



THE BECKETT CIRCLE LE CERCLE DE BECKETT

Newsletter of the Samuel Beckett Society

A Flaunting Humanist

Editor's Note: Ruby Cohn died on 18 October 2011, just as the fall issue of this newsletter was going to press. Several readers answered the call for brief remembrances of Ruby's life and legacy, and they are arranged alphabetically in the following pages. I especially wish to thank Linda Ben-Zvi for her advice and assistance in organizing this tribute.

The first time I met Ruby I was up in the air, literally. It was in June 1978 at the revolving restaurant on the top of the BT Telecom Tower in London, a place she had carefully chosen to host us, the newly-arrived American NEH participants for her summer seminar at the National Theatre. "A festive meal in a special place and some good wine will break the ice," she told me later. Thoughtful, thorough, generous: these are qualities Ruby had in abundance. Who else would host strangers; who else would make a special trip from London to Canterbury to search for the perfect restaurant for another "festive meal," this time for participants of a Beckett Working Group, and then swear me to secrecy about the identity of our "anonymous host."

The Beckett Working Group was actually begun because of Ruby. She and I ate in many fine and not so fine restaurants over the years, but one place where she adamantly refused to dine—or visit—was Israel, where I moved in the 1990s. She not only had fierce loyalty to friends but equally fierce hatred of injustice, which she felt Israel policies embodied. However, in June 1996—when the Oslo Accords seemed to be pointing to some possible prospects for peace (more alliterative than actual as it soon turned out)—I decided that a Beckett meeting might weaken her resolve. It did. She came, along with many Becketteers; and the happy memory of that first Working Group is captured in the beautiful photograph of Ruby that Angela and I used in *Beckett at 100*, dedicated to her, and that the *NY Times* and other publications printed in their obituary tributes.

In the *Times* piece Bill Irwin describes catching the "Beckett virus" from Ruby, who taught him the meaning of "close reading." Many would echo his words. She said of herself, "perhaps I made Beckett's acquaintance because I was punctilious about reading texts." Her first correspondence to him had listed errors she discovered in his novels. For Ruby it was always texts to which she returned and performances of texts, which she reconstructed from notes

recorded with her ever-present flashlight/pen surreptitiously parting the dark in theatres around the world. At a time when critical theory was threatening to make close analyses of texts and performances passé, and the word "theatre" had become a metaphor for any human activity, Ruby kept this focus, although she acknowledged to me that many bright grad students were lured in other directions and this pained her.

As much as what she wrote, it was how she wrote that is part of her legacy. She hated convoluted style and sentences requiring a road map to get from the subject to the verb. Ruby always wrote simply but profoundly, few words but carefully chosen, very much in the

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Ruby Cohn in Israel, 1996. Courtesy of Linda Ben-Zvi.

Happy Days at Washington's Avant-Bard

Having established itself anew during the past two years in the Artisphere in Arlington, Virginia (former home of the Newseum), the former Washington Shakespeare Company has rechristened itself WSC Avant-Bard. Its commitment to the production of daring and innovative productions of classic and modern works—such as the much-discussed all-nude production of *Macbeth* directed by José Carrasquillo in 2007—remains undiminished, and its stylish, technologically up-to-date new locale is a vast improvement over the converted warehouse that was its former home. In September 2011 its intimate black-box theatre provided an especially effective setting for Carrasquillo's "50th Anniversary production" of Beckett's *Happy Days*, in which a finely nuanced rendition of the text was combined with some startling innovations in set design, costuming, and production—not least among them a nuclear blast and subsequent blackout early in the second act—that startled aficionados of the play and may well have perplexed newcomers to it.

With only five rows of seats on an L-shaped set of risers facing an arc-shaped set, the small and intimate space put every member of the audience in unusually close proximity to Winnie, so that every nuance and gesture stipulated in Beckett's unprecedentedly micromanaging stage directions—which, notoriously, stipulate even the movement of her eyes—could be appreciated as rarely before in Delia Taylor's subtle and finely modulated performance. When she examined Willie's pornographic postcard, for example, even viewers situated in the top row of seats (as I was) could have no doubt what the amorous couple in the seemingly-authentic sepia-tinted Edwardian-style photo was

in fact doing. When it was returned to him, Willie—deftly played by director Carrasquillo himself—made unambiguously clear (even with only his head visible above the mound) his onanistic enjoyment of it, bringing to the pastime an enthusiasm and vigor that seemed unlikely in a character said to be "not the crawler [he used to be], poor darling [. . .] No, not the crawler [she] gave [her] heart to" and who struggles but fails to climb the mound's less-than-Kilimanjaroesque slope when the play ends. On the other hand (so to speak), it may offer a novel explanation of why—despite Winnie's encouraging exhortation to do so—he can't manage to "put a bit of jizz into it" any more.

Behind her, a (quite wrongly) cloud-filled sky was mounted on a series of billboards that did not extend even nearly to the stage floor. Protruding arm-extension-style lights atop them cast technology-created shadows across the framed and papered-on sky, producing a Magritte-like effect: "*Ceci n'est pas un ciel*" indeed, cleverly linking one absurdist to the other. Beckett's own specification of "a very pompier trompe-l'oeil backcloth to represent [an] unbroken plain and sky to meet in the far distance" [italics mine] implies a certain artificiality. Nevertheless, the cloud-filled sky certainly mitigated the unallayed "hellish" yet "holy" light that Winnie so stoically endures. While softening her plight and placing it within an unmistakably man-made landscape, it also evoked the "day of dappled sea-borne clouds" in which the young aesthete Stephen Dedalus found his initial creative impetus in James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*—hardly an apposite association here.

