Linked to the Centre for Modern European Literature at the University of Kent, UK, this series offers a space for new research that challenges the limitations of national, linguistic and cultural borders within Europe and engages in the comparative study of literary traditions in the modern period.

More information about this series at
http://www.palgrave.com/gp/series/14610

Olga Beloborodova
Dirk Van Hulle • Pim Verhulst
Editors

Beckett and Modernism

palgrave
macmillan

Editors
Olga Beloborodova
University of Antwerp
Antwerp, Belgium

Dirk Van Hulle
University of Antwerp
Antwerp, Belgium

Pim Verhulst
University of Antwerp
Antwerp, Belgium

Palgrave Studies in Modern European Literature
ISBN 978-3-319-70373-2 ISBN 978-3-319-70374-9 (eBook)
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-70374-9

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017960185

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s) 2018
This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.
The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.
The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, express or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Cover illustration: Granger Historical Picture Archive / Alamy Stock Foto

Printed on acid-free paper

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer International Publishing AG part of Springer Nature
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Acknowledgements

First of all, we would like to thank all the contributors to the second annual conference of the Samuel Beckett Society (exploring the theme of Beckett and modernism), which took place at the University of Antwerp from 27 to 30 April 2016. The present volume is the result of the many fruitful discussions that were held during this event and the chapters were carefully commissioned to cover a broad spectrum of time, authors, and topics with respect to Beckett and modernism. In particular, we are grateful to Edward Beckett for attending the conference and for endorsing the project.

We would also like to extend our thanks to Fordham University Press, New York, for their kind permission to quote from Jean-Michel Rabaté's 2016 book *Think, Pig! Beckett at the Limit of the Human* in his chapter, and to the Russian State Archive of Literature and Art in Moscow for their permission to quote letters from Nancy Cunard and Robert Herring to Sergei Eisenstein in the chapter by Galina Kiryushina, and to include a facsimile of Samuel Beckett's letter to Sergei Eisenstein as a frontispiece to her chapter.

Lastly, we would like to acknowledge the University of Antwerp's support of this publication with a TOPBOF grant for the project entitled 'Literature and the Extended Mind: A Reassessment of Modernism'. The research leading to these results has also received funding from the European Research Council under the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013)/ERC grant agreement no. 313609.

Contents

Introduction
Negative Modernism: Beckett's Poetics of Pejorism and Literary Enactment 1
Dirk Van Hulle

How Beckett Has Modified Modernism: From Beckett to Blanchot and Bataille 19
Jean-Michel Rabaté

From Language Revolution to Literature of the Unword: Beckett as Late Modernist 37
Shane Weller

Late and Belated Modernism: Duchamp...Stein.Feininger.. Beckett 53
Conor Carville

Beckett and Joyce: Two Nattering Nabobs of Negativity 69
Sam Slote

Beckett, Lewis, Joyce: Reading *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* through *The Apes of God* and *Ulysses* 81
José Francisco Fernández

'Omniscience and omnipotence': *Molloy* and the End of 'Joyceology' 95
Andy Wimbush

'A new occasion, a new term of relation': Samuel Beckett and T. S. Eliot 111
William Davies

'The gantelope of sense and nonsense run': *Echo's Bones and Other Precipitates* in the 1930s 129
Onno Kosters

Schenectady Putters and Leaving Certificate Ta-Tas: Satirizing Irish Nation-Building in 'Echo's Bones' 147
Feargal Whelan

Samuel Beckett's 'Le Concentrisme' and the Modernist Literary Hoax 161
Paul Fagan

Theoretical and Theatrical Intersections: Samuel Beckett, Herbert Blau, Civil Rights, and the Politics of *Godot* 179
S. E. Gontarski

Samuel Beckett and Modern Dance 193
Evelyne Clavier

'Execrations on another plane': Film Theory in *Close Up* and Beckett's Late Prose 209
Galina Kiryushina

'Temporarily sane': Beckett, Modernism, and the Ethics of Suicide 223
Ulrika Maude

Broadcasting the Mind: Extended Cognition in Beckett's Radio Plays 239
Olga Beloborodova and Pim Verhulst

References 259

Index 283

Beckett, Lewis, Joyce: Reading *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* through *The Apes of God* and *Ulysses*

José Francisco Fernández

There is no shortage of critical studies on the coming of age of Samuel Beckett as a writer and on how he needed to surpass James Joyce in order to find his own voice.[1] Special emphasis has often been placed on the inner conflict that this situation provoked in the young Beckett, an ambivalent position in which he admired Joyce deeply, yet felt the need to break free of his influence:

