

BEYOND THE METAPHOR: THE IMPORTANCE OF CHESS IN THE WORK OF SAMUEL BECKETT¹

PARA ALÉM DA METÁFORA: A IMPORTÂNCIA DO XADREZ NA OBRA DE SAMUEL BECKETT

MÁS ALLÁ DE LA METÁFORA: LA IMPORTANCIA DEL AJEDREZ EN LA OBRA DE SAMUEL BECKETT

Pedro Querido (pedro_sq@hotmail.com)*

ABSTRACT

Much has been written on chess as a theme or motif in some of Samuel Beckett's works, namely in *Murphy* (1938) and *Endgame* (1957), and most readings of these works seem to focus solely on the indubitable metaphorical force of chess, or rather of the popular conception of chess. Yet to fail to think of chess as chess, i.e. as a complex system in its own right, one which boasts a long history, millions of current professional and casual players, a vibrant community and even competing schools of thought which fundamentally differ in the way they perceive and theorise the same game, is to fail to engage with the text in a way that does justice to Beckett. This article advocates a more balanced approach for the critical analysis of *Endgame* in general and the game of chess in *Murphy* in particular. Such an approach, it is argued, should include a more solid knowledge of chess theory and practice, and some examples of the kind of interpretations and insights that it could yield are discussed.

Keywords: Samuel Beckett; chess; literature; Murphy; Endgame

RESUMO

Já muito foi escrito sobre o xadrez enquanto tema ou motivo em algumas obras de Samuel Beckett, nomeadamente em *Murphy* (1938) e *Endgame* (1957), e a maioria das leituras dessas obras parece concentrar-se sobretudo na indiscutível força metafórica do xadrez, ou melhor, da ideia popular do xadrez. Contudo, não pensar no xadrez enquanto xadrez (ou seja, enquanto sistema complexo por direito próprio, um sistema que tem uma longa história, milhões de jogadores amadores e profissionais, uma comunidade bem dinâmica e até diferentes escolas de pensamento que veem e teorizam sobre o mesmo jogo de maneiras radicalmente diferentes) é não lidar com o texto de uma maneira que faça justiça a Beckett. Este artigo propõe uma abordagem mais equilibrada para a análise crítica de *Endgame* em geral e do jogo de xadrez em *Murphy* em particular. Será argumentado que tal abordagem deve incluir um conhecimento mais sólido da teoria e da prática do xadrez, e serão discutidos alguns exemplos do tipo de interpretações e perspectivas que esse tipo de abordagem poderá proporcionar.

Palavras-chave: Samuel Beckett; xadrez; literatura; Murphy; Endgame

RESUMEN

Mucho se ha escrito sobre el ajedrez como tema o motivo en algunas de las obras de Samuel Beckett, más precisamente en *Murphy* (1938) y *Endgame* (1957), y la mayoría de las lecturas de estas obras parecen centrarse sobre todo en la indudable fuerza metafórica del ajedrez, o más bien de la concepción popular del ajedrez. Sin embargo, dejar de pensar en el ajedrez como ajedrez (es decir, como un sistema complejo por derecho propio, que cuenta con una larga historia, millones de jugadores profesionales y casuales actuales,

¹ ARTIGO APRESENTADO NAS V JORNADAS DA HISTÓRIA DOS JOGOS EM PORTUGAL

una comunidad vibrante e incluso escuelas de pensamiento rivales que difieren fundamentalmente en la manera en que perciben y teorizan el mismo juego) es dejar de tratar el texto de una manera que haga justicia a Beckett. Este artículo aboga por un enfoque más equilibrado para el análisis crítico de *Endgame* en general y el juego de ajedrez en *Murphy* en particular. El argumento es que este enfoque debe incluir un conocimiento más sólido de la teoría y la práctica del ajedrez, y se discuten algunos ejemplos del tipo de interpretaciones e ideas que podría producir.

Palabras clave: Samuel Beckett; ajedrez; literatura; *Murphy*; *Endgame*.

* Pedro Querido (MA in English Literature, University of London, 2009; MA in Teaching English and German, New University of Lisbon, 2012) is a student in an international PhD programme in Comparative Studies; the recipient of a scholarship from the Portuguese Funding Agency (FCT); and a member of the Centre for Comparative Studies of the School of Arts and Humanities of the University of Lisbon. His PhD research focuses on the theme of old age in absurdist literature, and his research interests include early twentieth-century fiction, comparative literature and the absurd in literature.

