



THE BECKETT CIRCLE LE CERCLE DE BECKETT

Newsletter of the Samuel Beckett Society

Krapp at The Gate

Michael Colgan, director of Dublin's Gate Theatre, regularly rises to the occasion of Beckett Festivals every number of years (most recently for the centenary of the playwright's birth). His fidelity to the works and memory of the man never wavers or diminishes, as evidenced by single productions of individual plays between the festivals. Not that those individual productions are anything less of an event. For this new staging of *Krapp's Last Tape* Colgan lined up Michael Gambon and great anticipation surrounded the casting of one of the very greatest contemporary stage and film actors in the role. It is the first time Gambon has played it; the most recent interpreter (in the past decade or so) was John Hurt, twice at The Gate as well as in the 'Beckett on Film' project. Gambon has made several notable ap-

pearances on The Gate stage in recent years. The possibility that he might essay the role of Krapp would have been suggested by his appearance in Beckett's *Eh Joe*, director Atom Egoyan's re-imagining of that TV film as a stage play. The role consisted primarily of Joe—in the lugubrious form of Gambon—padding around and exploring his room before settling on the bed. Egoyan presented what was essentially a mixed media production, since a close up of Gambon's face was projected on to a screen (as in the TV version) while we simultaneously saw his corporeal body in front of us. We had the opportunity to study Gambon's changing expression, and what Beckett's text calls 'the mounting tension of listening' as he silently attends to the voice of a woman. A fifty-something man alone in his room

In This Issue:

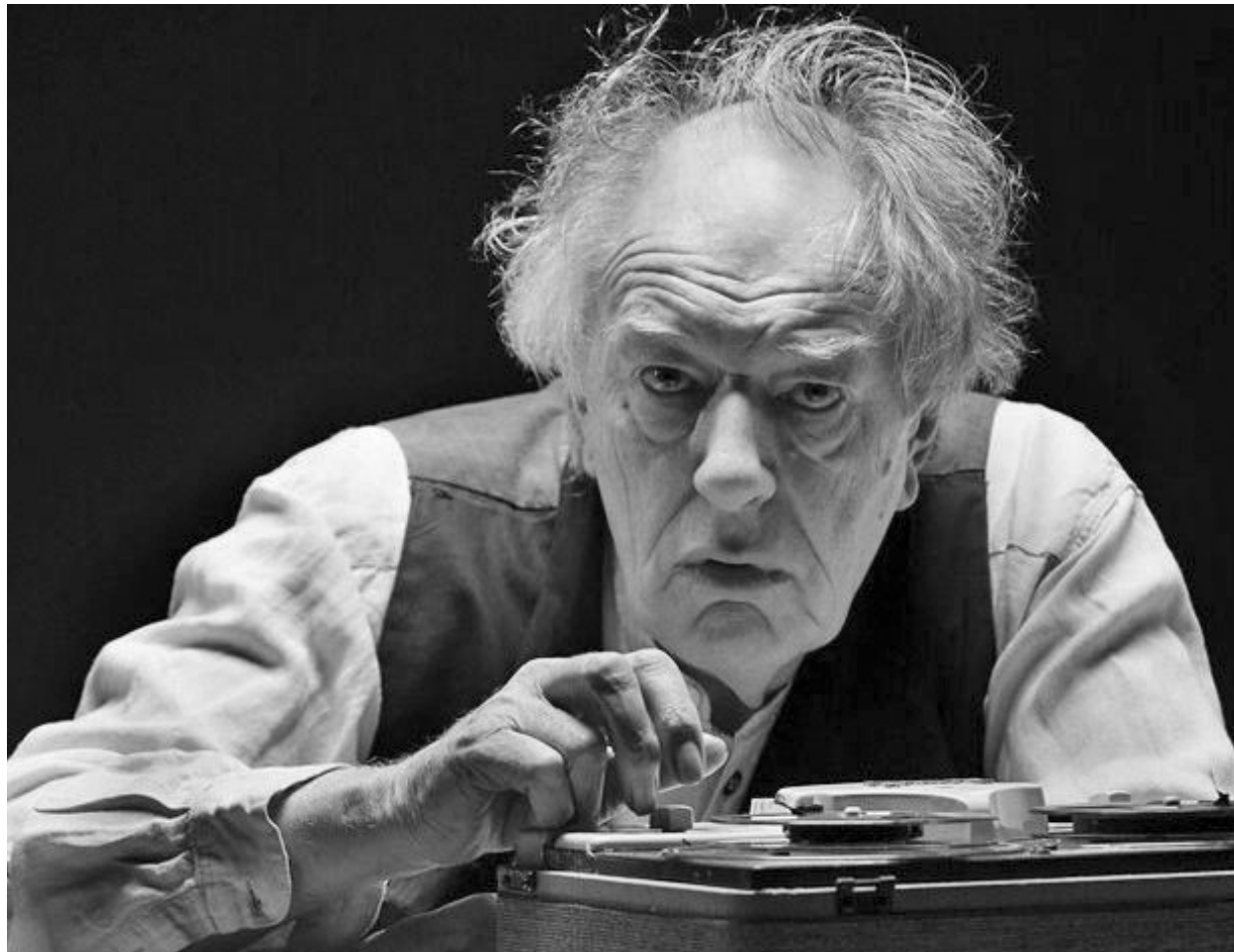
Tribute to Avigdor
Arikha

Performance
Reviews
from Dublin,
Melbourne and
Chicago

Conferences
Reviews
from Munich,
Montréal and
Gdańsk

Reviews of Books
by Friedman
and McDonald

Fall 2010
Volume 33
No.2



Michael Gambon in Gate *Krapp*. Photo by Pat Redmond.

listening to a voice that is not present: this is what unites the two Beckett characters.

The difference, of course, is the voice. The role of Joe is a silent one, combining initial physical mime with screen acting in close up. Krapp, on the other hand, after his opening business with the bananas and the setting up of the tape recorder, gets to speak and to try out his vocal chords on a word like 'spool'. Famously, Krapp is a man of more than one voice. As he plays a tape from thirty years before, the old man's 'cracked voice [and] distinctive enunciation' is replaced by a 'strong voice' and a 'rather pompous' one at that. Gambon's younger voice was distinctly plummier than the more guttural voice of the present, shedding affectation. But more interestingly the first was a recognizably Anglo-Irish voice in its intonation, the second a grittier Dublinese. This 'distinctive' Anglo-Irishness linked Gambon to the originator of the role and the man for whom it was written, Patrick Magee. Both Gambon and Magee have and had long and distinguished careers on the English stage, and can elocute with the best of them. But there is a distinctive Irish intonation in their vocal array which they can modulate at will. Gambon, who like Colgan was born and raised on Dublin's Northside, made his Irish stage debut at The Gate in 1962. In this production at the same venue in 2010, there was a real sense of an actor getting back in touch with his roots, deploying everything he had learned along the way but also centering himself in a more Dublin-oriented older Krapp. Gambon's sense of biological and theatrical origins may be part of why Michael Colgan has been so successful in getting him to forego lucrative movie contracts long enough to take a succession of leading roles at The Gate. On this occasion, what also caused surprise was to see Colgan himself listed as director of the production. But it is often forgotten that he began his career (at The Abbey) as a director, in charge of the Kerry storyteller Eamonn Kelly and his one-man shows. What was required then of him as a director was what was equally required on this occasion: to create the conditions and encourage the atmosphere in which a master actor could exercise his talents to the full. This was achieved on the opening night at The Gate, and subsequently, with full houses held in thrall as Gambon made the stage his own.

He did so from a deliberately slow and tentative beginning. Not only sitting at the table, as the stage directions require, but lying on it, with his head buried, either asleep or hiding. Then slowly a hand emerges, like a creature with an independent existence, sinuously exploring the space. When Krapp's face appears, it has all the decrepitude one would require, with its askew thinning grey hair and its furrowed brows. But there is also a wide-awake stare with open eyes that suggests the face of a baby first encountering the world. A sense of playfulness animated

the opening movements. There is of course the business with the banana, with Krapp orally fixating on it before slipping on the peel. (The banana was thrown into the wings, not into the audience, perhaps reflecting health concerns.) This was beautifully complemented by Gambon's reading of the line, declaring his resolve regarding bananas—'Cut 'em out!'—through understatement rather than vehemence. When he was on his feet Krapp played with the light and shade surrounding his table, stepping from one to the other and then back again, before repeating the movement several times.

The lighting (by James McConnell) did not have the stark alternation between light and dark which is specified in the text and which earlier productions have tended to follow. Instead, there was a diffusion of faint light growing less as the table receded but still rendering the whole room dimly visible. (No set designer was credited.) This made for a less immediately dramatic opening, as did Gambon's

apparently aimless wanderings around and on and off the stage (where it was less clear Krapp was fortifying himself with drink). The effect was to naturalise the environment and hence the character, to make the audience feel as if we had entered his living space and were drawn into intimate communion with

"Krapp's concentration on the various women from his past even more sharply reveals them as mother figures, with the urgent and replayed 'let me in' a desire to be let back into the womb."

him. By the time he played his tape, we had settled down with Krapp to listen to it with a heightened interest and sensitivity.

What I had not been prepared for was how much emotion is conveyed by Krapp's description of his mother's death. I will never forget the palpable thickening in Gambon's voice as he read the lines about the 'moments' after the blind went down. The brilliance of the passage lies in its concentration on Krapp's activity with the dog, the latter 'yelping and pawing' until finally he is given the ball. It serves of course as a displacement of what Krapp is feeling with regard to his mother, but the lines also express a compassion for all living creatures that goes beyond egotism. The centrality of the death of the mother was also foregrounded in this production by its one textual curiosity: the omission of the reference to the 'last illness of his father' when the thirty-nine-year old Krapp refers to an even earlier tape he had been listening to. (There are arguably three lines about him if we identify the father as the one who says 'Take his mind off his homework' and as the 'he' in the reiterated 'maybe he was right'.) On opening night (29 April 2010), had Gambon forgotten this line? It was not included at a later performance either, so in the end its omission has to be seen as intentional. Accordingly, Krapp's concentration on the various women from his past even more sharply reveals them as mother figures, with the urgent and replayed 'let me in' a desire to be let back into the womb. This interpretation is of a piece with the child-like, wondering, exploring aspect of

Gambon's Krapp, struggling to be born anew as he sits among discarded tapes and scrunched up pieces of paper, the detritus of discarded selves.

The last time I reviewed *Krapp's Last Tape* at The Gate, the live broadcast of the review on Irish radio coincided with 9/11, between the falling of the two towers. Although this event was not mentioned overtly in the review, it informed everything the interviewer and I said. What struck me later was the greatness of Beckett's play in being adequate to the awfulness of the historic moment, its ongoing prophetic ability to address world events long after its composition. Nothing so dramatic or apocalyptic attended this performance or this review. But this production of *Krapp's Last Tape* at The Gate took place in the Ireland of 2010, a country undergoing a particularly severe participation in the global economic meltdown. The metaphor that most suggests itself is one of darkness, a growing black hole, and what is increasingly registered by Irish citizens is the alienation and in particular the isolation they are experiencing. At several key moments in his performance, Michael Gambon turned around in his seat and looked back before facing front again. There was no need to say anything about the encroaching darkness and what it might signify in the catastrophic aftermath of the Celtic Tiger phenomenon. But when he resumed we all drew closer to this isolated figure on stage and the words he offered us, because their interpreter and their author together helped us to feel less alone.

--Anthony Roche

New Interpretations of Beckett in the Twenty-First Century

Series Editor: Jennifer M. Jeffers,
Cleveland State University



As the leading literary figure to emerge from post-World War II Europe, Samuel Beckett's texts and his literary and intellectual legacy have yet to be fully appreciated by critics and scholars. The goal of **NEW INTERPRETATIONS OF BECKETT IN THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY** is to stimulate new approaches and develop fresh perspectives on Beckett, his texts, and his legacy. The series will provide a forum for original and interdisciplinary interpretations concerning any aspect of Beckett's work or his influence upon subsequent writers, artists, and thinkers.

