

materiali
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**Beckett is an Euclidean author, so the man
who interprets him. His works are careful
like in a musical score...**

di Antonio Borriello

Pubblichiamo l'intervento che Antonio Borriello, studioso e interprete beckettiano, ha tenuto nell'ambito del seminario «Beckett in Rome» (Università degli Studi di Tor Vergata – Roma, 17-19 aprile 2008). L'autore torna su una questione ancora viva - se il rigore filologico che Beckett pretendeva per le messe in scena dei suoi testi sia ancora da rispettare pedissequamente o se invece non sia naturale che ogni regista e interprete lavori in piena libertà sulle opere – schierandosi nettamente a favore della prima ipotesi

Don't be amazed at all that is happening in Italy in the long run (sometime it happens even abroad) about unfaithful staging of Beckett's literary works. In Italy is well known the quarrel arose between stars and the heirs of the great Dubliner of Paris regarding an interpretation and its consequent withdrawal from stages of *Aspettando Godot*. This quarrel is nearly finished up the Civil Court and even in Parliament through questions! Even if successively the Company won by Italian Court the urgent resort against SIAE (Italian Society of Authors and Publishers).

It is common knowledge, the last allurements *Fragments (Come and go, Rough for theatre I, Rockaby, Act Without Words II, Neither)* by Peter Brook, writer who I

personally knew and actually I am sensible of his unusual artistic production. However in *Come and go*, the clever producer makes use of some male sex actors! The three figures in “dramaticule” are kinds of Moire or Parche, mysterious and deeply poetical existences; coloured inspirations (colourless violet, colourless red, colourless yellow) lovely, rising and falling; they are female winged presences, silenced. They are absolutely female and anything else. To tell the true, Flo, Vi and Ro’s faces are clothed with broad brimmed hats and you can only see the mouth and the chin while they are hidden in the half light, this could warrant the interpretation by a male sex actor. Nevertheless, either actor’s interpretation, his movements, his vocal timbre and above Beckett’s original text, impose all that the dramatist tough , word for word. Only following in the wake of Beckett, in his method, the actor can find his interpretation, better at his technical ability and at an his own style, using all the own palette of the soul, using the emotions to transfer them to the audience, so it could avoid more scenic redundancy . Therefore, the Beckettian actor is in service with the text. This one is already staging; it is dramaturgic and scenic text.



(“Va’ e vieni” per la regia di Antonio Borriello)

I think many Italian staging, resulted in the long run twisted without cause and a long way from the original text. Contrarily, up to day, (in Italy) remain

unforgettable the excellent interpretations, (I cite by heart) by Laura Adani in *Giorni Felici*, by Glauco Mauri in *L'ultimo nastro di Krapp* and *Atto senza parole*, by Giulia Lazzarini in *Giorni Felici*, and some more by Luciano Mandolfi and Andrea Camilleri.

Generally, it can be a great success a personal reading of a piece, respecting the translation, the language, the vowel sound, the learning, the actor's taste, (even a second reading, I think about the classic dramaturgy, Brecht...), but the speech changes radically the direction if we are talking about Beckett's works. The faithfulness to the dramaturgic text, observing its smallest details, must represent a happy scenic consubstantiation.

I remind that Beckett sometimes, imposed the interruption of staging against the rules. He did well, very well. It may be Beckett passes to the realization of his works, just like Euripide and Shakespeare the Great, Moliere, Pirandello and Eduardo. Beckett's detailed and long stage directions are a dramaturgic text too. Or rather, they are the same text. Observe Krapp's crazy explanations. They are full of space-temporal suggestions, as well as exhortation to take any care of own dress rehearsal, to make up their face, to take care of every object, of own gesture... of a greater or smaller twinkling of an eye. Everything is specified just like in a musical score. Beckett is a writer as Pitagora (or, if you prefer, as Euclide). Perfect. Beckett as great dramatist has always defined everything for his interpreters, with a bright exactness: age, sex, body, posture, tallness, walk, eyes, the number of the steps, the use of the hands and the gestures (in how many seconds), the entrances and exits out of the scene and above all very careful arrangements (iron orders, and even steel orders) delivered to the producer (the idea, the content, the tough...) for the sound engineers (one, two strokes, a strident bell, more strident, long, short, noises, from the outside... in *Footfalls*, *Oh les beaux jours*), and some lights (violent, strong, soft, dissolvent, dark...), for the scene painter (the space, a background trompe-l'oeil, the colour, a blob of colour, a tree with and without leaves, a raw wood table m. 2:40x1:20... in *Oh les beaux jours*, *En attendant Godot*, *Ohio Impromptu*), for the costume designer (long trousers, short, shirt with and without collar, coat with many pockets, a low-necked bodice, a pair of boots number 48, a bowler-hat... in *Krapp's Last Tape*, *En attendant Godot*), for the property man (a reel, a big banana, a pipe, a stool, a clock, a leg of chicken, a necklace of pearls, a tooth past... in *Krapp's Last Tape*, *En attendant Godot*, *Oh les beaux jours*), for the

maker up (white face, purple nose, disordered grey hair, preferably blond, generous breast, long white hair... in *Krapp's Last Tape*, *Oh les beaux jours*, *Ohio Impromptu*) and many small details always present in the hardy explanation of every work.

