

## Crossing Francophone Boundaries: Beckett's Fictions

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Although Samuel Beckett's *œuvre* is bilingual in French and English, his writing is generally considered to be the product of a single national identity. While a small group of major critics has focused on the author's poetics of bilingualism and self-translation, the consequences of labeling Beckett's work in terms of its French or Anglo-Irish identity have not been raised. On the contrary, criticism from both sides of the Channel and both sides of the Atlantic attempts to anchor Beckett in one of several positions: English literary tradition, Irish politics, Cartesian philosophy, French existentialism, and even the *Ecole Normale Supérieure* have been invoked to pin Beckett's identity to a position of national or cultural coherence.

Does Beckett's writing reflect Ireland's loss of its mother tongue, a consequence of British colonial power? Does it reflect a loyalty to Ireland, beyond the expatriate's harsh criticism leveled against the mother country, and beyond the censorship that the young Beckett endured in his homeland? Does Beckett's use of English reflect an ambivalent attitude toward the language of the oppressor? As an Irish Protestant of Huguenot descent, does Beckett's turn to French reflect a point of origin that eludes the difficulty of Anglo-Irish identity, rather than the stylistic or practical aspects of using French as a non-native speaker living in a foreign country? All of these questions except the last one have been raised many times by anglophone critics of Beckett. Early French criticism of Beckett rarely asks the question of why Beckett

writes in French, but as a political and cultural asylum for exiles, postwar France had no reason to question the shift away from a native language to the exile's new language, when that new language was French. In this context, Beckett's use of French indicates an even greater distance from the Irish Renaissance and the revival of Gaelic than Joyce's indications of discomfort in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. If Dedalus feels "unrest of spirit" when colonialist confrontation focuses on language, it is not because Joyce would have wished to abandon English in favor of Gaelic.

Joyce's later ambition to infuse English with other languages and to dissolve the boundaries separating one word from another challenges notions of racial purity and cultural origins. While Joyce rests his case with the question of language, Borges offers a more radical response in an interview by Seamus Heaney and Richard Kearney on the occasion of the Joyce Centenary in 1982. In answer to a question about the existence of a Spanish-American tradition, Borges comments on his own background:

Argentina and Uruguay differ from most other Latin-American countries in that they possess a mixture of Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese cultures which has made for a more European-style climate. . . . I myself am descended from Portuguese, Spanish, Jewish, and English ancestors. And the English, as Lord Tennyson reminds us, are themselves a mixture of many races: "Saxon and Celt and Dane are we." There is no such thing as a racial or national purity. And even if there were, the imagination would transcend such limits. Nationalism and literature are therefore natural enemies. I do not believe that there exists a specifically Argentine culture which could only be called "Latin-American" or "Hispanic-American." The only real Americans are the Indians. The rest are Europeans. I like to think of myself therefore as a European writer in exile. Neither Hispanic nor American, nor Hispanic-American, but an expatriate European. (qtd. in Kearney 50-51)

In Beckett's case, the ideological consequences of a nationalist (and colonialist) perspective on literature deny both the form and content of his *œuvre*. With its emphasis on otherness, passage, and exile, Beckett's *œuvre* radically questions identity. In

this sense, Beckett's writing opens a window on the diasporas of modernity. The linguistic explosion of the familiar that haunts modernity beginning with Baudelaire and Flaubert leads toward the writing of these diasporas that have become encoded as post-colonial, transnational, and in some cases, as Francophone, in the new contexts of globalization.

### Exile and Languages

It is a miraculous paradox of the writing of exile, beginning with Dante, that the experience of the singular subject, the awkward speaker floundering in a desert of loneliness and violence, resonates on the level of a collective loss or the passing-through of an ocean or a Trail of Tears. This passage through the terrors of the unknown is an element shared by the subjects of diaspora, where language itself flounders in a strange element, and where literature struggles against opacity to give an account of life. It could be argued that Beckett's writing of otherness or of the Other eludes the collective dimension of diaspora and of globalization, but audience responses to *Waiting for Godot* (*En Attendant Godot*) and other plays indicate that Beckett reaches audiences precisely through his defamiliarizing and de-sentimentalizing representations, and that something happens on stage that affects spectators at the point of intersection between a subject and a community. The passionate response of prisoners from several countries, including many who staged Beckett's first well-known play, is an example of Beckett's impact. Allegorical abstraction takes effect in something that is often described as "universal": the intersection of the singular and the collective. In some of the later writings, Beckett's portrayal of a character as "Man" or "Woman"—without a proper name, a context, or a social identity outside of the minimal situation depicted by the work—adds an additional emphasis to a level of allegorical abstraction already present in *Watt*. This type of character is not the universally advertised Everyman, the emblem of the human condition in Western European allegorical tradition, but rather Every (wo)man's potential for loss of dignity, context, and respect in Beckett's created world. The Otherness of Beckett's characters lies in the rejection