JENNIFER M. JEFFERS is Professor of English and Associate Dean and Ombudsperson for the College of Graduate Studies at Cleveland State University. In addition to numerous articles, she is the author of *The Irish Novel at the End of the Twentieth Century: Gender, Bodies, and Power, Britain Colonized: Hollywood's Appropriation of British Literature, Uncharted Space: The End of Narrative*, the editor of *Samuel Beckett*, and co-editor of *Contextualizing Aesthetics: From Plato to Lyotard*.

Palgrave Macmillan expects to publish 2-3 titles per year in this series. We welcome inquiries from prospective authors and editors whose work addresses these and related issues.



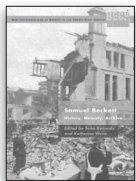
BECKETT'S MASCULINITY
Jennifer M. Jeffers
2009 / 320 pp. / \$75.00 hc. / 0-230-61528-7

FOR NEW PROPOSALS, CONTACT:

Brigitte Shull
Editor
Palgrave Macmillan
175 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10010 (USA)
Brigitte.Shull@palgrave-usa.com
www.palgrave-usa.com

or

Jennifer M. Jeffers
j.m.jeffers53@csuohio.edu



SAMUEL BECKETT
Edited by Sean Kennedy and
Katherine Weiss
2009 / 240 pp. / \$60.00 hc. / 0-230-61944-4

'CALL FOR PAPERS'

Samuel Beckett Working Group
Osaka, Japan
7-12 August 2011

Next year's Working Group will be meeting at the International Federation of Theatre Research (IFTR) Annual Conference in Osaka, Japan, 7-12 August 2011 (the Working Group will meet on the 7th and 8th August). The topic of the conference is 'Tradition, Innovation, Community.' The Working Group topic will be 'Tradition and Innovation.' This topic covers areas such as

- Formal experimentation
- Approaches to different media
- Adaptations from one medium to another
- Tradition and innovation in critical approaches
- The uses, abuses and undoing of existing traditions

The Working Group format provides that papers are distributed and read ahead of the meeting. At sessions, held over a two day period during the IFTR conference, participants give short resumes of their work, followed by a lengthy discussion period of at least 30 minutes per paper. This is an extremely effective method, which allows ideas to be discussed, debated and evaluated, with participants suggesting directions for these works-in-progress.

To commemorate the 15th year of the Working Group next year there will be a Beckett workshop included in the conference programme, open to all conference delegates who would like to be involved (participants only).

If you are interested in joining the Working Group in Osaka, please send a title and a short abstract by 31 December 2010 to:

Julie Campbell <j.campbell@soton.ac.uk>
(proposals from outside Asia), or
Mariko Hori Tanaka <junsetsuan@gmail.com>
(proposals from Asia)

Papers (length 5,000 words) to be distributed by the end of June 2011

We look forward to seeing you in Osaka!

Conference webpage:
<http://www.fir2011osaka.org/>

Avigdor Arikha (1929-2010)

The first meeting of Samuel Beckett and Avigdor Arikha—the Paris-based, Israeli artist who died on 29 April 2010, one day after his 81st birthday—took place in 1956, backstage, after a performance of *Waiting for Godot*. Arikha had been brought by a friend, and was unaware that the tall, intense Irishman whom he regaled with stories of the theatre he had seen in an Arab village in Israel, was the author of the play just presented. Three days later, at a party hosted by the poet Alain Bosquet, they were formally introduced, and after disengaging themselves from the others present, they walked, talked, and drank through the night. The next day Beckett wrote to thank his host for introducing him to Arikha, “whom I found very likeable” [“que j’ai trouvé fort sympathique”] (qtd. in Atik 15). The feeling was mutual. Those qualities that Arikha most admired—“simplicity, modesty, and limitation”—he found in Beckett, who became for him “the lighthouse I was looking for and never expected to find” (qtd. in Thomson 31). The two men would maintain a close relationship for the next 33 years, until Beckett’s death¹

Born to German-speaking parents in Czernowitz, the capital of the Bukovina province of Romania (also the birthplace of poet Paul C elan and novelist Aharon Appelfeld), Arikha started drawing at an early age. It was this talent that may have saved his life. When he was deported, along with his parents and sister to a concentration camp in 1941,² he kept a sketchbook of his impressions of life around him. In 1944, representatives of the International Red Cross entered the camp. When they saw his work, they were impressed and arranged passage for Arikha and his sister on a children’s transport to Palestine. He was placed in Ma’aleh Hahamishah, a kibbutz on the way to Jerusalem. It was near Jerusalem four years later that Arikha, a soldier in the War of Independence, was seriously wounded in an ambush. Again he turned his experiences into art; the woodcuts he created from these years are powerful depictions of war, similar in their impact to the war drawings of Otto Dix.

Like Beckett, who retained Irish identification despite living the majority of his life in Paris, Arikha identified himself as Israeli, even though he was born elsewhere and only resided there for ten years. In 1954, after studying at the Bezalel Art Academy in Jerusalem, he went to Paris to continue his studies and stayed (though he did keep and visit his residence in Jerusalem). Two years later, at the age of 27, he met Beckett, 50 at the time. Perhaps it was their  migr  position in Paris, initially outsiders in art and writing circles, as well as their shared war and near-death experiences, love of music, art, languages, and erudition, which drew them together and cemented their long friendship.

During his career, Arikha’s work took several different turns. He initially concentrated on abstract art after his move to Paris. By the mid 1960s he abandoned it, moving primarily to figurative drawing, and later to painting, marked by meticulous attention to detail and line, with an insistence on working only by natural light. When asked by an interviewer how he determined “which part of the per-



son to include in the composition and which to leave out,” he replied, “It’s like laundry, you have to decide where to hang it from” (qtd. in Hendler). His figures and objects were “hung” with great exactitude and care, extraneous elements omitted; Giorgio Agamben noted this quality when he first visited Arikha in his studio a year before his death and “knew with absolute certainty that I was facing the greatest living painter” and that “nobody apparently knew how to seize the essence of his paintings better than Beckett” [translation mine] (qtd. in Dagen).

In addition to his exacting minimalism, Arikha, like Beckett, rebelled against the type of creation that seemed to be merely a replication of what had already been done. As he told a *Washington Post* reporter in 1979: “People who think there is anything new in the arts are idiots. In my early 30s I was quite successful as an abstractionist. But I started painting my own set of forms over and over again. Finally, it repulsed me” (qtd. in Masters). When he turned from abstract art, which he came to see as “painting from painting” (qtd. in Thomson 44), and began to draw from life after 1965, he became convinced that competency in the traditional meaning of the term would not lead to the

art he wished to create. "Economy of means is, in fact, the threshold of concentration. . . . When I draw and paint, the essential thing is not to know what I do, or else I cannot come to what I see" (qtd. in Fox). He believed that "By getting better one gets worse. The better you paint the worse you get" (qtd. in Thomson 144). Beckett likewise adheres to this principle in his oeuvre, where linguistic and literary mastery is avoided at all cost. Beckett claimed that he only began to unlock his creative possibilities when he recognized he knew nothing and when he made that nothingness the subject of his art. Similarly, when moving to life studies, Arikha claimed, "I had to unlearn what I had learned: I had to learn how not to generalize, not to interpret, not to 'make art'" (qtd. in Thomson 45).

Two of the texts Beckett dedicated to Arikha touch on these issues and apply to the works of both men. Beckett described the creative act in Arikha's art in terms compatible with his own:

Siege laid again to the impregnable without. Eye and hand fevering after the unself. By the hand it unceasingly changes the eye unceasingly changed. Back and forth the gaze beating against unseeable and unmakeable. Truce for a space and the marks of what it is to be and be in face of. Those deep marks to show.³

The imperative for both artists, as Beckett repeats four times in "Ceiling" (written for Arikha), is to go "on"—despite insuperable obstacles. In her book *How It Was*, the American poet Anne Atik, Arikha's wife, indicates that instead of the text he had planned to write concerning Arikha's art, Beckett wrote "a text about seeing. . . . which became 'Ceiling.'" She reproduces the text, in which the title "Ceiling" is erased and "Somehow Again" is substituted, with the inscription in Beckett's hand at the top right: "for Avigdor, September 1981" (108-09).⁴

After Arikha married Atik in 1961, Beckett became a regular visitor at their home, often dining with the family.⁵ During these evenings, Arikha would draw Beckett; each work done in one visit. The drawings range from 1965 when Beckett was fifty-nine until 1983, when he was seventy-six.⁶ None are posed in the usual sense of the word. Instead, the artist sketched Beckett when he was absorbed in some familiar activity: drinking a glass of wine, smoking a cigar, listening to music, playing chess with the younger daughter, Noga. With the simplest lines, Arikha is able to bring forth the familiar face, with quick yet sure brush strokes the arm, hands, hair, glasses, eyes, and entire physiognomy. They are not finished portraits; rather they appear as visual equivalents of the very indeterminacy and interrogative nature of the artistic project itself which both men recognized and about which they often conversed. In his use of a large variety of techniques in these works, Arikha also follows Beckett's model in seeking various means to capture what ultimately cannot be captured. At the same time each portrait appears to be, as Beckett said about Proust's work, "neither created nor chosen, but discovered, uncovered, excavated, pre-existing" (64). When Beckett was told how well the works captured him, he would reply, "I try my best" (Atik 101). Clearly, so did Arikha.

Even after death, Beckett's image and presence remained incorporated by Arikha into his own living spaces and art: paintings of the studio include Beckett photographs placed on shelves or attached to walls; a poster reproduction of an earlier painting—a trace of a trace—and objects that Beckett used (a spoon, a napkin) appear, still carrying the weight of memory. Most poignant and resonant is "Memento S.B." in which an empty candlestick belonging to Arikha's mother is placed alongside a sketch of Beckett, both set on a shelf in front of a cracking wall.

In addition to his paintings of Beckett, Arikha leaves other important legacies to Beckett Studies. James Knowlson credits him with first suggesting the importance of the Old Masters to Beckett's work, a subject Knowlson, Lois Oppenheim, and others followed diligently to the enrichment of Beckett scholarship. Knowlson also notes that Beckett became "accustomed [...] to seeing himself through the eyes of Avigdor Arikha," implying that those poses Arikha captured, with Beckett's "hand to his head or to his mouth," may have influenced the poses Beckett describes in his prose piece "Still." Knowlson claims that "Still" "seems in fact to have evolved out of Beckett's love of painting and his friendship with various painters" (593). It was also Arikha who first suggested that Beckett see Caravaggio's "Decollation of St. John the Baptist," in the cathedral of la Valletta, which so moved Beckett and influenced the imagery for *Not I*.

Arikha's work on Beckett texts is rich and varied. He created six color aquatints based on a fragment of *Les Dépeupleur* for *L'Issue*; illustrated *Oh les beaux jours* (with Arikha and Atik posing as Willie and Winnie) and *Malone Dies*, both for a special edition by Les Prix Nobel; illustrated, in the realistic mode, a passage from *The Lost Ones*, entitled "The North," published in limited edition; contributed six drawings for the Minuit edition of *Nouvelles et texts pour rien*; and worked on sets for *Endgame*, directed by Alvin Epstein and presented at the Samuel Beckett Theatre in New York in 1984.

This output is part of the artist's long, productive, and much honored career, with solo exhibitions in venues such as the British Museum, Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza, Scottish National Gallery, Corcoran Gallery, and Marlborough Galleries in New York and London; and paintings in the collections of leading international museums including the Louvre, the Tate Gallery, the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Jewish Museum in New York, and the Los Angeles County Museum of Art. In addition, he has also served as curator and written over fifty articles and catalogues on the work of other painters, most notably Ingres and Poussin, whose exhibits he curated at the Louvre. In 2005, he was made a chevalier of the Legion of Honor by the French government.

