THE BECKETT CIRCLE
LE CERCLE DE BECKETT
Newsletter of the Samuel Beckett Society

Oh les beaux jours at the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier

After *En attendant Godot* in 1978 and *Fin de partie* in 1988, *Oh les beaux jours* belatedly entered the repertoire of the Théâtre Français under Frederick Wiseman's direction at the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier, the Comédie Française's home in the Latin Quarter that offers a wide range of contemporary classics. Wiseman is an American filmmaker who has made some thirty-five full-length documentary films dealing with American institutions and society and with Western culture in general. In 1995, while filming a documentary about the Comédie Française, he met Catherine Samie, the company's Doyenne; he subsequently directed her in his own adaptation of Vasily Grossman's novel *Life and Fate*. In *Oh les beaux jours*, Samie plays Winnie to Yves Gasc's Willie, and the two actors' long-standing friendship and artistic partnership give their joint performance an indefinable poignancy.

Wiseman's direction is both innovative and extremely faithful to Beckett's meticulous stage directions. Its inventiveness largely springs from set-designer Paul Andreu's subtle treatment of the mound in which Winnie is buried. Andreu recalls finding a new angle to the play's scenography in Winnie's enigmatic musing, "Is gravity what it was, Willie, I fancy not. Yes, the feeling more and more that if I were not held – in this way, I would simply float up into the blue." In Andreu's set, it is not so much Winnie who sinks down into the mound between acts one and two, as the mound that rises up to her neck and seems to carry her skyward. The mound is a beautifully wrought sand-coloured canvas evocative of an absurdly sumptuous garment that both magnifies Winnie and keeps her body tightly constrained; it is matched by an equally intriguing hat, a light metallic structure which seems to point her upwards.

Taking her cue from Andreu's set, Catherine Samie's Winnie looks as if she were going to "float up into the blue" at any moment – if she only could. She is a remarkably strong, wilful woman, not a frail creature faltering on the edge of a precipice. Samie's performance is entirely free of pathos. Her Winnie's deliberate lightness and absurd high spirits in the face of her grotesque predicament makes the horror of her situation palpable. Samie, who says that she views the play as a "hymn to life and death," delivers her lines like a hypnotic song, improvising an astonishing vocal tour de force as she rambles on, yet always preserving the halting rhythm with which Beckett gives a voice to silence. "What I admire most about

PHOTO: LOT

Catherine Samie's performance of Winnie in Frederick Wiseman's production of *Oh les beaux jours* was inspired by Paul Andreu's innovative set-design.

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Beckett is his passion for silence," says Frederick Wiseman. His *Oh les beaux jours* is a convincing homage to Beckett's "passion for silence," his relentless refusal to provide any answers to the enigma of life. Wiseman's production will be presented again in November 2006.

—Alexandra Poulain

Interview with Catherine Samie

Alexandra Poulain. How did you approach the role of Winnie?

Catherine Samie. As I always do, simply by learning the lines by heart and waiting for sensations to arise. The words first set off intuitions and then emotions that gradually make their way to the brain. It's very strange, like a natural process: a seed that is planted and slowly grows into branches, leaves and fruit, like so many doors opening onto the text. It's such a strong text, such a great hymn to life and to death. As Beckett says, there is only one way out: when something's wrong, when you're in deep trouble, sing, "sing your old song, Winnie" and keep a stiff upper lip: She says that she is in pain, but she hangs on to the small habits of life so that she can go on and see one more day, just one more – and that goes for all of us. Some people have very small lives, with very, very small habits and hardly any movement at all, and others, like artists, I think, are lucky enough to be able to express themselves thanks to their craft, to evolve a little, as I did with the Théâtre Français. Still, it's the same story for all of us. I became an actress by sheer chance, but what I really like is rehearsing. I love rehearsals, but then you have to face the audience, and that is truly frightening. It's a big problem, having to deal with that thing which is my body, my mind – myself, or so they say. It's so strange, you're here on earth and you don't really know why, and then you say words…

The script reminds me of the Tibetan *Book of the Dead* —in particular, the idea of the forty days after death— which I read when I was young. I come from the part of the North of France near the Belgian border, a region where people care very much about old folks who are about die. I used to sit with sick, dying people, to talk to them, sometimes to wash them, and I always felt that when they died, something else started, another process was on its way, until they were *really* dead. They seem dead to us, who are still engrossed in worldly affairs, in matters of power, the whole silly business of life… but they're not quite dead yet. And I feel that Winnie is in that transitional state; she is dead, yet not quite dead, and she is being buried, first up to the waist, then up to the neck, but she'll only be really dead when the mound covers her head. I am probably completely wrong, because there's the business about the gun, she is tempted to finish it all with the gun, and we don't know whether Willie…

AP. You make the text sound like music. You have an extraordinary vocal range, and the rhythm is hypnotic. Did you envisage it as a vocal script?

CS. Yes, of course, there are words that are meant to be sung. For instance: « *Tout... ta-la-la... tout s'oublie... la vague... non... délie... tout ta-la-la tout se délie... la vague... non... flot... oui... le flot sur le flot s'oublie... replie... oui... le flot sur le flot se replie...* » It's like the sea; it's soft, and terrifying, truly terrifying at the same time. I work on my voice, every day, with my tape recorder. But some days, I find my voice is not free, and I feel all constrained, like an old singer who hasn't slept for three nights – which is not my case, of course… But it's not a matter of doing high- or low-pitched voices, it has to make sense, to come from the heart and the mind, and anyway it changes every day. I have an outline, of course, but you can't do the same thing everyday, because it's such a disturbing text. It a hymn to joy, harmony and tenderness, even if there isn't any! (Laughs) Especially if there isn't any – which is Beckett's ultimate joke.

AP. Your Winnie is an impressively strong woman, full of gusto and energy. How did you create her character?

CS. When I was young, I was lucky enough to see great actresses perform. Some of them were very old, and they were magnificent, very elegant physically – which I am not, but now that I am old, I couldn't care less, really. But they were beautiful, externally and internally, and extraordinarily strong. Many great ladies— Mme Berthe Bovy, Mme de Chauveron, Mme Lise Delamare—they were an inspiration. But I decide nothing; I feel things and my body does what it can. You're stuck in that magma, that set, that chaos of sorts, with the sun, the heat, just as in real life. Why are we here, where are we going, why so much suffering? And the small joys, that you have to keep returning to; otherwise, you just can't go on. Of course, you feel pain, you hurt, but you have to hold on. And she does, she flies away, thanks to what she has inside her skull… which is why I like the little metallic hat they've made for me. There's nothing normal about it, it's so completely irrational! I try at least to make her fly. In

THE SAMUEL BECKETT ENDPAGE

A multiple resource website for anyone and everyone interested in Beckett and his work, the Endpage is always in progress and infinitely expandable. Contributions, postings, criticism, or suggestions are encouraged and can be made onsite at:

http://www.ua.ac.be/beckett

Or by contacting Dirk Van Hulle (dirk.vanhulle@ua.ac.be). The Endpage contains the official homepage of the Samuel Beckett Society.

fact, I played the part well only on two occasions, and I have no idea what happened then. I am always horribly nervous before a performance, but then the show starts and all is well. I warm up, and the words come out by themselves; then I walk off the stage, and it's over.

Translated by Alexandra Poulain

Beckett Shorts at Grinnell College

In anticipation of the 2006 centennial celebrations, the Theatre Department at Grinnell College presented in mid-November 2005 a performance of seven of Beckett's late plays that explored his evolving, diverse, yet very consistent poetic practice. The bill began with the revised version of *Krapp's Last Tape* in matinee performances by Theatre colleague Chris Connelly. Audiences enjoyed a special treat from tenor Michael Oxley, a Music Department colleague, who sang Schubert's "Death and the Maiden" after my lecture on the play, which dealt with its Gnostic themes and Beckett's choreography, including the "Hain" moments (as Beckett called them when directing the play in Berlin) when Krapp turns to sense "friend Death" in the dark. An ensemble of ten student actors appeared in evening performances of *Play, Come and Go* (rev.), *Not I, Footfalls* (rev.), *A Piece of Monologue,* and *Ohio Impromptu*. Professional guest artists included scenic designer Geoff Curley (Chicago), lighting designer Martin Vreeland (New York), and costume designer Katherine Kohl (Minneapolis).

> "Prayers unanswered" was the key phrase or rip word for the actress who played the role, a religious studies major.

In both proscenium and black-box staging, Beckett's plays need a well-oiled, silent running theatre machine. "Less is more" minimalism is complexity with the appearance of simplicity. A new light board, together with a new sound system, allowed our designers to create conditions of total blackout and silence. (As Xerxes Mehta has observed, sensory deprivation renders Beckett's iconic dream images more vivid). A cavernous 425-seat theatre was reduced to 200 centered seats, fronting on a proscenium frame of black legs and a specially constructed commando cloth front curtain. Audiences had program notes for each play and a study guide; brief pauses between plays, with house lights to half, allowed them to relax and read ahead (as in a dance concert or music recital).

Well-designed scenic elements and well-rehearsed invisible shifts permitted swift passage between plays; tight timing of house fades, curtain, and stage fade-ups formally inducted us into the dream space. *Play's* potted heads stood in a grave trap center-stage. In quick succession, *Come and Go's* trio replaced the disembodied heads upstage center, the ladies floating in linen dusters in soft floral hues, with colorful feathers and ribbons on their hats adding animation to their movement to and fro. Riding eight feet high in a cabin that included an assistant director on-book (a safety precaution that proved unnecessary), Mouth hovered well above the audience downstage center. (We eliminated the Auditor this time, though I have used one in past productions). Antoni Libera's description of his staging (Directing Beckett 110) helped both the set and light designers here to anticipate the problems of isolating and illuminating the palpitating gash. In addition to a beam bender affixed to the spotlight from below (in "prompt box" position), Vreeland made the mouth pop with color by adding a red-gelled, tightly shuttered instrument at the back of the house, its very small beam spread aimed as straight in as possible to eliminate shadows. In Footfalls, the design vocabulary embraced sculpture and architecture, with a vertical light box upstage right balanced against the ghostly figure of May pacing along an off-center left elongated plinth of faintly glowing floorboards, elevated and slightly raked, hovering above the stage floor.

Beckett's haunted, closed-space worlds are visions vouchsafed to the mind's eye, the eye of imagination, memory, and desire, not the eye of flesh. Beckett called his explorations "ontospeleology," the quest of first things and fundamental sounds. An excavator of his own inner dark, Beckett discovered in the fitful glimmerings of the imagination ghostly figures revolving their stories of evanescent, discontinuous being: "To have lived was not enough for them, they have to talk about it." Beckett's spotlight theatre illuminates the disembodied visual and vocal remnants of humanity at the limits of representation. Audience members remarked on the sheer vitality of these ghostly remains. The nervous energy, dramatic intensity, and fierce concentration generated in performing even these relatively short plays can also produce an intense exhilaration in performers.

Disciplined restraint in performance and design allowed us to focus on the dramatic event common to all of these plays: the central crisis of a consciousness forced to speculate on its own identity and situation in the near-absence of any determinate reality beyond its own workings in prolonged iterations of poetically spare, well-worn routines of speaking and thinking. In spare dramas of ontological impasse (especially *Play and Not I*), the earth opens to abysses, and out of the depths, a human consciousness grapples with Who now? Where now? What now? What possible action, initiative, or assertion, beyond the restless urge to make sense where possibly there is none to be made? "Penitence, yes, in a pinch atonement, one was resigned, but no, that does not seem to be the point either," as *Play*'s W1 says in fierce indictment. W2 mocks the light with derisive laughter,

a shade gone in the head playing at "moody madness, laughing wild amid severest woe." Having said all they could, in flights of vertiginous panic, they display reckless courage before an unheeding witness: "Am I as much as . . . being seen?" Man demands. (Souls on ice, mouths on fire, the actors worked with no safety net. No prompter. Text drill was essential).

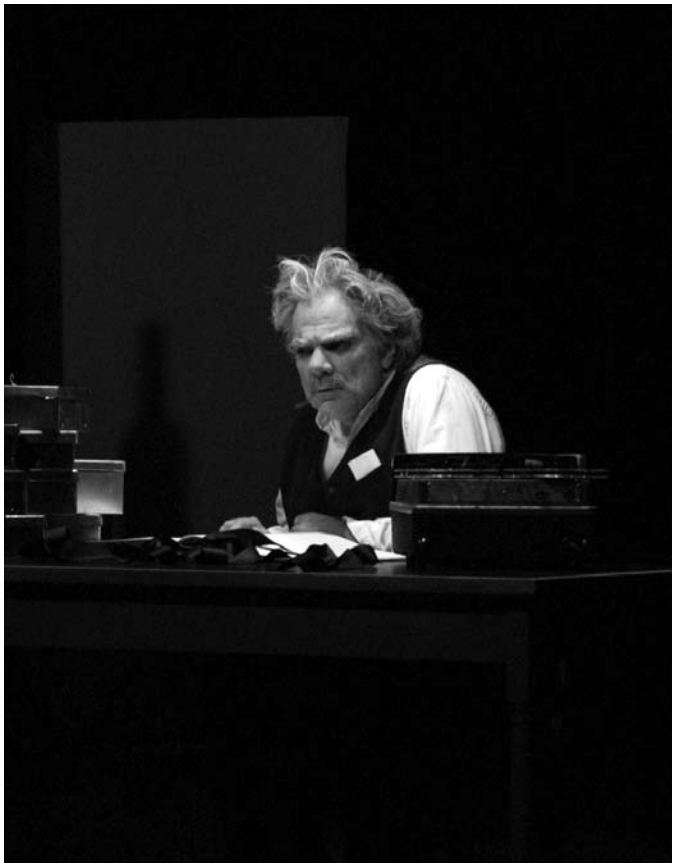
Mouth's outpour climaxes with the realization that there is nothing she can tell, nothing she can think to alleviate her distress. The fearful resurrection of the mouth and the now unstoppable flow where before she was only a gaping mute suggest some purgatorial purpose, something she had to tell, how it was, how she had lived, an apology, the pensum. Homely logic prompts her to recall a courtroom scene by way of analogy; before the law, unable to speak to enter her plea. "guilty or not," she is saved only by the hand on her arm guiding her away. Though she now realizes there is nothing she can think, nothing she can tell, she keeps on going, not knowing what she is trying—it's all she can. Where early on she laughed sardonically at the idea of a merciful God (she's no fool), in the end her desperation is measured in the repeated phrases—"God is love," "she'll be purged," "tender mercies," "new every morning"—that show her hoping for the best from her Catholic upbringing, truly grabbing at straws, no help or comfort. "Prayers unanswered" was the key phrase or rip word for the actress who played the role, a religious studies major.

