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'No More Head, No More Heart' How It Is – Part 3

The question of structure pervades this part. The conventional 3-part arrangement – a systematic means of ordering that is culturally overdetermined – is distended in various ways, *pace* the work's own tripartite adherence to 'before Pim', 'with Pim', and 'after Pim'. Part 3 is both a plea for the inevitability of structure, an acknowledgment that we cannot do without it, and a series of strategies for multiplying the 3-part arrangement that it completes.

The narrative adumbrates a fourth part, an 'after after Pim' as it were, that never actually arrives ('of our total life it states only three quarters'). This part exists, perhaps, only as a dangerous supplement, rather than a fully-realised part in its own right. But if this fourth part can be hinted at, if not properly actualised, does it not also raise the possibility of a *fifth* part, a prequel to part 1 ('before before Pim'), a state or period which is also mentioned? Neglecting to name this part suggests the numerical conundrum of the status assigned to 'zero' – whether it can be said to possess any distinct properties, or only exists because of its more substantive successors.

There is, of course, a central mathematical, or rather geometric, dilemma within the text. The bodies are linked, a 'vast imbrication of flesh without breach or fissure', but does the resultant pattern describe a line – an infinite line – or a circle? Both possibilities are explored by the narrator. A concordant dilemma is the narrative's apparent gesturing towards closure, and a failure to acknowledge its own one-sidedness: its neglect of symmetrical 'completeness'. In part 3 we learn that each individual is, by turns, both tormentor and tormented, martyring and being martyred. Yet in part 2, the narrator only plays the former, the part of torturer; the 'reverse angle' position of martyr is not subsequently performed.

This part also extends the vertical hierarchy. The mud 'below' and the light 'above' is linked to genealogy. There is a sense of dynastic order, of families begetting families, with biblical echoes. At the head is Kram, with his lamps, both witness and scribe, a shadowy, godlike figure of the order of Knott or Godot. Significantly, he 'goes back up into the light to end his days.' Allusion is also made to prayer going up from below.

Casting a curious light on the structural perplexities is the notion of 'justice', which is often referred to without being described ('we have our being in justice'). It becomes evident that what is 'just' is what is structurally just, which is to say *aesthetically* just. Everyone is defined in this imbrication of flesh, this interchange of torturer and tortured. The word 'exquisite' is used to describe torture – a striking choice, suggestive of a painstaking form of organisation, something almost too organised.

This linking of justice with organisation – with reason and an odd kind of 'beauty' – reaches back to an earlier, platonic notions of virtue and its affiliations with these

ideas. And, once again, there is a mathematical substratum: learning maths as training to become a philosopher, to ascertain what might qualify as 'just'.

Dissolving most of the above is the narrator's central hypothesis: is he alone, or are there 'innumerable others'? The form of justice adumbrated depends, of course, on the latter. If there is only him alone, there cannot be symmetry, ordering, organisation. The final pages plunge headlong into the former possibility: 'the whole story from beginning to end yes completely false yes [...] all balls from start to finish yes'. Solipsism is circumvented by characteristic Beckettian impotence. His narrators are not producers of all that they contemplate, but produced ('someone in another world yes whose kind of dream I am yes'). These concluding passages are all the more disquieting for being the revenant of the Unnamable. The calm, measured tones of parts 1 and 2 are disrupted by the relentless, compulsive voice of the earlier work, and its sliding in and out of hysteria. The circular motion described above thus finds a curious correlate in the movement of Beckett's prose voice.