Many detailed obituaries in leading newspapers refer to this prodigious output; they invariably comment as well on the Arikha/Beckett relationship. Anne Atik wrote the most detailed account of the closeness between the two men in her memoir of Beckett, *How It Was*. When I was preparing this summary of Arikha's life and work, I contacted her and asked if there might be anything she wished to write now. She kindly responded: "Here are a few lines

I wrote this morning, though of course the thoughts have been there for a long time." We are honored to publish them here.

--Linda Ben-Zvi

Notes

- 1 Avigdor Arikha and Anne Atik were among ten invited friends and family members who attended Beckett's funeral (Atik 127-28). He is buried in the Montparnasse cemetery not far from Beckett's grave.
- 2 All but his father survived the war, although Arikha was only reunited with his mother in the late 1950s.
- 3 Atik prints this "First English (final) version of text for A.A." as well as five early versions of the text in French, and another version of the text in English, which Beckett changed.
- 4 Ruby Cohn (371) indicates that the text went through five drafts, and notes that it is published in French and English, respectively, in *Arikha* (Paris: Hermann; London: Thames and Hudson, both 1985) but not in the *Collected Shorter Prose*. James Knowlson, in *Damned to Fame*, makes no mention of the text under either title.
- 5 Arikha talks about these evenings and the music listened to, in his essay in *Beckett Remembering Remembering Beckett*.
- 6 Atik prints several of the drawings in her book. A larger number can be found in *Drawing on Beckett*, which also contains an essay by Mordechai Omer on the drawings. Comments related to the drawings in this essay are taken from the introduction to the book.

Works Cited

- Atik, Anne. *How It Was: A Memoir of Samuel Beckett*. London: Faber and Faber, 2001.
- Ben-Zvi, Linda, ed. *Drawing on Beckett*. Tel Aviv: Assaph Books, 2003.
- Cohn, Ruby. *A Beckett Canon*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2001.
- Dagen, Philippe, "Avigdor Arikha," *Le Monde*, 6 May 2010.
- Fox, Margalit. "Avigdor Arikha, Artist of the Everyday, Is Dead at 81," *New York Times*, 1 May 2010.
- Hendler, Seffi. "No Time, Gotta Paint: A Paris Excursion with Avigdor Arikha," *Haaretz*, 30 April 2010.
- Knowlson, James. *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett*. London: Bloomsbury, 1996.
- and Elizabeth Knowlson. *Beckett Remembering Remembering Beckett*. London: Bloomsbury, 2006.
- Masters, Christopher. "Avigdor Arikha Obituary." *The Guardian*, 11 May 2010.
- Thomson, Duncan. *Arikha*. London: Phaidon P Ltd., 1994.

Anne Atik on Avigdor Arikha

What Beckett and Arikha had in common, besides their genius, what closed the gap of 23 years between them in age, nullified the difference in religious cultures, minimized the differences in their mother tongues, was their unbendable probity, even ramrod, stubborn, in their relations with friends and agents involved in their work, probity above all in their conception of what art had to be or not to be and what they owed it.

In the 51 years I spent with my husband, art, his responsibility to it, came before us all. It was hard on the children, but what they knew, even when very young, was that he never lied, incapable of a white or even grey lie, that he was true to what he saw and felt as he looked, only did what light and time permitted him to do. Beckett was that way not only in his writing but in his directing and translating. They were both against the short-cut, the half-way, the almost. Whole or nothing. And thus, the language most suitable to them both, most held in common, was music, where words couldn't interfere. And poetry, where words struck chords in another, supra-language.

There are and have been others in the world who have that high a conception of what art can be, but the likes of these two soldiers, comrades in their battle against the inauthentic, I shall probably never see again.

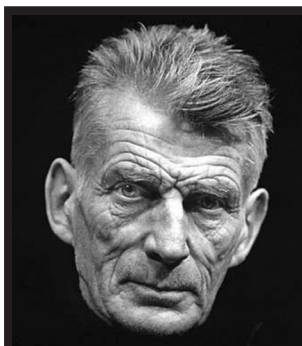
Beckett at MLA, Los Angeles 2011

Session 323. Beckett and Theory

Friday, January 7, 1:45-3:00 p.m., Platinum B., J. W. Marriott Program arranged by the Samuel Beckett Society

Presiding: Anthony Uhlmann, University of Western Sydney

1. "Beckett's Three Critiques," Jean-Michel Rabaté, University of Pennsylvania
2. "Beckett and Eventuality," Richard Begam, University of Wisconsin-Madison
3. "Deleuze and Beckett: Disguising Repetitions in *Endgame*," Thomas J. Cousineau, Washington College (Maryland)



THANK YOU

The Beckett Circle appreciates the generous support of Xavier University, in particular Dean Janice Walker, Provost Roger Fortin, and the Office of Marketing and Printing Services.

Godot in Oz

I suppose we must be grateful to the producers of this show that they have taken the risk of financing an expensive tour to Australia of a Beckett play at all, rather than a musical or *Run for your wife*. This blockbuster production has enjoyed as much or more TV commercial advertising as *Mary Poppins*, which may explain the inflated ticket prices in Oz. This was a much-praised and much-excoriated production. I am tempted to call it Easily Digested Beckett for Beginners were it not for some critics I greatly respect who have given it favourable reviews. Perhaps I am at last and unbelievably suffering from *Godot*-fatigue after having seen so many productions going back to Peter Hall's in 1955.

The production under review was directed by Sean Mathias and was well known and copiously reviewed (e.g. *The Beckett Circle*, Fall 2009) for over a year in Britain before touring. In fact one should make it clear that Ian McKellen is the only survivor of the original cast (Patrick Stewart was Vladimir, Simon Callow was Pozzo, and Ronald Pickup was Lucky). These have been replaced by Roger Rees, Michael Kelly, and Brendan O'Hea, respectively. This means that Sir Ian's performance must have changed too (apart from aging and sprouting a grey Gandalf beard), since any change of cast profoundly affects any play in which relationships are as vital as in *Godot*.

It was hugely enjoyed (well, the first act was; Act Two isn't as funny) by the opening performance audience at the Comedy Theatre in Melbourne. One wonders if most people were there to see *Godot*, or Gandalf doing a comic turn. It was a crowd-pleaser, a record-breaking bums-on-seats success. Dedicated Becketteers (indeed anyone who has seen a great performance of this play) have different criteria for success. As Charlton Heston said of film, the trouble with theatre as an art is that it's also a business—and vice-versa.

I agree with Roger Rees (having sat through many dull, over-reverential productions of the play) who has been quoted as saying *Godot* "is a very, very funny play." But it's not only that for connoisseurs like the readers of *The Beckett Circle*, who expect new insights from such a star-studded cast.

The common critical practice of labelling every production that is faithful to the text (which includes instructions for the set) as boring, old hat, or unadventurous, and all those that are not faithful as exciting, creative, or modern, is simplistic. My benchmark is set by The Gate Theatre production (seen in Mel-

bourne in 1998), which was hugely successful and funny. It didn't balk at the despair or cut one line, which the Mathias touring production did in several of the more despairing and thought-provoking parts of dialogue (or raced through them so unmemorably that they made no impact).

Mounting a production of Beckett's great tragicomedy *Waiting for Godot* is a delicate balancing operation, like a high-wire act: fall one way and you land in the heavy world of the Bible and Pascal, and risk making the audience look at their watches. Fall the other side of the wire and you find yourself doing a series of music-hall gags to the amusement of spectators and risk being charged with frivolity.

This is a problem of direction, set design and casting. The director has to do his homework, absorb the play's meaning, and transmit it to the actors; cast the wrong actor, however talented, and there is nothing one can do except squirm at the misdirection, muffed rhythms and missed chances.

One cannot simply say one didn't like the set without going into details. Stephen Brimson Lewis's set for the play was a ruined, roofless building, the same as the one used at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket. There is a tree growing in the middle of it, so it must have been in that state for many years. It has been widely assumed it is a bombed-out theatre, which would be consistent with the clues that the two tramps are presented as clapped-out old troupers and hoofers. For those who miss this point, the arrival of Pozzo and Lucky is greeted by a drum-roll from nowhere, as if they are a couple of circus performers. The Boy emerges from under the stage, from which a bright strip of light suddenly appears. This implies that Mr Godot lives under the stage too. Is this the intention, or were the implications simply not thought through? In either case, the gimmick is not only confusing and superfluous but stagey and inconsistent with the naturalism of the tramps' easy friendship.

This idiosyncratic setting has other drawbacks: first,



Kelly, McKellan, O'Hea and Rees in Melbourne *Godot*."

the moonlight had to be provided by a sudden spotlight shining a circle of light on the floor. Estragon's marvelously appropriate quotation from Shelley ("Pale for weariness of climbing heaven and looking down on the likes of us") should be delivered directly to the moon, which doesn't and can't rise rapidly and suddenly because the cyclorama of this set does not represent the night sky for all to see. This is an impoverishment, robbing us of all the connotations of something very odd about time in this place, and providing the mysterious atmosphere of pathos that pervades the end of each act.

Secondly, and even more importantly, the ruined theatre set is reductive, as is any attempt to fix a location for the tramps' evening vigils. The setting should be "A country road" in a deserted landscape, with nothing recognisable about it except the tree. When Estragon wonders if they're in the right place, Vladimir says "[Godot] said by the tree," not "in the ruined theatre." The ruin is also inconsistent with the following exchange:

V: Do you not recognize the place?

E: Recognize! What is there to recognize? [...] And you talk to me about scenery! [...] You and your landscapes!

V: All the same, you can't tell me that this bears any resemblance to the Macon country, for example.

Blind Pozzo asks in the script if this is a place called "The Board" (does he in this production? I have no recollection of it), which implies some sort of interrogation, judgment and fear of punishment, as do Estragon's cries of "I'm in hell" and "I'm accursed"—both either cut or mumbled in this production. These are some of the clues (there are more) to a Dantesque purgatorial setting, uni-

versal and imaginary, out of this world.

In short, the theatre conceit has not been thought through, and was an unnecessary expense. I don't know how Lewis's set got approval from the Beckett estate.

Now to the casting. Michael Kelly's Pozzo depended on volume to render bullying bluster. I felt like covering up my ears. He meHeHissed the nuances of Pozzo's vulnerability and deceitfulness. O'Hea's Lucky spoke all the words faultlessly but didn't understand his message or make its import clear. He and the director hadn't done their Beckett homework.

Both Roger Rees and Ian McKellen enjoy themselves immensely, and play the comedy very well. McKellen reverted to the accent of his native Lancashire and adopted the voice of the once-famous music hall comedian Robb Wilton ("The day war broke out my wife said to me, 'What are you going to do about it?'"). But he was wasted as Estragon; McKellen should have played Vladimir. He would have been able to express memorably the missing balancing element of this tragicomedy—Vladimir's poetic, lyrical, humanitarian, heartfelt meditations in Act Two: "Let us not waste our time in idle discourse..."; "All I know is that the hours are long..."; "In an instant all will vanish and we'll be alone once more, in the midst of nothingness!" Roger Rees didn't know what to do with these, or maybe he simply forgot them. I can't recall his even saying some of them. But he did a good job with the comedy and did a splendid soft-shoe shuffle.

Newcomers to Beckett will have been joyfully surprised at how amusing his most famous play was. The same could be said of some productions of *Happy Days*. Let us hope they are well prepared before they go and see a bleaker play such as *Play* or *Footfalls* or even *Endgame*.

