

art journal

Guest Editor Debra Bricker Balken

Executive Editor Lenore Malen

Managing Editor Virginia Wageman

Editor M. E. D. Laing

Reviews Editor Martica Sawin

Editorial Assistant/Advertising Renée Ramirez

Design Harakawa Sisco

Issue Design and Production Russell Hassell

Editorial Board Michael Brenson, Judith K. Brodsky, Cynthia Carlson, Lenore Malen, Gerald Silk, Robert Storr, Paul Tucker, Judith Wilson, Martha Wilson

Art Journal (ISSN 0004-3249) is published quarterly by College Art Association, Inc., 275 Seventh Ave., New York, NY 10001. Copyright © 1993 College Art Association, Inc. All rights reserved. No part of the contents may be reproduced without the written permission of the publisher. Second-class postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. Printed by Waverly Press, Easton, Maryland.

Printed in the U.S.A.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *Art Journal*, 275 Seventh Ave., New York, NY 10001.

Art Journal is available as a benefit of membership in the College Art Association. Subscriptions for nonmembers: individuals, \$30 per year (add \$6 for foreign postage); institutions, \$45 per year (add \$6 for foreign postage). For information about back issues, subscriptions, and CAA membership, call or write CAA, 275 Seventh Ave., New York, NY 10001; 212/691-1051.

Correspondence for *Art Journal* should be addressed to the Executive Editor at the College Art Association. Because each issue of *Art Journal* is organized thematically under the editorial direction of a designated guest editor, unsolicited manuscripts cannot be accepted. Letters to the editor will be considered for publication, provided they are 500 words or less.

Advertising information and rates are available from the CAA office, 212/691-1051.

COVER: Alexis Smith and Amy Gerstler, *Past Lives* (detail). See page 74, fig. 4.

Interactions between Artists and Writers

artist's pages

Philip Guston's Exchanges *edited by Ellen Lanyon* 5

editor's statement

Interactions between Artists and Writers *Debra Bricker Balken* 16

Collaborating on the Paradigm of the Future *Margarita Tupitsyn* 18

Sophie Taeuber and Hans Arp: A Community of Two
Renée Riese Hubert 25

→ Illustrating Samuel Beckett: The Issue of the Supererogatory
Judith Wechsler 33

Questions of Identity in *Oranges* by Frank O'Hara and Grace Hartigan
Terence Diggory 41

Collaboration without Object(s) in the Early Happenings
Johanna Drucker 51

Collaboration as Social Exchange: *Screen Tests/A Diary* by Gerard Malanga and Andy Warhol
Reva Wolf 59

A Muse in the Room, or Poets Are Poor *Raphael Rubinstein* 67

Notes on the Publisher as Auteur *Debra Bricker Balken* 70

Interactions between Artists and Writers *Jim Dine and Ron Padgett / Susan Barron and John Cage / Archie Rand and John Yau / Alexis Smith and Amy Gertsler / Barbara Fahner and John Cage / Bradford Morrow and Gregory Amenoff / Judith Shea and John Ashbery / George Condo and William Burroughs / Dennis Ashbaugh and William Gibson / Raphael Rubinstein and Shirley Jaffe* 72

book reviews

William Camfield, *Max Ernst*; Maud Lavin, *Cut with the Kitchen Knife*; Peter Pachnicke and Klaus Honef, eds. *John Heartfield*; reviewed by
Johanna Drucker 82

Eunice Lipton, *Alias Olympia*; Otto Friedrich, *Olympia*; Griselda Pollock, *Avant-Garde Gambits*; reviewed by *Steven Z. Levine* 87

Donald Kuspit, *The Cult of the Avant-Garde Artist*, reviewed by
Bradley Collins 91

Gabriel P. Weisberg, *Beyond Impressionism*; Patricia Mainardi, *The End of the Salon*; reviewed by *Alisa Luxenberg* 95

Wen C. Fong, *Beyond Representation*; Richard Vinograd, *Boundaries of the Self*; R. Stewart Johnston, *Scholar Gardens of China*; reviewed by
Robert Albright Rorex 98

books and catalogues received

Illustrating Samuel Beckett

The Issue of the Supererogatory

Judith Wechsler

In any case I wish him every success in his courageous undertaking. And I am ever prepared to collaborate with him as with Mahood and Co., and to the best of my ability, being unable to do otherwise, and knowing my ability.

—Samuel Beckett, *The Unnamable*¹

The prospectus for this *Art Journal* issue on collaboration suggests addressing or challenging “canonical assumptions about originality and authorship.” But what are these assumptions? Current theory asserts that previously there was the unfortunate myth of originality and genius but that now we have a better grasp on the myth by privileging the context and conditions of production and placing greater importance on the readings of works rather than the intentions of their producers. But the myth of the individual genius did not rule everything in the past—consider the borrowings and interactions of Shakespeare and other dramatists, or those of Wordsworth and Coleridge: writers collaborated well before Pound helped Eliot. Exchanges and collaborations between writers and painters precede modernism, from *et in Arcadia* inscriptions, to writing within painting. Beliefs regarding artistic property have been debated at least since the Renaissance; they came very much to the fore in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries with the laws of copyright. The issue prevails in our time in the arguments over the “droit d’auteur” versus “work for hire.”