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INTRODUCTION

It is difficult to overstate the cultural influence of chess, one which is remarkably widespread and has spanned well over a millennium. In fact, as Gary Allan Fine and Harvey Young (2014) point out, “[t]hroughout its long history, chess has always been more than a game” (p. 91). Having originally been deemed to reflect a military order, and later a social order (Fine and Young, 2014, p. 91), the game of chess, and the seemingly simple action of playing chess, is always liable to be read metaphorically (Fine and Young, 2014, p. 88).

The indisputable symbolic power of chess is clearly evident in its past and present use (and abuse) as a metaphor. Most people, regardless of their interest in chess and knowledge of its basic rules, are familiar with terms such as “pawn”, “check(mate)” and “stalemate”, and may even use some of these tropes in everyday speech. As Derek Alsop (2012) notes, “[e]veryone uses chess metaphors. Chess, the subject of one of the first books published in English, is the most important board game in the history of both Western and Eastern cultures” (p. 30).

Because “chess drips with tradition and is laminated with meaning” (Fine and Young, 2014, p. 88), its presence in literature is both inevitable and worthy of serious analysis. Indeed, it has featured countless times as a meaningful motif, such as in William Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* and T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land*, and even explicitly as a key theme in works like Stefan Zweig’s *Schachnovelle*, Vladimir Nabokov’s *The Defense* and Lewis Carroll’s *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There*.

However, few writers have successfully integrated chess into their work (and passionately lived chess outside of it) to quite the same extent as Samuel Barclay Beckett (1906-1989). As the works cited in this article demonstrate, the chess connection in Beckett’s writing has certainly not gone unnoticed. Indeed, one of the purposes of this article is to draw even more attention to that connection by providing an overview of what has already been written on the subject. This will be carried out most conspicuously in the discussion of *Endgame*.

Yet another, related aim is to call for a greater emphasis to be laid on the significance of chess *qua* board game and complex system in its own right, whose tenets must be placed on an equal footing with literary precepts if a better overall understanding of the texts in question is to be achieved. In my analysis of the chess game in *Murphy*, I will attempt to avoid the pitfalls of “chess-as-pretext” by looking into the rich and almost egalitarian dynamics of the interplay between literary themes and philosophical considerations on the one hand and actual chess rules, conventions, theory and practice on the other, illustrating the value of such an approach with a couple of examples of the kind of results such readings might bring forth.

The main argument put forward in this article, then, is that in some of Beckett’s works, most notably *Murphy* and *Endgame*, chess is not a mere trope, not a tired metaphor used to thinly disguise some ulterior “meaning”, but rather an important organising principle, so much so that any reading of these texts is decidedly incomplete without a working knowledge of the theory behind chess.

BECKETT AND CHESS

James Knowlson (1996), in his authorised biography of Samuel Beckett, *Damned to Fame*, thoroughly chronicles the Irish writer's growing fascination with the game of chess, noting that he was "an ardent chess player" who "would play with anyone good enough to give him a game, whether a relative, friend or total stranger" (p. 210). According to Knowlson (1996), Beckett had a respectable collection of chess books (p. 547), regularly read and studied the chess columns in *Le Monde* (p. 546), and was keen on playing "games of chess against himself" (p. 390), often by re-enacting famous games (p. 546), a habit he did not relinquish even when his sight started to fail him and copying the moves required a great deal of trouble and patience (p. 507).

It should come as no surprise, then, that early on in *Damned to Fame* Knowlson states that "[c]hess was to play an important part in Beckett's life, and appears several times in his writing" (1996, p. 10). Beckett's first published novel *Murphy* is one of the most interesting illustrations of this. The chess game that takes place towards the end of the novel – one which is annotated in full and even humorously commentated on in a style that parodies the chess parlance of the time –, is allotted a great deal of significance, representing nothing less than a crucial turning point for the plot. Its importance is nowhere more evident than in an article authored by Bern-Peter Lange (2016), thanks to his most thorough analysis of the manuscripts, letters and biographical details related to Beckett's writing of the chess game in *Murphy*.

