there is clear evidence
the basis for reconstruct-
rows, and uses these as
the notes taken by one of
on French literature at

Laugh across the world.
work also makes people
Samuel Beckett has been
deciphering the
her waist in the sand end-
bish bins, and a fadedly
aged parents live in rub-
ophise about parsnips,
game and Happy Days, in

on French literature at

In these two highly
Le Juez's book also
points out that
Le Juez reveals, for

It is equally intriguing
to understand that Beckett's
characters are endlessly
fascinating because they
need to be read as and
through prisms of irony.
Where Mercier is par-
ticularly interesting is in
the way in which he struc-
tures his book around a
series of dialectical oppo-
tions: theory/thesis; Ireland/the world;
gentleman/tramp;
woman/man, etc.
Many critics have
rightly indicated how
much of Beckett's think-
ing has been con-
tinuated on a series of hina-

Here, he is very much
working in the French
philosophical tradition.
However, most of Beck-
's work is considered one side of each of the
oppositions, whereas
Mercier emphasises the
"minor" pole, eg the
"gentleman" rather than
"the tramp", obliging us
to rethink the nature of
these oppositions and see
them as complex, mobile
relationships, rather than
simple hierarchies.

One doesn't always
agree with Mercier, but he
certainly makes one think
and the book is written in
such a lively fashion that it
is difficult to put down
– except in occasional
moments of exasperation
and one quickly picks up
the book again.
Both books will interest
a wide readership, since

"I always felt that Chatto
had done her a great
disservice by not
preparing to be edited in
the evening."
Saying about literature near-
ly 80 years ago.
Mercier's
Beckett/Beckett
was first pub-
lished in 1977, but this
highly personal book
remains one of the key
books on Beckett – and
one of the most readable.
It is personal, quirky,
sometimes irritatingly
self-congratulatory, and
occasionally strangely
wayward in its interpreta-
tion of Beckett, as when
Mercier attacks Beckett's
wayward in its interpreta-
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