

Department of Analytic Philosophy
Institute of Philosophy, Czech Academy of Sciences
Prague

is pleased to announce
The XI. Prague Interpretation Colloquium on



CHAOS and FORM: Echoes of Beckett in Literature, Theatre and the Arts

to be held on April 10-13, 2016 in Prague.

„What I am saying does not mean that there will be henceforth no form in art. It only means that there will be new form, and that this form will be of such a type that it admits the chaos and does not try to say that the chaos is really something else. The form and the chaos remain separate. The latter is not reduced to the former. That is why the form itself becomes a preoccupation, because it exists as a problem separate from the material it accommodates. To find a form that accommodates the mess, that is the task of the artist now.“

(Samuel Beckett, in interview with T. F. Driver)

The colloquium, commemorating Samuel Beckett's 110th anniversary, will focus on a topic which played a crucial role both in Beckett's work and in his published reflections: the function of form in art. It can serve to expose the chaotic nature of the world we live in or to construe an artificial order and impose it on (our picture of) the world. According to Beckett, the latter is typical for great literary manipulators and „masters of their material“, while the former equals resigning upon any „mastery“ of this kind and engaging in a never-ending search for a form that would not serve as tool of artistic engineering.

This gives rise to a variety of questions, for instance:

- (1) What kinds of shape does this search acquire in Beckett's works and what role (if any) do analogical aspirations play in contemporary literature, theatre and the visual arts?
- (2) What kind of normativity, and under what conditions, can be assigned to the requirements imposed by Beckett on the artistic form? What does it mean to be true to these requirements in staging Beckett's dramas?
- (3) What happens with the reader's conceptual apparatus, inferential schemes, patterns of imagination, interpretative skills etc. in confrontation with texts which are designed to expose the chaotic nature of reality?
- (4) What happens with the semantics of sentences appearing in such texts, their inferential roles, the narrator's position, the function of the first person etc.? What is the role of permanent revocations, revisions of expression meanings, deviant uses of conversational clichés etc. in Beckett's oeuvre?

(5) Which of the contemporary theories of meaning (if any) can provide tools suitable for analyzing the forms of communication and chances of understanding (if any), available in the world as described by Beckett?

(6) Which of the contemporary theories of mind and action (if any) can help to make sense of the patterns of behaviour of the inhabitants of such a world, the role of intentions, preferences, habits, conventions etc. in governing this behaviour, criteria (if any) of evaluating its results etc.?

Any other topics inspired by the general subject of the colloquium will be most welcome.

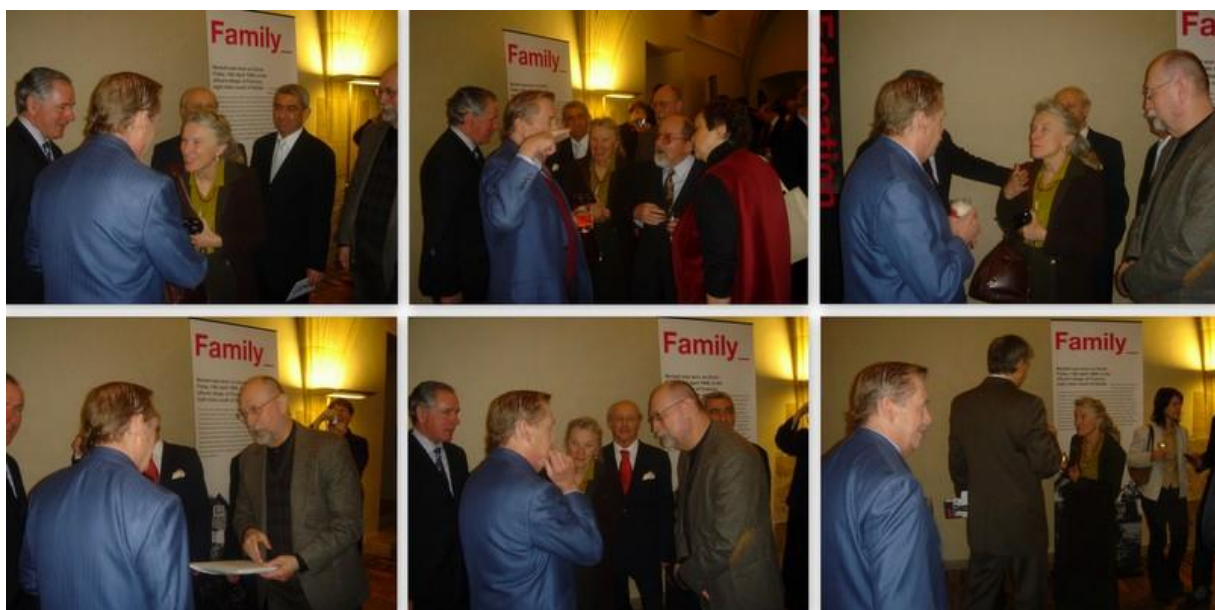
The programme, we eagerly hope, will include performances of several short plays by Samuel Beckett and the opening of an exhibition inspired by Beckett's work.

Colloquium coordinator:

Tomáš Koblížek, PhD., Department of Analytic Philosophy, tomas.koblizek@gmail.com

.....

The Department of Analytic Philosophy was founded in 1990 as a part of the *Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences*. Its main task was then to introduce the central topics of analytic philosophy into Czech context and to initiate systematic research in this field. With this aspiration the department organized a series of international philosophical meetings in Karlovy Vary and in Prague, attended by W. V. O. Quine, D. Davidson, H. Putnam, P. Strawson, J. Searle and many others. Since 2000 the program of the Department includes, as one of its priorities, interdisciplinary research in the theory of interpretation, located at the confluence of the philosophy of language, aesthetics and literary theory. The outputs of this project include international meetings organized within the *Prague Interpretation Colloquia* series and several collective monographs, e.g. *Fictionality-Possibility-Reality* (ed. by P. Kořátko, M. Pokorný, M. Sabatés), Bratislava: Aleph, 2010; *Beckett: filosofie a literatura* (ed. by K. Císař and P. Kořátko), Praha: Filosofia, 2010; *Mimesis: Metaphysics, Cognition, Pragmatics* (ed. by G. Currie, P. Kořátko, M. Pokorný), London: College Publications, 2012; *Text and Work: The Menard Case* (ed. by T. Koblížek, P. Kořátko, M. Pokorný), Praha: Litteraria Pragensia, 2013. In progress is a joint publication project on *The Aesthetic Illusion in Literature and the Arts*.



The VI. Prague Interpretation Colloquium: *Interpreting Work and Interpreting Author*, April 2006 (with Václav Havel at an exhibition commemorating Beckett's centenary)