

Introduction

The aim of this study is to present a new perspective on Beckett's fictional minds. Its theoretical backbone is the recently developed postcognitivist paradigm of extended cognition: the idea that the mind does not reside exclusively in the head, but rather extends into the world in a continuous and constitutive way. In foregrounding the hybridity of cognitive processes and states, postcognitivism rejects traditional brain-bound mind models, which in turn derive from the Cartesian principle of mind/world dualism. The Cartesian dualist doctrine, which has dominated philosophy of mind and cognitive science since the inception of both disciplines, treats the mind as an isolated, hermetically sealed, computer-like container that turns on mental representations and operates entirely independently from the lived, phenomenal world it inhabits.

Beckett's engagement with Cartesian philosophy has been widely acknowledged in Beckett studies. Many first-generation Beckett scholars had interpreted Beckett's oeuvre through the prism of Descartes' dualist doctrine, and their views became firmly entrenched in the decades that followed. More recently, however, the Cartesian Beckett hypothesis has been losing ground, due in no small measure to archival research which has revealed numerous other philosophical sources of influence, as well as Beckett's relatively limited knowledge of Descartes' work.

Without disputing the immense value of early Beckett scholarship, the present study provides a contribution to post-Cartesian Beckett studies by analysing Beckett's extended fictional minds in his prose. The principal argument defended here is that despite the Cartesian bias introduced by the first generation of Beckett scholars, Beckett's fictional minds are not isolated 'skullscapes'.¹ Instead, more often than not they are grounded in the interaction with their fictional storyworlds, however impoverished those may have become in the later part of his writing career. The postcognitivist reassessment of Beckett's work aims at fostering a new approach to the Beckettian mind, away from the canonical critical focus on introspection and towards a hybrid model of cognition.

The present study has the following structure: in the Introduction, postcognitivist theories of extended cognition will be briefly elucidated and contrasted with Cartesian dualism. Section 1 will then trace the emergence of the Cartesian bias in early Beckett studies and its evolution in recent decades. What this

¹ Linda Ben-Zvi derived her canonical term from an equally famous Beckettian image: '[w]hether light or dark, small or spacious, all these enclosures are variations of the same skullscape first explored by the Unnamable: "the inside of my distant skull where I once wandered, now am fixed"' (1986, 4).

survey demonstrates is that, in many cases, early Beckett scholars had good reasons for foregrounding Cartesian elements in Beckett's texts; however, other influences were often overlooked and alternative interpretations were lacking. Section 2 engages in a dialogue with this Cartesian perspective by discussing Beckett's prose works in order to flesh out his extended fictional minds. For reasons of scope, drama does not feature in Section 2 (and features only marginally in Section 1), although a postcognitivist reading certainly applies to Beckett's plays just as much as it does to Beckett's prose.²

The idea of a close interaction between the human brain and the environment it operates in goes back a long way and rose to unprecedented prominence during the early modernist period. William James, for example, treated consciousness as a function rather than an entity,³ and the emerging field of phenomenology placed the emphasis on subjective experience. However, the twentieth century also witnessed a paradigm shift *away* from the notion of experience, partially as a reaction to the proliferation of 'unscientific' psychologism and behaviourism. The birth of analytic philosophy at the turn of the century and its later transformation into cognitive science in the 1950s, with rudimentary yet rapidly developing computers, has led to a fixation on the representational and computational models for the human brain. Such models assume that sensorimotor and environmental factors merely *cause* cognitive processes to occur inside the brain; in no way do they participate in cognition properly so-called (Rowlands, 2010, 30). Fortunately, in recent decades it has become clear that the clinical abstraction that underlies brain-bound models of cognition does not bring us much closer to solving the mystery of the human mind. As a result, an alternative, postcognitivist paradigm has emerged both in philosophy and cognitive science – one that brings the environment and material objects back under the spotlight of scientific scrutiny.

Extended cognition – an umbrella term for postcognitivist models used interchangeably with active externalism, 4E cognition,⁴ and distributed cognition – insists on a dynamic and constitutive interaction between the biological brain, the

² To take just one example, the short play *Play* (1964) is grounded in the constitutive interaction between the characters and the light beam that prompts and cuts their speeches by jumping from one face to another, thus regulating their cognitive activity. For details on extended cognition in Beckett's drama, see Beloborodova 2018.