> Convinced of his own inferiority, but cursed with the deep need to assert himself in spite of his convictions, Beckett could not take a stable view of the situation in which he found himself [...]. Every impulse in one direction found itself countermanded by a regressive pull in another, which then itself became subject to an alternative move, with the abiding threat being the discontinuance of writing. (Pilling 2004: 4)

I would like to introduce a further, complicating element in the Beckett–Joyce equation, that of the figure of Wyndham Lewis, as I believe his role in Beckett's emancipation from his master was far from peripheral. In

J. F. Fernández (✉)
University of Almería, Almería, Spain

© The Author(s) 2018
O. Beloborodova et al. (eds.), *Beckett and Modernism*, Palgrave Studies in Modern European Literature,
https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-70374-9_6

addressing the triangle formed by these authors, the impression is that, in more ways than one, 'Beckett follows a path previously travelled by Lewis' (Terrazas 2001: 51). In his relation with Joyce, Lewis was for Beckett not necessarily a model to be followed, but certainly a testing ground. Beckett was a late witness to the controversy resulting from Lewis's criticism of Joyce and his work, and I suggest that he drew significant lessons from the whole affair. It is interesting to note, for instance, that it was Lewis who had voiced criticism of *Ulysses* in the early days, and that *Ulysses* occurs less frequently, but also less positively, in Beckett's critical writing and letters than other works by Joyce.[2]

The influence of Lewis on Beckett has been discussed widely, with traits in Lewis's major works often seen as having left some kind of imprint on Beckett's key plays. For example, after examining a fragment of dialogue in *The Apes of God* (1930), Tyrus Miller notices 'the similarity (which may indicate influence)' between certain passages in Lewis's novel and 'Beckett's free floating dialogues in *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame*' (1999: 242). As Miller explains, 'Both Lewis and Beckett explore the seepage of theater into human relations, rendering action inconsequential and conversation unreal' (242). Lewis's *The Childermass* (1928) also left its mark on *Waiting for Godot*, according to Dennis Brown: 'For in its stark scenario, comedic apparatus, and infantilised dialogue it set a precedent for a future Nobel prize-winner' (1990: 117). Likewise, Yoshiki Tajiri points to the evident similarities between Pullman and Satters, the protagonists of *The Childermass*, and Mercier and Camier, on the one hand, and Vladimir and Estragon, on the other. In Tajiri's reading, Lewis's characters become the precursors to Beckett's pseudocouple, in that they too are seen moving aimlessly, are unable to separate, and do not quite understand the reality around them (2013: 216–218). Melania Terrazas has also addressed the commonalities between Lewis's *Enemy of the Stars* (1914) and Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*, with Lewis again establishing a precedent for 'many of the aesthetic forms and situations' that appear in the piece by Beckett: '*Enemy of the Stars* and *Waiting for Godot* meet in their shared aesthetic rebellion against the institutional machinery of their respective times' (2001: 51–52).

These and other scholars have found parallel motives, precedents, and similar treatments of topics in Lewis and in the mature Beckett, but my interest here is in earlier influences, dating back to the period when Beckett was engaged in his first attempt at long-form fiction, *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, an aspect of their relationship that has hitherto

not been considered. I would suggest that Lewis's novel *The Apes of God* exerted more than just a tenuous influence on the young author. The points in common between *Apes* and *Dream* seem to me to indicate that Beckett had digested Lewis's novel, that he took some ideas and copied certain expressions (as a means of indicating that *Apes* was indeed an influence), and that he tried to exceed its scope and ambition, including *Ulysses* into the bargain. It is my contention that when Beckett was writing *Dream*, a novel which contains many parodic elements of *Ulysses*, he was aware of what Lewis had done in *Apes*, a novel which also takes Joyce's book as a negative model: by parodying Lewis he would in turn be able to avoid *Ulysses* directly. In his efforts to escape the genius of Joyce and pursue his own career, Beckett used Lewis's novel as a fulcrum to prise *Ulysses* from his immediate path. Lewis's criticism of the kind of fiction represented by Joyce would also act as a warning for Beckett, so that he would not repeat the 'mistakes' that Joyce had made in the composition of his novel.