--Colin Duckworth

Séminaire Samuel Beckett Université du Tohoku, Sendai

Avec le soutien de la Japan Society for Promotion of Science (JSPS), un Séminaire Samuel Beckett se tiendra deux fois par an (juillet/décembre) à la Faculté des Lettres de l'Université du Tohoku, à Sendai, à partir de cette année universitaire. La première journée est prévue le samedi 18 décembre.

La langue d'échange pour ce Séminaire sera le français. Son but est de contribuer au développement, particulièrement au Japon, des recherches sur l'œuvre en français de Samuel Beckett. Il s'agira également de montrer ce que des recherches sur l'œuvre de Beckett dans le champ de la littérature française peuvent apporter de spécifique, non seulement par leur objet, mais aussi par leur arrière-fond culturel et leurs instruments d'analyse. Régulièrement, des chercheurs reconnus seront invités à ouvrir le Séminaire par une communication.

Ce Séminaire est ouvert à tous ceux qui tra-

vailent sur l'œuvre de Beckett ou simplement s'y intéressent. Ceux/celles qui souhaiteraient donner une communication dans le cadre de la journée du 18 décembre sont prié(e)s de nous envoyer par courrier électronique, à l'adresse indiquée ci-dessous, un résumé de la proposition (une page environ) avant le 15 octobre. Les réponses seront transmises d'ici le 12 novembre. Sauf exception, les communications dureront de 20 à 30 minutes. Elles seront suivies d'une discussion.

Responsable du colloque : Yann Mével, Maître de conférences en littérature française

Adresse électronique : yann.mevel@yahoo.fr

Assistante : Shimanuki Yoko

Samuel Beckett Working Group in Munich 2010

The Samuel Beckett Working Group met at the International Federation of Theatre Research 2010 World Congress which took place at the Ludwig Maximilians University in Munich in July. Group participants were truly international, hailing from France, Greece, Ireland, Israel, Korea, Japan and the United Kingdom. The topic was 'New Approaches to Beckett's Radio and Television Plays.' The meeting was chaired by the convener, Linda Ben Zvi (Tel Aviv University, Israel), who has been convening and chairing the Working Group since 1996. She has decided to pass on the baton for the coming year. Mariko Tanaka and Julie Campbell will be conveners for the Osaka Beckett Working Group (see below).



At the 2010 Working Group the following papers were discussed: Jonathan Bignall (University of Reading, UK), 'Spatiality and Production in Beckett's TV Plays'; Julie Campbell (University of Southampton, UK), 'Listening to *Embers*'; Noboru Kataoka (Waseda University, Japan), 'An Analysis of the Circularity/Spiral Structure Around a Missing Core in *What Where*'; Younsuk Kyong (Waseda University, Japan), 'Krapp—Confined to Machine and Feminine Darkness'; Tricia McTighe (Queen's University, Belfast), '*Noli me Tangere*: Haptic Certitude in *Eh Joe* and *Nacht and Träume*'; Maria Ristani (Aristotle University of Thessalonika, Greece), 'The Ambivalence of the Acoustic in *Embers*'; Jürgen Siess (Université de Caen Basse-Normandie, France/Tel Aviv University, Israel), 'Discourse and Institutional Implications in *Embers*' and Mariko Hori Tanaka (Aoyama Gakuin University, Japan), "'Struggling with a Dead Language": Language of Others in *All That Fall*.'

The discussions proved most fruitful, as the structure of the Working Group enable them to become very detailed and far more in depth than is possible in the traditional conference structure. The Working Group format provides that papers are distributed and read ahead of the meeting. At sessions, usually held over a two-day period during the IFTR conference, participants give short resumes of their work, followed by a lengthy discussion period of at least 30 minutes per paper. This is an extremely effective method, which allows ideas to be discussed, debated and evaluated, with participants suggesting directions for these works-in-progress.

The topic of our Munich meeting, 'New Approaches to the Media Plays,' was successful, since it illustrated the importance of the radio and TV plays in Beckett's oeuvre, in spite of the fact that they have so often been sidelined. The fact that there were three papers on *Embers* meant that the discussions on this specific play were particularly lively and productive.

The Working Group members also attend the conference panels, which on this occasion included papers on Beckett's drama, for instance, Nicholas Johnson (Trinity College Dublin, Ireland), who joined the Group discussions, gave a fascinating paper on 'Language, Multiplicity and the Void' which focused on Beckett's radical critique of subjectivity, language and ontology.

Next year's Working Group will be meeting at the IFTR Annual Conference in Osaka, Japan, 7-12 August 2011. The Working Group will meet on the 7th and 8th of August. The topic of the conference is 'Tradition, Innovation, Community.' The Working Group topic will be 'Tradition and Innovation.' This topic covers areas such as:

- Formal experimentation
- Approaches to different media
- Adaptations from one medium to another
- Tradition and innovation in critical approaches
- The uses, abuses and undoing of existing traditions

If you are interested in joining the Working Group in Osaka, please send a title and a short abstract by December 31st 2011 to:

Julie Campbell <j.campbell@soton.ac.uk> (proposals from outside Asia), or

Mariko Hori Tanaka <junsetsuan@gmail.com> (proposals from Asia)

Papers (length 5.000 words) to be distributed by June 30th 2011.

We look forward to seeing you in Osaka!

Conference webpage:
<http://www.firt2011osaka.org/>

--Julie Campbell

Underthinking *Endgame*

Endgame—Beckett's most liminal exploration of liminality—begins where it ends: "Finished, it's finished, nearly finished, it must be finished. Grain upon grain, one by one, and one day, suddenly, there's a heap, a little heap, the impossible heap." The point of reference in Clov's opening line is a paradox by Zeno: How do we distinguish between the individual grains of sand and a pile of sand? How do we distinguish between a disparate set of parts and a coherent whole? Alas, the Steppenwolf production of *Endgame*, mounted this past spring in Chicago (1 April - 6 June), showed no sign of being able to answer either of these questions. Indeed, Frank Galati's staging of the play aimed neither at interpretive coherence nor artistic unity. In his hands, Beckett's drama was essentially a collection of disarticulated parts, a series of bits and skits which failed to achieve any larger vision.

The Steppenwolf production featured William Petersen in the role of Hamm. Petersen, well known for such films as *To Live and Die in L.A.* and more recently for the television series *CSI: Crime Scene*, certainly brings star-power to the production. He also boasts an impressive list of theatre credits, including roles in such classics as *A Street Car Named Desire*, *The Night of the Iguana*, *Glengarry Glen Ross* and *Fool for Love*. I have never seen Petersen on stage before, and he may be dramatically effective when dealing with the American intonations and rhythms of Williams, Mamet and Shepard, but he was decidedly out of his element in Beckett. Hamm refers not only to Noah's cursed son, but also to Shakespeare's Hamlet. Yet Petersen sounded more like a mid-Western version of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern than the Prince of Players. His acting lacked conviction, as well as any sense of subtlety or shading. It was as though he was reading memorized lines, which he delivered with a uniformity of tone and pacing that reduced Beckett's bleak poetry to a twangy, slangy monotony. Hamm is an enormously complicated character—at once epic, elegiac, comic, pathetic, bathetic, empathetic—and yet Petersen's performance communicated little more than an inert complacency. When Hamm asks "Can there be suffering loftier than mine?" he is engaging in self-dramatization and self-commiseration, but he is also a man who has suffered deeply and gained insight in the process. Yet one cannot imagine Petersen's Hamm uttering the words "Mene, mene" or listening to the "dripping" in his head. The character he projected was terminally suburban. For him the ultimate suffering would consist not of being confined to a wheel-chair but of having to stir from his Barcalounger.

Ian Barford was equally disappointing in the role of Clov. There are many ways of realizing this character. I've seen political interpretations, in which he was played as an Irish servant oppressed by his Anglo-Irish master; existential interpretations, in which he was depicted as a tragic clown given to comic pratfalls; and humanistic interpretations, in which he was portrayed as Hamm's fellow sufferer in a post-apocalyptic world. But Barford offered no interpretation, mechanically mouthing his lines without any sense of what he is saying or why he is saying it. Also missing from Barford's performance—and



Ensemble members William Petersen (left) and Ian Barford (right) in Steppenwolf Theatre Company's production of *Endgame* by Samuel Beckett, directed by ensemble member Frank Galati. Performances run April 1 - June 6, 2010. Photo by Michael Brosilow.

from Petersen's interaction with him—was any emotional or dramatic tension between Clov and Hamm. In a letter to Alan Schneider, Beckett famously remarked of his two characters, "nec tecum nec sine te," indicating how fully they epitomize the difficulty of relationships. That difficulty is apparent throughout the play. One moment Clov speaks of wanting to kill Hamm, and the next he seems almost to love his master. There is even the suggestion that Clov is the son Hamm never had, the "boy" in the story told about the beggar from Kov. Yet Petersen's Hamm and Barford's Clov displayed about as much intimacy as two neighbors meeting at a backyard barbecue. When Clov and Hamm take their parting from each other toward the end of the play, it should be a dramatic high point. Here it was flat and affectless, the emotional equivalent of a yawn.

Nagg and Nell, the other "couple" in *Endgame*, were capably played by Francis Guinan and Martha Lavey. Guinan is an accomplished actor, and his performance was both sensitive and nuanced. The one moment in the evening when the play briefly fluttered to life was Guinan's commanding recitation of the story of the Tailor and the Pants. The story is itself a parable of aesthetic consolation—how art almost makes the metaphysical mess tolerable—and Guinan's rendering of it was at once comic and poignant. Lavey did not light up the stage as brightly as Guinan, but she turned in an effective and at times affecting performance as Nell, and there was evidence of real rapport between her and Guinan.

The evening concluded with a post-show discussion led by Steppenwolf's Literary Manager, Joy Meads. Earlier I had read Polly Carl's program note, "Overthinking the Play," which draws a lengthy comparison between *Endgame* and the television series *Mad Men*. Carl argues that Beckett's play and *Mad Men* are the "flip side of the same coin," both works registering "nothingness," as they ex-

press the idea that "meaning" is "up for grabs." I mention Carl's fatuously "inclusive" reading of *Endgame* because it became the central theme of Meads' discussion. Indulgently soliciting opinions and then agreeing with everything that was said, Meads explained that Beckett's ultimate "point" is that all interpretations are equally valid. Such a position perfectly describes Steppenwolf's approach to *Endgame*, which was so fearful of "overthinking" the play, that it ended by "underthinking" it. The results were about as substantial and compelling as one of Don Draper's ads.

--Richard Begam

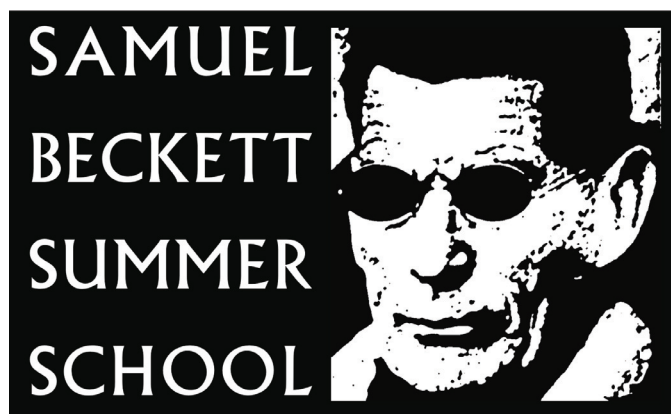
Comparative Drama Conference Call for Papers

Conference: *Text & Presentation*: 35th Annual Comparative Drama Conference
Location: Los Angeles, California
Conference Dates: 24-26 March 2011
Proposal Deadline: 11 December 2010

Papers reporting on new research and development in any aspect of drama are invited for the 35th Comparative Drama Conference that will take place at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, 24-26 March 2011. Papers may be comparative across nationalities, periods and disciplines; and may deal with any issue in dramatic literature, criticism, theory, and performance, or any method of historiography, translation, or production.