of their marginal status and qualities by a communicative network or a cultural frame that cannot integrate them. They are victims of a structure that turns the status of prisoner inside-out: marginalized and rejected, they are Outside; locked up by a structure that will not free them from their suffering, they are trapped Inside. They are simultaneously in exile and in prison. In most cases, their solitude is ambiguously accompanied by a partner, a lover, or a companion who reflects their predicament. Outside and inside, Beckett shows a man alone (Malone, aptly named, one of Ireland's most common family names) putting pencil to paper and "creating" an Other of his own.

Another way of addressing what is at stake in modern allegory and Beckett's abstractions that minimally represent individuals walking on roads, going in and out of buildings, wearing hats, and telling stories is the vision of the Other placed at a distance from the perceiving subject, reader or spectator. In the light of this distance—detachment or estrangement—the Other appears as grotesque, incomprehensible, comic, repulsive, and if possible, inhuman. An aesthetic of defamiliarization (a term familiar to readers of Brecht) that is a leitmotif of Modernism shapes Beckett's scripts for fictional and dramatic characters. Defamiliarization combines with the repetitions of habit, according to Proust's notion of the habitual and its impact on the subject. The defamiliarized but habit-ridden world of Beckett represents a point of national origin as a point of descent into the abyss rather than as a positive source. An example might be the connection between some grotesquely horrible Irish songs about Irishmen mutilated in war ("Johnny I Hardly Knew Ye" is known around the world) and the unnameable protagonist of *The Unnameable*, first published in French as *L'Innommable*. The namelessly horrible narrator makes a point of naming a range of Beckett's fictional characters from other works—Molloy, Mahood, Malone, and Murphy—with the same initial, M. The M seems to stand for Man, as the typically Irish names reach toward an abstraction of identity. Brecht's hieratic title of "Man is Man" reaches toward the same abstraction, except that Beckett's Men (unlike the fictional characters invented by Brecht or Kafka, another

modernist master who combines defamiliarization with the daily grind of habit) are all Irish. Defamiliarization reshapes the violence and death that threaten from without but also from within.

Defamiliarization banishes nostalgia with the counter-violence of allegory that cuts things into pieces. In modernist echoes of baroque aesthetics, defamiliarization turns into a mode of representation of the Other, a way of rendering-strange. If the point of departure is ideology, then the process of Beckett's oeuvre, this rendering-strange of defamiliarization, allows for the possibility of reading Beckett across classifications of French literature, Anglo-Irish literature, and the more recent categorization of Francophone literature among emerging literatures. Beckett's biographical trajectory moves him from Ireland to France, and from Dublin to Paris, but the trajectory of his writing shuttles back and forth between two cities and two worlds of language.

Beckett's bilingual writing revolves around several forms of translation: from French to English, from English to French, and from something strange, foreign to language itself, into a written text. This strangeness, estrangement, or distance turns into writing; defamiliarization is the writing out of an extreme approach to a poetics of language. The paradoxical qualities of giving words to the unspeakable and of naming the unnameable, of giving a voice to the silence of experiences that language captures belatedly—these qualities characterize the writing of the Other. The experience of loss is implicated in the strangeness of the Other; Beckett observed in his reading of Proust the shift of the object, loved and lost, from inside the self to the barren expanses of the Other.

Beckett radicalizes this trajectory when he extends the loss of the object to language. This loss is encoded as “nothing”—nothing known, nothing knowable. In Malone's third-person account of Sapo, a fictional figure intended by Malone to represent some of his own experience, this unknowing is evoked in terms of the non-transparency of language: “Then he was sorry he had not learnt the art of thinking . . . and sorry he could make no meaning of the babel raging in his head, the doubts, desires, imaginings and dreads” (*Malone Dies* 193).<sup>1</sup> In Beckett's first published ver-

