# Beckett's Creatures

Art of Failure after the Holocaust

Joseph/Anderton

Bloomsbury Methuen Drama An imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

BLOOMSBURY

LONDON • OXFORD • NEW YORK • NEW DELHI • SYDNEY

# CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	ix
List of abbreviations	xi

### Introduction 1

What is a Beckettian creature? 3
The last human and becoming-animal 8
Concepts of the creature and creaturely life 14
Beckett after 1945 25
Overview of Beckett's Creatures 31

1 Testimony: Bearing witness to the event and self 33

'Impossibility of expressing': Art of failure and lacuna of testimony 36
Fallibility and dissociation 51
(In)sovereign author-narrators 58
Obligation to testify: Mechanics, enunciation, ruin 67
Testimony of fiction 77

2 Power: Master-servant relationships 89

Exercising writing in *Watt* the fungible and Knott there 92 'A vague supplication': Melancholy in *Waiting for Godot* 103

Master-servant context: The Holocaust and the Jewish creature 109

Biopolitical struggles: Territory and custody 118

# 3 Humour: Failure and degradation 133

Humour in failure 138
Textual performances 147
Words and flesh in Endgame 156
Metanarrative tragicomedy 163
'Turd waiting for the flush': Gallows humour 173

## 4 Survival: Incompleteness and continuation 181

'Oh all to end': Beckettian stirrings still 183 Creaturely 'undeadness' 190 Repetition and performance 197 Forms of activity and stasis in Molloy 204 'Finish dying': Death without death in Molloy 213

Epilogue 223 Notes 229 Bibliography 233 Index 247