Another startling feature of the production was the transformation of the mound by costume designer Marie Schneggenburger and set designer Tony Cisek. Beckett's austere "expanse of scorched grass rising centre to low mound" with "gentle slopes down to front and either side



Carrasquillo and Taylor in *Happy Days*. © Dru Seffon. Courtesy of WSC Avant Bard.

of stage" in a "maximum of simplicity and symmetry" has here been transformed into a faded-golden cascading ball gown of heavily brocaded fabric over six feet high, with crumbles of dirt clods, pebbles, and dust lightly scattered over it but doing nothing to obscure the pattern of the fabric. Tinged by lighting director Cory Ryan Frank's earth-tone browns at the base, the coloration subtly shifted to faded blue hues up towards the embroidered low-cut bodice. The mound looked like a Brobdingnagian ball gown of an antebellum design—as if Winnie were a Miss Havisham-like figure who had never changed out of the gown she wore to her first ball. With a necklace of pearls and a thin arc-like hat that matched the material of the dress, she looked like a perennial bridesmaid never to be a bride.

The frilly white collapsible parasol that complemented Winnie's attire never literally caught fire as Beckett's script specified that it should do—the notoriously difficult stage effect having here been supplanted by a sound cue of crackling fire that was accompanied by suddenly bright orange lighting; a hasty disposal of the parasol behind the mound ensued. The supposed-to-be "piercingly"-ringing bell was replaced by a clangingly hand-rung old-time school-bell, quite wrongly suggesting that an unseen human ringer must be somewhere nearby; a much louder and more abrasive electric alarm-bell seemingly operated from a seemingly remote and indifferent unseen otherwhere would have been much more apposite. The revolver produced from her bag was in fact a dueling pistol, its long barrel pointing down the mound but remaining well out of Willie's reach as he grunted and less-than-half-climbed towards her and /or it. Winnie's mirror and comb were antique and silver-backed, more elegant than might have been assumed. Quite gratuitously among such Edwardian-era fineries, a cellphone sounded from inside her bag, incongruous (and laugh-provoking) in its contemporaneity.

When the audience returned from intermission, Winnie was entirely unchanged from the first act: that is, she remained buried only to her waist, *not* now buried to her neck as the text specifies and thus not indicating that an undeterminable amount of time has passed during the interval. Less than five minutes into the second act, however, the extremely loud sound of a seeming nuclear explosion led to an immediate total blackout in the theatre. Shortly thereafter, when the lights returned to their normal level, there she was: buried up to her neck, as if in an instant, as if due to an act of war or at least of extreme violence, no longer after an indeterminable amount of time but in an instant, no longer a metaphor for the inevitable ravages of time and mortality. Obviously the most radical alteration of the script in this production, it is also surely its most controversial and disconcerting: as if Winnie simply had not noticed—or as if she thought nothing had happened—Taylor's well-attuned rendering of the near-monologue resumed without any acknowledgment of whatever had just happened. Later, when Winnie speaks of hearing "cries," the audience heard them too—again distantly, as if from survivors of the blast.

One can only guess, then, what theatergoers who bought their tickets to *Happy Days* relatively unaware of the nature of Beckett's play must have made of Carrasquillo's

assurance in his Director's Notes in the program that this is "Beckett's happiest play." Like *Candide*, they may well have wondered in astonishment: if *this* is the happiest of all of Beckett's possible worlds, what must the others be like? Even more baffled, no doubt, were those who—according to the company's Executive Director Warren Arbogast—went in "thinking we were doing a show about the 1970's TV sitcom but didn't want to say *that's* what they were thinking." No doubt they too must go on . . .

A more apposite clue to the production's prevailing tone may be found in the inclusion of six lines of Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale" in the small type beneath the program's cast list:

'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot
But being too happy in thine happiness,—
That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees
In some melodious plot
Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
Singing of summer in full-throated ease.

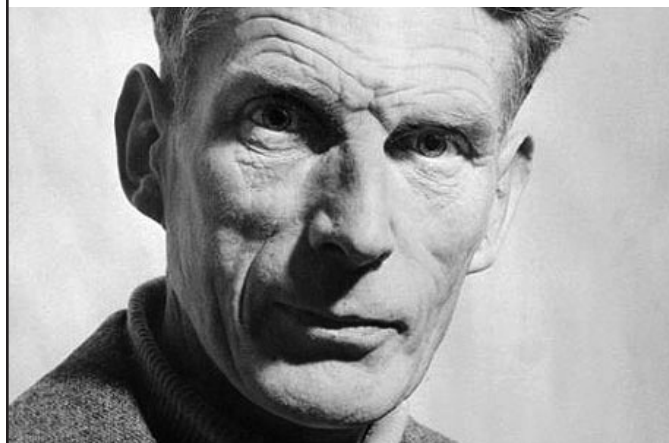
Throughout Carrasquillo's production, Beckett's prose *does* sing thanks to Delia Taylor's masterfully subtle rendition—even in her unusually billboarded landscape, atop an un-earthly mound of attire, despite a blast whose effects she remains oblivious. Somehow nohow on indeed.

