

BECKETT AND BUDDHISM

Beckett and Buddhism undertakes a twenty-first-century reassessment of the Buddhist resonances in Samuel Beckett's writing. These reverberations, as Angela Moorjani demonstrates, originated in his early reading of Schopenhauer. Drawing on letters and archives along with recent studies of Buddhist thought and Schopenhauer's knowledge of it, the book charts the Buddhist concepts circling through Beckett's visions of the 'human predicament' in a blend of tears and laughter. Moorjani offers an in-depth elucidation of texts that are shown to intersect with the negative and paradoxical path of the Buddha, which she sets in dialogue with Western thinking. She brings further perspectives from cognitive philosophy and science to bear on creative emptiness, the illusory 'I', and Beckett's probing of the writing process. Readers will benefit from this far-reaching study of one of the most acclaimed writers of the twentieth century who explored uncharted topologies in his fiction, theatre, and poetry.

ANGELA MOORJANI is Professor Emerita of Modern Languages and Intercultural Pragmatics at the University of Maryland (UMBC). She has extensively explored the multidimensional writings of Samuel Beckett in her many publications. In her other books and articles, she investigates the effects of trauma and mourning on modernist writers and artists.

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For many years I had wanted to explore in greater depth the sources of Buddhist echoes in Beckett's fiction and theatre, so on receiving an invitation to lecture on a topic of my choice at the 2016 Samuel Beckett Summer School at Trinity College Dublin, I set to work on a paper entitled 'What the Archive Tells Us about Beckett and Buddhism'. I owe a debt of gratitude to Sam Slote and Nicholas Johnson for their invitation and hospitality and to the audience of students, faculty, and summer school participants from around the globe for their questions, comments, and interest in knowing more about the topic of my lecture. Special thanks to Rónán McDonald, a fellow lecturer at the summer school that year, whose suggestion that I expand the lecture into a book led to my seriously considering this project. I remain grateful to Minako Okamuro, whose invitation to teach a seminar on Beckett's theatre at Tokyo's Waseda University in 2008 brought with it opportunities to interact with the Samuel Beckett Research Circle of Japan and to experience Japan's Buddhist-imbued culture, especially in the theatre and the arts. But it is the unfailing support, forbearance, and solicitude of Kishin Moorjani that made possible the years of intense research and writing for both the lecture and the book. His involvement with my passion for Beckett's oeuvre dates to the time of the writing of my doctoral dissertation in the late 1960s and my always renewed attempts to grapple with the work's multidimensionality. One could not wish for a more sympathetic, astute, and witty conversation partner through it all, for whose unfaltering encouragement and kindness, not to forget his reading of an earlier version of the manuscript, there are no adequate words of gratitude.

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For his invaluable support and guidance, my gratitude to Ray Ryan of Cambridge University Press and my thanks to the staff for their helpfulness and expertise.

Abbreviations of Editions Used

Works by Beckett

- Cc* *Comment c'est* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1961).
Co *Company* (New York: Grove Press, 1980).
CP *The Collected Poems: A Critical Edition*, ed. by Seán Lawlor and John Pilling (New York: Grove Press, 2012).
CSP *The Complete Short Prose, 1929–1989*, ed. by S. E. Gontarski (New York: Grove Press, 1995).
CSPL *Collected Shorter Plays* (New York: Grove Press, 1984).
D *Le Dépeupleur* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1970).
Dis *Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writing and a Dramatic Fragment*, ed. by Ruby Cohn (New York: Grove Press, 1984).
DN *Beckett's Dream Notebook*, ed. by John Pilling (Reading: Beckett International Foundation, 1999).
Dream *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, ed. by Eoin O'Brien and Edith Fournier (New York: Arcade Publishing, 1992).
EB *Echo's Bones*, ed. by Mark Nixon (New York: Grove Press, 2014).
Eleu *Eleutheria* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1995).
End *Endgame* (New York: Grove Press, 1958).
Film *Film: Complete Scenario/Illustrations/Production Shots* (New York: Grove Press, 1969).
Fin *Fin de partie, suivi de Acte sans paroles* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1957; 1967 ed.).
HD *Happy Days* (New York: Grove Press, 1961).
How *How It Is* (New York: Grove Press, 1964).
Ill *Ill Seen Ill Said* (New York: Grove Press, 1981).
In *L'Innommable* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1953; 2016 ed.).
LSB I *The Letters of Samuel Beckett, vol. I: 1929–1940*, ed. by Martha Dow Fehsenfeld and Lois More Overbeck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

