



University of
Kent

BOOK OF ABSTRACTS

Beckett's Threshold: Salvation and Horror
Edward Bizub

Proust and the *cogito*; Geulincx and Golgotha: these are some of the parameters by which we can “measure” Beckett’s threshold, a liminal space which seems to have found reverberations in World Literature, and yet the source of these reverberations is probably unknown to his admirers. Take *Godot* for instance. How many people would be surprised to find the seminal moment of Cartesian philosophy written into the scene at the end of the play? Who recognizes a famous scene in Proust’s novel rewritten in Beckettian fashion? And how can we guess that that very scene is likewise a commentary on Geulincx’s famous maxim as well as on the drama of Golgotha, all tied to the mystery of a shoe and the movement of a foot?

To explain Beckett’s wide appeal, this intricately crafted threshold, with its emphasis on paralysis and impotence, can be seen as resonating with the modernist movement as well as with the premises of postcolonial criticism under different auspices. The subversion of traditional texts may be interpreted as a reaction not only to realism but to a hostile world as well: the “inward turn”, Stephen Dedalus’s vision of history as a nightmare. Salvation and horror become intermingled in the aftermath of colonialism: Kurtz’s pursuit of “progress” in *The Heart of Darkness*; Adela Quested’s experience of the cave in *A Passage to India*; and Chinua Achebe’s depiction of cultural destruction in *Things Fall Apart*.

The aim of this paper would be to show how one can marry a micro-textual analysis with a broader investigation. In the case of *Godot*, the play’s reception reveals the hidden potentiality of a dynamic piece of writing. Analysis and reception: the one legitimizes the other.

Short Bio:

Edward Bizub has taught Comparative Literature at the University of Geneva and the University of Lausanne. He is the author of the following books: *La Venise intérieure. Proust et la poétique de la traduction*, Neuchâtel, La Baconnière, 1991; *Proust et le moi divisé. La Recherche: creuset de la psychologie expérimentale (1874-1914)*, Genève, Droz, 2006; *Beckett et Descartes dans l’œuf. Aux sources de l’œuvre beckettienne: de Whoroscope à Godot*, Paris, Classiques Garnier, 2012.

Inversions of Modernity: Beckett and Karatani on Language and Literature

Douglas Atkinson

While it is impossible to deny the international influence that Beckett's writing has had concerning the nature of Modernism and the question of literature, it is equally evident that the reception of Beckett in Japan was of an entirely different order. Furthermore, it can be argued that the motivation for the more or less immediate acceptance and celebration of Beckett's work was not simply a fortunate coincidence or a matter of chance. Rather, following the argument made by Karatani Kojin – Japan's foremost literary theorist – I will argue that the unique political, sociological and cultural context of 20th century Japan created a perfect storm for reflections on the nature of Modernism and, indirectly, the reception of Beckett's work. I argue that Karatani, a colleague of both Derrida and de Man at Yale, mirrors the movement of Beckett's Trilogy both methodologically and thematically in order to arrive at the ideological constructs of his key terms, namely "Origins", "Modern", "Japanese" and "Literature." And where Beckett used "his" masters of Modernism – namely Joyce and Proust – as points of departure, Karatani will also follow suit here by addressing Japan's foremost modernist, Natsume Soseke, in order to identify and critique the elements of an essentially Japanese experience of Modernism. Karatani's genealogical critique of the essential attributes of modern Japanese fiction – setting, interiority, confession, illness, power and "The Extinction of Genres" - is a perfect parallel to Beckett's deconstruction of the elements of narrativity, thus clearly showing the necessity for reappraising the import of Beckett's work via Karatani's appropriation of his major motifs and strategies for questioning the nature of literature and its import on Modernism's search for a source of the Self.

Short Bio:

Douglas Atkinson teaches at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Free University of Brussels) where he lectures in critical thinking and academic composition at The Doctoral School. Additionally, he gives courses in Advanced English Proficiency for students in Literature and Linguistics. He is also adjunct professor of Rhetoric and the Humanities at Vesalius College. He holds a PhD in Philosophy and specializes in 20th century Continental Philosophy, with a focus on the intersection between philosophy and literature. His current work is on the philosophic import of Maurice Blanchot and his influence on Samuel Beckett, phenomenology, hermeneutics and philosophy of language. He is currently co-supervising a PhD project at the VUB on Beckett and Joyce, and has promoted a wide range of Master's Theses in literature. His literary interests focus primarily on Beckett, Modernism and Post-Modernism, phenomenology, deconstructionism, psychoanalysis, death and modern Japanese literature.

‘...something that is not Beckett’: Beckett and the ‘problem’ of inheritance in early US postmodern fiction

James Baxter

In this paper, I intend to interrogate the complicated inheritance of Samuel Beckett on what Tom LeClair and Larry McCaffery label ‘the first wave of American Postmodernism.’ The primarily Euro-centric notion of Beckett as ‘last modernist’ will be carefully reframed in light of the economic and cultural shift towards the United States as the site of a postmodern ‘exhausted’ impulse. Without effacing the known distance from which Beckett’s association with the US was conducted, the post-war influx from without of both European and global modernisms will provide the situation for my reading of Beckett’s exceptional legacy on US postmodernism. This will be reinforced via the criti-fictional texts of John Barth and Donald Barthelme, both of whom conceive of their projects as to a large degree in the wake of Beckett. In this context, Beckett is re-conceptualised as a ‘problem,’ regarding what Barth in ‘The Literature of Exhaustion’ (1967) describes as ‘the used up-ness of certain forms or the felt exhaustion of certain possibilities.’ Similarly—and emerging from a condition of being ‘overwhelmed by Beckett’—Barthelme proposes that one must ‘write in some sense in opposition to Beckett, as Beckett wrote in opposition to Joyce.’ As such, the ‘Nominalist irony’ posited by Beckett against the Joycean ‘apotheosis of the word,’ holds a unique place in the transition between literary moments, towards both the ‘felt ultimacies’ of Barth or Barthelme’s process of ‘not knowing.’ This will be conducted alongside the assertion in Richard Begam’s significant monograph on *Samuel Beckett and the End of Modernity* (1996), regarding the ‘differential conception of postmodernism’— ‘implicated in what it opposes.’ As such, I will propose that the same poetics of impasse and opposition can be mapped onto the fabric of Beckett’s US bequest, traces of Beckett visible in the working through of the author’s inheritance.

