
Beckett’s interest in an aesthetic of elimination, reduction

*Krapp*: one character, single light, voices in the dark
form in part emanating from recognition of aporia
self as “unnameable”: not I, you, he, or she
diversity of selves w/ attenuated sense of core self
existential desire for authenticity & transcendence of self muted
still a fairly “realistic” frame
staged character understood to re-present script
internal correspondences between light, sound, action
Krapp names his space at beginning

in Müller, internal diversity/hybridity compounds difficulties of political identification
reimagining Hamlet in Cold War Eastern Europe
characters turn into characters, characters renounce themselves or their pasts,
characters blend as authorial voice, narration & action merge
divided self also emblematic of Cold War division of East & West Germany
Hamlet to Horatio: “a wall is growing between the two of us” (54)
Pest in Buda monologue: “I shake my fist at myself” (56); “the intellectual in conflict w/ history”
Artaud, anti-drama, anti-theatre, anti-representation?
“be again”
if mechanisms of power have thoroughly embedded themselves
in past masterpieces, in history, in language itself,
does act of re-presenting perpetuate such mechanisms
Müller: Literature to provide resistance to theatre
allusions to classic five-act form, but largely outside plot
difficulty of literal re-presenting of text a strategy for change,
clowningly begging directors and actor to deconstruct authority
of the text?
staging to collide w/ text to produce open space of
reading for audience?
yet still a musical sense of building, leitmotifs, and even
climax/anti-climax
and the aphoristic nature of the language, boldness of the
metaphors bespeaks authority
yet also a tissue of quotations; Benjamin on quotes
I. Family Scrapbook
   Prologue: Hamlet helps Uncle Claudius hump mother, wants a real sorrow, makes fun of Ghost dad;
   Ophelia: “look how she shakes her ass, a tragic character” (54)
   ends in a kind of maudlin self-pity for being born

II. The Europe of Women
   Ophelia talks back, but her revolution also insists on her victimization

III. Scherzo
   Hamlet embraces his feminization
   what is in H’s identification w/ women
   identification w/ the oppressed, w/ gender identity, w/ objectification outside of identity?
   breast cancer Madonna, Artaud’s Jet of Blood

iv. Pest in Buda/Battle for Greenland
   divided city
   long mono about conflicted political identity of artist/intellectual
   ritual nausea of the quotidian, the “pre-fabricated . . . GEMÜTLICHKEIT” (57)
   repulsion as a privilege; revolution in different languages

v. Fiercely Enduring Milleniums in the Fearful Armor
   Electra/Ophelia ends re-production and to some degree the illusion of productivity,
   the way being that learning to be a productive citizen is often at the expense of normalizing one’s behavior
Is this just an outcry of the self, an expression of internal pain?
   Not quite
dialectical humor, the thing is and is not, truth in contradiction
“I want to be a machine.” –Andy Warhol

Once you believe in character, what else is there?
Once a story is told, does it become like an object . . . Everything in its destined place
and nothing out of order.
   how create something where resolution does not turn the telling
of changes into the consequenceless?

Different reception in east & west
   critique of Eastern cult of statehead and statecraft?
fashionable pessimism in west?
anti-masterpiece became masterwork in West?
does this just become an historical image of despair?

Is there something besides irony here? Does some weird sincerity come out?
   If to be true to Brecht, one must betray him; when language is
thoroughly colonized by power, can one only speak truly by speaking in
tongues?
Underlying the sense of apocalypse and even producing it, the longing for utopia?

Are we invited to follow the command: “What thou killed thou shalt love” (55).

“Down with the happiness of submission… [then Squeaky Frome line] When she walks through your bedrooms carrying butcher knives you’ll know the truth.”

Marx on revolution, not something one has the privilege to wish for or choose, a necessity
For next time: Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*

How are *speech* and *language* different according to Saussure?

Chicken or the egg question: which come first, cognitive ideas or the words that name them?

What are the parts of the sign?

In what sense is the sign arbitrary?

George Carlin makes fun of people who tell others, “just say it in your own words.” What does Saussure say about individuals’ & groups’ ability to change language?