--William Hutchings

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

The Beckett Circle will soon be moving online. The web address for this new entity will be communicated to members of the Samuel Beckett Society soon in a separate announcement. The present issue is the last one that will be printed and mailed to the entire membership.

Please read the President's Message for more information about these important changes concerning membership and newsletter services.



Beckett and German Culture

In the run-up to the publication of the German Diaries, probably in 2015, Beckett's communication with German philosophy, literature, film, and TV continues to hold Beckett scholars in thrall. Subsequent to several German Beckett conferences in recent years, for instance at Kassel, Düsseldorf and Hamburg, another event brought Beckett's multifarious connections to Germany in focus. The conference on "Samuel Beckett and German Culture / Samuel Beckett und die deutsche Kultur" was held at the TU Darmstadt from 23-25 September 2011, jointly organized by Jan Wilm (Darmstadt) and Mark Nixon (Reading), and it provided evidence that he persistently inspires a younger generation of Austro-German literati – well beyond his well-known influence on the likes of Bernhard and Handke.

The first day of the conference was preoccupied with issues of translation. Marion Fries (Universität Düsseldorf) picked out some "Fragments of German Literature in the German Translations of Beckett's Work" and Kathrin Schoedel (Universität Erlangen) focused on German translations, by Christian Enzensberger and Wolfgang Held, of Beckett's early work. Once again, it became clear that Beckett's intertextual debate with German culture was marked by accents on *Wehmut* (lack and melancholy, mixed with pleasurable memory) rather than by playful allusions. Idiosyncratically, he picked out references to fragments from Grillparzer (*Malone Dies*), Heine (*Company*) and Goethe (*Eh Joe*). A major thread at the conference was Beckett's Romanticism.

Beckett continues to be highly influential on contemporary literature in German. Norbert W. Schlinkert found in the work of slam poet and novelist Michael Lentz (*Liebeserklärung* (2003), *Pazifik Exil* (2007)) a number of obvious Beckettian tropes and postures – exile, imprisonment, solipsism – often also referencing Kierkegaard's *Die Wiederholung*. In a magnificent, animated reading from Beckett's *Texts for Nothing* and from his own *Pazifik Exil*, Lentz himself, who won the prestigious Ingeborg Bachmann prize in 2001, provided spectacular substance for Schlinkert's claims, continuing his intimate dialogue with Beckett. Gaby Hartel showed curious similarities between Arnheim's theories of film sound and Beckett's work for radio – particularly the idea that in any medium the artistic potential comes out of its limitations. Discussing *Embers* and *Company*, she distilled this point to the argument that German radio theory was a key influence on the Beckettian take on synaesthetics.

On the second day, Thomas Hunkeler (Université de Fribourg) discussed the occasional but persistent presence of Walther, Heinrich von Mohrunen and the troubadour poetry in Beckett's *Echo's Bones* via Robertson ("da tagte es") as well as in *Molloy* and *Stirrings Still* over more than fifty years. To Hunkeler, this was one way in Beckett's *ars poetica* of balancing the Joycean exuberance with a defamiliarized but simple *arte povera*, "perfectly intelligible". Shane Weller's (University of Kent) talk led Beckett scholars "Towards a Literature of the Unword: Beckett, Kafka, Sebald", arguing that it was not coincidental that Beckett's project of

linguistic decomposition came out of his engagement with German and Austrian literature and philosophy (Mauthner). In the key works *L'Innomable* and *Worstward Ho*, Weller also resurrected Kafka as a kindred spirit, disturbing and too close for comfort for Beckett, and assessed Sebald as a political twist of 'unwording' and negativity. Mauthner's influence on Beckett also figured prominently in Dirk Van Hulle's (Universiteit Antwerpen) contribution – "Kritik des reinen Quatsches': Beckett and German Philosophy". Hulle explored Beckett's library and read the Whoroscope notebooks and Beckett's pencil marks in his volumes of Kant, Cassirer, Schopenhauer, (the editor) Frauenstedt and Olga Plümacher's *Der Pessimismus*. Friedhelm Rathjen showed how intimately Siegfried Unseld admired Beckett, who was his perennial 'No. 1'-author, and to what extent Beckett profited from Unseld's almost tank-like protection. Rathjen amusingly recounted various anecdotes and biographical details, but noted the limits of Unseld's understanding of Beckett. The evening was rounded off by Tim Parks. The renowned Italian-based novelist, who was shortlisted for the Booker (*Europa*, 1997) and whose recent, highly successful work of non-fiction, *Teach Us to Sit Still*, resonated at least with the bodily ills that informed Beckett's work, offered an insightful and, in part, amusing personal perspective on Beckettian writing and suffering.

On the final day, Beckett's work for, as well as his appearance in, visual media figured prominently in the contributions. Ulrika Maude (Reading University) explored "Beckett, Automatism and German Expressionist Film". She showed not only the well-known influence of German expressionist and surrealist film on Beckett, whose viewing diet while in Germany can now be surmised, but also detected an expression of unease in the face of the mechanical and automatic that invokes the Kleistian marionette theatre. Eckart Voigts-Virchow (Universität Siegen) focused on the way in which Beckett was presented on German TV. While Voigts-Virchow described Beckett's own TV works as "untelevision", programs such as *Die großen Dramatiker – Samuel Beckett* or *Lippen schweigen* (2006) seek to reintegrate Beckett via a strictly biographical approach and TV-rhetoric into the contemporary televisual landscape. The conference was rounded off by its inimitable mentor and frequent reference point, Mark Nixon, who gave insights into his recent research preoccupation, the key importance of Beckett's pre-war experience of Germany.

