Beckett and Ireland is the first volume of essays devoted exclusively to the topic of Beckett’s vexed relationship with his homeland. It provides compelling evidence of the continuing relevance of Ireland to Beckett’s writing long after he left for wartime France. Each essay is written by a leading Beckett scholar, and presents new insights into a wide range of approaches and topics. The volume offers a fresh perspective, providing a genuine step forward in the understanding and appreciation of these texts. It is essential reading for Beckettians, modernists, and those interested in Irish writing.

Seán Kennedy is Associate Professor of English at Saint Mary’s University, Halifax, Canada. He has previously published essays on Samuel Beckett in The Irish University Review and Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd’hui.
Contents

List of figures vii
Notes on contributors viii
Acknowledgments xi

Introduction: Ireland/Europe … Beckett/Beckett
Seán Kennedy 1

1 The ghost at the feast: Beckett and Irish studies
Rónán McDonald 16

2 Frames of referrance: Samuel Beckett as an Irish question
David Lloyd 31

3 The politics of aftermath: Beckett, modernism, and the Irish Free State
James McNaughton 56

4 Beckett at the GPO: Murphy, Ireland, and the “unhomely”
Patrick W. Bixby 78

5 “In the street I was lost”: cultural dislocation in Samuel Beckett’s ‘The End’
Seán Kennedy 96

6 Postcolonial parables: repositioning Waiting for Godot
Victor Merriman 114

7 Ghost writer: Beckett’s Irish Gothic
Sinéad Mooney 131
Contents

8 Back roads: Edgeworth, Yeats, Bowen, Beckett 150
   Peter Boxall

9 Vestiges of Ireland in Beckett’s late fiction 171
   Michael Wood

10 Afterword: “the skull the skull the skull the skull in Connemara” – Beckett, Ireland, and elsewhere 179
   Andrew Gibson

Bibliography 204

Index 218
Figures

1. Maurice McGonigal, *Famine (An Ghorta)* 49
4. Albrecht Dürer, *Melancholia I* 52
Notes on contributors

Seán Kennedy is Associate Professor of English at St Mary’s University, Halifax, Nova Scotia. He is editor, with Katherine Weiss, of Samuel Beckett: History, Memory, Archive (2009).

Ronán McDonald is Director of the Samuel Beckett International Foundation and a lecturer in the School of English at the University of Reading. His publications include Tragedy and Irish Literature: Synge, O’Casey, Beckett (2002) and the Cambridge Introduction to Samuel Beckett (2006) together with numerous articles and reviews on modern British and Irish literature and culture. He was editor of Bullán: An Irish Studies Journal from 1994 to 2002 and recently guest-edited a special issue of the Yearbook of English Studies on ‘Irish Writing since 1950’.

David Lloyd, Professor of English at the University of Southern California, works primarily on Irish culture and on postcolonial and cultural theory. He is the author of Nationalism and Minor Literature (1987); Anomalous States (1993); Ireland after History (1999); and Irish Times: Temporalities of Irish Modernity (2008). He is currently at work on two further books, A History of the Irish Orifice: The Irish Body and Modernity; and a study of Samuel Beckett’s visual aesthetics. He has co-published several other books: Culture and the State, co-authored with Paul Thomas (1997), The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital (1997), with Lisa Lowe, and The Nature and Context of Minority Discourse (1991), with Abdul JanMohamed.

James McNaughton is an Assistant Professor of English at the University of Alabama, where he teaches courses on Anglo-American modernism and twentieth-century Irish and British literature. He is currently writing a book on Samuel Beckett.
Notes on contributors

Patrick Bixby is Assistant Professor of British Literature at Arizona State University and author of *Samuel Beckett and the Postcolonial Novel* (2009). He has served as Assistant to the Editors of *The Letters of Samuel Beckett* (2009), and is currently writing a book on Nietzsche and Irish Modernism.

Sinéad Mooney is the author of *Samuel Beckett* (Northcote House Writers and their Work series, 2006) and the co-editor of *Edna O’Brien: New Critical Perspectives* (Carysfort Press, 2006). She has also published a number of essays on Beckett and Irish women’s writing. She is currently working on a study of Beckett’s translation and self-translation on a fellowship from the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences. Since 2002, she has been a lecturer in the Department of English at the National University of Ireland, Galway.

