

# Samuel Beckett:

## An Inventory of His Papers in the Carlton Lake Collection at the Harry Ransom Center

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### Descriptive Summary

<b>Creator:</b>	Beckett, Samuel, 1906-1989
<b>Title:</b>	Carlton Lake Collection of Samuel Beckett Papers
<b>Dates:</b>	1947-2000
<b>Extent:</b>	3 boxes (1.26 linear feet)
<b>Abstract:</b>	The Samuel Beckett Papers in the Carlton Lake Collection consist of manuscripts and proofs of Beckett's works, letters to various correspondents, correspondence and works associated with the authors of the first extensive bibliography of Beckett, and a few third-party works. Works included are generally brief monologues and prose passages in French or English.
<b>Call Number:</b>	Manuscript Collection MS-04960
<b>Languages:</b>	Material written in English and French.
<b>Note:</b>	The Ransom Center gratefully acknowledges the assistance of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, which provided funds for the processing and cataloging of this collection.
<b>Access</b>	Open for research.

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### Administrative Information

<b>Acquisition</b>	Carlton Lake Collection, purchase and gift, 1981-2001.
<b>Processed by</b>	Monique Daviau, Richard Workman, and Catherine Stollar, 2004
<b>Repository:</b>	<a href="#">Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin</a>

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## Biographical Sketch

Samuel Barclay Beckett was born April 13, 1906, at his family's home in Foxrock, south of Dublin. He was educated at Miss Ida Elsner's Academy in Stillorgan, the Earlsfort House School in Dublin, and the Portora Royal School in Enniskillen, Northern Ireland (1919-23). He began his law studies at Trinity College in order to become an accountant in his family's architectural surveyance firm, but in his third year he started studying modern languages, particularly French. His studies improved so markedly that he won a scholarship to pass the summer in France before his senior year, and he graduated first in his class in modern languages in 1927.

Following his graduation, Beckett taught at Campbell College in Belfast (1927-1928) and the École Normale Supérieure in Paris (1928-1930). During his stay in Paris, he established relationships with many important literary figures of his day, including Thomas MacGreevy, Richard Aldington, Brian Coffey, Denis Devlin, George Reavey, Samuel Putnam, Nancy Cunard, Sylvia Beach, and, most significantly for Beckett, James Joyce.

Beckett's early writings such as *Whoroscope* (1930), *Proust* (1931), *More Pricks than Kicks* (1934), *Echo's Bones and Other Precipitates* (1935), and *Murphy* (1938) won him neither fame nor money. Despite his love for Paris and his periodic stays in Germany, France, and London, Beckett's financial straits repeatedly constrained him to return to live with his disapproving family in Dublin, where he became subject to mental breakdowns and frequent, severe bouts of depression.

Throughout the 1930s and early 1940s, Beckett worked as a reviewer and translator for various magazines and projects, including Nancy Cunard's *Negro Anthology* (1934). He became increasingly interested in modern drama as he observed productions of the Dramiks, a Dublin troupe, and contemplated writing his own dramas. In October 1940, he became a member of the French Resistance, and he and Suzanne Deschevaux-Dumesnil (whom he married in 1961) were forced to flee to unoccupied France in August 1942. The French rewarded his resistance in 1945 with the Croix de Guerre and the Médaille de la Résistance.

During the late 1940s, Beckett began to write many of his works in French, including *Molloy* (1951), *Malone meurt* (1951), and the play that finally won him international fame, *En attendant Godot* (1952). Other works that helped to establish Beckett's reputation include *L'Innomable* (1953), *Watt* (1953), *Fin de partie* (1957), and *Krapp's Last Tape* (1960). After 1960, Beckett's works became increasingly brief, but he remained prolific until his death on December 22, 1989. Beckett was awarded the Nobel Prize in 1969.

The two Beckett scholars John Fletcher and Raymond Federman spent a decade compiling the first large-scale bibliography of their subject, *Samuel Beckett: his works and his critics*; an essay in bibliography (1970), with Beckett's personal assistance.