Short Bio:

James Baxter is a second year PhD candidate in the Department of English Literature at the University of Reading. He is currently working on a thesis titled “‘the old aporetics’ of Samuel Beckett and the influence on narrative possibility in US metafiction.’ His broader research interests include: writing after Beckett, reflexivity, theories of reading, the history of Grove Press, and the works of Thomas Pynchon and Don DeLillo.

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.

‘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.

Perceptions Denied: An Examination of the Gaze in *All That Fall*

Holly Anna Furey

A specific way in which bodily and social anxieties are presented in Beckett's work is through the aspect of denied perception. Beckett's characters are often tensely suspended with the anxiety of occupying a negative space; it is both a continuous and contagious state of being. I will examine the ways in which the audience comes to occupy this negative space. My paper will also incorporate how Maddy Rooney of *All That Fall* and the 2016 PanPan production of the play at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin subvert theatrical norms; not only does Mrs Rooney resist any form of gaze or visual interrogation but the play itself also denies the audience's complete perception of it. Moreover, it is significant that the subject in question, Mrs Rooney, exists within an ongoing state of enervation and often her confrontations with her 'self' are, in a sense, self-destructive.

Short Bio:

Holly Furey is part of a group of Trinity College Dublin postgraduate students approaching Beckett from an Irish perspective.

Waking Beckett: All That Fall and the 1916 Centenary
Eimhin Walker

Samuel Beckett is celebrated as one of the world's greatest writers and the debate around Beckett's nationality is often quite fierce, with him being claimed as an Irish, French, European and International writer. There are also others who do not see his nationality as a particularly important aspect of his work. His theatrical work is produced all over the world and is able to resonate with audiences of all nationalities. Indeed, wherever it is produced and how the production chooses to stage the performance enables different readings and understandings to be achieved. This essay aims to closely examine the recent Pan Pan Theatre production of *All That Fall* at the Abbey Theatre in Dublin as part of their *Waking the Nation* season. It will explore the paradoxes that are located in Beckett's play and the impact of their staging, as well as the relevance of this play in the centenary year of 1916.

Short Bio:

Eimhin Walker is a postgraduate student currently undertaking an M.Phil in Irish Writing at Trinity College Dublin, where her work has included exploring the use of liminal and normal space in Irish Theatre and re-examining the myth of sacrifice in the plays of William Butler Yeats. Previously she has studied at Warwick University where she specialised in Irish Literature. She has also worked in the amateur and professional theatre industry in numerous roles including those of Set Designer and Producer.

Beckett, the Celtic Tiger, and the Commodification of an “Irish Writer”

Kurt McGee

Despite the awkward relationship between Beckett and Ireland throughout much of the twentieth century, today he has not only been accepted as an “Irish writer,” but has been co-opted as a figure of Irish globalization. This paper argues that the Celtic Tiger in Ireland saw the commodification of Samuel Beckett, who was well-suited to represent the new paradoxical global Irishness that was being exported around the world. Beckett became a bridge, an offshore patrol vessel, the face of a ten Euro coin, and his work was made more palatable to the international public through projects such as *Beckett on Film*, which set out to make modern and definitive versions of the plays that have become highly accessible in their digital format and which, through their method, illustrated the power of the burgeoning Irish tech industry. The paper concludes by examining how productions of Beckett’s plays have changed since the 1990s to emphasize this new understanding of the writer as distinctly Irish, but one who must nevertheless appeal to a more global audience.

Short Bio:

Kurt McGee is a postgraduate student at Trinity College, Dublin in the Irish Writing M.Phil. His recent projects have focused on the complications of the term “Irish writer,” and how figures such as Jonathan Swift and Edmund Burke have forged a strong association with Ireland primarily through their persuasive writing in support of Ireland against English socioeconomic sanctions.

**“Abstracted to death”: “Exagminating” Beckett’s relationship with Ireland through
“Dante... Bruno. Vico.. Joyce”
Chris Wrycraft**

More than twenty years before Beckett’s plays cemented an international reputation, his essay “Dante... Bruno. Vico.. Joyce” constituted the beginnings of his literary career. Published in Paris in 1929, the text responds to criticisms of Joyce’s language in the serialization of *Work in Progress*, which would become *Finnegans Wake*. Through Joyce’s work, Beckett also analyses the use of language in literature. He remarks that the English language had been “abstracted to death,” (15), a fault supposedly addressed in Joyce’s writing by uniting content with form. This presentation will consider Beckett’s evaluation of Joyce, in particular the occasionally parodic form utilised within his critique. Parallels between the senses of Beckett and Joyce’s writing will be explored, with Joyce’s influence at this early stage of Beckett’s career more noticeable than in later works. Style and form are crucial to Beckett’s overall meaning, demonstrating how the written message of a text can be reinforced by its composition. An evaluation of whether the text can be considered in any way Irish will also be developed. If Ireland does not feature explicitly in the main body of this text, its form exaggerates a self-aware acknowledgement of its artificiality. This strain of humour might be traced in the works of Beckett’s Irish contemporaries and predecessors, although it is not an exclusively Irish trope. Beckett’s engagement with European texts and philosophy is readily demonstrated, yet his Irish heritage is also subtly signalled through the sometimes satirical tone of the essay. Ireland may not be dealt with in any great detail in the content of Beckett’s critique, however its form as an essay written by one Hibernian expatriate to another invites an unravelling of these potential connections.

Short Bio:

Chris Wrycraft received his undergraduate degree in English and Related Literature from the university of York in 2014. In September 2015 he commenced postgraduate study at Trinity College Dublin in the M. Phil course on Irish Writing. Alongside Irish literature and history, he pursues an interest in twentieth century literature, theory and criticism.

The Reluctant Translator: Beckett's Road to Mexico (via Paz)

Patricia Novillo-Corvalán

Samuel Beckett has long been associated with translation, be it the colossal collaborative enterprise of translating sections of James Joyce's "Anna Livia Plurabelle" into French or the sustained process of self-translation that enabled his work to co-exist in two languages. Equally significant, albeit less celebrated, is his translation of an *Anthology of Mexican Poetry* (1958), a volume of one hundred poems that has so far occupied a marginal place within the Beckett canon. The anthology was part of an international cultural project sponsored by UNESCO and developed in close collaboration with the Mexican writer Octavio Paz in the early 1950s.