Papers should be 15 minutes in length and should be accessible to a multi-disciplinary audience. Scholars and artists in all languages and literatures are invited to email a 250 word abstract (with paper title, author's name, institutional affiliation, and postal address at top left - please also include any technical requirements for your presentation such as powerpoint or slide projectors, DVD/VHS, etc. - please note, AV that is not requested with the abstract cannot be guaranteed) to Dr. Kevin Wetmore at compdram@lmu.edu by 11 December 2010.

Select papers will be published in *Text & Presentation*, an annual book series published by McFarland.



Trinity College Dublin • 11-15 July 2011

Confirmed speakers for 2011 include: Linda Ben-Zvi, Ian Buchanan, Gerry Dukes, S.E. Gontarski, Barry McGovern, Mark Nixon, Dirk Van Hulle, Sarah Jane Scaife and Shane Weller.

<http://www.tcd.ie/drama-film-music/samuel-beckett-summer-school/>

Hosted by the School of Drama, Film and Music and the School of English, Trinity College Dublin

Trinity College Dublin is honoured to present the annual Samuel Beckett Summer School, a weeklong celebration and exploration of the works of one of its most famous graduates. Each year we will invite the world's foremost Beckett scholars to present new lectures and seminars on all aspects of Beckett's works. We hope that the School will appeal to a wide range of Beckett enthusiasts by providing the opportunity to savour and study Beckett's works in the context of the university where he began his intellectual life.

The Summer School will run for one week in July/August, this year from 11 to 15 July. There will be two lectures in the morning and a choice of seminars will be available in the afternoon. In the first year we will run four seminars; enrolled students will choose which seminar they wish to attend when they register. One of the seminars will be a drama workshop and one will be a reading group. In the evenings we will offer a range of activities, which may include a performance of one of Beckett's plays at the Samuel Beckett Theatre specially commissioned for the Summer School. The Library at Trinity College, which houses a significant collection of Beckett's manuscripts, will prepare an exhibit for the Summer School.

Each year the Summer School will have a unique theme, which will be addressed in one of the seminars and two of the lectures. The theme for 2011 will be "Gilles Deleuze and Samuel Beckett." Confirmed speakers for 2011 include: Linda Ben-Zvi, Ian Buchanan, Gerry Dukes, S.E. Gontarski, Barry McGovern, Mark Nixon, Sarah Jane Scaife, Dirk Van Hulle, and Shane Weller. The Patron of the Summer School is Edward Beckett.

Full information about the 2011 programme will be available on this website in September. Registration for the 2011 Samuel Beckett Summer School will start in December 2010.

For further information, contact Sam Slote, slotes@tcd.ie or Stephen Wilmer, swilmer@tcd.ie

Back to the Beckett Text

Despite the cloud of ash drifting over the northern Atlantic from the erupting Eyjafjallajökull volcano, the University of Gdańsk's *Back to the Beckett Text* seminar took place between the 10th and the 16th of May 2010 in Sopot. What initially was conceived as a small academic gathering developed into a week-long festival, held in two venues and attracting the attention of scholars, directors, actors, students, and the general public from Poland and the world. Whereas the Dworek Sierakowskich hosted most of the academic sessions, the nearby Off de BICZ Theatre was the venue for theatre, translation, and discussion workshops, as well as evening open meetings such as theatre performances, film presentations and discussions directed to all those who are interested in Beckett's work. The main language of the festival was English, but some events were held in Polish and some of them involved French, German and Spanish.

The main objective of the academic sessions was to concentrate attention on the Beckett text rather than its context, which, as S.E. Gontarski wrote in his introductory "set of thoughts," was "easier said than done." Participants rose to the occasion, however. The keynote addresses were delivered by Enoch Brater, H. Porter Abbott, S.E. Gontarski and Mark Nixon, and presented recent directions in their research. Simultaneously, by offering a forum to a younger generation of scholars from Japan, Canada, Italy, France, Great Britain, Ireland and various academic institutions in Poland, the seminar provided an opportunity for diverse scholars to present and discuss their ongoing projects. Intriguing insights into the Beckett text were also provided by John Paul Riquelme and Carrie Preston, whose "Boston University Session on *Footfalls*" provocatively placed the Beckett text within various theatrical and literary traditions. Sunday, which was the final day of the seminar, was reserved for Beckett in the context of Polish studies, and aimed at strengthening local co-operation among those interested in his work. Particular attention was paid to Beckett's impact on Tadeusz Różewicz's drama, and to Beckett's role in the tradition of Polish radio and theatre drama.

One text was positioned as central for the entire *Back to the Beckett Text* week: *Company*. Indeed, as *Company / Compagnie / Towarzystwo / Voz*, the text was approached in a number of very different ways. The issues raised by its Spanish and Polish translations were presented by Antonia Rodriguez-Gago and Antoni Libera respectively; a Wednesday round-table discussion confronted the ways in which *Company* is understood by Brater, Abbott, Gontarski, Libera and Rodriguez-Gago; a fresh interpretation of the text was offered by Marco Bernini, a young scholar from Italy; and Charles Krance conducted a detail-oriented

"One text was positioned as central for the entire *Back to the Beckett Text* week: *Company*. Indeed, as *Company / Compagnie / Towarzystwo / Voz*, the text was approached in a number of very different ways"

translation workshop based on his bilingual edition of *Company / Compagnie*. It was also Charles Krance's idea to present a four-language reading of some extracts taken from late work by Beckett, and the *Company* reading assumed a prominent role.

Additionally, the Spanish director Javier Aguirre presented *Voz*, his minimalist film adaptation of *Company*. Bordering on a radio play, *Voz* presents an enormously bleak picture in which visual action is reduced to the unhurried burning of a candle and slow

movements of a male figure visible at the beginning and the end of the film. As might be expected, the real action is vocal and consists of a harsh voice interpreting the Spanish translation of *Company*. His exchange with those who watched the film was unforgettable.

Theatre workshops began on Monday morning with Douglas Rintoul of *Complicite* introducing some of the improvisational methods normally used by the company, as they were in their recent production of *Endgame*. Much to the surprise of actors and the invited audience, what seemed initially rather playful and completely "un-Beckettian" groupwork quite suddenly turned, at one point, into a powerful explication of the word-movement interplay which is so typical for *Complicite's* interpretation of *Endgame*. Following Rintoul's workshop, Joanna Czajkowska's session attempted to "translate" Beckett's *Quad* into the language of modern dance. In his Thursday workshop, Antoni Libera presented more director-centered methods of working with actors. The pace of his work was impressive, as he managed to offer after only three hours work an introductory version of *Catastrophe*. On Saturday, S.E. Gontarski, working on *Footfalls*, suggested yet another directorial approach to Beckett. Then Patricio Orozco and Robson Correa de Camargo shared their South American experience in performing Beckett, definitely more expressive and more obviously dynamic than the European and US approaches on display.

For most actors who participated in these workshops, it was their first encounter with Beckett on stage, and most of them seemed to be eager to continue this "strange adventure," as they said. Also Ewa Ignaczak and Ida Bocian, the directors who run the Off de BICZ Theatre, and whose three-part workshop led to short etudes based on fragments of *Endgame*, expressed their intention to produce a full version of the play in the near future. David Malcolm's workshop *Reading Beckett Aloud* then ended with a short presentation in which Beckett's words intermingled with those of traditional Irish folksong, Flann O'Brien and Zbigniew Herbert.

As has been mentioned above, evening meetings were open to the general public. Among those which attracted most attention, we should mention the performances of *Not I* and *Rockaby* with Irena Jun, the most recent Polish production of *Krapp's Last Tape* with Eugeniusz Kujawski,

and a TV recording of Antoni Libera's production of *Happy Days* with Maja Komorowska as Winnie.

In terms of publication, the *Back to the Beckett Text* seminar left us with a bilingual (Polish/English) conference brochure, and pre- and post-conference special Beckett issues of *Topos*, a Polish literary bimonthly. A TV documentary produced by Joanna Cichocka was also broadcast by TVP Gdańsk (an English version is scheduled for late 2010). Additionally, the University of Gdańsk Press will publish two collections of essays: in 2010 a book in Polish (*Samuel Beckett: Tradition — Avant-Garde*) and in 2011 another volume, this time in English, which will be entitled simply *Back to the Beckett Text*.

Back to the Beckett Text provided academic and artistic inspiration to all involved. We hope this is not the last time that the international Beckett community of scholars and artists will have a chance to exchange ideas and perform their interpretations of Beckett's work in Sopot. We were enormously encouraged by the breadth and depth of the response to our call for contributions. We hope to be able to mount a similar celebration of Beckett's work in Sopot in the future.

--David Malcolm & Tomasz Wiśniewski

"Beckett's Letters" at NeMLA 2010

Since 2009, when NeMLA devoted a panel and a seminar exclusively to Beckett's work, the association is building a tradition of organising Beckett sessions at its annual conventions. The seminar on "Beckett's Letters"—in which seven Beckett scholars, both junior and senior, from four countries and three continents participated in April 2010 in Montréal, Canada—contributed to this tradition-in-the-making, which the two sessions anticipated for the 2011 convention will carry on. This year's seminar aimed at providing a critical and timely response to the publication in early 2009 of the first volume of Beckett's correspondence. The guiding question of the seminar was: What is the discursive status of Beckett's letters and how can the letters help us to better understand the writer's work? Each participant answered this question from his/her own perspective, which brought to the session a welcome diversity of approaches.

In his paper "Murphy in the Letters: Character, Text and End," Arka Chattopadhyay (Jadavpur University Kolkata, India) offered an interpretation of *Murphy* as "the supposed point of origin" of the split between the subject and the (other's) voice, an issue that Beckett would continue to pursue throughout his oeuvre. Chattopadhyay supported his Lacanian/Badiouian interpretation of the novel with remarks that Beckett made in three letters to Thomas McGreevy from September 1935, January 1936 and July 1936, about various aspects of *Murphy*: specific characters (e.g. Murphy, Mr. Endon, Mr. Kelly); represented objects, actions and their (non)symbolism (e.g. the kite and kite-flying); aesthetic themes (e.g. the poem as prayer); and the relationship between plot and story (i.e. the non-coincidence of the text's end and the main character's death).

Robert Cohen (University of California-Irvine, USA) concentrated upon a letter that he received from Beckett in 1960 in his paper "Beckett's 'Mistake' in *Waiting for Godot*." Herein Beckett admitted that he shouldn't have omitted in his English self-translation of *En attendant Godot* the line that begins "ce soir on couchera [...]" Beckett also explained that *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame* "simplify" by "reduc[ti]on" specific passages from the French versions so that the plays become more effective in the theatre. While Beckett's letter guided Cohen when staging *Godot* and *Endgame* at various points in his career as a play director, his paper argued that the differences between the French and English texts are very likely due to the fact that Beckett wanted to eliminate any indices of "potential or failed religious epiphanies in these plays' pivotal dramatic moments."

S. E. Gontarski (Florida State University, USA, co-chair of the seminar) discussed Beckett's correspondence from the 1950s and '60s to Grove Press. In his paper "Letters to his American Publisher: The Business of Being Beckett," Gontarski elaborated on the commercial aspects of Beckett's work in the American publishing context, bringing to the fore issues that are oftentimes overlooked or dismissed as irrelevant in Beckett criticism. Beckett's willingness to sign limited editions, autograph books and assist with publicity, all helped increase the popularity and "commodity" value of Beckett in the USA. Gontarski argued that Beckett did not eschew—at least not prior to the Nobel Prize—the "business" of constructing and projecting an image of himself that was marketable.