One particularly curious and revealing chapter of the publication history of that novel concerns Beckett's letters to the editor George Reavey, which testify to the writer's eagerness to obtain permission to use a photograph of two apes playing chess as a frontispiece (Beckett, 2009, p. 381). He was curiously adamant about this, renewing his plea fully 14 months after he had first voiced it (Beckett, 2009, p. 586). It was with a heavy heart that he realised that Reavey would not be granting his stubborn wish after all (Beckett, 2009, p. 587).

This determination shows that the use of the amusing image was not an attempt at a lazy joke, just like the full annotation of a chess game cannot be dismissed as a pedantic modernist gimmick. Indeed, no appraisal of *Murphy* can be complete without taking the theme of chess into consideration. However, as a brief overview of the analyses of the chess theme in Beckett's play *Endgame* will show, literary criticism on Beckett has all too often underplayed, oversimplified or otherwise misread the potential for chess to shed light on the Nobel laureate's work.

CHESS IN BECKETT CRITICISM: THE CASE OF *ENDGAME*

As Alsop (2012) points out, "Beckett's interest in chess has had to suffer symbolic readings since the beginning of serious criticism" (p. 26). The obvious relevance of the theme of chess, allied to an unwillingness or inability to engage with chess in any depth below the surface level, has given rise to a "pattern of inappropriate chess metaphors [...] in Beckett studies" (Alsop, 2012, p. 29).

Plenty of examples of this, including some of a more extreme variety, have already been provided by Alsop (2012). A notable one is James Acheson's influential reading of the dramatic work

Endgame, which leads us “to believe that Beckett is playing chess with the audience”, even though his chosen allegory – the audience and readers playing Black, Beckett playing White and winning – “has nothing to do with real chess” (Alsop, 2012, pp. 28-29). Besides, “Acheson also misapplies terms taken from chess” (Alsop, 2012, p. 29), and this is by no means uncommon in literary critics’ interpretations related to chess.

K. Jeevan Kumar’s 1997 article “The Chess Metaphor in Samuel Beckett’s *Endgame*” is a particularly curious case, in that it takes up some of these issues, such as the often-neglected importance of chess in Beckett’s work, at the same time as it furthers the erroneous idea that chess is simply a metaphor, by claiming that the explicit and implied chess imagery has a one-to-one relationship with some ulterior meaning. While credit is due to Kumar (1997) when he states that it is “more acknowledged than analysed” that “chess is the central metaphor in *Endgame*” (p. 540), he is perhaps too quick in promoting that metaphor to the rank of “unifying element” (p. 540) and in considering that chess in *Endgame* is nothing more or less than “a metaphor for the murky chaos of human existence rooted in absurdity” (p. 550).

Even if this were true, it would be decidedly insufficient in and of itself as an interpretative key to a text as notoriously intricate and enigmatic as *Endgame*, although this seems to be Kumar’s argument. Of just as little help, though in an opposite way, is to make use of generalising commonplaces such as that of chess as “a metaphor of life” (Kumar, 1997, p. 542). Instead, it makes more sense to look at chess not as an empty vessel that can be filled with whichever signified the context requires but as “one of the oldest forms of *systematic* symbolic action” (Fine and Young, 2014, p. 88, original emphasis), one which combines established rules, familiar patterns and geometrical precision with endless possibilities for innovation, creation and even beauty. In short, this is a call for an appraisal of literary and dramatic texts in light of chess theory and practice, as opposed to an assessment of chess as a mere literary device, be it an analogy, metaphor or allegory.

For instance, bearing in mind the undoubtable pervasiveness of echoes of chess imagery in *Endgame*, it is certainly relevant (and clever) to read Hamm’s fastidious demands to be placed right in the centre of the room, a goal that seems to be unattainable (Beckett, 1986, p. 105), as a reference to the fact that “the chess board is devoid of a central square” (Kumar, 1997, p. 541). It is less useful to bend the laws and recurring themes of chess in order to justify a certain interpretation. For example, though Kumar (1997) speaks of “the uncertainty and unpredictability of the last phase of a game of chess” (p. 540), the truth is that of all three phases the endgame is undoubtedly the most predictable one, in many cases to a degree of mathematical certainty (presuming best play by both players, naturally).