This paper seeks to recuperate this overlooked aspect of Beckett scholarship in order to explore in detail one of Beckett's most onerous tasks as a translator. Beckett himself, however, flippantly dismissed the poems as "execrable", while stressing that the work was purely an "alimentary chore". For Beckett, the translation of the anthology became food for thought (quite literally), but when it came to the actual translation of the poems it is clear that Beckett found the Mexican "feast" of one hundred poems difficult to stomach. This paper seeks to dispel Beckett's own scathing view of his Mexican translations as superfluous exercises that he reluctantly executed in order to make a living. Close scrutiny of the anthology lays bare the complexity and underlying strategies of Beckett's re-creative translation practice. It is my argument here that Beckett's translation of Mexican poetry benefited from, and was influenced by, his previous experience translating Joyce. And whilst the translation of the anthology cannot be equated with the linguistic difficulty presented by *Finnegans Wake* (1939), I demonstrate that certain poems, especially the baroque lyrics written by the seventeenth-century poet Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, would have required a similar sensitivity to wordplay and linguistic experimentation. Beckett utilised and privileged the idea of translation as re-creation, a strategy that allowed him to enhance and even improve some of the original Spanish poems, a point that is discussed in the light of the recent world literature theories developed by David Damrosch, among others. Finally, the paper focusses on specific poems that Beckett translated, including 'Upon a Corpse' by the Romantic poet Manuel Acuña, in order to suggest that Beckett was intrigued and captivated by Mexican notions of death as celebrated in the Day of the Dead where the living consumes the bread of the dead.

Short bio:

Dr Patricia Novillo-Corvalán is a lecturer in the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of Kent. Her research interests include comparative and world literature, medical humanities, translation studies, modernism, and twentieth- and twenty-first-century Spanish and Latin American literature. She has written extensively on cross-cultural encounters between writers worldwide, including a monograph on Borges and Joyce, and articles on Gustave Flaubert, Julio Cortázar, Samuel Beckett, Derek Walcott, Roberto Bolaño, Manuel Puig, and Marina Carr. She is currently writing a large-scale study on the transnational cultural exchanges between Anglophone modernism and Latin America, and also editing a collection of essays titled *The Art of Medicine in Iberian and Latin American Literature*.

**The Bilingual Musicality of *Textes pour rien / Texts for Nothing*
Llewellyn BROWN**

If the notion of “world literature” can be counted among the effects of our postmodern reality, Beckett’s bilingual work can assuredly be understood as one of its symptoms: both revealing its existence and offering a salutary response.

Rather than seeing Beckett’s bilingualism as an expression of the postmodern rejection of an “original” text – in reaction to traditional conceptions –, it would seem preferable to view it in relation to a non-negotiable, “impossible” dimension inherent in language, and the singular “*jouissance*” (Lacan) attached to it. This enables us to see the “abortive” status of *Textes pour rien / Texts for Nothing* in a more positive light.

The two versions of what, on the level of meaning, would seem to be the same literary work, prove to be substantially different as regards the effect produced on the reader, and doubtless for the author. The musicality of these texts involves the impact of language on the subject, and is immediately apparent in the specific qualities inherent in French and English. The divergent accentual systems are complemented by the “weaker”, more fluid and allusive language in French, while the English tends to reinforce the substance of words. The two languages thus appear not to be equivalent but to maintain their radical difference in relation to each other.

Bilingualism thus seems to provide a structuring framework whereby Beckett can enclose and situate the subjective part of language that refuses to be assimilated within universal exchange and communication.

Short Bio:

Llewellyn Brown is a professeur agrégé and teaches French literature at the Lycée international de Saint-Germain-en-Laye. He has published *Figures du mensonge littéraire: études sur l’écriture au XX^e siècle* (2005), *L’Esthétique du pli dans l’œuvre de Henri Michaux* (2007), *Beckett, les fictions brèves : voir et dire* (2008), *Savoir de l’amour* (2012), *Beckett, Lacan and the Voice* (2016). He is a member of the editorial committee of publisher Lettres modernes Minard (Paris), and directs the “Samuel Beckett” series.

100% Guaranteed Beckett: *Hat It Been Bilingual*

Mary O'Byrne and Wei Zheyu

Our project is a joint practice-based research conducted by Mary O'Byrne and Wei Zheyu, and it consists of two parts: a performed reading followed by a paper presented by us.

Our performed reading is an experiment of the Lucky's speech in *Waiting for Godot* with the fusing of two languages (English and Chinese). With our research we would like to reflect on the label "Beckett", as it has become fetishized through the circulation of "world literature", or the circulation of cultural capital, in the age of globalisation. We acknowledge and examine how the text of *Waiting for Godot* has been (mis)interpreted in the Chinese and Irish context due to local political and aesthetic reasons, and attempt to offer a possible way of performing Beckett's masterpiece, which refuses to be dominated, generalised, or monopolised by a singular hegemonic voice.

In the reading we pay our attention to the intonation, rhythm and tone of Lucky's speech in its English and Chinese text, and explore if there is a universal philosophy embedded in the two languages, which will address the nature of language, reflected by the possibility within the impossibility of "translating" Beckett into a bilingually-fusing text. We look at our process of translating and embodying the text through Derrida's idea of "naming", and we focus on the tension between language being domesticated and it resisting the domestication. The practice-based research will offer a critique on the violence of the production of "global culture", and shed new light upon understanding Beckett in the context of interculturalism.

Short bio:

Mary O'Byrne is a third year PhD student in the School of English in Trinity College Dublin. The working title of her research is: The phenomenology of death and human consciousness and the inner workings of time in the stage plays of Samuel Beckett. She is researching under the supervision of Professor Chris Morash, Seamus Heaney Professor of Irish Writing, Head of School of English in TCD.

A graduate of University College Dublin with a B.A in Social Science in 1982, Mary worked in the public service for over twenty years, obtaining a Masters of Public Administration in UCD in 1989. She completed a Masters of Drama and Performance in UCD in 2010 and began her PhD as a John and Pat Hume Scholar in National University of Ireland, Maynooth in 2011, transferring to TCD in 2012. Mary works as a Teaching Assistant, in the School of English and she is the Convenor of Beckett Reading Group established in 2014 to the present.

