

BECKETT'S POLITICAL IMAGINATION

Beckett's Political Imagination charts unexplored territory: it investigates how Beckett's bilingual texts reimagine political history, and documents the conflicts and controversies through which Beckett's political consciousness and affirmations were mediated. The book offers a startling account of Beckett's work, tracing the many political causes that framed his writing, commitments, collaborations and friendships, from the Scottsboro Boys to the Black Panthers, from Irish communism to Spanish republicanism to Algerian nationalism, and from campaigns against Irish and British censorship to anti-apartheid and international human rights movements. Emilie Morin reveals a very different writer, whose career and work were shaped by a unique exposure to international politics, an unconventional perspective on political action and secretive political engagements. The book will benefit students, researchers and readers who want to think about literary history in different ways and are interested in Beckett's enduring appeal and influence.

EMILIE MORIN is Senior Lecturer in the Department of English and Related Literature at the University of York. She works on modern literature, theatre history and forms of political writing. She has published widely on the work of Samuel Beckett, including a monograph entitled *Samuel Beckett and the Problem of Irishness* (2009), and has co-edited *Theatre and Ghosts: Materiality, Performance and Modernity* (2014) and *Theatre and Human Rights after 1945: Things Unspeakable* (2015).

BECKETT'S POLITICAL IMAGINATION

EMILIE MORIN

University of York



Cambridge University Press
 978-1-108-41799-0 — Beckett's Political Imagination
 Emilie Morin
 Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom
 One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA
 477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, VIC 3207, Australia
 4843/24, 2nd Floor, Ansari Road, Daryaganj, Delhi – 110002, India
 79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.
 It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of
 education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
 Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781108417990
 DOI: 10.1017/9781108284011

© Emilie Morin 2017

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception
 and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements,
 no reproduction of any part may take place without the written
 permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 2017

Printed in the United States of America by Sheridan Books, Inc.

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data

Names: Morin, Emilie, 1978– author.

Title: Beckett's political imagination / Emilie Morin.

Description: New York : Cambridge University Press, 2017. | Includes
 bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2017020175 | ISBN 9781108417990 (hardback)

Subjects: LCSH: Beckett, Samuel, 1906–1989 – Knowledge – Politics. | Beckett,
 Samuel, 1906–1989 – Criticism and interpretation. | BISAC: LITERARY

CRITICISM / European / English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh.

Classification: LCC PR6003.E282 Z78163 2017 | DDC 823/.912–dc23 LC record available at
<https://lcn.loc.gov/2017020175>

ISBN 978-1-108-41799-0 Hardback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy
 of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication
 and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain,
 accurate or appropriate.

Cambridge University Press
978-1-108-41799-0 — Beckett's Political Imagination
Emilie Morin
Frontmatter
[More Information](#)

For Nick

Contents

<i>Acknowledgements</i>	<i>page</i> viii
<i>Notes and Abbreviations</i>	xi
Introduction	i
1 False Starts: The ‘Material of Experience’ and the Writing of History	28
2 Another War Entirely: Internationalist Politics and the Labour of Translation	79
3 Aftermaths: The ‘Siege in the Room’ and the Politics of Testimony	130
4 Turning Points: Torture, Dissent and the Algerian War of Independence	184
Conclusion	238
<i>Select Bibliography</i>	253
<i>Index</i>	259

Acknowledgements

As I write these lines, a decade has elapsed since I began researching a book on Beckett and politics. The research support offered by the Department of English and Related Literature at the University of York enabled me to write the actual monograph, and the book-in-progress was nurtured by years of conversations with friends, students and colleagues. Thanks are due to Derek Attridge and Hugh Haughton, for their support and generosity; to Michelle Kelly, for her input and responses to chapter drafts; to Lauren Arrington, Aisling Carlin, Victoria Coulson, David Dwan, Jason Edwards, Mary Fairclough, Helen Fulton, Kevin Killeen, Catherine Laws, Mary Luckhurst, Emma Major, Michael McAteer, Jon Mee, Linne Mooney, Bryan Radley, Lawrence Rainey, Reena Sastri, Freya Sierhuis, Helen Smith, Elizabeth Tyler, Claire Westall and Michael White, for research conversations about major and minor book matters; to Borianna Alexandrova, for enriching discussions and for the index; and to Megan Girdwood, Timothy Lawrence, Julia Mason, Jay James May, Alexander Price and Nick Wolterman, for stimulating dialogues. My appreciative thanks to Marthe Gautier and Tommy Murtagh, for kindly agreeing to speak to me about Samuel and Suzanne Beckett; to David Barnett, Emmanuel Blanchard, Raphaëlle Branche, Salem Chaker, Monique Courty-Garnier, Marie Cosnay, Masin Ferkal, Jim House, Daniel Lee and Renata Morresi, for their readiness to reply to research queries and their generosity; to Mark Nixon, for judicious advice and archival expertise; to Deirdre Bair, Maurice Harmon, James Knowlson and John Pilling, for helpful responses to Beckett-related questions; to Jean-Michel Rabaté and Seán Kennedy, for their close reading of the manuscript as external peer-reviewers; and to Elizabeth Barry, Peter Boxall, Alan Warren Friedman, Julian Garforth, Jonathan Heron, Patrick Lonergan, Ulrika Maude, Rónán McDonald, James McNaughton and the late Rosemary Pountney, for thought-provoking discussions about Beckett. Many thanks also to Amélie and Olivier Cahn, Dominique and Bernadette

