

XI. 13 May

Samuel Beckett, 1906-89

-Critic, playwright,

-Winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1969.

-He wrote in both French and English and is perhaps best known for his plays, especially En attendant Godot (1952; Waiting for Godot).

What influences on Beckett's writing do you perceive?

-Influences: Dante, Descartes, Joyce.

What are Beckett's main concerns?

The widespread idea, fostered by the popular press, that Beckett's work is concerned primarily with the sordid side of human existence, with tramps and with cripples who inhabit trashcans, is a fundamental misconception.

He dealt with human beings in such extreme situations not because he was interested in the sordid and diseased aspects of life but because he concentrated on the essential aspects of human experience.

MIT OpenCourseWare
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

21G.031J / 4.608J Topics in the Avant-Garde in Literature and Cinema
Spring 2003

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <http://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.