Jennifer M. Jeffers (Cleveland State University, USA) presented a paper on "The Battle for the Illocutionary and the Proliferation of Meaning in *The Letters of Samuel Beckett*." Drawing on the distinction originating in pragmatics between the locutionary as text and the illocutionary as context, Jeffers argued that the textual meaning of the *Letters* is not given once and for all, but is a function of their variable contextualisation. Jeffers suggested that the selection of letters to be included in the volume and the critical apparatus that accompanies them—such as the introduction, notes and bio-bibliographical profiles—establish only one possible framework for understanding and interpretation. Jeffers maintained that some potentially relevant contextual information was omitted from the apparatus and gave the example of Thomas McGreevy's sexuality.

Seán Kennedy (Saint Mary's University, Canada) argued, in the reworked version of his paper "Beckett's Irish Habitus" given at the MLA 2009 convention, for the Irish re-contextualisation of Beckett's work in light of Bourdieu's notion of *habitus*. As "embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history," Beckett's *habitus* necessarily comprises an Irish dimension that Kennedy retraced through the writer's letters and prose using the example of the bowler hat. While Beckett "performed a [negative] ascendancy" in letters from the 1930s addressed to Thomas McGreevy—by repeatedly and forcefully rejecting things Irish that the bowler hat stood for, such as prosperity and respectability—"in the post-war work, the bowler hat figures the enduring inculcation to an Irish *habitus* that cannot be merely shrugged off."

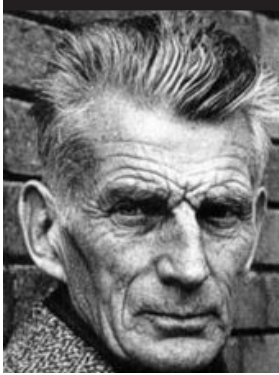
Matthieu Protin (Paris 3 Sorbonne Nouvelle, France) gave a talk titled "Fragments of a Treaty on Aesthetics Never to be Written: Beckett's Artistic Ideas in his *Letters*." He argued that Beckett's letters don't allow the reconstruction of an aesthetic theory due to the subjective, deictic, circumstantial and temporal form of the epistolary genre. However, noted Protin, there are recurrent aesthetic points that Beckett tackled in several letters, namely: the necessity of art, the "inorganism" of landscape and anti-Wagnerism. Protin highlighted the anti-romantic and pro-classical stance implicit in the first point; the "influence" of Watteau's people in urns on Beckett's stage images for the second; and the "work of adaptation" as an antidote to Wagnerism with respect to the third. He also pointed out that Beckett wrote his epistolary aesthetic remarks in a style both derisive and serious.

Carla Taban (University of Toronto, Canada, organiser and co-chair of the seminar) talked about "Tropes for Writing in Beckett's Works and *Letters*." I argued and illustrated that a close analysis of Beckett's *Letters* reveals concrete textual

links between the author and epistler's output, which help to retrace the design and evolution of specific scriptural modalities. For instance, in letters from the 1930s Beckett consistently used a dental source domain (i.e. references to teeth, carries, dentists, etc.) to metaphorically think and speak of the target domain of writing. In creative works such as *Molloy* the same source domain figures prominently at the levels of plot, story, discourse and metadiscourse. From his *Letters* to his novels, Beckett evolved his metaphorical "chain-figures" by "disseminating" their domains and thus their meanings on different textual planes.

At the end of the seminar, the audience was interested in discussing issues such as the status of Beckett as a French-Irish writer and the accessibility for research of audio-visual works that Beckett has directed or advised. Calls for papers for next year's Beckett sessions at NeMLA are available at: <http://www.nemla.org/convention/2011/cfp.html#cfp11114>

--Carla Taban



Samuel Beckett Society

Membership and Dues Form

One year:	\$35
Two years:	\$60
Students:	\$20 (one year only)

Membership includes a subscription to *The Beckett Circle*, published twice yearly. Members of the SBS are also eligible for a subscription to the *Journal of Beckett Studies* at a reduced rate; please go to www.eupjournals.com/jobs/page/subscribe for more information.

Checks made out to the Samuel Beckett Society are accepted in the following forms:

- U.S. dollars drawn on U.S. banks, or a money order in US dollars
- Canadian dollars drawn on Canadian banks
- Pounds sterling drawn on British banks
- Euros drawn on banks from the European Monetary Union
- Checks in Japanese yen, Australian dollars or any other widely traded currency, so long as they are drawn on a bank using that currency

Membership and subscription dues can also be paid in various currencies by credit or debit card online through the SBS PayPal account. Go to the Samuel Beckett Endpage (www.ua.ac.be/beckett/) for more information.

Name _____

Address _____

Country _____

Email _____

Dues enclosed _____ Contribution _____

MAIL TO: Professor Jean-Michel Rabaté
Department of English
339 Fisher Bennett Hall
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6273

Call for Papers for the second issue of *Limit(e) Beckett* :

Cliché in the work of Samuel Beckett: stimulus or obstacle?

Je connais ces petites phrases qui n'ont l'air de rien
et qui, une fois admises, peuvent vous empester toute une langue.

Malone meurt

Bouche comme cousue fil blanc invisible

Bing

Cliché itself, the degenerative metaphor of everyday language, is, Beckett recognizes,
expressive of fundamental desires, fears and truths
Elizabeth Barry, *Beckett and Authority: The Use of Cliche*

Cliché points initially to the imprint of a mold, the impression, and the mechanical reproduction of the identical. Sounds marks, photographic prints, ready-made snatches of discourse or of representation: the varied forms of cliché in Beckett's work evoke an entire formal and signifying network, like these stereotyped expressions, replayed or thwarted by a narrative voice of uncertain responsibility, or like the definition of bodies by their rigid posture, with the pieces for television and their static shots.

Between text and image, the Beckettian cliché is characterised by the repetition of motifs, large recurring themes or brief quotations, musical phrases, pictorial visions or photographic negatives, ritualised gestures or autobiographical reminiscence. Discursive and non-discursive, the cliché or stereotype becomes a many-sided issue in writing, at once rhetorical, enunciative, aesthetic and logical. It reopens an ethical interrogation that allows us to problematise the passivity of its reception (the Flaubertian *idée reçue*), and the value of its sporadic appearance. The writing of cliché is at once the *experience* of an obstacle specific to language and representation, and of an event that alters the vitality of an "original" poetic creation; and the *experimentation* of a paradoxical stimulus, giving rise to a complex practice that also brings into question the memory and the cultural and historical context of Beckett's work.

By the very fact of this creative ambiguity aroused by cliché, the possible approaches to this topic are necessarily diverse: unreconcilable, but rich in unexpected resonances and varied perspectives. Such perspectives include, but are not limited to:

- historical, including those that question Beckett's relationship with the tradition of the modern writing of cliché, and his development as a writer during the era of 20th-century mass culture
- linguistic (*énonciation* and bilingualism)
- critical (interrogation of genres and of academicism)
- intertextual (the status of poetic, Biblical and philosophical quotations present throughout Beckett's *œuvre*)
- aesthetic (between voices, postures, images, technologies, exhaustion, and the variation of media)
- anthropological or political (norms and identities)

- philosophical (from the binary distinction between copy and original, to the modulation of a writing of variation)

It is this question of the paradoxical energy of the cliché within Beckett's polymorphous writing that will be the focus of Issue 2 of *Limit(e) Beckett*: what is to be done with it, against it, in its folds, interruptions, bypasses, diversions, even in its reactivations, between blockage and relaunch? Can it therefore be said that cliché constitutes the primary material of this writing? If cliché is defined initially by its impression, is there a force of impression in the Beckettian writing of the cliché? The breadth of the field of exploration opened by the cliché makes it less a *theme* than a sort of *arrest* (of the image, of discourse), which causes paths of reading to diverge, and prevents the unification of its interpretation. A *plasticity* of the cliché therefore: between sense and sensation, that Beckett approaches with humour, grace or violence, in the game of writing as in a risk constantly renewed. Seemingly so ordinary, the cliché appears where writing falters, and remains sometimes the ultimate mode of continuing – on the edge of the abyss.

www.limitebeckett.paris-sorbonne.fr

Limit(e) Beckett is an international electronic journal, published by a team of Beckett doctoral candidates in partnership with two universities: Paris IV-Sorbonne and Paris VII-Denis Diderot.

Languages: French and English.

Format: Full articles (between 15000 and 35000 characters, spaces included).

Deadline for submissions: 30 January 2011.

We will contact the authors of the selected articles at the end of February 2011.

Online publication: Spring 2011, on the site *Limit(e) Beckett*:
www.limitebeckett.paris-sorbonne.fr

Contact : limitebeckett@gmail.com

BOOK REVIEWS

Alan W. Friedman. *Party Pieces: Oral Storytelling and Social Performance in Joyce and Beckett*. Syracuse: Syracuse UP, 2007. xxviii + 258pp. \$22.95; £20.50

As anyone who has enjoyed a good party will attest, there comes a time at the best occasions when the guests are called upon to provide the entertainment: a song, a speech. At such times the population can be seen to swiftly divide into those eager to perform, and those determined to resist. Alan Friedman's observant study takes such moments as emblematic of a performance of the self in circumstances where audience and social expectation are bound together. Joyce and Beckett, he suggests, both respond to an Ireland where such performance was routine (though in decline); but their very respective treatments of such moments reveal important distinctions.

Party Pieces starts by positioning its two authors across two modern catastrophes: the Irish Famine and the Holocaust. Friedman figures Joyce as a nostalgic scribe recounting a declining oral tradition, and Beckett as staging its disappearance in the context of a later global devastation. There may be a case that the Famine is felt in each of these writers' works, but here it is not made persuasively. Friedman might have sought out stronger accounts of Irish social trends than those provided by the less than reliable witnesses P. W. Joyce and W. B. Yeats. And although he notes that the idea of pre-Famine Ireland as prelapsarian is 'too simplistic' (4), he still quotes with a straight face Estyn Evans' doubtful contention that 'the Famine broke "down patterns of behaviour which had continued with little change since prehistoric times"' (6).

Despite the less than convincing historical framing, this is an engaging study. Separate chapters on *Dubliners*, *Portrait* and *Ulysses* present a complex range of occasions to consider. From Bartell D'Arcy's rendition of 'The Lass of Aughrim' in 'The Dead' to Molly Bloom's dreamy dwelling on 'Loves old sweet sonnnng' in the Penelope chapter of *Ulysses*, Joyce's portrayal of Dublin is reconstituted as a mesh of recounted performances, some overt, some hidden. However satirically given he was to mocking the paralysis of 'acting'—as opposed to 'action'—Joyce's attachment to the shared delight found in song and speech comes through. Friedman asserts that Stephen as a young man is trapped and emptied by his father's bathetic command of small audiences; indeed, Friedman's argument seems overwhelmed by his own evidence that the books revel in such social displays. He acknowledges, for instance, Joyce's admiration for J. F. Taylor's oration on the Irish language and the potency of his biblical comparison of Ireland to the Israelites—"bearing in his arms the tables of the law, graven in the language of the outlaw"—but interprets Stephen's jejune attempts to produce his own

versions as acts of dissipation rather than promise. As with the later critique of Hamlet, such stabs at allegory and criticism are surely ironised, with their failures wrapped in the astonishing accomplishment of *Ulysses* itself. Stephen's self-compulsion—"On now. Dare it. Let there be life"—is a meta-textual geeing-up, confirming not just his wish to perform to the particular situation but also the drive of the author to render it ambitiously.

So rich is the range of performance in Joyce's work that Friedman is spoiled for choice. It is perhaps to be expected that among such splendours, the study should be less than comprehensive. However, Taylor notwithstanding, Friedman might have dwelt longer on the uses of the political speech in Joyce—Robert Emmett is mentioned only in passing, for example. Similarly, Ireland's rhetorical tradition was no less sustained by the sermon; and although Friedman acknowledges that 'the most extensive oral performance in all of Joyce's writings is the preacher's melodramatic, mesmerising sermon on hell and damnation' (64) in *Portrait*, there is little consideration of its cultural significance. It seems strange, too, that *Exiles* is hardly considered, and here lies a conundrum. Is the subject under discussion the performance of a clearly designated set of 'party pieces', or the consideration of a much wider range of social displays as performances? While *Exiles* gives little opportunity to the former, the latter is central to the play, particularly its consideration of seduction—so evident in the theatricalities of Robert Hand.