All in all, in particular the early Beckett and the Beckett of the short later works continue to profit from the embedding of his texts in German culture. It is striking that Beckett research seems to have moved almost entirely away from textual concerns and now almost exclusively focuses on the Beckett contexts. His inspirations and biographical, historical and intellectual milieux as well as his reception were at the heart of this conference. In both of these fields, German culture figures prominently. This conference has widened the view from the initial focus on the archival gems and the perspectives gained from the forthcoming publication of the German diaries to include other ways of assessing Beckett's dialogue with Germany and Germany's dialogue with Beckett.

-- Eckart Voigts-Virchow

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The Samuel Beckett Society is pleased to announce the launch of a new website to keep members up-to-date with current activities across the globe and to facilitate communication between members. In addition, because of increased printing costs, the board would like to re-launch *The Beckett Circle* in an electronic format. There will, however, be a transitional period whereby the *Circle* will continue to be available in print format, upon request. *The Beckett Circle* will keep its name but the electronic format will allow for an increased number of operations.

This transition will occur in the Fall/Winter 2012 issue, and will coincide with the introduction of a new editorial board. Peter Fifield at St John's College, Oxford, will replace Graley Herren at the helm as the new editor of the *Beckett Circle*. Derval Tubridy will continue in her role as review editor. The new website will be designed, managed and maintained by Rhys Tranter at Cardiff University.

In its new format, the *Circle* will not only be more easily and readily accessible; it will also be available to a much broader audience. It will be linked with any number of international groups working on Beckett, which will facilitate the dissemination of information. We envisage that there will be public access to part of the website, thereby raising the profile of The Samuel Beckett Society, and that part of the site will be reserved for members, with privileged access to additional information. In this way, *The Beckett Circle* will keep growing. Will it reach asymptotically infinite dimensions? Can we become more Beckettronic? To paraphrase Pascal and Borges, and like Celia's bust, *The Beckett Circle* should become an infinite sphere whose center is everywhere and whose circumference is nowhere.

It also my great pleasure to announce the two SBS panels that will be offered at the next MLA in Boston (3-6 January 2013).

Beckett's Method and Discourse

1. Gregg Lambert (Syracuse University): "Beckett and Method"
2. Robert J. Harvey (SUNY Stony Brook): "Lessons in Lessening"
3. Richard Marshall (3:AM Magazine, London): "Naturalizing Beckett: Beckett and Nietzsche"

Beckett's Manuscripts, organized by Dirk Van Hulle (University of Antwerp)

1. Kristen L. Marangoni (University of Tulsa):
"The labor of composition: A Visual Genesis of Beckett's *Watt*"
2. Federico Bellini (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milan):
"Beckett and St. Augustine: from *Dream of Fair* to *Middling Women* to *Murphy*"
3. Mark Nixon (University of Reading) and Dirk Van Hulle: "The Beckett Digital Manuscript Project (www.beckettarchive.org)"

This MLA meeting will be a perfect opportunity to introduce and congratulate Mark Nixon who will be the next president of the Samuel Beckett Society as of 1 January 2013.

Finally, I would like to conclude this unusually long and detailed letter with my special thanks to Graley Herren for his longstanding services to the Society in editing *The Beckett Circle*. He will be missed, but we know that he will remain active and will keep a dynamic presence at our meetings and in our institutions.

--Jean-Michel Rabaté

Samuel Beckett Working Groups

SAMUEL BECKETT: FACING UP TO THE FUTURE

University of Southampton

7-9 September 2012

You are invited to join the Samuel Beckett Working Group for a weekend discussing papers presented by a group of international Beckett scholars, including a workshop led by a drama group which focuses on Beckett's work, and performances of three Beckett plays. There are limited places available for auditors. You will receive all the papers written by the presenters at the beginning of July, to give you time to read them carefully and consider the ideas presented and join in the discussions.

If you would be interested in joining us, please email Julie Campbell (convenor): j.campbell@soton.ac.uk. Specify if you require B&B accommodation at the University (Ensuite room: £35.25; Standard room: £26.50) and how many nights you plan to stay (for example: Thursday to Monday or Friday to Sunday) so that the accommodation can be booked. The SBWG attendance fee (excluding the B&B accommodation) will be no higher than £75.00, and this includes lunch and refreshments. The plan is that we will go to a local restaurant for the evening meals.

The programme is planned to run from 10.30 am on Friday 7th to 5.30 pm on Sunday 9th. If you would like any further information do get in touch.

AOYAMA GAKUIN UNIVERSITY, TOKYO

22-23 December 2012

This call for papers is for the Working Group meeting taking place at Aoyama Gakuin University in Tokyo on 23 December 2012. This Working Group is held in conjunction with the Samuel Beckett Research Circle in Japan, commemorating its twentieth anniversary.

