

Introduction to *Beckett/Philosophy*

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The connections between Samuel Beckett (1906-1989) and philosophy were redoubtably present throughout his life, and remain alive and kicking more than a generation after his death. Characteristically and perhaps unsurprisingly, evasive comments by the former shed only a half-light upon his relationship with the latter, in keeping with Beckett's famed reticence to discuss his work or intellectual influences. To take just the 1960s as an example – at the end of which he received the Nobel Prize for Literature – Beckett repeatedly declaimed all knowledge or understanding of Western philosophy to interviewers on one hand, while on the other simultaneously recommending to Sighle Kennedy, amongst others, that a starting point for his work could be found in two maxims of Arnold Geulincx and Democritus of Abdera, respectively: “where you are worth nothing you should want nothing,” and “naught is more real than nothing.”¹ This emphasis upon the void, no less than the syzygy of his position on philosophy, offers a fitting reminder that the texts to follow collectively explore that contradictory, paradoxical and spartan terrain sometimes called the “Beckett Country”:

¹ Two of Beckett's more famous declamations of philosophical knowledge are found in interviews from the early 1960s with Gabriele D'Auberede and Tom Driver, reprinted in *Samuel Beckett: The Critical Heritage*, edited by Lawrence Graver and Raymond Federman (London: Routledge, 1997), 238-48; Beckett's letter to Sighle Kennedy of 14 June 1967 on Arnold Geulincx and Democritus of Abdera – “already in *Murphy* and neither very rational” – is reprinted in the oft-cited collection of journalism and miscellany entitled *Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment*, edited by Ruby Cohn (New York: Grove Press, 1984), 113. A similar view was advanced five years earlier in an interview with Lawrence Harvey, as recounted in his *Samuel Beckett: Poet and Critic* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1970), 267. For a broad introduction to Beckett's relationship with Western philosophy, see my “‘I am not a philosopher.’ Beckett and Philosophy: A Methodological and Thematic Introduction,” *Sofia Philosophical Review* 3/2 (2010).

Closed place. All needed to be known for say is known. There is nothing but what is said. Beyond what is said there is nothing. What goes on in the arena is not said. Did it need to be known it would be. No interest. Not for imagining. Place consisting of an arena and a ditch. Between the two skirting the latter a track. Closed place. Beyond the ditch there is nothing. This is known because it needs to be said. Arena black vast. Room for millions. Wandering and still. Never seeing never hearing one another. Never touching. No more is known.²

There can be little doubt, then, as Dermot Moran has recently suggested, that such a “stark Beckettian world cries out for philosophical interpretation.”³ Yet at the same time, by the way of acknowledging the pitfalls facing any facile linking of Beckett’s (or any other modernist’s) literature with philosophical ideas – in no small measure due to the challenging opacity of Beckett’s (especially postwar) literature – *Beckett/Philosophy* charts a narrow course. That is to say, the contributions to this collection examine specific philosophical interventions (or “slashes,” as suggested by this volume’s title), in Beckett’s development and expression as a literary writer. Western philosophy is therefore selectively engaged here through the lens of Beckett’s engagement with a particular thinker, doctrine or theme, as registered across his published prose, drama, and poetry, as well as in manuscripts, letters, and reading notes.

Moreover, in publishing this groundbreaking collection through the kind offices of the *Sofia Philosophical Review*, the cumulative implications throughout are that, first, Samuel Beckett was a particularly philosophically-minded writer; second, his knowledge of philosophy was extensive, perhaps

² Samuel Beckett, “Closed Place,” in *Texts for Nothing and Other Shorter Prose 1950-1976*, edited by Mark Nixon (London: Faber, 2009), 147.

³ Dermot Moran, “Beckett and philosophy,” in *Samuel Beckett: 100 Years*, edited by Christopher Murray (Dublin: New Island, 2006), 94. Despite merely seeing many philosophical allusions in Beckett’s work as simply “a kind of arbitrary collection or *bricolage* of philosophical ideas,” the philosopher nonetheless astutely continues: “Beckett’s relation to philosophy is difficult to complex. He was not a philosopher; if he had been, he would not have needed to engage with art.” (93-94).

more so than any other leading modernist author (save T.S. Eliot⁴); and finally, different philosophical concepts are repeatedly invoked and explored across an *oeuvre* lasting fully six decades. These suggestions thus open Beckett's engagement with, and deployment of, Western philosophy for a distinctly philosophical readership for the first time. As such, the editors of this volume greatly hope academic philosophers might take up the baton offered by the present collection from (mostly) literary critics, in order to further the work undertaken here by considering Beckett's work from a philosophical perspective – perhaps via the starting points advanced by the individual chapters that to ensue.

