



The Making of Samuel Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape / La Dernière Bande*





BECKETT  
DIGITAL  
MANUSCRIPT  
PROJECT

VOLUME 03

The Making of  
Samuel Beckett's  
*Krapp's Last Tape /*  
*La Dernière Bande*

DIRK VAN HULLE

UPA  
University Press Antwerp

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The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Research Council under the European Union's Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007–2013)/ ERC grant agreement n. 313609.

Book design: Stéphane de Schrevel

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*Krapp's Last Tape/La dernière bande*

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UPA is an imprint of ASP nv

(Academic and Scientific Publishers nv)

Keizerslaan 34 · B-1000 Brussels

T +32 (0)2 289 26 50 · F +32 (0)2 289 26 59

info@aspeditions.be · www.upa-editions.be

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ISBN of the Bloomsbury edition: 978 1 4725 3423 1

ISBN of the UPA edition: 978 90 5718 151 1

NUR 632

Legal deposit D/2015/11.161/001

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Distribution for the Benelux:

ASP/University Press Antwerp  
34 Keizerslaan, B-1000 Brussels  
www.aspeditions.be

Distribution for the rest of the world:  
Bloomsbury  
50 Bedford Square, London, WC1B 3DP  
www.bloomsbury.com



'to isolate i from my multiple Mes'  
(James Joyce, *Finnegans Wake*)

'c'est comme de la merde, voilà, de la merde, le voilà enfin, le mot juste'  
'it's like shit, there we have it at last, there it is at last, the right word'  
(Samuel Beckett, *L'Innommable / The Unnamable*)





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# The Beckett Digital Manuscript Project

## *Series Preface*

This volume is part of the Beckett Digital Manuscript Project, a collaboration between the Centre for Manuscript Genetics (University of Antwerp), the Beckett International Foundation (University of Reading) and the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center (University of Texas at Austin). The development of this project started from two initiatives: (1) the ‘inhouse’ genetic edition of four works by Samuel Beckett (a cooperation between the Universities of Antwerp and Reading), and (2) the series of Variorum Editions of Samuel Beckett’s Bilingual Works, initiated in 1986 by Charles Krance, with the permission and support of Samuel Beckett. With the kind permission of the Estate of Samuel Beckett, these initiatives were developed into the Beckett Digital Manuscript Project, which combines genetic criticism with electronic scholarly editing, applied to the study of Beckett’s manuscripts.

The Beckett Digital Manuscript Project consists of two parts:

- a A digital archive of Samuel Beckett’s manuscripts ([www.beckettarchive.org](http://www.beckettarchive.org)), organized into 26 research modules. Each of these modules comprises digital facsimiles and transcriptions of all the extant manuscripts pertaining to an individual text, or in the case of shorter texts, a group of texts.
- b A series of 26 volumes, analysing the genesis of the texts contained in the corresponding modules.

The Beckett Digital Manuscript Project aims to contribute to the study of Beckett’s works in various ways: by enabling readers to discover new documents and see how the dispersed manuscripts of different holding libraries interrelate within the context of a work’s genesis in its entirety; by increasing the accessibility of the manuscripts with searchable transcriptions in an updatable digital archive; and by highlighting the interpretive relevance of intertextual references that can be found in the manuscripts. The Project may also enhance the preservation of the physical documents as users will be able to work with digital facsimiles.



The purpose of the Beckett Digital Manuscript Project is to reunite the manuscripts of Samuel Beckett's works in a digital way, and to facilitate genetic research: the project brings together digital facsimiles of documents that are now preserved in different holding libraries, and adds transcriptions of Beckett's manuscripts, tools for bilingual and genetic version comparison, a search engine, and an analysis of the textual genesis of his works, published in print with a selection of facsimile images, as in the present volume.

Dirk Van Hulle  
Mark Nixon





## Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	13
Abbreviations	14
List of Illustrations	18
<b>Introduction: Cognitive Krapp</b>	<b>20</b>
PART I	
<b>1 Documents</b>	<b>42</b>
1.1 Autograph Manuscripts	43
1.1.1 English	43
1.1.2 French	60
1.2 Typescripts	62
1.2.1 English	62
1.2.2 French	73
1.3 Pre-Book Publications	75
1.3.1 English	75
1.3.2 French	76
1.4 Editions	79
1.4.1 English (UK)	79
1.4.2 English (US)	81
1.4.3 French	85
1.4.4 Trilingual	89
1.5 Acting Copies and Broadcasting Scripts	105
1.6 Annotated Copies and Production Notes	116
1.6.1 English	116
1.6.2 French	124
1.7 Genetic Map	128



PART II

**2 Genesis of *Krapp's Last Tape***—————**132**

2.1 Context	133
2.1.1 Prehistory	135
2.1.2 Chronology	138
2.2 Versions	155
2.2.1 Version 1 (EM1, 'Eté 56, 11r-14r)	156
2.2.2 Version 2 (EM2)	157
2.2.3 Version 3 (ET1)	160
2.2.4 Version 4 (EM3, 10v-11v)	167
2.2.5 Version 5 (ET2)	168
2.2.6 Version 6 (ET3)	169
2.2.7 Version 7 (ET4)	169
2.2.8 Version 8 (ET5)	171
2.3 Scene per scene	183
2.3.1 Scene I: Mime I	185
2.3.2 Scene II: 'Spooooool!'	193
2.3.3 Scene III: 'My condition'	195
2.3.4 Scene IV: 'Aspirations'	199
2.3.5 Scene V: Song	203
2.3.6 Scene VI: 'Viduity'	204
2.3.7 Scene VII: 'The vision'	213
2.3.8 Scene VIII: 'Farewell to love' I	215
2.3.9 Scene IX: 'Farewell to love' II	216
2.3.10 Scene X: Mime II	217
2.3.11 Scene XI: Recording	217
2.3.12 Scene XII: 'Farewell to love' III	224

**3 Genesis of *La Dernière Bande***—————**228**

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Conclusion	250
Works Cited	254
Index	264

## Acknowledgements

First of all, I wish to express my gratitude to Edward Beckett for his unremitting support of the Beckett Digital Manuscript Project. The research for this book was made possible thanks to the ERC consolidator grant ‘Creative Undoing and Textual Scholarship: A Rapprochement between Genetic Criticism and Scholarly Editing’ (CUTS). I owe a debt of gratitude to the holding libraries, especially Steve Enniss, Elizabeth L. Garver, Richard Workman and Rich Oram at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of Texas Austin), the University of Reading’s Beckett International Foundation, Lynda Claassen at the University of California San Diego, Joel Minor at Washington University, St Louis; to André Derval (IMEC), Irène Lindon (Les Éditions de Minuit), Amy Braitsch (John J. Burns Library, Boston College), Nicole C. Dittrich (Special Collections Research Center of Syracuse University Library), Adrien Hilton (Rare Book & Manuscript Library, Columbia University), Breon Mitchell and Isabel Planton (Lilly Library, Indiana), Kathleen Monahan (Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill), for their help with the location and bibliographic description of the documents; to Vincent Neyt, Pim Verhulst, Wout Dillen and Fien Leysen for all their invaluable help with the encoding, proofreading, dating and collation of the textual versions; and especially to Geert Lernout and Mark Nixon for all their feedback.



## Abbreviations

- ATF* *All That Fall and Other Plays for Radio and Screen*, ed. by Everett Frost (London: Faber and Faber, 2009).
- BDMP1* *Samuel Beckett's Stirrings Still / Soubresauts and Comment dire / what is the word: a digital genetic edition*, ed. by Dirk Van Hulle and Vincent Neyt (Brussels: University Press Antwerp, 2011). The Beckett Digital Manuscript Project; module 1, <http://www.beckettarchive.org>
- BDMP2* *Samuel Beckett's L'Innommable / The Unnamable: a digital genetic edition*, ed. by Dirk Van Hulle, Shane Weller and Vincent Neyt (Brussels: University Press Antwerp, 2013). The Beckett Digital Manuscript Project; module 2, <http://www.beckettarchive.org>
- CIWS* *Company, Ill Seen Ill Said, Worstward Ho, Stirrings Still*, ed. by Dirk Van Hulle (London: Faber and Faber, 2009).
- CP* *Collected Poems*, ed. by Seán Lawlor and John Pilling (London: Faber and Faber, 2012).
- Dis* *Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment*, ed. by Ruby Cohn (London: John Calder, 1983).
- DN* *Beckett's 'Dream' Notebook*, ed. by John Pilling (Reading: Beckett International Foundation, 1999).
- Dream* *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, ed. by Eoin O'Brien and Edith Fournier (Dublin: Black Cat Press, 1992).
- E* *Endgame*, preface by Rónán McDonald (London: Faber and Faber, 2009).
- HD* *Happy Days*, ed. by James Knowlson (London: Faber and Faber, 2010).
- KLT* *Krapp's Last Tape and Other Shorter Plays*, preface by S.E. Gontarski (London: Faber and Faber, 2009).
- LSB I* *The Letters of Samuel Beckett, vol. I, 1929–1940*, ed. by Martha Dow Fehsenfeld and Lois More Overbeck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
- LSB II* *The Letters of Samuel Beckett, vol. II, 1941–1956*, ed. by George Craig, Martha Dow Fehsenfeld, Dan Gunn and Lois More Overbeck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

<i>LSB III</i>	<i>The Letters of Samuel Beckett, vol. III, 1947–1965</i> , ed. by George Craig, Martha Dow Fehsenfeld, Dan Gunn and Lois More Overbeck (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
<i>Mo</i>	<i>Molloy</i> , ed. by Shane Weller (London: Faber and Faber, 2009).
<i>MD</i>	<i>Malone Dies</i> , ed. by Peter Boxall (London: Faber and Faber, 2010).
<i>MPTK</i>	<i>More Pricks than Kicks</i> , ed. by Cassandra Nelson (London: Faber and Faber, 2010).
<i>Mu</i>	<i>Murphy</i> , ed. by J.C.C. Mays (London: Faber and Faber, 2009).
<i>NABS</i>	<i>No Author Better Served: The Correspondence of Samuel Beckett and Alan Schneider</i> , ed. by Maurice Harmon (Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard UP, 1998).
<i>PTD</i>	<i>Proust and Three Dialogues with Georges Duthuit</i> (London: John Calder, 1965).
<i>TFN</i>	<i>Texts for Nothing and Other Shorter Prose 1950–1976</i> , ed. by Mark Nixon (London: Faber and Faber, 2010).
<i>TN3</i>	<i>Krapp's Last Tape: The Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett 3</i> , ed. by James Knowlson (London: Faber and Faber, 1992).
<i>Un</i>	<i>The Unnamable</i> , ed. by Steven Connor (London: Faber and Faber, 2010).
<i>W</i>	<i>Watt</i> , ed. by C.J. Ackerley (London: Faber and Faber, 2009).
<i>WFG</i>	<i>Waiting for Godot</i> , ed. by Mary Bryden (London: Faber and Faber, 2010).
<i>WN</i>	'Whoroscope' Notebook, Beckett International Foundation, University of Reading, UoR MS 3000.

#### Abbreviations of manuscripts relating to *Krapp's Last Tape / La Dernière Bande*

<i>EM</i>	English Manuscript, 'Eté 56' Notebook, UoR MS 1227-7-7-1, Beckett International Foundation, University of Reading.
<i>ET1</i>	English Typescript 1, HRC MS SB 4-2-1
<i>ET2</i>	English Typescript 2, HRC MS SB 4-2-2
<i>ET3</i>	English Typescript 3, HRC MS SB 4-2-3
<i>ET4</i>	English Typescript 4, HRC MS SB 4-2-4
<i>ET5</i>	English Typescript 5, UoR MS 1659
<i>ETC</i>	English Thermofax copy, HRC MS SB 4-2-5



ETC'	English Typed Copy, UCSD Alan Schneider collection MS 103, Box 74, Folder 10
PPF	Page proofs for <i>Faber and Faber</i> ( <i>KLT</i> 1959)
PPG	Page proofs for <i>Grove Press</i> ( <i>KLT</i> 1960)
FT1	French Typescript 1, HRC MS SB 4-2-6

### Abbreviations of pre-book publications

- ER* *Evergreen Review*, volume II, number 5 (Summer 1958): 13-24.  
*LLN* *La Dernière Bande* in *Les Lettres Nouvelles*, ed. by Maurice  
Nadeau, 7<sup>e</sup> année, Nouvelle Série, N° 1 (4 March 1959): 5-13.

### References to editions of *Krapp's Last Tape / La Dernière Bande*

- KLT* 1959 *Krapp's Last Tape and Embers* (London: Faber and Faber, 1959).  
*KLT* 1960 *Krapp's Last Tape and Other Dramatic Pieces by Samuel  
Beckett*. First Evergreen Edition (New York: Grove Press, 1960)  
*KLT* 1964 *Krapp's Last Tape*, in: *Dramatische Dichtungen in drei  
Sprachen* vol. 2 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1964).  
*KLT* 1970 *Krapp's Last Tape and Other Dramatic Pieces, The Collected  
Works of Samuel Beckett* (New York: Grove Press, 1970).  
*KLT* 1974 *Krapp's Last Tape*, in: *Das letzte Band. Krapp's Last Tape. La  
Dernière Bande*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1974.  
*LDB* 1959 *La Dernière Bande, suivi de Cendres* (Paris: Les Éditions de  
Minuit, 1959).  
*LDB* 1960 *Lettre Morte* (Robert Pinget) et *La Dernière Bande* (Samuel  
Beckett). Collection du Répertoire (Paris: Théâtre National  
Populaire / Les Éditions de Minuit, 1960).

### Abbreviations of holding libraries and archives

- BBC WAC, Written Archives Centre, Caversham, RCONT1,  
Scriptwriter: Samuel Beckett, file 1: 1953–1962  
DLA Deutsches Literaturarchiv, Marbach: Suhrkamp Archive (SUA).  
FSU Barney Rosset/Grove Press papers at Florida State University  
HRC Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, The University of  
Texas at Austin

IMEC	Institut mémoire de l'édition contemporaine, Caen
IU	The Lilly Library, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana
JEK	James and Elizabeth Knowlson Collection, The University of Reading
NLI	National Library of Ireland
SCRC	Special Collections Research Center, Syracuse University Libraries
TCD	Trinity College, Dublin
UCSD	University of California, San Diego
UoR	University of Reading
WU	Washington University, Saint Louis

### Note on the transcriptions

The transcription method applied in this study attempts to represent Beckett's drafts with as few diacritical signs as possible, crossing out deletions and using superscript for additions. Uncertain readings are in grey. Bold typeface is used to highlight words in quotations from manuscripts.



## List of Illustrations

- 1 Earliest draft (partial version) of *Krapp's Last Tape* ('Magee Monologue'), 'Eté 56' Notebook, page 11r
- 2 Second draft (partial version) of *Krapp's Last Tape* (Scene III), 'Eté 56' Notebook, page 14r
- 3 Addition to the third (partial) version (ET1) of *Krapp's Last Tape*, 'Eté 56' Notebook, page 21r
- 4 Thermofax copy (ETC), preserved at the Harry Ransom Center, MS-HRC-SB-4-2-5, 4r, with marginal correction (not in Beckett's hand)
- 5 Carbon copy of French typescript (FT) with autograph corrections, preserved at the Harry Ransom Center, MS-HRC-SB-4-2-6, 1r
- 6 Illustration of 'Freund Hain' in Matthias Claudius' *Sämmtliche Werke*
- 7/7 Beckett's annotated working copy for the London production of the play (1973), UoR MS 1227/7/10/1, opening page and pages 14-15
- 8 Marginal annotation in green ballpoint in Alan Schneider's copy of the *Evergreen Review* version of *Krapp's Last Tape* (ER 14)
- 9 Page from Marcel Mihalovici's manuscript notebook containing the French (blue), German (pencil) and English (red) versions of the opera *Krapp, ou La Dernière Bande* (UoR MS 1227-7-10-2, 79)
- 10 Page 225 in Samuel Beckett's copy of *The Works of William Shakespeare*, 'The "Universal" Edition' (London and New York: Ferderick Warne and Co., n.d.), with the two stanzas of Amiens's song marked with a blue pencil
- 11 Opening page of the second typescript (ET2), preserved at the HRC
- 12 On the fifth typescript (ET5, UoR MS 1659, 7r, line 1) – as Beckett specified to Patrick Magee – he changed the word 'panting' into 'burning', which he wanted 'to be brought out very strong'.
- 13 On the fourth typescript (ET4, HRC MS SB 4-2-4, 6r), the only substitution in blue-black ink is the same substitution of 'panting' by 'burning'.
- 14 Lastline from Petrarch's sonnet CXXXVII, possibly taken from Montaigne's essay 'De la tristesse', jotted down by Beckett in his 'Sam Francis' Notebook (UoR MS 2926, 19v-20r)
- 15 'Eté 56' Notebook, page 12r
- 16 First page of the first typescript (ET1, 1r)
- 17 First typescript (ET1; HRC MS SB 4-2-3), page 3r
- 18 'Eté 56' Notebook, page 19v



- 19 Annotated copy of *La Dernière Bande*, held at the Lilly Library in Bloomington, Indiana, page 29
- 20 Beckett's notes (black ink) for the first French performance at the Théâtre Récamier on 22 March 1960
- 21 Notes for the first performance of *La Dernière Bande* on the verso of page [74] of the copy of the 1959 Minuit edition, preserved at the Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana





# Introduction: Cognitive Krapp



In 1931, when Beckett was teaching his course on ‘Racine and the Modern Novel’ at Trinity College, Dublin, he emphasized Racine’s modernity by comparing his work with modern authors such as André Gide. The student notes indicate that Beckett saw the notion of complexity as a key to modern literature. And to stress his point, he used the works of writers such as Corneille and Balzac as a contrastive background. Rachel Burrows wrote in her notes on Beckett’s course that ‘Corneille & Balzac abdicated as critics’.<sup>1</sup> One of the other students, Leslie Daiken, noted that for instance Racine’s character of ‘Andromaque is faced with a multiplicity of conflicting demands’ (UoR Daiken notes, 8r) while ‘There are no authentic women characters in Corneille’ (5r). Racine’s technique to study this complexity was to make use of so-called confidants, according to Daiken’s notes: ‘The function of the confidants is to express a fragment in the mind of the protagonist’ (8r). The other students in Beckett’s class similarly noted that Racine’s dialogues are actually monologues. The confidants merely serve as sounding boards to reveal the protagonists’ divided consciousness or the ‘division in mind of antagonists’ (Burrows, TCD MIC 60, 65; Le Juez 2008, 59).

In *Krapp’s Last Tape*, this division characterizes all the stages of Krapp’s ‘self’ and aspects of his life, the most outspoken division being the opposition light/darkness. As early as 1972, in a public lecture delivered at Trinity College, Dublin (‘Light and Darkness in the Theatre of Samuel Beckett’, 7 February 1972), James Knowlson already made a direct link between the opposition light/darkness and the dualism of mind and body (as discussed for instance in *Murphy*). The dichotomy between light and darkness is especially stark in *Krapp’s Last Tape*, which makes it a particularly suitable case to study Beckett’s developing views on cognition. Most of Beckett’s writings can be understood as an inquiry into the human mind. And *Krapp’s Last Tape* is one of the most remarkable attempts to evoke and even ‘stage’ the workings of a person’s mind.

This book will therefore analyze the genesis of Beckett’s play *Krapp’s Last Tape* from a cognitive perspective, starting from the research hypothesis

1 ‘Novel by Balzac, play by Corneille – no critical faculty (...) For Balzac – characters can’t change their minds or artistic structure crashes – must be consistent’ (TCD MIC 60, 41). ‘When French artist abdicates as critic everything goes wrong. Corneille & Balzac abdicated as critics’ whereas ‘Racine is always present as critic’ (48). For a discussion of these notes, see Le Juez 2008, 55.



that the connecting element in the dichotomies between darkness and light, night and day, sense and spirit, damnation and salvation is Time, and that, by introducing a temporal dimension, a genetic approach may be particularly relevant to the study of cognition<sup>2</sup> in *Krapp's Last Tape*.

To reconstruct the logic of a work's genesis, it is necessary to apply what Pierre-Marc de Biasi calls 'a selective critical procedure', that is, a particular critical point of view. Every reconstruction of a literary genesis is also a construction. As Pierre-Marc de Biasi noted (2004, 42), genetic criticism consists of two elements. Whereas the first element ('genetic') indicates the attempt to describe the extant textual materials and organize them according to their chronology, the second element ('criticism') is a critical hypothesis about the dynamics of a creative process. Especially this second aspect entails the recognition that it is impossible to be completely neutral or objective. Genetic criticism is not limited to the bibliographical description of manuscripts. It is the study of creative processes. In the endeavour to map the dynamics of these processes, every hypothesis is coloured by a particular point of view. The critical viewpoint can range from psychological to sociological or narratological perspectives. The critical point of view that informs this genetic study of *Krapp's Last Tape* is cognitive philosophy.

#### Krapp, the Narrator: Denarrative Selfhood

The reason why this approach seems particularly appropriate to *Krapp's Last Tape* is that Krapp is a character that can be said to problematize what Daniel C. Dennett has dubbed 'narrative selfhood', which he conceptualizes as a centre of gravity, a 'centre of narrative gravity' which, in spite of its abstractness, is 'tightly coupled to the physical world' (Dennett 2014, 334).

To some extent, this focus on narrative relates to what Jonathan Gottschall calls 'the storytelling animal'. His book of that title (2012) is subtitled 'How Stories Make Us Human'. According to Gottschall, the human mind is 'tuned to detect patterns' (103) and this 'hunger for meaningful patterns translates into a hunger for story' (104). If it cannot find meaningful patterns in the world, 'it will try to impose them' (103):

2 The working definition of 'cognition' as used in this book is the mental process of acquiring understanding through thought, experience and the senses.



'The storytelling mind is a crucial evolutionary adaptation. It allows us to experience our lives as coherent, orderly, and meaningful' (Gottschall 2012, 102). This 'evolutionary' view on storytelling is not new. In 1991, Daniel C. Dennett suggested that telling stories is 'our fundamental tactic of self-protection, self-control, and self-definiton' (Dennett 1991, 418). The kind of taletelling he has in mind is 'more particularly concocting and controlling the story we tell others – and ourselves – about who we are' (418).

One of the differences between Gottschall and Dennett is that Gottschall sees religion as part of this storytelling evolutionary strategy, whereas Dennett – like other evolutionary thinkers such as Richard Dawkins – regards religion as a noxious sort of virus of the mind. Gottschall suggests that religions may be part of the same storytelling urge: 'humans conjure gods, spirits, and sprites to fill explanatory voids' (121). Since 'we abhor explanatory vacuums' we create religions, which Gottschall dubs 'the master confabulations of the storytelling mind' (121).<sup>3</sup>

Samuel Beckett's works seem to thematize this 'explanatory void' as a storytelling impulse, but there is a clear difference with Gottschall's analysis. Whereas Gottschall's work embraces this human characteristic, Beckett parodies and criticizes it, notably in *Krapp's Last Tape*, which – as H. Porter Abbott notes – 'allowed him to stage the self-estrangement he had elaborated in prose' (Abbott 1996, 64). Beckett critically scrutinizes our tendency to conjure 'gods, spirits, and sprites' to fill those voids. As Sue Wilson notes with reference to the Manichaeism in the play: '*Krapp's Last Tape* is a critique, not a celebration, of its protagonist's useless Manichaean, and metaphysical, obsessiveness. Beckett criticism, which often suffers from a similar disability, might do well to concede that inclusion of Manichaean "Wild stuff" in *Krapp's Last Tape* is not equivalent to an authorial commendation of the system's wisdom' (Wilson 2002, 142). This critical attitude applies to Beckett's creative use of any system that tried to construe a pattern of meaning, be it psychological, philosophical or religious. While Beckett always remained skeptical of the way each of these systems tried to impose a particular narrative framework upon the world, he did make use of them as a contrastive background against which he could write his own

3     Jonah Lehrer employs the same notion of a 'mental confabulation', but applies it to the idea of a unified self, an invention we tend to make 'in order to ignore our innate contradictions' (Lehrer 2008, 180).



work. A religious system that serves this purpose in *Krapp's Last Tape* is Manichaeism, which will be discussed in chapter 2.3.

### Krapp, the Confessor: Memoirs and Dramatic Diaries

One of Beckett's sources of information about this religion was Saint Augustine's *Confessions*. As his notes in the 'Dream' Notebook indicate, Beckett read the *Confessions* thoroughly (*DN* 11-30; entries [79]-[211]). To Thomas MacGreevy he described his reading as 'phrase-hunting in St. Augustine' (25 January 1931; qtd. in *DN* 11) and that, indeed, seems to have been his direct purpose at the time: culling interesting or exotic phrases to use them in his first novel, *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*. But his reading may have had a more lasting effect as well. In the chapters in which Augustine confesses his sins as a Manichaeist, he repeatedly makes an explicit link between confession and memory. In Book III, Chapter VI.10 of the *Confessions*, he introduces the pseudo-Christian sect of the Manichaeans as a group of 'men, delirious in their pride, carnal and voluble, whose mouths were the snares of the devil' (transl. Albert C. Outler). The doctrine of their Persian religious leader Mani (A.D. 216-277) was based on the stark contrast between light and darkness. The sect consisted of a select minority of 'perfecti' and a group of followers, called 'auditores'. Saint Augustine confesses that he used to be an auditor: 'I confess my remembrance of this to thee, O Lord, as far as I can recall it -' (Book III, XI.20). Augustine repeatedly mentions the possibility that his memory is defective, not unlike many of Beckett's characters, such as Malone, who claims to 'benefit by a hiatus in [his] recollections'.<sup>4</sup> In Outler's translation, there are many things that Augustine has 'simply forgotten'; in the translation by E. B. Pusey, which Beckett probably read when he made his notes in the 'Dream' Notebook, Augustine uses a negative construction: 'much I pass by, hastening to those things which more press me to confess unto Thee, and much I do not remember' (Book III, XII.21, transl. Pusey).<sup>5</sup>

4 One day I found myself here, in the bed. Having probably lost consciousness somewhere, I benefit by a hiatus in my recollections, not to be resumed until I recovered my senses, in this bed. As to the events that led up to my fainting [...] they have left no discernible trace, on my mind.' (*MD* 7)

5 In the translation by Outler: 'for I pass over many things, hastening on to those things which more strongly impel me to confess to thee - and many

Augustine tries to recall his ‘past errors’,<sup>6</sup> which is similar to Krapp’s endeavour. The difference is that Augustine relies on God as an *aide-mémoire* and regularly asks for God’s confirmation (‘Is it not thus, as I recall it’),<sup>7</sup> whereas Krapp has to rely on his recorded tapes. While the idea of the confessions as a sort of memoir entails all the potential distortions of memory, the habit of recording a tape on each birthday links up with Beckett’s early idea for a ‘Journal of a Melancholic’ (see Nixon 2011, 121–5) and with his interest in Samuel Johnson, including Johnson’s habit of recording his thoughts on his birthday. In his ‘Bibliography of Diary Fiction’, H. Porter Abbott notes that *Krapp’s Last Tape* is ‘the only instance that appears to qualify’ as a ‘dramatic diary’ (Abbott 1984, 208). Abbott’s annotated bibliography follows immediately after his analysis of *Malone Dies* as a diary novel. Given the chronological coincidence of Beckett’s re-immersion in his novel when Donald McWhinnie suggested a selection of passages from *Malone Dies* to be read and broadcast on the BBC (see chronology in section 2.1.2), it is not surprising that there are affinities between Beckett’s ‘diary fiction’ and the ‘dramatic diary’.