- LSB II* *The Letters of Samuel Beckett, vol. II: 1941–1956*, ed. by George Craig, Martha Dow Fehsenfeld, Dan Gunn, and Lois More Overbeck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011.)
- LSB III* *The Letters of Samuel Beckett, vol. III: 1957–1965*, ed. by George Craig, Martha Dow Fehsenfeld, Dan Gunn, and Lois More Overbeck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
- LSB IV* *The Letters of Samuel Beckett, vol. IV: 1966–1989*, ed. by George Craig, Martha Dow Fehsenfeld, Dan Gunn, and Lois More Overbeck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).
- Ma* *Malone Dies*, in *Three Novels* (New York: Grove Press, 1956), 177–288.
- Mal* *Mal vu mal dit* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1981).
- Mo* *Molloy*, in *Three Novels* (New York: Grove Press, 1955), 7–176.
- MPTK* *More Pricks than Kicks* (London: Calder & Boyars, 1970).
- Mu* *Murphy* (New York: Grove Press, 1957).
- P* *Proust* (New York: Grove Press, 1957).
- PA* *Premier amour* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1970).
- Pm* *Pas moi*, in *Oh les beaux jours suivi de Pas moi* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1963–1974), 79–95.
- Textes* *Nouvelles et Textes pour rien* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1958; 2013 ed.), 113–206.
- Un* *The Unnamable*, in *Three Novels* (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 289–414.
- W* *Watt* (New York: Grove Press, 1959).
- WfG* *Waiting for Godot* (New York: Grove Press, 1954).
- Worst* *Worstward Ho* (New York: Grove Press, 1983).

Works by Meister Eckhart

- CMW* *The Complete Mystical Works of Meister Eckhart*, trans. and ed. by Maurice O'C. Walshe, revised with a foreword by Bernard McGinn (New York: Crossroads Publishing, 2009).
- DW* *Deutsche Werke*, vols. 1–5 (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1958–2003).
- MEW I* *Meister Eckhart Werke I*, trans. by Josef Quint, ed. and comm. by Niklaus Largier (Frankfurt a. Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1993).

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MEW II *Meister Eckhart Werke II*, trans. by Ernst Benz et al., ed. and comm. by Niklaus Largier (Frankfurt a. Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1993).

Works by Fritz Mauthner

BKS I *Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache*, vol. 1, 3rd ed. (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung Nachfolger, 1921).
[http: archive.org](http://archive.org).

BKS II *Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache*, vol. 2, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung Nachfolger, 1912).
[http: archive.org](http://archive.org).

BKS III *Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache*, vol. 3, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart: J. G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung Nachfolger, 1912).
[http: archive.org](http://archive.org).

Work by Nāgārjuna

MMK *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*, in *Nāgārjuna's Middle Way*, trans. and comm. by Mark Siderits and Shōryū Katsura (Sommerville, MA: Wisdom Publications, 2013).

Works by Arthur Schopenhauer

PP II *Parerga and Paralipomena: Short Philosophical Essays*, vol. 2, trans. and ed. by Adrian del Caro and Christopher Janaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

WWR I *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. 1, trans. and ed. by Judith Norman, Alistair Welchman, and Christopher Janaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

WWR II *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. 2, trans. and ed. by Judith Norman, Alistair Welchman, and Christopher Janaway (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018).

Library Archives

TCD Trinity College Dublin Library, Department of Manuscripts
 UoR Beckett International Foundation, The University of Reading

Notes on the Text

Parenthetical translations from French and German, without quotation marks, are the author's. On first mention of texts Beckett

wrote first in French and subsequently translated into English, both the French and English titles are given. Because of constraints of space, in subsequent discussion, reluctantly, only the English versions are cited except for comparisons. Diacritics and italics are used to mark transliterated Sanskrit terms, even when these, *nirvāṇa* for example, are in common usage in English. The intent is to defamiliarize such terms in order to draw attention to their meanings in Eastern thought. Among the exceptions are the words ‘karma’ and ‘Upanishads’ and the name Shankara, which are commonly transliterated without diacritics. Underlining is used to indicate words or titles underscored by Beckett and others in their letters and drafts.