Despite their different tonalities, *Krapp's Last Tape, Come and Go, Footfalls, A Piece of Monologue* and *Ohio Impromptu* deal with last things, dramatic exercises in askesis, an emptying out of the self in final reckonings that court the outer dark, drawing on the other dark from which memory is conjured, staring beyond that black beyond to discern finally the one matter, the dying and the going. In *Krapp's Last Tape*, as the old man takes stock and then takes his leave, Beckett firms up the final account by carefully choreographing Krapp's lonely self-condemnation, his enthrallment in erotic memory, and his last moments as a "dream-eaten man." *Come and Go* and *Ohio Impromptu* provide rare company and consolation in the blest dark. In the end, two or three grow to be as one. Speaker goes solo into that good night, escorted on the ebb and flow of his own lament. The plays, realized in the details of their formal abstraction, teach us to see not with the eyes of this world but the inner world, courting the black vast and void, from Krapp's "empty dream" to the "profounds of mindlessness" of *Ohio Impromptu*'s final moment.

— Ellen Mease

Ralph Wilson's *Footfalls*

In a theatrical career spanning a half century (1943-1994) that saw the emergence of a genuinely Australian theatre, Ralph Wilson directed more than two hundred plays, including many by Samuel Beckett. In a eulogy that appeared in *Theatre Australasia*, he was described as a "genius" who, if he had lived abroad, might have become a figure like Vsevolod Meyer. He did very likely become Australia's most knowledgeable and pre-eminent interpreter of Beckett.



The program of Beckett's short plays at Grinnell College began with Chris Connelly's performance in the revised version of *Krapp's Last Tape*.

Wilson began directing Beckett's plays in the 1950s with a production of *All That Fall* in Canberra. In his view, Endgame was the greatest play of the twentieth century, certainly as great as *King Lear*. He frequently returned to it, while also directing *Footfalls, Eh Joe, Krapps Last Tape* and *Waiting for Godot, Happy Days*, and *All that Fall* twice). In response to an interviewer's question as to why he found these plays so appealing, Wilson noted that " the vitality generated by the characters as they contend with their situations. The arresting existential images. The often hilarious Swiftian humour about biological and human functions that are wearing out. The structure of his plays: one of the chief joys in rehearsing a Beckett play is to discover how all the motifs are orchestrated to make a perfect dramatic score. The highly compressed and poetical language essential for great drama." Wilson also said that, with the exception of Beckett's, probably no twentieth-century plays will survive into the future.

In many ways, Beckett's plays were ideal for Wilson. He was always preoccupied with the text and gave scant attention to costumes and sets in his productions. However, lighting was a different matter; in particular, his study of Rembrandt's art influenced his lighting schemes. Many remember Wilson's production of *Eh Joe* with the actor's head shimmering in a rectangle of light on a wall of darkness. The actors Wilson chose for many of his pro-

ductions were often people he had met on the street. One such actor was an alcoholic whose face had a formidable ongoing twitch that Wilson used to great use in *Hey Joe*.

I was extremely lucky to work with Wilson on many of his productions including his final one of Beckett's *Footfalls*. I was already very familiar with the play, having served about eight years previously as stage manager to Wilson's earlier production of this play. I loved its imagery and the skill required by its vocal tones. I hadn't seen Wilson for many years, and when we met up again I showed him a painting I had done of *Footfalls*. He then said very spontaneously with a glint in his eyes, "You could play the part," as if instantly recognizing that I had some kind of affinity with the role and, since I was now older, could understand the human pathos required for such a role. At that time he was seventy-seven years old and in the final throes of leukaemia. So began a rehearsal that continued for over four months.

We would either rehearse at his modest home in the suburbs or go to the theatre that was named after him when he won the Order of Australia 1998 for his services to the arts. In many ways Wilson looked like one of Beckett's characters. He had always been a big and imposing man; now, with illness, he had a stoop and could not walk far without a stick. Even though his body had lost its vitality, his mind and voice were as vibrant as ever. When he would get fired up over Beckett's text, he would stick his jaw and lower teeth out in characteristic fashion. At first we spent many days at his home going over the text and discussing the many dimensions to the play. Wilson was a great listener and never once did he ever have you parrot him. He was always interested in the actor's finding the essence of the character through his or her own technical and emotional journey.

Lisa Angove performs the role of May in Ralph Wilson's last production of a Beckett play.

As the months passed by, Wilson's health declined, and there were many times he went in and out of hospital. Many of the rehearsals were taped with a cassette recorder and taken to his hospital bed, where he could go over the rhythm and tones and write copious notes. At one rehearsal he had a heart attack, and I had to take him to the hospital emergency ward. Never once did he complain about his health; his focus was on the play and on the feelings that it depicted.

Footfalls is one of Beckett's later works, and it was fitting that it was Wilson's last production as the play is about death and the ever-slight possibility of redemption. Wilson spent many days talking about the play's meaning and its value as a metaphor for the larger world situation: humanity's existential condition as seen by Beckett. In its three movements, the character May's posture becomes more and more stooped as if the world's weight is on her shoulders. As she paces to and fro, it's as if she symbolises Christ carrying the cross with all of its human suffering and martyrdom. In some ways I think that I became symbolic not only of May's pain, but of my director's as well.

When the play opened, Wilson was too ill to attend any performances. The reviews were outstanding. Although reviews and recognition never interested Wilson (he was really only interested in the creative process during the rehearsal period), I could tell that he was proud of his final production. He died shortly after *Footfalls* finished in Canberra. A short tour of the production occurred after his death.

Last year, I remounted the production in Melbourne and, to my surprise, many who saw the production ten years ago came to see it again. I had several very interesting responses from audience members. Many nights they failed to clap after the end of the performance; they sat, rather, in complete silence and told me afterwards that they found the production overwhelming and had never seen anything like it before. A review in Melbourne's' *Age* acknowledged Wilson's achievement: " This is all a Beckett production should be: exact in its fidelity to the script, uncompromising in its bleakness, precise in its rhythms and vocal control. Beckett's mesmeric force, his ability to summon spirits from the vast deep were all brought out for over for an hour in the Carlton Courthouse."

Those who knew Wilson and saw his productions, particularly those of Beckett's plays, will always remember them. His life inspired celebration along with gratitude for the energy and talents he shared so generously.

— Lisa Angove

ESSAY

Beckett's Second Skins

Beckett's afflicted bodies have drawn the clinical gaze of a number of psychoanalytic thinkers. For Didier Anzieu, Beckett speaks after 1946 "avec l'intérieur de son ventre, ou à partir de tel organe blessé ou malade, à partir de sa propre chair mise à nu sous une peau déchirée" ['from his gut, or an injured or ailing organ, his own flesh laid bare under lacerated skin'](*Beckett* 113, my translation). Anzieu further credits Beckett with having anticipated his own notion of a *moi-peau*, or "skin ego," a phantasmatic interweaving of psychic and bodily boundaries. As an interface between the psyche and the outer world, the skin ego develops from sensations originating in the surfaces of the body, some of which, such as the soothing sensations received from being held, are transformed into phantasms of envelopment in a common skin with the mother and, beyond this skin, in a seamless enfolding in uterine wrappings. Such phantasms deny the painful severing of symbiotic fusion at birth and the tearing away from maternal envelopment (skin, voice, rhythm, color). In fantasy, then, the skin ego has the function of defending against separation anxiety by means of a protective covering. On the other hand, phantasms of a wounded skin, Anzieu maintains, masochistically evoke the pains of the lacerating severance. Such skin phantasms, he writes, are open wounds asking to be bandaged (*Moi-peau* 41, 43, 62).

Anzieu refers to Beckett's skin maladies to hypothesize that, in switching to French, he was able to trade a toxic tunic of maternal imprints for a less toxic, if still lacerated, second skin. To substitute for the lost envelopment, he composes texts that, for Anzieu, function as old garments that, in constant need of mending, are turned inside out (*Beckett* 216, 98). We know that Beckett's textual second skins involve phantasms of a dual enfolding not only in the womb but also in the tomb, that familiar early modernist trope for generativity. For Beckett, too, it is a trope for the abstract site from which issue his voices and visions: "Yes, I'd have a mother, I'd have a tomb […] here are my tomb and mother […] I'm dead and getting born […]" (*Texts for Nothing* 9). The enshrouding in a psychic location of a before and after life from *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* to *Rockaby* suggests that Beckett's writing, issuing from such a matric location (Molloy's "I am in my mother's room. It's I who live there now"), could be identified as *écriture féminine* or "gynesis," were it not that it is doubled by attempts to defetishize writing by a de-gendering, as in *Ohio Impromptu*, where matric enfolding is un-conceived in terms of "profounds of mind. Of mindlessness."

Because the womb/tomb trope appears nevertheless difficult to efface once and for all and because so many artists and writers adopted it at the time along with Beckett (most likely melding Schopenhauerian nirvana with Otto Rank's womb paradise), I have been contesting the exclusively phallic definition of the fetish in psychoanalytic thought. If fetishists replace a lost object (whether material or imaginary) by a magic substitute then, I argue, imaginary wrappings that phantasmatically replace maternal envelopment are among the most common fetishes from babyhood onward. There is a long and rather comic history of convoluted arguments by psychoanalytic thinkers refuting the idea that such "transitional" objects (in the Winnicottian sense of an object mediating between the psyche and the outer world) can be identified as matric (rather than phallic) fetishes.

Anzieu (*Beckett* 154) draws attention to the function of the Beckettian overcoat as a psychic covering, or a second skin of the type that for Esther Bick (484) takes the place of the defective containing function of the "mother." (The quotation marks around "mother" indicate that for infants "mother" is any person of either gender or gender mix who nurtures them). Bick's parental container overlaps with Anzieu's common skin and uterine envelopment, but it is even more akin to Bion's container that takes in and modifies a child's terrors. It appears that the obsessively recurring Beckettian coat, no less than the hat (a caul for Murphy and the stamp of the father for the narrator of "The Expelled"), is a psychic covering replacing the faulty containing/protective function of both parents. Instead of "parents," I should say parental "figures," or "imagos," because if experienced as unresponsive, the parental containers are transformed into phantasmatically cruel objects of attack.

That Beckett, who knew his Melanie Klein, combined maternal and paternal containers into one composite is suggested, for instance, by his insistence that Endgame's two garbage cans touch: "Front left, touching each other, covered with an old sheet, two ashbins." The sheet covering Hamm, echoing the "old sheet" enveloping the parental containers, as well as his dressing gown and toque, the blood-stained handkerchief over his face, the blanket over his knees, and the thick socks on his feet bring to mind a second skin substitute for one that has been trashed and the need to recover the warmth of uterine envelopment. The play's many transitional objects of the type that help children separate from their parents, the stuffed dog, the blanket and other pieces of cloth, the pacifier-pain-killer—most of which either disappear or are discarded—add to the atmosphere of abandonment and revenge on the parental figures that first expelled the child from its paradisiacal wrappings and then failed to provide a psychic skin (container) that would make life bearable. As Nagg tells Hamm about his frightened call in the dark as a child, "We let you cry. Then we moved you out of earshot, so that we might sleep in peace." This is indeed a text that claws. On the other hand, my reading of *Endgame*'s stage image as a cruel theatre of the mind is only one reading among

many, and, as others have seen, the curtain-like sheets and handkerchief also have a theatrical referent that turns the action on stage into a play within a play within a play.

Akin to the fragmented-body art after the First World War, the many depictions of lacerated skin in need of bandaging after the Second harken back to early woundings reactivated by the traumas of a horrendous war. In the insecure climate of the last few decades, skin piercing and tattooing and "bandage art," or "art médecine" (the latter used as the title of a 1999 exhibition at the Picasso museum in Antibes) repeat the drama of fusion and rupture and the repair of the lost matric enfolding or containing. Particularly cruel is the scene of the marking and lacerating of Pim's skin in *How It Is*. Wrapped around Pim, Bom "trains" his victim by digging his nails into his armpit, carving his own childhood on his back, and inscribing the name of Pim on it. Thus marked and socialized, Pim's mutilated skin takes the place of the first cover/container, as Bom takes away Pim's sack.

Many artists in the 1940s and 50s similarly translated their suffering skin egos into lacerated surfaces, Alberto Giacometti's and Germaine Richier's cratered and hollowed-out sculptures being among the most renowned; painters, likewise, covered their canvases with second layers, anything from fabric to cement, which like the sculptural surfaces of the times were incised, gashed, and variously mangled. Thus, for example, the scraggly surfaces of Robert Rauschenberg's early black, red, and gold paintings and his later "combines," consisting of paint, newspaper, fabric, and other materials such as wood, metal, wire, and string, are ripped and gashed to give signs of overall degeneration. Francis Bacon's horrifying visions of flayed and bloodied skin are so well known that they may already have come to your mind. Such a gruesomely wounded skin ego calls for spectacular bandages such as the dramatic bands of paint in which Bacon enshrouds or at times encases his heads and figures, to which can be added his depictions of bathrobes, overcoats, hats, and open umbrellas, some of which he places enigmatically in the same picture space with flayed carcasses.

Coats appear to be privileged second skins, but to focus only on the postwar years, the list of psychic skins imagined by artists to dress their wounded skin egos is long indeed: wrapped canvases and objects and sites, sculptures consisting of dresses, coats, suits, feathers and furs, and dwelling-extensions of the skin or of a womblike tomb or a tomblike womb. The Beckettian variations on the psychic skin/container, among which, in addition to the ones already mentioned, one might recall the hilarious description of Molloy wrapping himself in the *Times Literary Supplement* under his coat, May's "worn grey wrap" in *Footfalls*, rocking chairs, urns, and cylinders, have many parallels in the wrap-, garment-, and dwelling art of the last half of his century. The Italian artist (and medical doctor) Alberto Burri, for instance, glued torn and mended burlap sacks on his canvases held together by string. How is one not to think of Pim's sack, which he ties around his neck with a cord and about which he says, "knees drawn up back bent in a hoop I clasp the sack to my belly […] I never let it go" (How It Is 10). Burri's and Pim's sacks suggest the embryonic sack and other forms of matric cover/containment, of which they are fetish substitutes of considerable emotional effect.