Victor Merriman is Associate Professor in Drama at Liverpool Hope University. He has contributed essays to *The Irish University Review*, *The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Irish Drama* (Shaun Richards (ed.)), *Third Text*, and *Modern Drama*. He is Guest Editor for a forthcoming special issue of the on-line journal *Kritika Kultura*, on radical theatre and Ireland, and has completed a monograph on Irish theatre in the 1990s, for Carysfort Press. He was a member of An Chomhairle Ealaion/The Arts Council (1993–1998), and chaired the council’s Review of Theatre in Ireland (1995–1996).

Peter Boxall is a senior lecturer in English Literature at the University of Sussex. He has published widely on twentieth-century fiction and drama. He regularly contributes essays and articles to journals, such as *Textual Practice* and *The Yearbook of English Studies*, and is currently co-editor of *The Year’s Work in Critical and Cultural Theory*. He has recently published a *Reader’s Guide* to Samuel Beckett’s drama (Palgrave Macmillan 2003), and his latest book is entitled *Don DeLillo: The Possibility of Fiction*. He has also completed a monograph on contemporary fiction, for Continuum Press, entitled *Since Beckett* (2009).

Michael Wood is Charles Barnwell Straut Professor and Professor of Comparative Literature at Princeton University. He has written books on Luis Buñuel, Franz Kafka, and Gabriel García Márquez, as well as *The Magician’s Doubts*, a study of Nabokov, and *The Road to Delphi*, a study of the ancient and continuing allure of oracles. Among his other books are *America in the Movies* and *Children of Silence*. A member of
the American Philosophical Society and of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, he is a regular contributor to the London Review of Books and the New York Review of Books.

Acknowledgments

This book is dedicated to the memory of Elizabeth Hayes.

The following thanks are due: all of those involved in the genesis and production of this book, in particular the contributors, for their patience and understanding; Ray Ryan for his quiet efficiency and generous encouragement of the project; Michael Rubenstein, who read portions of the manuscript and made many helpful suggestions; Mark Nixon and Rónán McDonald, of the Beckett International Foundation at Reading, who gave freely of their time and expertise. My personal interest in Beckett's relationship with Ireland was fostered during my time on the MA in Culture and Colonialism program at the National University of Ireland, Galway. I would like to thank Dr Lionel Pilkington and Dr Seán Ryder for all their help, then and since. I would also like to thank the trustees of the Beckett Estate, Faber and Faber, as well as Grove Press for their permission to quote from published and unpublished materials. The staff of Harry Ransom Research Center at the University of Texas, Austin, as well as the library staff at Trinity College, Dublin, were always extremely helpful, and I would also like to thank all at the British Museum and Irish National Museum for their permission to reproduce images from their collections.

Permission to quote from More Pricks than Kicks, Proust, Footfalls, Murphy, Company, Four Novellas, Waiting for Godot, Watt, Mercier and Camier, All That Fall, Ghost Trio, and Nohow On by Samuel Beckett in British Commonwealth by kind permission of Faber and Faber Ltd.

Excerpts from ‘Echo’s Bones’; and letters from Samuel Beckett to Thomas MacGreevy, Nancy Cunard, and Barbara Bray reproduced by kind permission of the Estate of Samuel Beckett c/o Rosica Colin Limited, London.

From Watt Copyright © 1953 by Samuel Beckett.

From Complete Short Prose by Samuel Beckett Copyright © 1995 by the Estate of Samuel Beckett.

xi
xii

Acknowledgments

From *Collected Shorter Plays* Copyright © 1984 by Samuel Beckett.
From *Poems, Short Fiction, Criticism* (vol. IV) by Samuel Beckett
  Copyright © 2006 by the Estate of Samuel Beckett.
From *More Pricks than Kicks* Copyright © 1934 by Samuel Beckett.
From *Mercier and Camier* Copyright © 1974 by Samuel Beckett.
From *Waiting for Godot* Copyright © 1954 by Samuel Beckett.
From *Disjecta* by Samuel Beckett Copyright © 1984 by Grove Press, Inc.
From *Nohow On* by Samuel Beckett Copyright © 1981 by Samuel
  Beckett.
From *How It Is* by Samuel Beckett Copyright © 1964 Grove Press, Inc.
From *Collected Poems in French and English* Copyright © 1977 by Samuel
  Beckett
used by permission of Grove/Atlantic, Inc.