Deirdre Bair:
A Preliminary Inventory of Her Collection of Samuel Beckett and Brian Coffey at
the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator:        Bair, Deirdre, 1935-
Title:          Deirdre Bair Collection of Samuel Beckett and Brian Coffey
Dates:          1971-1992
Extent:         1 document box (.42 linear feet)
Abstract:       Consisting primarily of materials related to Deirdre Bair's National
Book Award winning biography of Samuel Beckett (1978), this
collection contains correspondence between Bair and Beckett, Brian
Coffey, Henry Miller, Octavio Paz, David L. Diamond, and Peggy
Guggenheim, among others, and Bair's notes of eighty-two
interviews with Beckett and some of his family and acquaintances
such as Ann Beckett, Edward Beckett, Brian Coffey, Man Ray, and
Kay Boyle.

Call Number:    Manuscript Collection MS-5124
Language:       English
Access:         Open for research

Administrative Information

Acquisition:    Purchases, 2006 (R16494); 2009 (09-02-007-P)
Processed by:   Stephen Cooper, 2011

Note: This brief description is an accession record. The collection is
not fully processed or cataloged; no biographical sketch, descriptions
of series, or indexes are available.

Repository:     The University of Texas at Austin, Harry Ransom Center
Scope and Contents

Consisting primarily of materials related to Deirdre Bair's National Book Award winning biography of Samuel Beckett (1978), this collection contains twenty-one letters (1971-1977) between Bair and Beckett. The correspondence begins with Bair's introduction of herself and the scope of her proposed project and ends near to the completion of her research when, after a short time of seemingly ending his cooperation, Beckett agrees to let Bair include most of the original source material she sought his permission to publish.

Bair's correspondence with Beckett acquaintances includes approximately sixty letters (1972-1980) with Brian Coffey in which he discusses subjects including Beckett and old Dublin, his own work and family, and Bair's work and personal life. In other notable correspondence (1973-1992), all single and often short letters, Henry Miller, Octavio Paz, David L. Diamond, and Peggy Guggenheim, among others, recount their relationship with Beckett or lack thereof. Miller recalls he "hardly knew Beckett at all," and that the second time they met he found him "shy, reserved" and they "had little to say to one another."

Series I. Correspondence 1971-1992, undated

Deirdre Bair to Samuel Beckett, 1971-1972, undated  Container 1.1

Samuel Beckett to Deirdre Bair, 1971-1977  Container 1.2

Brian Coffey to Deirdre Bair, 1972-1980, undated  Container 1.3-1.4

Various recipients and correspondents, 1973-1992, undated  Container 1.5
Series II. Interview Notes 1971-1977

'B-F,' 1971-1975  Container 1.6
'G-L,' 1971-1974  Container 1.7
'O-R,' 1971-1976  Container 1.8
'S-W,' 1971-1977  Container 1.9