³ In his 1904 essay, provocatively titled 'Does Consciousness Exist?', James explains that he only denies the existence of consciousness as one of the poles in a dualist system: 'I mean only to deny that the word stands for an *entity*, but to insist most emphatically that it does stand for a *function*. There is, I mean, no aboriginal stuff or quality of being, contrasted with that of which material objects are made, out of which our thoughts are made; but there is a function in experience which thoughts perform, and for the performance of which this quality is being evoked' (1996, 1–2; emphasis added).

⁴ 4E cognition stands for embodied, embedded, enacted, and extended cognition (the four main strands in postcognitivism).

rest of the body, and the environment. Departing from a simple question – ‘Where does the mind stop and the rest of the world begin?’ (Clark and Chalmers, 2010, 27) – the proponents of extended cognition attempt to deal a significant blow to the hegemony of the Cartesian mind that has reigned supreme for centuries in the Western world, and thus dispense with the ubiquitous principle of mind/world dualism it entails.

For the present study, two theories of extended cognition will be of relevance, one more radically anti-Cartesian than the other. The less radical one is the *extended mind thesis*: according to its founding fathers, Andy Clark and David Chalmers, the extended mind thesis straddles the internal human brain and external objects (both material and immaterial) in a so-called hybrid or extended cognitive system. The idea is that both elements – neural and extracranial – are equally important: ‘[T]he human organism is linked with an external entity in a two-way interaction, creating a coupled system that can be seen as a cognitive system in its own right. . . . If we remove the external component the system’s behavioural competence will drop, just as it would if we removed part of its brain’ (Clark and Chalmers, 2010, 29). The extended mind thesis underwrites the traditional assumption that cognition is essentially information processing, and the only way to process information is to turn it into some form of representation. What it disputes, however, is the necessarily intracranial *location* of representations, claiming that they can also be external and functionally similar to their internal counterparts.

We use coupled cognitive systems all the time in our everyday lives. Consider the ways we rely on our content-bearing devices, such as smartphones and computers, to offload our long-term memory. However, the extended mind thesis goes beyond purely mnemonic functions, and a good example here is creative writing. As Richard Menary notes, ‘an act of writing is supported by neural enabling processes as well as manipulations of the bodily external environment. We create and manipulate words and sentences in conjunction with relevant bodily and neural functions’ (Menary, 2007, 622). Marco Bernini also refers to authors of fiction as ‘extended-mind workers’ (2014), foregrounding material agency as a constitutive part of a hybrid cognitive system.

Unlike the extended mind thesis, *enactivism*, the more radical member of the postcognitivist family, categorically rejects the representational account of cognition and claims that cognitive processes take place during the intelligent agent’s unmediated interaction with their surroundings. It draws on the theories of the French phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who emphasised the importance of the body for human cognition and saw ‘our bodies both as physical structures and as lived, experiential structures’ (Varela et al., 1991, xv). This is how Varela, Thompson, and Rosch formulate the challenge of their

enactivist theory: ‘In the enactive program, we explicitly call into question the assumption – prevalent throughout cognitive science – that cognition consists of the representation of a world that is independent of our cognitive and perceptual capacities by a cognitive system that exists independent of the world’ (page xx). More recently, Di Paolo, Rohde, and De Jaegher (2010) developed a set of five elements that constitute an enactive cognitive system: namely, autonomy or self-generation, sense-making, emergence, embodiment, and experience. The key feature of such a system is that it is not only *shaped* by the world it interacts with, but it also plays a constitutive role in *shaping* that world every time the interaction takes place. In other words, enactivism goes beyond rejecting the concept of mental representations as the motor of cognitive activity: it questions the very idea of a stable, pre-given world out there that only needs to be discovered by an otherwise passive organism. The idea is that the organism’s cognitive actions ‘modify the environment and/or the relation of the organism to its environment, and hence modify in return the sensory input’ (Stewart, 2010, 3).

Even this brief description of two major postcognitivist strands reveals important differences in the way they situate the cognising agent within its environment. While the extended mind thesis, with its foregrounding of external objects as parts of a hybrid cognitive system, still underwrites the representational mind model and implicitly acknowledges the existence of the internal/external divide, enactivism abandons both of these premises – in their eyes still Cartesian – and reconceptualises cognition as a perpetual feedback loop with no pre-given representational structures stored in the neural brain or elsewhere.