The idea that painting or writing is monolithic is limited and unhistorical, a set-up for an argument without real substance: postmodernist criticism has isolated the concept and used it as a foil. It is time again to open up the question regarding confounding authorship. The work of Samuel Beckett is particularly apt for calling into question certain assumptions about collaboration; it disturbs much received opinion, including the latest.

The prospectus for this issue also suggests exploring how careers are redirected as a result of collaboration. There are, however, many examples of dialogues between poets and artists that do not lead to such redirection, such as collaborations between living artists and dead ones: Maillol’s illustrations of *Odes d’Horace*, Picasso’s paintings after Velázquez’s *Las Meninas*, and in the setting of texts to music, as with Benjamin Britten’s *Billy Budd*. If one does not believe in

collaboration with the dead, one cannot believe in art: art is a kind of prayer and resurrection (*laborare est orare*). Beckett’s review of MacGreevy’s poems, begins with the line, “All poetry . . . is prayer.”² Collaboration can be like an act of communal prayer rather than the “apotheosis of solitude,” of which Beckett writes in his essay on Proust.³

It is worth looking at analogies with other arts, contrastively and compoundingly. As a man of the theater, Beckett presents an interesting case for thinking about collaboration. He directed most of the productions of his plays staged in Paris, and some in England and Germany. (It is thought that he stayed away from American productions because he didn’t want to make the trip.) Beckett tried to maintain absolute control of his productions but when it wasn’t possible he ignored them.⁴ To his American publisher Barney Rosset he wrote that he wouldn’t interfere with productions of his plays on aesthetic grounds because there would be no end to it.⁵

For the production of *Rockaby*, written at the request of director Alan Schneider for Billie Whitelaw to perform, on the occasion of the writer’s seventy-fifth birthday celebration in Buffalo, Beckett told Whitelaw, “Do it as you like it.” He did not want to intrude on the early rehearsals, which took place in England. Schneider said to Whitelaw, “You and I know what Sam wants.”⁶ Beckett had worked closely with Whitelaw, an actress for whom he had already written several plays.

Beckett was an active collaborator in the translation of his own work into French, or from French into English: *Krapp’s Last Tape* with Ludovic Janvier, *Malloy* with Patrick Bowles. Beckett was unusual in bringing a text into his own tongue with the help of others; an Irishman translated from French into English.

Illustration is unlike the production of a play, which is the fulfillment of an intention, but rather more like setting a work to music: the text does not necessarily need it. (An example is Benjamin Britten’s compositions for the poems of Wilfred Owen or Tennyson, which have their own verbal music.) Beckett’s texts do not need music or pictures, yet he has allowed both. But why?

The answer is in part linked to biographical and sociological considerations. Artists were among Beckett’s closest friends. Some illustrations may have been admitted out of

affection and allegiance, such as those to the text Beckett gave to Jean Deyrolle, *Le Séjour*, in 1967, or to the text given to Stanley William Hayter for *Still* in 1974 (Hayter was one of Beckett's oldest friends in the art world). Beckett was "happy to help" in having drawings by Louis Le Brocqy accompany the text of *Stirring Still* in 1989.

Some illustrations resulted from an artist's or publisher's idea; others may have come about in response to the artist's financial need or as an act of the generosity for which Beckett was famous.⁷ In many cases Beckett did not choose the illustrator, but was approached by the artist or the publisher. He did not necessarily know the artist's work beforehand, nor did he always see and approve the drawings before publication.

Perhaps illustration is the kind of interpretation—without criticism or verbal commentary—that Beckett could countenance. Though in his art criticism he is concerned with the problem of representing the object, Beckett does not state a preference for representational or abstract illustrations of his own work, and there are distinctive examples of both: Giacometti, Corey, Klabunde, Quadflieg, Steadman, among those with representational imagery; Deyrolle, Hayter, Ryman among the abstract. Beckett does not seem to have attempted to control or influence the illustrations.⁸

To know the circumstances of the different occasions for illustration would take the help of an authorized biography and access to letters. We would need to know more about the context, the readership, and the relative roles of writers and painters in Paris and London. Nor do we have enough evidence to try to deduce psychological intentions. But is knowledge of the external factors, the biographical and sociological background, the most revealing or significant matter? Beckett wrote: "All that should concern us is the acute and increasing anxiety of the relation itself, as though shadowed more and more darkly by a sense of invalidity, of inadequacy, of existence at the expense of all that it excludes, all that it blinds to."⁹

In studying the interaction of text and image the question arises, especially with Beckett, of how an artist/illustrator approaches a text when no illustration is necessary or perhaps even possible. (One can argue that no text should need illustration, though some texts may invite them.) Are illustrations supererogatory?¹⁰ Did Beckett see illustrations as a rogation or supplication? He is said to have called illustrative interpretations "adumbrations."

