

SBWG Past Reports

2025 Interim Meeting

The 2025 interim meeting took place on Zoom on 10 October 2025 and gathered new and existing SBWG members across continents and generations to connect, present research and to plan the 2026 Annual Congress in a collaborative fashion.

Céline Thobois-Gupta and James Little, the current SBWG co-conveners, thanked Tracy Davis and Alyson Campbell – outgoing subcommittee representatives at the IFTR ExComm – for their excellent work at the service of working groups during their term. They also thanked Trish McTighe, the SBWG honorary convener, for her ongoing support of the WG.

General Housekeeping

The meeting began with a summary of:

- the WG mission,
- its growing international membership,
- its collaborative and inclusive work ethics,
- its evolution with the shifts from the broader field of theatre and performance studies, as well as with contemporary creative practices,
- its developing network of artists,
- its current publication project,
- its career support initiatives.

All those details can be found on the [WG page](#).

We submitted a detailed report of our past four years of activities to the IFTR for the WGs quarterly review. The report was pre-submitted to all members for feedback. We will communicate any outcome when we hear back from the ExComm.

We then discussed the benefits of collaborating with other WGs, and we encouraged members to lead on such activities with the full support of conveners. We also stimulated our promotion of members' work and activities in our respective academic and cultural contexts. For example, Alice Clabaut's film *En attendant Monsieur Godot* screened at IFTR 2025 is now programmed as part of the First Fortnight Festival in Dublin (2026), and Yuta Hagiwara's performance *Breath <Message Dial ver.>*, premiered at IFTR 2025, is considered for presentation in the USA as well as Hong Kong University.

Members are welcome to propose academic and non-traditional academic activities during IFTR conferences and at interim meetings, and they are invited to edit or co-edit volumes and journals on behalf of the group. All in all, all creative initiatives are beneficial to the community and the health of the WG.

Faculty members who wish to become mentors as part of our ECR mentorship programme can express their interest via email, and ECRs who need support can also contact us at sbwg.iftr@gmail.com.

Elections

Convener elections will take place in Melbourne during the IFTR congress. All registered members can vote, including those who will not travel. More details will be circulated in due course.

We propose to grow the team from 2 to 3 conveners, including 1 faculty member and 1 ECR. It is key to have a faculty member for experience and funding, as well as for the status of the WG within the organisation (and therefore its survival). ECR conveners are very welcome to bring their fresh ideas and perspectives, while developing their profile and skills. However, they should be aware that IFTR does not guarantee funding to cover any expenses incurred by attendance. We hope that the election can increase cultural and geographical leadership of the WG, to have strategic representation in non-European locations, as well as to accurately and inclusively represent our international community.

Candidates who would like to nominate themselves should send a bio (200 words), a brief statement (200 words) and a photo of themselves by 30 May 2026 at sbwg.iftr@gmail.com.

2026 Conference

Key information:

- 6–10 July, Melbourne
- [CFP](#): ““Nothing to be done”: What Samuel Beckett’s Theater Does and What We Do With It.”
- Travel Bursary Application Deadline: 30 November
- New Scholars Prize and Helsinki Prize Entry Deadline: 15 November
- Abstract Submission Deadline: 8 December
- New Registration Process

As the website is currently in the process of migration to a new host, the dates can change. Check the IFTR website to stay informed.

Anthony Uhlmann presented Beckett Studies and Beckettian creative ecosystems in Australia. He mapped a thriving community of Beckett scholars mostly located in Sydney and Melbourne existing since the 2000s. He also invited attendees to look at the recent performance history of Beckett in Australia, including two major productions of *Happy Days*, *Still*, Stephen Rea’s touring production of *Krapp’s Last Tape*. Alongside Mark Byron, he offered support towards the organisation of the conference.

The second half of the meeting featured two short research presentations, as well as an artistic roundtable with the director Stan Lai interviewed by two early-career scholars, Chaomei Chen and Chengyun Zhao, who are also reviewing the play for the *Journal of Beckett Studies*.