1 Survey of Beckett Criticism

This section seeks to explore the critical appraisal of Beckett’s engagement with philosophy. The first part investigates the Cartesian bias in early Beckett criticism and its gradual undoing in more recent scholarship, focusing on the rigid mind/world (or subject/object) dualism advocated by Descartes himself as well as his followers, such as Arnold Geulincx. The second part introduces a number of alternative philosophical schools (such as early Greek philosophy, phenomenology, and extended cognition) that have been gaining increasing prominence as Beckett studies matured.

Ironically, Beckett studies have been plagued by all manner of dualisms from the very start: French-speaking vs Anglophone, modernist vs postmodernist, humanist vs poststructuralist, and so on. In this connection, the Cartesian bias in early Anglophone Beckett studies has been seen as a counterweight to the

existentialist trend in Francophone Beckett scholarship (Morot-Sir, 1976, 29–30; Feldman and Madmami, 2015, 15). From the 1980s onwards, new fields of enquiry such as ‘Beckett and the archive’, ‘Beckett in context’, and ‘Embodied Beckett’ began to emerge, possibly as an alternative to the post-structuralist/postmodernist/psychoanalytical wave of criticism that had its heyday in the closing decades of the twentieth century (Pattie, 2000, 152–80). Without making any judgements as to the quality of earlier and more recent Beckett criticism, this section will investigate how Cartesianism in Beckett studies has fared since the discipline’s inception, and how it has been affected by the growing attention to the archive and new developments in (cognitive) philosophy.

Cartesianism in Early Anglophone Beckett Studies

The story begins with Ruby Cohn’s now legendary special issue of *Perspective* (1959). Devoted entirely to Beckett, it was the first comprehensive critical survey in Beckett studies, and as such immediately set the tone for years to come. Not only did the issue place Beckett’s oeuvre firmly within a philosophical framework, it also established a profound connection with Descartes’ dualist doctrine (Pattie, 2000, 105). A telltale sign is the fact that two of the five articles comprising the issue have the word ‘Cartesian’ already in their titles. Both articles – ‘The Cartesian Centaur’ by Hugh Kenner and ‘Beckett’s *Murphy*: A Cartesian Novel’ by Samuel Mintz – later became canonical in Beckett studies.

It was Hugh Kenner who introduced some of the most enduring Cartesian imagery to Beckett scholarship. In the first section of his highly influential *Samuel Beckett: A Critical Study*, aptly titled ‘The Man in the Room’, Kenner writes that ‘Malone in bed bears curious analogies with Descartes, whose speculations, notoriously detached from the immediate inspection of visible and audible things, were by preference pursued in the same place’ (1961, 17).⁵ Kenner also mentions Beckett’s own ‘siege in the room’, from 1945 to 1950, which famously delivered *Waiting for Godot* and the Trilogy, preceded by an ‘apprenticeship or Cartesian preparation’ that consisted of Beckett ‘[spending] most of his days in bed’ (21). This way, the connection between Malone, Beckett, and Descartes becomes almost biographical. The trope of the room, or any enclosed space, also receives a Cartesian explanation in Ruby Cohn’s

⁵ Morot-Sir draws a similar parallel (between Descartes and all Beckettian characters) in discussing the opposition between the road and the room, ‘an opposition that is permanent in Beckett’s work’ (1976, 64). He associates the room with Descartes, and the road with Belacqua, and believes that ‘Beckett’s vision of humanity is dominated by those two couples’, with the room being the ‘center of perspective’, the road ‘the bridge’, and ‘all Beckettian events [deriving] from them’ (65).

discussion of the four novellas: invoking the figure of Descartes as sketched in *Whoroscope*, she connects the loss of housing by the characters in ‘L’Expulsé’ and ‘La Fin’ to ‘the Cartesian mind-body cleavage evict[ing] man from the dwelling in which he was formerly housed’ (1962, 102). Besides, the protagonist of ‘Le Calmant’, just like Malone, ‘wonders whether his room *is* a head, though not necessarily his own’ (116–17).

Kenner detects Cartesian overtones in both Beckett’s early and later writing: ‘[The Belacqua stories] turn on a discrepancy between the mind’s operations and what the world presents’ (1961, 41), whereas the later works all but dispense with the world. In Molloy’s case, ‘the phenomena of the visible world simply do not interest him. He tired of them, he gives us to understand, long ago’ (60). As for the body, ‘the late novels turn their surfaces . . . from the light, which falls on bodies in repetitious, cyclic, violent motion. (This is all that an orthodox Cartesian is likely to make of bodily activities, and Beckett from the first has found some variety of Cartesianism much to his taste)’ (61). The physical is associated with the senseless, as is cruelty, and – once again – biographical facts are used as illustrations, as Kenner refers to Beckett’s stabbing in Paris and the occupation of France during World War II.