Equally indefensible is the notion that “the final moves in a game of chess take much time or get slower; each move needs much forethought and the player has to take into account the consequences before the piece is actually moved” (Kumar, 1997, p. 545). In fact, *on average*, the middle game is by far the phase that requires most time and forethought, since that is the time when presumably most pieces are already active, and when the aggregate number of possible combinations and potential ramifications of every single legal move can easily exceed the number of atoms in the universe.

Alsop also challenges several chess-based readings of *Endgame* as too readily sacrificing accuracy for hermeneutic convenience. In reply to Hugh Kenner's interpretation of Hamm as vulnerable to lethal forces, Alsop points out (2012) that "[i]n chess terms it doesn't quite work", because in the endgame, "as pieces are removed or exchanged, the King becomes less, not more vulnerable, until, in many endgames, he becomes the most powerful piece on the board" (p. 27).

This is part of the reason why theories focused on Hamm's impending checkmate do not hold water in light of endgame practice, where "[t]he end itself, at the highest level, is rarely a final conclusive move", much like "in Beckett's fiction and drama", which is more centred on "waiting and pausing" (Alsop, 2012, p. 38). In fact, "the idea of prolongation and delay is much closer to Beckett's vision of the human predicament, in *Endgame* as elsewhere, than the threat of immediate checkmate – an obviously decisive end" (Alsop, 2012, p. 27).

This combination of chess theory with Beckett's personal philosophy is the best approach for the reading of the theme of chess in a play like *Endgame*. There must be some balance between both sides of the equation. Those keen on exploring the existential musings putatively present in Beckett's work have to reckon with the fact that "the analogy with chess [in *Endgame*] suggests a range of moves bound by rules that have nothing to do with existential choice", and chess enthusiasts intent on proving the significance of chess should be aware of the fact that Beckett "apparently warned the cast [of a production of *Endgame*] about the 'limits of the chess imagery'" (Alsop, 2012, p. 26).

Nevertheless, there should be an equilibrium between these two aspects, thus the current imbalance in Beckett criticism must be redressed. This is implicit in Alsop's defence of the merits of a more accurate analysis of chess in Beckett's novels and plays: "Rather than searching for metaphoric, symbolic, or allegorical readings that apply the idea of chess beyond the realities of the board, it is more rewarding to ask what it was about the real conditions of chess that exercised Beckett's literary interest (Alsop, 2012, p. 36). Lange's recent article (2016) is perhaps the one that fills this particular void in Beckett criticism in the most systematic manner.

Another fascinating example, one which tries more vehemently to combine a description of the "real conditions of chess" with the Herculean (or perhaps Sisyphean?) task of explicating Beckett's work, is Andrew Hugill's "Beckett, Duchamp and Chess in the 1930s" (1992). In it, Hugill, leaning on Beckett's avid interest in chess and personal acquaintance with Marcel Duchamp, reads in *Endgame* an elaborate representation, or at least faint echo, of Duchamp and Halberstadt's chess study *L'opposition et cases conjuguées sont reconciliées* (see Hugill, 1992). Like so many other scholarly works on this subject, the second section of Hugill's article is essentially a rather heavy-handed pitch for a one-to-one metaphorical – almost allegorical – interpretation of *Endgame*, but in its first section it does a fine job at establishing a most pertinent connection between an influential chess study that contributed to endgame theory and a perfectly valid interpretation of what the dramatic setting and dynamics of Beckett's play might be argued to resemble or evoke.

Having outlined the optimal methodological approach to reading chess in Beckett – one which places chess and literary considerations on more equal terms and looks at how each of them influences the other –, we can now direct our attention to the single most overt and significant

reference to chess in Beckett's oeuvre: the game between the protagonist of *Murphy* and the elusive Mr. Endon.

THE GAME OF CHESS IN *MURPHY*

Murphy, the protagonist of Beckett's eponymous novel, is a "seedy solipsist" (Beckett, 1957, p. 82) thoroughly consumed by his obsession to belong to the "little world" (Beckett, 1957, p. 178), that is, the inner sanctum of the mind inhabited by the patients at the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat (MMM), the mental institution where he works. However, try as he might to emulate them he does not seem capable to liberate himself from the shackles of earthly desires, whose flames are constantly stoked by the interactions with the "big world" (Beckett, 1957, p. 179).