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## Sources:

For further information on the life and writings of Samuel Beckett, see:

Andonian, Cathleen Culotta. *Samuel Beckett, A Reference Guide*. Boston: G.K. Hall, 1989.

Bair, Dierdre. "Samuel Beckett." *Dictionary of Literary Biography*. Detroit: Gale Research Company, 1982. 13.1: 52-70 and 15.1: 13-32.

Knowlson, James. *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996.

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## Scope and Contents

The Samuel Beckett Papers in the Carlton Lake Collection, 1947-2000, consist of manuscripts and proofs of Beckett's works, letters to various correspondents, correspondence and works associated with the authors of the first extensive bibliography of Beckett, and a few third-party works.

The archive is organized in four series: I. Works, 1951-1983; II. Outgoing Correspondence, 1947-1989; III. John Fletcher, 1961-1989; and IV. Works by Other Authors and Miscellaneous, 1994, 2000. Works are generally brief monologues and prose passages, in French or in English. Beckett gave "8" the provisional title of *The Way*, and in certain drafts, Beckett repositioned the "8" to look like the infinity symbol.

Beckett's letters to Parisian journalist and novelist Georges Belmont are in French and span nearly forty years. They primarily discuss Beckett's daily life, travels, and what he was reading or viewing on the stage. The (English) correspondence to former-convict-turned-actor Rick Cluchey is written almost entirely on postcards and concerns the staging of Beckett's plays during the 1980s, both those in which Cluchey was involved as well as other productions. The brief correspondence with Marilyn Meeker of Grove Press is in English. The largest collection of letters are those to Mania Péron, the widow of his friend Alfred Péron who was killed in World War II. The correspondence, in French, covers almost forty years and includes many references to his work.

Series III is composed of papers formerly belonging to scholar John Fletcher, coauthor with Raymond Federman of *Samuel Beckett: His Works and His Critics; An Essay in Bibliography* (1970). Included are the manuscripts of three other works by Fletcher concerning Beckett: an unpublished notebook and two subsequently published books, *The Novels of Samuel Beckett* (1964) and *A Student's Guide to the Plays of Samuel Beckett* (1978). Correspondence in this series includes both incoming and outgoing letters. Fletcher's correspondence with Beckett began with Beckett's helpful responses to Fletcher's requests for information about his works, but over time the two men grew to

be close friends. Letters between Fletcher and Federman (mostly in English but occasionally in French) concern both the bibliography they were jointly writing and their respective academic careers and personal lives. Other correspondents in this series (including Theodore Besterman, Nancy Cunard, Richard Ellmann, Hugh Ford, Stuart Gilbert, Peggy Guggenheim, and Jacques Putman) were either materially involved in the publication of the bibliography or were consulted in reference to Beckett's life or works.

Series IV contains a small scrap of music manuscript by Suzanne Beckett, who was a talented musician; Eoin O'Brien and Edith Fournier's "Some facts relating to the publication of Samuel Beckett's *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*", discussing the Black Cat Press's edition of the work; and printed material from a Beckett festival in Scotland in 2000.

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## Related Material

Other materials associated with Samuel Beckett may be found in the following collections at the Ransom Center: Nancy Cunard, Zdzislaw Czermanski, Leslie Daiken, Ronald Frederick Henry Duncan, English Stage Company at the Royal Court Theatre Correspondence, Stuart Gilbert, Joseph Maunsell Hone, Robert Guy Howarth, Mary Hutchinson, Hugh Kenner, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., Carlton Lake Art Collection, A. J. Leventhal, New Departures, George Reavey, Tom Stoppard, and the Library of T. Edward Hanley.

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## Index Terms

### Subjects

Authors, Irish--20th century.

Playwrights, Irish--20th century.

### Document Types

Postcards.

