

Upon encountering the dramas and shorter prosaic works of Samuel Beckett, the reader or spectator will probably soon notice, apart from other characteristic features, the exceptional number of characters that limp, have various foot defects and pains, have problems with locomotion and balance, or who are even legless. In other cases, external causes impede the protagonists from moving, as for example in the play *Happy Days*, where Winnie is stuck in a mound of earth. Incapability of movement and stagnation, whether voluntary or forced, does not appear merely on the physical level; hesitation, inability to decide or act despite an urge to do so are themes frequently occurring in Beckett's texts; when we think of these manifestations of impotence in abstract terms, we realise that they represent stagnation as well: the inability to progress from one situation to another, further from one attitude or mental state etc. The characters often experience the ancient dilemma of activity versus passivity in human life; in many cases, Beckett illustrates it on motion. Another level on which a certain form of immobility emerges is often the structure of a text; that is to say, the plot does not reach any conclusion; the situation presented therein, although usually close to unbearable, does not change, or becomes cyclic. The occurrence of these motives is evidently determined by Beckett's general artistic interests and beliefs, which will be treated with more detail in the first chapter. Therefore, it becomes clear that these themes are not only important individually, but also as a part of a complex of thoughts, which shapes the author's creative approach as well as the range of themes that he tends to be concerned with.