

**What Do We Have Left?
Possibilities and Prospects of Applying Theory in the Analysis of
Samuel Beckett's *Play* – A Cognitive Approach
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To claim that Beckett's dramatic oeuvre has been analysed based on virtually every single existing literary theoretical school is evident. This might confront us with the fact that striking upon something new is unlikely, and it also makes us consider new ways of processing this so much treated body of works. What way would, however, be appropriate to approach Beckett's theatre? Where can we look for new paths? Well, I strongly believe that text-based literary approaches in general ensure only a limited access to decipher Beckettian theatre, and the fittest method lies outside the world of mere literary criticism.

I wish to examine in what ways literary theory could be replaced as a possible mode of apprehension, while turning to a more radical and less text-centred approach to grab the essence of Beckett's theatre. In my research, while analysing the tableau presented in Beckett's drama *Play*, I mainly rely on the work of researchers of body studies, and – most importantly – cognitive scientists who emphasise the significance of our bodily presence and responses to theatre. I intend to approach the Beckettian bodies – and the tableau formed of bodies – in *Play* from a cognitive, corporeality-centred framework which I find to be the most appropriate methodological path to access the visceral-corporeal dramatic performances of Samuel Beckett.

Despite the fact that Beckett's ever-returning wish was to create a play in which only text is present, he was convinced that the most important aspect of a drama is the actual performance. In his rhythmical, pictorial tableaux, precisely because of the sparseness of the text, the body pushes more and more to the forefront. The carefully pointed, focused lighting, the increasing amount of darkness, narrow spaces, and the little but sharp choreography of movements make Beckett's *Play(s)* especially apt for a cognitive, perception theory-based analysis.

Short Bio:

My investigation focuses on how the dramatic work of Samuel Beckett can be approached using mostly phenomenological and cognitive methods. In my research I mainly focus on the bodies appearing in Beckett's plays, as well as the *tableaus* formed from these bodies. During my examinations I wish to achieve a kind of synthesis or co-operation between the humanities and the hard sciences in order to better understand the dramatic oeuvre of Beckett. Material related to the theme of the doctoral dissertation is about to be published.

My current research embraces a wide variety of topics, mostly various neurological, perception theoretical, and cognitive approaches to literature (especially to theatre), while I also examine my field of interest from a philosophical, phenomenological point of view.