Similarly strong effects result from viewing Beckett's urn-figures and Jean Pierre Raynaud's *Psycho-Objet 27 Autoportrait*, each condensing pre-birth and after-death enshrouding into one container. Raynaud's "psycho-object" (a term that could be usefully adopted to describe the phantasmatic nature of all second skins and containers) dates from 1966, a few years after Beckett imagined first white rectangular boxes and then urns for the three heads of *Play*. Raynaud's self-portrait consists of a large white rectangular box reminiscent of a coffin or a shipping trunk: a number of porthole openings reveal a red interior, while a lifeline/umbilical cord attaches the psycho-object to an electric outlet in the wall. The crutches attached to the box thus suggest the faltering voyage from womb to tomb that are here condensed into the self-portrait of the artist. Which Beckettian would not think of Molloy's conception of himself as a "boîte fermée," which in the English translation becomes a "sealed jar," and the crutches he needs for his unreal journey?

The suffering skin ego and its many second skins appear everywhere dramatized in Beckett's texts and the art of the second half of his century. It would take another essay to probe the many ways in which Beckett works at effacing these cruel images by the abstract envelopment in blankness and the dark of "mindlessness."

– Angela Moorjani

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This essay, which Angela Moorjani submitted in response to the editor's request, draws upon the chapter on skin fetishism in her Beyond Fetishism *as well as a paper that she presented at the Rennes conference on "affect" in Beckett's work, subsequently published, in French, in* Samuel Beckett Today / Aujourd'hui 10.

Beckett at 100: New Perspectives

If you are a member of The Samuel Beckett Society, then you have probably circled the date April 13, 2006 on your calendar. This is of course Beckett's 100th birthday, an occasion that has inspired numerous centenary conferences and revivals across the globe. The first international academic conference of 2006 was held February 9-11 in Florida, and everyone who attended will agree that it established a high standard for all subsequent celebrations. Sponsored by the Winthrop-King Institute for Contemporary French and Francophone Studies, in association with the Department of English at Florida State University and the *Journal of Beckett Studies*—and co-directed by William Cloonan, Stan Gontarski, and Alec Hargreaves—"Beckett at 100: New Perspectives" lived up to the promise of its title. The weekend in Tallahassee was filled with poignant tributes to Beckett the man, provocative reassessments of his work, and stimulating new perspectives on the future of Beckett studies.

One of the most interesting trends in Beckett Studies these days is the effort to re-historicize Beckett within an Irish context. This theme was established early and sounded often throughout the conference. The "Ireland I" session was among the earliest on Thursday morning's program; it was also among the best. The panel was anchored by one of the leading new voices in this movement, Seán Kennedy, who was admirably supported by Ronan McDonald, Nicholas Allen, and Patrick Bixby. The challenge of a really good conference session is to strike a balance between diversity and consistency; the papers should be similar enough that they speak to one another, but different enough that they do not simply repeat one another. This session rose to that challenge brilliantly, from McDonald's overview of Beckett's dubious position in Irish Studies, through Allen's argument about the politically subversive treatment of time in *More Pricks Than Kicks*, to Bixby's postcolonial reinterpretation of the Bildungsroman tradition in the trilogy. The session culminated with a fresh reading of Beckett's mature work by Kennedy, who compellingly reinterpreted the novellas as an expression of Protestant marginalization from the Catholic ethos of post-independence Ireland. The "Ireland I" panel was followed by lively discussion—though, curiously, it was not followed by an "Ireland II" session. Nevertheless, several subsequent papers in other sessions advanced this theme of re-historicizing Beckett's Irishness, including fine presentations by Emilie Morin and Patrick Johnston, to name only a couple. This critical approach has captured the imagination of some of Beckett Studies' most promising scholars, and they are showing us how to teach Beckett in new ways. The movement gained increased exposure and momentum from the Tallahassee conference, and we may surely expect more fresh insights from scholars in this field in the near future.

A more traditional approach to Beckett, but one which has lost none of its power to surprise us with new revelations, is "Beckett and Philosophy." This topic was featured in Friday's "Beckett and Philosophy" panel and in Saturday's "Beckett and Philosophy, Yet Again." The Friday panel deserves special mention, since more than one attendee singled it out as the best panel of the conference—a judgment that I share. The session featured Richard Begam and Porter Abbott, two Beckettians at the height of their interpretive powers. Begam offered a fascinating new reading of *Murphy* as a philosophical response to, and at times a parody of, Kantian aesthetics. He also asserted a much stronger influence from the Marquis de Sade in *Murphy* than has heretofore been acknowledged (an assertion that encountered lively debate during the Q & A). On the other hand, Abbott's paper offered an extended rumination upon why Beckett would have insisted, "I am not a philosopher." While genuinely (and diplomatically) conceding the value of philosophy to understanding Beckett's work, Abbott argued that philosophy is of limited use to understanding how Beckett got his work done. What artists do in the production of art—contrary to what philosophers do in the production of philosophy—is *fail*. That is to say, artists like Beckett surrender to irrational, pre-cognitive voices and images in a way that the systematizing efforts of philosophy traditionally contravene. Begam's philosophically astute portrait of Beckett might seem irreconcilable with Abbott's depiction of Beckett the Anti- or Non- or Contra-Philosopher. However, as would often prove the case, that welcome and authoritative voice from the front row had the last word. James Knowlson concurred that Beckett was perpetually working in the dark with strange voices and obsessional images, but he also reminded us that those voices and images frequently emerged from a mind deeply informed by his philosophical readings.

The "Beckett at 100" organizers deserve credit for the wisdom of their conference design. Numerous concurrent sessions were followed by generous coffee breaks to encourage post-panel discussion. The conference also offered several stimulating plenary sessions so that we could all gather simultaneously to hear from some of the most distinguised scholars in the field. Jean-Michel Rabaté's prodigious talents were on full display in the conference's first plenary session, "Beckett's Philosophies and Beckett's Philosophers." Rabaté examined the philosophical matrix connecting Beckett, Theodor Adorno, and Alain Badiou. In one of the more enticing revelations of the conference, he offered a glimpse into Adorno's extensive unpublished notes on *The Unnamable*—a publishing opportunity that did not escape the notice of the *Journal of Beckett Studies*, with its growing list of indispensable monographs. The second plenary talk was delivered, in French, by Bruno Clément. He observed that Beckett's work during the period of the trilogy seems to oscillate between a violent and systematic

rejection of images and a receptivity to them that is so welcoming that it leads to the production of "real images." Clément further argued that this hesitation concerns, in fact, the role of the imagination and that considerations of this subject from a specifically rhetorical perspective neither ignore nor disdain the philosophical tradition that has also examined it.

Clément's lecture on Friday morning was followed that evening by Mary Bryden's fascinating examination of the 1956 cast recording of *Waiting for Godot*, produced by Columbia Records maverick Goddard Lieberson. Several conference panels had already focused upon the challenges of adapting Beckett's plays for the recent *Beckett on Film* project. Therefore, it was interesting to learn from Bryden how Goddard Lieberson wrestled with similar challenges fifty years ago in adapting *Godot* from stage to vinyl recording. Most interesting of all, Bryden offered evidence from Beckett's correspondence to show that he largely approved of Lieberson's addition of original music to punctuate anxious moments in the play.

Conference-organizer Stan Gontarski welcomes keynote speakers Mary Bryden, James Knowlson, Bruno Clément, and Jean-Michel Rabaté to "Beckett at 100: New Perspectives."

The concluding plenary talk – in which James Knowlson delivered the final keynote address of his career —deserves special mention because it provided some of the most memorable moments of the conference. The tide of this momentous occasion began to rise even before he assumed the podium. In a stirring introduction, conference impresario Stan Gontarski enumerated Knowlson's unsurpassed contributions as biographer, critic, editor, archivist, founder, and good-will ambassador of Beckett Studies. Gontarski also spoke for all those assembled when he announced that we Beckettians simply might not permit Knowlson to retire from the conference circuit, so irreplaceable is he as scholar, mentor, colleague, and friend. Be that as it may, if the address on February 11th was in fact his swan song, then he certainly exited the stage on an emotional crescendo.

As one might expect from the title of his multimedia presentation, "The Intricate Web of Life and Work," Knowlson's guiding principle here, as in *Damned to Fame*, was the notion that an understanding of Beckett's life-experiences and personal influences could open up new windows of understanding into his work. In support of this claim, he treated the audience to several sample links between Beckett's life and work, many of them only recently discovered. For instance, Knowlson shared photographs and excerpts of the correspondence excerpts between Beckett and Pamela Mitchell. He argued that Beckett's agonized letters to Mitchell from his brother Frank's deathbed exhibit discernible anticipations of *Endgame*. He also offered a new potential source for *Endgame* in the Genesis story of Noah and the Flood, based in this case upon evidence from Beckett's personally annotated copy of the Bible. Knowlson's detective work also uncovered a tantalizing photograph of Beckett's first love, Peggy Sinclair (see James and Elizabeth Knowlson's *Beckett Remembering / Remembering Beckett* 38). Close examination of this photo (c. 1929) reveals a solitaire on her left ring-finger. Were Beckett and Peggy Sinclair engaged? If so, then her importance in his personal life has been underestimated, and the impact of her death (in 1933 from tuberculosis) on both his life and his work needs renewed consideration.

Knowlson offered many other examples of biographical details that might prove useful to critics. However, I would not want to leave the reader with the impression that his talk was merely a series of new footnotes to his biography. It was much more than that. One wonders if Knowlson was conscious of the self-referential appropriateness of his title, for, by the end of his talk, it was apparent to everyone just how intricately linked his life had become to the work of Samuel Beckett. Knowlson closed by holding up his own late mother's comb, while simultaneously drawing our attention to a Beckett family memento, the shaving mirror that Beckett kept with him until his death. Using these tangible and deeply personal objects as touchstones, Knowlson vividly illustrated his thesis about the intricate links between the life and the work. The power of the speech, punctuated by such an indelible final image, and coupled with the knowledge that we may have witnessed his final performance on the Beckett stage, led the audience to pour out its gratitude with a lengthy standing ovation. It was quite simply the most emotionally charged moment I have ever witnessed at an academic conference.

In short, Knowlson capped off a most rewarding conference with its most memorable moment. The mood of

nostalgia turned quickly to a spirit of celebration during the grand finale banquet, topped off with a special treat: a letter from Edward Albee, read by Stan Gontarski. Twenty-five years after organizing the legendary "Samuel Beckett: Humanistic Perspectives" at Ohio State, Gontarski presided over yet another splendid conference in "Beckett at 100: New Perspectives." The event left all who attended with new enthusiasm for where Beckett Studies is going, and renewed admiration for where it has been. We must thank the organizers and sponsors of this wonderful event, and we must plead with Gontarski not to wait another quarter-century before inviting us back for another Tallahassee Impromptu.

— Graley Herren

The Beckett Project Paris

Le Centre Culturel Irlandais was the host venue on Friday, 3 March, 2006, for the launch of *The Beckett Project Paris* and the announcement of its first project. The president of the association, Sheila O'Leary, welcomed a group that included a considerable cross-section of the Paris Franco-Irish community. In her inaugural address, O'Leary outlined a series of initiatives to celebrate the legacy of Samuel Beckett. These include the creation of a web-site to diffuse documentation (conference papers, for example) that would otherwise remain inaccessible, the creation of a bursary programme to facilitate work on a Beckett-inspired project, the organisation of conferences, exhibitions, theatre- and reading-events, and also the commissioning of original art works in various domains. The association's first project involves the commissioning of a limited-edition Artist's Book by Irish painter Richard Gorman. In her introduction to the artist, O'Leary quoted Gorman's wonderfully Beckettian observation about his own work, "The paintings I make signify only that they are what I spend my time doing."

Richard Gorman, a member of Aosdana—the affiliation of creative artists in Ireland—then spoke briefly of his intention to come to Paris from his Milan base to work on this project, which should be completed in the autumn, with the renowned printmaker Michael Woolworth. The book itself will contain five to seven lithographs or woodblock prints along with photographs of the process of printmaking and of the studio. The prints may be presented loose so that the buyer can use them as he or she sees fit. He likened the assignment to having homework and then having to come back and present it, "wondering if it will have anything to do with the brief." Sheila O'Leary went on to pay tribute to Culture Ireland for funding the book project, to Pierre Joannon of the Ireland Fund dofFrance for assisting with funding for the launch and, of course, to the hosting venue for being just that, and then announced that research has already commenced on the association's next project, the website initiative.

The evening continued with readings from *Oh les beaux jours* by Franco-Irish actress Olwen Fouéré and of *Texts for nothing no. 13* by Irish actor Conor Lovett. The second reading was interrupted briefly due to the passing out of one of the volunteer students who assisted with the evening. Fortunately, the patient was revived by a plainclothed "pompier" who did as much to reassure the congregation as he did to help the woman back to reality. The reading of the text then continued and Sheila O'Leary, having thanked Les Editions de Minuit and Calder Publications for permitting the readings, invited one and all to have a glass of wine.

Amongst those present were Her Excellency The Irish Ambassador to France Anne Anderson, M et Mme Henri Vart of l'Association pour la Maison Samuel-Beckett (Roussillon), Brynhild Sirevag, Directrice of La Maison de Norvège (Cité Universitaire), Helen Carey, Directrice of Le Centre Culturel Irlandais, Judy Hegarty Lovett, Artistic Director of Gare St Lazare Players, Rosetta Beaugendre, Secretary of -, Selina Cartmell, Director of Siren Productions, and Wesley Hutchinson, Director of the Centre de Recherche en Etudes Irlandaises at l'Université de Paris III—Sorbonne Nouvelle.

— Judy Hegarty Lovett

Celebrating the launching of The Beckett Project Paris were, from left to right, Helen Carey, Richard Gorman, Her Excellency The Ambassador of Ireland, Anne Anderson, Sheila O'Leary, Rosetta Beaugendre, Wesley Hutchinson, Olwen Fouéré, Judy Hegarty Lovett, and Conor Lovett.

Remembering Beckett in Kassel

Samuel Beckett's association with the city of Kassel, to which the family of his cousin Peggy Sincair had moved in 1922, was first commemorated by an international symposium on "Beckett and Postmodern Literature" that the University of Kassel had sponsored in 1986. The State Theatre staged several Beckett plays throughout this week-long event. In August 2005, the Samuel Beckett Gesellschaft—a literary society that succeeded the study group "Beckett in Kassel"—was founded. One of its first projects was to launch the Beckett centenary with a dinner party in the historic "Ratskeller," in exactly the same place where Sam and Peggy had celebrated New Year's Eve in 1929.