Klaus Gronenborn gave a presentation on Beckett’s encounter with the German artist and film comedian Karl Valentin (an artist on whom Gronenborn curated a retrospective at the Goethe Institut, 2001). The two men’s encounter took place in 1937, during Beckett’s tour of Germany, within the space of Valentin’s *Panoptikum*, “a cabinet of curiosities and a showroom.” Outlining the overlaps between Beckett’s and Valentin’s interest in puns, wordplay and artistic forms which fail (as Valentin’s *Panoptikum* ultimately did), Gronenborn laid out a comparative research agenda which is rich with future possibilities.

Sebastian Shakin then presented his and Eva Hoffman’s planned production of *Mercier and Camier*, which will take place in the Central Library of the University of Regensburg as part

of the “Beckett’s Room” exhibition currently running there (2025–26). The presentation opened questions regarding how the novel’s narrative might be condensed for performance, how different characters might be integrated (including the casting decisions this involves) and presented a visualisation of the staging within the library’s architecture, which the audience will traverse over the three separate performed sections. This innovative production opens new questions about how Beckett’s prose texts might be staged.

To round off a richly rewarding set of encounters, director Stan Lai was interviewed by Chengyun Zhao and Chaomei Chen. Lai presented a beautiful set of stills from his productions of Beckett’s short plays (Taipei 1988, Huichang 2025, Shanghai 2025). This included shots from inside the Lai family ancestral house in Huichang, which has been converted into a centre for cultural performance. We also saw stunning shots from *Beckett Above* (Beijing), which situates Beckett’s minimalist art in the context of recursively structured artworks. Responding to sensitively framed and informative philosophical, dramaturgical and political questions from Zhao and Chen, Lai stated that “Beckett’s art is what we Chinese call the art of “leaving out” (liubai—“to leave white, i.e. blank”), but his works leave out much more than the Chinese painters do.” This presentation prompted searching questions on the part of the interviewers and the audience, and will remain in our memories for many years to come.

Taking into account the theme of next year’s conference – What Theatre Does – it is clear from this meeting that the SBWG continues to “do” more and more, even when it may seem that there is “nothing to be done.”

2025 Report

This report summarises the work accomplished by the Samuel Beckett Working Group (SBWG) at the IFTR conference 2025, which took place at the University of Cologne in Germany between 9 and 13 June 2025. Please note that another report is available for the interim meeting we held in November 2024.

This year marked a milestone in the history of IFTR with the largest number of delegates, something also reflected by the scale of our working group with 16 presenters, 5 regular auditors, and more occasional visitors. For the SBWG, the 2025 conference also marked a milestone in terms of inclusivity: we have been actively working towards becoming a connective tissue between scholars in Beckett Studies from the Global South and the Global North, particularly by supporting attendance for colleagues from the Global South and fostering ECR research. While obtaining visas and receiving funding often remain significant issues for some of our colleagues – problems we continue to raise with the organisation and work on at our level – we note that the SBWG has become a truly international and intergenerational community of research with delegates in presence from Argentina, China, Cyprus, Czechia, England, France, Greece, Hungary, India, Iraq, Ireland, Japan and Saudi Arabia. We also hosted video presentations from Pakistan and the Philippines. The closed session panels were chaired by members of the WG who volunteered to serve the community, and we observe that the opportunity was well used by ECRs as a way to develop their professional skills, which we would like to keep on facilitating in future years. The diversity of the WG, the quality of our conversations and the collegiality of our relationships were commended by several auditors, who expressed interest in joining us as members in coming years.

In response to the conference theme “Performing Carnival: Ekstasis, Subversion, Metamorphosis,” the Samuel Beckett WG proposed to collectively work around the research axiom “Greying the Carnival: Samuel Beckett Inverting / Inverting Samuel Beckett” in English and in French.

- James Little opened the WG by facilitating a collective, bilingual reading of “Long After Chamfort,” which bridged between tragedy (last year’s theme) and carnival through the figure of the fool, while “making community” in voicing Beckett – building on a long standing SBWG tradition.
- This year’s theme generated interest in Beckett’s doodles, as well as in the interactions between archive and performance: the group navigated the Beckett Digital Manuscript Project and discussed the categorisation of doodles under the guidance of Amjad AlShalan and James Little.
- The theme also stimulated sustained conversations on the Absurd, which expanded existing discourses towards the political and the intermedial, signalling a new synergy between Beckett’s oeuvre, the Absurd and contemporary cultures, ten years after the greening of the Absurd (Lavery and Finburgh, 2015).
- In connection with recent work on Beckett’s afterlives (Bignell, McMullan, Verhulst, 2023; Carville and Verhulst, 2025), presentations examining contemporary performances of Beckett’s work investigated how Beckett’s “grey carnival” operates as a lens through which to look at culturally specific issues, while requiring translation (verbal and non-verbal) to resonate to powerful effect with the local. This stream of work also reevaluated Beckett’s positioning within various cultural categories – such as canons, pop culture, children’s

literature and performance, digital technologies – and asked important questions such as: who is Beckett for, can Beckett be dangerous and even why Beckett?

