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The research hypothesis of this essay is that Beckett’s practice of “denarration” (Richardson 2001) is not only relevant to narratology, but also has a genetic and a cognitive dimension. The manuscripts of *Molloy, Malone meurt* and *L’Innommable* are examined to show how both the synchronic and the diachronic structures of these texts play a role in Beckett’s inquiry into the human mind and how the techniques of dis- and denarration are deployed to challenge old models of the mind and intimate more recent cognitive theories that consider the mechanics of the mind in terms of narrative intelligence.

In “Narrative and Mind: Directions for Inquiry” (2013), David Herman emphasizes that investigations of the mind-narrative nexus often consist of a unidirectional borrowing by narrative scholars of ideas from the cognitive sciences (202). Instead, he pleads for a bidirectional exchange of ideas between narrative theory and cognitive sciences, suggesting that literary narratologists studying fictional minds can contribute to the sciences of the mind in general. This implies that “scholars of story” (202) need to find methods and strategies “for exploring ways in which scholarship on narrative can inform, and not just be informed by, research on the mind” (203). The method this essay suggests is a combination of genetic criticism and cognitive narratology.

From a narratological perspective, this essay focuses on the role of “disnarration” and “denarration” in evocations of fictional minds. In “Denarration in Fiction: Erasing the Story in Beckett and Others” (2001) Brian Richardson defines denarration as “a kind of narrative negation in which a narrator denies significant aspects of her narrative that had earlier been presented as given” (168). He contrasts this working definition with Gerald Prince’s concept of the “disnarrated,” denoting “possible events that, though referred to, remain unactualized
in a text” (169). Richardson subsequently identifies a series of instances of denarration and presents them as a continuum of narrative negation. This continuum ranges from denarration ‘light’ to substantial narrative negations as forms of “extreme narration” (Richardson 2006).

(1) Mild forms of denarration consist of statements that trespass slightly beyond the basic conventions of realism and that modify, qualify, or negate material that had been presented as “given,” but without creating narrative gaps that cannot easily be processed by readers. Here, “the denarration remains distinctly local, indeterminacies are temporary, and the stability of the represented world is not seriously challenged” (Richardson 2001, 171).

(2) Towards the middle of the continuum, Richardson locates narrative negation that may be either a remaking of the narrative world or a form of narration that unfolds in a “less determinate ontology where fact and allegory, history and fiction, and the literal and the metaphorical regularly slide into one another; there is considerably less stable, determinate narrative there to be controverted” (171).

(3) To illustrate the more extreme side of the continuum, Richardson refers to Beckett’s *Molloy*, in which “very little (if anything) is left over after the assaults of textual negation the narrative performs upon itself” (171). Brian McHale has termed these narrative instances of denarration “Worlds under Erasure” (1991 [1987], 99-111). The standard example is the closing paragraph of *Molloy*: “Then I went back into the house and wrote, It is midnight. The rain is beating on the windows. It was not midnight. It was not raining” (Beckett 2009b, 184).

In Beckett’s ‘three novels’ the techniques of dis- and denarration give shape to an increasingly sophisticated way of questioning accepted notions of cognition. Building on the previously explored research hypothesis that Beckett challenged the Cartesian model of the mind (Van Hulle 2012), and that some of his works prefigure a cognitive model that comes close to Daniel C. Dennett’s notions of the Multiple Drafts Model, this essay argues that Beckett’s novels *Molloy, Malone meurt* and *L’Innommable* can be read as inquiries into the narrative mechanisms of the mind. If consciousness can be viewed in terms of storytelling, as cognitive philosophers such as Antonio Damasio, Daniel Dennett, Daniel Hutto, Richard Menary, J. D. Velleman and others suggest, and when the act of storytelling in *Molloy, Malone meurt* and *L’Innommable* is regarded from a cognitive point of view, the function of special forms of narration, such as dis- and denarration, may be of interest to sciences of the mind in general. The study of these narrative