

Translating the Topographies of Beckett's *En attendant Godot*
Eva Kuras

In considering the various, sometimes conflicting, “topographies” of *En attendant Godot*, Samuel Beckett both points to and deflects from familiar topoi. Temporal and spatial abstractions, which suggest both a “nowhere” and an “everywhere,” are contrasted with representations of national, Christian as well as broader Western literary topoi like the locus amoenus and its reverse, the locus horridus. The play’s liminal sense of time and place, of being forever suspended between one state and another, moves beyond Judeo-Christian, Western-centric themes towards the potentially “universal” human experience of dealing with transition. The play finally shifts from abstraction as well as local, regional or national identifications towards the here-and-now space of the performance itself. I argue that it is this broadening and then narrowing that opens the doors to the play’s translatability across sociopolitical (and socioeconomic) divides.

Short Bio:

Eva Kuras is a PhD student in Comparative and World Literature at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in the United States. She focuses on modernist American, British, French and Polish literatures.