- This led the group to engage with methodologies that pertain to Beckett studies and performance studies, reflecting on how to record, archive and preserve work produced after Beckett (e.g. oral history, ethnographic interview methods, group memory activation), and crucially, how the enterprise is also bound to fail in some aspects.
- In the last session, Alice Clabaut screened her film *En attendant Monsieur Godot*, which records an innovative pedagogical project introducing Beckett to primary school pupils in France: it received excellent feedback and generated interest for international adaptations. Zhaoyu Zhang presented her puppet theatre reworking of *Waiting for Godot* and introduced her latest creative project derived from this experiment, which integrates audience participation via digital technologies. To wrap up the week, Sarmad Mohammed offered an embodied activity on companionship in *Godot* as a dialogue with *En attendant Monsieur Godot*.

In addition to the 6 closed session panels, the SBWG highly contributed to the wider conference.

- For the first time, we partnered with the Asian Theatre Working Group to present a general panel (GP) and a performance. The GP “Beyond Carnival: Performing Beckett in Asia” featured papers reflecting on performances of Beckett in Japan, China and the Philippines. The vibrant Q&A demonstrated the benefit of such a partnership and the cross-pollination of Beckett studies, Asian studies and intercultural studies.
- Yuta Hagiwara’s telephone performance *Breath <message dial ver.>* – a reworking of Beckett’s *Breath* – previewed on Monday, premiered on Tuesday and ran with extended hours until Friday, welcoming over 100 participants. Yuta Hagiwara designed and directed the performance for the IFTR conference, with the support of Lancaster University and the Department of Drama at Trinity College Dublin. Following the success of the performance and the insightful conversations on the work of Kamome Machine during the general panel, the director is now considering touring internationally with this performance. Through interactions with audiences, Hagiwara also began to think about the archive that this performance is generating and how the visual and audio records may be stored and used in the future by Kamome Machine. The SBWG encourages members of both WGs who experienced *Breath <message dial ver.>* to review the performance for the *Journal of Beckett Studies* and other potential venues.
- The SBWG launched the co-edited volume *Samuel Beckett and Ecology*, published by Bloomsbury-Methuen Drama in May 2025 in presence of six contributors, two co-editors and Ella Wilson from the publishing house. The well-attended launch was an opportunity to reflect on the WG’s collaborative work ethic as well as its cultural and methodological diversity. We also bridged between this completed editorial project and the current one: the “tragic” issue of *Samuel Beckett Today / Aujourd’hui*, which emerged from the WG’s meeting in Manila (2024) and is also a testament to the WGs diversity, as the call for papers has received more than 30 submissions from 20 countries on 4 continents.

The SBWG continues to pursue its mission of research production and dissemination, but we also strive to:

- Continue making the IFTR conference and Beckett Studies more accessible to colleagues from the Global South;
- Keep fostering an inclusive, diverse and respectful community of research;
- Stimulate intercultural and international collaborations;

- Facilitate the transition of new scholars from the New Scholars Forum to Working Groups;
- Contribute to maintaining IFTR's ecosystem through collaborations with other WGs and proactive engagement with the organisation's evolution;
- Advocate for a fairer academic ecosystem and support ECRs' professional development;
- Connect artists and scholars working after Beckett for the benefit of both parties.

The 2026 IFTR Congress is scheduled to take place in Melbourne (Australia) between 6 and 10 July. Elections for the SBWG convenorship will be held during the Congress. Our next interim meeting will be announced early September and should happen online at the end of September or at the beginning of October.

We welcome queries and suggestions throughout the year at sbwg.iftr@gmail.com.