In terms of reliability, however, Krapp’s collection of tapes constitutes something in between a diary and a memoir: it is not really a diary, for the recordings take place only once a year and are consequently prone to contain more distortions than a daily record; on the other hand, it is not a memoir

things I have simply forgotten’ (Book III, XII.21).

- 6 ‘I would confess to thee my shame to thy glory. Bear with me, I beseech thee, and give me the grace to retrace in my present memory the devious ways of my *past errors*’ (Book IV, I.1, transl. Outler; emphasis added).
- 7 For instance, one of the more memorable events Augustine recalls is the arrival of Faustus: ‘There had just come to Carthage a certain bishop of the Manicheans, Faustus by name, a great snare of the devil; and many were entangled by him through the charm of his eloquence. [...] For almost the whole of the nine years that I listened with unsettled mind to the Manichean teaching I had been looking forward with unbounded eagerness to the arrival of this Faustus. [...] When at last he did come, I found him to be a man of pleasant speech, who spoke of the very same things they themselves did, although more fluently and in a more agreeable style. [...] But they who extolled him to me were not competent judges. They thought him able and wise because his eloquence delighted them’ (Book V, III.3; VI.10). His graceful and seductive eloquence, however, turns out to be a deceptive veil, covering his ignorance of the liberal arts. And then Augustine asks for God’s confirmation: ‘Is it not thus, as I recall it, O Lord my God, Thou judge of my conscience?’ (Book Five, VI.11; emphasis added).

either. The old, 69-year old Krapp, is often surprised and seems to have a different memory of what his younger selves remembered.

### Krapp, the Protagonist: the Mechanism of Memory

Beckett thematizes this mechanism of memory and thus problematizes what Gottschall describes as follows: 'A life story is a carefully shaped narrative that is replete with strategic forgetting and skillfully spun meanings' (Gottschall 2012, 161). According to Gottschall, 'we misremember the past in a way that allows us to maintain protagonist status in the stories of our own lives' (170), and this need to give ourselves the role of the protagonist in our own stories 'warps our sense of self' (171).

How this sense of 'self' takes shape in the mind is described by Antonio Damasio by means of the verb 'to protagonize'.<sup>8</sup> Krapp's recordings perform this function of 'protagonization', but the older Krapp's comments immediately undermine and ridicule this pompous 'sense of self'. Regarding the coordinating structures, necessary to construct the 'autobiographical self', Damasio insists that they 'are *not* Cartesian theaters'<sup>9</sup> by which he alludes to Daniel C. Dennett. By coining this notion of the 'Cartesian theater', Dennett rejected the Cartesian idea that consciousness would 'happen' at a particular place (the pineal gland), which he caricatures as a little theatre in which a homunculus interprets all incoming data. The problem of this model is that this homunculus would, in its turn, need a smaller homunculus inside its brain, and this smaller homunculus an even smaller one inside its brain and so on. This Chinese boxes model of the mind, which is even illustrated in a doodle in the manuscript of *L'Innommable* (Van Hulle and Weller 2014, 155) – resembles the model of character-narrators within character-narrators in *Molloy*, *Malone Dies* and *The Unnamable*. After having parodied this Cartesian homunculus model by means of the M-characters in his novels,<sup>10</sup>

8 'Within the narrative of the moment, [the protoself] must *protagonize*' as a result of 'its moment-to-moment engagement as caused by any object being perceived' (Damasio 2012, 202; Damasio's emphasis). In this context, Damasio stresses that 'the protoself is not to be confused with a homunculus' for 'The well-identified problem with the homunculus resides with the infinite regress it creates' (Damasio 2012, 201).

9 'They are *not* interpreter homunculi' (Damasio 2012, 214).

10 *Modern Manuscripts: The Extended Mind and Creative Undoing* (Van Hulle 2014, 154 ff.) explores how Dennett's (and others') alternative models of the



Beckett now staged another way of thinking. He obviously did not develop a philosophical, explicitly formulated new model of the mind. But his play does enact a way of thinking that presages Dennett's post-Cartesian alternative, called the 'multiple drafts model'.

### Krapp, the Editor: the Multiple Drafts Model

Dennett's alternative metaphor for the workings of consciousness presents consciousness as a continuous process of editing and revising. Similarly, Gottschall notes that, 'like a novel in process, our life stories are always changing and evolving, being edited, rewritten, and embellished by an unreliable narrator' (Gottschall 2012, 176). The same editing metaphor is employed by Damasio, who suggests that human minds 'are about the cinematic editing choices that our pervasive system of biological value has promoted' (Damasio 2012, 72).

The metaphor of editing in these philosophical, literary, psychological and neurological approaches is applied to the mind as something that takes place inside the brain.<sup>11</sup> What Beckett does in *Krapp's Last Tape* is significant from a cognitive perspective. He 'externalizes'<sup>12</sup> this process by means of a 'machine': the tape recorder. At first sight, one could explain away this device as an *aide-mémoire*, as it was often done in the 1960s and 1970s.<sup>13</sup> Having recognized the deficient nature of his memory relatively early in his life, Krapp has devised a way to keep track of his remembrances

mind relate to Beckett's inquiries into the human mind.

- 11 An interesting approach to literature from the vantage point of neuroscience and phenomenology is Paul B. Armstrong's *How Literature Plays with the Brain: The Neuroscience of Reading and Art* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins, 2013).
- 12 This is the term Rosemary Pountney employs to describe this memory beyond the brain: 'By externalising Krapp's overriding memory on the spool of tape that provides the recurring action in *Krapp's Last Tape*, Beckett is once again fusing form with content' (Pountney 1988, 57). Still, this 'externalization' perpetuates an inside/outside metaphor that underwrites the Cartesian mind/body split.
- 13 Sabine Kozdon has made a survey of 'Krapp's Tape Archive' (Kozdon 2005, 160). The various descriptions of the tape recorder range from a 'technische[s] Gedächtnis' (Mennemeier 1964, 307) to a 'memory machine' (Gilbert 1968, 252) or a "taped" memory-bank' (Knowlson 1976, 59). In the 1990s, it was still referred to as a 'Maschinengedächtnis' (Becker 1998, 161), one of Beckett's 'technischen Prothesen' (Becker 1998, 10). As part of



by recording them. In that basic sense, the tape recorder resembles ‘Otto’s notebook’ in David Chalmers and Andy Clark’s article ‘The Extended Mind’. Chalmers and Clark argue that the mind is not limited to the brain and to illustrate their thesis, they introduce a fictional Alzheimer’s patient called Otto, who knows his memory is deficient and therefore makes use of a notebook to remember things. His notebook functions as a memory, the only difference being that this memory ‘lies beyond the skin’ (Clark and Chalmers 2010, 33–4). A paradigm that builds on this idea, but also radicalizes it, is ‘enactivism’.

### Krapp, the Recorder: Enactivism and the Extensive Mind

Enactivists argue that basic minds indeed interact with the environment, but whereas in Otto’s case the ‘extension’ of his memory was presented as an exceptional case (the case of an Alzheimer’s patient), they argue that this interaction with the environment is not an exception but the rule. That is why ‘radical enactivists’ such as Daniel Hutto and Erik Myin prefer the term ‘extensive mind’ to the ‘extended mind’ (Hutto and Myin 2013, 137).<sup>14</sup>

From this enactivist perspective, the tape recorder in *Krapp’s Last Tape* is not just an *aide-mémoire*; it is an integral part of Krapp’s mind. This view contrasts with interpretations of the tape recorder and the boxes with spools as a metaphor for Krapp’s ‘brain’,<sup>15</sup> and of the den as part of ‘the arena of the brain’, as Sidney Homan called it: ‘We are *inside Krapp’s head*, and his movements, whether about the desk, in terms of it, or backstage, are played out in the arena of the brain’ (Homan 1984, 97; emphasis added). Krapp’s desk is also compared to a brain: ‘Krapp’s desk [...] may well be a brain, with its compartments or “drawers” of experiences, memories and information’

these metaphors, the tapes have been called ‘konservierte Vergangenheiten’ (Mennemeier 1964, 309) and ‘Erinnerungskonserven’ (Maierhöfer 1970, 85).

- 14 A crucial aspect of ‘enactivism’ is that it questions representationalism. From an archaeological perspective, Lambros Malafouris describes the problem of representationalism by noting that ‘extended-mind theorists, have, to varying degrees, expanded the territory of mind into the material world’, but that ‘they have generally failed, or that they remain unwilling, to break completely from representationalism and move beyond its computational heritage’ (2013, 85).
- 15 For instance, Georg Hensel calls it ‘ein Bild von Krapp’s Gehirn’ (Hensel 1968, 67).

(Homan 1984, 44). Against this metaphorical, ‘internalist’ (Herman 2011, 255) conception of the workings of the mind, an enactivist approach does not reduce the workings of mind and memory to the brain.

This approach accords with Lambros Malafouris’s ‘material agency theory’ (Malafouris 2013, 119). According to Malafouris, ‘Material signs do not represent; they enact. They do not stand for reality; they bring forth reality’ (118). This ‘material agency’ (119) has an impact on the human mind, which Malafouris regards as ‘an emergent product of complex ecological relationships and flexible incorporative forms of material engagement’ (239).

As an archaeologist, Malafouris developed his theory based on the study of knapped stones. Krapp’s tape recorder is admittedly much more complex an object than a knapped stone, but it can also serve as an ‘agent’,<sup>16</sup> and thus play an active role in Krapp’s ‘extensive mind’. This ‘extensive mind’ in *Krapp’s Last Tape* is not just a theatrical technique. What is at issue is more than putting on stage what takes place ‘inside the skull’. It is the enactment of the enactive mind at work.

This enactment of the mind is a good starting point to discuss the relation between Beckett’s work and enactive cognition. In 1978, Thomas Postlewait wrote an interesting article on the way Beckett’s short plays ‘dramatize a mind’ (484): ‘By taking up drama, Beckett determines to restate his artistic concerns in a medium that traditionally has had little patience for the life of the mind divorced from social interaction and moral decision’ (479). What Beckett tries to do, according to Postlewait, is to show ‘internal consciousness as external event’<sup>17</sup>: ‘In other words, he is holding a mirror up to the act of reflection’ (479). The mirror is a rather problematic metaphor from the vantage point of ‘enactivism’ since it tends to be linked to ‘representation’, a notion the enactivist paradigm explicitly questions (in the context of cognitive philosophy). The notion of ‘enaction’ (in relation to cognition) was first suggested by Francisco J. Varela, Evan Thompson and Eleanor

<sup>16</sup> As it happens, Beckett also employed the word ‘agent’ when – in his production notebook – he analysed the psychology of the play and referred to the tape recorder as an ‘Agent masturbateur’ (see section 2.6.1).

<sup>17</sup> Postlewait’s essay is not an enactivist interpretation of *Krapp’s Last Tape*: he regards consciousness as something ‘internal’, which is ‘externalized’, to use Pountney’s term (1988, 57). Enactivism tries to avoid the inside/outside metaphor and would see the interaction with listeners such as Racine’s confidants as part of consciousness, rather than just an ‘externalization’ of an ‘internal consciousness’.

Rosch in 1991. Their book *The Embodied Mind* ‘questions the centrality of the notion that cognition is fundamentally representation’ (9).<sup>18</sup> In contrast with this view, Varela, Thompson and Rosch define cognition as ‘embodied action’.<sup>19</sup> From a Beckettian viewpoint, this notion of embodiment is also present in Steven Connor’s reading of the tape in *Krapp’s Last Tape*: ‘Tape brings together the continuous and the discontinuous [...] it is the medium that most seems to embody the predicament of temporal embodiment – by linking us to our losses, making it possible for us to recall what we can no longer remember, keeping us in touch with what nevertheless remains out of reach, making us remain what we no longer are’ (Connor 2014, 101). Connor’s term ‘material imagination’ is probably more suitable to describe the cognitive mechanisms at work in *Krapp’s Last Tape* than Postlewait’s mirror reflecting the act of reflection, but Postlewait does have a point when he writes that in order to stage this material imagination Beckett had to ‘meet the need for a listener (besides the audience)’ (480). This part of the listener is played by both the tape recorder and by the older Krapp.

#### Krapp, the Auditor: The Character and the Mechanical Confidant

The tape recorder thus performs the role the ‘confidants’ play in Racine’s dramatic writings. As Angela Moorjani has shown, the Racinean character-confidant pair – analysed by Beckett in his lectures at Trinity College Dublin in the early 1930s – is recognizable in many of Beckett’s novels. Although Racine’s character-confidant pairs were devised as a dramatic technique ‘to express *inner* discussion’ (Burrows, TCD MIC 60, 73), they have arguably had as much impact on Beckett’s prose fiction as on his drama, if not more

<sup>18</sup> As Varela, Thompson and Rosch argue, the notion that cognition is fundamentally representation is based on three assumptions: ‘The first is that we inhabit a world with particular properties, such as length, color, movement, sound, etc. The second is that we pick up or recover these properties by internally representing them. The third is that there is a separate subjective “we” who does these things’ (9).

<sup>19</sup> ‘By using the term *embodied* we mean to highlight two points: first, that cognition depends upon the kinds of experience that come from having a body with various sensorimotor capacities, and second, that these individual sensorimotor capacities are themselves embedded in a more encompassing biological, psychological, and cultural context. By using the word *action* we mean to emphasize once again that sensory and motor processes, perception and action, are fundamentally inseparable in lived cognition’ (172–3).

(Moorjani 2012). Beckett had made the link between this Racinian dramatic technique and prose fiction by applying it to his analysis of André Gide's works. But the impact on Beckett's drama cannot be neglected either, for it is not limited to such pairs as Didi and Gogo in *Waiting for Godot*, Hamm and Clov in *Endgame*, Winnie and Willie in *Happy Days* or Mouth and Auditor in *Not I*. The notion of the Auditor in this context of the confidants is especially interesting given the Manichaean background of Krapp's *Last Tape*. Whereas Augustine confesses to have been an 'auditor', Krapp's confessions – confided to the mechanical confidant in the form of the tape recorder – are those of an 'auditor' listening to his earlier selves.

With regard to Beckett's appropriation of Racine's confidant technique, the interaction between his own dramatic work and his work of fiction increasingly started to play a role by the time he was working on *Krapp's Last Tape*. When he wrote the play, he had just finished translating *L'Innommable*, in which he calls Mercier and Camier a 'pseudocouple': 'Two shapes then, oblong like man, entered into collision before me. They fell and I saw them no more. I naturally thought of the pseudocouple Mercier-Camier' (*Un* 7). The Racinian character-confidant pairs (such as Phèdre-Oenone, Andromaque-Céphise, Oreste-Pylade, Hermione-Cléone) allow the main characters to express their thoughts as in a soliloquy by addressing their confidants. In his TCD lectures, Beckett coined the term 'polylogue' (Burrows, TCD MIC 60, 64) for this technique, when for instance Pylade 'gives fragmentary voice to Oreste's divided mind' (see Moorjani 2012, 47). In the early story 'Ding-Dong', Beckett had already alluded to the Racinian pseudocouple Orestes and Pylades: 'We were Pylades and Orestes for a period, flattened down to something very genteel; but the relation abode and was highly confidential while it lasted' (*MPTK* 32).

In the same story, Belacqua speaks of 'a sorry collapse of my internus homo' (32). If the 'internus homo' can be related to the homunculus model or 'Cartesian theatre' and if the tape recorder can be regarded as an agent (a 'material agent' in Malafouris's terms), Krapp and his recorder illustrate not so much Beckett's application of Racine's technique to externalize the so-called 'interior monologue' of the main character, but Beckett's intuition of the 'extensive mind' at work. *Krapp's Last Tape* shows that the Racinian character-confidant pair is more than just a technique to 'externalize' (Pountney 1988, 57) what goes on 'inside' the mind; it shows that the mind

is interaction. Rather than ‘a stage metaphor for time past’ (Cohn 1976, 165), the recorder is part of the workings of the mind.

In this sense, the pseudocouple Krapp and his tape recorder plays its Raciniian role to express not only ‘division in mind of antagonists’ (Burrows, TCD MIC 60, 65), as Rachel Burrows wrote in her lecture notes, but also ‘the vision’, as Grace McKinley (mis)understood it. She may not have clearly heard what Beckett had to say about this internal conflict, so ‘division’ became ‘the vision’ in her notes:

Pylade etc. are the fragments of the divided minds of Orestes etc. Their function is to express **the vision** in the minds of their protagonists’ (McKinley in Knowlson and Knowlson 2006, 308; emphasis added).

No matter how involuntary McKinley’s mistake was, it unwittingly indicates an interesting interplay between ‘division’ and ‘the vision’, touching upon a thematic core of *Krapp’s Last Tape*. Evidently, Krapp’s pompously presented ‘vision’ or so-called revelation – ‘the vision at last’ – is the centre of the play if one puts the emphasis on Krapp’s creative career. At the same time, ‘division’ is a central theme as well. One could even argue that, in this inquiry into the human mind, ‘division’ *is* the vision. The 39-year-old Krapp’s vision, his clear Manichaean division of mind and body, light and darkness, leading him to choose a life of the mind and abandon love, soon becomes a caricature. But Krapp is not alone. His opinions are divided, as it were, and his older self is extremely critical of ‘the vision’ of this pompous earlier version of himself.

In this context, it is interesting that Krapp uses both the first-person and the third-person pronoun to talk about his former selves,<sup>20</sup> understanding himself both as one individual consisting of a succession of versions, *and* as a succession of individuals:

<sup>20</sup> Rolf Breuer interprets this as follows: ‘On the one hand, there is one Krapp who is present in three phases of his life; on the other hand, there are three Krapps. Krapp himself is aware of this conflicting nature of things, for sometimes he speaks of himself in the first person and sometimes in the third person [...]. In the one case he understands himself as one Self in three phases, in the other case he understands himself as three Selves’ (Breuer 1993, 564–5).



Hard to believe *I* was ever that young whelp. The voice! Jesus!  
And the aspirations! [...] Statistics. Seventeen hundred hours,  
out of the preceding eight thousand odd, consumed on licensed  
premises alone. More than 20 per cent, say 40 per cent of *his*  
waking life (*KLT* 6; emphasis added).

These multiple Krapps or multiple drafts of Krapp have their counterpart in the multiple drafts of *Krapp's Last Tape*.

#### Krapp, the Spool: Multiple Drafts and Bergsonian Affinities

In his essay *Proust* (1931) Beckett already wrote that ‘the individual is a succession of individuals’ (*PTD* 19). He was obviously not the first to suggest this idea and his reading not only of Proust but also of Bergson around the same time may have played a role as well.<sup>21</sup> Bergson is mentioned several times in Rachel Burrows’s notes on the classes Beckett taught at TCD during Michaelmas 1931.<sup>22</sup> With his students, Beckett discussed the distinction between the ‘Bergsonian conception of intelligence & intuition’ and the highest and lowest forms of intelligence according to Bergson, that is, respectively ‘l’intelligence personnelle’ and the ‘fonctionnement [de l’] esprit’ (Burrows, TCD MIC 60, 9; see Gontarski 2008, 96). Fairly early in the lectures, Beckett explained that ‘intuition can achieve a total vision’ whereas ‘intelligence can’t’, according to Bergson.<sup>23</sup> Apart from the relatively direct impact of Beckett’s encounter with Bergson on his essay *Proust*, the Bergsonian suggestion that intelligence can ‘apprehend the passage of time but not [the] present moment’<sup>24</sup> to some extent still reverberates in *Krapp's Last Tape*. In his ‘Introduction à la métaphysique’, an essay that first appeared in 1903 and was later included in *La Pensée et le Mouvant*,

- 21 Jeanette R. Malkin notes that Bergson distinguishes two types of memory: habit memory and ‘pure’ or spontaneous memory (1997, 34). ‘Krapp’s memory-machine’ corresponds to ‘habit memory’, which Bergson describes as ‘mechanistic, functional, reflecting a view of time which is serial and consecutive: basically a spatial and analytic concept of time’ (34).
- 22 For a discussion of Bergson in these notes, see Gontarski 2008.
- 23 Rachel Burrows, TCD MIC 60, 7; see Gontarski 2008, 96.
- 24 Burrows, TCD MIC 60, 7.



Bergson tries to figure out why ‘we’ intuitively seem to grasp the notion of a persisting self, which he calls a reality:

Il y a une réalité au moins que nous saissons tous du dedans, par intuition et non par simple analyse. C'est notre propre personne dans son écoulement à travers le temps. C'est notre moi qui dure. Nous pouvons ne sympathiser intellectuellement, ou plutôt spirituellement, avec aucune autre chose. Mais nous sympathisons sûrement avec nous-mêmes. [There is one reality, at least, which we all seize from within, by intuition and not by simple analysis. It is our own personality in its flowing through time – our self which endures. We may sympathize intellectually with nothing else, but we certainly sympathize with our own selves.] (Bergson 1970, 1396; trans. T. E. Hulme)

What Bergson takes for granted – that ‘we’ sympathize with ourselves – is not that evident (‘sûrement’) in *Krapp’s Last Tape*. And the play also challenges Bergson’s rather internalist notion of the mind: ‘Quand je promène sur ma personne, supposé inactive, *le regard intérieur* de ma conscience, j’aperçois d’abord, ainsi qu’une croûte solidifiée à la surface, toutes les perceptions qui lui arrivent du monde matériel’ [‘When I direct my attention *inward* to contemplate my own self (supposed for the moment to be inactive), I perceive at first, as a crust solidified on the surface, all the perceptions which come to it from the material world’] (1396; trans. T. E. Hulme; emphasis added). This crust consists of three types of cognition: perceptions of material objects, memories attached to them, and tendencies, habits or virtual actions linked to these perceptions and memories:

Ces perceptions sont nettes, distinctes, juxtaposées ou juxtaposables les unes aux autres; elles cherchent à se grouper en *objets*. J’aperçois ensuite des souvenirs plus ou moins adhérents à ces perceptions et qui servent à les interpréter; ces souvenirs se sont comme détachés du fond de ma personne, attirés à la périphérie par les perceptions qui leur ressemblent; ils sont posés sur moi sans être absolument moi-même. Et enfin je sens se manifester des tendances, des habitudes motrices, une foule d’actions virtuelles plus ou moins solidement liées à ces

perceptions et à ces souvenirs. [These perceptions are clear, distinct, juxtaposed or juxtaposable one with another; they tend to group themselves into objects. Next, I notice the memories which more or less adhere to these perceptions and which serve to interpret them. These memories have been detached, as it were, from the depth of my personality, drawn to the surface by the perceptions which resemble them; they rest on the surface of my mind without being absolutely myself. Lastly, I feel the stir of tendencies and motor habits – a crowd of virtual actions, more or less firmly bound to these perceptions and memories.] (Bergson 1970, 1397; trans. T. E. Hulme)

Bergson first presents his model centrifugally, ‘du dedans vers le dehors’ (1397), by means of the metaphor of a sphere, starting from an inner core and ending in ‘le monde extérieur’ [‘the exterior world’]. Then, he takes another, centripetal perspective, ‘de la périphérie vers le centre’ (1397), and starts looking for what is ‘le plus durablement moi-même’ [‘most enduringly myself’] (1397). Underneath the frozen surface (‘congélation’) he finds a continuous flux (‘une continuité d’écoulement’), which he first presents as a succession of multiple states, not unlike the texts of *Comment c'est / How It Is* (‘ma vie dernier état’ / ‘my life last state last version’; Beckett 2001, 2-3): ‘C'est une succession d'états dont chacun annonce ce qui suit et contient ce qui précède’ [‘a succession of states, each of which announces that which follows and contains that which precedes it’] (1397; trans. T. E. Hulme).

But the fact that he perceives these multiple states as states is a retroactive experience.<sup>25</sup> As long as he was experiencing them, it was impossible to say where the one ended and the next began.<sup>26</sup> That is when Bergson switches to yet another metaphor, the image of a spool, which prefigures the central metaphor of *Krapp's Last Tape*:

25 ‘A vrai dire, ils ne constituent des états multiples que lorsque je les ai déjà dépassés et que je me retourne en arrière pour en observer la trace’ [‘They can, properly speaking, only be said to form multiple states when I have already passed them and turn back to observe their track’] (1397).

26 ‘En réalité, aucun d'eux ne commence ni ne finit, mais tous se prolongent les uns dans les autres’ [‘In reality no one of them begins or ends, but all extend into each other’] (1397).

C'est, si l'on veut, le déroulement d'un rouleau, car il n'y a pas d'être vivant qui ne se sente arriver peu à peu au bout de son rôle; et vivre consiste à vieillir. Mais c'est tout aussi bien un enroulement continual, comme celui d'un fil sur une pelote, car notre passé nous suit, il se grossit sans cesse du présent qu'il ramasse sur sa route; et conscience signifie mémoire. [This inner life may be compared to the unrolling of a coil, for there is no living being who does not feel himself gradually to the end of his role; and to live is to grow old. But it may just as well be compared to a continual rolling up, like that of a thread on a ball, for our past follows us, it swells incessantly with the present that it picks up on its way; and consciousness means memory.] (1397)

Bergson thus visualizes the notions of the self, consciousness and memory by means of the metaphor of winding and unwinding spools. In its basic structure, this image resembles Beckett's metaphor of decantation in *Proust*, where he pictures the self as 'the seat of a constant process of decantation, decantation from the vessel containing the fluid of future time, sluggish, pale and monochrome, to the vessel containing the fluid of past time, agitated and multicoloured by the phenomena of its hours' (PTD 15).

But Bergson immediately nuances his metaphor in the next paragraph: 'A vrai dire, ce n'est ni un enroulement ni un déroulement, car ces deux images évoquent la représentation de lignes ou de surfaces dont les parties sont homogènes entre elles et superposables les unes aux autres. Or, il n'y a pas deux moments identiques chez un être conscient' ['But actually it is neither an unrolling nor a rolling up, for these two similes evoke the idea of lines and surfaces whose parts are homogeneous and superposable on one another. Now, there are no two identical moments in the life of the same conscious being.'](1397-8) S. E. Gontarski draws attention to the way Bergson immediately rejects his own image of accumulation. According to Gontarski, 'Krapp finally remains fettered by what Bergson calls "habits of mind"' (Gontarski 2011, 72). From a Bergsonian perspective, the problem is that Krapp's tapes only represent a succession of moments, not a 'convergence of images that would access pure durée' (72). Moreover, Krapp's approach is not Bergsonian; it is analytic rather than intuitive: 'what Krapp does with his intuited insight is to return to the old habits of analysis,

immediately to betray the intuition by ‘translating’ it into language as he reduces the ‘multiple states’ of lived and felt experience into something of a chronological line, something akin to the path of Zeno’s arrow in flight’ (Gontarski 2011, 71).

To what extent Krapp’s tape recorder can be interpreted as a comment on, or critical allusion to, Bergson’s image of the self is hard to determine with certainty. One of the books in Beckett’s library – Bachelard’s *L’Intuition de l’instant* (1932) – suggests he appreciated Bergson but not without critical distance. Even though the copy in Beckett’s library is a 1966 edition (i.e. it post-dates the writing of *Krapp’s Last Tape*), it does indicate that Beckett continued to critically reassess his early interest in Bergson. Bachelard suggested an intuition of the present instant as an alternative to Bergson’s ‘intuition of duration’, because any human being is always faced with the discontinuity of experience (Bachelard 1966, 42). Bachelard was critical of Bergson’s immobile image of mobile time implied by the intuition of duration, which affirmed a form of continuity within the self. *Krapp’s Last Tape* repeatedly emphasizes precisely the discontinuity between these states (‘Hard to believe I was ever that young whelp; ‘hard to believe I was ever as bad as that’; *KLT* 6, 9; *CDW* 223). But the multiplicity of states or versions does correspond with Bergson’s ‘succession d’états’ and with the awareness that these ‘états multiples’ can only be experienced as multiple states with hindsight, when one can look back and observe their traces (Bergson 1970, 1397).

