

dans d'autres, l'auteur retrace les interventions courageuses de Monnerville, qui en juriste consciencieux défendait 'l'équilibre des pouvoirs' (p. 188) face aux risques de dérives vers un pouvoir personnel durant les premières années de la présidence de de Gaulle. Monnerville termina sa carrière politique (l'auteur a raison d'insister sur le fait qu'elle fut exceptionnelle) en tant que membre du Conseil constitutionnel. Brunet rappelle également qu'en 1953 Monnerville aurait pu être un candidat logique à la présidence de la IV<sup>e</sup> République, n'eût été la couleur de sa peau (pp. 137–40). L'ancien sous-secrétaire d'État aux Colonies (1937–38) resta cependant fidèle à son engagement assimilationniste tout au long de sa carrière: 'Monnerville avait gardé l'image idéaliste d'une colonisation française débouchant sur l'union fraternelle des peuples de l'outre-mer et de la métropole' (p. 164). En ce qui concerne la fin de l'Empire colonial français, Brunet fournit relativement peu d'indications sur les prises de position de Monnerville durant les guerres d'indépendance en Indochine et en Algérie. L'accent est mis sur la politique intérieure et sur les activités et l'influence de Monnerville durant ses deux décennies à la présidence de la chambre haute du Parlement français, avec deux chapitres consacrés à ses conflits avec de Gaulle durant et après le référendum de 1962, qui institua l'élection au suffrage universel direct du président de la République. Le bilan de l'action politique de Monnerville que dresse l'auteur dans son dernier chapitre est nuancé, indiquant par exemple qu'en 1945 'Monnerville, comme la plupart des radicaux, n'apprécie pas dans toute son intensité le désir de renouveau politique qu'éprouvent les Français' (p. 227). Malgré les récits détaillés des joutes parlementaires qui constituèrent une grande partie de la carrière politique de Monnerville, la biographie de Brunet se lit avec plaisir, l'auteur ayant réussi à faire ressortir les dimensions multiples de l'homme (franc-maçon, résistant, écrivain, etc.).

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*Samuel Beckett 3: les 'dramaticules'*. Sous la direction de LLEWELLYN BROWN. (Revue des lettres modernes.) Caen: Lettres modernes Minard, 2012. 334 pp.

Understanding the late work of Samuel Beckett is all about understanding the disturbance of medium and genre that it enacts. The most recent of Lettres modernes Minard's Samuel Beckett series takes as its subject the late, short pieces for theatre published in French as '*dramaticules*', appropriately sustaining a concern for the plays' transactions between textuality and performativity, different media, and different languages throughout. The collection is divided into sections on genre, presence and absence, and voice, with two separate features: a sound but largely familiar study of Beckett's debts to Dante (Jean-Pierre Ferrini), and an engaging 'témoignage' on the experience of translating Beckett's Christianity-saturated work into the culturally proximate but vitally distinct language and culture of Hebrew (Shimon Levy). Matthieu Protin, opening the collection, takes the instructive perspective that these pieces are theatrical experiments — as much prescriptions for a director as literary gestures for a reader — observing that the 'scène' nonetheless becomes less concrete in the course of Beckett's practice. In fact, as this revealing reading observes, the plays develop out of the distinctive theatricality and deictic effects of Beckett's prose works. Taking up some of these considerations, Stéphanie Ravez gives a very persuasive and articulate account of *Solo (A Piece of Monologue)*, embracing an insightful meditation on the different visual media with which Beckett experimented late in his writing for theatre. Céline Hersant also relates theatre and text, giving an ingenious account of the late plays' formalist properties (and their use of rhetorical hypotyposis, in a literal and figurative sense), even though she strains a little at times to relate this to the 'other' theatre she identifies, that of mental and memorial

space. Delphine Lemonnier-Texier, under 'Effets de genre', offers a more conventional reading of Beckett's ghostly pieces, relating them via motif (ghosts, skulls) and — less convincingly — formal structure to Shakespearian tragedy; while Florence Godeau in the section 'Présence et absence' makes a more sturdy examination of the concept of the ghostly in Beckett, in a good introduction to the plays with fresh insights. Mireille Bousquet, in turn, offers elegant but somewhat familiar reflections on the pragmatics of time and the 'unsayable' in *That Time* and other late works. Under 'Voix', Lea Sinoimeri engages directly the works' bilingual status, in an undemonstrative but revealing reading of Beckett's late work as a theatre of voice and audition with links to both ancient tragedy and post-dramatic theatre. Finally, Llewellyn Brown gives a thorough close reading of *Bereuse* (*Rockaby*), underpinned by some underdeveloped but suggestive gestures towards Lacan and others, and gaining momentum in the bracing theoretical account of the play's final rejection of life. The *Avant-propos* establishes a somewhat reverential attitude towards Beckett's late work, described rather wildly as the 'sommets de son art', and the collection presents itself as a way of knowing and appreciating better these 'créations'. It is, then, for the most part aimed less at the seasoned Beckett scholar than at a general reader. It is, however, a volume of sensible scope and frequent insight, a welcome addition to only a small body of criticism on this work considered as a corpus.

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*Simone de Beauvoir and the Politics of Ambiguity*. By SONIA KRUKS. (Studies in Feminist Philosophy.) New York: Oxford University Press, 2012. xiv + 204 pp.

In this first and excellent study of Simone de Beauvoir's political thought, Sonia Kruks consolidates her reputation as one of the foremost analysts of Beauvoir's work. Rightly centring on the phenomenological concept of ambiguity at the heart of Beauvoir's thinking on politics, Kruks's study is divided into five main chapters focusing respectively on the significance of a Beauvoirian critical humanism in a posthumanist, post 9/11 world; the enduring relevance of her thinking on oppression; how privilege might be strategically deployed in forming political judgements; how risk and ambiguity lie necessarily at the heart of political judgement; and, lastly, what Beauvoir's thinking on justice and revenge can offer to retributive responses to atrocity. With admirable clarity and a talent for teasing out dispassionately the ambiguities of political choice-making (including Beauvoir's own), Kruks argues that a productive reconstruction of humanism is needed. She shows how Beauvoir offers valuable tools to such an enterprise, namely, a phenomenological perspective on politics that acknowledges more fully the limits of sovereign rationalism and the embodied and affective situation from which political judgements are actually made. In Chapter 2 Kruks provides new and more nuanced readings of *Le Deuxième Sexe*, *L'Amérique au jour le jour*, and *La Vieillesse* as studies of gender, race, and ageing construed as different forms of oppression, rooted respectively in asymmetrical recognition, indifference, and aversion. As she argues adeptly, if privilege cannot be definitively worked out or worked through, Beauvoir's own political choices from the late 1950s onwards reveal that it may nonetheless be deployed strategically to support the other's freedom. Kruks's study is enriched by both historical and contemporary examples, such as the trial of the Vichy intellectual collaborator Robert Brasillach (the analysis of which forms the core of Beauvoir's 1946 essay 'Œil pour œil'), Beauvoir's defence of FLN militant Djamilia Boupacha, who was sexually tortured during the Algerian War, the Cold War political dilemmas that confront Henri in *Les Mandarins*, and, more recently, the recourse to 'truth and reconciliation' committees across the globe as an alternative to retributive justice. Throughout, Beauvoir's political philosophy is productively staged