The Irish Ambassador to Germany, Mr. Seán O'Huiginn, had sent his First Secretary for Culture and the Media, Adrian Farrell, from Berlin. The festival started with a national symposium in the town hall at which the chair of the Samuel Beckett Gesellschaft spoke about the friendly relations between Dr. Gottfried Büttner and Beckett that began in the 1950s, about the international symposium held on the occasion of his 80th birthday, and, finally, about the creation of the Geselleschaft. Rolf Breuer (University of Paderborn) presented his new book *Samuel Beckett: Eine Einführung*, as did Therese Fischer-Seidel (University of Düsseldorf) and Gaby Hartel, who co-edited *Samuel Beckett und die deutsche Kultur*, and Erika Tophoven, who has published *Becketts Berlin*. We are all looking forward to James Knowlson's *Beckett Remembering: Rembering Beckett*.

In the afternoon of New Year's Eve, the Beckett Gesellschaft's director and local city councillor Wolfgang Rudolph led forty-eight enthusiasts on a walk to the railway station (now Kulturbahnhof) where Beckett usually arrived and was met by Peggy. We had reserved a tram of that period to transport us to Bodelwschinghstr. 5 (ex Landgrafen Street), the house where the Sinclairs had lived in Kassel. There was, however, so much snow and ice that we had to resort to a bus instead. The switches were so frozen that Kassel Transport had its hands full just in maintaining the services of its regular street-car system. Konstanze Liebelt's readings from *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* during the ride led us to observe that Belacqua would have been familiar with the weather that we were experiencing. About seventy inhabitants of Kassel's West End witnessed the subsequent unveiling of a commemorative stone placed in front of the Sinclairs' house with the inscription, "Samuel Beckett, 1906 – 1989, Irish Nobel Prize winner, lived here between 1928 and 1932." A Samuel Beckett Park is being planned for the neighborhood, which is undergoing redevelopment.

The "Beckett Year 2006" officially began in the town hall with welcoming addresses given to one hundred and twenty-five invited guests by Rogelio Barroso on behalf of the Mayor and by Adrian Farrell, First Secretary of the Embassy of Ireland. Then Horst Müller's Amateur and Student Theatre Company performed *Krapp's Last Tape*, which was framed by two versions of Come and Go. The society then moved downstairs to the vaulted rooms of the Ratskeller under the town hall, where members and guests enjoyed—in a setting that Beckett and Peggy had known—a banquet that was accompanied by a Jazz quartet playing the Charleston, waltzes, and other favorites of the 1920s. Henrike Taupitz and Ignaz Wilka organized a tombola, along with a Beckett quiz and interviews with foreign guests.

The Gesellschaft met again in the late morning of New Year's Day for a walk in Wilhelmshöhe hillside park, where, according to a biographical interpretation of *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, Sam and Peggy's love affair had ended seventy-six years ago. Peggy died of tuberculosis, and the Sinclairs left Germany in 1933. Beckett's Kassel was almost completely destroyed by an air raid during the Second World War (22 October 1943) but the old town hall and the Ratskeller miraculously survived. Beckett never returned to Kassel in person; he did, however, return there in his works.

— Gerd Rohmann

MLA 2005: Beckett and History

"Beckett and History," the program arranged by the Samuel Beckett Society at the Modern Language Association's 2005 convention in Washington, D.C., featured three presenters: James McNaughton, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor; Sean D. C. Kennedy, Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia; and Katherine Weiss, University of Arizona; with Enoch Brater, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, presiding. In an engaging 75-minute session, each of the speakers contributed meaningfully to the project of historicizing a writer whose work invites a postmodern critique. The purpose was not to replace prior readings but to extend the range of critical inquiry. All were successful in doing so.

James McNaughton, who recently defended his University of Michigan dissertation under the direction of Enoch Brater, began his re-titled paper, "Forget about History in Beckett: 'Schicksal = Zufall for all practical purposes,'" by reminding auditors of Beckett's familiarity with political propaganda and metahistorical narratives. Noting that Beckett had already expressed an interest in challenging narratives that relied on divine sanction and anthropomorphizing the past, particularly through racial allegories, McNaughton offered an analysis of Watt that examined and extended the relationship between Fritz Mauthner's philosophy of language and Beckett's project. McNaughton insightfully mapped the ways in which Watt, which Beckett wrote when he was in the Resistance in Paris, "explores rational fallacies by which citizens avoid critique, take comfort in propaganda, and collaborate with a reigning ideology." At the core of Watt is the question of whether a critique of language that

exposes ideological abstractions can challenge political power structures. The novel's strategy is to show how narratives that rationalize the past by privileging divine destiny over historical accident become sinecures for inaction.

The goal of Sean Kennedy's presentation, "The Bowler Hat in Beckett: A Political Reading," was to enrich the reading of the bowler hat that appears so frequently in Beckett's post-war work. Kennedy noted how important symbols became in the period following the formation of the Irish Free State and particularly in the 1932 election, when the bowler hat and the cloth hat acquired oppositional resonance, appearing in campaign posters and political cartoons. The bowler hat reappears in Beckett's four post-war novellas, in which the narrator tells of his initiation into the English/Irish bowler: it was a hat his father (who supported Cosgrave) insisted he wear, a hat he could have discarded—but did not—when his father died. And though ill-fitting, it was a hat filled with political associations. In the end, Kennedy suggested that the bowler "is Beckett's symbolic condensation of a complex blend of alienation, belonging and longing: an index of a prior affiliation to the world of middle-class Irish Protestantism, and a marker, subsequently, of displacement and loss." Without dismissing its vaudeville and psychoanalytic associations, Kennedy extended the significance of Beckett's bowler to the political and the personal. As he put it, a reading of the major works that allows for the ambivalence and the complexity of this recurring symbol "will reveal a more vulnerable and conflicted Irish Beckett than has been acknowledged to date."

While Kennedy looked at a way in which Beckett's pre-war experience informed his post-war writing, Katherine Weiss examined a way in which his post-war experience engendered yet another symbol: the fragmented body. In "'. . . humanity in ruins': The Historical Body in Samuel Beckett's Fiction," Weiss historicized Beckett's prose fiction of the 1960s, identifying the destroyed Normandy town of Saint-Lô, which Beckett described in the radio text The Capital of the Ruins, as an influential intellectual source. Weiss made the point that the bodies of Beckett's pre-war protagonists are intact and that it is not until Watt that Beckett "flirts" with the disjointed body. Offering examples of fragmented protagonists in the experimental fiction—All Strange Away, Ping, and Lessness, for example—and of a corresponding fragmented language, Weiss contended that the prose of the 1960s is "an attempt to reimagine poetry and fiction after World War II." Unable to return to the pre-war narratives, Beckett took the "scattered ruins" of the imagination and created a new form of language and fiction. As Weiss put it, in Beckett's post-war fiction, "the fragmented storyteller attempts to rummage through and clear away the debris to compose a new textual body out of the rubble . . ."

The discussion that followed raised issues of the possibilities and limitations of an historical approach; the distinguishing and "universalizing" features of bowler hats; the ill-fitting hat and the perceived need (in psychoanalytic theory) for social mobility; the concept of the superego and Beckett's conflicted sense of relationships; the connections between historical events and the chronology of Beckett's work; and the continuing presence of Ireland. The session helped reclaim history and, through shards of his writing—Nazi propaganda, bowler hats, and fragmented bodies—added a chapter to the never-complete narrative of Beckett as writer.

— June Schlueter

Waiting for Beckett

In 1971, the Hungarian-Jewish writer and theatre director George Tabori chose to work in Germany, subsequently becoming one of the most important theatrical figures in the German-speaking world. In addition to writing two major plays, The Cannibals *and* Mein Kampf, *that deal with the extermination of the Jews (Tabori himself lost his father and an uncle to the Nazi persecution), he became famous for his productions of Shakespeare, Lessing, Brecht, Beckett, Enzensberger, and Jellinek. In the production of* Warten auf Godot *that he directed in 1983 in Munich with Peter Lühr as Estragon and Thomas Holtzmann as Vladimir, Tabori transferred elements of Brecht's epic theatre to Beckett's play. The wall behind the stage was exposed and the theatre's emergency exit became an integral part of the actors' performance. Holtzmann, in addition to playing the role of Vladimir, became a Brechtian narrator-author by reading the stage directions aloud to his partner (and, through him, to the public). Tabori's* Godot *is also noteworthy for its references to the play's World War II background. Conceiving Didi and Gogo as two intellectuals hiding from persecution, Tabori associated them with Beckett and Henry Hayden in 1942-44.*

In "Waiting for Beckett" Tabori plays once more, although in a somewhat different way, with the conditions and the possibilities of the narrative and dramatic genres. His text echoes not only Beckett's play, but also the irony that characterizes the narrator's discourse in stories such as L'expulsé *and* Premier amour, *written just before* Godot. *On the thematic level, we can read it as a short story about an encounter that failed. Godot comes but George has nothing to ask, nothing to say to him, since he has put all his energy into his effort to imagine the encounter. The situation of the reader-director who looks forward anxiously to his meeting with the great playwright continues over 12 hours, and the narration fills as many pages. We can also read this text as a subtle hommage to the master, to the Irish humor with which Tabori feels a special affinity in the context of his own culture.*

— Jürgen Siess

* * *

"They also serve who only stand and wait." Armed with such Miltonic humility, I arrived twelve hours too early, afraid of missing my appointment. Beckett, for his part, came sixty-three seconds late—a natural exercise in what the play is all about, if it is about that at all. "Nothing is certain," as Estragon says.

If I were to compile a list of all the things I did in those twelve hours and sixty-three seconds, it would fill a book, and thus prove that one can do quite a lot whilst waiting.

George Tabori directs Michael Rothmann and Axel Werner in the Berliner Ensemble's production of *Warten auf Godot.*

PHOTO: MONIKA RITTERSHAUS

For this reason, one does not wait very much whilst one is waiting. Every one of these little activities – taking a bath, staring at the ceiling, dozing off during a Duras play, sipping a Pernod in the Deux Magots, visiting H. in the shade of the Utrillo mill – appeared at the time to take on a singular existence. What connected them was less that which was, but that which was to come: my appointment at 11 o'clock the following morning. Apparently, it is possible to exist simultaneously on different planes of time. This can lead to problems, as it did for Macbeth, who was "sick at heart" at the time when he received the news of his wife's death. She should have died later, on the following day for example, so that he could have endured the present day in all its fullness. I would also have enjoyed my dinner with H. more fully had I not at the same time been putting together a list of questions in my mind, questions which, as I already knew, I would not dare to ask Beckett.

[…]

K. in the Deux Magots, a book by Beckett in each pocket. We have not seen each other since the fifties. K. is unchanged apart from the fact that he is half-blind. He only reads Beckett; in all these thirty years he has exclusively read Beckett. "Why waste my time with the mediocre?"

[…]

If you want to do Beckett, burn all your other books. When you meet him tomorrow, don't ask him anything; otherwise, he will get you. At any rate, you won't be able to tie him down. I have tried to tie him down – "Nothing to be done." Like Kafka, he is an exhibitionist who has been placed upside down on his head, a sphinx. Reminds me of that old Algerian in the Jardin du Luxembourg. I met him almost daily. Summer or winter he is wrapped in this long black coat. When I approach, he bares his broken nakedness, then closes his coat again. One day, finally, I said to him: "Listen, old man, if you want to show something then show it; why do you close your coat?" "That is poetry," he replied.

[…]

Later on in the evening, I take a bath with Deirdre Bair's biography. Why try to combine the life and the work, poet and poetry? Like most biographies, this also is brilliant gossip. It is a further embarrassment to be meeting a living legend the following day. But gossip can also be great art, at least since Homer. The credibility of the sermon on the mount is not unrelated to the anecdote of the washing of the feet. The death of the child Hamnet gives shape to Hamlet's grief. Will it help Peter Lühr to know that,—in order to imitate his master James Joyce, who had small feet --Beckett, who had large feet, also wore elegantly pointed shoes, which hurt like hell and were impossible to remove. "Estragon, sitting on a low mound, is trying to take off his boot." That's how the play starts. "Nothing to be done," Estragon/Lühr will say a few months later. With his unusual alchemical energy, he will portray Estragon's scepticism concerning the hope for this worst of all possible worlds whilst he is battling with this worst of all possible boots. For Lühr, the boot, just like the hat, will not merely be a banal prop, nor a clownish gag, but a magical object that will help him transform words into

flesh – the first task of an actor – and lead him to an Imitation of Christ.

I cannot refrain from associating the craft with the craftsman, or the bathtub in the Hotel PM a year ago with the rehearsal room a few months ago, when I reiterated hearsay about the first draft of the play in which Estragon was still called Levy. How could I have ignored such scraps of gossip, even if I had to ask myself what Thomas Holtzmann could do with the knowledge that Beckett himself was once a tramp, fleeing on foot from the fascist police in Paris, a flight that is at the core of the play, and that his marital skirmishes were of the same kind as those between Vladimir and his friend Estragon? Will it be wrong of us to see the two of them, not as two-dimensional clowns in a cloud-cuckoo-land of abstractions, but as intellectuals on the run, as the text repeatedly makes clear? One cannot play abstractions, only the people that create them.

[…]

There was a time during rehearsals when we suspected that every single one of the characters could be a disguised Godot, a nameless and invisible Godot who had masked himself as one of God's spies to put his flock to the test from their midst, just as Godot-Gods have done since the beginning of time. We even devised an improvisation, which we called "The Kingdom of Godot is within you." Everybody drew lots out of a hat, and whoever got the one marked with a "G" had to play his character as if he were Godot, but without the others knowing it. I am sure that Beckett would have loathed such little games, but it was important for us to find that same "distraction" that Beckett had felt when he wrote this play so that it would also become our play.

[…]

At 10.20 the next morning I was lying in wait in the foyer of this horrendous hotel and stared at the entrance. Beckett does not know what I look like; do I really know what he looks like? The all too familiar pictures show the large head of an eagle, the white eyes of a zombie and Dracula teeth. But photos are deceptive; they make people (in particular legendary people) look better than they really do. Furthermore, what a terrible hotel, packed to the roof, a birdcage full of tourists acting like a twittering flock, about to descend upon Paris and make it filthy. The foyer with its cafés, bars and boutiques is so unbeckettian that I begin to doubt the pictures as well as the legend. For a moment I imagine that he will not appear as a noble bird of prey in his famous polo-neck sweater, but as a stout Irishman, red cheeked and drunk, more like Brendan Behan, with whom I once got drunk in the Hotel Algonquin on 44th Street in Manhattan. After all, it is not easy to meet legends. One day my father met Tolstoy, whom he adored. "By God, what an ugly man," he said on returning home. When my brother once left the house in the thirties to go and interview Joyce, I waited with baited breath for his report. "Terribly bourgeois," he said. "He wears a tie and pointed shoes." What a disappointment! I had imagined a wild Irish prophet, perhaps naked, but at least with hair dyed green, spouting forth interior monologues. "What did he say?" I asked. "Nothing much." This reminds me of another story: Joyce and Beckett in a room, sitting in silence for hours. Beckett remained silent about the world, Joyce about Joyce.