#### Krapp, the Character and the Work in Progress: The ‘Multiple Drafts Model’ and the Work’s Multiple Drafts

A similar observation applies to the traces of the writing process and its multiple drafts. The genetic analysis thus constitutes a counterpart to Dennett’s multiple drafts model. But what is a mere metaphor in Dennett’s model is a material reality in genetic criticism. The objective of this book’s genetic analysis is not to establish an analogy between *the author* and his character (even though biographical readings are certainly possible), but to show that *the work* and the character correspond to similar logics of the draft (what Daniel Ferrer calls the ‘logiques du brouillons’; Ferrer 2011) – both consisting of multiple states. As a consequence, the research hypothesis is that analyzing the succession of textual versions may shed some light on



the dynamics of the multiple drafts model, characterizing the fictional mind evoked in this play.

This book follows the same structure as the other volumes in the Beckett Digital Manuscript Project: Part I is devoted to the extant documents; Part II is a narrative of the work's genesis. The division also reflects the distinction between the documents and the versions of the text. A document is the material vessel containing possibly more than one text. For instance, the so-called 'Eté 56' exercise book (see 1.1.1) contains more than one version of *Krapp's Last Tape*, and apart from that it also contains early versions of, and notes for, other works by Beckett. The documents are material objects, the versions are not.

Part I therefore provides a bibliographical description of the relevant documents, preserved in the holding libraries at the University of Reading, the Lilly Library in Indiana, the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center and the University of California, San Diego. If readers are more interested in the story of the genesis, it is possible to skip the description of the documents and jump to the second part.

Part II reconstructs the logic of the work's progress by discerning the various versions, determining their chronology and analysing their contents.

To facilitate the analysis of the genesis, the three versions of Krapp will be referred to as young Krapp (Krapp1), middle-aged Krapp (Krapp2) and old Krapp (Krapp3). And the text of *Krapp's Last Tape* will be divided into twelve scenes:

- I      Mime I: Stage directions and opening mime  
From '*A late evening in the future*' (KLT 3; CDW 215)  
to '*brings them smartly together and rubs them.*' (KLT 4;  
CDW 216)
- II     'Spooooo!': Krapp's ledger and spools  
From '*Krapp: [Briskly.] Ah!*' (KLT 4; CDW 216)  
to '*hand cupping ear towards machine, face front.*' (KLT 5;  
CDW 217)
- III    'My condition': taped voice of Krapp2, intellectually at the 'crest of  
the wave'



From ‘Tape: [Strong voice, rather pompous]’ (*KLT* 5; *CDW* 216) to ‘Did I ever sing? No. [Pause.]’ (*KLT* 6; *CDW* 218)

IV ‘Aspirations’: taped voice of Krapp2, listening to Krapp1 ‘an old year’  
From ‘Just been listening to an old year’ (*KLT* 6; *CDW* 218)  
to ‘When I look –’ (*KLT* 7; *CDW* 218).

V Song: Krapp3’s backstage singing interrupted after the word ‘shadows –’  
From ‘[Krapp switches off, broods, looks at his watch ...]’ (*KLT* 7;  
*CDW* 218)  
to ‘[... switches on, resumes his listening posture.]’ (*KLT* 7;  
*CDW* 219).

VI ‘Viduity’: widowhood and death of Krapp’s mother  
From ‘Tape: – back on the year that is gone’ (*KLT* 7; *CDW* 219)  
to ‘But I gave it to the dog. [Pause.] Ah well.... [Pause.]’ (*KLT* 8;  
*CDW* 220)

VII ‘The vision’: Krapp2’s revelation  
From ‘Spiritually a year of profound gloom’ (*KLT* 8; *CDW* 220)  
to ‘the fire – [Krapp curses louder, switches off, winds tape  
forward, switches on again]’ (*KLT* 9; *CDW* 220).

VIII ‘Farewell to love’ I:  
From ‘– my face in her breasts’ (*KLT* 9; *CDW* 220)  
to ‘Here I end – [Krapp switches off, winds tape back, switches  
on again.]’ (*KLT* 9; *CDW* 221).

IX ‘Farewell to love’ II:  
From ‘– upper lake, with the punt’ (*KLT* 9; *CDW* 221)  
to ‘Past midnight. Never knew –’ (*KLT* 10; *CDW* 221)

X Mime II: second scene backstage and preparations for recording  
From ‘[Krapp switches off, broods. Finally he fumbles in his  
pockets...]’ (*KLT* 10; *CDW* 221)  
to ‘[... clears his throat and begins to record.]’ (*KLT* 10; *CDW* 221)



XI Recording: including reminiscence of scenes II ('Spooooo!'') and V (Song)

From 'Just been listening to that stupid bastard I took myself for'  
(*KLT* 10; *CDW* 222)

to '[*Pause.*] Lie down across her. [*Long pause. He suddenly bends over machine, switches off, wrenches off tape, throws it away, puts on the other, winds it forward to the passage he wants, switches on, listens staring front.*]' (*KLT* 11; *CDW* 223)

XII 'Farewell to love' III:

From '–gooseberries, she said.' (*KLT* 11; *CDW* 223)  
to '[... *The tape runs on in silence.*] / curtain' (*KLT* 12; *CDW* 223).

Part II discusses the context of the writing process (2.1); the succession of versions of the play as a whole (2.2); the genesis of each individual scene (2.3); and the genesis of the French version, *La Dernière Bande*.<sup>27</sup>

27 Because the French title of *Krapp's Last Tape* is differently capitalized in various publications, its spelling will be standardized throughout this book according to the rules set out by *Le Monde* in their blog post on capitalization, which states that whenever an adjective occurs between an article and a noun, all three should be capitalized([http://correcteurs.blog.lemonde.fr/2006/05/09/2006\\_05\\_lintit\\_des\\_capi/](http://correcteurs.blog.lemonde.fr/2006/05/09/2006_05_lintit_des_capi/)).

PART I



# 1 Documents





## 1.1 Autograph Manuscripts

### 1.1.1 English

#### *The 'Eté 56' Notebook (UoR MS 1227-7-7-1)*

The autograph manuscript of the earliest version of the play is part of what is known as the 'Eté 56' exercise book (UoR MS 1227-7-7-1, named after Beckett's inscription 'ETE 56' on the front cover). The inside of the front cover is inscribed by Beckett: 'for Reading University Library, Sam. Beckett'. The catalogue of the University of Reading's Beckett Manuscript Collection describes the notebook as consisting of

96 leaves, blank from f. 45 until f. 96 verso.<sup>28</sup> Squared paper.  
22 × 13 com. Blue and black ink. [...] The verso pages are used primarily for corrections and notes. There are also many doodles adjacent to pauses or revisions. (Bryden, Garforth and Mills 1998, 59)

The text on f. 10 verso to f. 22 recto, and on f. 24 verso and f. 25 recto relates to *Krapp's Last Tape*. Apart from material for *Krapp's Last Tape*, the 'Eté 56' Notebook contains drafts of, and notes for, two other plays, one novel and two radio plays: *Fin de partie* (*Endgame*), *Happy Days*, *Comment c'est* (*How It Is*), *All That Fall*, and *Words and Music* – as well as some typographical notes regarding the title of yet another radio play, *Embers / Cendres*. On the front flyleaf, Beckett has made a rudimentary table of contents:

<u>Fin de Partie</u>	scraps
<u>All That Fall</u>	"
<u>Krapp</u>	First draft
<u>Pim</u>	Notes
<u>Willie-Winnie</u>	Notes ('Eté 56', front flyleaf)

<sup>28</sup> Folio 96 verso is not entirely blank; it contains a few typographical drafts for the title page of *Cendres* (*Embers*).

**Folio 01r, first half:** The notes on *Fin de partie* start with a ‘Petit supplément’ to the play, consisting of Nagg and Nell’s dialogue regarding the sawdust or sand in their bins.

**Folio 01r, second half – f. 02r first half:** The second half of the page is preceded by the heading ‘Cosy (HOME HAMM)’ and is a draft of the dialogue in which Hamm’s statement ‘Ma maison t’a servi de home’ is followed by Clov’s routine confirmation ‘Oui (regard circulaire), ceci m’a servi de cela.’ On folio 02r, the fragment closes again with ‘COSY’ in capital letters.

**Folio 01v – 02r, second half:** The underscored ‘COSY’ (02r) is followed by ‘Arsy-versy’ (cf. *ATF* 24; *CDW* 191) and other notes for the radio play *All That Fall*, as well as a very short dialogue (starting with ‘Nice day for the races’). The facing leaf (01v) contains a more extensive dialogue between Mrs. Rooney and Miss Fitt (from Mrs. Rooney’s ‘Ah yes, I am distract, very distract’ to Miss Fitt’s ‘Is there anything I can do, while <sup>now that</sup> I am here?'; cf. *ATF* 15; *CDW* 182-3).

**Folio 02v – 03r:** Further notes for *All That Fall*, starting on f. 03r with a few suggestions for the ‘name of station’. One of the suggested names is the cancelled ‘Bally – ?’, as in the Molloy country, probably based on the Dublin suburb of Ballyboghill, or on Baile Átha Cliath, the Irish name for Dublin (see also the French manuscript of *L’Innommable*, BDMP2, FN1, 05v). This first note in black ink is followed by a note in pencil referring to ‘Dante’s damned – indovini / Inf 20 watering their buttocks / with their tears’ (which links with the ‘arsy-versy’ note on page 02r). The next excerpt (in black ink again) is the biblical verse from which the radio play’s title derives: ‘The Lord upholdeth all that fall and / raiseth up all those that be bowed down. / (Ps 145.15)’. Beckett also jotted down the end of the radio play: ‘End: wind & rain Boy runs off. / Wind & rain 15 seconds. They move / off. Dragging feet etc 15 seconds. / They stop. Wind and rain. / End’. Page 03r can be dated rather precisely, since the passage at the bottom is a draft of the typed letter Beckett sent to John Morris, controller at the BBC’s Third Programme, on 27 September 1956:

September 27<sup>th</sup> 1956

6 Rue des Favorites  
Paris 15me

Dear Mr Morris

Herewith the script we spoke of in Paris.  
It calls for a rather special quality of bruitage,  
perhaps not quite clear from the text.  
I can let you have a note on this if you are interested  
in the script for the Third Programme.

With best wishes,

Yours sincerely

Samuel Beckett (*LSB II* 656)<sup>29</sup>

**Folio 03v – 07r:** The cancelled word ‘fixture’ at the top of page 04r is still part of the *avant-texte* of *All That Fall*.<sup>30</sup> The loose jotting ‘Title for autobiography / The TIME OF MY LIFE’ is followed (after a page-wide dividing line) by a fragment of *Fin de partie*, from ‘Tu peux me gratter?’ to the story of the tailor, Hamm’s ‘Assez!’, Nell’s repeated ‘On voyait le fond’, and finally the stage direction indicating that Hamm is exasperated, ‘(excédé)’, corresponding to E 15-17; CDW 101-3.

**Folio 07 – 10r:** Another fragment of *Fin de partie*: Hamm imploring Clov to say something before he goes (‘Avant de partir ... dis quelque chose’), followed by some heavily revised versions of Clov’s ‘few words’ for Hamm, ‘to ponder ... in [his] heart’ (cf. E 47; CDW 131-2).

**Folio 10v – 11v:** Draft of the opening mime of *Krapp’s Last Tape*, scene I.

29 See BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham, scriptwriter folder, BECKETT, SAMUEL FILE 1953-1962.

30 Beckett replaces the word ‘races’ by ‘fixture’ on the typescript held at the Harry Ransom Center; see Pim Verhulst, *The Making of Samuel Beckett’s Radio Plays* (London: Bloomsbury, forthcoming).

Fig. 1: Earliest draft (partial version) of Krapp's Last Tape ('Magee Monologue'), 'Eté 56' Notebook, page 11r.

Magee Monologue 20. 8. 58

wearied small old man, almost blind (one eye, nothing left against the other), almost deaf (left ear can hear almost touching tape). sitting under a small plain wooden chair as small plain wooden table to one on either side a thick worn wooden, a larger wooden and a number of crooked boxes ~~underneath~~ <sup>underneath</sup> wooden tape. Table and chair stands adjacent here in a circle. Many tapes, used to stage in shadow.

A. (reading from paper, his hands over it)  
One ... tree ... four ... five ...  
The sun is clear from between  
Windows facing it. (Appreciatingly.)  
Spoon! (again, reading the word.)  
Wood! (The sun has to take,  
State facing at the door) and  
turning at the door.) Five ... tree.  
The sun is heat and without rain,  
It is hot, to the water the air. Three!  
Three three! (He turns back  
to book) Book ... book ... (Feeling  
at numbers) four ... two ...  
and surprise) ... nine! ... seven ...  
oh! He turns round! (He  
ignores the sun from the door!)  
Sun three three! (He opens it,  
over at the door it remains) Four  
... (He turns back to book)  
him at the right side the entry.) Five.  
The sun back of the door.) Five ...  
Five ... (He turns back to book.) Four  
five. (He turns off a tall lamp before  
him, turns back and puts it back to  
with the others. The sun has a foot.  
from above wood five. The last is  
from above wood five. The first is  
on the machine, the first again at  
the top. In all, 12 boxes. The sun  
first front without racing, Nine

Fig. 2: Second draft (partial version) of *Krapp's Last Tape* (Scene III), 'Eté 56' Notebook, page 14r.

**Folio 11r – 14r (first half):** First draft of *Krapp's Last Tape*, scenes I–V. This first draft, called 'Magee Monologue', does not yet feature the opening mime (only the opening stage directions) of scene I. In scene II, the revelling in the word 'Spooooo!' is not yet made explicit. In this draft, Krapp3 is an old man called A, who searches for a tape before settling down to listen to it. In scene III, Krapp2 is 31 years old (instead of 39 in the published version) and it is he (not Krapp1) who talks about his plans for a fuller and more (rather than less) engrossing sexual life in scene IV. Scene V takes place backstage but does not contain the song yet. When Krapp re-enters, he winds the tape forward, switches on, resumes his listening pose, and hears the words ‘– a moment in the life of all pioneers’. These words are followed by a page-wide dividing line.

**Folio 14r (second half) – 20r:** Underneath the horizontal line on page 14r, Beckett started a second draft of scene III. This time Krapp2 is ‘Thirty-seven today’. The ‘Plans for a fuller sexual life’ of scene IV are now, for the first time, attributed to a younger self. This is the first appearance of Krapp1 (‘it must be <sup>at least</sup> ten or twelve years ago’, f. 15r). Scene V still does not contain the song. The first draft of scene VI starts on the last line of f. 15r and continues on f. 16r with his mother’s ‘long widowhood’, followed by the first drafts of scenes VII (Vision), VIII (Farewell to love I), IX (Farewell to love II), X (Mime II), XI (Recording, without explicit mention of ‘Spooooo!’ and Song), and XII (Farewell to love III).

**Folio 20v:** Draft of a letter regarding a prospectus of a tape-recorder to be sent to Beckett in order for him to check up on the mechanics of it, followed by two paragraphs about plans for *Fin de partie* and ‘mime’ (probably *Acte sans paroles I/Act without Words I*), to be performed at the Venice Biennale and possibly at the Holland Festival, and about the *mise en scène* of *Endspiel* in Vienna. This may be a draft of the letter to John Beckett, mentioned in Beckett’s letter to Donald McWhinnie of 7 March 1958: ‘I have written a short stage monologue for Magee (definitely non-radio). It involves a tape-recorder with the mechanics of which I am unfamiliar. I can't release it until I check up on some points. I have asked John B. to send me a book of the words (instructions for use). If he delays in doing so I may have to ask you to

help me. Indeed if you happen to have such a thing handy you might send it along straight away.'<sup>31</sup>

**Folio 21r:** Additions to *Krapp's Last Tape*. The first paragraph opens with 'Well out of that. Hopeless business' and ends with 'Hard to believe I was ever that young pup'. This is the passage to which the word 'insert' in the margin of the first typescript's opening page (ET1, 1r) refers. For an overview of the (partial) versions of *Krapp's Last Tape* in the 'Eté 56' Notebook, see the 'Writing Sequence' below. (A discussion of the interaction between page 21r and ET1 can be found in chapter 2.3.4.)

A page-wide dividing line is followed by the heading 'Opening':

Opening

Consults register and reads out rubrics.

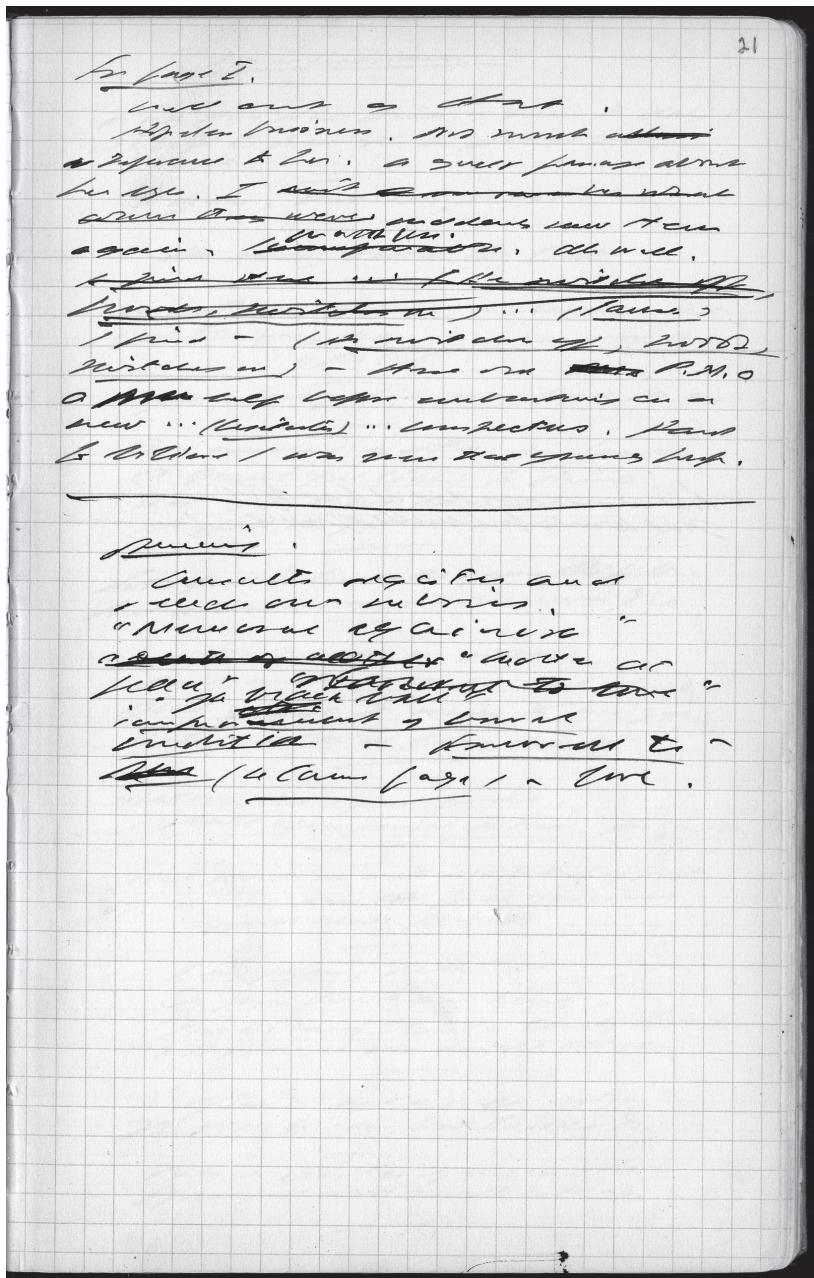
"Memorable equinox"

"Death of mother" "Mother at peace" "Farewell to love" etc. "The black ball" improvement of bowel condition – Farewell to – love (he turns page) – love.

The original hesitation (a hyphen) before 'love' is replaced by the inline addition indicating the page break in the ledger: '(he turns page)'. Apart from the idea of the tape recorder as a material extension of memory, this use of the 'material' break between 'Farewell to' and 'love' (to replace Krapp's original hesitation before the word 'love') is one of the many instances where Beckett stages the extended or extensive mind at work (see Introduction).

<sup>31</sup> BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham, scriptwriter folder, BECKETT, SAMUEL FILE 1953-1962 (see *LSB III* 115).

Fig. 3: Addition to the third (partial) version (ET1) of Krapp's Last Tape, 'Eté 56' Notebook, page 21r.





*Writing sequence of early (partial) versions of Krapp's Last Tape in the 'Eté 56' Notebook*

Partial version 1

11r
12r
13r
14r

Partial version 2

14r
15r
16r
17r
18r
19r
20r

Partial version 3

21r	ET1, 1r
	ET1, 2r
	ET1, 3r
	ET1, 4r

Partial version 4

10v
11v

**Folio 21v – 24r:** Two and a half pages of obituary verses under the heading 'In memoriam'. Beckett jotted down these verses in the wake of (or possibly even during) the creative process of *Krapp's Last Tape* (for on pages 24v-25r he was still making notes on the 'truquage' for the tape recording). The draft translation on 22v (see below) was most probably written before Beckett left for Switzerland on 7 May 1958, so the 'In memoriam' pages probably date from March or April 1958. It seems plausible that these verses are taken from obituary pages in newspapers. These paralipomena do not seem to relate directly to *Krapp's Last Tape*, but in the context of Krapp's referring to



his remembrances as his ‘P.M.s’ or post-mortems on the previous page (21r), the post-mortem verses do colour the relation of the 69-year-old Krapp to his past selves. They offer a sentimental counterpoint to the harsh rejections of ‘that stupid bastard I took myself for thirty years ago’ (*KLT* 10; *CDW* 222). The emphasis on remembrance is obviously relevant to the content of the play, for instance:

gone, but not forgotten (22r)  
[...]  
memories of you will never die (22r)  
[...]  
Whatever else I fail to do  
I shall never forget to pray for you (22r)  
[...]  
only a cluster of memories  
sprayed with a million tears. (22r)  
[...]  
These words are written with deep regret  
By a wife who loved you & will never forget (23r)  
[...]  
We think of him each morning,  
We think of him at night,  
Of all the pain he suffered,  
God knows it was a fight. (23r)  
[...]  
Like falling leaves the years roll by  
but memories of you will never die (24r)

**Folio 22v:** Draft translation of short text on Bram van Velde’s paintings, under the heading ‘BRAM’:

Among the immovable masses of a being set aside, ~~elosed~~ <sup>pent</sup> up and in for ever on itself, pathless, airless cyclopean [...] <sup>the</sup> fitful fires of the spectrum of dark. ~~An~~ Endless unveiling veil after <sup>beyond</sup> veil, plane after plane of ~~imp~~ imperfect transparency, an unveiling towards the unveilable, the nothing, the thing again.



The closing line of the text characterizes Bram van Velde's work as an 'art of incarceration'. The repeated references to the 'veil' recall Schopenhauer's veil of deception (inspired by the Indian 'veil of Maya'), the image of boring holes or tearing apart the 'veil' of language in his famous letter to Axel Kaun (July 1937)<sup>32</sup> and Beckett's reading (for Joyce) of Heinrich Zimmer's *Maya: Der indische Mythos* in 1938.<sup>33</sup> It also recalls the short text, which Beckett – practicing his German – wrote in the 'Clare Street' Notebook in August 1936, just before he went to Germany. In the context of the visual arts, the stress on the eyes in this text's imagery (as in 'Hope is the cataract of the spirit, which cannot be pierced until it is completely ripe for decay') is an interesting background to the 'endless unveiling' and 'the unveilable' in the short text on Bram van Velde:

There are moments when the veil of hope is finally torn apart  
and the suddenly liberated eyes see *their* world, as it is, as  
it must be. Alas, it does not last long, the revelation quickly  
passes, the eyes can only bear such pitiless light for a short  
while, the membrane of hope grows again and one returns to  
the world of phenomena. (UoR MS 5003, 17r-18r; translated by  
Mark Nixon)<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> In the letter to Kaun, Beckett's metaphor of the veil applies more specifically to his own language: 'And more and more my own language appears to me like a veil that must be torn apart in order to get at the things (or the Nothingness) behind it. [...] To bore one hole after another in it, until what lurks behind it – be it something or nothing – begins to seep through; I cannot imagine a higher goal for a writer today' (*Dis* 171-2). Peter Fifield's remark that Beckett's text about the 'unveiling towards the unveilable' is 'all melodrama' (Fifield 2011) can – to some extent – also be applied to the Kaun letter, which Beckett later dismissed as 'German bilge' (*Dis* 170).

<sup>33</sup> See Van Hulle 1999.

<sup>34</sup> See Nixon 2011 (170) for a full transcription and translation. In the 'Clare Street' Notebook, Beckett uses the participle 'weggerissen'; in the Kaun letter he employs the verb 'zerreissen' to express the idea that the veil needs to be 'torn apart'.



The text in the ‘Eté 56’ Notebook is a translation of (a fragment of) ‘Peintres de l’empêchement’, which appeared in *Derrière le miroir* (published by Galerie Maeght in Paris, in June 1948), reprinted in *Bram Van Velde*, edited by Jacques Putman (Paris: Editions Georges Fall, 1958)<sup>35</sup>:

Parmi les masses inébranlables d’un être écarté, enfermé et rentré pour toujours en lui-même, sans traces, sans air, cyclopéen, aux brefs éclairs, aux couleurs du spectre du noir. Un dévoilement sans fin, voile derrière voile, plan sur plan de transparences imparfaites,<sup>36</sup> un dévoilement vers l’indévoilable, le rien, la chose à nouveau. Et l’ensevelissement dans l’unique, dans un lieu d’impénétrable proximité,<sup>37</sup> cellule peinte sur la pierre de la cellule, art d’incarcération. (7)

On 7 May 1958, Beckett joined Bram van Velde, Jacques and Andrée Putman to drive to Switzerland in Putman’s car for the opening of the first big retrospective exhibition of Bram van Velde’s works in the Kunsthalle in Bern<sup>38</sup> (Knowlson 1996, 451–2), which ran from 10 May to 15 June 1958. Beckett’s translation into English was not made for the exhibition’s catalogue, which – apart from a brief chronology of biographical dates, a list of the 63 exhibited paintings and eight reproductions – only contains a preface (‘Vorwort’) by Franz Meyer.

Ten years earlier, a partial English translation of ‘Peintres de l’empêchement’ (without the long opening paragraph) had appeared in the catalogue of the Samuel M. Kootz Gallery in New York under the title ‘The New Object’ (for the full text, and an introduction by Peter Fifield,

35 ‘Achevé d’imprimer en octobre 1958, sur les Presses de l’Imprimerie Letouzey et Ané, Paris, pour le compte de Georges Fall, éditeur. Les reproductions en couleurs ont été tirées par l’Imprimerie Blanchard, Paris.’

36 As Peter Fifield notes, the ‘veil’ quotation ‘has been toned down’ in *Bram Van Velde* (Turin: Edizioni D’Arte Fratelli Posso, 1961), ‘omitting a round of repetition – “Un dévoilement sans fin, voile derrière voile, plan sur plan de transparences imparfaites” – to make the text leaner and less florid’ (Fifield 2011, 877 note 9).