sion, the opacity of language is designated as *charabia*, a word used to denigrate the speech of Auvergnat 'emigrants' seeking work in Paris. The etymology of this word seems to contain its own allegory of Otherness and defamiliarization. The origin of *charabia* remains uncertain. One hypothesis is that it connects the Auvergnat emigrants' imperfectly spoken French with a possible Spanish origin, *algarabia*, and especially with the Arabic term of *algharbiya* with its reference to a different (foreign) language, spoken by Berbers in the west. Another hypothesis derives *charabia* from the provençal root, *charrá*, to converse, from *tcharr*, the confused noise of speech. *Charabia* shifts between the Self and the Other as an implicit standard of shared language (or *la langue de la tribu*) and the mere noise of its rendering by immigrant outsiders. The term opens up to reveal a substantial piece of the Francophone map and the implicit spoken language ranging all the way from Arabic and its Others to Auvergnat dialect and the French of the Ile de France via Spanish and Provençal.

The familiar word *charabia* (the sounds of incomprehensible language) collects feelings in the mixed metaphor of the waves breaking in Sapo's head. The more literary "babel" of Beckett's later version in English refers to the biblical story of the ruined tower of Babel, and languages that are condemned to remain opaque to each other. Beckett's mixed metaphor this time around turns the babel into something that rages inside Sapo, perhaps like the fire raging in Krapp (*Krapp's Last Tape* or *La Dernière Bande*) or the rage of God when he discovers the existence of the tower. *Charabia* resonates in a popular Parisian context of spoken language, but Babel (unlike "babble," a possible translation of *charabia*) evokes the Father's condemnation of the son. These fragments of language are neither abstract nor universal; they are linguistically and culturally coded singularities that substitute for each other but do not translate each other. They are instances of difference and small markers of otherness.

Beckett uses birth and death almost interchangeably to map the terrain of this experience at the extreme points of the uncanny and the defamiliarized. The voice that speaks for these extremes is not yet here or no longer all there; Beckett invokes the

*cri à blanc*, the white scream of a voice that has lost its voice.<sup>2</sup> It speaks with the voice of a shade, who returns briefly from the Underworld to make an appearance on Beckett's stages of silence. The voice echoes; its resonances come back to us after its exit. Like the snow falling at the end of "The Dead," Joyce's story ending *Dubliners* and beginning the world of *Ulysses*, the voices speaking in Beckett's texts make it impossible to separate the self from the Other, the living from the dead.

The subject swoons, and external reality is shrouded in the blank space that connects the dead to the living. This blank space is the space of the stage in *Waiting for Godot*, the desert sands that cover Winnie in *Happy Days* (*O les Beaux Jours*), and the manuscript that Malone writes in *Malone Dies*. It is the silence of Molloy, and the space of fiction in all of Beckett's writing. Modernism makes it possible to write out this positioning in blankness and silence, partly inherited from Baudelaire and Flaubert. It is the space of the voice without timbre, the cold white voice of the ghost that Beckett wishes to get down on the page.

The distance from the familiar that characterizes silence, exile, and otherness in Beckett's writing can be traced through his explorations of both of the languages that claim him, French and English. As a white middle-class Dubliner, Beckett has not yet been claimed as post-colonial or Francophone. It can be supposed that for the usual notions of racial and cultural dominance, to say nothing of gender, Beckett has been claimed for England and France. Anglo-Irish literature is the property of English literature in a way that Francophone literature does not—or does not yet—"belong to" French literature. When a contemporary Francophone writer like Driss Chraïbi states that post-colonial writing goes beyond the narrow constraints of French literature, the claim seems to be made on the basis of a judgment of culture in the name of the Other. A reading of Beckett that would take the remarkably bilingual nature of his work as a point of entry into its quality of Otherness might explore the secret of Beckett's silences and voices in the way that his language takes on a life of its own—a double life. Beckett works through a suspension of individual identity, or perhaps a disintegration of the principles that

sustain identity. He arrives at a radical representation of an Other, at the end of the line.

### Two Traditions

Beckett's work has been said to "belong to" two traditions, but the question of what culture Beckett most truly represents, if any, has not been asked. He does not represent anything like English or French cultural identity, nor does he explore the representation of post-colonial or Francophone cultural identity. His sparse references to places and to popular culture lean toward Ireland and Foxrock, the suburb near Dublin where he was born and raised. He infrequently refers to places on the continent.

