

Radio-listening and Memories: Beckett's Ireland in All That Fall
Moonyoung Hong

According to Samuel Beckett, his first radio play, *All That Fall* (1956), is specifically written for “voices, not bodies.” Beckett refused to have it staged because it would have been “destructive of whatever qualities it may have and which depends on the whole thing’s coming out of the dark.” The play is also considered one of his most Irish productions, being set in Boghill, which is modeled after Foxrock where Beckett grew up, and with references to Irish issues of that time. Prompted by the BBC’s request to make a play fit for radio, Beckett began to experiment with a medium that would pervade throughout his career and would even provide, as in *Krapp’s Last Tape*, a suitable image for themes of memory, disembodiment, blindness, temporality, and isolation. This presentation will examine why Beckett, ever-conscious about the form he used, decided to make his first radio play “Irish.” Looking at how Beckett draws elements from his own memories in *All That Fall*, I will argue that radio-listening is linked to the idea of “involuntary memory,” and required that Beckett bases his imagination from his own childhood particularities, which is from Ireland. It is Beckett’s way of engaging and disengaging with Ireland.

Short Bio:

Moonyoung Hong is a postgraduate student at Trinity College, Dublin in the M. Phil Irish Writing. Her research projects deal with Irish theatre ranging from W.B. Yeats and J.M. Synge to contemporary playwrights such as Brian Friel, Tom Murphy, and Marina Carr and focuses on the relation of their work to Irish history and culture.