37 The version in ‘Peintres de l’empêchement’ reads ‘impénétrables proximités’ (plural) (*Dis* 136).

38 Bram van Velde: Kunsthalle Bern, 10. Mai – 15. Juni, Ausstellungskatalog (Bern: Kunsthalle Bern, 1958).

see *Modernism/modernity* 18.4 (November 2011), 878–80). As Peter Fifield points out, by leaving out the opening paragraph of ‘Peintres de l’empêchement’ much of Beckett’s disinclination is lost. In this paragraph he insisted three times that he had said all he had to say about the painting of the van Velde brothers, and that he had nothing to add.<sup>39</sup> But he was also quick to add that it was not a matter of saying what had not yet been said, but of ‘saying again’ (as in his poem ‘Cascando’<sup>40</sup>): ‘Heureusement il ne s’agit pas de dire ce qui n’a pas encore été dit, mais de redire, le plus souvent possible dans l’espace le plus réduit, ce qui a été dit déjà’ (*Dis* 133). So, Beckett said it again, repeating his own words in other words. The English translation of 1948 (which appeared in the Kootz catalogue) clearly differs from Beckett’s translation in the ‘Eté 56’ Notebook:

in the immovable masses of a being shut away and shut off and turned inward for ever, pathless, airless, cyclopean, lit with flares and torches, coloured with the colours of the spectrum of blackness. An endless unveiling, veil behind veil, plane after plane of imperfect transparencies, light and space themselves veils, an unveiling towards the unveilable, the nothing, the thing again. And burial in the unique, in a place of impenetrable nearness, cell painted on the stone of cell, art of confinement.  
(Beckett 2011 [1948], 880)

The image of the veil may not have been directly relevant to *Krapp’s Last Tape*, but its presence among the draft versions of the play shows the insistence with which this metaphor recurs in Beckett’s notes, not only before but also after the War, and into the 1960s. Thus, for instance, in the audiotaped production meetings of *Film*, Beckett says to director Alan Schneider and the other members of the film crew: ‘I know that technically, we can’t use a veil, but psychologically, between O’s eyes and the thing finally he’s obliged to look at in order to be able to deal with it, there is a

39 J’ai dit tout ce que j’avais à dire sur la peinture des frères van Velde dans le dernier numéro des Cahiers d’Art [...] Je n’ai rien à ajouter à ce que j’ai dit à cet endroit. C’était peu, c’était trop, et je n’ai rien à y ajouter’ (*Dis* 133).

40 ‘saying again / if you do not teach me I shall not learn / saying again there is a last / even of last times / last times of begging / last times of loving / of knowing not knowing pretending’ (*CP* 57).



veil.’<sup>41</sup> Krapp’s *Last Tape* focuses on listening rather than on seeing, but if one replaces ‘to look at’ by ‘to listen to’, it deals with a similar psychological interaction between Krapp and ‘the thing finally he’s obliged to [listen to] in order to be able to deal with it’.

**Folio 23v:** This page contains a list of names, which may have been taken from the same obituaries as the sentimental verses on the corresponding recto pages (22r-24r):

Bracken / Hickey / Murdy / Mongey / Foley / Weaver / Conboy /  
Tuite / Keeley / Wade / Leaden / Sote / Tisdall / Cobbe / Moult /  
Needham / Harney / McGlone / Siney

These names recur in the second typescript of Beckett’s English translation of *Esquisse radiophonique* (*Rough for Radio I*),<sup>42</sup> with only two small variants in spelling ('Murdy' becomes 'Hurdy' and 'Harney' becomes 'Herney'). In the second typescript of *Rough for Radio I*, Beckett tried to fill in the blanks in the framework of the radio play, making use of these names. The French original, *Esquisse radiophonique* was written on 29 and 30 November 1961 (immediately after finishing *Words and Music* on 29 November, when Beckett sent the final typescript to Barbara Bray). Beckett abandoned *Esquisse* to start writing the first draft of *Cascando* on 1 December 1961. The framework of the ‘sketch’ or ‘rough’ consists of a conversation between ‘Lui’ and ‘Elle’, interspersed with fragments of ‘Music’ and ‘Voice’ coming from a radio receiver. Beckett abandoned this *Esquisse* in November 1961 and did not fill in the part to be spoken by ‘Voice’. In September 1973, the *Esquisse* was published as a sketch in *Minuit 5*, and Beckett tried not only to translate, but also to complete it in late 1973 and early 1974, at the request of Martin Esslin and composer Humphrey Searle (Esslin 1977, 97). To complete it, he needed to fill in the parts spoken by ‘Voice’, coming from the radio receiver. On 1 February 1974, he told Ruby Cohn that he had failed to complete the radio play: ‘Esquisse translated,

41 Audiotaped production meetings of *Film*, transcribed by Paul Ardoïn, *Product and Process: Making and Unmaking Films with Beckett and Burroughs* (PhD thesis, University of Antwerp, 2014), 378.

42 I owe a debt of gratitude to Pim Verhulst for drawing my attention to this connection between the names in the ‘*Eté 56*’ Notebook and the radio play.

filled in and scrapped. Nauseating ghost of *Cascando*. It was only to be expected' (UoR COH 097). This postcard to Cohn may create the impression that, more than twelve years after Beckett had abandoned *Esquisse* on 30 November 1961 to start a new radio play (*Cascando*), he apparently still had the feeling it was a precursor or 'ghost' of *Cascando*. But this hides the fact that between August 1973 and January 1974, Beckett did make several attempts to fill in the framework (in 4 versions – a typescript, two manuscripts and another typescript).<sup>43</sup> The first extant attempt to fill in the speech part of 'Voice' (before revision), reads as follows:

... too of course was there not to mention / Bracken Hickey Hurdy  
Mongey Foley / Weafer Conboy Tuite Keeley Wade / Leaden  
– sweet Leaden ! – Sote Tisdall Cobbe / Needham Herney Siney  
McGlone Moult / so in the end I suppose they were all there /  
all I ever knew all there / all but one / all I ever loved or didn't  
or couldn't or wouldn't / all but one / parent<sup>s</sup> and relative<sup>s</sup> of all  
kinds / as remembered at some stage fixed for ever (MS 1991-01,  
Burns Library, Boston College)

The repeated line 'all but one' is important as it served as a preliminary title during the writing process. In letters to Barbara Bray, Beckett refers to his 'rough for radio' as 'all but one'<sup>44</sup> and 'all but 1'.<sup>45</sup> The suggestion that the 'one' is the first-person narrator 'T' himself – the only one that eludes remembrance – connects *Rough for Radio I* to *Krapp's Last Tape*. This link is also corroborated by the location of the list of names in the 'Eté 56' Notebook, immediately following after the last notes for *Krapp's Last Tape*. That they are all 'remembered at some stage fixed for ever' is another interesting connection, for no matter how hard Krapp may try to remember his previous selves, he can only turn the first-person 'T' into a third-person

43 These versions are preserved at Boston College's Burns Library. For a detailed description and analysis of these documents, see Pim Verhulst, *The Making of Samuel Beckett's Radio Plays* (London and Brussels: Bloomsbury/UPA, forthcoming).

44 Beckett to Barbara Bray, 30 September 1973, from El Jadida, Morocco (TCD 10948-1-544-1).

45 Beckett to Barbara Bray, 12 September 1973, from Marrakech (TCD 10948-1-540).



'relative', 'remembered at some stage' and 'fixed for ever' on a tape, yet these fixed Krapps of the past are 'all but I'.

**Folio 24v – 25r:** Notes and diagrams under the heading 'Tape recording': 'Should ~~Kra~~ Krapp move away / from table when recording? [...] Or stay at table for recording?' These questions are followed by a series of directions under the heading 'Truquage': the suggestion not to remove the lid from the machine so as to hide the manipulations of the tape 'from majority of audience'; to make 'K.' only appear to load the tape on the machine, while it is actually 'ready loaded'; to make him only appear to change reels when he wishes to record ('Actually he leaves in position the ~~tape~~ reel already loaded'); 'Similarly he <sup>at the end only</sup> appears to change reels again.' Beckett also immediately added an objection to his own suggestions: 'Objection: The raised lid will obscure Krapp's face' (25r).

**Folio 25v:** blank

**Folio 26r – 34v:** Notes for *Comment c'est* under the heading 'Pim'. One of the notes suggests the structure of Dante's *Divina Commedia*, 'Enf., Purg. Paradis'. Most of the verso pages are blank.<sup>46</sup> The notes contain typographical considerations such as 'Double interligne entre paragraphes', but also conceptual notes and intertextual references, such as the following cluster on page 27r:

Ontospéléologie

"Etre un ver, quelle force!"

(L'Homme qui Rit.)

"Une haine est toute une <sup>la</sup> haine. Un éléphant que hait une fourmi est en danger" (Ib.)

<sup>46</sup> For a transcription of these notes, see Édouard Magessa O'Reilly's genetic edition of Samuel Beckett's *Comment c'est / How It Is* (2001), 199-203.

The juxtaposition of a speleology of being with these references to Victor Hugo recall the narrator's 'Stupid obsession with depth' (*Un 3*) in *The Unnamable*, in combination with the pun on 'mine': 'Are there other pits, deeper down? To which one accedes by mine?' (*Un 3*). The narrator in *L'Innommable / The Unnamable* refers to Malone, who – in *Malone meurt / Malone Dies* – refers in his turn to Macmann, who 'might be stark staring naked', as the text suggests when the character is named Macmann for the first time.<sup>47</sup> According to the French version 'il serait nu comme un ver',<sup>48</sup> literally translated: 'naked like a worm', which prefigures the character Worm in *L'Innommable / The Unnamable*. So, by the time Beckett jotted down the Hugo quote 'Etre un ver, quelle force!' it was connected to an extensive underground complex of intratextual allusions.

**Folio 35r – 38r:** Draft of *Happy Days*, dated 8 October 1960, Ussy, at that moment provisionally called 'Play Female Solo'.

**Folio 38v – 44r:** Loose jottings and notes for *Happy Days*. Folio 41r features the idea for the 'Title: Happy Days', between two ideas for the 'End', followed by a list of the 'Objects' in the bag. On folio 42r, Beckett writes a note to himself: 'Why not toilet and prayer end / of I?', followed by a change of the characters' names (in green and black ink): 'Not Mildred: Winnie / Not Edward: Willie'. The catalogue of the University of Reading's Beckett Manuscript Collection notes: 'Beckett considers possible conclusions to the piece; this was clearly a troublesome matter for him as there are half a dozen proposed concluding scenes and phrases. Final sheet, f. 44, drafts section of Female monologue relating to the revolver. Marginal and verso doodles throughout in this draft' (Bryden, Garforth and Mills 1998, 47).

**Folio 44v – 45r:** Notes for *Words and Music*, dated 16 February 1961, Paris. Again, Beckett is preoccupied with the 'End: diminishing sound / of alternating words & / music till ✲ close on a / few words, a few notes.'

<sup>47</sup> 'For Sapo – no, I can't call him that any more, and I even wonder how I was able to stomach such a name till now. So then for, let me see, for Macmann, that's not much better but there is no time to lose, for Macmann might be stark staring naked under this surtout.' (MD 56)

<sup>48</sup> HRC MS SB 7.4, 36v-37r.

## Folio 45v – 96r: blank

**Folio 96v:** Two drafts to try out typography and layout of the title page of *Cendres [Embers]: CENDRES / (EMBERS) / PIECE RADIODRAMATIQUE DE / SAMUEL BECKETT / TRADUIT DE L'ANGLAIS PAR / ROBERT PINGET ET L'AUTEUR*

### 1.1.2 French

Several draft stages of *Krapp's Last Tape* have been preserved, but relatively few materials are left of the genesis of *La Dernière Bande*. According to the editors of Beckett's correspondence, 'SB's letters to and from Leyris have not been found' (*LSB II* 64). We made several enquiries and contacted Les Éditions de Minuit<sup>49</sup> and Éditions José Corti,<sup>50</sup> the heirs of Pierre Leyris,<sup>51</sup> and several holding libraries, including the Institut mémoires de l'édition contemporaine (IMEC)<sup>52</sup> in Caen, the Bibliothèque Nationale and the 'Jacques Doucet'<sup>53</sup> library in Paris, but no manuscript of the translation has surfaced. To the question whether Les Éditions de Minuit have any manuscripts, typescripts or proofs of *La Dernière Bande*, Mme

- 49 The management of the publishing house replied on 7 March 2014 confirming the collaboration with Pierre Leyris ('Il est vrai que Pierre Leyris a collaboré à la traduction de *La Dernière Bande*.) and referred to Federman and Fletcher's bibliography for more details.
- 50 This publishing house, for which Pierre Leyris often made translations, confirmed that the heirs of Pierre Leyris asserted that he did not preserve any archival material. I wish to thank Margot Delor for sharing the information she gathered for her MA thesis 'From *Krapp's Last Tape* to *La Dernière Bande*: The Question of Samuel Beckett's (self?)translation' (University of Antwerp, May 2014).
- 51 Pierre-Leyris's heir, Etienne Leyris, confirmed on the phone (May 2014) that he did not have any document relating to Pierre Leyris's collaboration with Samuel Beckett; that he did not have any manuscript of the translation; and that he did not even know about Pierre Leyris's collaboration on the translation of the play.
- 52 IMEC informed us that they only hold records related to production requests.
- 53 The 'Jacques Doucet' library holds the correspondence between Samuel Beckett and Robert Pinget (another interesting collaboration in terms of translation), but no materials concerning the collaboration with Pierre Leyris. I wish to thank the 'Jacques Doucet' library for providing us with the contact information of Pierre Leyris's heir, Etienne Leyris.



Irène Lindon replied: ‘Nous regrettons de n’avoir plus le manuscrit ni les épreuves de *la Dernière Bande* de Samuel Beckett.’<sup>54</sup> What did surface was a set of annotations made for the French premiere in March 1960. As to the question whether this was Beckett’s copy, Breon Mitchell notes that the Lilly copy of *La Dernière Bande* (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1960) bears no ownership signature nor bookplate, but ‘the notes are in Beckett’s hand throughout, including the extra pages that came inserted in the copy’.<sup>55</sup> These notes for Roger Blin are written in red ink in the margins and on the flyleaves of a copy of the first Minuit edition of *La Dernière Bande*, held at the Lilly Library (Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana), together with additional notes (in red and blue ink and in pencil) on separate sheets. These notes, however, are part of the play’s epigenesis – the continuation of the genesis after publication – and will be described in Chapter 3.

<sup>54</sup> Irène Lindon, email correspondence with Dirk Van Hulle, 4 April 2015.  
<sup>55</sup> E-mail correspondence from Breon Mitchell, 24 April 2014.



## 1.2 Typescripts

### 1.2.1 English

Throughout 1957, the year before the genesis of *Krapp's Last Tape*, the dentist<sup>56</sup> and manuscript dealer Jake Schwartz<sup>57</sup> kept asking Beckett if he had any manuscripts to sell. On 13 January 1957, Beckett told him: 'I don't know if I have kept the corrected typescript of All That Fall. I shall look in my accumulated rubbish' (HRC, Box 8, Folder 1, Beckett-Schwartz correspondence). Four days later he had found it and told Schwartz: 'you are welcome to it if it interests you'. But Schwartz may have been interested mainly in the manuscripts of the more famous plays. On 4 March Beckett told him:

I don't know exactly what you mean by MSS of last two plays. You have original of All That Fall. Do you mean original of Fin de Partie, of which no English version exists as yet? I don't feel like parting with any more MSS for the moment. Later on.

So, it must have been clear to Schwartz that the direct approach was not going to yield any more manuscripts for the time being. In the meantime, Beckett did keep Schwartz informed of what he was working on. On 23 May 1957, for instance, he told Schwartz that he was 'hard at work on the translation of Fin de Partie. Heart-breaking work'. Schwartz seems to have started sending Beckett a book once in a while. On 15 March 1958, Beckett wrote that he 'received safely the Stanislaus book' (*LSB III* 118). This was

56 Beckett later called Schwartz 'The Great Extractor' (Knowlson 1996, 482) when he learned through Henry Wenning 'that Schwartz had been paying him only a small percentage of the true value of his manuscripts' (483). When Beckett met him in Brighton in March 1961, this was to be 'the last occasion on which he felt trust' in Schwartz (482). See also (Van Hulle and Nixon 2007, 314).

57 According to Anthony Cronin, Beckett 'sold him manuscripts for £200 which were, of course, worth a great deal more. He liked Schwartz, as he did other, equally dubious characters, describing him as "an entertaining ruffian", and he continued to send him manuscripts almost as soon as the works in question were completed, evidently believing in keeping his study uncluttered' (Cronin 1996, 542).

Stanislaus Joyce's *My Brother's Keeper* in the Viking Press edition with a preface by Richard Ellmann.<sup>58</sup>

In the same letter, Beckett told Schwartz he had not only a manuscript of his translation of *L'Innommable*, but also 'four states' of typescripts of *Krapp's Last Tape*:

I am also keeping for you, if you would be interested, the MS of my translation of L'Innommable of which I have completed the first draft, and four states, in typescript, with copious and dirty corrections, of a short stage monologue I have just written (in English) for Pat Magee. This was composed on the machine from a tangle of old notes, so I have not the MS to offer you. (SB to Jake Schwartz, HRC, Box 8, Folder 1, 15 March 1958; *LSB III* 118)

Beckett's phrasing may have given Schwartz the impression that the actual composition happened 'on the machine'. The 'old notes' in which the 'MS' was entangled refers to the 'Eté 56' Notebook, with which Beckett did not wish to part, probably not just because it contained the earliest stages of the creative process, but also because of the 'tangle'. This 'tangle' is an interesting metaphor to describe the creative space of the 'Eté 56' Notebook. As the description in section 1.1.1 shows, it is not a notebook like the 'Dream' or the 'Horoscope' Notebooks. Instead of jottings, reading notes and excerpts, it mainly contains drafts. In that sense it resembles James Joyce's red-backed 'Guiltless' Notebook (British Library, MS 47471b), which contains numerous drafts for the chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 and 8 of *Finnegans Wake*. Joyce did not want to part with it either and tried to keep working in the same paperspace for as long as he could find blank pages or blank parts of pages. A plausible explanation for this common phenomenon is that these writers liked to think on paper and the interaction with the 'text produced so far' (TPSF)<sup>59</sup> had a stimulating effect on their creative imagination.

58 To Con Leventhal, Beckett wrote on 29 February 1958: 'Am just finishing Stanislaus Joyce's book on his brother in the Viking Press edition, with a preface by Ellmann. Interesting material on the early days in Dublin' (qtd. in Van Hulle and Nixon 2013, 39).

59 In writing research, the 'text produced so far' (usually abbreviated as TPSF) is a term denoting the effect of re-reading on the writing process (Flower and Hayes 1981, 370; Leijten, de Maeyer, van Waes 2011, 331).



On 25 March, slightly more than a month after starting the ‘Magee Monologue’ in the ‘Eté 56’ Notebook (dated 20 February 1958), Beckett enclosed the set of four typescripts in another letter to Jake Schwartz. The Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at Austin, Texas, holds these first four typescripts of *Krapp’s Last Tape*, in the Samuel Beckett Collection, Box 4, Folder 2.

#### **ET1 (MS-HRC-SB-4-2-1)**

In *No Symbols Where None Intended*, Carlton Lake describes the first typescript as follows:

Untitled [‘Krapp’s Last Tape’]. Typed manuscript, signed, March 1958, 4 pp., 4to. Typescript I. With numerous autograph revisions and additions in black ink. There are a few doodles. The text varies considerably from the published version and lacks, in particular, the introductory stage directions and description of the setting. The protagonist appears as ‘A’. At the top of page 1 Beckett has written: ‘Typescript I of *Krapp’s Last Tape* 3.58.’ Inscribed, in blue ink, at the bottom of page 4: ‘for / Jake Schwartz / Sam. Beckett / March 1958. (Lake 1984, 105)

The title and date were added afterwards. At the moment of composition of this typescript, Beckett had not yet chosen ‘Krapp’ as the name of his protagonist. The typescript is only a partial version (comprising scenes III through XII), corresponding with the second fragment drafted in the ‘Eté 56’ Notebook (the fragment starting underneath the page-wide dividing line on page 14r). It opens with ‘Thirty-seven today, sound apparently in wind (as he rimes this word with mind) and limb, apart from my old trouble, and intellectually I have little doubt at the peak of my powers, or thereabouts.’ The first two words of the added parenthesis are written in a hand that is rather hard to read, and it is unusual that Beckett should have chosen the archaic spelling ‘as he rimes’, but the stage direction appears to indicate that the word ‘wind’ should rhyme with ‘mind’ (see discussion in chapter 2, section 2.2.3).

The length of the typescript is only 3.5 pages. Although it was to expand to 7 pages, the ending was already in place: ‘The tape runs on in silence. / Curtain’ (4r).

### ***ET2 (MS-HRC-SB-4-2-2)***

Between ET1 and ET2, Beckett probably returned to the ‘Eté 56’ Notebook to draft the opening scenes (10v-11v), which served as a basis<sup>60</sup> for the opening page of ET2. Carlton Lake describes the document as

‘Crapp’s Last Tape.’ Typed manuscript, signed, March 1958, 10 pp., 4to. With many autograph corrections, annotations, and revisions in black and blue inks. [...] Introductory material relating to the stage setting has been added, and the verso of page 1 has a long autograph addition which incorporates stage directions concerning A’s [Krapp’s] movements. (Lake 1984, 105)

The ‘10 pp.’ are typed (and partly written) on 6 leaves. The preliminary title ‘CRAAPP’S LAST TAPE’ is a handwritten addition in the top margin of the first page. In the typed text, the name of the protagonist is still ‘A’; it is changed into ‘Crapp’ in the handwritten revision. At the back of the last leaf (6v), some calculations relate to the passage on page 2r about Krapp’s plans to drink less: ‘Statistics. Seventeen hundred hours, out of the preceding eight thousand odd, consumed on licensed premises alone. <sup>Over 20%</sup>’ (ET2, 2r).

### ***ET3 (MS-HRC-SB-4-2-3)***

This is the first typescript that bears the title ‘KRAPPP’S LAST TAPE’ (typed) and features the protagonist’s name as Krapp with a K:

Typed manuscript, signed, March 1958, 9 pp., 4to. [...] With many autograph emendations and additions, a few doodles, and one mathematical calculation on the verso of the last page. [...] Beckett has added a few more details concerning the setting: e.g., ‘April 1986’ has been changed to ‘a late evening in the nineteen eighties.’ Inscribed, in blue ink, on the last page: ‘for Jake Schwartz / Sam. Beckett / March 1958.’ (Lake 1984, 106)

60 As Daniel Ferrer notes, a manuscript is not a text but a protocol for making a text (Ferrer 2011, 43). Here, the manuscript (pages 10v-11v) served as a protocol for typing the text of ET2.



The '9 pp.' are typed (and partly written) on 6 leaves. Beckett has written 'Typescript III' in the top margin of the first page. The original temporal setting ('April 1986') would support the many biographical readings of the play, as it suggests a link with Beckett's month of birth, April 1906. In 'April 1986' the author would have been 80 years old. The calculation on the verso of the last leaf probably relates to Krapp's age:

40	25 - 37
12	
<hr/>	
52	37 - 70 <sup>37</sup>
33	
<hr/>	
85	

If '40' indicates the number of years between Krapp3 and Krapp2 (in this early version), and '12' the number of years between Krapp2 and Krapp1, Beckett was considering the possibility that Krapp1 was 33 years old, the age of Jesus of Nazareth when he was crucified. In that case Krapp3 would have been 85 years old. The alternative was Krapp1: 25 years; Krapp2: 37; Krapp3: 70 – with 33 years between Krapp2 and Krapp3.

#### **ET4 (MS-HRC-SB-4-2-4)**

The fourth typescript consists of 7 leaves. Beckett considered replacing the word 'Tape' by 'Reel' in the title:

'Krapp's Last Tape (Reel).' Typed manuscript, signed, 9 pp., 4to.  
[...] The verso of page 5 has an arithmetical computation, not incorporated into the text. Beckett has slightly modified the title, adding 'Reel', within parentheses, as a possible alternative for 'Tape'. Except for a few minor variants, the manuscript is close to the published text. An autograph note on the final page reads: 'Note on technique of tape-recorder.' Inscribed: 'for / Jake Schwartz / Sam. Beckett / March 1958' (Lake 1984, 106).



The ‘arithmetical computation’ mentioned by Lake is a calculation of the number of hours and minutes in a year:

$$\begin{array}{r} 365 \\ 24 \\ \hline 1460 \\ 730 \\ \hline 8760 \text{ hours} \\ 60 \\ \hline 525.600 \text{ minutes (ET4, 5v)} \end{array}$$

#### **ET5 (MS-UoR-1659)**

The University of Reading holds a typescript ‘(with proof corrections)’, marked in Beckett’s hand in the top margin of the first page. The Reading catalogue describes it as a ‘Late formative draft’ and draws attention to the different writing tools of the corrections:

Corrections made in black and blue-black ink and in type. These are minor but frequent [...]. The initial setting is altered from ‘A late evening in the nineteen eighties’ to ‘A late evening in the future’. (Bryden, Garforth and Mills 1998, 59)

The different writing tools indicate several revision campaigns. At different stages of revision, this corrected typescript (ET5) served as the basis both for ETC and for the Faber and Faber edition. After ETC had been typed Beckett made extra changes to ET5. These extra changes were taken into account when the text of the Faber page proofs was set and when Beckett read the proofs of the pre-book publication in the *Evergreen Review* (see section 1.4.1).<sup>61</sup>

61 This procedure corresponds with the genesis of *Embers* (published in the same volume as *Krapp’s Last Tape*): The typescript (UoR MS 1396-4-6) arrived at Grove Press on 26 March 1959; Grove prepared proofs; Beckett returned his corrected set in late September 1959; *Embers* was first published

### ***ETC (MS-HRC-SB-4-2-5)***

This thermofax copy of (the carbon copy of) a missing typed manuscript consists of 8 leaves. In this version the time modification from 'the nineteen eighties' to 'the future' (see ET5) is already incorporated in the typed text, i.e. ETC follows after ET5 in the genetic dossier. Most probably this is (a copy of) the version Beckett sent to Barney Rosset (and several others) on 18 March: 'Herewith Magee monologue. I have sent copies to George Devine, Magee, Kitty Black and Rosica Colin' (FSU, SB to Barney Rosset, 18 March 1958).

Some substitutions in ET5 are not yet incorporated in the typed text of ETC, but also marked with a blue ball-point on ETC. The difference is that in ET5 the correction is made by Beckett, whereas the hand that made the correction in ETC is not Beckett's. For instance:

- bench by the weir from where I could see her window. There  
I sat, **day after day** in the biting wind, wishing she were gone. (Pause.)  
**Deserted spot it was,** Hardly a soul just a few regulars (ET5, 4r)

In ETC, the addition 'in the biting wind' is already incorporated in the typed text, but 'Hardly a soul' is added by hand in the left margin:

- bench by the weir from where I could see her window.  
There I sat, **in the biting wind**, wishing she were gone.  
(Pause.) **Deserted spot it was,** Hardly a soul just a few regulars  
(ETC, 4r)

### ***ETC' (MS-UCSD-AS-103-74-10)***

In the typed copy held at the Alan Schneider collection in San Diego, the addition 'Hardly a soul' is already incorporated, i.e. ETC' succeeds ETC in the chronology of the genetic dossier. Still, the chronology is more complicated than the succession ET5 > ETC > ETC' suggests, for ET5 features corrections that have been made at different stages in the genesis.

separately in *Evergreen Review* III.10 (November 1959). The text showed very few variants compared to the one published by Faber and Faber, one month later (Verhulst 2015).