In Beckett, a plurality of languages confronts a singular silence. Translation occurs at the margins of French and English texts, as well as between language (or languages) and silence. Several questions occur in this context, beyond the lost language of Gaelic (and the French spoken by Huguenot exiles who gave Ireland Mercier and Camier, as well as some of Beckett's ancestors). Beckett's French is a second language learned in school and spoken in France, while the author's native language is English. The great actor Jack McGowran, who became known as "the Beckett actor" because of his one-man shows of Beckett's work, assumed that Beckett was French until he heard him speak at their first meeting over ten glasses of whiskey. McGowran said to Beckett that he detected tones of Dublin, and the critic Vivian Mercier also identifies Beckett's Dublin accent and speech patterns.

The two-fold structure of Beckett's written language may include an invisible third, an invisible Other: not Italian, German, or Gaelic, as certain readers of Beckett have suggested, but the Other that intrudes from beyond the border of a language viewed as a homeland for a patriotic identity. For all its horror and silence, the Other according to Beckett does not prevent his texts and characters from echoing literary language. These echoes or indirect quotations resonate most richly in the language of the text in which Beckett places them.

Beckett's literary allusions range widely from the Bible, Dante, Shakespeare, Gray, and French drama through modern poetry, Joyce, and Proust. His characters are not dispossessed because of politics or power; they are not leaders or workers. If they belong to any cultural entity, they belong only as dispossessed figures, oddballs, misfits, prostitutes, sociopaths, tramps, and closet intellectuals. It is in their identity as characters, whose identity is trampled and in some cases ruined, that their interior wandering in circles, in and out of language, attains an impact that is usually called universal. The fragments of culture in language that these characters carry with them, however, are strikingly precise: many of the variations in translations lead into the elaboration of later texts. If hats and bicycles translate so easily that they appeal to the reader as elements of something universal, the same cannot be said of Beckett's fragmentary objects in language.

Fictional Beckett characters seem to step out of cultural and social contexts into their abject solitary existences, while the texts in which they evolve hint at culture in their portraits of something like a fictional reality, just beyond the grasp of those characters. In this context, the divergences between French and English versions of texts that were published as translations by the author (except for *Molloy*, published as a translation by the author with Patrick Bowles) can be charted but not decoded. Their permutations are not systematic. Some of the translated texts look like pieces of a puzzle that fit together around a missing piece. Beckett's work refutes some critics' attempts to read a single dominant principle of translation into its migrations between languages. These texts articulate and maintain an idiom that crosses the boundaries between French and English with a variety of solutions to the untranslatable: Beckett's translation operates as transformation, adaptation, and reinvention. In both languages, the limit that Beckett sets on the powers of language remains in effect.

A major paradox of Beckett's translations is this: only the fragmentary objects of language that register the presence of other texts and other voices in a world where silence is closing in can save that world from ruin. Elusive fragmentary objects of lan-

guage from the Other interrupt the passage toward silence and the monotonous rehearsal of death; these objects distract us from the strangeness of language, declared in *The Unnameable* and other texts. In most of Beckett's fiction, this strangeness allows death, dying, and an unnatural silence to invade the echoes of thoughts in an endlessly interiorized interior monologue. Beckett's work is a dialogue or a war between these two forms of otherness: borrowed text and the estrangement of language. An implicit dialogue occurs within many of the texts between a verbal and informal style and a highly literary one. On this level, Beckett can be compared to Céline as well as Joyce. While the tension between verbal and written styles inhabits Modernism, it occurs with a particular intensity in these writers.

Faced with Beckett's rendering of Otherness, the theoretical perspective on verbal art in society suggests the Francophone status of Beckett's French as an approach to French thought through another culture, through a linguistic identity that cannot be reduced to a sense of national identity, and through a textual form of *métissage*. Beckett's French and English texts emerge through each other, via translation. But even the term of translation needs to be questioned, since as Brian Fitch indicates, the differences that strike the reader of Beckett texts side by side, original language and translation, often occur on the basis of manuscript variants rather than a simple rejection of the original in favor of something else.<sup>3</sup> Another factor that complicates the question of translation in Beckett occurs in the context of Modernism: at the time of Beckett's early experiments in auto-translation, Ezra Pound had written literary adaptations of works from a number of languages and called them "translations." Most of Beckett's translations of French poems for publication include elements that resemble Pound's free-form poetic adaptation.

### Boundaries

The crossing of boundaries characterizes Beckett's themes: birth and death, living and speaking in present and past, memory and fabrication, living on the edges of society, entering and leaving strange establishments, getting thrown out, crossings in daily life,

writing and crossing out, and most insistently interior monologue alternating with silences and spoken language. In English and French, Beckett focuses on the crossing of boundaries within language: tones, registers, sound and meaning, words and musical form, four-letter words spoken or not, quotations and allusions to other texts taken to extreme or strange connotations, thinking aloud or inserting written words into speech, speaking words that cannot be understood by listeners, and especially the unexpected effects of words, unspoken meaning and thought, and silence on the strange and isolated characters who live in Beckett's world.