Wei Zheyu received his B. A. in Sun Yat-sen University (2010) and his M. A. in Nanjing University (2013), both in English Language and Literature. Co-funded by Trinity College Dublin and Chinese Scholarship Council, he is currently a PhD student in Department of Drama in TCD. His doctoral research, "Post Cold-War Chinese Experimental Theatre: Staging Globalisation and Its Resistance", offers a study of contemporary Chinese *spoken drama*, especially experimental theatre, within the context of globalisation and interculturalism, and critique of globalisation.

Beckett and Post-War Experimental Fiction in Poland

Bartosz Lutostański

In my essay I would like to discuss the problematic issue of experimental fiction in general and Samuel Beckett as an experimental writer from the perspective of post-war experimental fiction in Poland in particular.

In the first section I will briefly analyse some definitions of experimental art in the context of tradition and normativity in literature (diachronic axis) as well as relativity and individuality (synchronic axis). Subsequently, I will propose a typology of experimental fiction grounded in the categories of small and large semantic units (J. Sławiński, 1967). The artistic activities within the order of the large semantic units will be further subdivided into the following types: formal (i.e. a group of dominating phenomena that have to do with narrative form), thematic (i.e. a group of dominating that refer to contents), and generic (i.e. a group of dominating phenomena that regard genre and text type). Each type of experimental work will be illustrated with an example from Beckett's fictional oeuvre.

In the second part of my paper, I will contextualize my findings by providing a far from exhaustive list of novels by Polish experimental writers after World War Two (Andrzejewski, Białoszewski, Buczkowski, Gombrowicz, Mach) with analogous phenomena to Beckett's novels. The purpose of this will be to demonstrate a number of text features common for the Irish and Polish artists. Ultimately, I will not explore Beckett's influence on Polish writers, as it is virtually improvable, but rather parallel approaches to novel and language, yearnings to "make things new" or attempts at expressing the post-war reality at both sides of the Iron Curtain.

Short Bio :

Bartosz Lutostański is an independent scholar currently based in Warsaw, Poland. He actively participated in organising four literary conferences. He taught narrative theory, literary theory and British literature. The list of his publications includes studies of contemporary literature (S. Beckett, W. Gombrowicz, J. Berger) and narratology. He is also a translator of numerous articles by, amongst others, H. Porter Abbott, S.E. Gontarski and Wład Godzich into Polish. After successfully doing the PhD (January 2016 at the University of Gdańsk, Poland) he has dedicated himself to his three passions: teaching English, writing, and playing the bass guitar.

What Goes Around Comes Around: *Godot's* Circularity and World Literature

Juan Luis Toribio Vazquez

Waiting for Godot is generally acknowledged to be one of the major works of world literature. The reasons for this include the universality of its setting, its characters, imagery and themes. However, the play's circular narrative structure is also a crucial factor, echoing, as it does, ideas of circularity in various cultures across the world.

This paper will analyse *Godot's* circularity with the purpose of assessing the effects and implications of this narrative form, and illustrating the parallelisms between the circular structures found in this play and those to be found in other plays by Beckett. It will then consider adoptions of this device by a number of later playwrights, and show that one of the parameters used by Esslin in order to categorise Beckett and his successors under the simplifying label of 'absurdism' was their reliance on the device of circularity. Although deployed by preceding dramatists, Beckett endowed his circularity with a heightened significance as well as with a distinctive *twist*: that of engendering a degenerative cyclicality. Moreover, his use of circularity bestowed the text with a universal message, allowing it to circulate beyond the frontiers of the European continent.

Short Bio:

Juan Luis Toribio Vazquez is a PhD candidate in Comparative Literature in the School of European Culture and Languages at the University of Kent. His research project has the working title 'Nihilism and Narrative Form' and examines the influence of the philosophical concept of nihilism on the narrative structure of twentieth century European and Latin-American literature. The specific aims of the project are to highlight the existence of a cyclical literary trend, emerging in Europe towards the end of the nineteenth century, developing and reaching Latin-America throughout the twentieth; to subcategorize a number of different instances of narrative circularity; and to assess the aesthetic and philosophical implications of this type of structural experimentation. Moreover, the thesis aims to present an innovative framework with which to classify and interpret unnatural narratives.

How Beckett Became a French Avant-Garde Playwright: *Godot's* French Premiere and its Influence on the Reception of the Play in England and Germany

Matthieu Protin

En attendant Godot was a huge success. This is a well-known fact. However, the complexity of the process which led to this event, and especially the importance of the Irishness of the play, has been less studied. I would like to show how *Godot's* premiere not only represents an important shift in Beckett's work from a generic viewpoint, from poetry and novel to drama, but also in terms of reception.

If Blin chose *Godot*, it was mainly due to his knowledge of Irish literature. Well acquainted with Irish plays, Blin could see the parallel existing between *Godot* and *The Well of Saints*, and he had staged *The Moon in the Yellow River* by Johnston in 1949. Staging *Godot* was, in this perspective, quite logical.

If *Godot* was staged by Blin because of its Irishness, the reception of the play by a French audience would insist on its novelty. Unable to establish connections with the Irish theatre – about which they knew almost nothing – the French audience pointed out the avant-garde features, rather than the influence of Irish plays such as *The Well of Saints* or *Purgatory*. Being classified as a French avant-garde playwright had a huge influence on Beckett's career. Both the German and English Theatre showed a great interest for the French Theatre in the 1950s – for different reasons. Therefore, while Blin established continuity from Yeats to Synge to Beckett, Hall and Stroux went from Ionesco, Genet, and Sartre to Beckett.

Therefore, what took place in the Babylone Theatre in 1953 was not only a triumph, but a metamorphosis: Beckett was no longer an Irish writer. He had become a French avant-garde playwright.

Short Bio:

Alumnus of the Ecole Normale Supérieure of Paris, *agrégé* of Modern Literature, Matthieu Protin is teaching drama at Sciences-Po Paris. He also taught at the Sorbonne Nouvelle University of Paris, and at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure des Arts et Techniques du Théâtre. He is a member of the research group on the Poetics of Modern and Contemporary Drama at the Institute for Research in Theatre studies. Besides his academic activities, he is also working as a professional actor.