Inclusion of *Exiles* in Friedman's consideration of Joyce might have added important linkage to Beckett. For although there is consideration of Samuel Beckett's own attitudes to playing the piano or singing in public, the discussion of his early plays fixes less on the particular category of the 'party piece' than on the erosion of this aspect of his works. The idea of the socially distinctive 'piece' is not entirely lost: there are illuminating considerations of Lucky's monologue in *Waiting for Godot*, and Winne's attitude to song in *Happy Days*. Friedman's reasonable emphasis, however, is on Beckett's paradoxical impulse to perform the reluctance, failure, or dwindling capacity to perform. His final chapter, 'Performers and Antiperformers in Beckett's Dramaticules', confidently and suggestively delineates the processes of isolation evident in the later work, whether it be the solipsism of Krapp, the furious denials of the mouth in *Not I*, or the 'acts of silent opposition' (75) of P in *Catastrophe*.

As Friedman recounts in his discussion of *Film*, these pieces frequently present moments in which the 'pursuing perceiver' in Beckett's words turn out to be 'not extraneous, but self' (138). Given that this is the case, Beckett might be thought of as beckoning us away from the currency of the 'party piece' as critical category—and Friedman's assertion that the narratives of such plays are scraps and shreds of that same performance tradition Joyce described does

BOOK REVIEWS

sometimes seem a stretch. On the other hand, Beckett's transitionally reflexive work *Play* shows an acute awareness of the ironies of performance in which the 'pursuing perceiver' is after all not merely 'self', but still, stubbornly, extraneous: the audience. As Friedman observes, *Play's* spotlight functions as an oppressive, restless demand for speech. But it also sheds light on itself metatheatrically, acknowledging technical staging as a point of contact between the writer and those before whom his performances find form. Thus, Beckett does not simply chart the lapsing into silence of a performance tradition; his works simultaneously repeat a compulsive return. The 'party' does not simply disperse, but endures and attends, disturbing the silence with applause.

--Ben Levitas

New and Forthcoming

- Brater, Enoch. *Ten Ways of Thinking about Beckett: The Falsetto of Reason*. London: Methuen, 2011. ISBN-10: 1408137224, ISBN-13: 978-1408137222.
- De Vos, Laurens. *Cruelty and Desire in the Modern Theatre: Antonin Artaud, Sarah Kane, and Samuel Beckett*. Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2010. ISBN-10: 0838642632, ISBN-13: 978-0838642634 2010.
- Fletcher, John. *The Novels of Samuel Beckett*. Charleston, SC: Nabu Press, 2010. ISBN-10: 1149485000; ISBN-13: 978-1149485002.
- Nixon, Mark. *Samuel Beckett's German Diaries 1936-1937*. London: Continuum, 2011. ISBN-10: 144115258X, ISBN-13: 978-1441152589.
- Klar, Robert. *Die Handlung über Nichts als Darstellungsproblem: Samuel Becketts En attendant Godot und Franz Kafkas Der Prozess*. Saarbrücken: VDM Verlag Dr. Müller, 2010. ISBN-10: 3639256905, ISBN-13: 978-3639256901
- Shaw, Joanne. *Impotence and Making in Samuel Beckett's Trilogy - Molloy, Malone Dies and The Unnamable - and How It Is*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2010. ISBN-10: 9042029730, ISBN-13: 978-9042029736.
- West, Sarah. *Say It: The Performative Voice in the Dramatic Works of Samuel Beckett*. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2010. ISBN-10: 904203078X, ISBN-13: 978-9042030787.

Rónán McDonald. *The Cambridge Introduction to Samuel Beckett*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006. x+140pp. \$20.69; £12.99.

In this slim volume, Rónán McDonald has undertaken the somewhat daunting task of condensing an entire canon into a brief, yet ample, introduction to Samuel Beckett, his life, works and intellectual preoccupations. While this inevitably results in a text that omits more than it can cover, it nonetheless successfully provides a clear overview of some of Beckett's richest texts.

From the outset, McDonald is quick to establish that his volume is not a comprehensive survey of Beckett's collected works. Noticeably absent, for instance, are Beckett's essays and philosophical writings, along with some of his lesser known plays and novels, such as *Eleutheria* or *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*. Also missing are Beckett's poetry and later 'minimalist skullscapes and dramaticules'. Rather than subject these to a 'cursory or tokenistic treatment', McDonald concedes to the need for brevity and chooses to omit them entirely.

Such omissions are perhaps unfortunate in introductory texts such as this, in which there is simply too little space to include everything, and these works are too often shunted aside in favour of the better-known pieces. It causes something of a vicious circle. However, McDonald does attempt to right this by cleverly interweaving, within chapters on Beckett's life and literary contexts, a loose discussion of both Beckett's intellectual and political leanings and some of his more neglected works. These chapters illustrate the milestones of Beckett's life, while successfully avoiding the pitfalls of relying too heavily on biographical anecdotes to find a deeper meaning in an artist's works. Rather, they provide markers of how he was influenced by his literary contemporaries (pointing, for instance, to his own admission that *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* 'stinks of Joyce') and of his antagonistic relationship with the politicisation of literature and the arts. McDonald also contrasts Beckett's later resistance to outright philosophical discourse with his earlier immersion in it, as well as the political turmoil that characterised his formative years.

McDonald includes an exemplary selection of Beckett's plays and prose intended to showcase his complex 'simple' style and the evolution of a career that spanned over fifty years. It is a selection that focuses consciously on those prose works and plays most often read and studied in the classroom and produced on stage. Thus there is an assumption that the reader will have some exposure to Beckett, and to this end McDonald dives straight into a detailed and structured investigation of how Beckett and his works might be read. There is a deliberate tendency away from summary or paraphrasing and a strenuous ef-

BOOK REVIEWS

fort to avoid telling the reader 'what it's all about'. Instead, McDonald manages to convey the aesthetic sensibilities and radical simplicity of Beckett's writing by offering accessible critical analyses illustrated by extended passages from Beckett's own work. At the same time, he balances a degree of neutrality even as he embraces the different ways Beckett can be analysed as a celebration of his enduring importance and relevance.

Adhering to the edict 'less is more', the selection of texts up for critical consideration is the result of a conscious and thoughtful culling. Unsurprisingly, *Waiting for Godot*, *Endgame* and the Trilogy (*Molloy*, *Malone Dies* and *The Unnamable*) are all given due attention. McDonald offers a fluid analysis of the bleak landscapes and alienation that characterises these pieces, emphasising the articulation of loss, drifting stagnation and self-depletion that seeps through them. McDonald navigates the topography of Beckett's notorious bleakness and existential aesthetic, but significantly reveals the unexpected playfulness and wittiness of Beckett's writings that are sometimes overshadowed. Using examples from *Watt*, for instance, he demonstrates how the distance and otherness that creates a chasm between each character is countered with Beckett's delight in the malleability of language ('What had he learnt? Nothing. What did he know of Mr Knott? Nothing'). McDonald, too, seems fascinated by the questions of articulation, concerns over enunciation and the occasional barrage of puns found in *Endgame*, *Murphy* and *How It Is*. He eagerly points out how Beckett's manipulation of punctuation and grammar in these texts, using commas, ellipses and fragmented sentences, imitate the crushing silences and white noise of his radio plays.

Indeed, the inclusion of the radio plays *All That Falls* and *Embers* is a welcome reminder of Beckett's enthusiastic experimentation with that medium. Beckett would seem to have taken to heart Donald McWhinnie's assertion that 'Silence is at the heart of the radio experience'. The exploitation of silences, the stillness and muteness, the audible constriction and 'weightiness' of the radio plays are again reflected in *Krapp's Last Tape* and later in *Watt* and *Murphy*. The interconnectedness and overlapping of ideas within Beckett's canon is returned to frequently, each text recalling the last and perhaps anticipating the next. McDonald suggests that, as in *Krapp's Last Tape*, Beckett can be seen questioning, even entering into conversation with, his former self as his writing progresses.

While I would have liked to see some engagement with Beckett's poetry and a deeper investigation into *More Pricks than Kicks* (which for some reason is given short shrift), ultimately this is an introduction that does just what it sets out to do. Without diluting the works of one of the twentieth century's greats or patronising the reader with oversimplification, the reader is left feeling comfortable enough to enter into a comprehensive discussion on Beckett's key works. The final short chapter on how Beckett has been approached by other literary critics is particularly insightful. Included with a brief survey of some of the most influential Beckett critics, such as Ruby Cohn and Martin Esslin, is a wide-ranging annotated guide to further reading. New Beckett scholars and old will find McDonald's book very useful.

-- Emma Haigh

The Beckett Circle Le Cercle de Beckett

ISSN 0732-224

Editor-in-Chief: Graley Herren
Book Review Editor: Derval Tubridy
Production Editor: Audrey Calloway
Editorial Assistant: Alice Finkelstein

All members of the Samuel Beckett Society are encouraged to submit items of interest for publication in *The Beckett Circle*. **If possible, submissions should be emailed in Word or Rich Text Format.** Please send all essays, theater reviews, letters to the editor, inquiries about advertising rates, and information on special events to:

Graley Herren
Department of English
Xavier University
3800 Victory Parkway
Cincinnati, Ohio 45207-4446
herren@xavier.edu

Inquiries concerning book reviews should be sent to:

Derval Tubridy
Department of English & Comparative Literature
Goldsmith College
London, SE 14 6 NW
England
d.tubridy@gold.ac.uk

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

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

At the end of this year, Anthony Uhlmann, Dan Katz and I will step down from the Executive Board, concluding our four-year terms. The remaining Members of the Board are Jean-Michel Rabaté (President), Dirk Van Hulle and Graley Herren. To fill the vacancies left by the departing Members, the Society is currently conducting an election. Since the Executive Board has historically consisted of five Members, we will be electing only two new Members. The candidate receiving the highest number of votes will serve as President-Elect for two years (2011-12) and as President for two years (2013-14), and the candidate receiving the second highest number of votes will serve as Member of the Board for four years (2011-14). Enclosed in the current issue of *The Beckett Circle* is an election ballot, with instructions both on how to vote and where to send the ballot. We will report the results of the election in the Spring 2011 issue of *TBC* and on the *Samuel Beckett Endpage*. On behalf of the entire Society, I would like to thank in advance all the candidates who have agreed to stand for office.

I would also like to remind members that SBS will be hosting a session at the annual Modern Language Association Conference, which is meeting this year in Los Angeles (6-9 January, 2011). In accordance with new MLA policy, Allied Organizations such as the Samuel Beckett Society are now entitled to one session. We had originally planned a program in which Pascale Casanova would give a lecture entitled "Beckett and Philosophy." Circumstances have unfortunately made it impossible for Prof. Casanova to attend the MLA, and we will therefore instead be hosting a session entitled "Beckett and Theory," which will be held on Friday, 7 January from 1:45-3:00 p.m. in Platinum Salon B of the Marriott Hotel. The details of the program are listed below.

Finally, as Anthony Uhlmann, Dan Katz and I leave the Board, we would all like to say that it has been a great privilege to serve the Society the last four years. Among the pleasures of working in the community of Beckett scholars is not only the intellectual stimulation one encounters, but also the warm fellowship and camaraderie. For that we are deeply grateful. On a more personal note, I would like to thank Anthony, Dan, Jean-Michel, Dirk and Graley for their patience, wit and generosity of spirit over the years. I simply cannot imagine five people with whom I would rather have served on the Executive Board. I would also like to express my gratitude to Michael Opest, doctoral student in English at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, who has acted as the SBS's Treasurer for the last two years. His industry and professionalism have significantly lightened the burdens of the Presidency and assured the smooth operation of the Society.