Fig. 4: Thermofax copy (ETC), preserved at the Harry Ransom Center, MS-HRC-SB-4-2-5, 4r, with marginal correction (not in Beckett's hand).

4

happiness. Unattainable laxation. Sneers at what he calls his youth and thanks to God that it is over. False ring there. (Pause.) Shadow of the opus...magnum. Closing with a - (brief laugh) - yelp to Providence. (Prolonged laugh in which Krapp joins.) What remains of all that misery? A girl in a shabby green coat, on a railway-station platform? No?

Pause.

When I look - ~~figures~~

Krapp switches off, broods, looks at his watch, gets up, goes backstage into darkness. Ten seconds. Pop of cork. Ten seconds. Second cork. Ten seconds. Third cork. Ten seconds. Brief burst of ~~music~~ quavering song.

Krapp (sings). Now the day is over,  
Night is drawing nigh-igh,  
Shadows -

Fit of coughing. He comes back into light, sits down, wipes his mouth, switches on, resumes his listening posture.

Tape - back on the year that is gone; with what I hope is perhaps a glint of the old eye to come, there is of course the house on the canal where mother lay a-dying, in the late autumn, after her long viduity (Krapp gives a start), and the - (Krapp switches off, winds back tape a little, bends his ear closer to machine, switches on) - a-dying, after her long viduity, and the -

Krapp switches off, raises his head, stares blankly before him. His lips move in the syllables of viduity. No sound. He gets up, goes backstage into darkness, comes back with an enormous dictionary, lays it on table, sits down and looks up the word.

Krapp (reading from dictionary). State - or condition - of being - or remaining - a widow - or widower. (Looks up. Puzzled.) Being - or remaining?... (Pause. He peers again at dictionary. Reading.) "Deep weeds of viduity"... Also of an animal, especially a bird... the vidua or weaver-bird... Black plumage of male... (He looks up. With relish.) The vidua-bird!

Pause. He closes dictionary, switches on, resumes listening posture.

Tape - bench by the weir from where I could see her window. There I sat, in the biting wind, wishing she were gone. \* (Pause.) ~~Wanted~~ just ~~at~~ ~~now~~, just a few regulars, nurse-maids, infants, old men, dogs. I get to know them quite well - oh by appearance of course I mean! One dark young beauty I recollect particularly, all white and starch, incomparable bosom, with a big black hooded perambulator, most funeral thing. Whenever I looked in her direction she had her eyes on me. And yet when I was bold enough to

Hadley a soul /

A good example is the passage where Krapp decides to ‘Leave it at that’. Initially, Beckett only replaced ‘bottle’ with ‘noggin’:

Ah empty your **bottle** <sup>noggin</sup> now and get to your bed. Finish this drivel in the morning. (ET5, 7r)

In ETC and ETC’ only the substitution ‘**bottle** <sup>noggin</sup>’ is incorporated:

Ah empty your **noggin** now and get to your bed. Finish this drivel in the morning. (ETC, 7r; ETC’, 7r)

Only subsequently did Beckett make the other corrections in ET5,

Ah ~~empty your~~ **bottle** <sup>noggin</sup> ~~finish your booze~~ now and get to your bed.  
**Finish** Go on with this drivel in the morning. (ET5, 7r)

These corrections were then incorporated, both in the Faber proofs and in the *Evergreen Review*. So, as indicated above, ET5 served both as the basis for ETC (and indirectly ETC’) – which seem to have been produced to serve as acting copies (i.e. not for publication but for a stage production) – and as the typescript from which the first American and British editions were set.

Whether the copy in the Alan Schneider collection (UCSD, San Diego) was typed by Beckett is not sure. Apart from the typescript UCSD also holds the original folder in which it entered the UCSD Special Collections. This original folder indicates explicitly: ‘KRAPP’S LAST TAPE (original ms) / (Typed by S.B.)’. If this is the case, it does not seem to have been typed on Beckett’s own typewriter. The exclamation mark after Krapp’s first exclamation ‘Ah!’ is a combination of an apostrophe above a full stop, probably because it was typed on a broken machine or a typewriter without a separate key for the exclamation mark. The typewriter Beckett used in 1958, however, had a key for the exclamation mark. The pages are not numbered, unlike all the other typescripts of *Krapp’s Last Tape* made by Beckett. In general, the typescript also contains more typos than the other typescripts (e.g. ‘confortalbe’ (2r); ‘The grain, now what I wonder do I mean by then [*for that*]’ (3r); ‘Hard to think of her a [sic] a girl’ (3r); ‘Brief burst of cuavering [sic] song.’ (4r); ‘Krapp siwtches [sic] off’ (4r); ‘shivereing’ (7r); ‘The tapes [sic] runs on in silence.’ (8r)). It shows an atypically high number of omissions of

spaces between words, e.g. ‘stoops and peers [*sic*] at skin’ (1r); ‘Heraises [*sic*] his head’ (2r); ‘closer to machine [*sic*]’ (4r); ‘with the [*sic*] ball’ (5r); ‘all done withanyway [*sic*]’ (6r). This is also the only typescript that adds the author’s name underneath the title:

KRAPP’S LAST TAPE  
by Samuel Beckett

The left margins of ETC show only a few handwritten marks in pencil, limited to the letters A and B, and here and there the letter H. The A and B may refer to camera A and camera B in Beckett’s ‘Suggestions for TV Krapp’ (see section 1.5). A is inserted, for instance, just before the words ‘into darkness’ whenever Krapp goes backstage (twice on page 4r, once on page 6r) and the ‘objective’ camera A has to shoot the panoramic view of the entire stage. B is inserted when the ‘subjective’ camera B has to zoom in, for instance, when Krapp ‘comes back into light carrying an old ledger / and sits down at table’. The / in this passage on page 2 corresponds with the first penciled B in the left margin. A letter H is added just before ‘The eyes she had!’ – probably indicating High ‘level of intentness’ of camera B.<sup>62</sup> On the verso of page 4, Alan Schneider has drawn a few sketches of the angles from which the stage could be shot.

62 See section 1.5 for Beckett’s 3 ‘levels of intentness’ (Low, Intermediate, High).

Fig. 5: Carbon copy of French typescript (FT) with autograph corrections, preserved at the Harry Ransom Center, MS-HRC-SB-4-2-6, 1r.

CORRECTED TYPESCRIPT OF  
FRENCH TRANSLATION OF  
"KRAAPP'S LAST TAPE" BY  
LA DERNIERE BANDE JAKE SCHWARTZ

*CDD"*

Un soir, tard, d'ici quelque temps.  
La turne de Krapp.  
A l'avant-scène, au centre, une petite table dont les deux tiroirs s'ouvrent du côté de la salle.  
Assis à la table, face à la salle, c'est à dire du côté opposé aux tiroirs, un vieux homme avachi: Krapp. /c  
Pantalon étroit, trop court, d'un noir pisseux. Gilet sans manches d'un noir pisseux, quatre vastes poches. Lourde montre d'argent avec chaîne. Chemise blanche crasseuse déboutonnée au cou, sans col. Surprenante paire de bottines, d'un blanc sale, du 48 au moins, très étroites et pointues.  
Visage blanc. Nez violacé. Cheveux gris en désordre. Mal rasé.  
Voix faible très particulière.  
Démarche laborieuse.  
Sur la table un magnétophone avec microphone et de nombreuses boîtes en carton contenant des bobines de bandes impressionnées  
La table et/ou ses environs immédiats baignés d'une lumière crue.  
Le reste de la scène dans l'obscurité.  
Krapp demeure un moment immobile, pousse un grand soupir, regarde sa montre, farfouille dans ses poches, en sort une enveloppe, la remet, farfouille de nouveau, sort un petit troussau de clefs, l'élève à hauteur des yeux, choisit une clef, se lève et va vers le devant de la table. Il se baisse, fait jouer la serrure du premier tiroir, regarde dedans, y promène la main, en sort une bobine, l'examine de tout près, la remet, referme le tiroir à clef, fait jouer la serrure du second tiroir, le tire, regarde dedans, y promène la main, en sort une grosse banane, l'examine de tout près, referme le tiroir à clef, remet les clefs dans sa poche. Il se retourne, s'avance jusqu'au bord de la scène, s'arrête, caresse la banane, l'épluche, laisse tomber la peau à ses pieds, met le bout de la banane dans sa bouche et demeure immobile, regardant dans le vide devant lui. Finalement il croque le bout de la banane, se détourne et se met à aller et venir au bord de la scène, c'est à dire à raison de quatre ou cinq pas au plus de chaque côté, tout en mastiquant méditativement la banane. Il marche sur la peau, glisse, manque de tomber, se rattrape, se penche, regarde la peau et finalement la rousse du pied, toujours penché, par-dessus le bord de la scène dans la fosse. Il renverse son va-et-vient, finit de manger la banane, retourne à la table, s'assied, demeure un moment immobile, pousse un grand soupir, sort les clefs de sa poche, les élève à hauteur des yeux, choisit une clef, se lève et va vers ~~vers~~ devant de la table, fait jouer la serrure du second tiroir, en sort une seconde grosse banane, l'examine de tout près, referme le

*ses /*

*l /*

*X*

*i /*

*le /*

## 1.2.2 French

### **FT1 (MS-HRC-SB-4-2-6)**

The Harry Ransom Center holds a typed version of *La Dernière Bande*, consisting of nine leaves. The top of the first page is inscribed in blue ink: 'Corrected typescript of / French translation of / Krapp's Last Tape' for / Jake Schwartz.' Carlton Lake describes it as a

Carbon copy of typed manuscript, signed, 9 pp., 4to. With a few corrections and additions in red and blue inks and in pencil  
(Lake 1984, 107)

The typescript does not feature the name of the translator (or translators), but the Suhrkamp archive at the deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach contains an early<sup>63</sup> photocopy of this typescript, which *does* have a title page with the name of Pierre Leyris as the sole translator: 'LA DERNIERE BANDE / (KRAPP'S LAST TAPE) / Un Acte / de / Samuel Beckett / traduit de l'anglais / par / Pierre Leyris'.<sup>64</sup> This photocopy was sent by the German translator Elmar Tophoven to Siegfried Unseld at Suhrkamp (22 December 1958), with an accompanying note, explaining that this French translation was authorized by Beckett.<sup>65</sup> The carbon copy's place in the genetic dossier is not straightforward. At first sight, it seems clear that it served as the

- 63 The photocopy in the Suhrkamp archive (SUA) features only the corrections that were made in red ballpoint on FT1, i.e. it features some but not all of the corrections on FT1:  
f. 1r: 'ses /' is not yet added in SUA; 'i /' (chosit > choisit) is not yet added in SUA;  
f. 2r: the cancelled pauses (2×) are not yet cancelled in SUA; 'le repos' is not yet substituted by 'la paix' in SUA; 'penché' not yet substituted by 'le buste incliné';  
f. 5r: 'que' in SUA is not yet substituted by 'ou';  
f. 7r: 'le tire' in SUA is not yet crossed out; 'Mais oui': in SUA 'Mais' is not yet crossed out; 'les mers': in SUA 'les' is not yet substituted by 'des'.
- 64 Suhrkamp archive (SUA) at the DLA (deutsches Literaturarchiv), Marbach (SUA: Suhrkamp/Verlagsleitung: Kasten 1, Mappe 'Beckett, Samuel: Dramatisches: All That Fall; Come and Go; La dernière bande; Embers; Film; He Joe').
- 65 Elmar Tophoven to Siegfried Unseld, 22 December 1958: 'Anbei eine Kopie der franz. Übersetzung, die Herr Beckett autorisierte.' (SUA: Suhrkamp/

basis for the pre-book publication in *Les Lettres Nouvelles*, for there are three marginal autograph additions (in red ballpoint pen) that have been incorporated in the text of *LLN*: on the first page of the carbon copy, Beckett added in the left margin: ‘Très myope (mais sans lunettes). Dur d’oreille’; and on the second page: ‘La boniche brune... (Il lève la tête, râvasse, se penche de nouveau sur l’appareil, lit.) le registre, lit.’. These additions also appear in *LLN*, as do the substitutions in blue-black ink, such as ‘Maman <sup>en paix</sup> enfin <sup>en repos</sup>’ (MS-HRC-SB-4-2-6, 2r) and ‘<sup>penché</sup> le buste incliné en avant’ (2r).

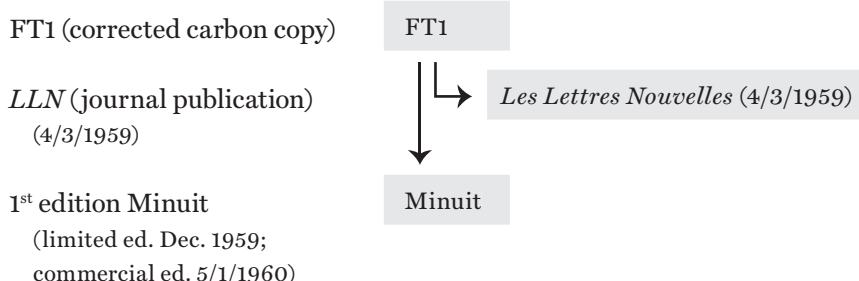
But as section 1.3.2 shows, there are also several variants between this annotated carbon copy and the text of *LLN*. Moreover, at these same instances of variation, the carbon copy does correspond with the text of the first Minuit edition. For instance, in the scene with the banana skin, the text of *LLN* reads:

**finalement, toujours penché, la pousse du pied dans la fosse**

In both the carbon copy and the Minuit edition, it reads:

**finalement la pousse du pied, toujours penché, par-dessus le bord de la scène dans la fosse (MS-HRC-SB-4-2-6, 1r)**

So, FT1 seems to have played a similar role as ET5 in the genesis of the English version. It served both as a basis for the magazine publication *LLN* and as a typescript from which the Minuit edition was set:



Verlagsleitung: Kasten 1, Mappe ‘Beckett, Samuel: Dramatisches: *All That Fall; Come and Go; La dernière bande; Embers; Film; He Joe*’)

## 1.3 Pre-Book Publications

### 1.3.1 English

#### *ER (Evergreen Review)*

*Krapp's Last Tape* first appeared in *Evergreen Review*, volume II, number 5 (Summer 1958), 13-24. The text was followed by a long 'NOTE', stating explicitly that 'All rights in Samuel Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* are reserved', with a 'Caution':

Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that this play, being fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States, the British Empire including the dominion of Canada, and all other countries of the Copyright Union, is subject to royalty. [...] Permission for any use of the play must be obtained in writing from the author's agent, Grove Press, Inc., 795 Broadway, New York 3, New York (*ER* 24).

Apart from *Krapp's Last Tape*, the issue also contains contributions by, amongst others, Roland Barthes ('Alain Robbe-Grillet', p. 113-26) and Antonin Artaud ('No More Masterpieces', p. 150-9).

Since ETC is the typescript in which the passage 'in the autumn,' (see section 1.4.2) was omitted and since this textual error occurs in all the early editions, this is probably a thermofax copy of the typescript version from which the *Evergreen Review* text and the Faber and Grove editions were set. But Beckett also used ET5 (MS UoR 1659) in this process. At first sight, this is remarkable, for ET5 is an earlier typescript than ETC (the text of the thermofax copy preserved at the Harry Ransom Center, MS HRC 4-2-5) and ETC' (the typed copy preserved at the Alan Schneider collection in San Diego). Several autograph corrections on ET5 have been incorporated in the typed text of ETC, as the first line illustrates:

A late evening in the nineteen-eighties <sup>future</sup>. (ET5, 1r)  
A late evening in the future. (ETC, 1r; ETC', 1r)

But ET5 also features autograph corrections in blue-black ink (see section 1.2.1). These are later than ETC and ETC', and they are what Beckett refers to as 'proof corrections' in the top margin of the opening page of ET5: 'with proof corrections' (also in blue-black ink). The most notable differences are the 'proof corrections' on pages 5r-7r of ET5 (all of which are also in the *Evergreen Review* text and in the Faber proofs, MS-HRC-SB-4-2-7), such as:

- Thanks to God that it is it's over. (4r)
- —false ring False ring there. (Pause.) (Pause.) False ring there (Pause.) (4r)
- Shadow<sup>s</sup> of the opus...magnum (4r)
- for a wire-haired fox-terrier little white dog (5r)
- A small, old, black, hard, solid rubber ball. (5r)
- We lay there without moving. (5r)
- This I imagine fancy is what I have chiefly to record (5r)
- encounters the banana, takes it out, peers at it, throws it away puts it back, fumbles (6r)
- Ah empty your bottle negin finish your booze now (7r)
- Finish Go on with this drivel in the morning. (7r)
- We lay there without moving. (7r)

It seems safe to conclude that neither ETC nor ETC', but ET5 was used for the subsequent revisions, which were then incorporated in the proofs for both the *Evergreen Review* and the Faber editions (see 1.4.1).

### 1.3.2 French

#### *LLN (Les Lettres Nouvelles)*

*La Dernière Bande* was first published in Maurice Nadeau's journal *Les Lettres Nouvelles*, Nouvelle Série, 7<sup>ème</sup> année, no. 1 (4 March 1959), 5-13.<sup>66</sup> The French title is followed by the English original in brackets: '(KRAPP'S LAST TAPE)' (LLN 5). On the last page (LLN 13), after the word 'RIDEAU', a parenthesis mentions that the text was translated by Pierre Leyris: '(Traduit

<sup>66</sup> The copy held at the Harry Ransom Center is inscribed: 'For Jake from Sam B. / Brighton 1961 / First printing of French translation / Krapp's Last Tape'

*de l'anglais par PIERRE LEYRIS*'. This is the only publication in which Leyris is mentioned as the sole translator. His name was gradually removed in subsequent editions (see survey in section 1.6.2).

There are quite a few variants between the HRC typescript (FT1) and the journal publication:

page	MS HRC SB 4-2-6 (FT1)	page	<i>Les Lettres Nouvelles (LLN)</i>
1r	regarde la peau et finalement <b>la pousse du pied, toujours penché, par-dessus le bord de la scène dans la fosse.</b>	6	regarde la peau et finalement, <b>toujours penché, la pousse du pied dans la fosse.</b>
1r	s'asseoit	6	s'assoit
2r	s'asseoit	6	s'assoit
2r	(avec vivacité). Ah !	6	(avec vivacité). – Ah !
2r	Il se penche sur la table et <b>se met à farfouiller</b>	6	Il se penche sur la table et <b>commence à farfouiller</b>
2r	Trente-neuf ans aujourd'hui	7	– Trente-neuf ans aujourd'hui
3r	En un sens. (Pause.)	7	En un sens (Pause.)
3r	<b>Miss McGlome</b>	7	<b>miss McGlome</b>
3r	<b>si un jour j'ai son âge</b>	8	<b>si jamais j'ai son âge</b>
3r	Pas grand'chose	8	Pas grand-chose
3r	Je les ai revus <b>dout à coup.</b>	8	Je les ai revus tout à coup.
4r	revient avec un énorme dictionnaire, s'asseoit	9	revient avec un énorme dictionnaire, s'assoit
5r	<b>là en train de jeter une balle</b>	9	en train de jeter une balle
5r	cette mémorable nuit de <b>Mars</b>	10	cette mémorable nuit de <b>mars</b>
6r	et d'un <b>côté</b> à l'autre.	10	et d'un <b>bord</b> à l'autre.
6r	et d'un <b>côté</b> à l'autre.	11	et d'un <b>bord</b> à l'autre.
6r	Finalement il farfouille	11	Finalement, il farfouille
7r	<b>Dieu merci.</b>	11	<b>grâce à Dieu.</b>
7r	<b>Pah !</b>	11	<b>Bah !</b>
7r	Dix-sept exemplaires <b>de vendus</b>	12	Dix-sept exemplaires vendus

(Lake 1984, 108). The place and date ('Brighton 1961') suggest that this item was among the last he entrusted to Schwartz (see Knowlson 1996, 482).



7r	Me suis crevé les yeux à lire <b>Effie</b> encore, une page par jour, avec des larmes encore.	12	Me suis crevé les yeux à lire <b>Effie</b> encore, une page par jour, avec des larmes encore...
7r	<b>Pah !</b>	12	<b>Bah !</b>
7r	Pas pu faire grand'chose	12	Pas pu faire grand-chose
7r	La dernière fois <b>ça</b> n'était pas si mal.	12	La dernière fois <b>ce</b> n'était pas si mal.
7r	Comment tu fais ton compte	12	Comment <b>que</b> tu fais ton compte
8r	Eté aux Vêpres une fois	12	Eté aux vêpres une fois,
8r	place l'autre sur l'appareil	12	place l'autre <b>bande</b> sur l'appareil
8r	d'un <b>côté</b> à l'autre.	13	d'un <b>bord</b> à l'autre.

The relative scarceness of extant manuscripts for the French part of the genesis makes it hard to come to definite conclusions, but it appears that, although FT1 did serve as the typescript from which *LLN* was set (see 1.2.2), quite a few textual changes were made at proof stage, either by Beckett or by the editorial team of *Les Lettres Nouvelles* – as happened with some other French magazine publications of Beckett's texts.<sup>67</sup> The Minuit edition followed the text of FT1 more closely (1.4.2).

<sup>67</sup> For instance, when the pre-book publication of a fragment of *L'Innommable* in the *Nouvelle Nouvelle Revue Française*, edited by Jean Paulhan, appeared in February 1953, a passage had been cut without Beckett's knowledge because the editorial committee thought that it was compromising (*LSB II* 358 n. 1).



## 1.4 Editions

### 1.4.1 English (UK)

#### *PPF (Faber and Faber proofs MS HRC SB 4-2-7)*

'Faber and Faber wish to publish Krapp's Last Tape and Embers in a volume,' Beckett wrote to Barney Rosset on 6 April 1959, telling him that he was 'pleased with the idea'.<sup>68</sup> While *Krapp's Last Tape* had appeared in number II.5 of the *Evergreen Review* in the Summer of 1958, *Embers* was published in November 1959 (issue III.10). In the meantime, Faber was preparing the page proofs. On 19 August 1959, Beckett told Barbara Bray: 'Proofs of Krapp & Embers arrived from Faber but haven't yet looked at them' (TCD 10948-1-042).<sup>69</sup> By the 27<sup>th</sup> he had corrected them, found them 'distressing' and 'made a few more changes' (*LSB III* 238). The Harry Ransom Center holds a set of corrected page proofs (loose sheets) for the publication *Krapp's Last Tape and Embers* (London: Faber and Faber, 1959). The title page shows Beckett's inscription: 'corrected proof / for / Jake Schwartz / from / Sam. Beckett / Paris Feb. 1960'. The 'proof corrections' in blue-black ink on ET5 (see above) were incorporated in the text of the corrected proof for Faber and Faber.

#### *Faber and Faber*

On 8 December 1959, Beckett told Barbara Bray that he 'Quite liked look and feel of Faber book', but that he had found 'From a quick look inside some mistakes in text' (*LSB III* 262). On 18 December, the first UK edition was commercially available (Pilling 2006, 148), presenting *Krapp's Last Tape* (pages 9-19), followed by *Embers* (21-39). The texts were preceded by the

68 Qtd. in Pim Verhulst, *The Making of Samuel Beckett's Radio Plays*, PhD Dissertation, University of Antwerp, December 2014, 79-80.

69 In a letter to Thomas MacGreevy (TCD 10402-222), dated 19 September 1959, Beckett also mentioned that the proofs of *Krapp's Last Tape and Embers* had arrived (see also Pilling 2006, 147). But since Beckett had already corrected them by 27 August (*LSB III* 238), it is probable that Beckett simply dated the letter to MacGreevy incorrectly, and that it should be 19 August 1959, the same day as when he wrote to Bray that he had received the proofs.

details about the first performances.<sup>70</sup> A later impression was issued in April 1965 (in Faber Paper Covered Editions), with shorter pages (18 cm instead of 20 cm; Federman and Fletcher 1970, 31).

In 1992, James Knowlson edited a ‘revised text’<sup>71</sup> in volume III of *The Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett: Krapp’s Last Tape* (London: Faber and Faber), based on the revisions Beckett made to his text during rehearsals of the performances he directed:

*Das letzte Band.* Schiller-Theater Werkstatt, Berlin, 5 October 1969. Directed by Samuel Beckett, with Martin Held as Krapp. In a double bill with Ionesco’s *Der neue Mieter*.

*La Dernière Bande.* Théâtre Récamier, Paris, 29 April 1970. Directed by Samuel Beckett, with Jean Martin as Krapp. In a double bill with *Acte sans paroles* directed and acted by Deryk Mendel.

[*Krapp’s Last Tape*. Royal Court Theatre, London, 16 January 1973. Directed by Anthony Page, with Albert Finney as Krapp. In a double bill with the world première of *Not I*, directed by Samuel Beckett.]

*La Dernière Bande.* Théâtre d’Orsay. Petite Salle, 8 April 1975. Directed by Samuel Beckett, with Pierre Chabert as Krapp.

- 70 ‘The first performance in Great Britain of *Krapp’s Last Tape* was given at the Royal Court Theatre, Sloan Square, London, on 28th October 1958. It was directed by Donald McWhinnie; and Krapp was played by Patrick Magee. *Embers*, a new play specially written for broadcasting, was first performed in the Third Programme on 24th June 1959. The cast was as follows: Henry: Jack MacGowran / Ada: Kathleen Michael / Addie: Kathleen Helme / The Music Master and The Riding Master: Patrick Magee / Pianist: Cicely Hoye / Produced by Donald McWhinnie.’ (*KLT* 1959, 7)
- 71 At the Beckett at Reading conference (7 April 2013, University of Reading), Barry McGovern pointed out a small omission in the text of the revised edition: ‘Be again on Croghan on a Sunday morning with the bitch’ (Beckett 1992, 9) should read: ‘Be again on Croghan on a Sunday morning, in the haze, with the bitch’.



*Krapp's Last Tape*. Akademie der Künste, Berlin, 28 September 1977. Directed by Samuel Beckett, with Rick Cluchey as Krapp.  
San Quentin Drama Workshop.

James Knowlson's revised edition is based on Beckett's production notes and copies with autograph annotations, described in section 1.6. The revised edition also includes the changes made to the German and the French texts (Beckett 1992, 279–82). As James Knowlson noted, 'These were at least all the changes that Beckett subsequently approved. He went over them in great detail'.<sup>72</sup>

#### **1.4.2 English (US)**

##### **PPG (Grove proofs, SCRC Syracuse)**

The Grove Press Records held at the SCRC do not include the page proofs for *Krapp's Last Tape* as published in *Evergreen Review*,<sup>73</sup> but they do include the 11-page proof for *Krapp's Last Tape* (without annotations) for inclusion in *Krapp's Last Tape and Other Dramatic Pieces (KLT 1960)*.<sup>74</sup>

There is also a second, nearly identical proof, but this appears to be for a later reprint of *Krapp's Last Tape and Other Dramatic Pieces*, because the copyright page identifies it as the 'Fifth printing' of this edition. The proofs are both clean copies, but the half title page of the later reprint has a handwritten notation in ink, 'Shipped 2/4'.

The differences between the first and the second proof concern the type of paper (the first proof is on thicker paper; the second proof's paper is thinner); the folding of the paper (the first proof is flat with two book pages per proof

<sup>72</sup> James Knowlson, email to Dirk Van Hulle, 15 April 2013.

<sup>73</sup> The Rosset/Grove archive of the Rare Book & Manuscript Library at Columbia University does not include proofs of the *Evergreen Review* version either (with many thanks to Adrien Hilton, Interim Head of Archives Processing, for examining the relevant folders; email correspondence 28 April 2015).

