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Extra

In Beckett's words, by Beckett's thoughts: a narrative on ageing

João Martins-Correia 

Samuel Beckett, Nobel Prize winner in literature in 1969, is one of the central names of 20th century Modernism. Beckett's artistic movement was deeply influenced by the deconstructionist atmosphere of the post-war period and is undeniably marked by the minimalist exploration of words as well as the separation from the traditional novel format.

Malloy (1951), *Malone Meurt* (1951) and *L'Innommable* (1953) form the post-war trilogy and support what was the author's greatest period of literary creation. Despite the lack of any associated logical sequence, each novel being a departure and destination in itself, they share a solid common ground: the progressive breakdown of the characters and the concept of human mortality.

In *Malone Meurt*, Malone appears as an institutionalised old man, stuck in a room, reduced to the limits of the bed and the rigidity of his own body; the world is reached only through the words he writes, and it is with them that he is entertained until the arrival of death. The entire narrative is marked by an inviolable feeling of death. The announcement is made at the start, in the title of the work.

Time is moved by the taste of words, entertained in tales, in stories, in lost memories. The creation of an inventory of belongings, which Malone imagines for himself, cradles the passage of time and is in line with the narrator's visible state of weakness, unable to accurately recall his goods in the absence of fateful calculations. Through the stories, traces of an indelible separation emerge between the facts announced by Malone, part of his elaborated fictional world, and his own past, indistinctly remembered. It is thus the portrait of a narrative amalgamation, an unstable game of blurred distinction between the act of narrating and being narrated.

Perceptual changes are consistently portrayed at the pace of the construction of the narrative, expressed not only as a translation of the fragility expectedly found in someone who lives his last days, with deficits in attention, memory and temporal perception, but also as symptomatic of a global loss of the sense of understanding of reality and of relations established with the world. *Malone Meurt* is a novel of vague phrases, wrapped in contradictions, associated with a certain degree of inconsistency and marked, at times, by an almost impenetrability: a complex labyrinth of both language and mind, collapsing together, bringing death and decay.

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