The street outside is flooded with light. People come and go; some enter, their faces in semi-darkness. A tall, gaunt man totters in with a stick; that could be he. I follow him to the gent's toilet, but it is not he. I run back, certain to have missed the right man, it is ten to eleven, time for another coffee, no waiter in sight, I stare again at the entrance, my limbs trembling.

Moreover, our Auditor was not played by an actor, but an elephant, which must have surprised or even annoyed Beckett.

During several seasons, we experimented with Beckett's texts, mainly in a circus, which is hardly the right place for Beckett, whose work demands the minimalism of a black proscenium with the greatest possible symmetry and meditative simplicity, rather than the wide-open atmosphere—festive and childish—of the arena. In our correspondence I tried, naturally in vain, to explain that I viewed the theatre as a learning process about human encounters and the nature of freedom and necessity, and that I was not interested in delivering end products or faithful renditions of canonized texts. When we put on Not I, for instance, I was not interested in using the brilliant but hopeless idea of reducing the stage to an illuminated mouth (which can hardly be done even with a laser light), but in concentrating on other Beckettian challenges hidden in the play: to speak the text in less than 20 minutes, and not as a rational discourse but rather as the confessional cry of a mute woman, who can free herself from muteness through extreme bonds, not unlike the ones Beckett had used in his own production.

But whereas his shackles – the actor was chained to a chair and an iron pole – were a technical device to achieve the greatest possible immobility, so that the mouth remained within the tiny spotlight, we were concerned with the dialectic between extreme physical restriction and equally extreme internal release. Moreover, our Auditor was not played by an actor, but an elephant, which must have surprised or even annoyed Beckett. Nevertheless, his letters – small calligraphic miracles – were never other than gracious and tolerant, although he made no secret of the fact that his idea of the theatre was rather different. What I could never quite make clear in our correspondence was my concept: theatre not as a supermarket for ideas, words, and gestures, but as a political, and thus a moral, not an aesthetic, laboratory, in which one could explore those ideas of freedom that had survived in a sphere where order rather than freedom was the main virtue – a virtue that, in my experience, degraded the actor to a robot, human beings to objects. The rest is history.

[…]

At 11 o'clock and sixty-three seconds, Beckett enters and pauses a moment to post a letter. His head is much smaller than I had expected, his eyes not white but pale blue, and his hands very warm. He walks flat-footed like a dancer, and talks with a wonderful Irish singsong. We drink coffee—two cups, I think—for which he pays. We talk of this and of that, mostly mundane things and nothing of importance. I wait, not asking any questions; nothing happens. Before we part, he says: "I hear you leave your actors a lot of freedom." "Yes," I answer, and await the reprimand for the elephant. "That's good," he replies.

Oh, this is a happy day, as Winnie says, this will have been another happy day.

— *George Tabori*
Translated by Mark Nixon

Le Livre de Sam

L'année 2006 marque le centenaire de la naissance de Samuel Beckett. Déjà partout dans le monde on prépare les colloques, les réunions, les discours, les conférences, les festivals, les représentations pour honorer Samuel Beckett. Déjà des articles, des papiers académiques, des essais sont en train d'être écrits. Toute cette préparation m'a inspiré à célébrer, pour moi-même, et par moi-même, dans une sorte de soliloque, les cinquante ans que j'ai passé avec l'oeuvre de Beckett, et avec Sam, comme je l'appelais.

Je me suis donc mis à écrire un livre qui raconte ces cinquante années d'amitié avec l'oeuvre de Beckett et avec Sam. Un livre fait de fragments d'écriture dans différents genres : narrations, poèmes, morceaux de lettres, méditations, dialogues, anecdotes, citations, et autres genres encore inconnus, qui font ici ce que j'appelle Le livre de Sam. *En somme, un livre fait de débris d'écriture, comme le sous-titre l'indique. Un livre sans doute impubliable parce qu'il est écrit, je devrais plutôt dire parlé parfois en français, parfois en anglais, comme cela se doit dans le cas de Samuel Beckett.*

Mais avant tout un livre sur l'importance que l'oeuvre de Beckett a eue sur mon travail d'écrivain, mais aussi l'importance pour ma vie d'avoir connu Samuel Beckett en personne. Ce n'est pas une biographie que j'écris. Cela a déjà été fait et refait, "à tort ou à raison," comme il est dit au début de Premier amour. *Tout ce qu'il y avait à savoir sur la vie de Beckett à été dit et redit. Le plus souvent "mal vu mal dit," comme nous a prévenu Sam avec le titre d'un de ses livres. J'évite donc de dire et redire ce qu'on sait déjà.*

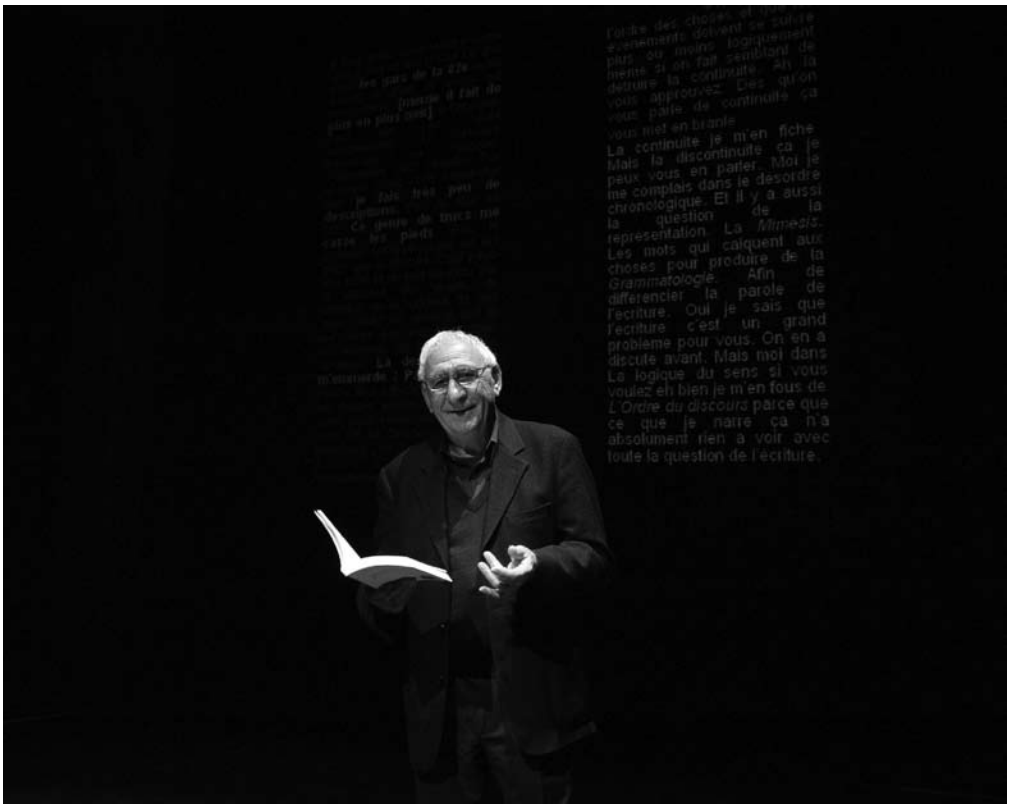
J'aurais pu appeler ce livre Sam et moi, *car c'est en fait l'histoire de mes rapports avec Beckett et son oeuvre que je me raconte ici. Mais cela aurait été trop présomptueux. Sam était tellement au-dessus de nous tous. Je raconte cette histoire dans une sorte de récit, de collage fait de morceaux d'écriture que j'ai accumulés depuis ma première rencontre avec, non pas Sam, mais* Godot, *en 1956. Il y a de cela cinquante ans.*

* * *

Une lettre d'une amie beckettienne me vient ce matin pendant que je suis en train d'écrire dans mon *Livre de Sam* comment il est toujours présent en moi et chez moi. Voici ce qu'elle m'écrit : «Beckett est aujourd'hui dans cet ailleurs dont nul ne revient, et nous restons seuls, glorieux héritiers de son questionnement moqueur, écartelés entre l'obscurité de sa cécité et de son désespoir, et le soleil de son humour et de son amour pour l'humanité. »

C'est beau ce que dit là mon amie beckettienne, mais pour elle Sam n'est plus là. Et elle est écartelée entre sa propre cécité et son désespoir. Pour elle, Sam est absent. Eh bien, pour moi Sam est toujours présent, et je reste donc, comme avant, et le resterai toujours, sachant que Sam est toujours avec moi, écartelé entre le *fourire* et les inévitables *foirades*.

Oui, Sam est avec moi tout le temps. Even when I play golf. Oh, how I would have loved to have played a round of golf with Sam. He had a 3 handicap at Trinity. I would have lost, of course, but what a round of golf it would have been. Too bad. But I did play billiards with Sam.



Raymond Federman performs at the 2005 Avignon Festival in the stage adaption of his novel *Amer Eldorado*.

Un billard avec Sam

Je joue pas mal au billard mais pas aussi bien que Samuel Beckett avec qui j'ai joué une fois. Pas le billard américain avec des pockets mais le billard à trois boules—deux blanches et une rouge. Un soir avec Sam et Ludovic Janvier [Ludo et moi on appelait toujours Beckett Sam parce qu'on était copain avec lui]— c'était tard après un bon dîner vers les deux heures du matin on décide de faire un billard. On était tous un peu paff. On trouve un café ouvert avenue du Maine avec un billard. Erica était avec nous. Mais elle jouait pas. Elle nous regardait jouer assise sur un tabouret en train de siroter un cognac. Bon il était évident que Sam était beaucoup plus fort au billard que Ludo et moi. Vachement plus fort. Sam était fort dans tout ce qu'il faisait. Au échecs, au piano. Dans tout quoi. On décida de faire une partie de cinquante points. Ludo commence. Il fait une série de trois points. Moi ensuite. J'en fait quatre. Puis le tour de Sam. Sam en fait douze. Et ça continue comme ça. Bon je vais pas décrire tout le jeu mais bien sûr Sam a gagné. On ramène Sam chez lui. C'est moi qui conduisais. J'avais une petite bagnole allemande. On s'embrasse. Sam nous dit on en fera un autre bientôt. Ensuite je ramène Ludo chez lui. Erica assise sur le siège arrière nous dit, vous savez Sam trichait. Pas possible Ludo et moi on crie. Sam ne sait pas tricher. Mais si insiste Erica. Il trichait à l'envers. Comment il faisait pour tricher à l'envers au billard Ludo et moi on demande. Eh bien il faisait douze ou quatorze points. Moi je comptais. Mais avec sa queue il mettait seulement cinq ou six points là-haut sur le fil où on marque les points. Il aurait pu vous écraser en cinq minutes. Faire cinquante points de suite sans que vous puissiez en faire un seul. Il manquait les coups exprès.

Ah Sam! Il manquait les coups exprès. Voila ce qui explique Sam le mieux :Sa générosité. His kindness. Son sens de l'humour. Mais surtout sa silencieuse manière d'exprimer son affection.

Le plaisir qu'il prenait à jouer des tours aux autres. En fait, c'était ça. Sam nous avait joué *un tour au billard*. Et je suis sûr que cela lui a donné du plaisir de ne pas nous avoir démolis.

— Raymond Federman

Errors in *A Beckett Canon*

Since A Beckett Canon *is now out in paperback, I add my own e.o.o.e. (errors or omissions excepted) for those who armed themselves with the hardback. With homage to the author of "Home Olga," where I first heard of e.o.o.e.*

— Ruby Cohn

51, ll. 7 - 8 The beggar woman offers Belacqua four seats for the price of three, since a tanner is sixpence. (Thanks to Gerry Dukes).

95 fn "Dieppe" was first published in *The Irish Times* (June 9, 1945), and then in *Les Temps Modernes* (November, 1946).

168 fn The first *Malone meurt* notebook contains part of Watt.

242 fn *Fragment de Théâtre II* was first published in *L'Herne* (1976) and then in *Ends and Odds*.

248, l. 2 up *Acte sans paroles I and II* are separated, not by four years, but by two. The first was written in 1956, the second in 1958.

263 fn *Happy Days* was not published by Calder but by Faber in 1963.

277, title I read Beckett's date on "Mongrel Mime" as 1963, but M. Lindon wrote me that it was 1983.

278 fn *Film* was first published by Faber in 1967, and then by Grove, etc.

314 fn *Abandonné* was first published by Georges Visat in 1972, not 1971.

345 fn, l. 2 ... *Mirlitonnades*. However, see Ackerley and Gontarski's *Grove Companion*: "the total is about forty-seven, depending on which drafts or jottings are accepted as part of the sequence." (p 373, col. 2)

l. 3 up Some are unpublished.

347, title The title should be *The Voice (Verbatim)*, and it dates from January, 1977.

377 fn, l. 2 up ... published only in JOBS 2:1 (1992) and in Volume IV ...

OMISSIONS OF DATES

33 fn "Dortmunder" was written January 1932.

37 fn *Dream* was begun in 1931, but most of it was probably written in 1932.

73 fn I have not seen the manuscript of *Murphy*, but I was told that it was begun August 20, 1935 and completed May, 1936.

159 fn "Mort de AD" was written in 1949.

160 fns "Vive morte" and "Bon bon" were both written in 1947.

218 fn *Acte sans paroles I* was written in 1956.

272 fn The first publication in English of *Cascando* was in *Evergreen Review* (May-June, 1963).

294 fn *Eh Joe* was begun April 13, 1965 and was completed by May, 1965.

340 fn "neither" was written in September, 1976.

371 fn "Ceiling" sports the dates July 10 and 26, 1981.

375 fn *Worstward Ho* was begun August 9, 1981 and completed March 17, 1982.

380 fn *Stirrings Still* was first published in the *Guardian* (March 3, 1989).

Current & Upcoming Events

Roussillon 2006

L'Association pour la Maison Samuel Beckett (whose bilingual webpage is available at www.beckett-roussillon.com) plans to celebrate the Beckett centenary this summer with a full program of events, all of which will be presented in the charming outdoor setting of the Conservatoire des ocres et pigments appliqués de Roussillon. The schedule is as follows:

Tuesday, July 25

5PM Annual meeting of the association's members, followed by a meeting of its board.