The situation becomes further enmeshed in the sense that, even though Beckett might have recognized Lewis's talent and accepted the soundness of some of his lines of attack on Joyce, he certainly did not feel any affinity with the much older English writer. Mark Nixon notes that Beckett 'loathed Wyndham Lewis's writing' (2007: 214) and Yoshiki Tajiri is emphatic in his claim, 'it is clear that Beckett had no [such] intention' of betraying Joyce (2013: 221).[3] In both character and ideology, Beckett was very much the antithesis of Lewis. Let us take as a starting point the year of 1932, when Beckett was writing *Dream* and had experienced at first-hand the aftermath of the commotion created by Lewis's venomous attacks on Joyce with his pamphlet 'The Enemy' and with his book *Time and Western Man* (both published in 1927). The differences between Beckett and Lewis at this time were enormous. Lewis, then aged 50, was an established author and had a justly earned reputation as a polemicist:

> From about 1914 to 1934 he was the self-declared 'Enemy' of seemingly the whole sociocultural panorama; to a degree unusual even in modernism, his procedure was antagonistic, consisting of endless negations, refusals, impertinences, provocations—and sparing few of the shibboleths of the emergent modernist canon itself. (English 1994: 69)

He had a rich life experience, including his time as a soldier in the First World War, plus his background as a visual artist (he had been the most

prominent member of Vorticism), and since an early age he had emerged as someone highly aware of his public image. He was a man with a strong, determined character who could also be intimidating, unafraid of other people's opinions. Politically, he had strong inclinations towards fascism. He had envisaged a breakthrough for an exhausted democracy, which he despised, through the leadership of an elite, and was 'committed to the great man theory of history and to the defense of "intelligence" in the face of the rising tide of mass mediocrity' (Jameson 2008: 30).

Meanwhile, in 1932, Beckett was just 26, but by no means an innocent. He had been brought up in a well-off family in a comfortable Protestant neighbourhood in Dublin, had received a fine education at Trinity College Dublin, was fluent in French and Italian, and had done his share of travelling. He also spent two years at the heart of the artistic avant-garde of Paris, had been in touch with the Surrealists, had become part of Joyce's inner circle, had for a brief time been a lecturer at Trinity College Dublin, and had published a book on Proust, among other critical pieces. But, ideologically speaking, Beckett came from a different universe altogether than Lewis: his politics, for instance, were much more circumscribed to Ireland, the place he had recently left and where he had experienced first-hand the repressive nationalism of the authorities. The social class he belonged to was deeply isolated in his native country, and this very much affected his attempts at writing fiction. His work went beyond the 'marginalised location occupied by southern Protestants who, despite their traditionally privileged position, faced ever more pressing questions about their place in Irish society and even their fundamental "Irishness"' (Bixby 2013: 66). In short, Lewis was a man of the world with a vast experience in many fields of life, and with extreme political views that encompassed the whole of Western civilization; for Beckett, on the contrary, 'all he had to go on at the level of his own experience was his intellectual life in Paris, an abortive love affair in Germany and the shock of returning to the circumscribed social life of Dublin' (Pilling 1997: 58).

Lewis's politics were surely inimical to Beckett, as would have been his arrogance. All in all, he probably saw in the English writer an adversary of a superior kind, someone he could not confront directly. He might have considered that Lewis, as the declared enemy of Joyce, somehow operated at a higher level. But the young writer was also aware that Lewis had embarked alone on the task of dismantling the literature of the sacred cows of his day. Beckett, who had been a modest, lukewarm advocate of modernist writing (in his 1929 essay 'Dante...Bruno.Vico..Joyce', and in his 1931 book *Proust*), therefore knew of the existence of a radical author who was utterly destroying modernism, and this might have given him food for thought, showing that there were ways of breaking with a tradition in which he did not fit, even though he did not subscribe to Lewis's methods.

When Beckett was introduced to James Joyce and his circle in November 1928, and in subsequent months, during which he strengthened his contact with him, Lewis's attack on the author of *Ulysses* from the previous year was probably still reverberating: 'Given that Beckett's initial involvement with both Joyce and the *transition* circle dates from these years', writes Tyrus Miller, 'it is difficult to imagine he would not have been familiar with the venomous attacks of Lewis on his master and idol and on his new literary acquaintances' (1999: 192). Lois Gordon is of the same opinion: 'Beckett would have borne witness to Joyce's great disappointment when people like Pound, Valéry Larbaud, H. G. Wells, and Wyndham Lewis told him that *Finnegans Wake* was a hopeless puzzle and a literary dead end' (1996: 74). Surely, Beckett felt sympathy for Joyce regarding what Lewis had written in 'An Analysis of the Mind of James Joyce'—chapter 16 of *Time and Western Man*—in that he had gone beyond literary criticism and produced rather insulting remarks: 'in general [Lewis] treated him [Joyce] as an Irish parvenu' (Ellmann 1982: 595).