2024 Interim Meeting

In our welcome, the conveners noted the global reach of the room. We were delighted to see so many parts of the world represented in the meeting as our broader membership continues to expand. We had members at the meeting from Argentina, China, Cyprus, Czechia, France, Greece, Iraq, Ireland, Japan, the Netherlands, Northern Ireland, Pakistan, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Spain and the United Kingdom.

Working Group Business

Our first order of business was a reminder of the identity and function of the WG in terms of the content of our work and research interests, the formal email address for the group (sbwg.iftr@gmail.com), our mission statement and our community standards. We also showcased the revised WG website.

Secondly, we proposed and ratified a change in convenor; Trish McTighe is stepping down and James Little is taking over as interim convenor. WG members ratified this change and were notified that an election will be held in two years time. We would like to welcome James to the role and offer him our congratulations. We all thank Trish for her tremendous work to make this research group thrive within the organisation and beyond, as well as for her commitment to support the academic development of ERC researchers. Trish kindly accepted the role of honorary convenor.

Conference:

We reminded members about conference theme and dates and deadlines:

Abstracts by 15th January,
Papers shared by 9th May,
Conference: 9th to 13th June

And we were delighted to welcome Beri Juraic, Asian Theatre Working Group co-convenor, to introduce the work of their group with a view to future collaborations between our groups. Their working group is interested in inter-Asian collaboration and highlighted the potential for a roundtable, workshop or traditional paper panel, or mix of these at the next IFTR meeting. We would be grateful if members who intend to travel to Cologne for the 2025 IFTR conference and would like to participate in such an event could email us.

Update on publications:

Samuel Beckett & Ecology is forthcoming with Methuen-Bloomsbury in 2025. A special issue, *Beckett & the Tragic*, has been proposed for *Samuel Beckett Today/ Aujourd'hui*. We encourage all our members to think on what publications they might wish to develop with working group colleagues.

Presentations & Discussion:

We had two short presentations from Amjad Amshalan and Iqra Nasim, new members of the group. We look forward to welcoming them to our in person meeting soon.

Finally, we convened an artist panel with theatre directors Yuta Hagiwara and Sarah Jane Scaife, who spoke about their creative work on Beckett. These two wonderful directors discussed their work and found significant commonalities within their various theatrical means.

A gentle reminder to fill in our survey, so we can track and update our working group members activities and publications.

2024

This report summarizes the activities of the Samuel Beckett Working Group in the academic year 2023-24. It highlights the achievements of the group, as well as its objectives for the upcoming year.

INTERIM MEETING

The Samuel Beckett Working Group held its online interim meeting in November 2023. We put into place a mentorship programme, by means of which postgraduate researchers can receive feedback on their projects and seek advice about professional development. A number of academics kindly volunteered to act as mentors, but we welcome more participation.

All working group members – and especially those located in the Global South – were invited to reach out to the theatre review editors of the *Journal of Beckett Studies* and *The Beckett Circle* to publish reviews of performances taking place in their respective countries, thus facilitating more inclusivity and diversity in our field.

In addition, our group drafted, discussed and internally ratified its own code of conduct. We also reflected on the ways in which we can contribute to the development of the IFTR's own text for the protection of vulnerable members and the prevention of harassment and discrimination. We are very much in support of the efforts of the organisation more broadly to engage with this issue and delighted to see work ongoing on the matter.

Eventually, we discussed the ongoing research of the past and current members of the working group and prepared our annual in person meeting at the conference held in Manila in July 2024.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The theme of the annual conference was “Our States of Emergency: Theatres and Performances of Tragedy.” In response to the general call for papers, our group proposed to reflect on “Samuel Beckett, Tragedy and Catastrophe: From the Modern Stage to Contemporary Performance.” Via the nine presentations that were delivered during the conference and the conversations they enabled, we explored the form of tragedy and the idea of the tragic in Beckett's oeuvre together with language and the unsayable; emotions, psychology and psychoanalysis; the grotesque, the smile, laughter, comedy and tragicomedy; attic tragedy and French classical tragedy; the Beckettian canons and their possible reconfigurations; environmental catastrophe and the Anthropocene; intimacy, the couple and the everyday; natalism, the future, futurity and their absence; the notion of ‘tragic optimism’; disability, age and gender; as well as redemption and divine mercy in monotheistic religions. Our working group sessions demonstrated the relevance of rethinking tragedy and the tragic in Beckett Studies and the need for a new publication on the same, which we will work towards.

