of Beckett's writing and ensuring that he dealt with what he wanted to deal with – nothing: *There are many ways in which the thing I am trying in vain to say may be tried in vain to be said* [Robinson, 1969, p. 37]. Where the art of representation through language is bound to fail due to its own inadequacy and the fact that there is actually nothing to express:

B. – *Yet, I speak of an art turning in disgust, weary of puny exploits, weary of pretending to be able, of being able, of doing a little better the same old thing, of going a little further along a dreary road.*

D. – *And preferring what?*

B. – *The expression that there is nothing to express, nothing with which to express, no power to express, no desire to express, together with no obligation to express.* [Robinson, 1969, author's note – front page]

In such a situation language becomes meaningless, because as Martin Esslin [Fletcher et al., 1978, pp. 48-49] states: *In a purposeless world that has lost its ultimate objectives, dialogue, like action, becomes a mere game to pass the time.* This disintegration of language is central to Beckett's drama and takes any number of the following forms: digressions, corrections, questions, additions, a continuous selection of unlinked words and themes, and a loose selection of associations, all of which leads towards disorganization and incoherence [Wiśniewski, 2006, p. 141]. In the extract from *Waiting for Godot* [1955]⁹ shown below, the idea of speech without a purpose, where there are loose associations and digressions, and where unlinked themes are pursued is evident. And, even though there appears to be an attempt at coherence as the speaker, Lucky, cites sources and uses structures to signal logical connections between ideas: *what is more, as a result, and in spite of*, it soon becomes apparent that the sources are dubious while the linking devices are only part of a free-wheeling exposition. This, in turn, moves from ideas concerning God and the universe, man's desperate position in the world, different sports and forms of physical activity, as well as a bishop and a number

observe good society from the outside, (...) in order to get to know its sacred cows, and have occasion to tell unpleasant things (...) The philosophy of clowns is the philosophy that in every epoch shows up as doubtful what has been regarded as most certain; it reveals contradictions inherent in (...) what seems obvious common sense, and discovers truth in the absurd. (Kołakowski cited in Robinson, 1969, 42).

⁹ *Waiting for Godot* was written in French in 1952. It was first performed in Paris in 1953. It was translated into English and first performed in London in 1955. It was published in English in 1956.

of locations including Clapham Common and Connemara. Thus it is, as Esslin states, simply part of a game to pass the time:

Lucky: Given the existence as uttered forth in the public works of Puncher and Wattman of a personal God quaquaquaquaqu with white beard quaquaquaquaqu outside time without extension who from the heights of divine apathia divine athambia divine aphasia loves us dearly with some exceptions for reasons unknown but time will tell and suffers like the divine Miranda with those who for reasons unknown but time will tell are plunged in torment plunged in fire whose flames if that continues and who can doubt it will fire the firmament that is to say blast hell to heaven so blue still and calm so calm with a calm which even though intermittent is better than nothing but not so fast and considering what is more that as a result of the labours left unfinished crowned by the Accacacademy of Anthropopopometry of Essy-in-Possy of Testew and Cunard it is established beyond all doubt all other doubt (...) that man in short that man in brief in spite of the strides of alimentation and defecation is seen to waste and pine waste and pine and concurrently simultaneously what is more for reasons unknown in spite of the strides of physical culture the practice of sports such as tennis football running cycling swimming flying floating riding gliding conating camogie skating tennis of all kinds dying flying sports of all sorts autumn summer winter winter tennis of all kinds hockey of all sorts penicillin and succedanea in a word I resume and concurrently simultaneously for reasons unknown to shrink and dwindle in spite of the tennis I resume flying gliding golf over nine and eighteen holes tennis of all sorts in a word for reasons unknown in Feckam Peckham Fulham Clapham namely concurrently simultaneously what is more for reasons unknown but time will tell to shrink and dwindle I resume Fulham Clapham in a word the dead loss per cent caput since the death of Bishop Berkley being to the tune of one inch four ounce per caput approximately by and large more or less to the nearest decimal good measure round figures stark naked in the stockinged feet in Connemara in a word for reasons unknown no matter what matter the facts are there and considering what is more much more grave that in the light of the labours lost of Steinweg and Peterman it appears what is more much more grave that in the light the light the light of the labours lost of Steinweg and Peterman that in the plains in the mountains by the seas by the rivers running water running fire the air is the same and then the earth namely the air and then the earth in the great cold the great dark the air and the earth abode of stones in the great cold alas alas in the year of their Lord six hundred and something (...). [Beckett, 2009, pp. 42-43].