Do the illustrators think they are supplying something to Beckett's text, and if so, how do they do it without imputing a deficiency? Do they try to raise to a higher power what one already has? Do they "use" the text like an epigraph, a misquotation, "from an idea by" which is ancillary to the original? Or do illustrations function like lines that "so truly parallel, though infinite can never meet"?¹¹ Do those that illustrate least illustrate best? On the whole, it is assumed that Beckett's text is supreme. It is not necessary to illustrate,

but it is not unnecessary. Beckett writes: "This submission, this admission, this fidelity to failure, a new occasion, a new term of relation. and of the act which, unable to act, obliged to act. he makes, an expressive act, even if only of itself, of its impossibility, of its obligation."¹²

The question of need is central in Beckett: the necessity to produce even when there is nothing to produce, the effort to say something about the human condition, even though the condition is unspeakable.¹³ He writes: "The expression that there is nothing to express, nothing with which to express, nothing from which to express, no power to express, no desire to express, together with the obligation to express."¹⁴ Writer and illustrator are engaged in an imaginative relationship and need, though the need may not be reasoned. "The need to have need and the need which one needs . . . the product of which is art."¹⁵

Contemporary art, Beckett writes, deals with the limits of representation: "The object of representation always resists representation, either because of its accidents or because of its substance."¹⁶ Beckett's writings on art are considered to be the clearest indication of his own aesthetic—one in which paradox is the most fitting expression.¹⁷

The importance of words rather than narrative line in Beckett's work makes illustrating his texts particularly problematic. How does one illustrate words and the endurance of which the words are a symbol? Illustrations could be said to attempt to represent what cannot be represented; the best illustrations function as visual metaphor. Beckett remarked on the rapport between literature and the visual arts: "Like fire and water they are separated by a zone of evaporation."¹⁸

Much book illustration in the twentieth century is abstract: the spirit of the text is in the image, but without depiction of literal actions or figures. Such illustrations and collaborations are like "readings," if one thinks of it in a postmodern sense. No modern writer has been "illustrated" more than Beckett, and no writer has so clearly posed the problem for illustration which is not representational. The illustrations to Beckett do not seem intended to visualize his work for a broad audience—they don't serve to make the work more accessible.

To date, I have found twenty-eight illustrated editions, beginning in the 1950s when Beckett's work began to be more widely recognized.¹⁹ The majority of illustrations were done after Beckett's Nobel Prize: fifteen editions in the 1970s, five in the 1980s, one in 1990. There is a wide range in the quality and style of illustration and in the type of publication—limited editions, trade books, and literary magazines. Most of the illustrations are for short stories and fragments—compressed texts: there are only a few illustrations for the novels and plays.²⁰

The *livre d'artiste*, a shared enterprise between writer and artist, is the most important and prevalent form in which Beckett illustrations appear. The readership for Beckett was relatively small, especially in his early years; perhaps he was

making a virtue out of a necessity, or turning disadvantage to advantage.²¹ A limited edition with illustrations is also a way of publishing a short story as a book. The audience for expensive editions is restricted and elite, in this case either dedicated Beckett readers who would read the texts without the illustrations or admirers and collectors of the artist's work.²² There is a paradox in the contrast of the grim and austere content of the texts, the black humor, and the exquisite special edition.

Illustrating Beckett may have the greatest impact on the illustrator—as affirmation and elevation: such is the case with Avigdor Arikha, the most prolific illustrator of Beckett. Arikha, born in Bukovina (Romania) in 1929, was deported to several forced-labor camps during World War II, when he lost both parents. At fifteen Arikha immigrated to Palestine; during the War of Independence in 1948 he was badly wounded. A year later he went to Paris to study at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. In 1956 Arikha met Beckett, who was also an outsider, a foreigner in his chosen country. Beckett visited Arikha and his family regularly and Arikha drew portraits of him over the course of two decades; they were friends until the end. Arikha recounts that they shared the belief that there is a “deep connection between ethics and aesthetics.”²³

Beckett wrote “For Avigdor Arikha” in 1967:

*Siege laid again to the impregnable without. Eye and hand fevering after the unself. By the hand it unceasingly changes the eye unceasingly changed. Back and forth the gaze beating against unseeable and unmakeable. Truce for a space and the marks of what it is to be and be in face of. Those deep marks to show.*²⁴

Arikha's conversion from abstraction to painting the visible world was influenced by Beckett: he “inspired me for my entire life in all respects.”²⁵ Arikha's development can be traced through his illustrations for Beckett's texts. Mordechai Omer notes that many of Beckett's published and unpublished texts, accompanied by Arikha's drawings and prints, were done “at the instigation of the writer.”²⁶

For *Nouvelles et textes pour rien* (*Stories and Texts for Nothing*) of 1958, there are six pen drawings in the tradition of the German Expressionists. The illustrations for “The Calmative” and “The End” relate to stories in the volume, the others to earlier texts (1947–52), *The Unnamable*, *Estragon* and *Vladimir* from *Waiting for Godot*, *Molloy*, and *Malone Dies*.

For *L'Issue*, excerpted from *La Dépeupleur*, Arikha made six abstract color etchings, printed in 1968 in a limited edition of 154 copies (*fig. 1*).²⁷ These are among the last of Arikha's abstractions and his only abstract illustrations for Beckett.

