

Coetzee / Beckett

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Abstract. This article presents an analysis of relations between works of J. M. Coetzee and Samuel Beckett. The primary research material covers novels and essays written by the former, and particular attention is given to those essays by Coetzee which deal with writings of Beckett (e.g. "Eight Ways of Looking at Samuel Beckett"). Because Coetzee's professional interest in Beckett has lasted for over forty years, it enables us to talk about certain shifts in his literary attitudes and evolution of his professional stance. It seems that among the key features which put these two writers together are the following: their profound belief in the integrity of form (style) and content, their fascination with philosophical dualism and existential homelessness, and, finally, their skeptical attitude towards the academic world.

Keywords: J. M. Coetzee; Samuel Beckett; integrity of style and content; philosophical dualism; existential homelessness

"I am not a Kafka scholar. In fact, I am not a scholar at all.
My status in the world does not rest on whether
I am right or wrong in claiming that Kafka read Kohler's book.
But I would like to think he did, and the chronology makes
my speculation at least plausible."

(J. M. Coetzee, *Elizabeth Costello*)

1.

J. M. Coetzee's unwillingness to address the public at celebratory events is well known. Perhaps it is then interesting that over the years – even after he was awarded the Nobel prize – Coetzee has attended a number of Samuel Beckett conferences all over the world. Beckett's work was the core subject of Coetzee's