

‘Cuineas a Chloisteáil:’ The Sound of Silence in Samuel Beckett’s *All That Fall*.

Bernadette Fox

Long categorised as the European Beckett, recent scholarship tends to repossess or re-identify Samuel Beckett as the Irish Beckett. While Beckett’s universality of themes supports a European perspective, the reclamation of an Irish aspect frequently involves the identification or re-imagining of Irish motifs and references in his oeuvre. Beckett’s first radio play, *All That Fall*, would appear to make that task simple as it is his most recognisably Irish work. While the more recent *Pan Pan* Theatre production reduces the emphasis on Irish accents as heard in the original 1957 BBC production, the script itself places the drama in the Irish landscape. However the question arises as to why Beckett chose to write such an identifiable ‘Irish’ play at this point in his career. *All That Fall* was composed as he was completing *Fin de Partie* and perhaps the familiarity of the Irish setting, including the use of overtly biographical elements, provided the opportunity to focus more precisely on the mechanics of radio drama. Radio as a medium of presentation requires active participation by the listener in order to translate the sounds heard and to relate it into a narrative. It therefore enables freedom for the listener freedom to create their own dramatic production based on how they interpret the sounds they hear. I will argue that despite the Irish presence in *All That Fall*, Beckett’s creativity is invested in the aural reception of sound and language as he worked with a new form of dramatic production. Yet still the question arises, would the radio play have worked as well if set in another part of the British Isles?

Short Bio:

Bernadette Fox is a postgraduate student at Trinity College, Dublin enrolled on their ‘Irish Writing in English’ M.Phil. A graduate of University College Dublin where she achieved a BA International in English (single subject major), she was awarded an Internship at the Dublin James Joyce Summer School in 2015. Additionally Bernadette spent a successful Erasmus year at the Albert Ludwigs University of Freiburg, Germany studying British and American literature. Recent projects include an investigation of how Irish drama is relevant to contemporary audiences particularly as read through the reception of works which focus on Northern Irish themes as received in the Abbey Theatre, Dublin.