In 1970, when Beckett received the Nobel Prize, Arikha was commissioned by the committee to make four ink-and-brush drawings of Winnie for *Happy Days* (*Oh les beaux jours*) and four for *Malone meurt*.²⁸ Posing his wife as



FIG. 1 Avigdor Arikha, illustration for *L'Issue* (Paris: Editions Georges Visat, 1968), color etching, 8 × 6½ inches.

Winnie, Arikha drew “Winnie and her bag,” “Winnie with mirror,” “Winnie ‘filth’” (Winnie holding her nose), and “End of Second Act” (Winnie buried up to her neck: “Fear no more the heat of the sun”). Arikha posed himself as the living corpse of Malone, in white ink on black paper (*fig. 2*). He evokes the despair and desolation of Malone and of Winnie.

Arikha chose a fragment from *Le Dépeupleur*, first published in Beckett's translation as the next-to-last paragraph from *The Lost Ones*, to make three etchings for a limited edition of 137 copies titled *The North* and published in London in 1972. There is a crouching nude woman, arms clasped around her knees, head lowered, her body covered by a cascade of hair, placed against a black background with evident and expressive marks of hatching (*fig. 3*). His drawings follow the text closely but it is in the treatment of the surface of objects, the near invisibility of certain tones that they approach Beckett. Writing about the relationship of the artist and his occasion, between the subject and the object, Beckett observes that the first stage is “technical mastery in the representation of surfaces.”²⁹ Arikha achieves deep blacks to grays in one state: the mode of etching conveys pressure and tension.

Five aquatints were made for *Au loin un oiseau* in 1973: the text appeared for the first time in this edition of ninety exemplars, with an additional thirty *hors commerce*.³⁰ Arikha



FIG. 2 Avigdor Arikha, illustration for *Malone meurt* (Paris: Collection des Prix Nobel, Edition Rombaldi, 1970), reproductions of ink drawings, 6¼ × 4¾ inches.

took "several concrete motifs which surround the character": coat, ruin, cane, stones, and grass. Beckett described to Arikha his father's stiff great coat, worn for open-car driving. Arikha had one like it and on seeing this Beckett said "Voilà, c'est ça" ("There, that's it"), though he didn't care for the first etching Arikha made of it: "It was not like that. It was standing up like felt." Of the final print (*fig. 4*), Arikha recalls Beckett said "exactly it" and that he was "happy" with the illustrations. Arikha observed about the making of these prints: "In fact, nothing can really be illustrated. To make the emotion of a poet visible is a process parallel to the illustrator moved by the poet. . . . I consider these engravings more accompaniment than illustration. I followed the example of the isolated representation of the instruments of the Passion."³¹

The focus on objects plays a central role in Beckett's early art criticism. In "Peintres de l'empêchement" Beckett writes:

*The history of painting is the history of its relationship with its object. This relationship is first explored in terms of breadth, then in depth. . . . As painting becomes more conscious of its limitations, it explores the outer confines of those limitations and then turns towards "the thing hidden beneath the thing."*³²

Arikha illustrated the content of Beckett's work, its characters and objects, its anxiety, and "the vision at the void."³³

Jasper Johns is concerned with fragmentation and the denial of self: the same issues appear in Beckett's writings; we witness them in their collaboration for *Foirades/Fizzles*. Johns has written: "An object that tells of the loss, destruction, disappearance of objects. Does not speak of itself. Tells of others. Will it include them? Deluge."³⁴

Beckett's description of the third stage of the artist's relationship between subject and object is one critical of its means, and doubtful of the existence of that relationship.³⁵ Jasper Johns's works parallel Beckett's texts in the more formal sense of language, signs, and metaphors.

One of the difficulties in illustrating Beckett is how one creates visual equivalents of texts which are beyond familiar time and space.³⁶ As Beckett wrote, "and a centre not its centre in search of a centre and its circle respectively, in boundless space, in endless time."³⁷ Space and time, the parameters of narration, are evoked in the visual arts by fixing moments spatially. In Johns's illustrations, we witness shifts of the sense of space. Johns has written:

*My experience of life is that it's very fragmented. In one place, certain kinds of things occur, and in another place, a different kind of thing occurs. I would like my work to have some vivid indication of those differences. I guess, in painting, it would amount to different kinds of space being represented in it.*³⁸



FIG. 3 Avigdor Arikha, illustration for *The North* (London: Enitharmon Press, 1972), etching, 7 × 10¾ inches.



FIG. 4 Avigdor Arikha, illustration for *Au loin un oiseau* (New York: Double Elephant Press, 1973), aquatint, 10¾ × 9½ inches.

The collaboration of Samuel Beckett and Jasper Johns took place in 1972–73 and resulted in *Foirades/Fizzles*, a limited edition of 250 copies published by Petersburg Press in 1976. The book consists of five French texts by Beckett written and translated between 1960 and 1975, some of which were published in 1972;³⁹ English texts were written in 1974 for this project, and thirty-three original etchings by Johns were printed at the Atelier Crommelynck in Paris in 1975 and 1976.