In arguably his most famous contribution to the Cartesian debate in early Beckett studies, Kenner coined the term ‘Cartesian Centaur’ and turned the bicycle, a frequently encountered object in Beckett’s novels, into a symbol of the mind–machine symbiosis. In the case of Molloy,

man and machine *mingle in conjoint* stasis, each indispensable to the other’s support. At rest, the bicycle *extends* and stabilizes Molloy’s endoskeleton. In motion, it *complements* and *amends* his structural deficiencies . . . This odd machine exactly *complements* Molloy. It even compensates for his inability to sit down . . . and it transfers to an ideal, Newtonian plane . . . those locomotive expedients improbably complex for the intact human being, and for the crippled Molloy impossible. (1961, 118; emphasis added)

It is striking how this image, if read from a postcognitivist point of view, serves as a powerful illustration of the smooth interaction between the human subject and the inanimate object. Yet, for Kenner, ‘[t]his [Cartesian Centaur] rises clear of the muddle in which Descartes leaves the mind-body relationship. The intelligence guides, the mobile wonder obeys, and there is no mysterious interpenetration of function’ (121). Kenner also quotes from ‘The Calmative’ to further illustrate his point: ‘Down a dead street . . . passes at an unassignable time a phantom cyclist, all the while reading a paper which with two hands he holds unfolded before his eyes. So body and mind go each one nobly about its business, without interference or interaction’ (121).

As is clear from the above examples, the main contradiction in Kenner's argument concerns the mind/body interaction. On the one hand, Kenner speaks of conjoining, extension, and complementation; he notes that the disintegration of Molloy, as well as of the Mercier–Camier tandem, begins with the demise of their bicycles (1961, 117, 128). On the other hand, he claims to see no communication between the two poles in the Cartesian dualist system, as the example of the phantom cyclist has shown.

Kenner's view on the Trilogy as a whole is equally Cartesian, as he sketches the following evolution of Descartes' doctrine across the three novels:

The Unnamable is the final phase of a trilogy which carries the Cartesian process backwards, beginning with a bodily *je suis* and ending with a bare *cogito*. This reduction begins with a journey (Molloy's) and a dismemberment of the Cartesian Centaur; its middle term (*Malone Dies*) is a stasis, dominated by the unallayable brain; and the third phase has neither the identity of rest nor that of motion, functions under the sign neither of matter nor of mind because it evades both, and concerns itself endlessly to no end with a baffling intimacy between discourse and non-existence. (1961, 128–9)

He also finds support for his argument in stylistic features that Descartes' writing seems to share with the Trilogy. In particular, he quotes the following passage from Descartes: 'But there is nothing which that nature teaches me more expressly than that I have a body which is ill affected when I feel pain, and stands in need of food and drink when I experience the sensations of hunger and thirst, etc. And therefore I ought not to doubt but that there is some truth in these informations' (from *Meditation VI*, qtd in Kenner, 1961, 119). For Kenner,

[the] last sentence, despite Descartes' proclaimed certainty, has Molloy's tone, and the whole passage . . . prompts comparison with certain speculations of *The Unnamable*: ' . . . Equate me, without pity or scruple, with him who exists, somehow, no matter how, no finicking, with him who whose story this story had the brief ambition to be. Better, ascribe me to a body. Better still, arrogate me to a mind. Speak of a world of my own, sometimes referred to as the inner, without choking. Doubt no more. Seek no more.' (1961, 119–20)

One would indeed be hard-pressed to ignore the uncanny similarity Kenner is alluding to, which partially explains why early Beckett criticism was so keen on discovering Cartesian elements in Beckett's work: those elements *are* undoubtedly present both on and under the surface of Beckett's texts. Moreover, 'these flats and revulsions come closer to the Cartesian spirit than Descartes himself' (Kenner, 1961, 120), because Beckett's protagonists completely lack the philosopher's unshakeable faith in God's good intentions: whereas Descartes states

that ‘God is no deceiver’, the Unnamable ‘assumes that the superior powers deceive continually’ (120). This is why, in the words of Ruby Cohn, ‘[in Beckett’s work] doubt does not, as in the *Cogito*, lead to a certainty of existence; doubt leads to more profound doubt’ (1962, 102).