Lewis's main line of attack on Joyce was that he represented parochial Ireland and that he had a petit bourgeois mentality; the result of the Irish struggle for independence had been in fact the triumph of mediocrity, clearly exemplified in Joyce's writings: 'Joyce is the poet of the shabby-genteel, impoverished intellectualism of Dublin. His world is the small middle-class one, decorated with a little futile "culture", and the supper and dance-party in *The Dead*' (Lewis 1993: 75). Stylistically, the salient feature of provincialism is the predominance of the picturesque, and *Ulysses* was, for Lewis, a book that abounded in local-colour details. For Lewis a true artist was defined as a radical innovator who did not need to turn to the past to recreate a particular atmosphere, but advanced towards the future with bold creativity; Joyce, then, had simply remained behind in his cosy little world. Here lies the second line of attack on *Ulysses*, that it was a 'time-book' (1993: 81), Lewis describing it as part of the modern tendency of delving into the past, very much influenced by the theories of Henri Bergson with his ideas of duration in time, and thus preventing a major breakthrough in art. *Ulysses*, with its stream of consciousness (its detailed description of Leopold Bloom's universe, for

instance), mixing past and present in a continuous exercise of memory, encapsulated for Lewis the worst feature of modern art, its complacency and its blurring of individuality in favour of a bland sense of humanity: 'In duration, all becomes "flux", a stream of undifferentiated "life" that submerges personality and swamps cognition' (Currie 1974: 125).

In his criticism of Joyce and also in his own writing, Lewis was in fact expanding on what he had been theorizing for some years in a general evaluation of modern methods of representing reality, criticizing among other things the practice of the 'inner method' that resulted in a continuation of romanticism and naturalism in literature, favouring the uncritical amalgamation of a shapeless mass of memories instead of depicting action or making a sharp analysis of reality based on the present moment. The latter, for Lewis, was the kind of art that was relevant for his day, and in this sense his training as a visual artist, focused mainly on spatial representation, informed his literary outlook. The internal method, he wrote in *Men without Art* (1934), had 'robbed Mr. Joyce's work as a whole of all linear properties whatever, considered as a plastic thing—of all contour and definition in fact' (Lewis 1987: 99). As it will be seen later, with *The Apes of God* he had already devised his practical proposal for the new literature.

Beckett soon found himself involved in the controversy between Lewis and Joyce when in December 1928 his master encouraged him to write an article in defence of 'Work in Progress', a literary project to which Beckett had provided some minor assistance. Beckett's essay 'Dante...Bruno. Vico..Joyce' was published in the June 1929 issue of the journal *transition* and appeared the same year in the collected volume *Our Exagmination Round his Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress*. The question of loyalty must not be underestimated here; that was indeed the main reason why Beckett and others wrote in defence of Joyce's book. As Sam Slote has argued, 'Work in Progress' was a text that they only knew partially; they lacked a general overview of its structure, and therefore they could offer only a description based on suppositions:

> The essays were meant [...] to defend and illustrate Joyce's new artistic project against the various attacks and cries of exasperation that were even then beginning to issue. And so the various contributors were tasked by the inscrutable Joyce with explaining and supporting something to which they had only limited and imperfect access. (2010: 15)

Drew Milne (2000: 288) has argued convincingly that Samuel Beckett was casting a sideways glance at Lewis in his oblique defence of his master in 'Dante...Bruno.Vico.. Joyce' and suggests that Lewis is the man behind the ironic and cryptic reference in Beckett's essay to 'an eminent English novelist and historian whose work is in complete opposition to Mr Joyce's' (*Dis* 27). The fact that Lewis's name is not mentioned is perhaps because Beckett felt that he was no match for someone who might have appeared to Joyce's followers as a figure of satanic prominence, although I would like to leave open the possibility that Beckett did not draw on all his dialectical resources in his defence of Joyce because he in part agreed with some of Lewis's criticism of Joyce's masterpiece, a suggestion contemplated by Milne when he admits that 'the refusal to address Lewis directly also suggests some of the anxiety motivating the rhetorical positioning of Joyce in *Our Exagmination*' (2000: 289). In one of the few comments that Beckett ever made on *Ulysses*, his argument brings to mind what Lewis had written about Joyce's intensive use of the inner method. On 26 March 1937 Beckett had written in his German Diaries:

> As I talk and listen realise suddenly how *Work in Progress* is the only possibility [possible] development from *Ulysses*, the heroic attempt to make literature accomplish what belongs to music—the Miteinander and the simultaneous. *Ulysses* falsifies the unconscious, or the 'monologue intérieur', in so far as it is obliged to express it as a teleology. (Qtd. in Knowlson 1996a: 258)

In any case, Beckett seemed to be trying to neutralize Lewis's notorious claim about Joyce in *Time and Western Man*—'What stimulates him [Joyce] is ways of doing things, and technical processes, and not things to be done' (Lewis 1993: 88)—when he wrote in 'Dante...Bruno. Vico.. Joyce', 'His writing is not *about* something; *it is that something itself*' (*Dis* 27).[4] But in other parts of his essay, too, Beckett probably had Lewis's criticism of Joyce foremost in his mind, such as when he sided with Joyce (without any great conviction) in his defence of other sensory perceptions in the writings of his master. If Lewis had criticized the overexposure to time in Joyce's work, Beckett explained that '[t]he beauty of *Work in Progress* is not presented in space alone, since its adequate apprehension depends as much on its visibility as on its audibility. There is a temporal as well as a spatial unity to be apprehended' (28). What this discourse reveals, in my opinion, is that Beckett was exerting a tentative tug of war with Lewis, using Joyce's work as a sort of pitch or playing ground.

Soon after this episode, Lewis would present to the world his alternative to Joyce's style of writing in the form of a novel, *The Apes of God*. As critics have pointed out, Lewis clearly had *Ulysses* in mind and thought of his own novel as a model to counteract what he considered were Joyce's baleful effects on literature. In terms of content and attitude, Lewis's novel would be the very opposite to Joyce's book: hard, sharp, objective, centred exclusively on the external aspects of action, without appealing to the consciousness or the inner perceptions of characters. It would be a predominantly visual narrative. By making his novel dissimilar to *Ulysses*, Lewis managed to set up Joyce's book as an unavoidable point of reference. As Scott W. Klein argues about *Apes*, '*Ulysses* acts as a frame of implicit reference, a text that lies beneath the surface of Lewis's fiction as a satirized but anxiously entrapping precursor, a parodied original that cannot be negated but only ambivalently revised' (1994: 22). It had been the rich texture of *Ulysses*, 'a universe open to all sensory and psychological phenomena', that Lewis found particularly objectionable, because it 'deflected attention from the conservatism of its materials onto the extrinsic experimentation of its styles' (2). He therefore strove to write a novel devoid of sentiment, a purely external fiction according to his own standards. As Lewis himself defined *Apes*, 'no book has ever been written that has paid more attention to the *outside* of people' (1987: 97). *The Apes of God* would act as the spearhead of his theories on the novel and also as a weapon against what he saw as the decadent world of Bloomsbury and other elitist literary circles.

As is well known, the plot of *Apes* centres on two main characters, Dan Boleyn, a young Irishman, and his tutor, Horace Zagreus. The older man sends his protégé on a tour of the homes of a series of dilettantes in the world of upper-class London, so that the young man can see their vacuous pretentions to become artists. In these fictional portraits, explains Ian Patterson, 'targets of Lewis's scorn or hatred are carefully staged, so as to foreground their basic crime: namely, their lack of authenticity, their lack of reality' (2011: 95). The publication of the novel created considerable commotion in the intellectual world of its day, as Lewis drew many of his characters directly from real members of the upper echelons of English literature and art that he so despised: the painter Richard Wyndham; Stephen Spender; Lytton Strachey; Sidney Schiff (pseudonym 'Stephen Hudson'); Osbert Sitwell, his younger brother Sacheverell and his older sister Edith; Clive and Vanessa Bell, and so on. The novel consolidated Lewis in the role he had been struggling hard to achieve, that of being the enemy of the whole intellectual class of his day: 'We cannot take Lewis's lengthy and savage denunciations of the bourgeois bohemian at face value without experiencing *The Apes of God* as a work of *colossal overkill*' (English 1994: 78).