It was Vera Lindsay, an active figure in the British art world, who approached Johns suggesting a collaboration with Beckett. Johns was receptive to the idea and in 1972 she arranged a meeting between the two in Paris. Johns had read “quite a bit” of Beckett; Beckett said he knew of Jasper Johns’s work (though he probably did not know Johns’s paintings of the late 1960s and early 1970s). As Johns recalls:

I had assumed that she had spoken to him, but she had not! So I had to tell Beckett that I didn’t want to do something which had already been published and had thought of fragments of writings he might have. I had imagined—well, one has no right to “imagine” what other people would do but I had! that he would have a sentence or part of a sentence, some really fragmentary structure that he would have saved. I had envisaged using these things as part of the imagery so they wouldn’t have to present themselves as literature. Beckett said he had things like that in French. . . . He started sending me these pieces. Of course they were not fragments in the way I had thought about them, they were very polished. Nevertheless, I continued to plan using the text in a painting until I went back

*to Paris to start actual work, and only then did I realize that a better solution was to have his work and my work side by side, for his was so finished, probably much more than mine.*⁴⁰

Johns had been working on a set of etchings based on *Untitled*, 1972, a six-by-sixteen-foot, four-paneled painting. He thought those images were the best he could produce and would be the most suitable for the collaboration with Beckett, no matter what the text. Coincidentally the imagery of the painting, especially the anatomical fragments, corresponded to aspects of the texts for *Foirades/Fizzles*: body parts and disassociation from the surrounding environment.

Beckett and Johns met three or four times while Johns worked on the etchings in Paris, though Johns says that he and Beckett did not discuss the images.⁴¹ Johns requested the use of the French as well as the English texts in order to have more material for the design of the book and Beckett agreed. They discussed the layout and when he first began the etchings, Johns might have shown a photograph to Beckett of *Untitled*, 1972. Beckett allowed Johns to determine the order in which the five *Fizzles* would appear, design how the words and etching would be integrated, and use the imagery initiated in *Untitled* of 1972.⁴² Beckett did not see the etchings until the book was almost completed: As Johns recalls showing the finished prints to Beckett:

*My memory is that Beckett looked at an image that was half crosshatching and half flagstone and he said to me that he would tell me what he thought of when he looked at it and I said please do and he said these crosshatched marks . . . how did he say it? . . . Here you move in all directions but no matter where you turn you come up against this wall. Something to that effect. It fitted in with images that fit in with his writing but I had never thought of it exactly in that way.*⁴³

Johns arranged the images in such a way that they sometimes coincide closely with the imagery of the essays, but there is not the sense that the etchings illustrate the text as such.⁴⁴ Richard Field points out that the order was mostly predetermined without reference to the texts.⁴⁵ Still, Johns managed to relate the body parts with some aspects of Beckett’s words, while maintaining the sequence of panels and casts as they appear in *Untitled*, 1972. Roberta Bernstein suggests that some of Johns’s etchings were deliberately chosen to accompany Beckett’s texts.⁴⁶

The book is divided into five parts, alternating French and English text. Johns separated the French and English texts of each *Fizzle* with a double-page etching that would show two adjacent panels of *Untitled*, 1972 (fig. 5). Field has articulated the problem of reconciling five texts and the four panels of Johns’s painting: four combinations, AB, BC, CD, and DA. In the fifth spread, he uses the French and English equivalents for names of the seven casts. Field’s essay is comprehensive and insightful, and the reader should consult it for a detailed analysis of the relationship of text and image