The Working Group topic will be "Samuel Beckett in the Twenty-first Century." This topic covers areas such as

- ◇ New experiments in the theatre
- ◇ Approaches to different media
- ◇ Adaptations from one medium to another
- ◇ New challenge to the existing traditions
- ◇ Historicizing Beckett
- ◇ Beckett and Music, Visual Art, and Film
- ◇ New Critical Approaches to Beckett

Papers to be presented at the Working Group are distributed and read by all the participants ahead of the meeting. At the Working Group session presenters 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 presenters' works-in-progress. There is limited space for presenters, so do get in touch as soon as possible to guarantee a place; there will also be a limited space for auditors, who would also be sent the papers to read, and be encouraged to engage in the discussions during the sessions.

A Symposium in French (with English resume) is planned on Saturday afternoon by the Samuel Beckett Research Circle in Japan. Other events related to Beckett's work will be announced later when the details are set.

If you are interested in joining the Working Group in Tokyo, please do get in touch. Send a title and a short abstract by 30 June 2012 to Mariko Hori Tanaka (convenor): junsetsuan@orange.plala.or.jp Papers (length 5,000 words) are to be distributed by the beginning of November 2012.

BOOK REVIEWS

Anna McMullan, *Performing Embodiment in Samuel Beckett's Drama*. London: Routledge, 2010. \$125, £80 hardcover; \$39.95, £24.99 paperback

For McMullan the human body is under constant re-definition, exposing its rich complexity in performance environments and undoing the Cartesian tradition. It is understood “not as a stable historical entity,” but rather as an embodied psychoanalytical and phenomenological subject. McMullan’s argument builds on Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, and most notably Merleau-Ponty to develop an understanding of embodiment, intercorporeality and “ontological doubleness,” which enables *Performing Embodiment in Samuel Beckett's Drama* to provide a vital bridge between existing theatrical studies of Beckett and contemporary work in Performance Studies.

In the first chapter—a conceptual introduction to the monograph—McMullan explains that *Performing Embodiment in Samuel Beckett's Drama* will proceed through “a broadly chronological development of Beckett’s dramatic work,” while also organizing chapters around the dramatic media in which Beckett conducted his experiments: mime, radio, film, television, and theatre. While acknowledging that this work was often “intermedial,” the reader is made aware that examples will re-emerge in an entirely appropriate cyclical pattern. The subsequent three chapters concern the theatrical plays—from early attempts to established masterpieces—while chapters four to eight focus on “mimes and fragments,” “radiophonic embodiments,” “the flesh of the screen,” and “the televisual matrix.” The final three chapters interweave the apparent tension between text and practice by engaging with “the traces of embodiment” in Beckett’s late theatre (Chapter Nine), “mutated bodies” in stage performances of Beckett’s late prose (Chapter Ten) and “re-embodiment” Beckett now (Conclusion).

The three chapters that use Beckett’s practice as a playwright of the 1940s-50s as an organizing principle demonstrate his *wright*-ing of embodiment that is variously “dehiscent,” “intercorporeal,” and “disjunctive.” McMullan explores “dehiscence” as “a process of maturation followed by rupture and dispersal” which creates a conceptual framework for the fragmentation or disruption of (gendered) embodiment in “Le Kid” and “Human Wishes” as well as *Eleutheria*, where “the protagonist and the dramatic world come asunder.” The “corporeal interdependency” depicted in *Godot* and *Endgame* underpins the third chapter, which also offers a re-reading of characters who “inhabit diverse temporalities and spatialities.” Enabling a clearer focus on “a single or principal protagonist,” McMullan’s fourth chapter concerns “disjunctive modes of embodiment, juxtaposing past and present, sight and hearing, the body as sign/spectacle, and as fractured through the proliferation of substitute

bodies” in *Krapp's Last Tape* and *Happy Days*.

Across these chapters, McMullan locates the theatrical Beckettian subject in relation to modernist paradigms of embodiment, and incorporates Beckett’s work as a theatre practitioner into our contemporary understanding of these plays. In doing this, she responds to Stan Gontarski’s 1999 observation that pre-millennial theatre history was ignoring the evidence that “Beckett was re-creating his dramatic corpus, reinventing himself as a dramatist, rewriting history in effect during his mid-1960s period,” as well as earlier processual, and perhaps feminist, models for Beckett Performance Studies, such as Ruby Cohn (1980), Rosemary Pountney (1988), Linda Ben-Zvi (1990). McMullan also extends her own research from this period, not only developing ideas from her *Theatre on Trial* (1993) and “Beckett as Director: the Art of Mastering Failure” (1994), but also her journal articles for *Samuel Beckett Today/aujourd'hui* 16 (2006) and *Performance Research* 12 (2007). This powerfully informed viewpoint, allows her to deal directly with Beckett’s artistic practice in relation to theories of embodiment across chapters four to eight.

McMullan argues that “the mimes and the unpublished dramatic fragments constituted laboratories in which Beckett tried out the possibilities of staging the body or a series of bodies” in a fascinating chapter on the “wordless drama” of the 1950s and early 1960s, such as *Act Without Words I&II* and *J.M. Mime*. This act of generating and then abandoning these texts enabled Beckett to consider new possibilities for the performing body and inform his later work for the stage. On radio, “the possibilities of sonic embodiment” were explored through “experiments” such as *All That Fall*, *Cascando* or *Embers* where “voice, sound, music, and the radio system intersect” (80). McMullan pursues this idea of the “body-circuit” into Beckett’s work for film and television, where human embodiment evolves in relation to technologies of representation, often denaturalizing or disarticulating the body from view. *Eh Joe* is re-read via Deleuze, Merleau-Ponty and Lacan but also draws upon the work of contemporary Beckett scholars such as Bignall, Oppenheim and Herren. The “relationship between the body semblance and the animating matrix” in the television plays is shown to prelude the late theatre, which will continue to “dislocate,” “distort” and “disorientate perceptions of embodiment,” especially in plays with an intermedial status, such as *Not I* and *What Where*.