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**Series I. Works, 1951-1983, nd**

- Ceiling, signed handwritten drafts and notes with revisions, July 10-26, 1981; three typescripts with handwritten revisions, nd **Box-Folder** 17.1
- Collected Poems, 1930-1978*, corrected galley proofs **Bound Volume** BV3
- Collected Shorter Prose, 1945-1980*, corrected galley proofs **Bound Volume** BV4
- Company*, typescript fragment with author revisions, July 27, 1979(Paris) **Box-Folder** 17.2
- 8, handwritten drafts and notes with revisions, May 14, 181 **Box-Folder** 17.3
- Fin de partie*, printed text annotated by Beckett for 1970 edition by John Fletcher and Beryl Fletcher, nd **Box-Folder** 17.4
- Ill Seen, Ill Said*, signed typescript fragments with author revisions, 1981 **Box-Folder** 17.5
- [Molloy]*, incomplete typescript carbon copy, handwritten revisions, some in hand of Mania Péron, nd **Box-Folder** 17.6
- Mongrel mime for one old small (M), signed handwritten manuscript with revisions, nd **Box-Folder** 17.7
- [Murphy]*, incomplete typescript with author corrections, nd **Box-Folder** 17.8
- Solo*, signed typescript with author revisions, nd **Box-Folder** 17.9
- Texte pour rien -- I ("Conte") typescript carbon copy with author alterations, inscribed "à Mania," 1951nd **Box-Folder** 17.10
- Textes pour rien, photocopy of material from the second notebook, from Reading University Library, nd **Box-Folder** 17.11
- Trois poèmes **Box-Folder** 17.12
- [Watt], typescript carbon copy fragments with author additions, nd **Box-Folder** 17.13
- [Untitled monologue] "On my way here I said...", two handwritten versions, one signed, nd **Box-Folder** 17.14

**Series II. Outgoing Correspondence, 1946-1989**

Belmont, Georges, 1951-1989, nd	<b>Box-Folder 17.15</b>
Cluchey, Rick, 1983-1989	<b>Box-Folder 17.16-17</b>
Meeker, Marilyn, 1964-1970	<b>Box-Folder 17.18</b>
Péron, Mania	
1947-1951	<b>Box-Folder 17.19</b>
1952-1953	<b>Box-Folder 17.20</b>
1954-1965	<b>Box-Folder 17.21</b>
1969-1983	<b>Box-Folder 17.22</b>
Undated	<b>Box-Folder 17.23</b>

**Series III. John Fletcher, 1961-1989, nd**

## Subseries A. Works, 1961-1962, nd

Notebook #11, handwritten with notes laid in, 1961-1962	<b>Box-Folder</b> 18.1
<i>The Novels of Samuel Beckett</i> (1964), handwritten manuscript, nd	<b>Box-Folder</b> 18.2-3
<i>A Student's Guide to the Plays of Samuel Beckett</i> , nd	<b>Box-Folder</b> 18.4-5

## Subseries B. Correspondence, 1961-1989

A-F	<b>Box-Folder</b> 18.6
Beckett, Samuel	
1961-1962	<b>Box-Folder</b> 18.7
1963-1964	<b>Box-Folder</b> 18.8
1965-1966	<b>Box-Folder</b> 18.9
1967-1986	<b>Box-Folder</b> 19.1
Federman, Raymond	
1963	<b>Box-Folder</b> 19.2
1964	<b>Box-Folder</b> 19.3
1965	<b>Box-Folder</b> 19.4
1966	<b>Box-Folder</b> 19.5
1967	<b>Box-Folder</b> 19.6
1969	<b>Box-Folder</b> 19.7
1969	<b>Box-Folder</b> 19.8
1970-1989	<b>Box-Folder</b> 19.9
Undated	<b>Box-Folder</b> 19.10
Photocopies	<b>Box-Folder</b> 19.11

G-Z

**Box-Folder** 19.12

Photocopies

**Box-Folder** 19.13



**Series IV. Works by Other Authors and Miscellaneous, 1994, 2000**

Beckett, Suzanne, "J'aurai seize ans aux fleurs nouvelles..." song score, nd

**Box-Folder**  
19.14

O'Brien, Eoin and Edith Fournier, "Some facts relating to the publication of Samuel Beckett's *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*," typescript, 1994

**Box-Folder**  
19.15

"Beckett Time" brochure and program for festival in Scotland, 2000

**Box-Folder**  
19.16