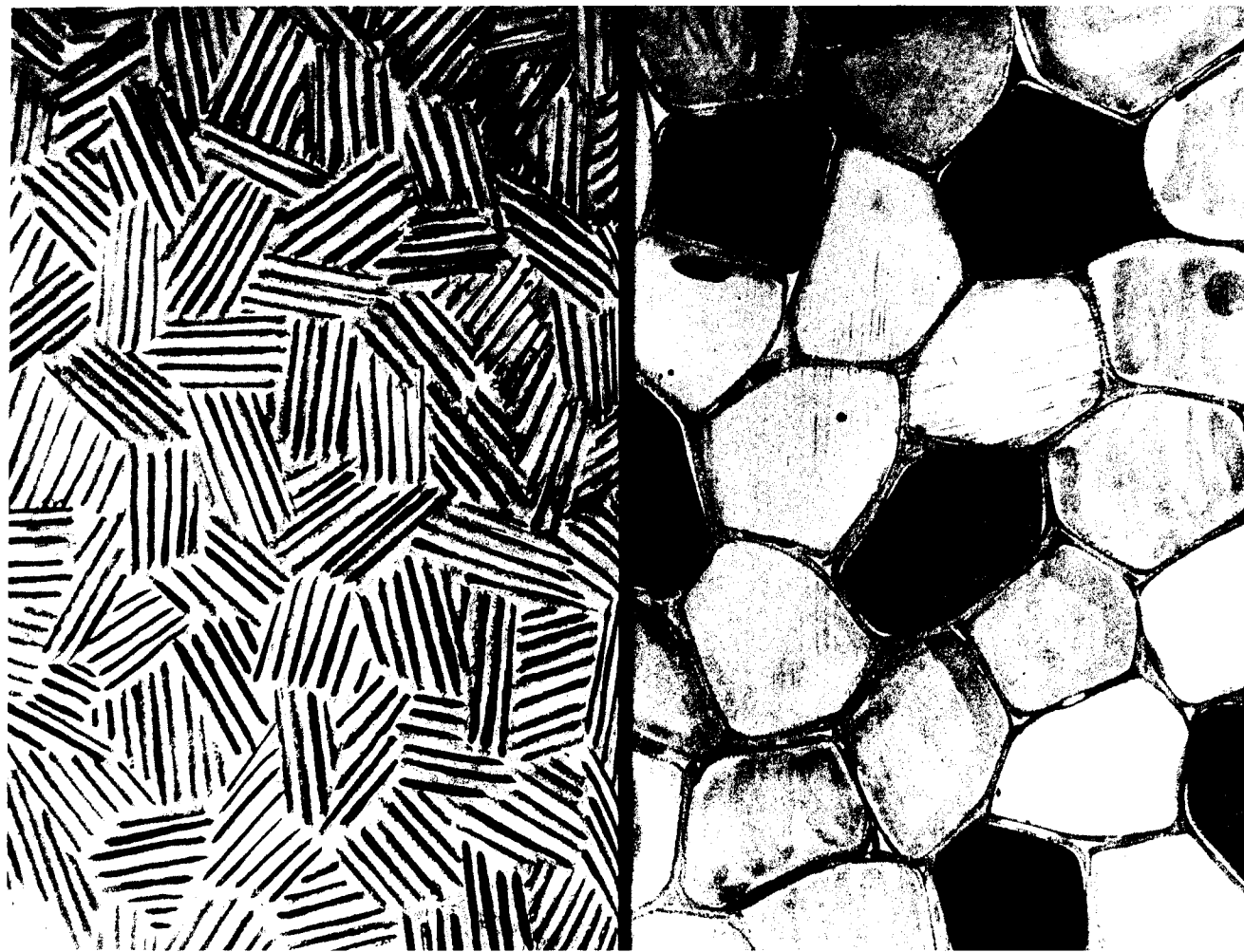


FIG. 5 Jasper Johns, illustration for *Foirades/Fizzles* by Samuel Beckett and Jasper Johns (London: Petersburg Press, 1976), etching, 14 × 10½ inches.

on literal and metaphorical levels. What follows here is a brief description of the sequence of *Foirades/Fizzles*.

For *Fizzle 1*, pressed up against the paper is a face with an X on it (*fig. 6*). The text and image are about the negation of self. It has been said that the face was Johns's, but Johns denies this. In Beckett's text we read: "there will be no more I, he'll never say I any more." (Earlier Johns had written: "My work became a constant negation of impulses.")⁴⁷

Fizzle 2, which has the longest text and the most illustrations, describes a man walking through a passageway with abrupt dead ends. Johns's flagstones come up short against the crosshatchings. There are also body fragments: torsos, a leg, foot, and hand.

Fizzle 3 is about the life cycle of the cockchafer. The stenciled word TORSE is placed beneath a large fragment of a torso, faintly etched; the ink drips and splatters like a bleeding wound. The torso appears twice, with the French and then with the English text, with the word TORSO (*fig. 7*). A line of the text opposite the torsos reads: "Ah to love at your last and



FIG. 6 Jasper Johns, *Fizzle 1*, illustration for *Foirades/Fizzles* by Samuel Beckett and Jasper Johns (London: Petersburg Press, 1976), etching, 7½ × 10¾ inches.

see them at theirs." Between the two torsos is a plate with crosshatching and flagstones.

Fizzle 4: "Place consisting of an arena and a ditch. Between the two skirting the latter a track. Closed place. Beyond the ditch there is nothing." Schematic etchings of the casts, one on a vertical strip, precede and follow a double page of the darkened flagstones.

Fizzle 5: Flagstones and schematized, darkened anatomical parts appear on facing pages; then, a foot and hand-print with an X close by (*fig. 8*). Field notes that "Beckett's words and Johns's images flicker between light and dark, between individuation and non-recognition."⁴³

In the imagery of Beckett and Jasper Johns there are no full human presences: bodies are shown fragmented, repeated, and deformed; they are metonymic. In the work of both men there are juxtapositions, repetitions, and irony and ultimately, the concern with issues of life and death, presented with stark formal beauty. Richard Field observes of

Johns: "If his view is pessimistic, it is not one that arises from the rack of personal encounters, disappointments and sufferings, but from a brilliant encoding of the human condition into the terms of the making of art."⁴⁹

In conclusion: illustrations to Beckett are not necessary to elucidate or amplify the text. Hence they are supererogatory—unnecessary, beyond what is required, and yet a store of merit. Illustrations are a form of hermeneutic: concerned with interpretation, their view is partial and uncritical, unlike exegesis or practical exposition.

