

# Cambridge Elements

Elements in Beckett Studies

edited by  
Dirk Van Hulle  
*University of Oxford*  
Mark Nixon  
*University of Reading*

## SAMUEL BECKETT'S GEOLOGICAL IMAGINATION

Mark Byron  
*University of Sydney*



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-108-73896-5 — Samuel Beckett's Geological Imagination  
Mark Byron  
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

314–321, 3rd Floor, Plot 3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,  
New Delhi – 110025, 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](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781108738965](http://www.cambridge.org/9781108738965)

DOI: 10.1017/9781108772457

© Mark Byron 2020

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 2020

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

ISBN 978-1-108-73896-5 Paperback

ISSN 2632-0746 (online)

ISSN 2632-0738 (print)

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.

## Samuel Beckett's Geological Imagination

Elements in Beckett Studies

DOI: 10.1017/9781108772457  
First published online: September 2020

---

Mark Byron  
*University of Sydney*

**Author for correspondence:** Mark Byron, [mark.byron@sydney.edu.au](mailto:mark.byron@sydney.edu.au)

**Abstract:** *Samuel Beckett's Geological Imagination* addresses the ubiquity of earthy objects in Beckett's prose, drama, and poetry, exploring how mineral and archaeological objects bear upon the themes, narrative locus, and sensibilities of Beckett's texts in surprisingly varied ways. By deploying figures of ruination and excavation with etymological self-awareness, Beckett's late prose narratives – *Company*, *Ill Seen Ill Said*, and *Worstward Ho* – comprise a late-career meditation on the stratigraphic layerings of language and memory over an extended writing career. These layers comprise an embodied record of writing in their allusions to literary history and to Beckett's own oeuvre.

**Keywords:** geology, archaeology, etymology, stone, intertextuality

© Mark Byron 2020

ISBNs: 9781108738965 (PB), 9781108772457 (OC)  
ISSNs: 2632-0746 (online), 2632-0738 (print)

## Contents

Introduction	1
1 'Saxa Loquuntur!'	9
2 <i>Company</i> : Mining Beckett's Literary Memory	28
3 <i>Ill Seen Ill Said</i> : Turning Deasil among the Cromlechs	36
4 Wordly Corrasions in <i>Worstward Ho</i>	53
Conclusion – The Masonry of Representation	63
Abbreviations	67
Bibliography	69