7:30 PM A stage reading of Michael Sadler's unpublished play, *L'Art de la fugue* (admission free).

9:30 PM Dinner

Wednesday, July 26

9:30 PM *Oh les beaux jours* followed by *Berceuse*, directed by Joël Jouanneau and featuring Mireille Mossé (25€).

Thursday, July 27

5:30 PM Stage reading of an unpublished text by Didier Anzieu on Beckett (admission free).

7:30 PM Stage reading of Thomas Bernhard's *Simplement compliqué* (admission free).

BeckettFest in Pittsburgh

Pittsburgh Irish and Classical Theatre will present a BeckettFest of performances of all nineteen plays, opening with *Endgame* on August 17 and ending on September 11 with an all-star reading of *Waiting for Godot*. The performance ensemble of actors and directors will include Tadeusz Bradecki, Simon Bradbury, Melanie Dreyer, Martin Giles, E. Bruce Hill, Dan Kamin, Sheila McKenna, Ellen Mease, Larry John Meyers, Catherine Moore, Mark Staley, and Andrew S. Paul, PICT artistic director. Scenic Design: Steffi Mayer. Costumes: Pei-Chi Su. Lights: Chris Popowich. For further information or tickets, contact 412-561-6000 or access our website www.picttheatre.org.

The PICT BeckettFest bills:

Endgame August 17-September 9

Krapp's Last Tape Aug 25-27

"Beckett's Women" Aug 29, 31, Sept 2 (*Play, Not I, Come and Go, Footfalls, Rockaby*)

"With and Without Words" Sept 3, 5, 9 (*Catastrophe, Rough for Theatre II, A Piece of Monologue, Rough for Theatre I, AWWII*)

Happy Days September 7

"Make Sense Who May" Sept 10 (*AWWI, What Where, Breath, That Time, Ohio Impromptu*)

Beckett & Company

A Centenary Conference on Samuel Beckett and the Arts, 5 – 7 October 2006

Tate Modern, The London Consortium, Birkbeck College, and Goldsmiths College will host an interdisciplinary conference to celebrate the importance of Samuel Beckett's work for the arts in the 21st century. Artists such as Jasper Johns, Bruce Nauman, Steve McQueen, and Doris Salcedo, composers such as Philip Glass, Morton Feldman and Mark-Anthony Turnage, filmmakers like Atom Egoyan and dancers like Maguy Marin have all engaged with Beckett in their work. Bringing together visual artists, composers, musicians, dancers, choreographers, architects, and philosophers, this three-day conference will provide an opportunity to question and debate Beckett's contemporaneity and to celebrate his relevance for the arts. Beckett & Company will begin with an academic conference at Birkbeck, followed by a day of public events, talks, and screenings at Tate Modern, headlined by key contemporary artists. Goldsmiths will close the conference with a series of workshops, roundtables, and performances that will bring scholars and practitioners into dialogue.

Contributions to the conference are invited in two forms:

- Academic papers of 20 mins.
- Presentations for workshop, roundtable or performance c. 20–40 mins.

Please send two copies of abstracts (250-500 words) with affiliation and contact details via email as Word, PDF or RTF attachments to Dr Derval Tubridy: d.tubridy@gold.ac.uk and Dr Laura Salisbury: l.salisbury@english.bbk.ac.uk by 1 June 2006.

Current & Upcoming Events

PARIS-BECKETT 2006

The Beckett centennial will be celebrated all around Paris by PARIS-BECKETT 2006, a four-month-long international pluridisciplinary Festival during the fall of 2006, with extensions into 2007.

PARIS-BECKETT 2006 will present for the first time anywhere all of Beckett's 19 plays in French as well as stagings of other Beckett works and performances in languages other than French, at theaters in Paris and the Paris region including the Comédie Française (Vieux Colombier and Studio), the Bouffes du Nord, the Théâtre de l'Athénée, and the Théâtre de la Ville. Among the directors and performers in the Festival are Frederick Wiseman, Catherine Samie, Michaël Lonsdale, Laurence Bourdil, Eléonore Hirt, Peter Brook, Coline Serreau, Natascha Parry, Geneviève Mnisch, François Tanguy, Bernard Levy, Gilles Arbona, Maurice Deschamps, Jean Dautremay, Michel Didym, Alain Françon, Jacques Gabel, Jacques Rebotier, Orchestre Ostinato, Xavier Marchand, Henry Pillsbury, The Godot Company, François Tanguy, Barbara Hutt, Raphaëlle Gitlis, Pierre Chabert, Maguy Marin, Helen Gary Bishop, and Sophie Loucachevsky.

The Festival will also present numerous events linked to the career of Samuel Beckett and to artists inspired in their own work by him, in disciplines such as dance, music, photography, marionettes, video art, and the plastic arts.

Included in the PARIS-BECKETT 2006 International Festival will be Beckett days and meetings presenting lectures, readings of Beckett's works, in French and in English, by celebrated actors, round tables bringing together playwrights, directors, critics, actors, novelists, and philosophers. These events will be held, among others, at the Bibliothèque Nationale de France (BNF), The Sorbonne in conjunction with the Maison des Ecrivains, the Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord, the Maison de la Poésie, and the Société des Auteurs et Compositeurs Dramatiques (SACD).

France Culture will broadcast Beckett's radio plays as well as other Beckett programs and ARTE will show his television works. These will also be shown in screenings together with various films of Beckett productions.

PARIS-BECKETT 2006 will provide an opportunity for a new, in-depth reflection on Samuel Beckett's work, his legacy to contemporary art and artists, and his resonance among today's public. Above all, it will, for the first time, enable French-speaking audiences to measure the brilliance and diversity of his theater. For schedules and information, visit www.parisbeckett.com

"Birth was the death of him" Conference

An International Conference in honour of Samuel Beckett's Centenary—co-organized by the Centre for Contemporary Fiction & Narrative, the University of Northampton's School of Arts, the UK Network for Modern Fiction Studies, and the London Beckett Seminar Group—will be held at the University of Northampton's Avenue Campus, 1–3 December 2006. Conference coordinators are Prof. Philip Tew, Steve Barfield, and Dr. Matthew Feldman. Keynote speakers will be announced.

Suggested themes include Beckett's Deathly Humour; Gothic Beckett and Beckett's Gothic; Holy Living and Holy Dying; Textual Death: Genetic Criticism since 1989; Beckett's Demise and an Afterlife of Archival Revelations; Philosophy, Time and Finitude; Eschatology, Teleology, Religion and the End; Deathly Lives and Deathly Living; Lunacy as Limbo/Limbo as Lunacy; Beckett's Legacy: Deathly States; Repetition as Deathliness; Disembodied Voices: Beckettian Narrative and Psychoanalysis; Death and Other Unfinished Business.

Please send abstracts of 200-250 words for proposed panels and/or papers to Matthew Feldman: matthew.feldman@northampton.ac.uk or Philip Tew: tewp@ukf.net The deadline for proposals is Friday, 8 September 2006; however, notification of acceptance for international delegates requiring confirmation for travel funding is guaranteed by Monday, 17 July 2006, if such proposals are received by Friday 30 June 2006. Earlier confirmation may be possible.

Beckett's Traces

Université Charles-de-Gaulle Lille 3
8-9 December 2006

The resonance that echoes would have in all of Beckett's work was discernible as early as his first collection of poems, *Echo's Bones*. When he abandoned (temporarily) both his mother tongue and poetry in the 1940s to write mainly theatre and prose in French, Beckett's interest did not wane. The survival of a sound that is an echo continued to evolve as Beckett's work did, to become a visual remnant in his later plays, in which the characters no longer participate in the representation of an action, but become the image of that which is narrated by a voice without body—a visual trace of that which is no longer or has not yet been. This conference will study all forms of echoes, relics, traces in Beckett's work, including (but not limited to)

- audible traces: Beckett, who made sure no recording was ever made of his voice, made of his stage characters "receivers" of recorded voices (*Krapp's Last Tape, That Time, Rockaby*); the radio plays, recorded for posterity, unlike the stage plays
- visual traces: the plays for television, a genre to which Beckett turned after having written stage plays, which leave no trace, other than, in the case of Beckett, his minutely detailed Theatrical Notebooks; *Film*; the *Beckett on Film* project; the photographs in *A Piece of Monologue* and *Film*
- the fading away of the characters in the late plays, themselves no more than traces of characters who no longer exist (or exist only as ghosts, or turned to stone) and who listen to the traces of a previous life which may have been theirs
- bilingualism: the trace left by English in French, by French in English, by Hiberno-English in both
- genetic criticism: the traces of the different stages of writing to be found in the finished work
- the traces left by those authors who counted for Beckett in his own work
- the traces left by Beckett's work in that of his successors
- the trace as a sign of evanescence, of what is no longer. In the radical miniaturisation of the Beckett text, there is nothing which is not the trace of something absent – absence of the character who is no more, who no longer seeks to be, absence of contact with the world, disappearance of the body, extinction of language

This conference is organised by the Centre d'Etudes en Civilisations, Langues et Lettres Etrangères (CECILLE) / Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches en études Irlandaises de l'Université de Lille 3 The organizing committee includes: Helen Astbury (Lille 3), Bernard Escarbelt (Lille 3), Fabienne Garcier (Lille 3), Carle Bonafous-Murat (Paris 3), and André Topia (Paris 3). 200-word abstracts in English or French should be submitted to Helen Astbury (helen.astbury@univ-lille3.fr).

BOOK REVIEWS

C. J. Ackerley and S.E. Gontarski, *The Grove Companion to Samuel Beckett: A Reader's Guide to His Works, Life, and Thought*. New York: Grove Press, 2004. xxvii + 686pp. $25. (To be published in the UK as *The Faber Companion to Samuel Beckett*. London: Faber, 2006. 736pp. £20.00).

On many levels, Ackerley and Gontarski's *The Grove Companion* to Samuel Beckett is an instructive and richly detailed work of cartographical scholarship. As they write in their introduction to this monumental volume, "[w]hile a distinct Beckett country is discernible, its lineaments are not always discrete, and as a result few maps chart its terrain. A comprehensive cartography, its atlas, say, remains to be written—one that includes his life (since it impinged so dramatically, if obliquely, on his art), his reading (since it has informed his art incalculably), his thought, for want of a better word (since despite protests to the contrary his art is imbued with and informed by the philosophical, ontological, linguistic, and cognitive cruxes of his and earlier ages)" (xiv). It is this hitherto unmapped terrain, ranging from the Pre-Socratic to the postmodern, from the verbal to the visual, from the conceptual to the literal, that Ackerley and Gontarski's encyclopaedic book attempts to chart. In this regard, the depth and breadth of reference, allusion, and intertext on offer here alone mark this book as a crucial landmark in the field of Beckett Studies. More than anything, the immense contours of this work's annotative range stands as exemplary archival testimony to the shifting literary, biographical, and philosophical ground that Beckett's writing consistently built and disassembled in the same instant. Each entry is a note toward reflection: a signpost indicative not only of the scholarly terrain already mapped in Beckett studies, but also of the potential shape that encounters with Beckett might take in the future.

In this regard, the depth and breadth of reference, allusion, and intertext on offer here alone mark this book as a crucial landmark in the field of Beckett Studies

In the same way that it would be somewhat unreasonable to waver over the inevitable omissions of certain terms, writers, and subjects (although "aphasia," "Adorno," and "sex" are three such instances noticeable by their absence) in a work of this magnitude, it is also a difficult and, in some senses, an arbitrary exercise to extract a small selection of entries for representative comment. Indeed, one of the most refreshingly original achievements of this book is the way in which its alphabetical format is itself an implicit refusal to impose upon the various aspects of Beckett's work, and of Beckett studies more generally, some form of conceptual and/or thematic organisation. For all its impressive eclecticism, however, there is no mistaking the ways in which this book provides a practical and foundational resource for Beckett scholars and non-specialist readers alike. On the one hand, the entertaining "A Beckett Chronology" (first drafted by Michael Rodriguez) that opens the volume and the wide-ranging bibliography that closes it both provide convenient touchstones for approaching or reappraising the work of Beckett. On the other hand, collected here are detailed entries on all of Beckett's works, preoccupations, and tropes, as well as expedient discussions of allusions, intersections, and their attendant marginalia. From this perspective in particular, the genuine reward of this book is not simply the way in which it sits usefully in conjunction with Beckett's texts themselves, but also the way in which each entry invites a considerate return to the reading of those texts. As the authors note toward the end of their introduction, "[w]riting for Beckett was always a haunting echo of memory, personal and cultural. Learning to read Beckett, again, is to approach him as already a repetition, an echo of his reading, of his culture, and finally of himself" (xvi). Throughout, it is the multiplicity of these echoes which reverberate strongly in this volume, rising and falling alongside the fluctuations in terrain that they map. Their looping arrangement encourages a continual reading of Beckett that takes place beyond the confines of any particular academic approach, affiliation, or assumption. Its field, rather, is the amorphous residue of "literary and cultural traditions, as much pre- as post-modern" (ix), as much at odds with categorisation as fascinated with the possibilities of research.

Needless to say, in its combination of exhaustive scope with regenerative aim, *The Grove Companion to Samuel Beckett* is pledged toward the ambitious. Yet it is this ambition that also makes the modest nomination of this book as a companion strangely misleading. The product of Ackerley and Gontasrki's painstaking research is much more than a book on a particular subject. The permeable form of cross-referencing that structures this book demands that it be read less as a "companion" than as a modifying excavation of remainders and ruminations, a loose-leafed intertextual compendium, a material hyper-text. Entries ghost other entries, simultaneously clarifying and obscuring one another, leading and abandoning. As Jacques Derrida, who once commented that he avoided writing "on" Beckett because the singularity of Beckett's idiom was precisely that which critical metalanguage could not

help but miss (*Acts of Literature* 61), has written: "[a] specter is always a revenant. One cannot control its comings and goings because it *begins by coming back*" (Specters of Marx 11). Such a notion of the spectre is itself exemplary of the Joycean precept of the "seim anew" from *Finnegans Wake* that Ackerley and Gontarksi invoke in the closing lines of their introduction. In each case, the concern is with underscoring the way in which the return is never an identical repetition but a variance, a starting over from a nothing in particular.