From this brief survey of Beckett’s work, it can be seen see that he might be viewed as both a literal and non-literal migrant, and that both personas, but especially the latter, engenders his work. In this, through his descriptions and use of actions, characterizations and language he conveys the “void” that is at the centre of life.

5. Conclusion

Rushdie takes the ideas of migrant and migration and applies them to the writing of Günter Grass, in doing so he extends the original premise of what they are to include not just movement in space but also across time, as well as the use of language and the form of thinking that occurs – the movement of ideas into images – so that, as Rushdie would have it, to be human is to be both migrant and metaphorical. In relation to this, I suggest that the state of migrant in terms of language and behavior can be equated to a form of existentialist alienation in which one becomes distant to and critical of one's surroundings. I also suggest that such a shift, rather than being debilitating (Camus' protagonist in *The Outsider*) is in fact enhancing (Sartre's *man*), especially when taken up as a strategy to be used by artists. In addition, the migrant status as extended by Rushdie is one in which the protagonist is distrustful of the systemic and completeness, preferring rather a state of being that is about process – divergence and openness rather than convergence and closure (Deleuze and his consideration of the event).

With regard to these ideas, irrespective of their status as literal migrant, in a number of works by the visual artist and theatre director Tadeusz Kantor and the writer Samuel Beckett, a non-literal migrant strategy might be said to be at play. Both creators use language and form to create images that challenge prevailing norms. These norms exist in the worlds of the visual arts, writing, and/or theatre, as well as society as a whole: in the sphere of the political, in connection with Kantor's *Dividing Line*, and the existential in relation to Beckett's *Watt*, *Molloy*, and *Waiting for Godot*. Meanwhile, in *The Dead Class*, Kantor crosses borders of time to exploit memories so as to bring about the “unthinkable” – a revitalization of the avant-garde agenda.

Finally, I want to return once again to Deleuze [1992, p. 80] and his consideration of the event. In this case the event is a concert:

Vibrations of sound disperse, periodic movements go through space with their harmonics or submultiples. The sounds have inner qualities of height, intensity, and timbre. The sources of the sounds, instrumental or vocal, are not content to send the sounds out: each one perceives its own, and perceives the others while perceiving its own. These are active perceptions that are expressed among each other, or else prehensions that are prehending one another (...) The origins of the sounds are monads or prehensions that are filled with joy in themselves, with an intense satisfaction, as they fill up with their perception and move from one perception to another.

It would appear that the migrant experience as proposed by Rushdie is one that opens out the possibilities of the world, be it that of the literal or non-literal migrant – the latter in the shape of the artist and a practice of art that might be said to be migrant. In doing so, it is not the closed world of Leibniz's monad that only notices and so is (can only be) inclusive of and happy with that which is similar to itself – prehensions that canprehend one another *because they express the world without exclusion* [Deleuze, 1992, p. 81] – which, in effect, becomes a world of exclusion. In contrast to this, the world of the migrant, “borne-across human” as proposed by Rushdie, is one that is open

to the world of *bifurcations and divergences* [Deleuze, 1992, p. 81] and the affirmation of *impossibles* [Deleuze, 1992, p. 81] that do not attempt to (can no longer) make a whole of the world but can only move through it. And, to return to the musical model, the migrant experience might therefore be equated to a harmony that *goes through a crisis that leads to a broadened chromatic scale, to an emancipation of dissonance or of unresolved accords, accords not brought back to a tonality* [Deleuze, 1992, p. 82].

The danger, of course, and especially in the current political climate, is that the migrant way of being and the form of artistic activity it engenders may be misunderstood or not want to be understood. In which case, the very positive lessons that can be learned from migrant experience, be it for the artist or “ordinary person”, will be pushed away as “not ours” or interpreted in a more sinister light. In this way, and turning to another image proposed by Deleuze in collaboration with Felix Guattari; rather than used for reinvention, the migrant and the experiences s/he has to offer are in danger of being interpreted as a form of War Machine that wants to destroy the State [Deleuze and Guattari, 2010, p. 394]. In which case, migrant being is something that has to be controlled, so that very much like Deleuze and Guattari’s representatives of State science curtail the “eccentric sciences”, the migrant will be allowed, *but precisely on the condition that all the dynamic, nomadic notions – such as becoming, heterogeneity, infinitesimal, passage to the limit, continuous variation – be eliminated and civil, static, and ordinal rules be imposed upon it* [Deleuze and Guattari, 2010, p. 400]. As a result, instead of an ambulant model, where a *process of deterritorialization constitutes and extends the territory itself* a State model is adopted which is *constantly reterritorializing around a point of view, on a domain, according to a set of constant relations* [Deleuze and Guattari, 2010, p. 411].

This article is dedicated to the memory of David Dye, artist and teacher.

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