As always, please feel free to contact Graley Herren or myself if you have any suggestions for *The Beckett Circle* or the Society. I very much look forward to meeting with members at the MLA in January.

All good wishes,
Richard Begam

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Anne Atik's long friendship with Beckett is detailed in her book *How It Was* (Faber & Faber, 2001) which was published in the U.S. by Shoemaker & Hoard in 2005. Her poems have been published by Enitharmon Press in England, and in many magazines and reviews, including *Literary Imagination*, *Pequod*, *Partisan Review*, *The Nation*, and *Ploughshares*.

Richard Begam, Professor of English at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, has published articles on modern and postcolonial literature, Irish literature and literary theory. He is the author of *Samuel Beckett and the End of Modernity* (Stanford University Press, 1996), co-editor of *Modernism and Colonialism: British and Irish Literature, 1899-1939* (Duke University Press, 2007), and co-editor of *Text and Meaning: Literary Discourse and Beyond* (Düsseldorf University Press, forthcoming 2010). He is currently completing a book entitled *Beckett's Philosophical Levity*.

Linda Ben-Zvi is former President of the Beckett Society and for the past fourteen years has headed the Beckett Working Group of IFTR.

Julie Campbell is Lecturer in Literature and Drama at the University of Southampton, UK. She has published widely, in books and scholarly journals, on Beckett's fiction and drama. Her essay on Beckett and Paul Auster was recently published in *Beckett at 100: Revolving It All* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 2008), and her chapter "'A Voice Comes to One in the Dark': Imagine: Radio, the Listener and the Dark Comedy of *All That Fall*" was published in *Beckett and Death* (Continuum, 2009).

Colin Duckworth is a member of the advisory board of JOBS. He was the editor of *En attendant Godot*, for which Beckett gave him access to the manuscript, and author of *Angels of Darkness: dramatic effect in Beckett and Ionesco*. His latest of many articles on Beckett's theatre are "Re-evaluating Endgame" (Rodopi) and "En attendant Godot: Notes on the Manuscript" (*Australian Journal of French Studies*). He has directed several Beckett plays, including *Godot* in English and French. He is Emeritus Professor of French at Melbourne University.

Emma Haigh is a PhD student at Goldsmiths, University of London, working on a Lacanian navigation of spy fiction. She curated the *Best of Bond* event (Barbican, 2007) and is author of "'The Fate of the World is in Your Hands, 007': Where Crisis and the Symbolic Order Come In (in Spy Fiction)" (GLITS-e, 2010).

Ben Levitas is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Drama at Goldsmiths, University of London. He is author of *The Theatre of Nation: Irish Drama and Cultural Nationalism 1890-1916* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2002) and has co-edited (with David Holdeman) *W. B. Yeats in Context* (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), and (with Richard Cave), *Irish Theatre in England* (Dublin: Carysfort Press, 2008).

David Malcolm is Professor of English Literature, Chair of the Department of Literary Studies and Vice-Director in the English Institute of the University of Gdansk. He has written books on Jean Rhys, Ian McEwan, Graham Swift and John McGahern. He co-edited the *Blackwell Companion to British and Irish Short Fiction* (2008). He writes reviews for the *Times Literary Supplement*.

Anthony Roche is the Head of Drama and Associate Professor in the School of English, Drama and Film at University College Dublin. He is the author of *Contemporary Irish Drama* (2nd edition, Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

Carla Taban is Sessional Lecturer at the University of Toronto (Canada), where she presently teaches interdisciplinary courses in rhetoric and semiotics. She is the author of *Modalités po(i)étiques de configuration textuelle: le cas de Molloy de Samuel Beckett* (Rodopi, 2009) and of several articles on Beckett's work, published or forthcoming in journals such as *SBT/A*, *Word & Image* and *Voix plurielles*. She is currently writing two articles on Beckett for *SBT/A*: one on the appropriation of the author's oeuvre by visual and multimedia artists in Quebec between 1990 and 2010; the other one on Beckett's *Molière*.

Tomasz Wiśniewski is the author of *Kształt literacki dramatu Samuela Becketta (The Literary Shape of Samuel Beckett's Dramatic Works)*, Universitas 2006) and several articles on modern drama and poetry. He co-edited special issues on Beckett for the literary bimonthly '*Topos*' (no. 6/2006, 1/2010 and 5/2010). In 2008 he organized in Olsztyn (Poland) the conference "Samuel Beckett: Tradition—Avant-garde."

Volume 17, Numbers 1 and 2: Beckett and the Mind (2009)

Elizabeth Barry, *Editorial Introduction*

Steven Connor: *Beckett and Bion*

Angela Moorjani: *Deictic Projection
of the I and Eye in Beckett's Fiction
and Film*

Kristin Czarnecki: *'Signs I Don't
Understand': Language and Abjection in
Molloy*

Laura Salisbury: *'What Is the Word':
Beckett's Aphasic Modernism*

Hugh Culik: *Raining & Midnight: the
limits of representation*

Ulrika Maude: *'a stirring beyond coming
and going': Beckett and Tourette's*

Peter Fifield: *Beckett, Cotard's
Syndrome and the Narrative Patient*

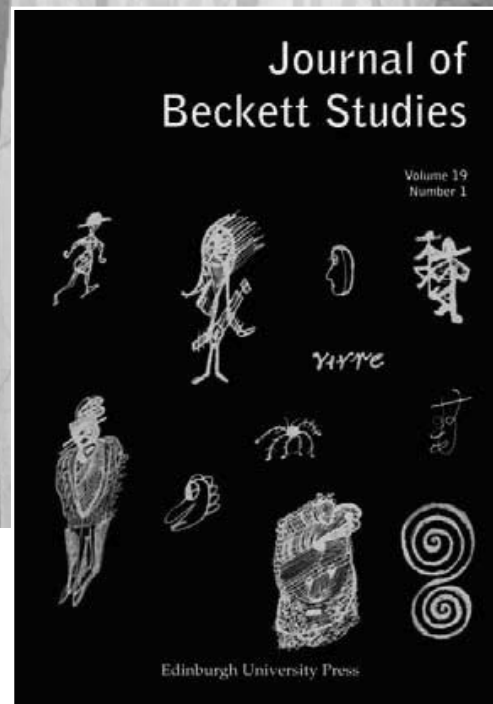
Lois Oppenheim: *A Twenty-First
Century Perspective on a Play by
Samuel Beckett*

Volume 18, Numbers 1 and 2: Beckett and TV (2009)

Guest-edited by *Ulrika Maude,
Durham University*

A discounted individual subscription
rate is available to members of the
Samuel Beckett Society.

Chief Editor: Anthony Uhlmann,
University of Western Sydney
Editorial Executive: C. J. Ackerley,
University of Otago; Dirk Van
Hulle, University of Antwerp; S. E.
Gontarski, Florida State University
Performance Review Editor: Linda
Ben-Zvi, Tel Aviv University
Review Editor: Mark Nixon,
University of Reading
Two issues per year
ISSN 0309-5207
eISSN 1759-7811



The *Journal of Beckett Studies* has been the journal of record for the established and expanding field of Beckett studies for over thirty years. Early in 2008 a new team of editors came together with a view to renewing the journal, consolidating and further building its profile, and moving it into the age of print/electronic publishing.

Each issue contains an introduction followed by a number of essays or 'notes'. There are also review essays, reviews of books and reviews of performances in each issue, and letters of reply where such are required. In addition, photographs, diagrams, and images of manuscript material may be reproduced from time to time. The journal will alternate between themed issues, often overseen by guest editors, and 'general' issues drawing upon non-themed contributions.

Subscribe online at www.eupjournals.com/JOBS



JOURNAL OF BECKETT STUDIES

SUBSCRIPTION OFFER - 30% DISCOUNT

on the individual subscription rates for 2010 and 2011

- | | | | |
|---|--------|---|--------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2010 Standard Print Price | £32.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2010 Discount Print Price | £22.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2011 Standard Print Price | £33.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2011 Discount Print Price | £23.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2010 Standard Online Price | £28.50 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2010 Discount Online Price | £20.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2011 Standard Online Price | £33.00 | <input type="checkbox"/> 2011 Discount Online Price | £23.00 |

First Names: Surname:
Institution (if appropriate)
Address:
Town: Postcode:
Country: Telephone:
Email Address:

- I enclose a cheque made payable to Edinburgh University Press
 Please debit my Visa/Mastercard
Card Number Expiry Date /
Security Code (last three digits on the reverse of the card)
Signature

Please return your completed order form to: Journals Marketing, Edinburgh University Press, 22 George Square, Edinburgh, EH8 9LF. Tel: +44 (0)131 650 6207, journals@eup.ed.ac.uk

JOURNAL LIBRARY RECOMMENDATION

I recommend a subscription to *Journal of Beckett Studies* ISSN 0309-5207 eISSN 1759-7811

Name _____
Dept _____
Reason _____

Subscribe online at www.eupjournals.com /JOBS

Samuel Beckett Society Executive Board Elections

The Samuel Beckett Society is conducting an election that will bring two new Members to the Board. The candidate who receives the highest number of votes will become President-Elect for 2011-2012 and will then serve as President from 2013-14. The candidate who receives the second highest number of votes will serve as a Member of the Executive Board from 2011 through 2014. The election is open to all members of the Society in good standing [a renewal form is included elsewhere in the present issue].

Please vote for no more than **two** nominees.

- _____ Patrick Bixby (Arizona State University, USA)
- _____ Jonathan Boulter (University of Western Ontario, Canada)
- _____ Andrew Gibson (Royal Holloway, University of London, UK)
- _____ Ulrika Maude (University of Durham, UK)
- _____ Mark Nixon (University of Reading, UK)
- _____ Katherine Weiss (East Tennessee State University, USA)
- _____ Shane Weller (University of Kent, UK)

Valid ballots must
be postmarked
no later than **1 MARCH 2011**.
Mail ballots to:

Professor Jean-Michel Rabaté
Department of English
339 Fisher Bennett Hall
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6273

THE SAMUEL BECKETT SOCIETY

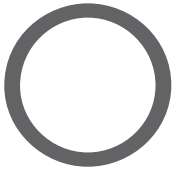
The Samuel Beckett Society is an international organization of scholars, students, directors, actors and others who share an interest in the work of Samuel Beckett. Honorary Trustees are Edward Beckett, John Calder, J.M. Coetzee, Ruby Cohn, John Fletcher, James Knowlson, and Barney Rosset.

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 is \$35.00 per year. Student membership is \$20.00 per year. Donations over and above the membership fee are welcome and tax deductible.

Checks made out to the Samuel Beckett Society are accepted in the following forms: U.S. dollars drawn on U.S. banks, or a money orders in U.S. dollars; Canadian dollars drawn on Canadian banks; Pounds sterling, drawn on British banks; Euros drawn on banks from the European Monetary Union; Checks in Japanese yen, Australian dollars or any other widely traded currency, so long as they are drawn on a bank using that currency.

Membership and subscription dues can also be paid in various currencies by credit or debit card online through the SBS PayPal account. Go to the Samuel Beckett Endpage (www.ua.ac.be/beckett/) for more information.

For membership inquiries, write to:
Professor Jean-Michel Rabaté
Department of English
339 Fisher Bennett Hall
University of Pennsylvania
Philadelphia, PA 19104-6273
jmrabate@english.upenn.edu



THE BECKETT CIRCLE
LE CERCLE DE BECKETT

Department of English
Xavier University
3800 Victory Parkway
Cincinnati, Ohio 45207-4446