What is particularly remarkable, then, about *The Grove Companion* is the way in which its architectural organisation establishes a form of critical writing that rejects its own comprehensiveness, and that is, therefore, reflectively well-suited to the study of the work, life, and thought of Beckett. If the term "companion" is appropriate at all, perhaps it should be understood here only in its nautical sense, namely, as a window frame through which light passes to a lower cabin, and back again. In all its various modes and mannerisms, what repeatedly characterises Beckett studies is an encounter with the sinew of fascination. It is a fascination with the work, history, thinking, writing, scholarship; with the dialogues between the archive and the genesis, between the place of foreignness and the foreignness of place. *In The Space of Literature,* Maurice Blanchot defines fascination as a "depthless deep" that rivets attention (32). Above all, Ackerley and Gontarski's large, expansive volume is an expressive monument to the welding fascination of Beckett's range.

— Nikolai Duffy

Colleen Jaurretche ed., *Beckett, Joyce and the Art of the Negative, European Joyce Studies* 16. Amsterdam / New York: Rodopi, 2005. 246 pp. $63; 50€.

This issue of *European Joyce Studies* explores the deep fascination of Joyce and Beckett with the negative and considers their aesthetic practices of negation. Jean-Michel Rabaté, in his remarkable contribution on "Joyce's Negative Esthetics," quotes the moving words Joyce wrote to his son about the negative orientation of his vision: "My eyes are tired. For over half a century, they have gazed into nullity where they have found a lovely nothing." As Rabaté remarks, the sense of despair in these lines "seems to testify to a deep familiarity with the spirit of utter nothingness." With such a spirit was Beckett perhaps even more familiar, and the idea of nothingness grounds his aesthetic in numerous well-attested ways. *"Nothing is more real than nothing,"* he wrote in *Malone Dies*, a novel originally to be called *L'Absent*. But Joyce's comments also point to the pleasures and possibilities of the negative, the paradoxically productive lure of the "lovely nothing" which the pieces in this collection ultimately underscore.

Beckett's later, short prose receives a refreshingly large amount of attention in this volume, and, given its overall focus on the negative, an engagement with these stark, stripped texts would seem imperative. Essays by Dirk Van Hulle and John Pilling, however, convincingly show that the strategy of negation—or subtraction—that Pilling refers to as Beckett's "compositional principle" was at work even in Beckett's earliest writing. Pilling discusses this in respect of *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, illustrating some of the ways that Beckett's first novel negates the novel form itself. Subjecting the typical conventions of the genre to a series of negations, having first brought them into play, Beckett operates an aesthetic of negation at this early stage by, in Pilling's words, "amassing substantial material while all the while 'gnawing' away at it."

Van Hulle traces this "intent of undoing" (as S. E. Gontarski influentially formulated it) via Beckett's interest in Fritz Mauthner, in a riveting piece of scholarship. Examining the different sort of notes the two writers took on Mauthner—Joyce noting scraps he could incorporate into the Wake, Beckett copying out lengthy abstract passages—Van Hulle discloses the tendency towards abstraction that would come to dominate Beckett's creative practice to be already discernable in this early engagement with Mauthner. Mauthner's critique of language drew Beckett and Joyce in different ways, their notes revealing that, in Van Hulle's phrase, where "Joyce was looking for words, Beckett tried to find the "unword."

Equally gripping is Ulrika Maude's sensitivity to the radical negation of the individual in Beckett's later "cylinder" works. Focusing on The Lost Ones, Maude challenges accounts of this text that see it as "an allegory of the human condition or as a parable of the authorial process," arguing instead that it presents the precariousness of embodied subjectivity, and a dissolution of individuality that is—more radical still—"oddly pleasurable and compelling." Maude's reading reveals Beckett's inversion of such humanist priorities as interiority, visual perception and verbal communication, and notes "a distinct obsession with the phenomenology of the skin." Representing both the body's limit and its point of merger with its environment, the skin possesses an ambiguity exploited in *The Lost Ones*, where naked bodies merge with each other, and with the "abode" in which they are confined—something underlined by the cylindrical world itself, which recalls characteristics of the human body.

Along with the productive juxtaposition with Joyce, another of this book's attractions for the Beckett critic is the sheer variety of approaches to its subject. Even the one theme that does recur in a numbers of essays—concerning the relationship of Beckett and Joyce to negative

theology—is tackled from diverse perspectives in articles by Russell Kilbourn, John Murphy and Asja Szafraniec. As Rabaté points out in his article (which revises part of his 2001 book, *Joyce and the Politics of Egoism*), the interest of both writers in mysticism was far from unusual in the 1930s. Rather, it constituted a major preoccupation of the transition circle. Eugene Jolas saw mystics like St John of the Cross as (in Rabaté's words) "forerunners of the new language of myth and the unconscious developed by the group of experimental writers and artists he [was] promoting." For Jolas, Joyce's "language of the night" in *Work in Progress* represented the contemporary epitome of this negative tradition, and Rabaté's highlighting of this context reminds us that the compulsion towards negativity in Beckett, often taken to be a matter solely of temperament, in fact has significant historical dimensions.

However, this volume sheds light on the relationship between Beckett and Joyce not just in relation to their negative aesthetics, but also in terms of the relationship between the bodies of criticism that attach to their work. As the far greater ability of those writing on Joyce in this collection to draw on notebooks, letters, and critical editions amply illustrates, there is a sense in which writing about Joyce seems to offer the Beckettian critical discourse a hopeful glimpse of its future. More significant, though, in this respect is Fritz Senn's enlightening and enjoyable "The Joyce of Impossibilities," which argues that Joyce's writing inevitably negates the criticism it compels. One reason is that there is simply far too much in a text like *Ulysses* to be distilled within the time and space allowed by institutional criticism. As Senn playfully puts it, "The buffet contains more à la carte than we could ever eat in a series of banquets." Yet Joyce demands critical writing, possibly more than any other writer. Senn draws an analogy with negative theology: what the Joyce text definitively is remains forever absent from the discourse that defines it; unnameable, like the mystic's God.

As Beckett scholarship and criticism grow to Joycean proportions, the lesson could be taken from Senn that such work must go hand-in-hand with serious self-reflection if the strange, elusive, multifarious compulsiveness of Beckett's writing is not itself to be negated in the interests of overly neat identifications.

— Patrick Johnstone

Diane Lüscher-Morata, *La souffrance portée au langage dans la prose de Samuel Beckett*. Amsterdam/New York:Rodopi, 2005. 312 pp. $79

Samuel Beckett writes, in Proust, that "suffering […] opens a window on the real and is the main condition of the artistic experience." The focus of Diane Lüscher-Morata's study is the idea that suffering is the *sine qua non* condition of Samuel Beckett's work. Starting from the prevailing position that Beckett's writing belongs to the via negativa tradition, she contends (echoing Beckett on Joyce) that "Beckett does not write about suffering, Beckett's writing is that suffering itself." Lüscher-Morata agues that Beckett's work is informed by the ancient tragic knowledge of solitude and pain in an unendurable universe that is indifferent to human suffering. Her thesis is that Samuel Beckett's prose fiction undergoes a "radical change" after the war, caused by the writer's realization that human suffering "has invaded all aspects of human experience and must be given a voice." Drawing on Paul Ricœur's narrative theory and his phenomenological approach to memory, she describes human suffering in Beckett's œuvre as an unavoidable and arbitrary human condition: "unexplainable data, raw fact." Lüscher-Morata examines Beckett's prose fiction as a narrative of memory in which the suffering subject, recalling hopelessly his past self, gradually dissolves into an a-temporal and a-historical extra-personal entity that is paradigmatic of immemorial human suffering.

Lüscher-Morata examines Beckett's prose fiction as a narrative of memory in which the suffering subject, recalling hopelessly his past self, gradually dissolves into an a-temporal and a-historical extra-personal entity that is paradigmatic of immemorial human suffering.

Lüscher-Morata distinguishes between the novels and the critical works written before the war and the minimalist post-war texts, arguing that suffering is the personal experience of an individual before the war, but that it becomes a collective and fundamentally public one afterwards. The first and fourth chapters of her study present a chronological and thematic comparative analysis of the two modes of suffering (individual vs. collective) that she distinguishes. Chapter two, with its focus on Watt, and chapter three, which is a brilliant interpretation of Beckett's critical works and thoughts on the arts as recorded in the *German Diaries*, could almost be read as independent thematic studies.

Lüscher-Morata begins by examining forms of suffering in the early prose works from *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* to *Murphy*. She contends that in the works written before the war, suffering is conceived as an event: it is

something that "happens" to someone; something that is observed and then narrated. What causes the narrator to ultimately disappear depends on his inability to mediate the event, the "real experience" of suffering through his narrative. The second chapter focuses on *Watt*, arguing that the novel is emblematic of arbitrary suffering as well as paradigmatic of Beckett's work on memory. *Watt*, Lüscher-Morata insists, establsihes the axiomatic link between suffering and memory central to Beckett's writing. She draws on the six notebooks leading to Watt to demonstrate that the eponymous character resists his coming into being and then surrenders to his fate as an intense suffering takes over all aspects of his narrative existence. For Lüscher-Morata, Watt is the first character who is fully aware of his plight and who gives to it its "irrepressible cry." The genetic history of the novel, which she reconfigures through her careful analysis of the notebooks, testifies to the "radical change" as it happens.

Chapter three, entitled *Art as Vision*, is one of the most enjoyable to read. In it, Lüscher-Morata shows that Beckett's artistic vision materializes out of his emotional and aesthetic responses to certain paintings of the great masters of the renaissance. She contends that the vision of human suffering that Beckett achieves from observing these paintings inspires him to write. Through a detailed and astute analysis of Beckett's famous *German Diaries*, she reveals how the writer's gaze turns into the creative "vision at last." This occurs in two stages: first, the sight of human suffering transforms the artist's vision through emotion; second, this transformed vision forms the basis of an emotionally detached artistic act. Lüscher-Morata draws a parallel between the dead body of Christ that Beckett admires in Bosch's and Carpaccio's paintings, the helpless Beckettian creature, and the schizophrenic subject (as understood by R.D. Laing). All are "withdrawn to the point of petrifaction." She argues convincingly that this vision gives Beckett an "inkling of the terms in which the [human] condition is to be thought again." Throughout this chapter, Lüscher-Morata makes excellent use of autobiographical materials and manuscripts to capture the origin of Beckett's creative impulse.

In chapter four, Lüscher-Morata focuses her attention on the works written after the war, which she redefines in terms of quest narratives. After *Watt*, the quest for the past self of the narrator proceeds along the same lines as memory. Following Ricœur's phenomenological approach to memory, she connects the fictional narrative undertaken to recover the past with the recounting of history, basing this connection on the way that both relate to absence and mourning. Using Ricœur's *Oneself As Another* to reformulate the question of "who" remembers "what" in Beckett's work, she links the subject's suffering to the presence of another inside itself. Retracing Ricœur's discussion of the pronominal form of the verb for "remember" in French (*se souvenir*), which leads necessarily to the remembrance of oneself, she demonstrates that the remembering subject becomes a remembered object after the war. Ricœur argues that the attributive relationship is coextensive with the subject and its multiple others because predicates are used in the same exact way whether they are ascribable to one subject or another. Adopting this rhetorical lens,

New & Forthcoming

- Casanova, Pascale. *Samuel Beckett,* trans. Gregory Elliott. London: Verso, 2006. ISBN: 1-8446-7112-7.
- Caselli, Daniella. *Beckett's Dantes: Intertexuality in the Fiction and Criticism*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006. ISBN: 0-7190-7156-9.
- Cohn, Ruby. *A Beckett Canon*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005. ISBN: 0-4720-3131-7.
- Feldman, Matthew. *Beckett's Books: A Cultural History of the Interwar Notes.* London:Continuum, 2006. ISBN: 0-8264-9059-X.
- Fischer-Seidel, Therese and Marion Fries-Dieckmann. *Der unbekannte Beckett: Samuel Beckett und die deutsche Kultur.* Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2005. ISBN: 35184-5674-1
- Gontarski, S.E. and Anthony Uhlman. *Beckett After Beckett.* Tallahassee: University Press of Florida, 2006. ISBN: 0-8130-2909-0. London: Faber and Faber, 2006. ISBN: 0571227384.
- Knowlson, James and Elizabeth, eds. *Beckett Remembering, Remembering Beckett: A centenary Celebration.* London: Bloomsbury, 2006. ISBN: 0-7475-7882-6. New York: Arcade Publishing, 2006. ISBN 1559707720.
- Kozdon, Sabine. *Memory in Samuel Beckett's Plays: A Psychological Approach*. Münster: Lit Verlag, 2005. ISBN: 3-8258-7255-6.
- MacDonald, Ronan. *Samuel Beckett: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006. ISBN: 0-5215-4738-5.
- Rathjen, Friedhelm. *Weder Noch: Aufsätze zu Samuel Beckett. Norderstedt:* ReJoyce, *2005.* ISBN: 3-0001-6654-5
- ----------, *Samuel Beckett*. Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2006. ISBN: 3-4995-0678-5
- Slade, Andrew. *Lyotard, Beckett, Duras, and the Postmodern Sublime.* New York: Peter Lang, 2006. ISBN: 0-8204-7862-8.
- Tophoven, Erika. *Becketts Berlin*. Berlin: Nicolai'Sche, 2005. ISBN: 3-8947-9159-4

Lüscher-Morata shows that after the war, the predicative construction of memory takes over the nominative, and memory becomes an object of discourse which is "self ascribable" as well as "other ascribable." From the personal experience of suffering recounted in the early works to the "vision at last," Lüscher-Morata takes us ultimately to the text for no one and for nothing in which she identifies the suffering Beckettian creature *par excellence*: "X, that paradigm of all human kind."

— *Nadia Louar*

Marius Buning, Matthijs Engelberts, Sjef Houppermans, Dirk Van Hulle, Danièle de Ruyter, eds. *Historicising Beckett / Issues of Performance. Beckett dans l'histoire / En jouant Beckett.* Vol. 15 of *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui.* Amsterdam and New York, NY: Rodopi, 2005. 362pp. €80; $100.

In the unlikely case that any Beckett scholar should need reminding of the valuable contribution of *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui* to the task of answering Winnie's question—"What does it mean? What's it meant to mean?"—the journal's editors have recently published an online cumulative index of the first fifteen issues on the S*amuel Beckett Endpage*. Roughly half of the contributions originate, as the compiler Marius Buning points out, from symposium papers, and the journal is to be applauded for its commitment to providing a platform for scholarly dialogue by enabling conference papers, and thus current research in Beckett Studies, to appear in print.