Unlike Kenner, who considers Cartesianism in Beckett’s oeuvre across the board, Samuel Mintz focuses principally on *Murphy*. Pleading from the very start against ‘the neatness of identifications’, Mintz stresses that ‘Beckett used Cartesianism . . . to give his novel structure, action, and meaning and not merely to exercise his intellectual ingenuity’ (1959, 156). At the same time, he contends that *Murphy* is ‘inexplicable’ without reference to the Cartesian system that underlies the novel, namely that of Arnold Geulincx (156).⁶ Mintz also flatly rejects the idea that Buddhist mysticism might be behind the third (dark) zone of Murphy’s mind, since ‘its roots go back no further than the dualism of Descartes and his followers’ (157). Also, Murphy’s belief both in ‘the physical fact’ and ‘the mental fact’ being ‘equally real’ suffices for Mintz to label him without further ado ‘an orthodox Cartesian’ (157).

It is interesting how Mintz, while remarking on ‘Murphy’s desire to isolate his mind or self from the world outside’ (1959, 159), invokes the rocking chair as ‘best suited’ for the purpose without commenting on the fact that the chair itself is part of the material outside world Murphy tries to escape. Despite Murphy’s earnest endeavours to leave ‘the big blooming buzzing confusion’ forever behind him, the world keeps bursting in, in the form of Celia, ginger biscuits, and the city of London – the latter enveloping Murphy on his numerous walks, and ultimately serving as his last resting place. Similarly, the Magdalen Mental Mercyseat, although seen by Murphy as a sanctuary, is still a replica of the big world, and the monad of Mr Endon’s cell a mere ‘representation’, be it ‘creditable’, of the little world (160).

Besides invoking the Geulingian dualist system for *Murphy*, Mintz equates the protagonist’s mind with Descartes’ (‘For Descartes’s mind, read Murphy’s mind’, 1959, 161) and notes their common love for a warm environment. According to Bertrand Russell, ‘Descartes’s mind only worked when he was warm’ (qtd in Mintz, 1959, 161), and Murphy relished his ‘heated garret’. Ironically, reacting to an outside temperature is a bodily function, which rather undercuts Murphy’s (and Descartes’) radical mind/body split. It seems that the path to a life in the mind (whatever that may mean) will inevitably lie in both the body and the environment, as *Murphy*’s text continuously reminds us.

⁶ In many ways, the dualism invoked by Geulincx is much more extreme than that preached by the great master himself: known as Occasionalism, Geulincx’ doctrine denied any connection between the mind and the body (thus rejecting Descartes’ pineal gland solution) and claimed that every physical and mechanical act is literally occasioned by God.

The way Mintz invokes the person (rather than the philosophy) of Descartes in his discourse could be a consequence of the excessive attention that early English-language Beckett studies paid to Beckett's poem *Whoroscope* (1930), which is more biographical than philosophical. Both Kenner and Cohn (among others) seem to attach a little too much weight to what could be considered an exercise in wit by a brilliant young writer eager to demonstrate his skill. Kenner sees in the Belacqua stories the Cartesian 'discrepancy between the mind's operations and what the world presents' (1961, 41), and in the same breath he links this to Descartes being the protagonist of *Whoroscope*. Similarly, John Fletcher states that "'Whoroscope" illustrates Beckett's lifelong fascination with Descartes' (1964, 27, also in Esslin, 1965, 25)⁷ – an assertion that should raise a few eyebrows, considering that the poem was written at the beginning of Beckett's creative career at the tender age of twenty-four.⁸ Ruby Cohn mentions, almost in passing, that Beckett 'received a Master's degree from Trinity in 1931, having done research on Descartes' (1962, 10). Although she does not go into detail as to what exactly Beckett researched, it has been assumed from the very beginning that Beckett's knowledge of the great Frenchman's work was comprehensive and thorough, and this has fuelled numerous Cartesian allusions that Beckett's work allegedly harbours.⁹ As to the poem itself, what Cohn deems 'overwhelming erudition' (11) can also be interpreted as a youthful attempt to dazzle the world with knowledge that is as impressive as it is irrelevant (such as the way Descartes liked his eggs, for example). Cohn enumerates several characteristics described in the poem that Descartes apparently has in common with other Beckettian protagonists:

Descartes's taste for a 'hot-cupboard' will be shared by Murphy; his love for a 'squinty doaty' by the hero of 'Premier Amour'. Beckett and his French heroes are as 'unmatinal' as Descartes himself.¹⁰ Other Cartesian interests are

⁷ In his article 'Beckett and the Cartesian Soul', Roger Scruton mentions Beckett's 'life-long obsession with Descartes' (1983, 230; emphasis added). Scruton also discusses 'certain philosophical theories that Beckett himself endorses here and there in his monograph on Proust . . . The first, it almost goes without saying, is the Cartesian theory of mind' (230).