This year, our first and last sessions were open workshops, in the view to further embedding our work and our community within the broader conference. Throughout the week, the Working Group sessions were attended by regular auditors. Their presence and contributions

showed not only how Beckett's oeuvre continues to be of interest and use to contemporary societal issues and to theatre practices responding to this context, but also how the working group offers a connection space in which Beckett Studies directly interact with other areas of theatre and performance research and practices. In our first workshop, we offered a breathwork session to welcome people in the space hosting the conference and help them ground themselves into the space, time and community. This was followed by a communal reading of *Worstward Ho* and a discussion of the experience and the text, which provided core themes to explore throughout the week, as well as an embodied approach to Beckett and the tragic. In our last workshop, we were honoured to host two theatre directors from Japan and the Philippines: Yuta Hagiwara and Gabo Tolentino. They shared with us their performances of Beckett's works, playing clips and showing pictures from their archives. They also generously offered reflections on their practice and the role that Beckett plays in their respective theatre-making journey. Both artists expressed a willingness to connect further with the Beckett community and the importance to foster communication between academics and artists, which we will endeavour to continue facilitating in coming years. We are grateful to the convenor of the Asian Theatre Working Group at IFTR, Beri Juraic, for introducing us to Yuta Hagiwara, and we look forward to further collaborations with this and other working groups in the near future.

We are pleased to report that the co-edited volume *Samuel Beckett and Ecology* should be published in 2025 with Bloomsbury. It is based on the work generated by the working group over the past four years, but also encompasses other disciplines (such as translation) and artistic reflections to feature a wide range of voices from all continents.

In addition to actively pursuing our mission of research production and dissemination, our working group would like to focus on the following directions in the coming year:

- Making the conference more accessible for colleagues from the Global South, particularly in regards to funding and travel requirements (primarily visas),
- Contributing to the IFTR's on-going writing of a text which prevents harassment and discriminations,
- Helping new scholars transition from the New Scholars Forum to working groups,
- Collaborating with other working groups through common workshops,
- Facilitating the connection between Beckett studies and artists to the benefit of both parties,
- Developing support to ECRs and advocating for a fairer work ecosystem.

Our next interim meeting will be announced in the autumn and should happen online at the end of November or at the beginning of December. The 2025 IFTR conference is scheduled to take place in Cologne (Germany) between 9 and 13 June. We welcome queries and suggestions throughout the year at sbwg.iftr@gmail.com.

2023

The Samuel Beckett Working Group held an online interim meeting in December 2022 during which members presented the development of their research. In addition, the group offered an ECR support session led by Dr Hannah Simpson (for more information, see the report of the interim meeting). In July 2023, the Working Group convened in person at the IFTR's annual conference hosted by the University of Ghana in Accra.

The yearly conference theme was "Myths, Mythmaking and Performance," and the working group proposed to explore the following theme: "Samuel Beckett's Drama and the Undoing of Myths of Empire and Imperialism." This theme was addressed in the context of England and Ireland, as well as France and the French-speaking world. Other papers dealt with the connection between Beckett's oeuvre and Taoism, the status of vagrants in Beckett's drama, the interaction between genres in Beckett's oeuvre and Beckett studies, as well as the notions of tradition and innovation in contemporary adaptations of Beckett's texts in Germany. In the post-presentation conversations, the group reflected further on Beckett's status as an exile writer, the connections between historical situations referenced in the texts and the contemporary world, presence and absence in performance, the geographies of copyright and the status of the boy in Beckett's drama.

The Working Group is a community that welcomes the presentation of projects and papers at different stages of the research and writing process: testing early ideas and work in progress is encouraged, and we also support the refining of papers at an advanced stage. This year, the working group benefitted from the presence of new members whose primary research is not on Beckett. The expertise that they brought to the reading group from other areas was invaluable, and we hope to collaborate more with scholars beyond Beckett studies in the future, in addition to continuing to foster a strong network of scholars from Beckett Studies, whose expertise facilitates vibrant and rigorous (yet respectful) debates. The presence of attendees from other working groups at each of our sessions was much appreciated. In the coming years, we hope to develop partnerships with other working groups at IFTR to enhance our interdisciplinary engagement within the organisation.