His PhD, *Pratique et poétique du drame. Beckett auteur-metteur en scène de son premier théâtre* was awarded the “Prix des Presses de la Sorbonne Nouvelle” and the “Prix Louis Forest de la Chancellerie des Universités de Paris” in 2015.

He recently published his first book *De la page au plateau: Beckett auteur et metteur en scène de son premier théâtre*, and wrote many academic papers in English and French, amongst which are: “Elective affinities? Beckett's theatre, between denial and philosophy in action”¹ and “Beckett tel qu'en lui-même Cambridge nous le révèle”.²

¹ *Samuel Beckett and the Encounter of Philosophy and Literature*, Arka Chattopadhyay (dir.), London, Roman Books, 2013, p. 100-117

² *Filiations & Connecting Lines, Samuel Beckett Today*, n°23, Sfej Houppermans and alii (ed.), Amsterdam-New York, Rodopi, 2012, p. 277-293.

Godot's Arrivals in Serbian Drama: Beckettian and Anti-Beckettian Discourses in Bulatović's *Godot has Arrived* and Komanin's *Godot has Arrived to Collect his Dues*
Snežana Kalinić

Beckett's *Godot* has had a considerable influence on Serbian theatre since its Belgrade premiere in 1954. In addition to being restaged several times, it has also inspired two Serbian playwrights of Montenegrin descent to write its 'sequels'. Miodrag Bulatović wrote *Godot has Arrived* in 1965, and Žarko Komanin published *Godot has Arrived to Collect his Dues* in 2002. This study is focused on the interplay of Beckettian and anti-Beckettian discourses in those two very different postmodernist rewrites of *Waiting for Godot*. Both rewrites present the arrival of the long-awaited Godot and subsequent creation of dystopian society. Yet, Bulatović's rewrite presents the arrival of a Christ-like Godot, embodied in the figure of a plain baker who is being derided for attempting to act as the creator of bread and the liberator of the oppressed, while Komanin's rewrite presents the arrival of an Antichrist-like Godot – a weapons merchant who profits from the misfortunes of those who are indebted to him, and abducts the bride of Vladimir's son. This study analyses not only the obvious anti-Beckettian discourses in Serbian plays but also the less apparent similarities between Beckett's tragicomedy and its rewrites. Both Serbian rewrites, in spite of being focused on Godot's arrivals, resemble Beckett's original inasmuch as they are also dealing with certain delays – delays of awaited content or of inevitable torment. Theoretical framework for this study is provided by Lubomír Doležel's typology of postmodern rewrites, as well as by various explorations of dystopian literature.

Short bio:

Snežana Kalinić works as an assistant professor at the Faculty of Philology (University of Belgrade, Department of Comparative Literature and Literary Theory). She graduated from the same Faculty in 2007. In 2009 she attended summer school for doctoral students at Ludwig-Maximilians University in Munich (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München). In 2015 she defended doctoral thesis entitled *Representations of Voluntary and Involuntary Memory and Forgetting in Samuel Beckett's plays (Predstavlanje voljnog i nevoljnog sećanja i zaboravljanja u dramskom opusu Samjuela Beketa)* at the University of Belgrade. Her fields of interest are: 19th and 20th century literature, modern drama theory, modern literary theory, performance studies, and cultural studies. Since 2011 she has participated in the scientific project *Knjiženstvo – theory and history of women's writing in Serbian until 1915*. Between 2002 and 2008 she was a member of the editorial board of Journal *txt*. Together with the other co-editors of *txt*, she won Belgrade City Award in 2004.

Waiting for Godot Without Simpatía:
A View of Samuel Beckett through the Cultural Script of Hispanics.
Robert Patrick Murtagh

The aim of this paper is to explore why Samuel Beckett does not appear to have integrated into Contemporary Spanish Culture. While it is true his novels have been translated, his works performed in Spanish theatres across the country, there still remains little or no real interaction with his worldview. The author is hardly ever mentioned in intellectual discourse, apart from relatively few writers acquainted with his work, and once he is established as a ‘classic’ author, he is very much forgotten and left aside by scholars and academics.

In coming to understand the reception of Beckett in Spain especially *Waiting for Godot*, as an emblem of his philosophical and artistic aesthetic, I propose to use the pragmatic concept of a *cultural script*, which recognises the varying linguistic conventions of different communities and appreciates the subtle intercultural nuances by detecting accepted patterns of social interaction for a particular group.

I will draw on one of the most influential empirical studies of Hispanic culture (“*Simpatía as a Cultural Script of Hispanics*”), which confirms a preference for and expectation of certain interpersonal relations known as ‘*simpatía*’. These discernible characteristics include the deemphasis of negative behaviour in negative situations, the emphasis on harmony and the externalisation of positive feelings. Furthermore, the research posits that deviation from this script or ignorance of these tenets incurs anything from stress and discomfort to complete rejection by Hispanics. Reading *Waiting for Godot*, through the perspective of *simpatía* as a cultural script for Hispanics, it is evident that Beckett’s characters fail to meet expected norms of behaviour that allow for acceptance and ultimately integration on a cultural level. Therefore, this paper sheds new light on understanding the reception of Beckett in Spain.

Short Bio:

Robert Patrick Murtagh is an independent researcher. He graduated with a First Class Honours Bachelor of Arts International degree from University College Dublin, majoring in Spanish with a minor in English. He was awarded the Bachelor of Arts Stage 2 Scholarship for the 2011/12 Academic session. His research interests are located in the field of Modern Literature with an emphasis on the work of Samuel Beckett, his reception in Spain and Translation Studies.