⁸ At the same time, Fletcher admits that the poem 'came into being by chance' and had to be delivered very quickly: '[Beckett] had been reading Adrien Baillet's life of Descartes . . . and so quite naturally used the material from it for his poem, written in a great hurry' (1964, 26). This hypothesis seems much more realistic than the one commonly advanced in early Beckett studies.

⁹ According to Scruton, 'Beckett began his literary career with a thesis (never completed) on Descartes' (1983, 230). By contrast, Morot-Sir has the following to say on the subject: 'It seems that Beckett's research on Descartes had no relation with any formal academic obligation. Mr. Jerome Lindon, whom I consulted on this matter, very kindly replied that for *Whoroscope* Beckett utilized notes taken in the course of his studies in Dublin, but that he never wrote any school paper on the topic' (1976, 46–7).

¹⁰ Similarly, Kenner talks about 'three attributes [that the Descartes of *Whoroscope*] shares with the protagonists of the future trilogy: a recurrent obsession (here, about eggs); an incapacity for

wheelchairs (*Endgame*), spectacles ('La Fin', *Waiting for Godot*, and *Endgame*), and slaughterhouses (almost all Beckett's French fiction). The early French heroes of Beckett imitate the Descartes of *Le Discours de la méthode*: 'I did nothing but roam from one place to another, desirous of being a spectator rather than an actor in the plays exhibited on the theatre of the world'. And all Beckett's work is an extrapolation of the Cartesian definition of man as 'a thing that thinks', so that knowledge begins with consciousness. (1962, 12–13)

The above quote demonstrates how easily (almost seamlessly) a transition is made from the person of Descartes – the protagonist of the early *Whoroscope* – to his philosophy, encompassing all of Beckett's work and reducing it to an expression of Cartesianism.¹¹

Three years later, Ruby Cohn returns to the common features between Descartes' person and Beckett's characters (1965, 169–70), but this time she makes an important change in her formulation regarding the great Frenchman's philosophy in Beckett's work: 'Far more telling, however, than these incidental reminiscences is the fact that all Beckett's work paradoxically insists upon and rebels against the Cartesian definition of man as "a thing that thinks," insists upon and rebels against the knowledge that is confined within consciousness' (170). This qualification of her earlier statement reflects on Beckett's far from straightforward aesthetic treatment of Cartesian ideas. Commenting on Geulincx' variations on the dualist theme, Cohn characterises Murphy as 'a would-be Geulincxian' (1965, 170),¹² who 'seeks to withdraw from the physical world at large, and retire into his mind' (1962, 49), and suggests that 'subsequent Beckett heroes will, like Murphy, find themselves reluctant to accept the absolute Cartesian cleavage between body and mind: instead, they too will be attracted to Arnold Geulincx, the seventeenth-century Cartesian, who emphasized the delights of the mind' (49). However, 'the material world, the macrocosm, impinges upon Murphy; burned to death in his heated garret, Murphy loses mind along with body' (1965, 170). Here, Cohn seems to acknowledge Murphy's inability to sever the connection between his mind and his body and his failure to withdraw from the big world, which may point to a fundamental unity of mind, body, and the world they operate in.

Having said that, it is easy to see why Beckett's texts provide so much ammunition to plead the Cartesian case, particularly as far as mind/world dualism is concerned, even if its influence and particularly Beckett's knowledge

brushing the wing of his mind against persons or things without nausea; and a singular absence of what can only be called identity' (1961, 41).

¹¹ In his study of Beckett's 'Philosophy Notes', Matthew Feldman also holds *Whoroscope* partly responsible for the Cartesian bias of early Beckett studies (2006, 40–1).

¹² Although she also labels him (just like Watt) 'a latter-day Cartesian' (1965, 174).