In addition to our classical presentation/Q&A format, we seek to extend our activities towards embodied and creative practice. At this year's conference, Trish McTighe opened the Working Group with a breathing session, and Céline Thobois-Gupta proposed a communal reading of *Ohio Impromptu*. Inspired by the Feminist Working Group, we also see an opportunity to connect meaningfully with the performance ecosystems in which the IFTR conferences are hosted by collaborating with a local artist via workshops or conversations for example.

As far as publication is concerned, we are happy to report that the *Samuel Beckett and Ecology* volume is well underway and scheduled for publication in 2024 with Bloomsbury. Most of the papers presented this year are already promised to publication venues. However, we welcome suggestions from all of our members on themes that matter to them and that they think need to be addressed in Beckett studies for future meetings and publications.

Due to the cost of travel and the lack of funding, several long-standing members as well as new ones could not attend, even though their abstracts had been accepted. Issues related to funding and accessibility have been brought to the organisation's attention during the conference, and we are committed to finding ways of supporting scholars who are interested in joining the group but could not attend the conference due to aforementioned circumstances. Our next online interim meeting will be announced in the autumn, and we will reconvene in person at the next annual conference, which will take place in Manila (Philippines) in 2024.

2022 INTERIM MEETING

The following is a summary of our interim meeting in which we looked at ways that the working group might best support emerging scholars.

For our interim meeting in December 2022, the working group hosted Dr Hannah Simpson (University of Edinburgh) who facilitated a very pressing conversation about ways that the working group (and by implication of course IFTR) can best support emerging scholars. We are summarising here the main points she raised, as well as those that came up in the subsequent conversation, and any links or resources that were shared during the session. We note that much of the focus here is on the UK context, with some reference to Ireland. In the Q&A, however, we were glad to include members from Argentina, Greece, Japan, China, France as well and to hear their thoughts on how these issues emerge in their various contexts. As we explore these matters further within the group, we are keen to uncover further ways of supporting emerging international scholars as well as those based in the UK.

Firstly, Hannah articulated how the issue of the PGR/ECR support and the state of the job market is no longer a subtext issue and is one that senior and salaried colleagues need to be having more widely. The challenges that she identified are ones that are familiar to many of us and include:

- Pay rates – even funded pay is too low to support the basic cost of life,
- Precarity and casualisation among ECRs,
- Balancing any caring responsibilities, family commitments and illness, chronic or short term, with the pressures of PhD and subsequent precarious work,
- The psychological impact that all of the above can have.

Hannah addressed a number of potential solutions or strategies to combat these issues, including:

Support

1. Creating and maintaining professional formal spaces for addressing the psychological aspects of the realities of the challenges faced, including finding means to support self-care. This is including critical reflection on what we normalise in terms of workload, what discourses of self-care often mean, and presenting a bulwark against internalised senses of low worth.
2. Ensuring that PhD students get appropriate career support and mentorship during their studies. It was suggested that too often careers sessions focus on transferable skills and a non-academic future, often to the detriment of career progression. An appropriate level of focus should be given to the academic career path, while support in developing transferable skills is important as well. Supervisors and mentors should monitor training access.

Remuneration

1. Offering PGRs/ECRs tactics for determining value in a role and leaving tactfully, especially when their work is being poorly rewarded. The advice is to not hesitate to leave unpaid jobs when they do not help a career or align with personal interests.
2. Working to end casualisation in higher education, especially 9-month contracts (see here for information on the UK UCU campaign on this topic: <https://www.ucu.org.uk/stampout>). While this issue is more a structural one that demands collective action, it is important to think on how salaried academics can use their positions to push back against exploitative contracts in their schools and departments and commit to supporting those on short term contracts to maximise their advantage for the job market, especially in regard to research and publications.
3. For adjunct staff, being paid for preparation work and marking is an interlinking issue that requires structural change, but salaried staff should be aware of the workload and challenges faced by people in these roles.
4. Funding bids with key roles carved out for the ECR with decent pay; salaried academics are already under significant pressure to bring in grant money, thinking of grant projects as a means to create jobs for ECRs is important, as is being sure that the terms of the contracts issued by the university are fair.

