

# The New Criterion

## Features

May 2009

## Beckett before

by [Denis Donoghue](#)

On *The Letters of Samuel Beckett 1929–1940*.

In February 1985 and again in a letter of March 18 to Martha Dow Fehsenfeld, Samuel Beckett authorized an edition of his letters, to be gathered during his lifetime and published after his death. But there was a caveat: the correspondence was to be reduced “to those passages only having bearing on my work.” It was not clear what he meant by “my work.” Jérôme Lindon, Beckett’s literary executor, maintained that the letters to be published must be only those that mentioned individual works or Beckett’s oeuvre. This would have entailed publishing only letters such as those that Beckett addressed to Alan Schneider on the production of *Endgame* and other plays that Schneider was to direct under Beckett’s instructions: these letters have been published as *No Author Better Served: The Correspondence of Samuel Beckett and Alan Schneider* edited by Maurice Har ...

**Denis Donoghue's** latest book is *On Eloquence* (Yale University Press).

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This article originally appeared in The New Criterion, Volume 27 May 2009, on page 12

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