<sup>74</sup> Pim Verhulst and I owe a debt of gratitude to Nicole Dittrich for providing us with the information regarding the proofs in the 'Beckett, Samuel – Krapp's Last Tape – Productions Proofs 1960' folder in Box 95 of the Grove Press Records.

page; the second proof is folded and gathered together in book format); the running header (the first proof has a running header at the top of each book page; the second proof has no running header); and especially the peripheral pages (as Nicole Dittrich notes, the first proof includes a copyright page with some pieces cut out, and instead of title pages there is a printed note next to the copyright page which reads ‘Half-title not set by Lettick. Page 2 is blank. Title page not set by Lettick.’; the second proof includes the title page, half title page, copyright page, contents page, and title page specifically for *Krapp’s Last Tape*).

### **Grove Press**

After the journal publication in *Evergreen Review*, the text of *Krapp’s Last Tape* was reprinted (with only a few variants) in *Krapp’s Last Tape and Other Dramatic Pieces* (New York: Grove Press, 1960), 8–28 (in a volume together with *All That Fall*, *Embers*, *Act Without Words I*, and *Act Without Words II*), with only a few variants (as shown in the table *ER* vs *KLT1960*). The 1960 edition was released on 23 May.<sup>75</sup>

Page	<i>Evergreen Review (ER)</i>	Page	<i>Grove Press (KLT1960)</i>
14	...still stooping, with his foot over edge of stage into pit.	11	...still stooping, with his foot over the edge of stage into pit.
18	State – or condition – of being – or remaining – a widow – or widower.	18	State – or <b>condition of</b> being – or remaining – a widow – or widower.

The variants with the Faber edition are minor and relate to differences in (British or American) spelling or house style. Faber uses single quotation marks – as in ‘viduity’ (*KLT1959*, 14) – and usually refers to KRAPP in capitals; Grove Press works with double quotation marks and with punctuation marks preceding the closing quotation mark – as in “viduity.”

<sup>75</sup> I owe a debt of gratitude to Nicole Dittrich, who found a clipping (Box 95) that indicates the date the edition was released (email correspondence 24 April 2015).

(*KLT*1960, 18) – and refers to (lower-case) Krapp, both in roman and in italics (for the stage directions).

<b>Page</b>	<b>Faber and Faber (<i>KLT</i>1959)</b>	<b>Page</b>	<b>Grove Press (<i>KLT</i>1960)</b>
9	Front centre a small table, the two drawers of which open towards <b>the</b> audience.	9	Front centre a small table, the two drawers of which open towards audience.
10	...still stooping, with his foot over edge of stage into pit.	11	...still stooping, with his foot over <b>the</b> edge of stage into pit.
11	Farewell to – ( <i>he turns page</i> ) – love.	13	Farewell to – ( <i>he turns the page</i> ) – love.
11	(strong voice, rather pompous, clearly Krapp's at a much earlier time).	14	(strong voice, rather pompous, clearly Krapp's at a much earlier time.)
12	More than 20 <b>per cent</b> , say 40 <b>per cent</b> of his waking life.	16	More than 20%, say 40% of his waking life.
14	His lips move in the syllables of ‘viduity’.	18	His lips move in the syllables of “viduity.”
14	State – or <b>condition – of being</b> – or remaining – a widow – or widower.	18	State – or <b>condition of being</b> – or remaining – a widow – or widower.
14	‘Deep weeds of viduity’...	18	“Deep weeds of viduity”...
14	nursemaids, infants, old men, dogs, <b>I</b> got to know them quite well –	19	nursemaids, infants, old men, dogs, <b>I</b> got to know them quite well –
15	The vision <b>at last</b> .	20	The vision, <b>at last</b> .
16	I said again I thought it was hopeless and no good going <b>on</b> and she agreed, without opening her eyes.	22	I said again I thought it was hopeless and no good going <b>on</b> , and she agreed, without opening her eyes.
17	...peers at it, puts it back, fumbles, brings out envelope, fumbles, ...	23	...peers at it, puts it back, fumbles, brings out <b>the</b> envelope, fumbles, ...
19	I said again I thought it was hopeless and no good going <b>on</b> and she agreed, without opening her eyes.	27	I said again I thought it was hopeless and no good going <b>on</b> , and she agreed, without opening her eyes.



Grove Press also published *Krapp's Last Tape* (with the same ‘other dramatic pieces’) as part of ‘The Collected Works of Samuel Beckett’ in 1970, just after Beckett had received the Nobel Prize for Literature. This edition is almost identical to *KLT* 1960, but in a 1980 reprint<sup>76</sup> of *KLT* 1960 Grove there is one important variant:

Page	Collected Works ( <i>KLT</i> 1970)	Page	Grove Press ( <i>KLT</i> 1960, 1980 reprint)
18	... – a-dying, after her long viduity, and the –	18	... – a-dying, <b>in the late autumn,</b> after her long viduity, and the –

On 4 January 1960, Beckett wrote to Alan Schneider: ‘By the way for God’s sake make sure in your script that there are no omissions or variations in the repeated passages’ (*NABS* 59). That is indeed the problem with the omission of ‘**in the late autumn,**’ in *KLT* 1959 (the Faber edition), *ER* (the *Evergreen Review* version), *KLT* 1960 (the first Grove edition), *KLT* 1970 (Grove Collected Works), in the mimeographed acting copy (MS-HRC-SB-5-4), in the revised text of the trilingual Suhrkamp edition (*KLT* 1974 56) and in all the Faber editions, even *KLT* (the 2009 Faber edition): Krapp hears ‘a-dying, in the late autumn, after her long viduity’, winds back the tape, and hears ‘a-dying, after her long viduity’ (the | indicates the omission):

there is of course the house on the canal where mother lay  
a-dying, in the late autumn, after her long viduity [K R A P P gives  
a start], and the – [K R A P P switches off, winds back tape a little,  
bends his ear closer to machine, switches on] – a-dying, | after  
her long viduity (*KLT* 7)

<sup>76</sup> 76 Grove Press reprinted the work, making a silent correction without changing the date of the original edition (1960).

The discrepancy between *KLT* 1970 and the 1980 reprint of *KLT* 1960, can be explained thanks to a 3-page document in the Grove Press Records held at Syracuse, regarding corrections to be made to the 1980 reprint. The third page of this document is a copy of page 18 of *Krapp's Last Tape* with the text reading ‘a-dying, after her long viduity, and the—’ and a handwritten addition of ‘in the late autumn’ (not in Beckett’s handwriting). In the upper left corner, Beckett has written this note, dated ‘1-4-80’: ‘Dear Mr. Root, Yes, a mistake. -Best wishes, Sam Beckett.’<sup>77</sup> From that moment onwards, the omission is restored in the Grove editions, also in the *Collected Shorter Plays* (1984)<sup>78</sup> and in the Centenary Edition.

#### 1.4.3 French

##### *Éditions de Minuit*

The first edition in French was *La Dernière Bande suivi de Cendres*, translated from the English by Pierre Leyris and the author (Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit, 1959). A limited edition of 40 copies on ‘pur fil Marais’ and 7 copies ‘hors commerce’ were printed in December 1959.<sup>79</sup> The ‘achevé d'imprimer’ of the first commercial edition is actually 5 January 1960,<sup>80</sup> but since the limited edition was already printed in December 1959 and copyright was claimed before the year was over, all the later editions indicate ‘1959’ as the year of publication.

77 SCRC, ‘Beckett, Samuel – Krapp's Last Tape – Production, manufacturing’ folder in Box 94. With many thanks to Nicole Dittrich at the SCRC in Syracuse for calling our attention to this document.

78 This only applies to the Grove edition of the *Collected Shorter Plays*, not to its Faber edition.

79 The details are mentioned on the copyright page of the first edition: ‘Il a été tiré de cet ouvrage quarante exemplaires sur pur fil du Marais numérotés de 1 à 40 plus sept exemplaires hors-commerce numérotés de H-C I à H-C VI.’

80 ‘Cet ouvrage a été achevé d'imprimer le 5 janvier 1959 sur les presses de la première imprimerie ukrainienne en France, 3, rue du Sabot, à Paris et inscrit dans les registres de l'éditeur sous le numéro 403.’



The title page of the first commercial edition<sup>81</sup> indicates that *La Dernière Bande* is a translation by Pierre Leyris and Samuel Beckett, whereas Beckett is mentioned as the sole translator from the second edition onward<sup>82</sup>:

SAMUEL BECKETT

# La dernière bande

Traduit de l'anglais par Pierre Leyris et l'auteur

As the cover indicates, the play was followed by the French translation  
of *Embers*:

La dernière bande  
*suivi de*  
Cendres

On page 35, the title page of *Cendres* mentions that it is ‘Traduit de l’anglais par Robert Pinget et l’auteur’. But it does not mention that this was a radio play. An error slip was therefore inserted, mentioning:

Samuel Beckett  
LA DERNIERE BANDE

Par suite d’une erreur, on a omis d’indiquer  
que la seconde pièce de ce volume, CENDRES,  
est une pièce radiophonique.

81 The Harry Ransom Center holds a copy (12mo, original wrappers, uncut and unopened) that is inscribed by Beckett on the half-title: ‘for / Jake / from / Sam / Paris 1960’ (Lake 1984, 108).

82 See section 1.6.2 for a survey of this development.

Two months later, in the second impression of this first edition ('achevé d'imprimer' 13 March 1960), this error in the paratext had already been corrected.<sup>83</sup> Federman and Fletcher note that the 2 February 1965 reprint (3,000 copies) is identical to the second impression, 'except for back cover, catalogue list to *Oh les beaux jours*' (1970, 41). As indicated in section 1.2.2, the relationship between FT1, *LLN* and the Minuit edition is not a linear succession (FT1>*LLN*>Minuit); instead, *LLN* and Minuit both derive from FT1. There are fewer variants between FT1 and the first Minuit edition than between FT1 and *LLN*:

page	MS HRC SB 4-2-6 (FT1)	page	Editions de Minuit (LDB 1959)
1r	Chemise blanche crasseuse déboutonnée	7	Chemise blanche crasseuse, déboutonnée
2r	(avec vivacité). Ah !	11	(avec vivacité). – Ah !
2r	Il se penche sur la table et <b>se met à</b> farfouiller	11	Il se penche sur la table et <b>commence à</b> farfouiller
2r	Trente-neuf ans aujourd'hui	13	– Trente-neuf ans aujourd'hui
3r	si <b>un jour</b> j'ai son âge	16	si <b>jamaïs</b> j'ai son âge
3r	Je les ai revus dout à coup.	16	Je les ai revus tout à coup.
4r	Et ces résolutions !	17	Et ces résolutions.
5r	L'oiseau-veuve	20	Loiseau veuve
5r	ça s'est trouvé comme ça	21	ça c'est trouvé comme ça
5r	cette mémorable nuit de Mars	22	cette mémorable nuit de mars
5r	en prévision du jour où mon labeur sera... (il hésite) ...consumé	23	en prévision du jour où mon labeur sera... (il hésite) ...éteint
8r	place l'autre sur l'appareil	31	place l'autre <b>bande</b> sur l'appareil

The variant 'ça c'est trouvé comme ça' (LDB 1959, 21) was corrected in later Minuit editions to 'ça s'est trouvé comme ça'. One variant between FT1 and the Minuit text is remarkable: '**consumé**' (in FT1) becomes '**éteint**' (in Minuit). Both verbs suggest that the work should be linked to fire (when the work will be done, when the fire will be consumed/extinguished), but

83 According to Federman and Fletcher, the first printing (5 January) consisted of 2,302 copies; the second impression (13 March) consisted of 2,121 copies.



‘éteint’ – with its affix ‘é-’ (from Lat. ‘ex’) – is arguably more negative. This tendency toward increased negativity in the translation is also noticeable in other works, notably in *L’Innommable / The Unnamable* (see Van Hulle and Weller 2014, 195) which Beckett translated just before he started working on *Krapp’s Last Tape*.

#### ***Minuit ‘Collection du Répertoire’ (N° 42)***

One week after the second impression, Les Éditions de Minuit and Théâtre national populaire published *La Dernière Bande* preceded by Robert Pinget’s *Lettre Morte*, illustrated with photographs of the two productions by Agnès Varda, as part of a series called ‘Collection du Répertoire’ with plays produced by Jean Vilar for the Théâtre National Populaire (‘achevé d’imprimer le 21 mars 1960 sur les Presses de l’Imprimerie LABOUREUR et Cie, à Paris. Dépôt légal Imprim. N° 7071. 1<sup>er</sup> trimestre 1960’). The University of Reading holds an offprint (inscribed by Beckett) of the text as published by Éditions de Minuit (Paris, 1960), 4 sheets, 27 × 21 cm, relating to the production by the Théâtre National Populaire at the Théâtre Récamier in Paris, 22 March 1960, directed by Roger Blin with R.-J. Chauffard in the role of Krapp (UoR MS 3633) (Bryden, Garforth and Mills 1998, 60). The credit line indicates that Beckett translated the text himself and does not mention Pierre Leyris: ‘Traduit de l’anglais par l’auteur’.

#### ***L’Avant-scène / Fémina Théâtre***

On 15 June 1960, the same combination of *Lettre morte* and *La Dernière Bande* was published in *L’Avant-scène / Fémina Théâtre* 222: 25–8. Again, Beckett is credited as the sole translator of his own text (see also Federman and Fletcher 1970, 41).

#### **1.4.4 Trilingual**

In 1964, Suhrkamp Verlag published the trilingual edition *Dramatische Dichtungen in drei Sprachen II*. This second volume contains the texts of *Krapp's Last Tape*, *La Dernière Bande* and *Das letzte Band*. The English and German versions (translated by Elmar and Erika Tophoven) were printed in parallel (pp. 82–109); the French version is printed at the back of the volume (pp. 329–43). The first volume came out in 1963. Beckett was grateful to Suhrkamp for the care they took to present his work in three languages, but he did draw the publisher's attention to the mistake they made in the first edition of the *Dramatische Dichtungen in drei Sprachen I* by reprinting the expurgated English version of *Waiting for Godot*.<sup>84</sup>

The correspondence in the Suhrkamp files at the Deutsches Literaturarchiv in Marbach shows how seriously they took Beckett's reprimand. The irony was that, even before the first volume of the *Dramatische Dichtungen* went into production, Suhrkamp's chief executive officer Siegfried Unseld had made it explicit that he wanted his texts to be absolutely flawless. As he wrote to Jérôme Lindon on 22 October 1962, asking for the most up-to-date versions of the French: 'Il m'est très important de publier des textes tout à fait irréprochables.'<sup>85</sup> When Beckett received a copy of the first volume on 1 November 1963, he already noticed a mistake on the cover relating to *Crapp's[sic] Last Tape*.<sup>86</sup> Ten days later, when he discovered the 'major error' regarding the text of *Waiting for Godot*, he explicitly suggested that

84 'There is one major error which I am very sorry to have to point out to you. For the English text of *Godot* you have followed the Faber edition. But this version is the one authorised by the Lord Chamberlain, and contains a good many changes and cuts, so many indeed as to be at moments barely intelligible. An edition of this sort has no raison d'être outside England' (*LSB III* 581). When Suhrkamp published its trilingual paperback edition in 1971, it did use the unexpurgated version, but the 1981 hardback trilingual Suhrkamp edition in one volume again reprinted the censored version and all the mistakes of the 1963 edition (Beckett, 1981, 412).

85 Correspondence Siegfried Unseld – Jérôme Lindon (DLA, SUA: Briefwechsel Les Editions de Minuit).

86 'J'ai bien reçu l'exemplaire du premier volume de mon théâtre. C'est d'une présentation admirable et j'en suis très fier. Je lirai soigneusement les textes anglais et français et vous communiquerai toute erreur éventuelle. J'en relève déjà une – bien mince – sur la couverture, à savoir Crapp au lieu de Krapp' (DLA, SUA: Briefwechsel Suhrkamp – Samuel Beckett, 1963–64)

it would be in everyone's interest if he could correct the proofs of the second volume, containing the plays originally written in English (including *Krapp's Last Tape*). And, on 19 March 1964, he even wrote that Suhrkamp could not start the typesetting of the second volume until he had 'gone through all original texts and French texts, correcting them if necessary', adding that he would be very grateful if they 'would let [him] have proofs of all at a later stage' – which Unseld immediately granted.<sup>87</sup> Being in Ussy, Beckett promised Unseld that, as soon as he was back in Paris, he would go through the texts with the help of Con Leventhal.<sup>88</sup> On 24 April 1964, Beckett sent the corrected English and French texts of *Krapp's Last Tape* to Unseld<sup>89</sup>: on pages torn from a 'First Evergreen Edition 1960, Second printing' he made a few corrections in black ballpoint, such as the change from '**cardboard**' boxes' to '**tin** boxes' (page 10) and the replacement of '**All over and done with**, at last' by '**Out**, at last' (page 20). The substantive change from 'better than a kick in the crutch' to 'better **between finger and thumb**' (sic; 'than' omitted) does not feature yet on the copy Beckett prepared for the typesetter (the change does feature in the French 'Druckvorlage'; see below). For the English version, Beckett most probably marked the change on the English galley proofs, which have not been preserved.

- 87 Siegfried Unseld to Samuel Beckett, 6 April 1964: 'In jedem Falle aber erhalten Sie diesmal Fahnen und Umbruchbogen, damit Sie den Herstellungsgang selbst überwachen können.' (DLA, SUA: Briefwechsel Suhrkamp – Samuel Beckett, 1963–64)
- 88 Beckett to Unseld, 10 April 1964: 'Dès mon retour de Londres, avant-hier, j'ai filé ici pour souffler un peu. Je rentre à Paris mardi prochain et me mettrai aussitôt, avec l'aide de mon ami Leventhal, à contrôler les textes anglais et français pour votre deuxième volume. Nous ferons ce travail par ordre chronologique et vous ferons parvenir les textes séparément, au fur et à mesure de leur révision. J'espère que le dernier, c'est-à-dire PLAY, vous parviendra d'ici un mois au plus tard.' (SUA : Briefwechsel Suhrkamp – Samuel Beckett, 1963–64)
- 89 'le 24 avril 1964 Paris / Cher Dr Unseld / J'espère que vous avez bien reçu les textes corrigés anglais et français de ALL THAT FALL, KRAPP, EMBERS et HAPPY DAYS.' (DLA, SUA: Briefwechsel Suhrkamp – Samuel Beckett, 1963–64)



Page	<i>KLT1960 (Grove)</i>	Page	<i>KLT1964 (Suhrkamp)</i>
10	<i>a number of cardboard boxes containing reels</i>	84	<i>a number of tin boxes containing reels</i>
18	State—or condition of being—or remaining—a widow	96	State – or condition – of being – or remaining – a widow
20	All over and done with, at last.	98	Out, at last.
23	<i>chooses key. unlocks first drawer</i>	102	<i>chooses key, unlocks first drawer</i>
25	reading <i>Effie</i> again	104	reading <i>Effi</i> again
25	with tears again. <i>Effie...</i>	104	with tears again. <i>Effi...</i>
25	Couldn't do much, but I suppose better than a kick in the crutch.	106	Couldn't do much, but I suppose better <b>between finger and thumb</b> .
28	CURTAIN	-	-

In 1974, Suhrkamp published a paperback edition of *Das letzte Band / Krapp's Last Tape / La Dernière Bande*, illustrated with black-and-white performance photographs (*KLT 1974*). The English text in this edition is a revised version, based on a copy of the 1970 Faber and Faber edition, which Beckett annotated for the 1973 Royal Court production (UoR MS 1227/7/10/1; Bryden, Garforth and Mills 1998, 61). The first correction in this annotated copy (referred to in *TN3* as *Faber a.c.*) is the deletion of the 'Purple nose' in the opening stage directions: 'White face. **Purple nose.** Disordered grey hair.' In *KLT 1974*, the purple nose is omitted. Similarly, the entire sentence describing what is on the table ('*On the table a tape-recorder with microphone and a number of cardboard boxes containing reels of recorded tapes*') is omitted and in its stead only the word '**bare**' is added in '*Table bare and immediately adjacent area in strong white light.*'

In the Faber edition, the stage direction before the first taped passage reads: '*He raises his head, broods, bends over machine, switches on and assumes listening posture, i.e. leaning forward, elbows on table, hand cupping ear towards machine, face front.*' In *Faber a.c.* (page 11), Beckett has written in the left margin: '**Action interrupted by Hain 1**' – 'Hain' referring to the image of death as the scythe-man, to whom Matthias Claudius had dedicated his entire oeuvre. Beckett's copy of Claudius's works opens with an illustration of 'Freund Hain' (Fig. 6; Van Hulle and Nixon 2013, 10).

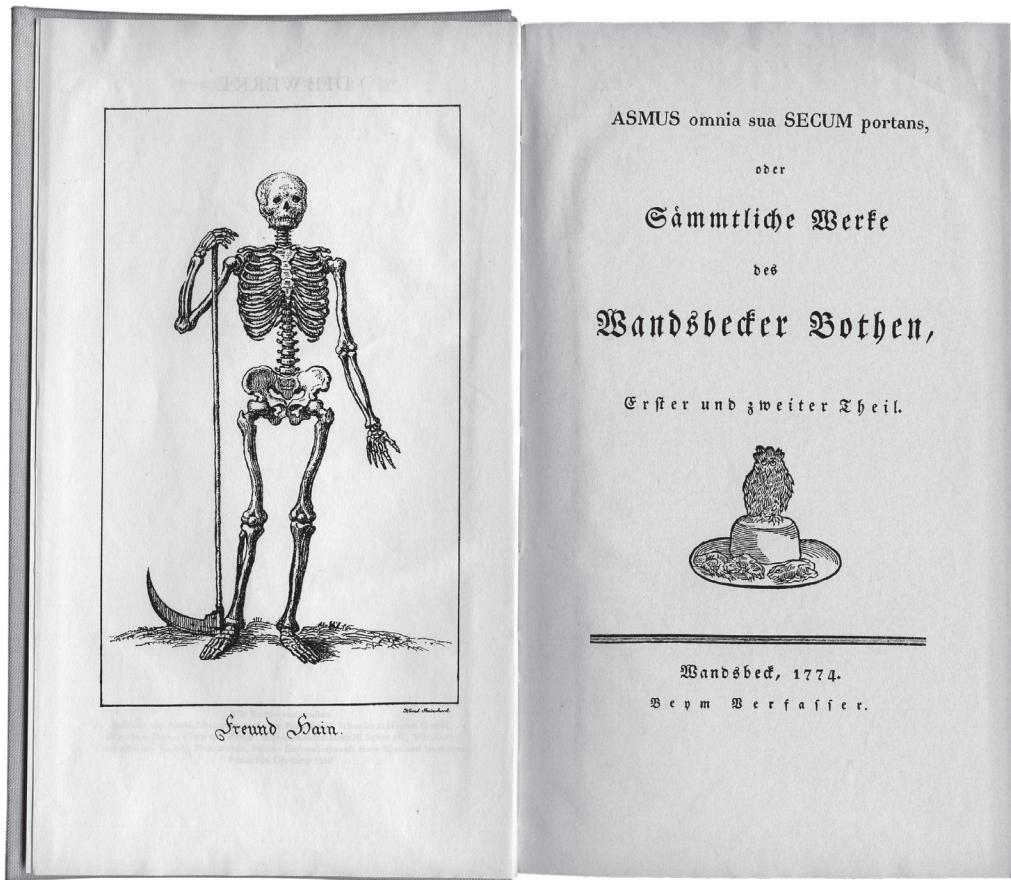


Fig. 6: Illustration of 'Freund Hain' in Matthias Claudius' *Sämmtliche Werke*

In *KLT 1974*, this interruption is integrated in the stage direction:

*He raises his head, broods, bends over machine, makes to switch on, arrests gesture, twins [sic] slowly to look over his shoulder into darkness backstage left, long look, then slowly back front, switches on and assumes listening posture, i.e. leaning forward, elbows on table, hand cupping ear towards machine, face front. (KLT 1974, 53)*

As the following table shows, the word ‘twins’ (for ‘turns’) is not the only textual error in this edition, whose variants<sup>90</sup> vis-à-vis the the Faber and Faber text concentrate on the stage directions:

Page	<i>KLT 1959 (Faber and Faber)</i>	Page	<i>KLT 1974 (Suhrkamp)</i>
9	<i>Front centre a small table, the two drawers of which open towards the audience.</i>	51	<i>Front left of centre a small table, one lateral drawer to Krapp's left.</i>
-	-	51	<i>Backstage right, invisible, curtained entrance to small closet.</i>
9	<i>Sitting at the table, facing front, i.e. across from the drawers, a wearish old man: KRAPP</i>	51	<i>Sitting at the table, facing front, a wearish old man: Krapp</i>
9	<i>White face. Purple nose. Disordered grey hair. Unshaven.</i>	51	<i>White face. Disordered grey hair. Unshaven.</i>
9	<i>On the table a tape-recorder with microphone and a number of cardboard boxes containing reels of recorded tapes.</i>	-	-
9	<i>Table and immediately adjacent area in strong white light.</i>	51	<i>Table bare and immediately adjacent area in strong white light.</i>

90 The table does not show variants in house style, such as Faber and Faber's way of using four instead of three dots if an ellipsis is followed by a new sentence or by stage directions. Throughout the text, the stage directions in the Suhrkamp edition are not between brackets, only in italics and followed by a colon.



9	KRAPP remains a moment motionless, <i>heaves a great sigh, looks at his watch, fumbles in his pockets, takes out an envelope, puts it back, fumbles, takes out a small bunch of keys, raises it to his eyes, chooses a key, gets up and moves to front of table.</i>	51	Krapp remains a moment motionless, <i>staring before him, shudders, looks at his watch, gets up and moves left to side of table.</i>
9	He stoops, <i>unlocks first drawer, peers into it, feels about inside it, takes out a reel of tape, peers at it, puts it back, locks drawer, unlocks second drawer, peers into it, feels about inside it, takes out a large banana, peers at it, locks drawer, puts keys back in his pocket. He turns, advances to edge of stage, halts, strokes banana, peels it, drops skin at his feet, puts end of banana in his mouth and remains motionless, staring vacuously before him.</i>	51	He stoops, <i>opens drawer, feels about inside it, takes out a large banana, advances to edge of stage, halts, strokes banana, peels it, drops skin at his feet, puts end of banana in his mouth and remains motionless, staring vacuously before him.</i>
10	He treads on skin, slips, nearly falls, recovers himself, stoops and peers at skin and finally pushes it, still stooping, with his foot over edge of stage into pit.	52	He treads on skin, slips, nearly falls, recovers himself, stoops and peers at skin and finally picks it up and tosses it away backstage left.
10	He resumes his pacing, finishes banana, returns to table, sits down, remains a moment motionless, heaves a great sigh, takes keys from his pockets, raises them to his eyes, chooses key, gets up and moves to front of table, unlocks second drawer, takes out a second large banana, peers at it, locks drawer, puts back keys in his pocket, turns, advances to edge of stage, halts, strokes banana, peels it, tosses skin into pit, puts end of banana in his mouth and remains motionless, staring vacuously before him.	52	He resumes his pacing, finishes banana, <i>broods, returns to drawer, takes out second banana, advances to edge of stage, halts, strokes banana, peels it, makes to drop skin, tosses it after first, puts end of banana in his mouth and remains motionless, staring vacuously before him.</i>

10	<i>Finally he has an idea, puts banana in his waistcoat pocket, the end emerging, and goes with all the speed he can muster backstage into darkness. Ten seconds. Loud pop of cork. Fifteen seconds. He comes back into light carrying an old ledger and sits down at table. He lays ledger on table, wipes his mouth, wipes his hands on the front of his waistcoat, brings them smartly together and rubs them.</i>	52	<i>Finally he has an idea, tosses banana backstage left, goes with all the speed he can muster backstage right into darkness, draws half open curtain of dimly lit closet, disappears inside, reappears with ledger, lays it on table, returns to closet, reappears with tins containing reels of recorded tapes, lays them on table, returns to closet, reappears with tape-recorder, lays it on table, connects it with lead from wing lying loose on floor front left of table, sits, wipes his mouth, wipes his hands on front of waistcoat, brings them smartly together and rubs them.</i>
10	ah! the little scoundrel!	53	ah! The little scoundrel!
10	With relish.) <b>Spooooool!</b>	53	With relish: <b>Spool!</b>
11	<i>He raises his head, broods, bends over machine, switches on and assumes listening posture, i.e. leaning forward, elbows on table, hand cupping ear towards machine, face front.</i>	53	<i>He raises his head, broods, bends over machine, makes to switch on, arrests gesture, twins slowly to look over his shoulder into darkness backstage left, long look, then slowly back front, switches on and assumes listening posture, i.e. leaning forward, elbows on table, hand cupping ear towards machine, face front.</i>
11	Thirty-nine today, sound as a bell, apart from my old weakness, and intellectually I have now every reason to suspect at the...	54	Thirty-nine today, sound as a bell, apart from my old weakness, and intellectually [sic] I have now every reason to suspect at the...
12	Shall I sing when I am her age, if I ever am? <b>No.</b> (Pause.) Did I sing as a boy? <b>No.</b> (Pause.) Did I ever sing? <b>No.</b>	55	Shall I sing when I am her age, if I ever am? <b>Pause. No. Pause.</b> Did I sing as a boy? <b>Pause. No. Pause.</b> Did I ever sing? <b>Pause. No.</b>
12	-a help before embarking on a new ...	55	-a help before embarking on an [sic] new ...