The Apes of God appeared in June 1930. A month later Nancy Cunard lent Beckett the book and he read it soon after. On finishing it, he wrote to Thomas MacGreevy and told him: 'Apes of God is truly pitiful. If that is satire a child's petulance is satire' (*LSB I* 32). By all accounts, this is the most extraordinary thing to say about Lewis's novel, because the work is in fact 'a massive satiric roman-a-clef of unrivalled toxicity' (Gutkin 2010). Lewis had discussed extensively the meaning and function of satire in modern art and devised his novel as an exemplification of his theories; indeed, experts have characterized his pen as being as sharp as a razor, a precise and well-honed instrument for exposing humanity to ridicule: 'The effect [of satire in *Apes*] is devastating, and however much we laugh our laughter remains uneasy. Aren't we assisting at, and enjoying, a display of gratuitously inhuman mockery? Doesn't it damage us as human beings to do so?' (Edwards 1981: 630). Furthermore, Lewis had no objection to defining himself as a satirist of a particular variety: 'I am a satirist, I am afraid there is no use denying that. But I am not a moralist; and about that I make no bones either' (1987: 87). He denied that satire must necessarily have a moral function, and his endeavour was to perfect a kind of non-ethical satire because 'no mind of the first order, expressing itself in art, has ever itself been taken in [...] by the crude injunctions of any purely moral code' (89). Satire for him was the perfect vehicle for the new art that he promoted, one that did not become entangled in the workings of the psychology of the characters but which focused only on the external aspect of people and things. This would produce a cool, non-judgemental, objective, and scientific point of view which would remove the blandness and imprecision of contemporary writing, paving the way for a new concept of art.

Taking all this into account, it is certainly surprising that a young aspiring writer like Beckett thought that he could surpass a master like Lewis in the art of satire. Yet his comment to MacGreevy clearly indicates that he thought he could do it much better. It seems that in his first novel Beckett tried to push beyond Lewis in one fundamental way, namely, by applying satire to members of his own family (including himself), not just friends and acquaintances as Lewis had done, and would do so for no particular reason, apart from the need to prove his point and populate his narrative

with grotesque characters (Lewis at least had the intention of revealing the falsity of what he considered art poseurs). Thus, Beckett took as a model for one of the main characters in *Dream* his cousin Peggy Sinclair, the Smeraldina in the novel, with whom he had had an affair, perhaps his first love, depicting her as an over-sentimental, childish, unlearned young woman. He also described her as gluttonous, hysterical, and not particularly good-looking: 'her body was all wrong', the narrator says about her (*D* 15). Beckett transcribed verbatim one of her love letters, with all its faulty, sloppy English, for a section in the novel that he would later turn into the story 'The Smeraldina's Billet-Doux' for his collection *More Pricks Than Kicks*. When the book of stories was published, Peggy had already died, but Beckett never forgave himself for this gratuitous act of cruelty (Knowlson 1996a: 183).

His uncle William Abraham Sinclair, Peggy's father, appears in the novel as the Mandarin and is described as a lusty pedant, fond of his drink, whom the protagonist calls 'old dirt' (*D* 102) and with whom he goes to a brothel in the middle of the New Year's celebrations. Beckett's aunt Cissie (Frances Beckett Sinclair) is described in the novel as an 'old multipara' (63) and as the 'eternal grandmother' (74) who 'bowed forward over the dangling bloodballast of her swollen paws' (86). Other people close to him received a similarly ruthless treatment. His tutor at TCD, Professor Thomas Rudmose-Brown, appears as the Polar Bear, described as a fastidious, grumpy old man who is obese and walks with difficulty. Lucia Joyce, James Joyce's daughter, is the model for the Syra-Cusa, one of the fair to middling women of the title, and is depicted as an unstable character—'Her neck was scraggy and her head was null' (33)—who used to vomit her food when taken out for dinner. The narrator makes a reference to her squint and calls her 'puttanina' (51). Beckett's friend Mary Manning and her mother were the basis for the caricatures of the Fricas in the novel. The daughter is described as having a 'horse-face' (180) and being 'a hell-cat' who is a sexual predator, in short, 'a nightmare harpy' (179). The Fricas' mother, for her part, is depicted as 'a bald caterwauling bedlam of a ma with more toes than teeth' (180). In its attempt to take satire to the limit and thus to out-do Lewis, *Dream* 'was, after all, a roman à clef that savaged much of Dublin intellectual life and some close friends' (Gontarski 1993: 20). Even in Beckett's description of himself, a willingness to beat Lewis could be detected. In *The Apes of God* there is only one mention of Lewis himself, when one of the characters asks about the English writer during the final part of the narrative: 'And our solitary high-brow pur-sang Lewis?'