Developing these ideas over the final three chapters, McMullan writes that “the body in Beckett’s late theatre is presented as both sign and site, engine or matrix of production (of stories, semblances, voice, footfalls or hiccups) and fabric to be composed and recomposed with limited materials.” Therefore, the body is “itself a matrix of embodiments [...] a site of production, Murphy’s ‘matrix of surds.’” In the section “Performing Bodies in Beckett’s Late Theatre” such theoretical abstractions are counter-balanced by accounts of “the extraordinary physical and vocal discipline needed

BOOK REVIEWS

for such an approach," such as Zarilli's "bodymind," Neumann's "double vision," Whitelaw's "spiraling inward," and Chabert's "bodily posture." McMullan blends philosophical phenomenology with performance theory throughout, often identifying emergent discourses and experimental practices at this intersection. Broadening her approach to an analysis of "Stage Performances of Beckett's Late Prose Texts," specifically *The Lost Ones* (1975) and *Imagination Dead Imagine* (1984) performed by Mabou Mines, and *Worstward Ho* (2005) performed by Gare St Lazare Players, McMullan reconsiders issues of "genre androgyny," "mutation from prose to stage," and "re-siting Beckett." She concludes "these productions confirm that staging Beckett's prose has the potential to complement and extend the performative laboratory of Beckett's theatre of the body." This relates back to her reading of the mimes and fragments as "corporeal laboratories," and forward to "interdisciplinary and intercultural translations and embodiments" of the future.

Such arguments enable *Performing Embodiment in Samuel Beckett's Drama* to enter into a discourse beyond Beckett Studies, where "the human is crucially constituted through performance" (Kershaw 2001), where performance itself "will be to the twentieth and twenty-first centuries what discipline was to the eighteenth and nineteenth" (McKenzie 2001), and where "the theatre of the late twentieth, and early twenty-first century was the human laboratory" (Read 2008). McMullan's text forms part of the Routledge Advances in Theatre and Performance Studies, sitting alongside works on the biopolitical (Giannachi 2006) and the neuroscientific (Di Benedetto 2010). *Performing Embodiment in Samuel Beckett's Drama* is well positioned to articulate the new environments for our embodiments, be they biomedical, transcultural or "ghost-haunted."

--Jonathan Heron

New and Forthcoming

- Ackerley, Chris. *Samuel Beckett and Science*. London: Continuum, 2012. ISBN-10: 1441175474, ISBN-13: 978-1441175472.
- Lozier, Claire. *De l'abject et du sublime: Georges Bataille, Jean Genet, Samuel Beckett*. Oxford, Bern, Berlin, Bruxelles, Frankfurt am Main, New York, Wien: Peter Lang, 2012. ISBN-10: 3034307241, ISBN-13: 978-3034307246.
- Salisbury, Laura. *Samuel Beckett: Laughing Matters, Comic Timing*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012. ISBN-10: 0748647481, ISBN-13: 978-0748647484.
- Tucker, David. *Samuel Beckett and Arnold Geulincx: Tracing 'A Literary Fantasia'*. London: Continuum, 2012. ISBN-10: 1441139354, ISBN-13: 978-1441139351.
- Weiss, Katherine. *The Plays of Samuel Beckett*. London: Methuen, 2012. ISBN-10: 140814557X, ISBN-13: 978-1408145579.

Samuel Beckett 2: "Parole, regard et corps"

Lettres modernes Minard

(Collection: « La Revue des Lettres modernes »)

Chers collègues,

Ce m'est un grand plaisir de vous annoncer la parution du deuxième volume de la Série *Samuel Beckett*, intitulé "*Parole, regard et corps*".

Chez Beckett, l'écriture articule intimement la dimension esthétique à l'implication subjective du créateur. Dans le premier volume de la Série, nous avons abordé certains aspects de l'impulsion créatrice de Beckett. Dans ce deuxième volume, nous situons des effets esthétiques au sein d'une triangulation structurante. D'abord, la *parole*, et le silence qui l'excède. Ensuite l'*image*, avec le regard qui sous-tend le visible. Ces deux faces se nouent enfin à l'endroit où l'écriture s'éprouve dans l'irréductible matérialité du *corps*.

Le troisième volume, en préparation, sera consacré aux "*dramaticules*".

Dans l'attente d'engager des échanges enrichissants, je vous prie de recevoir, chers collègues, mes cordiales salutations,

Llewellyn BROWN
lbrown@free.fr

COMMANDES (23 euros):
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14160 DIVES-SUR-MER
Tél.: 02 31 84 47 06
Mél: minarddistribution@wanadoo.fr

Dear colleagues,

It is a great pleasure for me to announce the publication of the second volume of the *Samuel Beckett* Series, titled "*Parole, regard et corps*" ("Speech, Gaze and the Body").