Events, Conferences & Networking

1. Colleagues' willingness to pass on opportunities, panel invitations, being asked to help run conferences, networks etc. as well as engaging with postgraduate work and treating them as colleagues and collaborators in their own right was cited as an important elements in PGR/ECR career development. It was noted that Beckett studies with its habit of plenary sessions at most events was exemplary in this regard.
2. Meeting places: where we meet is an important issue. Facilitating online and in person meetings widens access especially for international delegates.
3. Adopting a module whereby conference keynotes are paid expenses only and no keynote fee; this money is instead put towards support for PGR/ECR delegates.
4. Scrapping expensive banquets at conferences is essential if some of the inequalities of access cited above are to be lessened.

5. Assistance with basic skills including job application skills such as writing a CV and cover-letter is essential and something that the working group and IFTR new scholars can advise on.
6. Being mindful of PGR/ECR caring responsibilities.

The Single-Author Scholar?

During the subsequent conversation, we also discussed the issue of being competitive on the job market when studying a single author. Beckett scholars develop a wide range of skills and areas of expertise through Beckett studies, which has mostly become interdisciplinary. It is important that they value those other disciplinary engagements on their CV, instead of presenting themselves as single-author scholars. In addition, PhD students should be encouraged to take up teaching positions in which their knowledge of Beckett and other areas/disciplines is utilised towards learning.

In the Q&A, Matthew McFrederick also had some very clear and constructive advice for colleagues, based on his recent early experiences:

- Don't expect smooth linear progress as ECRs. Instead persevere and manage expectations;
- Versatility: consider your skillset and broader opportunities;
- Go beyond Beckett Studies for postdoc opportunities;
- Read job descriptions carefully before applying, ensuring that you match your skills and experience clearly to the requirements of the role;
- Do qualifications within your university (e.g. Fellowship for Higher Education, <https://www.advance-he.ac.uk/fellowship>).

As the SBWG convenors, we intend to respond to Hannah's advice with the following strategies:

1. Exploring modes of mentorship for emerging scholars through the group; this could take the form of acting as bulwark, as Hannah suggested, against some of the more challenging psychological impacts of precarity. It could also involve mentorship from senior colleagues, such as on basic skills like job applications, and the creation of a forum for sharing advice and resources;
2. Committing to hosting online interims meetings annually and facilitating in particular paper discussion for PGR and ECR members that could not afford to travel the preceding summer;
3. Embedding a discussion session within the in-person and interim working group meetings to discuss PGR and ECR support and feeding back the needs of these scholars to the organisation.

For a list of funding sources for PGRs and ECRs see here:

<https://iftr.org/working-groups/samuel-beckett/resources-pgr-ecr-funding>

2022

The working group touch based online in December 2021 and met in person in June 2022 at the IFTR international congress in Reykjavík (Iceland). At the latter event, the group welcomed new early-career researchers from Asia, Europe and America, but some of the longstanding members could not travel due to their countries' restrictive travel policies. While this event could not be accommodated in a hybrid format, we hope to work with the organisation to facilitate remote access to the working group when travel is not possible. We recognise the benefits of in-person meetings, and we encourage members to join physically, but we are also deeply aware of the financial, environmental and health restrictions that may impact researchers' mobility.

The yearly theme "Shifting Centres: In the Middle of Nowhere," particularly fitting to Beckett's oeuvre, was explored through the lenses of psychology, psychiatry, phenomenology, technology, philosophy, politics, theatre historiography, modernism/postmodernism, theatre and performance studies and humour studies. Presentations and discussions explored affective and subjective spaces in Beckett's drama, alongside the spaces of individual and collective memory. Researchers were interested in debating the frequent understanding of Beckettian physical and imaginary spaces as the "nowhere" and in thinking about non-anthropocentric approaches to space in Beckett's oeuvre, particularly in the contexts of the ecological crisis and in connection with intermediality. Attentive to power dynamics in Beckettian ecosystems, the group reflected on the role of less represented theatre practitioners who had a significant impact on Beckett's dramaturgies and on the international reception of performances in which site is understood as archive of a particular history.

The working group sessions are closed; nevertheless, we shared our work with the IFTR community at large in two ways. First, some attendees who expressed willingness to attend presentations were welcomed as guest auditors. Second, the working group offered an interdisciplinary public panel which presenting cutting-edge research on Beckett, space and performance and reflected on the geography of the Beckettian stage as well as that of Beckett studies, calling to attention the role of research centres as spaces of attraction and diffraction of knowledge.