(1981: 401).[5] It is a brief description, with just one hint of irony in which the established author portrays himself as a somewhat pretentious intellectual. It is significant that Beckett used the same compound ('high-brow') to define himself in *Dream*, but complemented it with a cascade of dubious compliments, as in an attempt to outshine Lewis in his capacity for self-satire: 'I know you', says the Mandarin to Belacqua (Beckett's alter ego in the novel), 'a penny maneen of a low-down low-church Protestant high-brow, cocking up your old testament snout at what you can't have' (*D* 100). As if they were engaged in a kind of perverse competition, Beckett seemed to be saying to Lewis that he could treat his own person in a worse manner than the English author treated himself.

There are other similarities between *Apes* and *Dream* that might indicate that Lewis's novel was taken seriously as a testing ground for Beckett's first extended fiction. According to John Pilling, '*Dream* simply could not have existed without the books which, and in which, Beckett had been reading' (1998: 21), and in my opinion Beckett borrowed some textual elements from Lewis's novel to show that he had seen through it.[6]

Likewise, Beckett probably took ideas from the structural design of *Apes* that he considered could be of use in his own fiction. Again, this might be a sign that he had somehow glided over Lewis's book and that he could outshine the English author. For example, neither novel moves forward in terms of action: '*Dream* begins *in medias res*, which is also where it ends' (Pilling 1997: 58). In this sense, it is just like *Apes*, 'the middle five-hundred pages' of which consist of 'a hiatus filled with purposeless activity' (Edwards qtd. in Gutkin 2010). Both novels, then, favour the use of anti-pathos, in that things are never quite done or finished. Beckett also took from Lewis what Tyrus Miller calls an erosion of positionality in *Apes*, by which Lewis 'intentionally destabilizes the implicit positioning on which either persona-mediated narration or direct address depends' (1999: 101), and at this juncture it is worth recalling the well-known remark of the narrator at the beginning of *Dream*: 'the fact of the matter is we do not quite know where we are in this story' (*D* 9). Other episodes bear striking similarities. In *Apes* Dan Boleyn is sexually abused by an older woman, and in *Dream* Belacqua is raped by the Smeraldina. The two main characters (both Irish, disoriented in the city, and neither of them masters of their own destinies) are also the objects of contempt by members of the police force. In both *Apes* and *Dream* the plot ends at a party where an assortment of eccentric characters are present, a selected group of grotesque figures from London and Dublin, respectively.

As regards the use of language, *Dream* shares with *Apes* a kind of forced syntax, as well as the inclusion of long fragments in French and words from German and other languages. The brisk syntactic constructions employed by Lewis, defined by Fredric Jameson as 'the accumulation of molecular sentences [which] threatens to deposit vast sheets of surface decoration and to smooth the most violent agitation of detail [...] into some dizzying churrigueresque cramming of all the empty spaces' (2008: 35), creates a textual abruptness that Beckett also favours in many passages of his novel. His editor, Charles Prentice, probably had this in mind when he wrote, on the more subdued stories of *More Pricks Than Kicks* in a letter of 1 February 1934, that Beckett's 'present affinities are with Joyce and Wyndham Lewis—affinities, for he is not an imitator' (qtd. in Nixon 2007: 214).

But what Beckett most productively took from the author of *The Apes of God* were the lessons he had learnt from Lewis's critique of *Ulysses*. If Lewis's intention had been to write a book that might prove that a modern narrative could be accomplished without concessions to sentimentality (namely, without the obsession with the past, the abundance of local colour or the immersion in the consciousness of the characters), Beckett would also try to surpass Joyce by writing a radical, unconventional novel taking into account the 'faults' that Lewis had detected in *Ulysses*. This may be partly the reason why Beckett wrote *Dream* in the present, thus avoiding any accusation of it being a 'time-book'. Notable is Beckett's attitude regarding the past, in that the only section which refers to a distant time, the protagonist's childhood, occupies just one page (section 'ONE' of *Dream*), and even then it is written in the present: 'Behold Belacqua an overfed child pedalling' (*D* 1). Speaking about the main character in the stories of *More Pricks Than Kicks*, derived in part from *Dream*, Ruby Cohn writes that 'indeed the protagonist Belacqua is virtually without a past' (2001: 48). In the composition of the novel, Beckett was drawing on what had happened to him in the previous four years of his life, unlike Joyce, who had gone back twenty years when writing *Ulysses*. Beckett's was a recent past that shared many features with his 'present' state at the time, in that a number of events in his personal and professional life since he arrived in Paris in 1928 (difficulties in sentimental relationships, personal insecurity, dissatisfaction with his teaching career so far, uncertainty as regards his intellectual development as a writer) still affected him when writing *Dream*. It is not a matter of coincidence that the time adverb 'now' is the frame of the narrative for the whole sequence of *Dream*, as the following examples illustrate:

> We also mentioned we might have to whistle up Mammy for a terminal scena. But now thinking it over again [...]. (*D* 149)
> Silence now we beseech you, reverence, your closest attention. (151)
> Seeing as how we are more or less all set now for Belacqua and the Alba to meet at least [...]. (167)
> At last the plot looks as if it might begin to thicken [...]. (199)

It should also be mentioned that in Beckett's predominantly visual narrative local colour is almost absent, in contrast to the rich display of perceptions that the characters in *Ulysses* receive when walking the streets of Dublin. Readers are also given only scant factual information on the city and its inhabitants in Beckett's work. In his first novel, then, we can perceive the origin of Beckett's disdain for 'the local-anecdotal dimension' and his view of detailed description as 'a misleading pleasure' in literature (Mays 1992: 137). Finally, it should be noted that there is no immersion in the consciousness of the characters in *Dream*. The narrator may indulge in lengthy disquisitions and digressions of various kinds, but the intimate thoughts of the characters are not revealed, with the exception of two fragments, 'Sedendo et Quiescendo' and 'Text', both written in clear imitation of Joyce and both published separately prior to the completion of the novel.

Lewis famously wrote that, despite its virtuosity in its technical aspects, *Ulysses* was in fact the epitome of naturalism because of the excessive description of a myriad of details: 'So rich was its delivery, its pent-up outpouring so vehement, that it will remain, eternally cathartic, a monument like a record diarrhoea' (1993: 90). It comes as no surprise, then, that Beckett ended the most Joycean section of *Dream*, 'Sedendo et Quiescendo', with the protagonist suffering a severe attack of diarrhoea, a physiological act that has been interpreted as 'an explosion of narrative colic designed to eliminate from the body of his book the waste matter Beckett had accumulated from his close association with Joyce' (Pilling 1997: 64). The implicit rejection of Joyce in this fragment from *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, following a scatological image envisaged by Lewis, does not mean that Beckett felt closer to Lewis than to Joyce. His dislike of the English writer was intense, of this there is no doubt, yet he

took advantage of the material in *Apes* that suited his needs, along with his own criticism of *Ulysses*, thus leaning on Lewis in order to surpass his master and to move forward.

Notes

1. For an exhaustive examination of Beckett's life, including a detailed account of his relation with James Joyce, James Knowlson's magnificent biography, *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett* (1996), should rightly be considered the main work of reference. However, there are other relevant works that deal specifically with the Beckett–Joyce connection, including Barbara Gluck's pioneering study *Beckett and Joyce: Friendship and Fiction* (1979), Phyllis Carey and Ed Jewinski's *Re: Joyce'n'Beckett* (1992) and Friedhelm Rathjen's *In Principle, Beckett is Joyce* (1994), to name but a few. This essay is part of the research project FFI2016-76477-P, funded by the Spanish Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad and by AEI/FEDER. The author would also like to thank CEI Patrimonio (Universidad de Almería) for their support.
2. For an explanation of Beckett's ambivalent reaction to *Ulysses*, see Fernández (2011).
3. Yoshiki Tajiri's vehement defence of Beckett was prompted by a comment by Dennis Brown in *Intertextual Dynamics within the Literary Group*: 'So Joyce's greatest disciple finally became his own man-of-words by the ultimate betrayal—choosing the precedent of Lewis, the rival, to find his own way' (Brown 1990: 118).
4. This correspondence is noted by Milne (2000: 289).
5. For David Trotter this is an example of *The Apes of God* being 'among other things a reflection on his [Lewis's] own satirical or "Enemy" persona, his own paranoia' (2001: 324).
6. In *Dream*, for instance, Beckett repeats with parodic intention a proper name that appears in *The Apes of God*, possibly to let it be known that Lewis's book had registered. Compare 'There followed a thin peppery coughing. "Yes milady." "Mrs. Hennessey." "Your ladyship?" "*Hennessey!*"'(Lewis 1981: 8) to 'She had not, and the waiter remembered nothing of the kind. "Hennessey!" she cried "3-star—double—degustation—hurry!"' (*D* 156).