13	<i>KRAPP switches off, broods, looks at his watch, gets up, goes backstage into darkness. Ten seconds. Pop of cork. Ten seconds. Second cork. Ten seconds. Third cork. Ten seconds.</i> <i>Brief burst of quavering song.</i>	56	<i>Krapp switches off, broods, looks at his watch, gets up, goes backstage into closet. Sound of pouring and drinking. Brief burst of quavering song.</i>
13	<i>He gets up, goes backstage into darkness, comes back with an enormous dictionary.</i>	56	<i>He gets up, goes backstage into closet, comes back with an enormous dictionary.</i>
14	-not having been introduced-	57	-not having been in-troduced-
14	throwing a ball for a little white dog as chance would have it.	57	throwing a ball for al [sic] little white dog as chance would have it.
16	<i>KRAPP switches off, broods. Finally he fumbles in his pockets, encounters the banana, takes it out, peers at it, puts it back, fumbles, brings out envelope, fumbles, puts back envelope, looks at his watch, gets up and goes backstage into darkness. Ten seconds. Sound of bottle against glass, then brief siphon. Ten seconds. Bottle against glass alone. Ten seconds. He comes back a little unsteadily into light, goes to front of table, takes out keys, raises them to his eyes, chooses key, unlocks first drawer, peers into it, feels about inside, takes out reel, peers at it, locks drawer, puts keys back in his pocket, goes and sits down, takes reel off machine, lays it on dictionary, loads virgin reel on machine, takes envelope from his pocket, consults back of it, lays it on table, switches on, clears his throat and begins to record.</i>	60	<i>Krapp switches off, broods, shudders, looks at his watch, gets up and goes backstage into closet. Sound of pouring and drinking. He comes back a little unsteadily with microphone, lays it on table, takes reels from tape-recorder, lays them on dictionary, takes virgin reels from drawer, loads them on tape-recorder, plugs in microphone, sits, takes envelope from pocket, consults it, lays it on dictionary, adjusts microphone, concentrates, switches on, records.</i>
16	-	60	The voice! Jesus!
17	<i>Crumbles it and throws it away.</i>	60	<i>Crumbles is [sic] and throws it away.</i>

18	<i>Long pause. He suddenly bends over machine, switches off, wrenches off tape, throws it away, puts on the other, winds it forward to the passage he wants, switches on, listens staring front.</i>	62	<i>Long pause. He suddenly bends over machine, switches off, wrenches off reels, throws them away, puts back the others, winds back to the passage he wants, makes to switch on, arrests gesture for look backstage left as before, back front, switches on, listens staring front.</i>
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One of the smaller additions in the revised stage directions is the word ‘broods’ (*KLT* 1974, 52): ‘He resumes his pacing, finished banana, **broods**, returns to drawer’. Daniel Katz has drawn attention to the frequency of this stage direction, counting 10 instances where Krapp ‘broods’ (155). And still, Beckett thought this was not enough, adding another instance to the Suhrkamp edition, which corroborates Katz’s suggestion that this might be an intertextual reference to W. B. Yeats’s poem ‘Who Goes With Fergus’, and indirectly to James Joyce. For throughout *Ulysses*, the poem haunts Stephen Dedalus, who twice quotes the line ‘And no more turn aside and brood’ (9, 41), when he is reminded of his mother’s death. Here, the ‘brooding’ and the ‘Hain’ converge. As Katz points out, it is Stephen’s mother who completes the verse in the ‘Circe’ episode: ‘And no more turn aside and brood / Upon love’s bitter mystery’ (474; qtd. in Katz 2006, 155). This second line is equally applicable to Krapp’s constant return to the ‘farewell to love’ scene, suggesting indeed that *Krapp’s Last Tape* is a portrait of the artist as an old man with all its Joycean connotations, including the translation of Stephen’s diary to the stage, or in H. Porter Abbott’s terms, the translation of ‘diary fiction’ into the genre of the ‘dramatic diary’ (see Introduction). But of course, unlike Stephen Dedalus in *A Portrait*, Krapp later ‘re-reads’ his diary, which adds an entirely new dimension to Beckett’s play and turns it into a parody of the artist as a pompous man whom Beckett himself might have become, had he not been able to escape from Joyce’s shadow and find his own voice.

As the last variant in the list above shows, it was not until 1974 that Suhrkamp corrected a mistake that had gone unnoticed for several years: instead of winding the tape ‘forward’, Krapp winds it ‘back’ to the passage he wants (also adapted in the French version of the 1974 Suhrkamp edition, where ‘avancer’ becomes ‘reculer’, p. 81). Originally, in the manuscript versions and the first two typescripts, Beckett had simply written that Krapp



'winds it to the passage he wants'. The mistake entered the text in the third typescript, ET3, where Beckett added 'forward'. This remained unchanged until the passage was adapted for the Royal Court performance of 1972. In the mimeographed acting version (MS-HRC-SB-5-4) the passage reads 'winds it back to the passage he wants' (p. 21). The 1972 production was the basis for the revised text published by Suhrkamp in 1974. In the more recent editions by Grove Press and Faber and Faber, however, the text still reads 'winds it forward'.

The trilingual editions by Suhrkamp were also an opportunity to make changes to the French text. Alerted by Suhrkamp's mistake of taking the expurgated version of *Waiting for Godot* as the base text in the 1963 publication of *Dramatische Dichtungen* vol. I (10 November 1963; *LSB III* 581), Beckett was closely involved in the production of the second volume, which came out in 1964.

About a dozen changes were made to the French text in this edition. In a set of pages torn from a 1959 Minuit edition that served as the typesetter's copy for the Suhrkamp trilingual edition,<sup>91</sup> Beckett made autograph changes in black ballpoint. Some of these changes are substantial. For instance, the black-white opposition is made more explicit by means of two notable changes: 'carton' becomes '*fer blanc*' and 'vieux point faible' becomes 'vieux point noir', as the following table<sup>92</sup> shows:

Page	<i>LDB 1959</i> (Editions de Minuit)	Page	<i>LDB 1964</i> (Suhrkamp)
8	<i>nombreuses boîtes en carton contenant des bobines</i>	331	<i>nombreuses boîtes en fer blanc contenant des bobines</i>
14	à part mon vieux point faible	334	à part mon vieux point noir
14	Viens de manger	334	Viens d'avaler
16	Bien sorti de ça, ah foutre oui !	335	Bien sorti de là, ah foutre oui!

91 Part of the Suhrkamp archive (SUA), kept at the DLA (deutsches Literaturarchiv), Marbach (SUA Suhrkamp°Peter-Suhrkamp-Archiv/ Verlagsleitung: Kasten 2 ('Dramatische Dichtungen' Bd 2): Folder: 'Beckett, Samuel: "Dramatische Dichtungen" (Band II)').

92 I owe a debt of gratitude to Pim Verhulst for his help with the textual collation of these editions.

17	<b>Et ces résolutions.</b>	335	<b>Et ces résolutions!</b>
17	Mille sept cents heures sur les huit mille et <b>quelques</b> précédentes	335	Mille sept cents heures sur les huit mille et <b>quelque</b> précédentes
21	ça <b>c'est</b> trouvé comme ça	338	ça <b>s'est</b> trouvé comme ça
21	<b>Une affaire finie</b> , enfin.	338	<b>Embarquée</b> , enfin.
28	<b>Bobiine !</b>	341	<b>Bobiine!</b>
28	<b>d'au-delà</b> les mers.	341	<b>d'au delà</b> les mers.
29	à lire <b>Effie</b> encore,	341	à lire <b>Effi</b> encore,
29	avec des larmes encore. <b>Effie...</b>	341	avec des larmes encore. <b>Effi...</b>
29	Pas pu faire grand'chose, mais <b>sans doute mieux</b> <b>qu'un coup de pied dans l'entre-jambes.</b>	341	Pas pu faire grand'chose, mais <b>quand même, un peu mieux qu'entre pouce et index.</b>
33	Rideau	-	-

When Krapp remembers the moment of his mother's death, he calls it '**Une affaire finie**, enfin' in the French Minuit version. Beckett changed this to '**Embarquée**, enfin', with the suggestion that she embarked on Charon's boat to be taken across the river Styx to the world of the dead. Moreover, it establishes a link with the 'farewell to love' scene in the punt. Apart from the black-white opposition, Beckett thus also reinforces the tension between Eros and Thanatos.

Some of the more subtle changes in the above table were only made at the stage of the galley proofs,<sup>93</sup> which Beckett corrected carefully. Thus, the '**bobiine**' became '**bobiine**' with three iii and '**Effie**' was corrected to '**Effi**' – bearing in mind a German audience that would have been more familiar with Fontane's *Effi Briest* than francophone or anglophone audiences. The omission of 'Rideau' at the end was a general decision by Suhrkamp (possibly in consultation with the author): the word is crossed out in pencil on the typesetter's copies of all the works included in *Dramatische Dichtungen II*.<sup>94</sup>

93 SUA: Suhrkamp°Peter-Suhrkamp-Archiv/Verlagsleitung: Kasten 2 ('Dramatische Dichtungen' Bd 2), Mappe: 'Beckett, Samuel: "Dramatische Dichtungen" (Band II)'.

94 The deletions in pencil are probably not Beckett's, as the typesetter's copy of *Cendres* shows: Beckett realized the inappropriateness of 'RIDEAU' (Curtain) at the end of a radio play and changed it to 'FIN' with a black ballpoint in the left margin; 'FIN' was then crossed out in grey pencil in a way that deviates from Beckett's method of correcting. Throughout the correction of the typesetter's copies and the galley proofs of *Dramatische Dichtungen II*,

After Beckett directed his play<sup>95</sup> in 1969 and 1970 at respectively the Schiller-Theater Werkstatt and the Théâtre Récamier,<sup>96</sup> the changes he made during rehearsals were also incorporated in the French text of the 1974, illustrated trilingual paperback edition of *Das letzte Band / Krapp's Last Tape / La Dernière Bande*. However, he largely ignored the changes he had already made to *KLT* 1964 and *LDB* 1964 (such as 'point noir', 'entre pouce et index', 'Effi', 'Embarquée'), as he did not use these earlier revised Suhrkamp editions as base text:

Page	<i>LDB 1964 (Suhrkamp)</i>	Page	<i>LDB 1974 (Suhrkamp)</i>
331	<i>A l'avant-scène, au centre, une petite table dont les deux tiroirs s'ouvrent du côté de la salle.</i>	69	<i>A l'avant-scène, décentrée à gauche (cour), une petite table à un seul tiroir latéral à gauche.</i>
-	-	69	<i>Au fond à droite, invisible, un réduit fermé par un rideau.</i>
331	<i>Assis à la table, face à la salle, c'est-à-dire du côté opposé aux tiroirs, un vieil homme avachi: Krapp.</i>	69	<i>Assis à la table, face à la salle, un vieil homme avachi: Krapp.</i>
331	<i>Visage blanc. Nez violacé. Cheveux gris en désordre. Mal rasé.</i>	69	<i>Visage blanc. Cheveux gris en désordre. Mal rasé.</i>
331	<i>Sur la table un magnétophone avec microphone et de nombreuses boîtes en fer blanc contenant des bobines de bandes impressionnées.</i>	69	<i>Rien sur la table.</i>
331	<i>Krapp demeure un moment immobile, pousse un grand soupir, regarde sa montre, farfouille dans ses poches, en sort une enveloppe, la remet, farfouille de nouveau, sort un petit rousseau de clefs, l'élève à hauteur des yeux, choisit une clef, se lève et va vers le devant de la table.</i>	69	<i>Krapp demeure un moment immobile, regardant dans le vide devant lui, frissonne, regarde sa montre, se lève et va au tiroir.</i>

Beckett always marks a deletion with an insertion sign (/) and adds a deleleur (with the corresponding insertion sign) in the margin. In the case of the pencil deletions of the 'Curtain' at the end of his plays, the cancellations are not marked with an insertion mark.

- 95 After the publication of the 1974 Suhrkamp edition, he also directed the performance with Pierre Chabert at the Théâtre d'Orsay in 1975.  
 96 James Knowlson lists the changes Beckett made to the texts for these productions (*TN3* 279–82).



332	<i>Il se baisse, fait jouer la serrure du premier tiroir, regarde dedans, y promène la main, en sort une bobine, l'examine de tout près, la remet, referme le tiroir à clef, fait jouer la serrure du second tiroir, regarde dedans, y promène la main, en sort une grosse banane, l'examine de tout près, referme le tiroir à clef, remet les clefs dans sa poche. Il se retourne, s'avance jusqu'au bord de la scène, s'arrête, caresse la banane, l'épluche, laisse tomber la peau à ses pieds, met le bout de la banane dans sa bouche et demeure immobile, regardant dans le vide devant lui.</i>	69	<i>Il se baisse, ouvre le tiroir, y promène la main, en sort une grosse banane, s'avance jusqu'au bord de la scène, s'arrête, caresse la banane, l'épluche, laisse tomber la peau à ses pieds, met le bout de la banane dans sa bouche et demeure immobile, regardant dans le vide devant lui.</i>
332	<i>Il marche sur la peau, glisse, manque de tomber, se rattrape, se penche, regarde la peau et finalement la pousse du pied, toujours penché, par-dessus le bord de la scène dans la fosse.</i>	70	<i>Il marche sur la peau, glisse, manque de tomber, se rattrape, se penche, regarde la peau, la ramasse et la flanque au fond de la scène à gauche.</i>
332	<i>Il reprend son va-et-vient, finit de manger la banane, retourne à la table, s'asseoit, demeure un moment immobile, pousse un grand soupir, sort les clefs de sa poche, les élève à hauteur des yeux, choisit une clef, se lève et va vers le devant de la table, fait jouer la serrure du second tiroir, en sort une seconde grosse banane, l'examine de tout près, referme le tiroir à clef, remet les clefs dans sa poche, se retourne, s'avance jusqu'au bord de la scène, s'arrête, caresse la banane, l'épluche, flanque la peau dans la fosse, met le bout de la banane dans sa bouche et demeure immobile, regardant dans le vide devant lui.</i>	70	<i>Il reprend son va-et-vient, finit de manger la banane, révasse, retourne au tiroir, en sort une seconde grosse banane, s'avance jusqu'au bord de la scène, s'arrête, caresse la banane, l'épluche, à [sic] le geste de lâcher la peau, se ravise, la flanque après la première, met le bout de la banane dans sa bouche et demeure immobile, regardant dans le vide devant lui.</i>



332	<i>Finalement il a une idée, met la banane dans une poche de son gilet d'où le bout émergera et de toute la vitesse dont il est capable s'en va au fond de la scène dans l'obscurité. Dix secondes. Bruit de bouchon qu'on tire. Quinze secondes. Il revient dans la lumière, portant un vieux registre, et s'asseoit à la table. Il pose le registre sur la table, s'essuie la bouche, s'essuie les mains à son gilet, les claque et les frotte.</i>	70	<i>Finalement il a une idée, flanque la banane au fond de la scène à gauche et de toute la vitesse dont il est capable s'en va au fond de la scène à droite, dans l'obscurité. Il écarte à moitié le rideau du réduit faiblement éclairé, disparaît dedans, en ressort avec un registre, le pose sur la table, retourne au réduit, en ressort avec des boîtes en fer blanc contenant des bobines de bandes impressionnées, les pose sur la table, retourne au réduit, en ressort avec un magnétophone, le pose sur la table, le branche sur un fil traînant par terre devant la table à gauche, s'asseoit, s'essuie la bouche, s'essuie les mains à son gilet, les claque et les frotte.</i>
333	Boîte...trois...trois...quatre	71	Boîte...trois...quatre
334	<i>Il lève la tête, râvasse, se penche sur l'appareil, le branche et prend une posture d'écoute, c'est-à-dire le buste incliné en avant, les coudes sur la table, la main en cornet dans la direction de l'appareil, le visage face à la salle.</i>	71	<i>Il lève la tête, râvasse, se penche sur l'appareil, a le geste de le brancher, se fige, se retourne lentement pour regarder par-dessus son épaulement dans l'obscurité au fond à gauche, long regard, puis revient lentement de face, branche l'appareil et prend une posture d'écoute, c'est-à-dire le buste incliné en avant, les coudes sur la table, la main en cornet dans la direction de l'appareil, le visage face à la salle.</i>
334	à part mon vieux point noir	72	à part mon vieux point faible
334	Viens d'avaler, j'ai regret de le dire	72	Viens de manger, j'ai regret de le dire
335	<i>Est-ce que je chanterai quand j'aurai son âge, si jamais j'ai son âge? Non. Pause. Est-ce que je chantais quand j'étais jeune garçon? Non. Pause. Est-ce que j'ai jamais chanté? Non.</i>	73	<i>Est-ce que je chanterai quand j'aurai son âge, si jamais j'ai son âge? Pause. Non. Pause. Est-ce que je chantais quand j'étais jeune garçon? Pause. Non. Pause. Est-ce que j'ai jamais chanté? Pause. Non.</i>
335	Bien sorti de là, ah foutre oui!	73	Bien sorti de ça, ah foutre oui!
335	Et ces résolutions!	74	Et ces résolutions.
335	Mille sept cents heures sur les huit mille et quelques précédentes volatilisées	74	Mille sept cents heures sur les huit mille et quelques précédentes volatilisées



336	<i>Krapp débranche l'appareil, révasse, regarde sa montre, se lève et s'en va au fond de la scène dans l'obscurité. Dix secondes. Bruit de bouchon qu'on tire. Dix secondes. Second bouchon. Dix secondes. Troisième bouchon.</i> Brie soudaine de chant chevrotant.	74	<i>Krapp débranche l'appareil, révasse, regarde sa montre, se lève et s'en va au fond de la scène dans le réduit. Bruit de verser et de boire.</i> Brie soudaine de chant chevrotant.
337	<i>Il se lève, s'en va au fond de la scène dans l'obscurité, revient avec un énorme dictionnaire</i>	75	<i>Il se lève, s'en va au fond de la scène dans le réduit, revient avec un énorme dictionnaire</i>
337	<b>L'oiseau veuve ou tisserin...</b>	76	<b>l'oiseau veuve ou tisserin...</b>
338	<b>ça s'est trouvé comme ça</b>	76	<b>ça c'est trouvé comme ça</b>
338	<b>Embarquée, enfin.</b>	76	<b>Une affaire finie, enfin.</b>
338	<b>grands rochers de granit et l'écumé</b>	77	<b>grands rochers de granit e l'écumé</b>
338	<b>l'obscurité que je m'étais toujours acharné à refouler</b>	77	<b>l'obscurité que je m'étais toujour acharné à refouler</b>
340	<i>Krapp débranche l'appareil, révasse. Finalement il farfouille dans ses poches, rencontre la banane, la sort, l'examine de tout près, la remet, farfouille de nouveau, sort l'enveloppe, farfouille de nouveau, remet l'enveloppe, regarde sa montre, se lève et s'en va au fond de la scène dans l'obscurité. Dix secondes. Bruit de bouteille contre du verre. Puis bref bruit de siphon. Dix secondes. Il revient d'un pas mal assuré dans la lumière, va vers le devant de la table, sort ses clefs, les élève à hauteur des yeux, choisit une clé, fait jouer la serrure du premier tiroir, regarde dedans, y promène la main, en sort une bobine, l'examine de tout près, referme le tiroir à clef, remet les clefs dans sa poche, va s'asseoir, enlève la bobine de l'appareil, la pose sur la table, révasse, branche l'appareil, s'éclairent la gorge et commence à enregistrer.</i>	79	<i>Krapp débranche l'appareil, révasse, frissonne, regarde sa montre, se lève et s'en va au fond de la scène dans le redout. Bruit de verser et de boire. Il revient un peu titubant avec un microphone, le pose sur la table, enlève les bobines de l'appareil, les poses sur le dictionnaire, prend dans le tiroir deux bobines vierges, les place sur l'appareil, branche le microphone, s'asseoit, sort de sa poche une enveloppe portant des griffonnages, la consulte, la pose sur le dictionnaire, ajuste le microphone, se concentre, branche l'appareil et commence à enregistrer.</i>
-	-	79	Cette voix! Jésus!
341	<b>Bobiiine!</b>	80	<b>Bobiine!</b>
341	<b>d'au delà les mers.</b>	80	<b>d'au-delà les mers.</b>
341	<b>Avec véhémence</b>	80	<b>Avec véhémence</b>
341	<b>à lire Effi encore,</b>	80	<b>à lire Effie encore,</b>



341	avec des larmes encore. <b>Effi...</b>	80	avec des larmes encore. <b>Effie...</b>
341	Fanny est venue une <b>ou</b> deux fois.	80	Fanny est venue une <b>oi</b> deux fois.
341	Pas pu faire grand'chose, mais <b>quand même</b> , <b>un peu mieux qu'entre pouce et index.</b>	80	Pas pu faire grand'chose, mais <b>sans</b> <b>doute mieux qu'un coup de pied dans</b> <b>l'entre-jambes.</b>
341	Lazur du ciel va se <b>ternir</b> ,	81	Lazur du ciel va se <b>ternier</b> ,
342	<i>Longue pause. Il se penche brusquement sur l'appareil, le débranche, arrache la bande, la jette au loin, place l'autre bande sur l'appareil, la fait avancer jusqu'au passage qu'il cherche, rebranche l'appareil, écoute en regardant fixement devant lui.</i>	81	<i>Longue pause. Il se penche brusquement sur l'appareil, le <b>débranche</b>, arrache <b>les</b> <b>bobines</b>, <b>les jette au loin</b>, <b>replace les autres</b> <b>bobines sur l'appareil</b>, <b>les fait reculer</b> <b>jusqu'au passage qu'il cherche</b>, <b>a le geste de</b> <b>rebrancher l'appareil</b>, <b>se fige</b>, <b>se retourne</b> <b>pour regarder au fond à gauche comme</b> <b>précédemment</b>, <b>revient de face</b>, <b>rebranche</b> <b>l'appareil</b>, <b>écoute en regardant fixement</b> <b>devant lui.</b></i>
342	elle a fait oui sans <b>ouvrir</b> les yeux.	82	elle a fait oui sans <b>ouvrir</b> les yeux.
343	-	82	<b>Rideau</b>

As the lists of variants show, the trilingual editions are a fascinating element in the play's epigenesis, which will be further explored in sections 1.5 and 1.6.



## 1.5 Acting Copies and Broadcasting Scripts

*Krapp's Last Tape* was first performed by Patrick Magee, directed by Donald McWhinnie, at the Royal Court theatre in a double bill with *Endgame* (directed by George Devine) on 28 October 1958. The first performance in the US took place at the Provincetown Playhouse, New York, on 14 January 1960, with Donald Davis as Krapp, directed by Alan Schneider.

### **Mimeographed Acting Copies (MS-HRC-SB-5-4)**

The Harry Ransom Center preserves a set of acting versions of *Not I* and *Krapp's Last Tape*, probably made in 1972 for the London Royal Court Theatre performance, directed by Anthony Page, premiere 16 January 1973 (HRC Samuel Beckett Collection, Box 5, Folder 4; Lake 1984, 155; MS-HRC-SB-5-4).

### **Alan Schneider's prompt book**

The University of California at San Diego (Mandeville Special Collections) holds a director's prompt book of *Krapp's Last Tape*, directed by Alan Schneider. It consists of:

1 a carbon copy of a typed version of the play, which does not correspond to any of the typescripts at HRC or UoR. For instance, all the introductory stage directions and descriptions of the mime are in capitals. The loose leaves are interleaved with Schneider's notes in blue ball-point (1 leaf of notes after every page of the typescript). In Krapp's first words 'Box...three... spool...five' the word 'spool' is changed in blue ball-point by the word 'reel' (overwritten). Throughout the scene (from 'Ah!' to '--love.' at the end of the typescript's second page) the word 'spool' is overwritten by the word 'reel'. On page 4 (line 7), 'These old P.M.s' are annotated with a note in the top margin: 'post mortems'. Alan Schneider had asked Beckett whether this was what 'P.M.s' stood for; Beckett confirmed on 4 January 1960: '*Post Mortems* by all means' (NABS 59). In the same letter Beckett asked Schneider to use 'spool instead of reel' and suggested 'sluice or lock' instead of 'weir'. On page 5 of the typescript the word 'weir' is underlined in blue ballpoint. There is a question mark penciled in the right margin; the word 'dam' is written above 'weir' in

pencil. Throughout the carbon copy, the stage direction ‘PAUSE.’ is boxed with blue ballpoint.

2 A second set of typescripts was made to facilitate the recording of the voice on the tape, in three parts. The first part is headed: ‘TAPE “A” KRAPP’ (4 leaves), starting with ‘Thirty-nine today, sound as a bell.’ At the bottom of page 2, the last line reads: ‘the late autumn, after her long viduity, and the’ – and is simply interrupted. This document presents only the text of what is spoken on the tape. To indicate the interruption after ‘viduity’, a large upward arrow is drawn in the bottom margin, pointing to the spacing just after the comma. The 4 leaves with ‘TAPE “A” KRAPP’ are followed by ‘TAPE “B” KRAPP’ (1 leaf: ‘---great granite rocks the foam flying up in the light of the lighthouse and the wind-guage [sic] spinning like a propellor, clear to me at last that the dark I have always struggled to keep under is in reality my most---’) and ‘TAPE “C” KRAPP’ (1 leaf: ‘---unshatterable association until my dissolution of storm and night with the light of the understanding and the fire---’).

Ten days before the American premiere, Beckett wrote a long letter to Schneider with advice and suggestions, including notes on textual integrity: ‘By the way for God’s sake make sure in your script that there are no omissions or variations in the repeated passages’ (*NABS* 59; see section 1.4.2). He also wrote that he thought there was a ‘Lot to be done with eyes. They can close for example for boat passage’ (61).