Murphy's favourite patient at MMM is Mr. Endon, "a schizophrenic of the most amiable variety" (Beckett, 1957, p. 186). His is "a psychosis so limpid and imperturbable" that the only way to interact with him is by playing chess, "Mr. Endon's one frivolity" (Beckett, 1957, p. 186, 187). Murphy is fascinated with Mr. Endon's social self-sufficiency, yet that very quality also causes their relationship – if one can even call it a "relationship" at all – to be almost entirely unidirectional: "the sad truth was, that while Mr. Endon for Murphy was no less than bliss, Murphy for Mr. Endon was no more than chess" (Beckett, 1957, p. 242).

The last game of chess between the two, the only one that is available to the reader (see Annex), lends itself perfectly to the interpretative approach proposed by this article. Just like the contextual information presented in the two previous paragraphs (Mr. Endon's indifference to the outside world; Murphy's aspiration to be like Mr. Endon; and his ultimate inability to do so) is essential to make sense of a chess game that would otherwise be simply baffling, the game of chess is a pivotal moment in the narrative, as it gives rise to a series of key events that push the plot forward in an irreversible way.

The game itself unfolds in a highly unusual way. On the one end of the board, "Mr. Endon, the victor, arranges his pieces with a precise, self-sufficient, and drastic economy, as ready as any calculating machine to exhaust the permutations of the back rank and return to stasis" (Lipking, 2003, p. 164). On the other, Murphy replies to that hymn to symmetry by striving to replicate it, first by aping Mr. Endon's moves as well as he can and then by following his general strategy (Taylor and Loughrey, 1989, p. 84); after that, and realising that even an imperfect replication is out of reach, Murphy does his best to rid himself of his pieces, in an effort to elicit some kind of acknowledgement of his existence from his self-absorbed opponent; and finally, towards the end, Murphy's sheer desperation leads him to what can only be described as an aggressive attempt at self-mate, before resigning in move 43, "with fool's mate in his soul" (Beckett, 1957, p. 245).

Just like Beckett's description of Hamm as "a king in this chess game lost from the start" (as quoted in Alsop, 2012, p. 26) invites analyses which draw from chess, literature and philosophy in equal proportions, in *Murphy* too any reading of the novel's game of chess must be informed by Beckett's own theory of chess, which is loosely based on the notion he likely inherited from Schopenhauer and Nietzsche of the tragedy of being born: "Beckett argued and then tried to demonstrate that once

the pieces are set up on the board, any move from then on will only weaken one's position, that strength lies only in not moving at all" (Bair, 1978, p. 221).

Understandably, the idea that "the best course to be adopted is to avoid the game; that is, not to make any move at all" (Kumar, 1997, p. 541), combined with Beckett's lifelong interest in psychoanalysis, would seem to strengthen Kumar's reading (1997) of the first move in a game of chess as being "analogous to birth", and thus Mr. Endon's "zeal to return to the initial position could be seen as the urge to return to the womb" (p. 542). But again, this kind of interpretation is driven by the metaphor, and that can obfuscate the meaning of the game itself rather than shed light on it. Fine and Young's concept of chess as a performance (2014) is particularly useful in this regard: "While chess is meant to be *played*, it is also *performed*, becoming discussable and notable" (p. 96, original emphasis). To mention but one possible implication of this, we can read the tongue-in-cheek annotation of Murphy's game with Mr. Endon (see Annex) not only as a light-hearted jab taken at the lyrical proclivity of much chess commentary but also as an oblique joke on the hermeneutical exercise in general, that is, on the human compulsion to provide epistemological frameworks or otherwise engage in exegesis when confronted with any given performance, regardless of how inscrutable or inane such performance might be.

It certainly makes sense to point out how "the performance of stillness and of small acts witnessed by an audience attuned to the meaning inherent in the subtlety of gestures and the potential consequences of movement [...] imbues chess with theatricality" (Fine and Young, 2014, p. 89). The link between chess and theatre, or "chessic theatre" (Fine and Young, 2014, p. 89), is longstanding, and the problematisation of that kinship based on the notion of performance is perhaps best explored by Beckett's *Endgame*. A reading of chess and drama in the works of Beckett from the specific point of view of performance theory would easily form a fascinating basis for a scientific article all by itself; unfortunately, it lies outside the scope of this article, but it certainly seems to merit closer inspection.

