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# The Representation of Otherness in Samuel Beckett's Not I

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## Résumé

‘not knowing what...what she was-...what?...no!..she!..SHE!’ Robert M Nelson notes that ‘cultural identities, like individual identities, emerge not from class struggle but rather from the land’. The contemporary urban landscape contains within its geographical spaces the concerns that are prevalent in much of Beckett’s work: alienation, loneliness, paralysis. It is these uncertainties associated with modern living that have emerged in theatrical performances. Moving through the city Walter Benjamin notes ‘involves the individual in a series of shocks and collisions. At dangerous crossings nervous impulses flow through him in rapid succession, like the energy in a battery.’ (1968:76) This paper explores the consequences of this uncertainty in Beckett’s *Not I*, a play designed to work on the ‘nerves of the audience’ where this precarious theatrical space is fleshed out with a stream of words. Through language, Mouth seeks to affirm her own identity and in doing so, redefines Irishness for a modern audience.

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