Karmayoga and Kalchakra in Beckett's Waiting for Godot: Explorations in Hindu Mythology

Priyanka Vaidya

This paper talks about the symbolic significance of Godot and the different stages of the lives of Vladimir and Estragon. It explores the various aspects of time and the circle of *karma* in the context of the Hindu concept of *Karmayoga*, *Sankhya* philosophy and *Kalchakra*. According to *Sankhya* philosophy, nature is composed of three forces called, in Sanskrit, *Sattva*, *Rajas*, and *Tamas*. These as manifested in the physical world are what we may call equilibrium, activity, and inertness. *Tamas* is typified as darkness or inactivity; *Rajas* is activity, expressed as attraction or repulsion; and *Sattva* is the equilibrium of the two. Initially the play reflects the *tamsic* state, which is the result of ignorance. Next, Vladimir and Estragon become active after getting the message about the arrival of God, which reflects the *rajsic* state. The realization of the motive of their ultimate existence reflects *Satwa*. The fundamental existential base of Vladimir and Estragon is *Kaal* and *Karma*. Vladimir and Estragon know that waiting is a temporary engagement but somehow their waiting continues without culmination. Time is passing, the wheel of time never takes anything with itself, and it never gives place to anyone in its journey. The wheel turns from one place to another, turns from one road to another and lives the life of continuity. As the time passes, the wheel becomes weak by numberless burdens of time's tyrannies. The journey never ends, incidents never stop, one wheel goes, and another wheel comes upon the road of life. Man feels entrapped in the world of activity. The very important theme of *Karma Yoga* is not focused on renouncing the work, but again and again Krishna focuses on what should be the purpose of activity. Krishna mentions in the following verses that actions must be performed to please the Supreme, otherwise these actions become the cause of material bondage and cause repetition of birth and death in this material world:

"To action alone hast thou a right and never at all to its fruits; let not the fruits of action be thy motive; neither let there be in thee any attachment to inaction." (Radhakrishnan *The Bhagavadgītā* 119)

Short Bio:

I work as Assistant Professor of English in Govt. Degree College, Dharampur, Distt.-Solan, Himachal Pradesh (India) . I have done my PhD in English Literature from Himachal Pradesh University, Shimla. I have also done a Masters in Journalism and Mass Communication. I have published three poetry books, entitled: *Little Life, Long Journeys; Some Drops from Dalit Desert* and *Dalit Ashru*. I have also published three research books, entitled: *Caste and Gender Hierarchies* and *Feminist Explorations* and *Exploring Caste*. I recently published a seventh book: *Lotus Rises in Mud*. I have been actively involved in the field of research through participation in national and international conferences and I have contributed more than sixty papers of national and international acclaim. I am currently working in the field of literature, in analysing caste, class, gender and various issues related to marginalised sections of society. I have been given State Level Award by Akhil Bharatiya Harijan League for contribution in the field of Dalit literature. I am associated with many literary groups and I am actively involved in poetry festivals.

Samuel Beckett and Atom Egoyan's *Eh Joe*: a televisual and theatrical vision

Julie Bénard

Eh Joe is Samuel Beckett's first TV play, subsequent to his one and only work for the cinema, *Film*. *Eh Joe*, along with *Film*, were written and broadcast during the mid 60's, when media studies started to grow. In fact, a mere chronological overview of Beckett's "jumping genres", from theatre to radio, cinema and television, shows us how it runs parallel to the history of the evolution of the media.

Though it seems to exemplify a "natural" progression in technological development, a non-linear line of evolutionary progress is observed. In other words, instead of leading to the superseding of one media over an out-dated one, it leads to one medium being inherently linked and pregnant with another one. Peter M Bøenish says that a medium is a "remediation" of another medium. Nonetheless, theatre appears to expose the underside of such a remediation, insofar as it is a "hypermedium". Causing no change in how the primary media theatre relies or behaves, an in-betweenness ensues forcing the audience to negotiate a perceptive gap, or undergo what is known as an "intermedial effect".

As such, what has been described as a "doubling of media" among the beckettian critics, corresponds in *Eh Joe* to the contrapuntal relationship between the voice and the camera that never act together. In Atom Egoyan's *Eh Joe* scenic transposition, it leads to the superimposition of Joe's live presence and screened image. The optical opposition it is meant to create emphasizes the spectator's position of the one seeing as subject and the subject seen. Moreover, the scrim running along the proscenium and on which Joe's face is projected, enacts a fundamental convention of the realist theatre: the invisible fourth wall. Whether on TV or on stage, *Eh Joe* mobilizes a vision that is at the same time theatrical and televisual.

Short bio :

Julie Bénard is a third year PhD student in English literature from the university of Paul Valéry, Montpellier III, France. She studies Samuel Beckett's practice of literary genres and use of the scenic, filmic and radiophonic devices. Her article, « Silence et dimension cognitive : la pensée dialogique dans la pièce radiophonique *Embers* de Samuel Beckett » ("Silence and cognitive perspective: dialogical thinking in the radiophonic piece *Embers* by Samuel Beckett"), is about to be published in the journal "Sphères" of the university of Avignon.

**Beckett's "The Lost Ones":
The Middle Passage between Late Modernism and Science Fiction**

Paul March-Russell

Postmodern critics such as Scott Bukatman, Brian McHale and David Porush, for whom science fiction (in McHale's words) is "the ontological genre par excellence", readily take Samuel Beckett's short fiction, "The Lost Ones" (1970), as an instance of a late modernist/early postmodern writer adopting sf tropes in what McHale has also described as the "feedback loop" between sf and postmodernism. This alleged adoption of generic tropes, however, is somewhat glibly described, focusing upon a superficial description of Beckett's evocation of a cylindrical device, into which are crammed "the lost ones" of the title, governed by a machine-like intelligence, and may instead be seen as a further instance of postmodern criticism's appropriation of sf so as to justify its own critical paradigms. Instead, this paper will examine more closely Beckett's possible use of an sf trope – the generation ship – so as to locate his story within a dialogue between sf and modernism that stretches back into the late 19th century. The paper will not argue for sf's direct influence on Beckett's work but will instead argue for the pervasiveness of sf tropes within modernist discourse, and offer a comparison between Beckett's story and one of the most notable generation ship stories, the novel "Non-Stop" (1958) by Brian Aldiss, a writer known for his mimicry of Beckett's style and for his own peculiar relationship between modernism and sf, as a writer of sf and fantasy published in the 1950s and '60s by Faber (whilst T.S. Eliot was still on the editorial board). I will argue that Beckett's story represents a "middle passage" (I use the term advisedly with connotations of the 18th and 19th century slave ships) between Theodor Adorno's "torn halves" of minority and mass culture. The non-generative ship of Beckett's story, as embodied by both the characters' inability to procreate and the over-determined theme of entropy, expresses the frustrated desires rather than the "jouissance" of McHale's alleged feedback loop, frustrations that find articulation in the New Wave sf of the same period, for example, Aldiss' "Report on Probability A" (1968) and "Barefoot in the Head" (1969).