For many illustrators the starting point is the object, the seeming subject of representation, but with Beckett, it can never be left there. The imagery need not be the same as that of the text but should have the qualities of fragmentation, paradox, and irony. Beckett and Johns turned the issue upside down, creating complete entities from fragments, ironically titling works *Untitled* and *Fizzles*.

Arikha and Johns represent two divergent approaches



FIG. 7 Jasper Johns, *Fizzle 3*, illustration for *Foirades/Fizzles* by Samuel Beckett and Jasper Johns (London: Petersburg Press, 1976), etching, 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 9 inches.



FIG. 8 Jasper Johns, *Fizzle 5*, illustration for *Foirades/Fizzles* (London: Petersburg Press, 1976), etching, 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ × 9 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

to illustrating Beckett's texts, two kinds of collaboration. Arikha, embedded in Beckett, addressed himself specifically to the texts, representing figures, objects, and events with the sense of desolation and despair that the content suggests. Johns, holding himself at more of a distance, began with a painting conceived independently from Beckett's texts but curiously parallel in its imagery and concerns. Starting with the object, Beckett, Johns, and Arikha ply meaning out of meaninglessness.

Jasper Johns: "I think that one wants from a painting a sense of life. The final suggestion, the final statement, has to be not a deliberate statement but a helpless statement. It has to be what you can't avoid saying."⁵⁰

Samuel Beckett: "The situation is that of him who is helpless, cannot act, in the event cannot paint, since he is obliged to paint. The act is of him who, helpless, unable to act, acts, in the event paints, since he is obliged to paint."⁵¹

40

Notes

This essay is dedicated to the memory of Charles Eames and Hans Namuth, with whom I collaborated in making films. I wish to thank Christopher Ricks for his critical reading of drafts of the essay and for his many thoughts and suggestions. Thanks too to Crystal Cromer and Karen Mayers.

1. Samuel Beckett, *The Unnamable* (New York: Grove Press, 1958), 82.
2. Quoted in Nicholas Zurbrugg, "Beckett and Critical Perspectives," in *Beckett and Proust* (Totowa, N.J.: Barnes and Noble Books, 1988), 182.
3. Samuel Beckett, *Proust*; Samuel Beckett and Georges Duthuit, *Three Dialogues*; 2 vols. in 1 (London: John Calder, 1965), 64.
4. Deirdre Bair, *Samuel Beckett* (New York: Summit Books, 1978), 634.
5. The collaboration between writer and artist in production design, which raises related issues, will not be discussed here; Giacometti and Arikha, who illustrated Beckett texts, also collaborated on sets for his plays.
6. As related in the film *Rockaby* by D. A. Pennebaker and Chris Hegedus, made in 1984.
7. *Beginning to End: A Selection from the Works of Samuel Beckett*, adapted by Samuel Beckett and Jack MacGowran, with drawings by Edward Gorey (New York: Gotham Book Mart, 1988) may well have been to raise money for the widow of his friend MacGowran.
8. We do know of an early example where Beckett refused publication because he disliked the illustration, or the idea of it. His friend George Reavey planned to combine poetry and illustration for his Europa Press volumes as a way of sharing the cost between artist and writer. Stanley William Hayter submitted engravings which Beckett rejected. According to Bair, *Samuel Beckett*, 206, "He did not want the effect of his poetry to be either diminished or enhanced by anyone else's creation." This occurred in 1935. I have not found illustrated editions before the early 1950s.
9. Beckett and Duthuit, "Bram van Velde," in *Three Dialogues*, 124–25.
10. "Supererogatory": "going beyond what is commanded or required"; "Supererogation": "The performance of good works beyond what God commands or requires, which are held to constitute a store of merit." *Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary* (1971), 2:175.
11. Andrew Marvell, "The Definition of Love."
12. Beckett and Duthuit, "Bram van Velde," 125.
13. Beckett defines art in terms of need in his review of Denis Devlin's *Intercessions*, 1938. See John P. Harrington, "Samuel Beckett's Art Criticism and the Literary Uses of Critical Circumstance," *Contemporary Literature* 21, no. 3 (1980): 331–48.
14. Beckett and Duthuit, "Tal Coat," in *Three Dialogues*, 125.
15. From "Les Deux Besoins," an unpublished essay on aesthetics, cited in and translated by Harrington, "Samuel Beckett's Art Criticism," 335.
16. "La Peinture des van Velde ou le monde et le pantalon," *Les Cahiers d'Art* (1945–46): 349–56. The essay is condensed in "Peintres de l'empêchement," *Derrière le Miroir* 11 + 12 (June 1948): 3–7. Reprinted in Samuel Beckett, *Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment*, ed. Ruby Cohn (London: John Calder, 1983), 133–37, 145.
17. Writings on art reprinted in Beckett, *Disjecta*, 115–52. A number of critics have written about Beckett's interest in art. See Harrington, "Samuel Beckett's Art Criticism"; Lawrence E. Harvey, *Samuel Beckett, Poet and Critic* (Princeton, N.J.:

Princeton University Press, 1970), 424–41; Vivian Mercier, *Beckett/Beckett* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977); and Dougald McMillan, "Samuel Beckett and the Visual Arts: The Embarrassment of Allegory," in *Samuel Beckett: A Collection of Criticism*, ed. Ruby Cohn (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975), 121–36.