For Samuel Beckett's works staging, the actor is obliged to respect the text: for my Krapp... I must be Krapp! His thoughts and his gestures, must be mine. I was obliged to make his memories and his actions, mine. It was necessary to share, to live together, and to act with Krapp, the scene, the word, the breath... It was necessary to raise a very profound cleverness to identify myself with the actor. I remember once the sublime Carmelo Bene said: "To play Shakespeare you must be Shakespeare: I'm Shakespeare". In this way, actor should show to be good at a similarity of character with the author. By this point of view, humbly, I analysed Krapp, living him intensely out of the scene too, and afterwards I removed him to the boards, assigning the analyses and tough in similar terms, in the direction of a comparison tout court with the body, the gesture and the word as drawn. Privileging the supremacy of speech, to approach and surmount the silence and go into that hypnotic outwards condition, in static-moving, possessing (on the contrary) a deep excited agitation of feelings, on this subject, I advice you to read all that Deidre Bair related in *Samuel Beckett. Una biografia* (trad. it. Garzanti, 1990, on page 573-574). The American studios tells exactly in her powerful study: "According to Beckett, the best performance is the one without actors or producers, but only the work. He was asked how could be possible a similar work, Beckett answered that author is obliged to look for the suitable actor, therefore the one who performs his instructions perfectly, the man who is able to humble himself in the work entirely". Bodily condition is absolutely necessary. In Bair's Text you can read a more extreme condition that Beckett asked again. "The best possible work is not when there are actors, but the one with only the text. I'm trying to write one of them". This is a desire you can compare with Edward Gordon Craig's intents (examine the interesting volume *Il mio teatro*, trad. it. by Ferruccio Marotti, Milano, Feltrinelli, 1971 and the article by Antonio Borriello *Antonin Artaud, Bertolt Brecht ed Edward Gordon Craig: una vera rivoluzione copernicana nell'Arte Scenica*, in "Mi Consenta", anno I, n. 7 november 2002, on page 41-43. Beckett will realize all that was augured about *Breath (Respiro*, the shortest staging in the story of the theatre: about 20 seconds without actors) and *Not I (Non io*, a very severe and touching

monologue, there was only a mouth staging!), in *Samuel Beckett Teatro completo* (trad. it. Torino-Parigi, Einaudi-Gallimard, 1994, on page 425-438). Moreover, it is not particularly complicate to act Beckett. On the contrary, it is very easy. Generally, it says about an author hard to play or also only to read. I think Beckett is to be considered for all that he says and nothing else. Beckett can't be played: you must live him. There are not sending back or allusions towards other philosophic, theological or literary ideas. Nothing is unusual, on the contrary, every thing is usual. You can't be unfaithful to Beckett: you must obey him with respect, I would dare and say with conscious orthodoxy. No excessive theatricality, but verity. The one referred to Life and Death. I'm deeply persuaded of it. In conformity with Samuel Beckett the Quaker, speech is very rigorous and so his perfect and untouchable texts. I can be immoderate (I will be, of course) to approach this work realized by this great humble genius lived in the twentieth century, near all that is written in the Book of Wisdom: "Omnia censura et numero et pondere disposuisti", but at least I like to think it's the true.



Antonio Borriello studious and faithful interpreter about Samuel Beckett, received in 1985 directly a letter of thanks and encouragement by the great Dubliner for his particular researches and interpretations. He published various studies, as for example: "Samuel Beckett, Krapp's last tape: dalla pagina alla messinscena, Napoli ESI, 1992 (which bibliographic apparatus contains more than two thousands new voices); Numerical references in Krapp's last tape, in Samuel Beckett: Endlessness in the year 2000. Samuel Beckett: Fin sans fin en l' an 2000, by Angela Moorjani e Carola Veit, Amsterdam-New York, Rodopi, 2002. The study considers the statement number and word in one of the most evocative Beckett's pieces, showing along a long philological way, beat after beat, absurd teacher's of predilection in favour number three and its multiples; Samuel

Beckett, il genio del Novecento che ha raccontato l'Uomo spezzato, "Il Secolo XIX", 13th April 2006; Antonio Borriello has been present in numerous international meetings: Beckett festival 1991, Trinity College, Dublin and "The international Beckett in Berlin 2000"; to the University of Maryland, Baltimore (USA), and Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, International Congress and, as member, to "The Samuel Beckett Society" symposium. He took care of "Beckett for Sarajevo", (in favour of children ex Jugoslavia) and 1906-2006 in homage to Samuel Beckett, Earth should be desert. An extraordinary show, supported by Irish Embassy in Italy and by Torre del Greco Commune. Here it could be admired scene-paintings and images made ready by Borriello and all the Italian and foreign publications since 1953 up to day reproduction in anastatic from "La fiera letteraria", "Corriere della sera", "La Repubblica", "L'Espresso", "Panorama", and may others (great signs of Italian Literature: Quasimodo, Flaiano, Augias, Bo, Gramigna, Raboni, Sanguineti...) and foreign newspapers as "The Irish Press", "The Irish Independent", "Arts", "The Independent", "The Times", "Suddeutsche Zeitung", "The Guardian", "The Daily", "Telegraph", "International Herald Tribune", "El Pais", "Le Monde", at last many Italian and Foreign volumes. The studious has got many books about and of Beckett, autographed too. Mario Ruotolo said: "what Antonio Borriello feels for Beckett is a big passion; it was born by a Literary attraction, by a fatal meeting against writer's word, who hit the target in the depth, dominate and become necessary to the sense, deposit in the conscience. That process imposes the fascinating of the art and generates a magic emotion between a reader and an artist, between the man who makes use of it and the same work. Just this 'brilliant' action, this creative tuning determinate an essential part in the search and in the complete analyses for twenty and more years however available for unpublished solution and critical discoveries he has considered in Samuel Beckett's theatre. Antonio Borriello joins love for the research and complementary aspects. This makes him a remarkable person in the outline of the contemporary theatre. It is indispensable to diffuse didactically, his golden artistic patrimony either in Italian or in foreign schools and universities, showing his theatrical 'praxis' as actor and as producer".

(Le foto che appaiono in queste pagine sono di Aliberti-Pomposo)