Such a fruitful exchange might depart from a question literary-minded scholars should probably do well to avoid: just how accurately, or knowledgeably, did Beckett understand and employ philosophical ideas? Amongst the tributaries forked out by what is now a sub-discipline of Beckett Studies in its own right, "Beckett and philosophy," this stream has yet to be pursued. To date, in fact, it is notable for its absence. To be sure, however, many other streams have been traversed by "Beckett and philosophy"; often departing from Lance St. John Butler's comment that "[i]n spite of all protestations to the contrary, Beckett is working the same ground as the philosophers."⁵ This contention will be considered by the present introduction, while the conclusion to this volume reflects individually upon the thirteen chapters published here for the first time. It therefore marks a racing start toward interdisciplinary collaboration, not least as *Beckett/Philosophy* repre-

⁴ T.S. Eliot received postgraduate training in philosophy, like Beckett's friend Brian Coffey, and unlike most modernist authors. See comments on the latter in §2 of my contribution to this volume, and on the former, see Manju Jain, *T.S. Eliot and American Philosophy: The Harvard Years* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1992); Rafeef Habib, *The Early T.S. Eliot and Western Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); and Donald J. Childs, *From Philosophy to Poetry: T.S. Eliot's Study of Knowledge and Experience* (London: The Athlone Press, 2001). The lack of such book-length analyses is notable for its absence in Beckett Studies.

⁵ Lance St. John Butler, *Samuel Beckett and the Meaning of Being: A Study in Ontological Parable* (London: MacMillan, 1984), 2. A similar view is espoused in a more recent study by Beckett's long-time English publisher, John Calder's *The Philosophy of Samuel Beckett* (London: Calder, 2002), which argues that "Beckett was the last of the great stoics" (1).

sents the most extensive discussion in English as yet of Beckett's relationship with philosophy. This is striking for at least three reasons.

First of all, Beckett seems the most philosophical of writers in both his "early" and "mature" (or postwar) work. His first essay from 1929, in praise of Joyce's then-unfinished *Finnegans Wake*, contained Giordano Bruno and Giambattista Vico in the title; in 1930, an award winning 98-lines of verse parodied the life of René Descartes; and in the next year, Beckett's only academic monograph, *Proust*, was so steeped in the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer as to distort the eponymous author's *À la recherche du temps perdu* ostensibly under examination.⁶ Other philosophers name-checked across Beckett's subsequent work, to name only some of those discussed in ensuing chapters, include Thales of Miletus in the 1932 poem "Serena I" (later included in Beckett's 1935 poetry collection, *Echo's Bones*); idiosyncratically "windowless" Leibnizian monads feature in the novel *Murphy* from 1935-36; a long-unpublished dramatic fragment from 1940, *Human Wishes*, is based around the life of Samuel Johnson; Immanuel Kant's "fruitful bathos of experience" is quoted in the Addenda to *Watt* from 1945; Arnold Geulincx appears in the short story "The End" and the first novel of the "Beckett Trilogy," *Molloy*, over the next two years; Aristotle, "who knew everything," makes an appearance in the *Texts for Nothing* from 1951; Zeno's Paradox opens the 1958 play *Endgame*; the Occasionalist philosopher Nicolas Malebranche is cited in "The Image" and *How It Is* over the next two years; and Bishop Berkeley's tag "esse est percipi" prefaces the 1964 arthouse (and Beckett's only) film, *Film*; while Fritz Mauthner "may be it" in *Rough for Radio II*, first published in 1975.⁷ Needless to say, there

⁶ See, respectively, "Dante...Bruno.Vico..Joyce," in *Disjecta*; "Whoroscope," in Samuel Beckett, *Selected Poems 1930-1989*, edited by David Wheatley (London: Faber, 2009); and *Proust*, reprinted in *"Proust" and Three Dialogues* (London: Calder & Boyers, 1970).