After finalising a partnership with Bloomsbury at the IFTR congress itself, we announced the publication of a collection of essays entitled *Samuel Beckett and Ecology* (forthcoming 2024) that aims at disseminating the research outcomes of (mainly but not exclusively) the working group over the past two years on the theme of ecology and on Beckett's ecological dramatic practices.

This year marked the end of Trish McTighe's four-year convening term. The members of group therefore voted to elect the next convening team for another four-year term. Trish McTighe (Queen's University Belfast) was re-elected, alongside Céline Thobois (Trinity College Dublin). Our endeavour is to organise an interim online meeting in December 2022 with present and past members of the working group. The aim of the session is to provide support to the members of the group in their current research and to update the community on the themes and methodologies explored by the community. While the working group has

successfully fostered inclusivity and diversity since its inception, we would like to open our group to a wider community of research and practitioners next year in Accra by inviting presentations both in English and in French.

2021

The working group met in July 2021 as part of the Galway IFTR online conference. The extension of the conference theme, Theatre Ecologies, allowed colleagues to deepen and enrich work begun last year looking at notions of the Anthropocene, the environmental aspects of the staging Beckett's work and its politics of precarity as they manifest and relate to issues of environmental degradation. The productive conversation of our sessions led to new understandings of Beckettian wastelands as ones produced out of human failure and human violence.

We were delighted to mark the publication of two new working group collections this summer edited by past convenors of the group. Congratulations to Anita Rákóczy, Mariko Hori Tanaka, and Nicholas Johnson on the publication of *Influencing Beckett, Beckett Influencing* (L'Harmattan, 2020) and to Laurens De Vos, Mariko Hori Tanaka, and Nicholas Johnson on the publication of *Beckett's Voices / Voicing Beckett* (Brill, 2021).

We were honoured to have Prof Anna McMullan launch *Influencing Beckett, Beckett Influencing* during the working group sessions. Prof McMullan is a long-time member of the IFTR Samuel Beckett Working Group and has herself recently published a monograph on Beckett and ecology entitled *Beckett's Intermedial Ecosystems* (Cambridge, 2021).

We will reconvene in person, it is hoped, at Reykjavik in June 2022.

2020

The working group met online in July 2020; while we had fewer participants than in previous years due to the pandemic, the papers and conversation were no less vibrant for all that. Topics of discussion included Beckett's relation to the Anthropocene, natural ecologies and the ecologies of media and technology that permeate his work. The theme for IFTR 2021, Theatre Ecologies, carries over from 2020, therefore papers are welcome for the working group that respond to this. As with previous years, the working group will also continue to provide an open forum for work dealing with any aspect of Beckett's theatre.

2019

In 2010, we had vibrant gathering in Shanghai. The size of the group permitted us to spend, as is traditional for this group, a significant amount of time on each paper and allowed for deep reading and engagement. Papers produced original perspectives on the topics of ecology and catastrophe, Beckett and pedagogy, and Beckett in translation. We commenced our initial session with questions such as: what ways do artists from around the world translate Beckett's work into their own contexts? How might we trace the intersections between Asian performance traditions and Beckett's theatre? And, in what ways do artists experiment with the work, while negotiating a longstanding 'tradition' in performing Beckett within urban Anglophone / European contexts? Each of the papers addressed these concerns in very different ways and provoked fascinating discussions about the nature of translation, eco-dramaturgy, and ethics.

One of the strengths of this year's activities lay in the openness of the group. There were a number of papers delivered across the conference that were Beckett-related, some in general panels, others within other working groups and one within the New Scholars' Forum. As a group, we attended a number of these talks and invited these speakers to attend our final working group session, which we opened up to all Beckett-interested people. Through this, we gathered some new attendees and members and we were delighted also to make connections with scholars from the Asian Performance Working Group. This open session produced a very stimulating discussion that illuminated the research interests of those in the room and the diversity of cultural contexts in which Beckett is continually animated, as well as pointing toward further publications and projects for the group. New members and old will join us for an interim meeting in Tokyo in December, in advance of our next meeting in Galway.