

Contents

1. Beckett's drama, audience response and postmodernism:	
A survey of critical positions and the aims of the present analysis	11
2. Detached audience laughter evoked by Beckett's early drama	22
2.1. Forms and functions of detached laughter	22
2.1.1. Corrective and deflating laughter	22
2.1.2. Laughter at a denial of free will	26
2.1.3. Laughter at the clash between mind and matter	32
2.1.4. Laughter at the confrontation of the mind with language	43
2.2. Postmodernist iconoclasm?	53
3. Integrating audience laughter evoked by Beckett's early drama	60
3.1. Forms and functions of integrating laughter	60
3.1.1. Laughter "with" the characters as actors	61
3.1.2. Laughter caused by conscious jokes	69
3.1.3. Laughter evoked by the creation of a second level of illusion	71
3.1.4. Laughter caused by aggression and blasphemy	79
3.2. Postmodernist freedom?	92
3.2.1. Postmodernist role consciousness?	94
3.2.2. Postmodernist play?	98
4. The interaction between the two types of laughter	101
4.1. <i>The forms of interaction and their functions</i>	101
4.1.1. Alternation: Blocking the audience's escape routes	103
4.1.2. Ambivalence: Denying the spectator reliability	113
4.2. A postmodernist denial of unity?	120
4.2.1. Postmodernist plurality?	121
4.2.2. Postmodernist indeterminacy?	124
5. Overview of Beckett's early drama	127
5.1. Individual plays	127
5.1.1. <i>Waiting for Godot</i> and <i>Endgame</i>	127
5.1.2. <i>All That Fall</i> and <i>Krapp's Last Tape</i>	132
5.2. Classification of the early drama as a whole	134

6. Detachment and identification evoked by Beckett's later drama	137
6.1. The two attitudes and their functions	137
6.1.1. Devices causing a wish for detachment	137
6.1.2. Devices drawing the spectator into the plays	150
6.2. A new attitude to established systems?	155
7. The interaction between detachment and identification in Beckett's later drama	158
7.1. The forms of interaction and their functions	158
7.1.1. Alternation: Preventing detachment	158
7.1.2. Ambivalence: Two perspectives on the characters' situation	161
7.2. A new attitude to unity?	165
8. Overview of Beckett's later drama	169
8.1. Individual plays	169
8.1.1. <i>Happy Days</i>	169
8.1.2. <i>Play</i>	173
8.2. Classification of the later drama as a whole	176
9. Audience response to Beckett's late drama	178
9.1. Two basic structural patterns	179
9.1.1. Unstable hierarchies	179
9.1.2. Continual permutations	194
9.2. The late plays and the postmodernist debate	199
10. The overall development of Beckett's dramatic strategy	204
 Appendix	 210
 Bibliography	 213