⁷ The dates provided above are taken from Ruby Cohn's indispensable *A Beckett Canon* (Ann Arbor, University of Michigan Press: 2001); see also John Pilling's more biographical *A Beckett Chronology* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2006). Philosophical references correspond to the following: Thales in *Selected Poems 1930-1989*, 25; Leibniz in Samuel Beckett, *Murphy*, edited by J.C.C. Mays (London: Faber, 2009), 114; the *Human Wishes* fragment is reproduced in *Disjecta*; Kant's "das fruchtbare Bathos der Erfahrung" comprises entry 31 of the 55 Addenda items at the end of Samuel Beckett,

are many more along the way, but these are important and suggestive references by a writer well-known for his meticulousness.

Secondly and no less notably, philosophers have themselves been quick to invoke Beckett's work for a variety of doctrines – as evoked by the title of Bruno Clément's article, "What Philosophers do with Samuel Beckett." As registered in one volume alone – and even before receiving the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1969 – Beckett was subject of texts by Gabriel Marcel (1953, 1957); William Empson (1956); Maurice Blanchot (1959), Northrop Frye (1960); Claude Mauriac (1960), Raymond Williams (1961), Wolfgang Iser (1966), David Lodge (1968) in addition to a longer essay by Theodor Adorno entitled "Trying to Understand Endgame."⁸ In the years since, longer works have appeared by Gilles Deleuze, Slavoj Žižek, Alain Badiou, and most recently Hélène Cixous.⁹ Although this list appears decid-

Watt, edited by C.J. Ackerley (London: Faber, 2009), 222; Geulincx appears in "The End," in Samuel Beckett, *The Expelled/The Calmative/The End/First Love*, edited by Christopher Ricks (London: Faber, 2009), 49, and in Samuel Beckett, *Molloy*, edited by Shane Weller (London: Faber, 2009), 50; Aristotle appears in "Text for Nothing VIII" in *Texts for Nothing and Other Shorter Prose 1950-1976*, 35; Zeno's paradox offers the backdrop to the opening of *Endgame*, in Samuel Beckett, *Endgame*, preface by Rónán McDonald (London: Faber, 2009), 93; Malebranche "less the rosy hue the humanities" is cited in "The Image", in *The Complete Short Prose, 1929-1989*, 167, and retained in Samuel Beckett, *How It Is* (London: Calder, 1996), 33; Berkeley's "to be is to be perceived" heads the script for *Film*, in *The Complete Dramatic Works*, 323; and Mauthner is mentioned in *Rough for Radio II*, in *ibid.*, 276.

⁸ See Bruno Clément, "What the Philosophers do with Samuel Beckett," trans. Anthony Uhlmann, in *Beckett after Beckett*, edited by S.E. Gontarski (Tallahassee: University of Florida Press, 2006); and *Critical Essays on Samuel Beckett*, edited by Lance St John Butler (Aldershot: Scholar Press, 1993). For discussion of Adorno's work on Beckett, including a planned future essay on *L'Innomable* "at the end of a projected fourth volume" of his *Noten zur Literature*, see Shane Weller, "The Art of Indifference Adorno's Manuscript Notes on The Unnamable," in *The Tragic Comedy of Samuel Beckett*, edited by Daniela Guardamagna and Rossana M. Sebellin (Rome: Laterza, 2009), 223.

⁹ See, for example, Gilles Deleuze, "The Exhausted," in his *Essays Critical and Clinical*, translated by Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (London: Verso, 1998); Alain Badiou, *On Beckett*, edited and translated by Nina Power and Alberto Toscano (Manchester: Clinamen, 2003); Slavoj Žižek, "Beckett with Lacan," parts one and two online at: www.lacan.com/article/?page_id=78 and www.lacan.com/article/?page_id=102 (last

edly weighted toward French *philosophes*, in many ways Beckett's international reception was defined by leading intellectuals both across and within nations – from the USA to China – (largely) following the surprise Parisian success of *Waiting for Godot* in 1953.¹⁰ Even the famous evasion by Jacques Derrida – that Beckett's work was “too close” for him to write on – suggests that Beckett's work may be seen as co-evolving with or even anticipating some of the major themes in contemporary philosophy (such as phenomenology or even Derrida's poststructuralist philosophy).¹¹