Short Bio:

Dr Paul March-Russell teaches Comparative Literature and Liberal Arts at the University of Kent. He is the editor of "Foundation: The International Review of Science Fiction" and his most recent, full-length publication is "Modernism and Science Fiction" (Palgrave Macmillan, 2015).

“Opening onto the World”

Jean Antoine-Dunne

This paper is interested in drawing parallels between the work of Samuel Beckett and the poetry of Caribbean writer, Kamau Brathwaite and will concentrate on their absorption of ideas of montage and the lessons learnt from montage.

The paper will focus initially and briefly on Gilles Deleuze’s reading of Sergei Eisenstein as an entry into ideas of shock and the passage to new thought. It will look specifically at Deleuze’s *nooshock* and his theorising of the interval.

The paper will point to the similarities between Deleuze’s theories and that of Eisenstein, in particular the theory of the attraction and the overtone. It will then look specifically at Beckett’s novel *Watt* and his television play *Quad* and at Brathwaite’s creation of what he calls Sycorax video text format, in particular in a work such as *Born to Slow Horses*.

The analysis and discussion will draw parallels between these two writers, and their works and offer a theory of difference leading to new ethical relations that also draws on the writings of Édouard Glissant.

Short Bio:

Jean Antoine-Dunne is a Senior Lecturer at the University of the West Indies, St Augustine. She is the editor of *Visions and Revisions. Film/in(g) the Caribbean. Caribbean Quarterly* (2015), *Interlocking Basins of a Globe. Essays on Derek Walcott* (2013), *Where is Here? Remapping the Caribbean. Special Edition of the Journal of West Indian Literature* (2010), and *The Montage Principle: Eisenstein in New Cultural and Critical Contexts* (2004).

Amongst her recent book and journal chapters are: “Mutual Obsessions. Beckett, Walcott and Brathwaite” (2015), “Introduction. Back and Beyond. The Context” (2015), “Sex, Spirit and the Artist in the Films of Felix de Rooy” (2015), “Overtones of the Visual Imagination. Or, Just like the Movies” (2013), “Playing with Sound and Visual: Literature and Film in the Anglophone Caribbean” (2013), “‘Look we Movin Now’: The Interface between Film and Literature” (2011), and recent documentary films: *Walcott as Poet and Seer* (2014), *Disabled/ Mislabeled* (2015).

**What Do We Have Left?
Possibilities and Prospects of Applying Theory in the Analysis of
Samuel Beckett's *Play* – A Cognitive Approach
Dorottya Jászay**

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.

Beckett's Queer Hermeneutics

Eleanor Green

Beckett's oeuvre is driven by a fascination with sexuality; however, it is rarely read in these terms. From sadistic carvings of 'YOUR LIFE CUNT ABOVE CUNT HERE CUNT' (*How It Is*) to acts of 'licking, sucking, fucking and bugging' (*All Strange Away*), sex cannot be avoided. This paper focuses on the significance of intercourse in Beckett and maps its intrinsic absences and formal failures, which constitute a queer utopian drive and force alternative hermeneutic manoeuvres.

Deleuzian disjunctive synthesis offers a suitable perspective from which we can begin to read what might at first seem to be dysfunctional or incomplete acts of intercourse. Forcing a negative method of definition, Beckett's erotic blunders exhibit generative properties as a result of the transitory, volatile space created by their incommensurable bodies. They evoke José Muñoz's queer becomings, which, as opposed to positing a definite queer subject, might see in missing or inchoate parts a certain affirmation or force that does not negate – indeed it creates indefinitely.

I will explain these generative properties through Beckett's use of language as code, employing Yuri Lotman's analysis of codes as generative sequences instead of closed feedback loops. Relating this discursive propulsion to Muñozian optimism, I would read failure as force: 'somehow on' (*Worstward Ho*). Since meaning must be located in this transit, Beckett's texts evade the possibility of an essentialist interpretation, such that we might only approach hermeneutics tangentially, an action closer to translation than exegesis, whereby one seeks 'not to find the 'structure' (...) but consider the disruption of presumptive global place and time that can take effect.' (Emily Apter, 2013) Hence by finding the reading intercourse in Beckett one might answer the question of how to align identity and failure, or an inability to communicate with successful translation.

Short bio :

Eleanor has recently been offered a place at the University of Sussex to undertake a PhD in the School of English on Queering Intercourse in Beckett and Contemporary Theory and Literature. She has organized a series of seminars and screenings in London looking at popular reception of queer pornography following a research trip to San Francisco. Most recently she completed an MA in Comparative Literature at Queen Mary's, University of London, with a focus on Beckett in translation.

Worstward Ho: Beckett's Case for Pure Language

Arthur Broomfield

Beckett's status as a world figure in literature is built on his ground-breaking insistence, stressed through his later works, that "words are all" i.e. that empty language is the real and as such, is privileged over presuppositions of the perceived world. Both philosopher and artist his works transcend the assumed barrier that divides the two and rises to a level from where his unique vision of reality creates an art form that is, according to Stanley Cavell, getting on with the game of un-doing, which may be the essence of Beckett's vision, to undo the connection between language and perceptions.

To understand Beckett's works is to go beyond fashionable literary theory and to build on the thinking of the great philosophers, for Beckett exceeds all philosophers. It is to recognize that, far from being an absurdist or existentialist, he is a believer, not in God "the bastard" but in a reality towards which his works incessantly aspire to go on. To fulfil this aspiration, the real, pure language, divorced from the senses, must free itself from the body and progress to a dimension that is unattainable for the body.

Beckett's vision imagines a dimension freed of all trappings of the corporeal, possibly best enunciated in *Worstward Ho*, the book of on, which brings the reader on a journey from "On, say on" through the systematic dismissal of the world, the body and the void to "Nohow on". We are left with language that is as pure as is possible in a dimension where language is dependent on the aid of the senses. Yet, through the cross fertilisation of language and philosophy Beckett leaves us with little option but to go on to explore the possibility of the dimension that is pure language.