Instead, I choose to stress here the need for a change of paradigm, namely in regard to the subordinate role frequently attributed to chess in relation to drama by literary scholars – mirroring popular perceptions of it as "just a game", which necessarily pales in comparison with more conventional artistic endeavours. While fictional games of chess like that between Ferdinand and Miranda in William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* may indeed be accurately seen as a rather straightforward symbol or metaphorical plot device (helped, in this instance, by the fact that chess as a proxy for courtship was a well-known *topos* at the time), it would be a disservice to Beckett – whose passion for, interest in and knowledge of chess has been widely commented on, including in this article – to read his use of chess in like manner. As Fine and Young note, "[t]he most compelling moments of chess as performance draw on chess and from chess" (2014, p. 96). Interpretations of a work such as *Murphy* should also "draw on chess and from chess", and the results can be very enlightening.

Let us consider the pawns, the "most metaphorically abused" of all chess pieces (Alsop, 2012, p. 27). According to the "cliché", they are "things of no worth, the mere tools of the powerful, who manipulate them without care for their wellbeing, greater ends justifying their paltry contribution to the means" (Alsop, 2012, p. 27). Instead, we should look at the pawns as what they are: Pawns, that is, chess pieces governed by their own laws and imbued with unique characteristics. For

instance, it has rightly been noted – even by the narrator himself (Beckett, 1957, p. 244) – that when Murphy fatefully plays 1. e4 (or P – K4) his whole mirroring enterprise is doomed to failure, as Mr. Endon does not advance any of his Pawns more than one rank ahead, and Pawns are special pieces in that they are the only ones that once moved can never go back to their former position. This is “Chess 101”, and most commentators mention this important aspect; indeed, Taylor and Loughrey (1989) propose an analysis of the game “in terms of the points at which ‘irrevocable’ moves are made”, that is, every time “a Pawn is advanced from the second rank” (p. 83).

This kind of chess-savvy reading is salutary because it can yield some surprising insights. The simple fact that 1. e4 (the King’s Pawn Game) is “the most traditional of all opening moves” (Alsop, 2012, p. 32) and in normal circumstances a very solid first move can bring forth a number of details that tie in perfectly with the novel’s plot and character development: for example, it could be read as (another) sign that the protagonist has fallen prey to habit, a paramount preoccupation in Beckett’s oeuvre (Ackerley and Gontarski, 2004, pp. 241-242); perhaps more importantly, it shows that Murphy is too steeped in the conventions and ways of the “big world” to ever truly attain the “microcosmopolitanism” he so ardently craves.

Yet the moment of the game which has most intrigued commentators is Murphy’s decision to resign when it was his turn to play, thus cutting short Mr. Endon’s symmetrical “exercise in total non-communication” (Knowlson, 1996, p. 210). In that moment, Mr. Endon “is just about to move his King back to K1, thereby returning fourteen pieces to their original squares” (Taylor and Loughrey, 1989, p. 84). But it is important to bear in mind that Murphy’s Queen is attacking K1; had Murphy moved any other piece than his Queen, Deirdre Bair (1978) argues, Mr. Endon would have to “capture Murphy’s Queen or disturb the symmetry of his pieces”, and either way he “would have been forced to acknowledge Murphy’s existence” (p. 225).

However, it need not be so. Mr. Endon might have ignored the rule of check (just like he failed to notify his opponent when he placed his King in check), or else might have simply “fade[d], without the least trace of annoyance, away into a light stupor”, as he would whenever he was supposed to play White (Beckett, 1957, p. 244). So instead of resigning “unnecessarily”, as it has been contended (Knowlson, 1996, p. 211), Murphy seizes the chance to at last make a dignified gesture. In stark contrast to *Endgame*’s Hamm – whose refusal to “play and lose and have done with losing” (Beckett, 1986, p. 132) makes him a “bad player”, since playing on when there is no prospect of a good result is a serious breach of chess etiquette –, Murphy is actually very sensible to resign, having realised that Mr. Endon’s closed circuit renders communication impossible, thus arguably shunning a vision of chess (and life) as a mere system of (in)finite and thoroughly inconsequential permutations.