Third and finally, right from the start Anglophone critics have interpreted Beckett's writings philosophically. In fact, the conventional starting point for “Beckett Studies,” a 1959 Special Issue of the academic journal *Perspective*, contained essays with titles like “The Cartesian Centaur” (Hugh Kenner) and “Samuel Beckett's *Murphy*: A Cartesian Novel” (Samuel L. Mintz). Moreover, as David Pattie deftly summarizes of this first period of Beckett criticism in English:

The *Perspective* issue identified Beckett as an important figure in English literature; and moreover, it introduced the notion that the Beckettian universe was governed by rules that were, at bottom, philosophical [...] English criticism in the 1960s linked Beckett not only to existentialism, but to Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Wittgenstein, and, most decisively of all, to the work of the seventeenth-century French philosopher René Descartes and his phi-

accessed 8/12/11); and Hélène Cixous, *Zero's Neighbour: Sam Beckett*, translated by Laurent Milesi (Cambridge: Polity, 2010)

¹⁰ See *The International Reception of Samuel Beckett*, edited by Mark Nixon and Matthew Feldman (London: Continuum, 2009).

¹¹ Derrida, cited in *Acts of Literature*, edited by Derek Attridge (London: Routledge, 1992), 60. For a variety of recent phenomenological approaches to Beckett, see *Beckett and Phenomenology*, edited by Ulrika Maude and Matthew Feldman (London: Continuum, 2009); and for well-known discussions of Beckett's work in light of poststructuralism, see Steven Connor, *Samuel Beckett: Theory, Repetition, Text* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988); Leslie Hill, *Beckett's Fiction: In Different Words* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); and, most recently, Anthony Uhlmann, *Beckett and Poststructuralism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

losophical disciples.¹²

Similarly telling titles were to follow over the next decade, from a 1962 chapter by Martin Esslin – later of “theater of the absurd” critical fame – in the collection *The Novelist as Philosopher*, and Ruby Cohn’s 1965 “Philosophical Fragments in the Works of Samuel Beckett” to John Fletcher’s “Beckett and the Philosophers” two years later; all capped by David Hesla’s remarkable “history of ideas” approach, and the first full-length study of Beckett and philosophy in English, his 1971 *The Shape of Chaos: An Interpretation of the Art of Samuel Beckett*. Readers of Beckett in English, by this time, should they have wished to consult literary criticism to divine meaning from Beckett’s texts, would doubtless have been struck by the philosophical consistency in approaching a writer famed for his protestations of “ignorance” and “impotence.”¹³ The view taken in this early period, despite the many nuances of this first period of Beckett criticism in English, is short-handed by a chapter entitled “The Human Condition” in *The Testament of Samuel Beckett*: “The whole of Beckett’s work moves relentlessly towards the answering of one question: What is existence? or, What is man?”¹⁴

¹² David Pattie, *The Complete Critical Guide to Samuel Beckett* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2000), 105.

¹³ As Ruby Cohn’s thoughtful “Philosophical Fragments in the Works of Samuel Beckett” puts it: “Beckett’s heroes not only deny that they are philosophers; they flaunt an inviolable ignorance [... But] they nevertheless continue to examine, propounding the old philosophical questions that have been with us since the pre-Socratics; on the nature of the Self, the World, and God,” reprinted in *Samuel Beckett: A Collection of Critical Essays*, edited by Martin Esslin (Engelwood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1965), 169. See also “Samuel Beckett,” in *The Novelist as Philosopher: Studies in French Fiction 1935-1960*, edited by John Cruickshank Westport: Greenwood, 1962); John Fletcher, “Beckett and the Philosophers,” in *Samuel Beckett’s Art* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1967); and David H. Hesla, *The Shape of Chaos: An Interpretation of the Art of Samuel Beckett* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1971).

¹⁴ Josephine Jacobsen and William R. Mueller, *The Testament of Samuel Beckett* (London: Faber, 1964), 109.

