

## Samuel Beckett and the Prosthetic Body

# Samuel Beckett and the Prosthetic Body

The Organs and Senses in Modernism

Yoshiki Tajiri

palgrave  
macmillan



© Yoshiki Tajiri 2007

Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2007 978-0-230-00817-5

All rights reserved. No reproduction, copy or transmission of this publication may be made without written permission.

No paragraph of this publication may be reproduced, copied or transmitted save with written permission or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988, or under the terms of any licence permitting limited copying issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency, 90 Tottenham Court Road, London W1T 4LP.

Any person who does any unauthorised act in relation to this publication may be liable to criminal prosecution and civil claims for damages.

The author has asserted his right to be identified as the author of this work in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

First published 2007 by  
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS and  
175 Fifth Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010

Companies and representatives throughout the world

PALGRAVE MACMILLAN is the global academic imprint of the Palgrave Macmillan division of St. Martin's Press, LLC and of Palgrave Macmillan Ltd. Macmillan® is a registered trademark in the United States, United Kingdom and other countries. Palgrave is a registered trademark in the European Union and other countries.

ISBN 978-1-349-28377-4

ISBN 978-0-230-62496-2 (eBook)

DOI 10.1057/9780230624962

This book is printed on paper suitable for recycling and made from fully managed and sustained forest sources.

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Tajiri, Yoshiki.

Samuel Beckett and the prosthetic body: the organs and senses  
in modernism / Yoshiki Tajiri.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Beckett, Samuel, 1906–1989—Criticism and interpretation.
2. Body, Human, in literature.
3. Senses and sensation in literature.
4. Technology in literature.
5. Literature and technology.
6. Modernism (Literature)—Great Britain. I. Title.

PR6003.E282Z842 2006

848'.91409—dc22

2006046059

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1  
16 15 14 13 12 11 10 09 08 07

*For my Father*

# Contents

|                                                                    |            |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <i>Acknowledgements</i>                                            | ix         |
| <b>Introduction</b>                                                | <b>1</b>   |
| <b>1 The Prosthetic Body and Sexuality</b>                         | <b>13</b>  |
| The masturbation machine in <i>Dream of Fair to Middling Women</i> | 13         |
| Beckett and the bachelor machine                                   | 19         |
| The attempt to dam up flows                                        | 24         |
| The machine and sexuality in Beckett's later work                  | 30         |
| <b>2 The Question of Boundaries</b>                                | <b>40</b>  |
| The body parts as prostheses                                       | 41         |
| Confusion of the organs                                            | 47         |
| The instability of the body's surface                              | 54         |
| A critique of Deleuze and Guattari's discussions of Beckett        | 63         |
| <b>3 The Prosthetic Body and Synaesthesia</b>                      | <b>75</b>  |
| Fragmentation of the body and synaesthesia                         | 76         |
| Technology and the transformation of the senses: three theories    | 83         |
| Synaesthesia in Beckett's early work                               | 91         |
| Synaesthesia in Beckett's later work                               | 101        |
| <b>4 The Camera Eye</b>                                            | <b>109</b> |
| Beckett and the cinema                                             | 110        |
| The camera eye/the naked eye                                       | 116        |
| The double and self-reflexivity                                    | 122        |
| <i>Ill Seen Ill Said</i>                                           | 133        |

|                                                                           |            |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|
| <b>5 The Prosthetic Voice</b>                                             | <b>138</b> |
| Beckett, Derrida, telecommunication                                       | 140        |
| Communication over distance: <i>The Unnamable</i> and<br><i>How It Is</i> | 145        |
| The prosthetic voice and the ghostly                                      | 151        |
| The interpenetration between the material and the<br>immaterial           | 156        |
| <br><i>Notes</i>                                                          | <br>169    |
| <i>References</i>                                                         | 190        |
| <i>Index</i>                                                              | 197        |

# Acknowledgements

First and foremost I would like to thank my former supervisor, Steven Connor, for working with me on the research project that formed the basis of this book. I am happy to have been part of the growing body of what I like to call 'the Steven Connor School'. My thanks also go to Mary Bryden and Andrew Gibson, whose warm encouragement and incisive comments helped me a great deal. I have benefited much from associating with several members of the London Beckett Seminar. In particular I am grateful to Daniela Caselli for giving me extremely timely advice, without which I might not have published this book.

Before going to London I studied English literature at the University of Tokyo. I decided to do so simply because the late Yasunari Takahashi, the founder of Beckett studies in Japan, was teaching there. My debt to him, both academic and personal, is beyond words. I strongly wish I could show him this modest fruit of my research. I have also been given considerable help by my fellow members of the Samuel Beckett Research Circle in Japan. I would especially thank Minako Okamuro for reading a large part of the typescript and offering useful suggestions. I should also point out that I was in part aided by the Japanese Grant-in-Aid for Scientific Research.

Despite its old age, my IBM Think Pad served me to the end as a positive prosthesis. Last but not least, I express my heart-felt gratitude to my wife and children for their support.

The author and publishers wish to thank John Calder Ltd for permission to quote from *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* and *The Unnamable*. Much shorter versions of Chapters 1 and 3 appeared in the journal *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui*, vols 11 (2001) and 12 (2002), and a condensed Japanese version of Chapter 4 appeared as a chapter in *The Vision and Movement of Samuel Beckett* (ed. Kojin Kondo; Tokyo: Michitani, 2005). The author and publisher are grateful for permission to reprint those works here.

YOSHIKI TAJIRI