In Beckett's work, the aesthetic dimension is intimately bound up with the subjective involvement of the creator. The first volume of the Series dealt with aspects of the creative impulse. This second volume situates aesthetic effects in a structuring triangle. First, *speech* in relation to silence that exceeds it. Then the *image*, with the gaze that underlies the visible. These two faces come together in the point where writing is experienced in the fundamentally material nature of the *body*.

The third volume, in preparation, will be devoted to the "*dramaticules*".

Hoping that this publication will contribute to develop further enriching exchanges, I extend to you, dear colleagues, my best regards,

Llewellyn BROWN
lbrown@free.fr

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NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Linda Ben-Zvi's latest Beckett publication is "Beckett and Disgust: The Body as 'Laughing Matter,'" in the recent issue of *Modernism and Modernity* devoted to Beckett.

Enoch Brater is the Kenneth T. Rowe Collegiate Professor of Dramatic Literature at the University of Michigan. The author of several seminal studies on Beckett, his most recent publication is *Ten Ways of Thinking About Samuel Beckett: The Falsetto of Reason*.

Mary Bryden is Professor of French at the University of Reading, and Co-Director of the Beckett International Foundation. Her forthcoming collection *Beckett and Animals* will be published by Cambridge University Press in 2012/13.

Julie Campbell is Lecturer in Literature and Drama at the University of Southampton. She has published quite a few articles on Beckett's prose fiction and drama.

Daniela Caselli teaches English at the University of Manchester. She is the author of *Beckett's Dantes* (2005) and *Improper Modernism: Djuna Barnes's Bewildering Corpus* (2009).

Andrew Gibson is Research Professor of Modern Literature and Theory at Royal Holloway, University of London. He is the author of numerous books, including *Beckett and Badiou: The Pathos of Intermittency* (Oxford, 2006) and *Samuel Beckett: A Critical Life* (Reaktion, 2010). His new book on James Joyce is forthcoming next year from Oxford.

Peter Gidal is an experimental filmmaker and aesthetician whose retrospectives have appeared at Belgian Cinematheque, Centre Pompidou, Tate Gallery, Anthology, NY, and many others. His books include *Materialist Film* (1989), *Understanding Beckett: Monologue and Gesture* (1986), and *Warhol: Films and Paintings* (1971).

Jonathan Heron is the Artistic Director of Fail Better Productions and IATL Teaching Fellow at the University of Warwick. He is co-author of *Open-space Learning: A Study in Trans-disciplinary Pedagogy* (WISH, Bloomsbury Academic, 2011) and *Chemistry, Performance and Ped-*

gogy – an interactive approach to periodic trends (CERP, Royal Society of Chemistry, 2010). His recent work as a theatre director includes *Rough for Theatre II & Ohio Impromptu* (Oxford Playhouse).

William Hutchings is a Professor of English at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and the author of *Waiting for Godot: A Reference Guide* (Praeger: 2005). His production history of *Happy Days*, titled " 'In the Old Style, Yet Anew': *Happy Days* in the 'AfterBeckett' " is included in *A Companion to Samuel Beckett*, edited by S. E. Gontarski and published by Wiley-Blackwell in 2010.

Jim Knowlson has written, co-authored or edited many books on Beckett's work and life. He founded the *Journal of Beckett Studies* and set up the Beckett Archive in Reading.

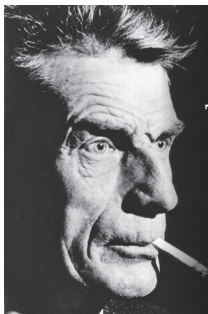
Anna McMullan is Professor of Theatre at the University of Reading. She has published widely on the drama of Samuel Beckett and on contemporary Irish theatre.

Angela Moorjani is Professor Emerita of French at the University of Maryland-UMBC. She publishes on repetition, melancholy, and cultural ghosts in artistic making.

Antonia Rodríguez-Gago is Profesora Titular of English Literature at the Universidad Autónoma of Madrid where she teaches English Renaissance Drama and Contemporary Theatre. She has published extensively on Beckett and on Contemporary Anglo-American Theatre focusing on women playwrights.

Eckart Voigts-Virchow is Professor of English Literature at the University of Siegen, Germany. His Beckett articles were published in *The International Reception of Samuel Beckett*, *Other Becketts*, *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui*, and *Samuel Beckett: A Casebook*.

Hersh Zeifman, Professor Emeritus at York University, Toronto and a past President of the Samuel Beckett Society, has published widely on Beckett and on modern and contemporary drama.



SPECIAL THANKS

The Samuel Beckett Society would like to thank the following individuals for their generous support:

Martha Fehesenfeld
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Gerald A. Rosen

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Hersh Zeifman
Christopher J. Herbert
LSA Dean Terrence J.