From this initial period of Beckett Studies, furthermore two philosophical readings emerged: the existential and the Cartesian. The first, largely a product of its time, found in Beckett a fictional exponent of existentialism *par excellence*: “From its inception, existential thought has felt itself at home in fiction. Because of its intense ‘inwardness’ and the ‘commitment’ of its proponents, it has expressed itself more strikingly in imaginative writing than in fictional treatises.”¹⁵ Yet existential thought – for all its very Beckettian emphasis on solitude, alienation and “intense self-consciousness”¹⁶ – did not seem able to account for Beckett’s artistic preoccupation with frailty, constraint and not knowing; or as he put it in conversation with James Knowlson: “he found the actual limitations on man’s freedom of action (his genes, his upbringing, his social circumstances) far more compelling than the theoretical freedom on which Sartre had laid so much stress.”¹⁷ As for existentialism, so too for Cartesianism – at one point, the *de rigueur* philosophical interpretation of Beckett’s work¹⁸ – which may well be a red herring. Without doubt “Whoroscope,” Beckett’s first published poem in 1930, centered upon the life of René Descartes, and demonstrated some knowledge of Cartesian philosophy. However, this was inductively applied to a reading of Beckett’s work as a whole, creating the misleading impression that, as both online sources and the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*

¹⁵ Edith Kern, *Existential Thought and Fictional Technique* (London: Yale University Press, 1970), viii. Comparable existential perspectives underwrite Ramona Cormier and Janis L. Pallister’s *Waiting for Death: The Philosophical Significance of Beckett’s En Attendant Godot* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1979); and L.A.C. Dobrez, *The Existential and Its Exits* (London: The Athlone Press, 1986).

¹⁶ Hannah Copeland, *Art and the Artist in the Works of Samuel Beckett* (The Hague: Mouton and Co. 1975), 42-3.

¹⁷ Cited in my “Beckett, Sartre and Phenomenology,” in *Limit(e) Beckett*, 0 Issue, online at: www.limitebeckett.paris-sorbonne.fr/zero/feldman.html (last accessed 8/12/11).

¹⁸ To note only the major accounts of Beckett and Cartesianism, see Edouard Morot-Sir, “Samuel Beckett and Cartesian Emblems,” in *Samuel Beckett and the Art of Rhetoric*, edited by Edouard Morot-Sir (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina, 1976); Michael Mooney, “*Molloy*, Part 1: Beckett’s *Discourse on Method*,” in *Journal of Beckett Studies* 3 (1978); and Roger Scruton, “Beckett and the Cartesian Soul,” in his *The Aesthetic Understanding: Essays in the Philosophy of Art and Culture* (Manchester: Carcanet Press, 1983).

have it, Descartes was “Beckett’s favourite philosopher.”¹⁹ Having had their say for so long over the past years, neither existentialism nor Cartesianism is given a chapter in this volume.

Given this longstanding tradition of reading Beckett’s explicit references, impulses and writings philosophically, it is thus surprising that an expansive collection in English has taken so long. Notwithstanding the scattergun approach taken by the recent *Beckett and Philosophy* – including essays on Beckett and everyone from Friedrich Nietzsche and Martin Heidegger to Jürgen Habermas and Michel Foucault – critics have largely neglected Peter Murphy’s call in his 1994 “Beckett and the Philosophers”: “The whole question of Beckett relationship to the philosophers is pretty obviously in need of a major critical reassessment.”²⁰ Yet better late than never and, in this spirit, *Beckett/Philosophy* attempts just such a “critical reassessment” of Samuel Beckett’s relationship with Western philosophy. This is undertaken in two distinct ways: the empirical and the thematic.

In terms of the empirical, the first ten chapters are concerned with the “meat and potatoes” of Beckett’s engagement with philosophy. It is now clear to scholars that Beckett’s substantial readings and note-taking from, and in, Western philosophy occurred during a period of systematic self-education across the 1930s. Beckett read widely and took detailed notes from a number of key philosophers during this period, as is demonstrated by the ensuing con-

¹⁹ For some of Beckett’s sources in the construction of “Whoroscope,” see Francis Doherty, “Mahaffy’s *Whoroscope*,” in *Journal of Beckett Studies* 2/1 (1992). For an argument that Cartesian influence upon Beckett is largely circumstantial, and better recast in terms of a wider engagement with Western philosophy, see my “René Descartes and Samuel Beckett,” in *Beckett’s Books: A Cultural History of Samuel Beckett’s “Interwar Notes”* (London: Continuum, 2008).