The latest volume is a worthy addition to this tradition, assembling papers on the subject "Historicising Beckett" delivered at the annual conference of the International Association for the Study of Irish Literature (IASIL) in 2004 and contributions on "Performing Beckett" taken from two workshops held in Leeds (2003) and St. Petersburg (2004). Providing two additional parts to the issue are three papers on the "The Child in Beckett's Work" (presented in Sydney in 2003) and the customary free space with contributions on a variety of topics. The overall diversity of the issue may result in the individual scholar gravitating toward a specific section, but all the contributions share the quality of providing illuminating and often original perspectives on a wide range of texts.

Mirroring the re-evaluation of Beckett's status as an apolitical writer undertaken in the pages of *SBT/A* six years ago, the present issue opens with a group of eight articles which persuasively remind us of the fact that Beckett's texts were not written in a historical vacuum, however much Beckett was at pains to point out (to MacGreevy in 1937) that he "had no sense for history." Preceded by Seán Kennedy's useful, if somewhat understated, introduction, the assembled papers convincingly resituate Beckett's work in the specific cultural, political, and social contexts in which it was produced. Thus Sinead Mooney breathes fresh life into the early essay "Recent Irish Poetry," a text habitually used by scholars as a "treasury of nutshell phrases" (*Proust*) to be pilfered for aesthetic statements which may elucidate the later work, by showing how it responds to the specific constellation of Irish literary and cultural determinants. David Hatch, in his insightful third dialogue with the *Three Dialogues* (having already appeared in the two previous issues of *SBT/A*), similarly reads Beckett and Duthuit's statements in the light of contemporary aesthetic debates in post-war Paris. Rina Kim, concentrating on the early fiction, illuminates Beckett's uneasy relationship with the Irish Free State through his specific representation of women, whilst both Patrick Bixby and Seán Kennedy, in two searching essays on cultural memory and identity, locate and reassess the Irish discourses governing Watt and Mercier and Camier.

Mark Quigley's article more generally offers perspectives on Beckett's work in an Irish postcolonial context, showing how Beckett problematizes and disrupts nationalist discourses in the early essays and *The Unnamable*. In many ways, the most interesting contribution to this section is James McNaughton's excellent piece on Beckett's response to German Fascism, which substantiates its argument by drawing on relevant source material such as the German diaries. In the first article of its kind to access this source since Knowlson's biography first introduced us to their existence, McNaughton's use of this material allows him to substantiate his argument that Beckett's poetics of irrationality was in part formulated as a response to a totalitarian master narrative, while avoiding such mythologizing comments as the one unwittingly made in the general editorial to the volume (which somewhat misleadingly and dramatically refers to Beckett's "horrifying pre-World War II experiences in fascist Germany").

The second section, on "Performing Beckett," offers a similarly illuminating group of nine essays, whose impression of incoherence could perhaps have been dispelled by an introduction. Certain themes and concerns do, in fact, link the essays. Thus the notion of "resistance" is explored by Takeshi Kawashima in his discussion of perception and the limits of perception in Beckett's drama, whilst Dimitri Soenen examines the way in which the shorter plays resist, by their very titles, generic classification. Julie Campbell expands (or rather restricts) this notion of resistance in her examination of the way in which female bodies are entrapped on stage in Beckett's drama, making good use of Beckett's repeated references to Jung's Third Tavistock Lecture during rehearsals. The other essays visit different ports of call:

Antje Diedrich provides a close examination of George Tabori's use of the rehearsal metaphor in his production of Waiting for Godot and Endgame; Christina Adamou implicates the two screen "texts" of What Where in a discussion of modernist and postmodernist discourses; Juliette Taylor relates the performative nature of Beckett's use of the French language in the Three Novels to his aim of linguistic estrangement; and Catherine Laws offers an interesting account of the composer György Kurtág's compositions inspired by Beckett's work. The role of the director and the activity of directing is the topic of the two remaining articles. Angela Moorjani's excellent essay persuasively argues for "directorial indirection," asserting that overtly determinate stagings reduce both the rich texture of Beckett's plays and of audience responses. Thomas Mansell's piece, which focuses on Beckett's increasing use of music in his work as a director, is similarly concerned with issues of directorial freedom and authorial control.

The third part of the issue is dedicated to an examination of "The Child in Beckett's Work," a topic which, like the little boy in *Ghost Trio*, has often made an appearance in critical endeavours but has not yet been fully explained. As Daniela Caselli points out in her brief introduction, the three essays that follow draw on recent studies of the child in literature and provide a welcome basis on which further work in this area can be conducted. The first two essays are concerned with specific texts: Stephen Thompson draws attention to the various inferences (in terms of stage presence and absence as well as the identification of "characters") that can be drawn from the fact that the Boy appearing in *Waiting for Godot* is a child, and Daniela Caselli explores the role of the childhood memories in *Company*. Both view Beckett's writing of the child as contributing to the general concerns with issues of innocence and authenticity in these texts. Jonathan Bignell concludes this section by examining the way in which Beckett's television plays can be seen as pedagogic, using the child as a measure by which an audience is conceived.

With Molloy's warning in mind that "if you set out to mention everything you would never be done," we come to the final section of the issue, the "Free Space." Assembled here are five essays that offer singularly interesting perspectives, many of which take up old chestnuts. Thus, Diane Lüscher-Morata re-examines the problematic ascription of subjectivity in Beckett, locating it finally, via Paul Ricoeur, in an absent or at least anonymous presence; Spyridoula Athanasopoulou-Kypriou discusses the therapeutic implications of the staging of an incomplete subjectivity in Not I; Geoff Hamilton fruitfully locates *Molloy* in the pastoral tradition; and Matthew James Vechinski discusses the value and limitations of applying Walter Benjamin's theory of translation to *L'Innommable/The Unnamable*. The volume ends on a high note with Davyd Melnyk's essay on the precise nature of Beckett's use of the "never been properly born" tag from C.G. Jung, offering a much-needed clarification of the way in which Beckett responded to the Tavistock Lectures.

Melnyk's essay, like all the essays collected in this stimulating issue, is a necessary reminder that there is indeed life yet in the old chestnuts or, rather, areas in Beckett Studies that have yet to be fully investigated. As James Knowlson pertinently remarked towards the end of his address to the Beckett Centenary Conference in Tallahassee in February: "There is much work to be done." And it is reassuring to know that *Samuel Beckett Today/ Aujourd'hui* will be around to help us in our endeavours.

— Mark Nixon

Fundraising Effort for the Beckett Society

One of the many ways to mark this important centenary year is to increase your support for the Samuel Beckett Society. The Executive Board has been ever-vigilant about enrolling new members, especially among those critics and scholars who have participated in events and symposia around the world. This effort has yielded impressive results so far from attendees at conferences held at Cerisy, the Beckett Archive in Reading, Florida State University, and at Trinity College, Dublin. But the SBS still needs your help. One way to do this is to urge your library to add *The Beckett Circle* to its collection (see the form included in this issue). Another way is to join those whose names are listed below by making a special contribution to the Samuel Beckett Society in this centenary year.

Anonymous
Enoch Brater
Ruby Cohn
Raymond Federman
Christopher J. Herbert
Breon Mitchell
Hersh Zeifman

Please send all contributions to Enoch Brater, President, at Samuel Beckett Society, Department of English, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, MI 48104, USA

LETTERS

Dear Beckettians,

It gives me much pleasure to announce the launching of the Cumulative Online Index of Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui, volumes 1-15, which can be viewed on the internet site of The Samuel Beckett Endpage (http://www.ua.ac.be//beckett) with the (freely downloadable) "Adobe Reader" program. Asthe Foreword explains, this project, intended for research purposes, consists of the complete Table of Contents and four different indexes on Contributors, Works, Names, and Topics; it is cumulative in the sense that all future issues will be indexed similarly with the indexing information that authors will provide for their articles.

In an enterprise of this kind oversights and other shortcomings are inevitable, so all suggestions for improvement (typos and other errors – however small -- omissions, additions, etc.) are most welcome indeed and will be included later this year in a revised version if necessary. I will be particularly grateful if the authors of the indexed articles would take the trouble to check their own entries.

I take this opportunity to draw your attention to SBT/A's forthcoming special issue no. 16, which is wholly devoted to the reading notes that Beckett kept in the twenties and thirties, now archived in the library of Trinity College Dublin. The issue contains annotated catalogues of these Trinity notes, followed by a set of essays in which scholars comment on other manuscript material and on the way that Beckett incorporated his reading into his work.

With centenary greetings,
Marius Buning,
Co-chief Editor SBT/A

Dear Sir,

In her essay, "The Shape that Matters" (*The Beckett Circle*, vol. 28, no 2, Fall 2005), Maria Cristina Figueredo corrects the attribution by Beckett to Saint Augustine of the two sentences, "Do not despair; one of the thieves was saved. Do not presume; one of the thieves was damned." After pointing out that Robert Greene, in *The Repentance of Robert Greene* of 1592, refers to such a "golden sentence" as appearing in Saint Augustine, she then goes on to suggest that this may well be the source of Beckett's phrase and his misplaced belief that Augustine had written this beautifully shaped judgement. *Damned to Fame* is then taken as her example of a book that "misquoted Augustine via Beckett." Along with just about every other Beckettian critic who has discussed the chances of salvation as a theme of *Waiting for Godot* or considered Beckett's preoccupation with shape (including, by the way, many authors of theological texts), I plead guilty to perpetuating this attribution.

Three things should be said, though. First, Ms. Figueredo was clearly unaware that Chris Ackerley had already pointed out, nine years ago—and in the *Journal of Beckett Studies* no less, vol. 6. no 1 (Autumn, 1996)—the probable source as being in Greene's The Repentance ["'Do not Despair': Samuel Beckett and Robert Greene," as well as in his *Demented Particulars: the Annotated Murphy* (Journal of Beckett Studies Books, 1998)]. where he links the phrase found in *Murphy* (213.2), "one thief was saved," to Beckett's comment to Harold Hobson about *Waiting for Godot*. Second, Beckett had also confided the same debt to the sentence, which he thought was in Saint Augustine, to Martin Esslin. Third, it is indeed clear from *Murphy* and the "Whoroscope Notebook," held in the University of Reading Beckett Archive, that Beckett had read fairly widely in Robert Greene's work and that Greene's book is almost certainly the source of his quotation/attribution. In *Murphy*, for instance, he quotes Sephestia's song from *Menaphon*, to which I allude in *Damned to Fame*. A page of typescript notes about Greene also figures in a section of Beckett's notes entitled "The 'University Wits," which includes a reference to The Repentance of Robert Greene. I am not then questioning Ms. Figueredo's suggestion but merely saying that in future, when we repeat this attribution, let us please give credit for its discovery to the one to whom it properly belongs, i.e., C. J. Ackerley.

Sincerely yours,
James Knowlson

Notes on Contributors

- Lisa Angove, who started her acting career while a student at the Australian National University, has worked in the theatre since the late 1980s. When Ralph Wilson died in 1994, she toured *Footfalls* to Sydney and Melbourne.
- Ruby Cohn, a longtime Beckett scholar, has published a number of books and articles on contemporary drama. She is Professor Emerita of Comparative Drama at the University of California at Davis.

Contributors (cont'd)

- Nikolai Duffy recently received his PhD in Comparative Literature from Goldsmiths College, University of London, where he is currently a visiting tutor. He has published articles on Maurice Blanchot and experimental poetics.
- Raymond Federman, Distinguished Professor Emeritus, considers himself primarily a bilingual novelist. He has published 13 novels, written either in French or English, and translated into 15 languages.
- Graley Herren is Associate Professor of English at Xavier University in Cincinnati, where he teaches Modern Drama and Modern British and Irish Literature. He is the author of *Samuel Beckett's Plays on Film and Television*, forthcoming next year from Palgrave Macmillan.
- Patrick Johnstone is a PhD candidate at Birkbeck College, University of London, writing a thesis on Beckett's Trilogy in its cultural contexts.
- Nadia Louar is Assistant Professor of French and Francophone Studies at Hobart and William Smith College. She has recently completed a book-manuscript entitled "La poétique du bilinguisme dans l'oeuvre de Samuel Beckett."
- Judy Hegarty Lovett is the Artistic Director of Gare St. Lazare Players Ireland and one of the founders of the Beckett Project Paris. Over the past ten years, she and actor Conor Lovett have developed a repertory of recitals of prose works by Samuel Beckett.
- Ellen Mease directs and teaches courses at Grinnell College on European dramatic literature, criticism, and theory as well as interdisciplinary Humanities courses on topics ranging from the Greeks to the Age of Revolution.
- Angela Moorjani is Professor Emerita of Modern Languages and Linguistics at the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, and a member of the executive board of the Samuel Beckett Society.
- Mark Nixon completed his PhD thesis on Beckett's German Diaries in 2004 and is now a Research Fellow at the University of Reading. He is currently working (with Dirk Van Hulle) on a digital manuscript edition of four texts by Beckett.
- Alexandra Poulain, a senior lecturer at the University of Paris IV-Sorbonne, writes on modern and contemporary Irish drama and is currently working on a monograph on the drama of Tom Murphy.
- Gerd Rohmann is Professor of English at the University of Kassel in Germany. In 1995, he was elected chair of the German Beckett Society.
- June Schlueter is Charles A. Dana Professor of English at Lafayette College. With Enoch Brater, she edited *Approaches to Teaching Beckett's* Waiting for Godot.
- Jürgen Siess, emeritus professor of comparative literature at Caen University, has published numerous articles on 18th and 19th century theatre. His most recent essay on Beckett appeared in *Drawing on Beckett*.

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Le Cercle de Beckett

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Please note that all materials for the Fall 2006 issue must be received by September 1, for the Spring 2007 issue by March 1.

Thank You

The Beckett Circle appreciates the generous and enthusiastic support that it continues to receive from the president of Washington College, Dr. Baird Tipson, and from its Office of College Relations.

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The Samuel Beckett Society is an international organization of scholars, students, directors, actors and others who share an interest in the work of Samuel Beckett. Its officers (and their terms) are Enoch Brater (2006), President; Executive Board: Thomas Cousineau (Newsletter Editor), Anna McMullan (2006), Linda Ben-Zvi (2008), and Angela Moorjani (2008). The Honorary Trustees are Edward Beckett, John Calder, Ruby Cohn, Raymond Federman, John Fletcher, James Knowlson, and Barney Rosset.

The Society provides opportunities for members to meet and exchange information. Membership includes a subscription to *The Beckett Circle*, the biannual newsletter of the Society. The annual meeting of the Society's Executive Board is held during the MLA Annual Convention. Individual membership is $35.00 per year and $60.00 for two years, library membership $35.00 per year, and student membership $20.00 per year. Donations over and above the membership fee are welcome and are tax deductible.

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