The Letters of Samuel Beckett (1929-1940) was published in German by Suhrkamp Verlag in Berlin on 21 January 2013.

Weitermachen ist mehr, als ich tun kann was translated by Chris Hirte.

Suhrkamp plans to publish the German edition of The Letters of Samuel Beckett (1941-1957) in fall 2014.

Andreas Isenschmid, “Das Genie als junger Mann,” Die Zeit, 24 January 2013

So smart and so personal. The first volume of his letters presents an unknown Samuel Beckett . . . with glimpses next to which any autobiography appears as a tired exercise in remoteness.

The underlying theme of this first volume of letters is misery and lament, lament and misery; about money problems, the confinement of Dublin and Trinity College, about not wanting to live and not being able to write. Strange only that one reads all that with great enjoyment. It is, in all of its disconcerting seriousness, also written with great zest. No matter how paralyzing and deadly his life may be, as soon as Beckett begins to put this condition into words, he transforms it into luminously alive wordplay.

Thus quite often disinclination to living turns into pure delight in words. And nowhere does that happen as frequently as in the letters to his friend Thomas McGreevy that make up the main portion of this copious volume. This searching, despairing, experimenting self-portrait, spread over several hundred pages as it emerges in these letters, may well be counted as one of Beckett’s main works.

Stefan Berkholz, Büchermagazin Diwan, Radio Bayern, 29 February 2013

Samuel Beckett, the ‘man of few words’, wrote tens of thousands of letters in his life - to friends, publishers, also admirers later on. Now the first volume of an extraordinary editorial project is available in German translation.

A dense style of prose, intense, rich in innuendo, but never gossipy, sometimes malicious, sometimes derisive, sometimes coarse, with a special sense of the sad absurdities of failure: Samuel Beckett’s tone comes through also in his letters. The multilingual Beckett writes in English and French, occasionally also in German, mixes in Latin, explains words in Ancient Greek to his friend and sponsor James Joyce, intersperses much - even, sometimes, very explicit poems.


Beckett is a gifted word-player. He quotes and persiflages the classics, gossips and blasphemes . . . The rejection of his novel Murphy provides an accompanying melody throughout his winter-journey. The first volume of letters, now available in German, encompasses Beckett’s half-year stay in Germany where he visited above all the museums and concert halls from Hamburg to Berlin and Leipzig to Munich. His cynical remarks concerning Wilhelm Furtwängler indicate that Beckett was a politically reflective contemporary.


A man of few words, Beckett is suddenly loquacious . . . For those who know Beckett only through his plays, the tone of his letters, vacillating between high-spirited cheerfulness and brash cynicism, will be a discovery. This volume contains Beckett’s “Apprenticeship and Travels.” During his journey through Germany in 1936-1937, Beckett experiences the rise of Hitler and the campaign against degenerate art, but . . . Hitler is mentioned by name only once at the end of a letter and then only in the ironic sentence: “All the toilet attendants say ‘Heil Hitler.’”