On stage and in fiction, monologue turns into dialogue or indirect discourse, and back into monologue; from the perspective of English and French, interpretation and adaptation combine with translation. Anglo-Irish resonances permeate Beckett's French as well as his English. This historical and cultural variation on Beckett's French, generally assumed to be standard Parisian, has been underscored by bilingual critics. It might reclassify his writing as essentially Francophone, i.e. writing in French that is inhabited (and articulated) by a cultural and linguistic Other. Anglo-Irish English is turned back into French, outside of Ireland. Living in London in 1933, Beckett commented: "they always know you're an Irishman. . . . They call you Pat" (). The cultural and linguistic Other obviously enters Beckett's English, reclassified among the Anglo-Irish writing that connects Beckett to Joyce, another expatriate, and to an Irish comic tradition that David Hayman, Vivian Mercier, Ruby Cohn, and Marilyn Gaddis Rose have explored.

### Choosing French?

Beckett writes and translates, or rather, adapts, revises and transforms his works across language. Beckett's choice of language has produced a remarkably strange commonplace: it has been said on both sides of the Channel (and the Atlantic) that because French is not Beckett's native language, because he learned it after his childhood, his use of it is "conscious," deliberate, and representative of his will and his choice. In this view, Beckett writing in

French is liberated from the taboos that afflict the speaker of a native language. But a second language, if it has been learned, is neither more nor less conscious than the language that Jean-Jacques Mayoux describes as having been absorbed with the mother's milk. Mayoux evokes Beckett's "excretions" directed at "la langue de la tribu" 'the language of a community.' It is not clear whether the shared language refers to Beckett's use of French, English, or both languages. He comments: "The freedom that he takes from that point on with respect to language is the varying distance that irony offers: we can see the advantage offered to him by French, a language that he had not been forced to swallow with his mother's milk when he could not shield himself from it, but that, on the contrary, he had accepted piece by piece at the level of critical consciousness" (Mayoux 135).<sup>4</sup>

Mayoux is a subtle reader and a pioneer critic in his essays on Joyce, Beckett, and English art, but his assumptions about language and his interpretation of Beckett's relation to language are problematic in several ways. First, the erotic associations of language may affect connotation, but they are not more consciously determined in the case of a second language than they are in a native language. Like the musical phenomena of voice, timbre, and silence, the signifiers of vocal eroticism seem to cross from one language to another. Second, the notion that learning a second language brings a critical faculty to bear on the elements of that language seems to deny the systematic character of language and to assume that an adult language learner can pick and choose among the pieces of that system.

The affinity between language and the unconscious that Freud and Lacan explore suggests the impossibility of conscious access to the system of language: for the speaker, only fragments and traces can be apprehended. The non-native speaker of a language may have a more acute idea of the strangeness of that language than the native speaker, but Beckett's focus on the Other allows him access to the dimension of strangeness that shapes English as well as French. Maddy Rooney's strange speech patterns in *All That Fall* (*Tous ceux qui tombent*) illustrate this dimension of otherness as it affects others' perceptions of how she speaks her own

“native” language, the English spoken near Dublin and Foxrock. She worries about the reactions of others to her spoken English, and her husband suggests that she sounds as if she were speaking a dead language.

While Mayoux affirms the differences between Beckett’s French and English, he also states that Beckett writes with “one voice” and that “he developed his writing analogously in each language” (134). One voice produces two written languages, each analogous to the other. It is as if neither language came first, in Mayoux’s view, but also it is as if the two languages were to unite through analogy. Brian Fitch gives a more accurate account of this paradoxical relationship when he suggests that Beckett’s texts in English and French for a given work represent a single work in two versions.

Beckett gave several answers to the question of why he chose to write in French; the shifting back and forth between English and French through the author’s “self-translations” seems to shock critics less than his initial shift away from his native language. The question can be rephrased as follows: Beckett’s choice of French over English is followed by a choice of both English and French. Beckett’s answers to the question of “why write in French” are of interest not as answers to an impossible question but because of the way he describes writing in French. If the question of “why does Beckett translate his work from one language to the other?” is asked, one answer might be that this question is also an impossible one, since Beckett’s adapted versions with discrete permutations seem to pursue the process of writing over the border of language and culture. Given Joyce’s influence on the early Beckett, and given Beckett’s fluent German, the question of language choice can be raised in a broader context, e.g. “why does Beckett limit his self-translations to French and English?”