Short bio:

Dr Arthur Broomfield has published a major study on the works of Samuel Beckett: *The Empty Too; language and philosophy in the works of Samuel Beckett* (Cambridge Scholars' Publishing 2014). He is attached to Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick. Dr Broomfield has written essays, delivered conference papers, and lectured on the works of Beckett.

Echos, rags and bones - a few Brazilian Becketts on the way
Fábio de Souza Andrade

Contemporary Brazilian productions of Beckett's plays are multiplying fast, always developing in an experimental drive, very much in tune with the dominant spirit of his work, rigorously faithful to its roots, yet never surrendering to a predictable system.

Protean in their variety of expressions, three recent and almost coincident in time Brazilian stagings provide an invaluable occasion to examine the current perspectives of Beckett's global reception: Isabel Teixeira's "Fim de jogo" ("Endgame", 2016), staged for a small audience, in the leading actor's own apartment; Isabel Cavalcanti's "Moi lui" and "Primeiro amor" (both based on Beckett's prose, "Molloy" and "First love", 2015); and, last, but not least, Adriano and Fernando Guimarães' "sozinhos juntos", intensive agenda combining dance, performances, a series of lectures and extremely provocative plays *d'après* Beckett - "quadrado" (inspired on "Quad"), "sopro" e "fôlego" (alternate double bills of "Act without words II" and "Footfalls" or "Ohio impromptu").

Short bio:

Professor Fábio Rigatto de Souza Andrade is a leading scholar on Beckett in Brazil. Among his recent essays that offer a global outlook of Beckett's works is "Facing Other Windows: Beckett in Brazil", published in *The Edinburgh Companion to Samuel Beckett and the Arts*, edited by Stanley Gontarski.

He also published *Samuel Beckett: o silêncio possível*, where he analyses *Molloy*, *Malone Dies*, *The Unnamable*, and he translated some of Beckett's works into Portuguese: *Fim de partida* or *Endgame* (2002), *Esperando Godot* or *Waiting for Godot* (2005), *Dias felizes* or *Happy Days* (2010) and *Murphy* (2013). As a renowned literary critic, Fábio de Souza publishes regularly in the Brazilian press ("O Estado de São Paulo", "Folha de São Paulo", "Jornal da Tarde", "Entrelivros", "Cult"). Since 2001, he has been lecturing at the Comparative Literature and Literary Theory Departments of the University of São Paulo (USP). He also supervises research projects related to Brazilian and European modernism and works as a Visiting Professor at the universities of Paris 8 and Freie Universität Berlin. In 2011, Fábio de Souza inaugurated "Grupo de Pesquisa Estudos sobre Samuel Beckett", which hosts regular meetings at USP, engaging Beckettian researchers from around Brazil. In Aug. 2014, Gontarski visited the group and discussed the contemporary state of Beckettian studies from a global and interdisciplinary perspective.

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.

“Anti-human and Reactionary”: Reading Beckett with Orwell

Richard Pettifer and Andrew Fuhrmann

For all that his work deals in situations of mud-spattered consternation and mouldering scatological humour, Beckett seems to have left behind what George Orwell once called a very clean smell. It is the problem of saintliness: what has Beckett, with all his stuttering deferral and disengagement, to do with the world of action? In this paper, using the optic of Orwell's committed humanism, we interrogate Beckett's contemplative art of withdrawal and non-attachment and consider recent attempts to recruit Beckett to the global anti-capitalist cause. Crucial to this investigation is the essential ambiguity of Beckett's art, the possibility that he might be integrated into almost any political system without seriously undermining the organisation of state power. Indeed, the only real political effect of Beckett's art might be to subvert the necessary relationship of the arts and social activism. By depicting the retreat into contemplation as a necessary survival strategy, Beckett's writing tends to promote continuity and encourage docile acceptance: the I-can't-go-on-I'll-go-on of the oppressed, the theocrat's injunction to fail better, the revolution put off until tomorrow, surely tomorrow. What is the contemporary ethical situation for a writer whose work not only traces the dark fissures of a fragmented world but also declares at every turn that the work of reconciliation is futile? And what hope is there in a vision of bankrupt subjectivities withdrawing en masse from history in the face of ecological crisis?

Short Bio:

This paper is co-authored by Richard Pettifer, an Australian theatre director and artist based in Berlin, and Andrew Fuhrmann, Master of Arts by research at the School of Culture and Communications, University of Melbourne, and Melbourne theatre critic.

“This craze for explicitation...”

Mischa Twitchin

It is a paradox of standard directorial approaches to Beckett’s plays, adapting and translating what he has written for performance, that they understand “fidelity” to the text to entail some form of “explicitation”. This presumes that an audience – whether in a theatre or watching on screen – requires a reading that reduces what might be strange in the play to what is already familiar in the medium of its performance: whether in terms of what is presupposed of an actor’s work, of the spatial setting of that work, or of the editing that layers its own narrative into the dialogue (all of which is explicitly the case in the widely seen Dublin film versions). Such “standards” of production recur regardless of Beckett’s critical reflections on “straining to enlarge the statement of a compromise” in the *Three Dialogues*, “(Exit weeping)”; or, indeed, the satire of *Regietheater* in his own example of an interpretative *Catastrophe*. As he writes to Alan Schneider (23.7.82), concerning the play’s premiere at the Avignon Festival (fragments of which he saw on television): “Protagonist all trussed up with screaming white bonds to facilitate comprehension.” In this presentation, drawing on Bredekamp’s “picture act” reading of Aristotle, I wish to argue that such compromised “comprehension” is essentially a banalisation of the wished-for *enargeia* of the stage image. Rather than simply describing work with the play, I will also show a performance-film that explores its adaptation in performance precisely by means of performance, staging the interplay between sound and image through time. Additionally, I will explore potential differences in the historical conditions for visualising *pathos* (or catastrophe) manifested in “disciplinary societies” and “societies of control”, where the model for the director of this *Ecce Homo* would no longer be a Party hack but a clone of Simon Cowell.

Short Bio:

Mischa Twitchin is a British Academy Post-doctoral Fellow at the Drama Dept., Queen Mary, University of London: <http://www.sed.qmul.ac.uk/staff/twitchinm.html>. Besides his academic work, he also makes performances, examples of which can be seen on Vimeo: <http://vimeo.com/user13124826/videos>.