18. Mordechai Omer, *Samuel Beckett by Avigdor Arikha*, exh. cat. (London: Victoria and Albert Museum, 1976), 5.
19. There was not sufficient space in this issue to publish the list in an appendix.
20. There is a 1979 illustrated edition of *Waiting for Godot* by Deltas Henke. Arikha did one drawing of Vladimir and Estragon from *Godot*. Erhardt illustrated *Watt* and *Ping*.
21. "The reactions of the small as well as the large public are becoming more and more enigmatic to me, and, what is worse, of less significance"; 1937 letter from Beckett to a German friend, Axel Kaun. Reprinted in Beckett, *Disjecta*, 171.
22. Edward Gorey has a certain following, so that his illustrations for *All Strange Away* (1976) and *Beginning to End* (1987), published by the Gotham Book Mart, would have contributed to the "success" of the volumes.
23. Interview with Arikha, June 10, 1990, in Paris. Robert Hughes has also noted that Beckett had a formative influence on Arikha's development; *Arikha*, texts by Richard Channin, André Fermigier, Robert Hughes, Jane Livingston, Barbara Rose, and Samuel Beckett (Paris: Hermann, 1985), 32.
24. Samuel Beckett, "For Avigdor Arikha," in *ibid.*, 10.
25. "To paint from life at this point of time demands both the transgression and the inclusion of doubt"; Arikha, quoted in Jane Livingston, "Thoughts on Avigdor Arikha," in *ibid.*, 102. "The illusion which is a painting from life, reflects on life and transforms reality"; Arikha, quoted in "Avigdor Arikha Interviewed by Barbara Rose," in *ibid.*, 88.
26. Omer, *Samuel Beckett by Avigdor Arikha*, 3.
27. Omer comments: "They represent Arikha's attempts . . . to paint the 'obscurity' within himself without reference to the visible exterior"; *ibid.*, 4. The illustrations are related in style to Arikha's painting *Nour et Blancheur* of 1965, which hung in Beckett's small room until his death.
28. *Collection des Prix Nobel* (Paris: Edition Rombaldi, 1970).
29. Harvey, *Samuel Beckett*, 432.
30. The text is also part of *Fizzle 3* but was not included with the texts for Jasper Johns's illustrations.
31. Avigdor Arikha, "Un Livre de Samuel Beckett et Avigdor Arikha: Au loin un oiseau," *Revue de l'Art* 44 (1979): 103.
32. Samuel Beckett, "Peintres de l'empêchement," in *Disjecta*, 135.
33. Samuel Beckett to Dierdre Bair, November 17, 1971, Paris; Bair, *Samuel Beckett*, 540, 411 n. 39.
34. Johns, "Sketchbook Notes," *Art and Literature* 4 (Spring 1965): 185.
35. Beckett, "Peintres de l'empêchement," in *Disjecta*, 135.
36. On Beckett's time and space see Martin Esslin, "Samuel Beckett—Infinity, Eternity," *Beckett at 80/Beckett in Context*, ed. Enoch Brater (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986).
37. Samuel Beckett, *Watt*, 1953 (New York: Grove Press, 1959), 128–29.
38. Jasper Johns, quoted in Mark Rosenthal, *Jasper Johns: Work since 1974*, exh. cat. (Philadelphia: Philadelphia Museum of Art, 1988), 40.
39. Richard S. Field, "The Making of *Foivades/Fizzles*," in *Foivades/Fizzles: Echo and Allusion in the Art of Jasper Johns* (Los Angeles: University of California, 1987), 99. A facsimile edition with critical essays.
40. Ann Hindry, "Conversation with Jasper Johns," *Artstudio* 12 (Spring 1989): 8.
41. Interview in New York, December 7, 1990, while Hans Namuth and I were making a film on Jasper Johns.
42. Field, "The Making of *Foivades/Fizzles*," 99–126.
43. New York interview, December 7, 1990.
44. Field, "The Making of *Foivades/Fizzles*," 100, observes: "It is one of the deeply moving aspects of this book just how craftily Johns managed to preserve the nearly pre-ordained order of his visual contributions while integrating them both functionally and imaginatively into the flow and meaning of Beckett's powerful literature."
45. *Ibid.*, 116.
46. Roberta Bernstein, "Johns and Beckett: *Foivades/Fizzles*," *Print Collector's Newsletter* 7, no. 5 (November/December, 1976): 141–45.
47. In Michael Crichton, *Jasper Johns* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1977), 27.
48. Field, "The Making of *Foivades/Fizzles*," 117.
49. *Ibid.*, 100.
50. Quoted in Rosenthal, *Jasper Johns: Work since 1974*, 69.
51. Beckett and Duthuit, "Bram van Velde," 119.

JUDITH WECHSLER, *NEH professor of art history at Tufts University, has written A Human Comedy: Physiognomy and Caricature in 19th Century Paris and The Interpretation of Cézanne.*