Beckett’s chosen focus is on two languages: the evolution of his writing has tended toward a rigorous separation of each from the other, at least on the level of a native speaker’s perception. This tendency may explain why Beckett did not completely acknowledge his earliest works, or allow them to be translated. His rigorous separation of texts in English from texts in French is a

refusal of the Joycean evolution away from the clear demarcation of English in early texts, like *Dubliners*, toward the multitude of languages that Joyce uses as the Masterbuilder of language, constructing a fantasmatic tower like Babel. Beckett, however, begins his own writing at the moment when he strikes down the fantasy of knowledge and claims to know nothing. The only Babel is the lower-case modest one of Sapo's inchoate feelings, raging around his head in a mixed metaphor, and perhaps only because Beckett did not find a satisfying English equivalent for the slur of *charabia* with its Flaubertian echoes of "charivari" and "charbovary."

A number of critics asked Beckett why he chose to write in French. He is quoted as answering that he was poorer in the French language, and also, in deliberately imperfect French, to get some attention: "pour faire remarquer moi." This phrase is an imperfect rendering of "to draw attention to me" in the words of a second-language speaker of French, perhaps a German or an American tourist on shaky ground with disjunctive pronouns. The notion of linguistic poverty might indicate the effort necessary to translate English texts into French, or to construct texts first in French, a second language, and later in English. But since Beckett returned subsequently to the writing of some first versions in English, the paradoxes of poverty in French and original writing in a second language remain open. "Pour faire remarquer moi" is and is not a little joke about grammar by a non-native speaker: Beckett approaches the impossible object from a position of disjunction, the fall out of transparency, into the dark of language.

Distanced from the norm, his creations enter the dimly lit pathways of the Other. Their minds are fogged with paradoxes, incomprehensible thoughts, and questions that no one can answer. In Malone's words: "A bright light is not necessary, a taper is all one needs to live in strangeness, if it faithfully burns." After beginning the story of Sapo in an effort to pass the time, he adds: "And on the threshold of being no more I succeed in being another. Very pretty" (*Malone Dies* 182, 194).<sup>5</sup> The unknown identity of the Other, who is and is not the self-portrait of the speaker, is evoked with the ironic tone that can be heard in Beckett's quip about writing in French to get some attention for "moi." A burn-

ing candle gives a barely minimal amount of light to “live” in the darkness surrounding the strange and unnatural Other. As a human likeness or an analogy for the self, the Other takes as many forms as Hamlet’s cloud in III: ii, and like that cloud puts identity itself into question. Beckett reduces the Cartesian self, the thinking and being of the intellect, to the abject and barely living Malone, quasi-entombed in a bed, without a memory of arriving at the institution that treats him by turns like a hospital patient, a madman, a corpse in a tomb, and a sociopathic criminal in prison. Malone writes: he further estranges the poor ghost of human existence into the equally reduced human likeness of Sapo. Thinking, being, and self are minimalized in this fictional shadow that Beckett projects onto the pages of Malone’s notebook. The “name” of Sapo, the self washed clean of human connection, is without the markers of identity. Beckett’s creatures pull us outside the recognizable borders of exile and homeland on an excursion to the watery coast of strangeness, the Outside, where all hell breaks loose. That “place” is where Beckett takes us in the last episode of *Malone Dies*.

## Notes

1. The French reads: “Alors il regrettait de ne pas avoir voulu apprendre l’art de penser . . . et de ne rien entendre, ou si peu, au charabia de doutes, désirs, imaginations et craintes qui déferlaient dans sa tête” (*Malone meurt* 30).
2. “Write for one voice. Cri à blanc” (Beckett, *Disjecta* 56).
3. See *Beckett and Babel*.
4. My translation. The French reads: “La liberté qu’il reprend dès lors face au langage est celle de varier la distance d’ironie: on voit l’avantage que lui donnait le français qu’on ne lui avait pas fait avaler avec le lait maternel quand il ne pouvait s’en défendre, mais qu’au contraire il avait accepté pièce à pièce au stade de la conscience critique.”
5. The French reads: “La grande clarté n’est pas nécessaire, une faible lumière permet de vivre dans l’étrange, une petite lumière fidèle” and “Et à la veille de ne plus être j’arrive à être un autre. Ce qui ne manque pas de sel” (*Malone meurt* 13, 32).

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