Acknowledgements

ix

Coco, Paul Cooney, Lisa Foran and Nilantha McPartland, Orlaith Fitzpatrick, Willow Coyle and Helen McClements, for their hospitality. It has been a pleasure to work with Ray Ryan at Cambridge University Press, and I thank him for his support and extraordinary dedication. I began assembling materials for this book after my doctorate at Queen's University Belfast; the research ethos of friends and mentors in the School of English at Queen's and at University College Dublin has remained a source of inspiration. Ultimately, none of this would have been possible without the support of my parents and siblings, Anne, Jean, Jean-Baptiste and Loïse, and the support of the Melia family. I also owe more than I can express to Nicholas Melia, for years of intellectual nourishment, responses to chapter drafts and so much more. This book is dedicated to him, with all my gratitude for making so much else possible.

The research for this book was conducted in many archives and research libraries including the BBC Written Archives, Caversham; the Beckett International Foundation, University of Reading; the British Library; the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, University of Texas at Austin; Oxford's Taylor Institution Library; Trinity College Dublin; the National Library of Ireland; the Bibliothèque Polonaise, Paris; the Bibliothèque Sainte-Geneviève, Paris; and the Institut Mémoires de l'Édition Contemporaine, Caen, where I was able to consult the Beckett collection by kind permission of Edward Beckett and Irène Lindon. Thanks are also due to the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, for the fellowship that enabled me to work on Ransom Center collections in 2012; to Elizabeth L. Garver at the Ransom Center, for supplying the cover image; to Lisa Eveson, Olivia Else, Margaret Dillon, Lisa Hopwood, Elaine Hickes and Keith Webster at the University of York library; Justine Sundaram at the Burns Library, Boston College; Jane Maxwell at Trinity College Dublin; Monica Thapar and Louise North at the BBC Written Archives; and York's F. R. Leavis Fund, for covering research and indexing costs.

An early version of the subsection entitled 'Inquests and Investigations' in Chapter 3 was published as 'Beckett's Inquests: *Malone Dies* and the Mysteries of the State', in *Revisiting Molloy, Malone meurt/Malone Dies and L'Innommable/The Unnamable*, ed. David Tucker, Mark Nixon and Dirk Van Hulle, spec. issue, *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui* 26 (2014): 137–50.

I thank the Dedalus Press, acting for the Devlin Estate, for kind permission to cite from Denis Devlin's unpublished correspondence, held at the Ransom Center; Indiana University Press, for allowing me to cite

Acknowledgements

from Octavio Paz's *Anthology of Mexican Poetry*, translated by Samuel Beckett (Indiana University Press, 1958); Fondo de Cultura Económica, for allowing me to cite from the poems of Alfonso Reyes; Association Guy Lévis Mano, for permission to cite from Guy Lévis Mano's translations in Octavio Paz's *Anthologie de la poésie mexicaine* (© Association GLM).

Notes and Abbreviations

Unless otherwise indicated in the footnotes, all translations from non-English sources are by the author.

Samuel Beckett is designated as SB in the footnotes.

- BR/RB:* *Beckett Remembering/Remembering Beckett*, ed. James and Elizabeth Knowlson (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2006)
- CDW:* Samuel Beckett, *The Complete Dramatic Works* [1986] (London: Faber, 2006)
- Chronology:* John Pilling, *A Samuel Beckett Chronology* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006)
- DF:* James Knowlson, *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett* (London: Bloomsbury, 1996)
- DFMW:* Samuel Beckett, *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, ed. Eoin O'Brien and Edith Fournier (London: Calder, 1992)
- D:* Samuel Beckett, *Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment*, ed. Ruby Cohn (London: Calder, 1983)
- IT:* *Irish Times*
- JoBS:* *Journal of Beckett Studies*
- JORF:* *Journal officiel de la République française*
- LM:* Anthony Cronin, *Samuel Beckett: The Last Modernist* [1996] (London: Flamingo, 1997)
- LSBr:* *The Letters of Samuel Beckett, vol. 1: 1929–1940*, ed. Martha Dow Fehsenfeld and Lois More Overbeck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009)
- LSB2:* *The Letters of Samuel Beckett, vol. 2: 1941–1956*, ed. George Craig, Martha Dow Fehsenfeld, Dan Gunn and Lois More Overbeck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011)

- LSB*₃: *The Letters of Samuel Beckett, vol. 3: 1957–1965*, ed. George Craig, Martha Dow Fehsenfeld, Dan Gunn and Lois More Overbeck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014)
- LSB*₄: *The Letters of Samuel Beckett, vol. 4: 1966–1989*, ed. George Craig, Martha Dow Fehsenfeld, Dan Gunn and Lois More Overbeck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016)
- MPTK*: Samuel Beckett, *More Pricks than Kicks* [1934] (London: Calder, 1993)
- NABS*: *No Author Better Served: The Correspondence of Samuel Beckett and Alan Schneider*, ed. Maurice Harmon (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998)
- NYT*: *New York Times*
- SB*: Deirdre Bair, *Samuel Beckett: A Biography* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1978)
- SBTA*: *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui*
- Trilogy*: Samuel Beckett, *Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable* [1959] (London: Calder, 1994)