McDonald, University
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Anonymous



The Beckett Circle

Le Cercle de Beckett

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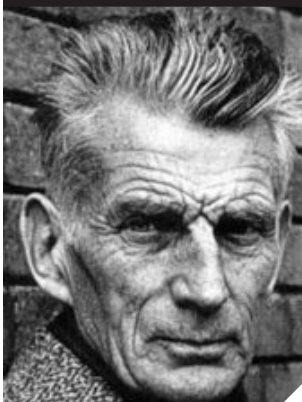
All members of the Samuel Beckett Society are encouraged to submit items of interest for publication in *The Beckett Circle*. **Submissions should be emailed in Word or Rich Text Format.** Please send all essays, theater reviews, letters to the editor, inquiries about advertising rates, and information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

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



SAMUEL BECKETT SOCIETY

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One year: \$35
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Members can soon keep up with the latest reviews and announcements in the world of Beckett studies through *The Beckett Circle* website, to be updated regularly. 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

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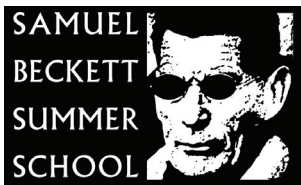
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 Philadelphia, PA 19104-6273



Samuel Beckett Summer School 2012
15–20 July 2012
Trinity College Dublin

Following from the success of last year's inaugural Samuel Beckett Summer School, the School of English and the School of Drama, Film and Music, Trinity College Dublin, are proud to announce the 2012 Samuel Beckett Summer School. Each year we will invite the world's foremost Beckett scholars to present new lectures and seminars on all aspects of Beckett's works.

LECTURE PROGRAMME

Sunday

Rodney Sharkey: '“Local” Anaesthetic for a “Public” Birth: Beckett, Parturition and the Porter Period'

Monday

Declan Kiberd: 'Samuel Beckett: Mystic?'
Seán Kennedy: 'Beckett, Yeats and the Big House, 1933'

Tuesday

Andrew Gibson: 'Samuel Beckett, How It Is and the Irish Misanthropic Tradition'
Emilie Morin: 'Beckett and Radiophonic Sound'

Wednesday

Enoch Brater: 'Beckett's Dramatic Forms, Considered and Reconsidered'

Thursday

John Pilling: 'Six Notebooks In Search of a Novel: Beckett writing Murphy'
Ulrika Maude: '“Convulsive Aesthetics: Beckett, Chaplin and Charcot'

Friday

Terence Brown: 'Beckett: Memories and Sounds'
Jonathan Heron: 'Theatre Laboratories, Performance Genetics and “Beckett's DNA”'

The Sunday lecture starts at 6 pm (although this may change in the final schedule). The weekday lectures are from 9.30-11 and 11.30-1, except for Wednesday when there is just one lecture, which runs from 11.30-1.

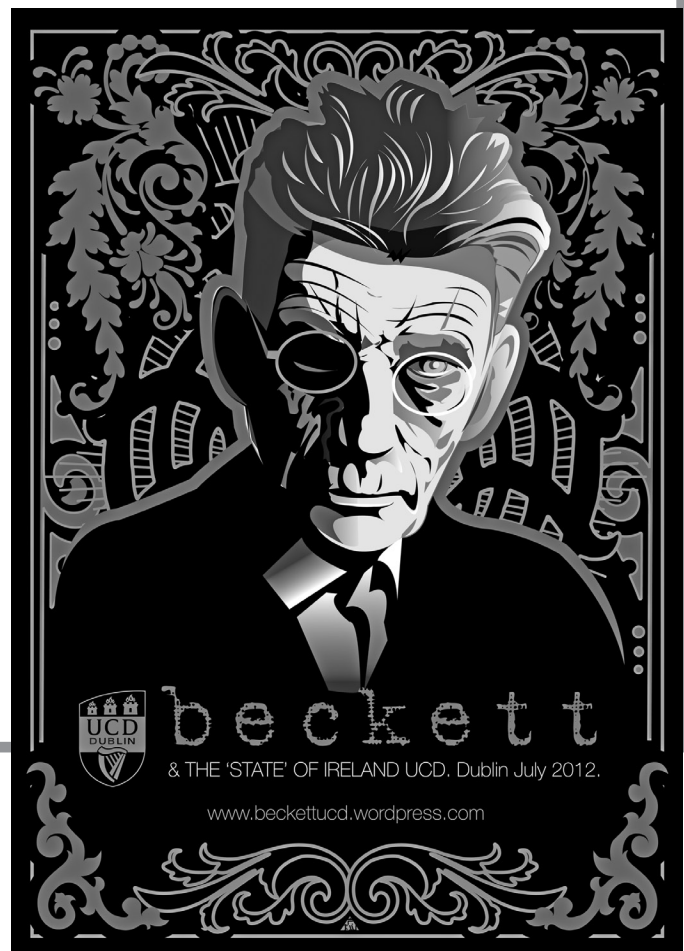
SEMINARS FOR 2012:

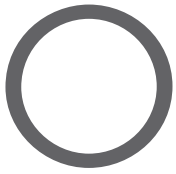
Beckett and Irish Culture, 1929–1949 (Seán Kennedy)
Beckett's Manuscripts (Mark Nixon & Dirk Van Hulle)
Performance Workshop (Rosemary Pountney & Jonathan Heron) Reading Group (John Pilling)

There will be multiple performances during the week, including a performance of *Rockaby* by Rosemary Pountney.

The fees for the Samuel Beckett Summer School have now been set: 670 euro programme only; 1170 euro programme plus accommodation at Trinity College Dublin. For more information see www.beckettsummerschool.com or contact sbss@usit.ie.

The Summer School will be preceded by the conference "Beckett and the State of Ireland: Irish Beckett – Global Beckett" at University College Dublin on 13–14 July. We encourage participants to attend both events. For more information see <http://beckettucd.wordpress.com>.





THE BECKETT CIRCLE LE CERCLE DE BECKETT

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Cincinnati, Ohio 45207-4446



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.

For membership inquiries, write to:

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