²⁰ See *Beckett and Philosophy*, edited by Richard Lane (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2002); and P.J. Murphy, “Beckett and the Philosophers,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Samuel Beckett*, edited by John Pilling (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 222. Some recent exceptions on the subject of Beckett and philosophy include Anthony Uhlmann’s *Samuel Beckett and the Philosophical Image* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Garin Dowd, *Abstract Machines: Beckett and Philosophy after Deleuze and Guattari* (New York: Rodopi, 2007); Shane Weller, *A Taste for the Negative: Beckett and Nihilism* (Oxford: Legenda, 2005); and Simon Critchley, “Lecture 3: Know Happiness – on Beckett,” in his *Very Little ... Almost Nothing* (London: Routledge, 1997).

tributions. While Beckett's philosophical indebtedness has long been recognized – particularly since the 1996 publication of James Knowlson's unrivalled biography, *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett* – a systematic treatment of leading “Beckettian” philosophers has been heretofore missing.²¹ Those thinkers assembled in the first portion of *Beckett/Philosophy* may therefore be seen to represent the current “canon” of philosophical influences upon Samuel Beckett. While some of the names are to be expected (Arthur Schopenhauer, Immanuel Kant, Bishop Berkeley, Arnold Geulincx), others are not (Henri Bergson, Gottfried Leibniz, Wilhelm Windelband, and the early Greeks); and still others push at the boundaries of philosophy itself (in different ways, Samuel Johnson and linguistic skeptics like Fritz Mauthner). By moving chronologically through Beckett's interwar didacticism in philosophy, the first ten chapters here collectively represent the leading, demonstrable debts to philosophy accumulated between the writing of his only academic monograph in 1930, *Proust*, via *More Pricks than Kicks* and *Murphy*, to the start of the wartime novel *Watt*.

Although many of the ten initial essays trace the influence of particular philosophers and doctrines in Beckett's postwar writings, key “Beckettian” themes comprise the final trio of essays in *Beckett/Philosophy*. These philosophical themes, in turn, may be said to be at the forefront of Beckett Studies – Beckett's philosophical approach to literary aesthetics; ethics; and abstraction – as reflected by a number of recent studies.²² Beyond pointing to the complexity of Beckett and/with/via philosophy, it is hoped that this connection of the empirical and thematic in *Beckett/Philosophy* shows that differing methodological approaches to Beckett's engagement with philosophy need not be an either/or affair. Rather, Beckett's early readings in philosophy are precisely the “scaffolding” for later key philosophical themes and concerns (such as Arnold Geulincx's influence on Beckettian ethics); or

²¹ For a discussion of Beckett's philosophical readings during the 1930s, see James Knowlson, *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett* (London: Bloomsbury, 1996), especially chapters 6 to 11; and Feldman, *Beckett's Books*, chapter 2.

²² See, respectively, Andrea Oppo, *Philosophical Aesthetics and Samuel Beckett* (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2008); *Beckett and Ethics*, edited by Russell Smith (London: Continuum, 2009); and Erik Tønning, *Samuel Beckett's Abstract Drama: Works for Stage and Screen, 1962-1985* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2007).

in Knowlson's recent formulation: "he does not attempt to reach firm conclusions. Concepts provide him rather with contrasting images, both verbal and visual, which he takes pleasure in weaving into intricate dramatic patterns."²³ And it is, finally, these "dramatic patterns" that keeps both readers and critics alike returning to the vexed, yet uncannily beautiful, terrain of Beckett and philosophy. Speaking of which, let's get moving, for

... time is limited. It is thence that one fine day, when all nature smiles and shines, the rack lets loose its black unforgettable cohorts and sweeps away the blue for ever. My situation is truly delicate. What fine things, what momentous things, I am going to miss through fear, fear of falling back into the old error, fear of not finishing in time, fear of revelling, for the last time, in a last outpouring of misery, impotence and hate. The forms are many in which the unchanging seeks relief from its formlessness. Ah yes, I was always subject to the deep thought, especially in the spring of the year. That one had been nagging at me for the past five minutes. I venture to hope there will be no more, of that depth.²⁴

²³ Cited in James Knowlson, "Samuel Beckett's *Happy Days* Revisited." I am grateful to Prof. Knowlson for allowing me to consult this forthcoming, as yet unpublished, text.

²⁴ Beckett, *Malone Dies*, edited by Peter Boxall (London: Faber, 2010), 23.