CONCLUSIONS

Clearly, chess as a theme in Beckett’s work cannot be taken at face value. A good number of scholars have set out to reflect on and make sense of Beckett’s clearly deliberate use of chess, and I have sought to bring to attention some of the ways in which that has been done so far. However, this article argues that merely conceding its metaphorical import, and elucidating the parallels between general chess concepts and a particular plot, does not do justice to the sheer complexity of

the interplay between the philosophy of chess and Beckett's own. Both of them play a vital part in our ongoing collective quest to "fail better" at reading Beckett.

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APPENDIX

The game, an Endon's Affence, or *Zweispringerspott*, was as follows:

WHITE (MURPHY)	BLACK (MR. ENDON) (A)
1. P-K4 (B)	1. KT-KR3
2. KT-KR3	2. R-KKt1
3. R-KKt1	3. KT-QB3
4. KT-QB3	4. KT-K4
5. KT-Q5 (C)	5. R-KR1
6. R-KR1	6. KT-QB3
7. KT-QB3	7. KT-KKt1
8. KT-QKt1	8. KT-QKt1 (D)
9. KT-KKt1	9. P-K3
10. P-KKt3 (E)	10. KT-K2
11. KT-K2	11. KT-KKt3
12. P-KKt4	12. B-K2
13. KT-KKt3	13. P-Q3
14. B-K2	14. Q-Q2
15. P-Q3	15. K-Q1 (F)
16. Q-Q2	16. Q-K1
17. K-Q1	17. KT-Q2
18. KT-QB3 (G)	18. R-QKt1
19. R-QKt1	19. KT-QKt3
20. KT-QR4	20. B-Q2
21. P-QKt3	21. R-KKt1
22. R-KKt1	22. K-QB1 (H)
23. B-QKt2	23. Q-KB1
24. K-QB1	24. B-K1
25. B-QB3 (I)	25. KT-KR1
26. P-QKt4	26. B-Q1
27. Q-KR6 (J)	27. KT-QR1 (K)
28. Q-KB6	28. KT-KKt3
29. B-K5	29. B-K2
30. KT-QB5 (L)	30. K-Q1 (M)
31. KT-KR1 (N)	31. B-Q2
32. K-QKt2!!	32. R-KR1
33. K-QKt3	33. B-QB1
34. K-QR4	34. Q-K1 (O)
35. K-R5	35. KT-QKt3
36. B-KB4	36. KT-Q2
37. Q-QB3	37. R-QR1
38. KT-QR6 (P)	38. B-KB1
39. K-QKt5	39. KT-K2
40. K-QR5	40. KT-QKt1
41. Q-QB6	41. KT-KKt1
42. K-QKt5	42. K-Q2 (Q)
43. K-R5	43. Q-Q1 (R)

And White surrenders.

(a) Mr. Endon always played Black. If presented with White he would fade, without the least trace of annoyance, away into a light stupor.

(b) The primary cause of all White's subsequent difficulties.

(c) Apparently nothing better, bad as this is.

(d) An ingenious and beautiful début, sometimes called the Pipe-opener.

- (e) Ill-judged.
- (f) Never seen in the Café de la Régence, seldom in Simpson's Divan.
- (g) The flag of distress.
- (h) Exquisitely played.
- (i) It is difficult to imagine a more deplorable situation than poor White's at this point.
- (j) The ingenuity of despair.
- (k) Black has now an irresistible game.
- (l) High praise is due to White for the pertinacity with which he struggles to lose a piece.
- (m) At this point Mr. Endon, without as much as "j'adoube", turned his King and Queen's Rook upside down, in which position they remained for the rest of the game.
- (n) A coup de repos long overdue.
- (o) Mr. Endon not crying "Check!", nor otherwise giving the slightest indication that he was alive to having attacked the King of his opponent, or rather vis-à-vis, Murphy was absolved, in accordance with Law 18, from attending to it. But this would have been to admit that the salute was adventitious.
- (p) No words can express the torment of mind that goaded White to this abject offensive.
- (q) The termination of this solitaire is very beautifully played by Mr. Endon.
- (r) Further solicitation would be frivolous and vexatious, and Murphy, with fool's mate in his soul, retires.

(Beckett, 1957, pp. 243-245)