The American premiere of *Krapp’s Last Tape* took place on 14 January 1960 at the Provincetown Playhouse, New York (Schneider 1986, 276). To get a glimpse of the way the play was received in 1960, a few passages from Tom F. Driver’s review in *Criticism in the Christian World* (2 March 1960) are telling:

The play reaches its emotional climax in a lyric passage in which the 39-year-old man (on the machine) describes his going in a boat with his beloved. His description of her eyes, her hair, her body, her unspoken acceptance and his eagerness carries through almost to the climax of union. It is perfectly frank yet it is in flawless taste, because its real interest lies not in the physical details themselves but in the longing of a human soul for that which is worthy of a desire. (256)

This scene, and by extension the entire play, was immediately appropriated (in the sense of what the situationists called ‘récupération’) as a ‘Rebuke to Nihilism’:

The effect of a play like *Krapp’s Last Tape* upon the attentive spectator is anything but debilitating. On the contrary, it is quickening. So far from being a statement *about* hope or *about* a good that may come to man, it has the even more welcome benefit of *instilling* hope. That is a tribute to Beckett’s art, and it is also evidence that true art is always a rebuke to nihilism. (256-7)

Donald Davis showed his appreciation of Alan Schneider’s direction in an annotated copy of *Evergreen Review* Vol. 2, No. 5. In the left margin, on the opening page of *Krapp’s Last Tape* (page 13), next to the word ‘wearish’ in the opening stage directions, Davis has written the following dedication in blue ballpoint: ‘With more gratitude than I can adequately express from your “weirish”! old man / [Donald]’ (UCSD Alan Schneider archive, Box 13, Folder 23; see also section 1.6). Donald Davis also played Krapp in other productions directed by Schneider<sup>97</sup> and his performance was recorded on

97 For instance the production for the Arena Stage, Washington, D.C., in early April 1961. The contract was made on 1 April 1961; the première took place on 4 April. The ‘Three Short Plays’ on the programme were *Krapp’s Last Tape*, Sean O’Casey’s *The End of the Beginning* and Eugene O’Neill’s *In the Zone*. For the Studio Arena Theatre, Donald Davis played the role of Krapp again on 17, 18 and 19 September 1968, directed by Alan Schneider, in a double bill with Albee’s *The Zoo Story* (Peter: Donald Davis; Jerry: Ben Piazza). (UCSD Alan Schneider collection Box 23, Folder 11). The same double bill, but with a different cast and director for Albee’s play, had been performed at Playgram Players Theater (115 McDougal Street, New York): Richard Barr, H. B. Lutz and Harry Joe Brown, Jr. presented their ‘Theatre 1960’ programme of the performance as “KRAPP’S LAST TAPE” / by SAMUEL BECKETT / Directed by ALAN SCHNIEDER / With DONALD DAVIS, followed by “THE ZOO STORY” / By EDWARD ALBEE / Directed by MILTON KATSELAS / With / MARK RICHMAN / WILLIAM DANIELS’. In the ‘ABOUT THE AUTHORS’ section, Beckett was presented as an ‘Irish-born prolific writer who now makes his home in Paris, writes in French and translates his works into his native English. His poems, short stories, novels, as well as his plays are replete with symbolism which has been the subject of many controversies and interpretations. Beckett himself wants his works to speak for themselves for he has steadfastly refused to be drawn into a discussion of what his characters stand for’ (UCSD, Alan Schneider Collection, Box 13, Folder 20).

Argo (Spoken Arts) Records, RG 220 (1960; see Federman and Fletcher 1970, 31).

On 13 November 1963, a production with Cyril Cusack in the role of Krapp was broadcast on television by the BBC. It was directed by Prudence Fitzgerald and produced by Peter Luke. Fitzgerald made use of flashbacks, with episodes from Krapp's past appearing on the wall. Later on, Beckett was to write his own suggestions for a television version of *Krapp's Last Tape* (see below). These instructions implicitly suggest that Beckett was not in favour of such visual extras.

### **TV Krapp**

On 29 November 1968, Alan Schneider mentioned he had heard that Beckett was 'doing a screenplay of KRAPP' (*NABS* 220), and on 22 January 1969, he repeated that he was 'most anxious to hear from you regarding screen adaptation of KRAPP' (220). Beckett did not speak of a screenplay, but simply of his '*Krapp notes*' (221). He sent his suggestions to Grove Press, with an accompanying letter, dated 31 January 1969:

I have not been successful with TV Krapp. I seem to be not yet capable again of serious work. The enclosed notes are all I have to offer. If they appear sufficient let Alan and technicians get on with it from there. There remains plenty of room for their inventiveness. That would be OK with me. If on other hand they appear worthless let's drop whole thing. Shd. be grateful in any case if you would let me have a photostat of these notes (UCSD MS 103, Box 25, Folder 14).

The document with suggestions immediately opens with Beckett's main idea: 'Two Cameras A and B' (72). Camera *A* is 'mere eye', whereas camera *B* 'listens':

A mere eye [...], frontal, covering general situation [...]. It is free to vary its images [...], provided no element of the total situation be at any moment lost in the process.

B investigates, from all angles and often above, detail of table situation, hands, face, machine, ledger, boxes and tapes. This camera **listens** and its activity is affected by words spoken. It can thus be used [...] as a means to distinguish in this recorded past those moments which matter little or nothing to Krapp from those which matter much or extremely. (UCSD MS 103, Box 25, Folder 14)

Beckett suggested three ‘levels of intentness’ for Camera B:

- 1 Low. All references to health and work
- 2 Intermediate. Winehouse, “darkness round me”, “silence this evening”, Miss McGloome, mother, dog, for example.
- 3 High. Those indicated page 1 [see the five passages quoted below] and if necessary others<sup>98</sup> (UCSD MS 103, Box 25, Folder 14)<sup>99</sup>

Beckett’s suggestion for the manner in which camera B could highlight the important moments is by freezing the frame. In accord with his earlier suggestion in his letter to Schneider (‘Lot to be done with eyes’, see above; NABS 61), he now singled out five scenes, all involving descriptions of eyes. As Cluchey and Haerdter noted later on, Beckett once gave this explanation to the stress on the eyes: ‘The eye is the organ of interruption between light and dark, therefore it is important’ (Beckett in Cluchey and Haerdter 1980, 134). Interestingly it is camera B, the ‘listening’ camera, that is to zoom in on the descriptions of the eyes and to ‘freeze completely’ during the following passages, including the repeated scene in the boat (highlighted in bold to mark the insistence of the mantric recurrence):

- 98 Beckett’s suggestion for the ‘others’ is: ‘for example for B McGloome invocation (p. 12) and for A during recording, as well as 3 indicated p.2, for example “Sat shivering ... Not a soul.” (p. 18)’
- 99 For a full transcript of these notes, based on the typescript with holograph additions and emendations, preserved in the WDR files, see Zilliacus 1980, 72-4.

- 1 'living on and off with Bianca in Kedar Street. Well out of that, Jesus yes! Hopeless business. [Pause.] Not much about her, apart from a tribute to her eyes. Very warm. I suddenly saw them again. [Pause.] Incomparable!' [= scene IV]
- 2 'A girl in a shabby green coat, on a railway-station platform? No? [Pause.]' [= scene IV]
- 3 'One dark young beauty I recollect particularly, all white and starch, incomparable bosom, with a big black hood perambulator, most funereal thing. Whenever I looked in her direction she had her eyes on me. And yet when I was bold enough to speak to her – not having been introduced – she threatened to call a policeman. As if I had designs on her virtue! [Laugh. Pause.] The face she had! The eyes! Like... [hesitates] ... chrysolite! [Pause.] Ah well....' [= scene VI]
- 4 '**– my face in her breasts and my hand on her. We lay there without moving. But under us all moved, and moved us, gently, up and down, and from side to side.**  
[Pause.]

Past midnight. Never knew such silence. The earth might be uninhabited.

[Pause.]

Here I end –

[KRAAPP switches off, winds tape back, switches on again.]  
– upper lake, with the punt, bathed off the bank, then pushed out into the stream and drifted. She lay stretched out on the floorboards with her hands under her head and her eyes closed. Sun blazing down, bit of a breeze, water nice and lively. I noticed a scratch on her thigh and asked her how she came by it. Picking gooseberries, she said. I said again I thought it was hopeless and no good going on and she agreed, without opening her eyes. [Pause.] I asked her to look at me and after a few moments – [Pause.] – after a few moments she did, but the eyes just slits, because of the glare. I bent over her to get them in the shadow and they opened. [Pause. Low.] Let me in. [Pause.] We drifted

in among the flags and stuck. The way they went down, sighing, before the stem! [Pause.] I lay down across her with **my face in her breasts and my hand on her. We lay there without moving. But under us all moved, and moved us, gently, up and down, and from side to side.**

[Pause.]

Past midnight. Never knew –’ [= scenes VIII and IX]

- 5 ‘– gooseberries, she said. I said again I thought it was hopeless and no good going on and she agreed, without opening her eyes. [Pause.] I asked her to look at me and after a few moments – [Pause.] – after a few moments she did, but the eyes just slits, because of the glare. I bent over her to get them in the shadow and they opened. [Pause. Low.] Let me in. [Pause.] We drifted in among the flags and stuck. The way they went down, sighing, before the stem! [Pause.] I lay down across her with **my face in her breasts and my hand on her. We lay there without moving. But under us all moved, and moved us, gently, up and down, and from side to side.**’ [= scene XII]

Of these 5 passages, the last two were to be given more emphasis than the first three: ‘Stills on 4 and 5 further pointed by conjunction with close up of face, whereas for 1, 2 and 3 camera simply freezes on whatever happens to be under examination when stop made’ (Beckett in Zilliacus 1980, 72–3). A photocopy of this three-page document with ‘Suggestions for T.V. Krapp’ (in Beckett’s hand), and a photocopy of a typed version annotated by Alan Schneider, is preserved at the UCSD Special Collections and Archives in San Diego (UCSD MS 103, Box 25, Folder 14). Schneider was not exactly enthusiastic about Beckett’s suggestions, just calling them ‘basically fine’: ‘What you are asking for, in effect, is an objective and a subjective camera; or, a basic long shot, moving back and forth (or from left to right), and a basic close-up, varying in angle, depending on what is to be seen. So long as we are in agreement on these two fundamentals, I am sure that there can be some flexibility within’ (*NABS* 223). Schneider did apologize for not going into greater detail, for he had not yet had the chance to study the script in relation to Beckett’s notes. Since the San Diego typescript (ETC) shows a few handwritten marks in pencil, limited to the letters A and B, and here and there the letter H for ‘High’ level of intentness (for instance at the top

of page ETC' 8r, before '–gooseberries, she said', the fifth moment when camera B was supposed to 'freeze completely'), ETC' probably served as the document on which Schneider studied Beckett's suggestions.

UCSD also holds the 1969 contract with Paul M. Heller Productions.<sup>100</sup> On 6 March 1969, Schneider wrote a letter to Pat Magee, asking him: 'Would you be available sometime in May to play Krapp in a film (low budget) version of KRAPP'S LAST TAPE, to be shot in New York. If there is any chance of getting you, we will move heaven and earth. Both Sam and I' (UCSD Alan Schneider collection Box 24, Folder 5). Beckett wrote to Schneider on 27 March that he did hope Magee could do it, 'though it seems a bit hard on Davis' (*NABS* 224). Schneider and Magee made plans to shoot the TV version in June, but Magee eventually did not 'stay free' in this period (*NABS* 225), so the plan was cancelled for the time being.

In the fall of 1969, Beckett directed his own play for the first time in the workshop of the Schiller-Theater in Berlin (the second time he acted as director, after the 1967 *mise en scène* of *Endspiel* in the Schiller-Theater). Martin Held played the role of Krapp. During the rehearsals, Beckett was approached by the WDR (Westdeutscher Rundfunk, Cologne) about a television version of the production. So, on 14 September, Beckett sent a letter to Schneider from Berlin, asking him to send 'a copy of the *Krapp* TV notes': 'Cologne needs them. I have no copy nor the courage to work them out again' (*NABS* 227).

Together with the 'Suggestions for T.V. *Krapp*', Schneider sent a list of 'Changes'. The last item in this list is 'Relationship with machine. Maximum intimacy p. 17 with punt repeat at end of which head on table' (*NABS* 228). This change corresponds with one of the changes Beckett had mentioned to Schneider as early as 21 November 1958, in the wake of the rehearsals with McWhinnie and Magee in London.<sup>101</sup> 'The most interesting discovery,'

100 'Agreement between Grove Press and Paul M. Heller Prods. Inc.

1. A film version of KRAPP'S LAST TAPE in black and white photography, (probably 16mm) with a budget not to exceed \$25,000 cash, such budget to be mutually[sic] agreed upon.

2. The film is to be produced by Paul Heller and directed by Alan Schneider. (...)' (UCSD Alan Schneider collection Box 24, Folder 4).

101 'I want to tell you about *Krapp* in London. I worked on it for about 5 days with McWhinnie and Magee before we opened. I am extremely pleased with the result and find it hard to imagine a better performance than that given by Magee both in his recording and his stage performance' (*NABS* 50).

Beckett wrote, ‘was the kind of personal relationship that developed between Krapp and the machine’ (*NABS* 50). On 4 January 1960, Beckett described the same scene as follows: ‘At the end, towards close of third repeat of boat passage, he can steal his arm round machine and sink his head on table’ (*NABS* 61).

Beckett’s plan was to add these changes to the stage directions in the Grove edition,<sup>102</sup> but since the *Evergreen Review* and the Grove versions hardly differ, the only record of the changes are the contents of his letters to Schneider and the list of ‘Changes’. The penultimate suggestion in this list indicates three moments when Krapp ‘Looks behind in shadow.

- 1 p. 11 interrupting loading of spool 1.
- 2 p. 14 on return from drink 1 interrupting movement to switch on.
- 3 p. 19 interrupting loading of spool 1’ (*NABS* 228)<sup>103</sup>

The list was returned to Beckett on 18 September 1969, during the rehearsals at the Schiller-Theater Werkstatt in Berlin, when he made an explicit link between these three instances and what he referred to as ‘Hain’.

After the premiere on 5 October 1969, the performance was recorded on 6–9 October, and it was broadcast by WDR by the end of the same month (28 October). Beckett’s Berlin *Regiebuch*, edited by Volker Canaris, is illustrated with dozens of stills from the WDR TV recording.

In 1971, Alan Schneider eventually managed to direct his TV version of *Krapp’s Last Tape*, produced by Mark Wright. Beckett’s suggestions for a TV version were not so easy to put into practice. On the typed version of Beckett’s suggestions, Schneider boxed the following line regarding Camera A: ‘Elucidation by camera of play as it stands.’ Underneath, Schneider penciled: ‘But how?’ He also encircled the words ‘for example’ in the following lines and marked them with an exclamation mark in blue ballpoint: ‘It arrives at this by a corresponding reduction or cessation of activity expressive of Krapp’s changing levels of attention. It would freeze completely for example’. In pencil, Schneider added in the right margin: ‘or get closer to

102 ‘In the course of rehearsals we established a certain amount of business which is not indicated in the script and which now seems to me indispensable. If Barney ever brings out the work in book form I shall enlarge the stage directions accordingly’ (*NABS* 50).

103 These three page references correspond with the following annotations regarding ‘Hain’ in *Faber a.c.*: ‘Action interrupted by Hain 1’ (11); ‘Faint Hain here?’ (14); ‘interrupted by Hain 2’ (19).

something (AS) or zoom' (USD MS 103, Box 25, Folder 14). Schneider wrote to Beckett on 12 May 1971: 'Camera A is OK, fine, throughout as you have indicated. The problem of having Camera B moving around for so long and then stopping as indicated is a serious one. (We tried it in the Studio one day.) The movement is most distracting. Would you object to our getting the equivalent effect by less movement, and then by coming in for very tight close-ups on details: machine, hands, face, etc. as indicated?' (*NABS* 255). Beckett had no problem with this suggestion whatsoever: 'Re Camera B use it as you deem best. My notes are no more than suggestions & have no pretensions to finality' (*NABS* 256).

A complete shooting log of the production (on 2 June 1971) is preserved at the Schneider archive (UCSD MS 103, Box 25, Folder 21).<sup>104</sup> In March 1969, Beckett had already written to Schneider that he thought it was 'a bit hard on [Donald] Davis' (who had played Krapp in Schneider's earlier productions) not to ask him, but Pat Magee, for the part in the TV production. So, since Magee had let them down, Schneider could have asked Davis this time, but he did not. The actor in Schneider's TV production was not Donald Davis, but Jack MacGowran. On 4 September 1971, two and a half years after Beckett had immediately thought of Davis's feelings, Schneider tried to explain to Davis why he had not asked him for the part: 'As you may recall, KRAPP was originally written for Pat Magee, and he did it for BBC and then on stage several times. Some two years ago, an opportunity came up to do a TV version, again with Pat – all this from Grove Press and Sam. At the last minute, Pat stood everybody up, and it never came off. [...] Subsequently, Pat went off to other pastures, and his place was in effect taken by Jackie M., who had in the meantime done several Beckett programs. When Grove revived the TV project, this time Sam went directly to Jackie, as his Irish colleague and disciple and most-favored actor. Especially after the great success of the Beckett evening at the Public Theatre, Sam felt he "owed" everything possible to Jackie' (UCSD MS 103, Box 25, Folder 16).

104 Judging from the log, the shooting went rather smoothly. A few initial attempts ('Take #1 NO GOOD Jackie unaware of action cue / Take #2 NO GOOD Jackie moved feet') were followed by a long Take #3, which lasted almost 20 minutes and was 'CUT' when Krapp is 'Brooding after "Farewell to – love"'. After a lunch at 12:35 (the log really records everything), the recording started again at 2:02 pm with Take #10. At 3:34 pm the recording was finished.



### **BBC Script**

Donald McWhinnie directed a TV production of *Krapp's Last Tape* with Pat Magee for the 'Thirty Minute Theatre' series on BBC2 on 29 November 1972. The BBC script (MS UoR MS 3072; 30 leaves) is preserved at the University of Reading (Bryden, Garforth and Mills 1998, 61), as well as a photocopy of the 1960 Grove text with manuscript annotations and 'extensive corrections to stage directions' by Beckett for the BBC2 television production (MS UoR 3071; 23 sheets, 30 × 21cm; Bryden, Garforth and Mills 1998, 60-1). In contrast with this description of the 'extensive corrections to stage directions', McWhinnie stated that Beckett only made 'some minor alterations in the stage "business" – not in the text – which he considers definitive for any future performance' (qtd. in Ziliacus 1980, 78).





## 1.6 Annotated Copies and Production Notes

### 1.6.1 English

As the previous sections already indicated, the genesis of *Krapp's Last Tape* continued after the first published version of the text, and in different media. This rich epigenesis is especially interesting with regard to the theatrical performances directed by Beckett himself. The University of Reading holds Beckett's production notebooks, which have been edited by James Knowlson with a wealth of annotations and a revised text (*TN3*). In 1977, Beckett wrote to Knowlson: 'I couldn't face a revised version of *Krapp*. Faber haven't approached me on the subject' (JEK, 19 October 1977). But later, a revised text was nonetheless constituted, based on Beckett's many annotated copies and production notes (the abbreviations are the ones suggested by James Knowlson, *TN3* xxxii):

#### *Lilly ms*

Copy of the 1959 French text annotated for the 1960 first French production (Théâtre Récamier, Paris, 22 March 1960, directed by Roger Blin, with R. J. Chauffard as Krapp in a double bill with Rober Pinget's *Lettre Morte*, directed by Jean Martin) with separate manuscript sheets of notes by Beckett. For a transcription of these notes, see chapter 3.

#### *Schiller nb.*

Production notebook with autograph notes prepared by Beckett for his own production of the play at the Schiller Theater Werkstatt, Berlin; premiere: 5 October 1969 (22 × 13 cm; notes on ff. 1-50; pagination by Beckett pp. 1-95; UoR MS 1396/4/16). For a detailed bibliographical description, see Bryden, Garforth and Mills 1998, 60; for the full transcription and translation, see *TN3*).



### ***Martin a.c.***

Jean Martin's French script annotated by him for Beckett's 1970 Théâtre Récamier production.

### ***McWhinnie a.c.***

Copy of the 1960 Grove Press edition annotated for Donald McWhinnie by Beckett for the 1972 BBC Television production, broadcast 29 November 1972 (UoR MS 3071).

### ***Faber a.c.***

Copy of the 1970 Faber and Faber edition annotated by Beckett for the 1973 Royal Court production (UoR MS 1227/7/10/1; Bryden, Garforth and Mills 1998, 61). The first correction is the cancellation of the 'Purple nose' in the opening stage directions, which was also cancelled in *Grove a.c.*, and omitted in the acting copy HRC MS SB 5-4 and in the trilingual Suhrkamp edition (see section 1.4.4). On pages 11 and 14, the annotations 'Action interrupted by Hain 1' and 'Faint Hain here?' are written in fuchsia ballpoint; the marginalia 'interrupted by Hain 2' on page 19 (just before '– gooseberries, she said') are in black ink. During Krapp's last recording, after 'hard to believe I was ever as bad as that', Beckett added in fuchsia ballpoint: 'The voice! Jesus!' (17)<sup>105</sup> – thus creating an echo with the earlier passage, spoken by Krapp2 on the tape: 'Hard to believe I was ever that young whelp. The voice! Jesus!'

### ***Grove a.c.***

Copy of *Krapp's Last Tape and Other Dramatic Pieces* (New York, Grove Press, 1960), with manuscript annotations, inscribed 'London 73' on the cover; used for the Albert Finney production, directed by Anthony Page at the Royal Court Theatre in London; premiere: 16 January 1972 (20 × 13 cm; UoR MS 1479/1; Bryden, Garforth and Mills 1998, 62). On page 13, the marginalia read: 'Action interrupted by first <sup>look</sup> over his shoulder left into

105 'The voice! Jesus!' is also added to *Grove a.c.* (in black ink; page 24).

### Banana Walk



- Halts
- 1. Peel 1
  - 2. Rain wood
  - 3. "
  - 4. Peel 2
  - 5. Remembers

700  
bare

Shudder  
1 off  
watch  
side  
openly

*Cut again 14. 13 - 19.*

**YES**

*To reading the script  
and all good wishes from  
Samuel Beckett  
2. 1. 73*

## KRAPP'S LAST TAPE

\* *Corrected for  
revival at  
Royal Court  
Theatre, Jan. 73.  
With Albert  
Finney.*

*A late evening in the future.  
KRAPP's den.*

*Front centre a small table, the two drawers of which open towards  
the audience.*

*Sitting at the table, facing front, i.e. across from the drawers, a  
wearish old man: KRAPP.*

*Rusty black narrow trousers too short for him. Rusty black sleeveless waistcoat, four spacious pockets. Heavy silver watch and chain. Grimy white shirt open at neck, no collar. Surprising pair of dirty white boots, size ten at least, very narrow and pointed.*

*White face. Purple nose. Disordered grey hair. Unshaven.*

*Very near-sighted (but unspectacled). Hard of hearing.*

*Cracked voice. Distinctive intonation.*

*Laborious walk.*

*On the table a tape-recorder with microphone and a number of  
cardboard boxes containing reels of recorded tapes.*

*Table and immediately adjacent area in strong white light. Rest  
of stage in darkness. Staring before him, shuddered,  
KRAPP remains a moment motionless, heaves a great sigh, looks at drawer  
his watch, fumbles in his pockets, takes out an envelope, puts it back,  
fumbles, takes out a small bunch of keys, raises it to his eyes,  
chooses a key, gets up and moves to front of table. He stoops, etc  
lock first drawer, peers into it, feels about inside it, takes out a reel  
of tape, peers at it, puts it back, locks drawer, unlocks second drawer,  
peers into it, feels about inside it, takes out a large banana, peers at*

9

Fig. 7 and 7':  
Beckett's annotated  
working copy  
for the London  
production of the  
play (1973), UoR  
MS 1227/7/10/1,  
opening page  
and pages 14-15.  
On page 14 (first  
annotation in  
the left margin),  
Beckett noted  
'Faint Hain here?',  
referring to the  
same 'Freund Hain'  
as in Beckett's  
1969 Schiller-  
Theater Werkstatt  
production; and in  
the top margin on  
the opposite page  
(15), he quoted  
the relevant lines  
from Shakespeare's  
*Othello* to which the  
word 'chrysolite'  
refers (see section  
2.3.6).

## KRAPP'S LAST TAPE

Faint Hain  
here? | Fit of coughing. He comes back into light, sits down, wipes his mouth, switches on, resumes his listening posture.

PAUSE TO PERMIT  
READING /  
START, LOOK /  
AT KR.  
PAUSE AS ABOVE /

TAPE: —back on the year that is gone, with what I hope is perhaps a glint of the old eye to come, there is of course the house on the canal where mother lay a-dying, in the late autumn, after her long viduity (KRAPP gives a start), and the—(KRAPP switches off, winds back tape a little, bends his ear closer to machine, switches on)—a-dying, after her long viduity, and the—

SOUND OF  
BOOKS FALLING  
IN CART. | KRAPP switches off, raises his head, stares blankly before him. His lips move in the syllables of 'viduity'. No sound. He gets up, goes backstage into darkness, comes back with an enormous dictionary, lays it on table, sits down and looks up the word. muttering words encountered on the way.

KRAPP: (reading from dictionary). State—or condition—of being—or remaining—a widow—or widower. (Looks up. Puzzled.) Being—or remaining? . . . (Pause. He peers again at dictionary. Reading.) 'Deep weeds of viduity.' . . . Also of an animal, especially a bird . . . the vidua or weaver-bird. . . . Black plumage of male. . . . (He looks up. With relish.) The vidua-bird!

PAUSE. HE CLOSES DICTIONARY, SWITCHES ON, RESUMES LISTENING POSTURE.

PAUSE: —bench by the weir from where I could see her window. There I sat, in the biting wind, wishing she were gone. (Pause.) Hardly a soul, just a few regulars, nursemaids, infants, old men, dogs, I got to know them quite well—oh by appearance of course I mean! One dark young beauty I recollect particularly, all white and starch,

If heaven wd. make me such another world  
of the entire - perfect chrysolite  
I'd not have sold her for it. Othello V.2.

### KRAPP'S LAST TAPE

incomparable bosom, with a big black hooded perambulator, most funereal thing. Whenever I looked in her direction she had her eyes on me. And yet when I was bold enough to speak to her—not having been introduced—she threatened to call a policeman. As if I had designs on her virtue! (Laugh. Pause.) The face she had! The eyes! Like . . . (hesitates) . . . chrysolite! (Pause.) Ah well. . . . (Pause.) I was there when— (back to normal) (KRAPP switches off, broods, switches on again) the L.P. blind went down, one of those dirty brown roller affairs, throwing a ball for a little white dog as chance would have it. I happened to look up and there it was. All over and done with, at last. I sat on for a few moments with the ball in my hand and the dog yelping and pawing at me. (Pause.) Moments. Her moments, my moments. (Pause.) The dog's moments. (Pause.) In the end I held it out to him and he took it in his mouth, gently, gently. A small, old, black, hard, solid rubber ball. (Pause.) I shall feel it, in my hand, until my dying day. (Pause.) I might have kept it. (Pause.) But I gave it to the dog.

Pause. *(Perhaps same effect as in pause top of 12)*

Ah well. . . .

Pause. ←

Spiritually a year of profound gloom and indigence until that memorable night in March, at the end of the jetty, in the howling wind, never to be forgotten, when suddenly I saw the whole thing. The vision at last. This I fancy is what I have chiefly to record this evening, against the day when my work will be done and perhaps no place left in my memory, warm or cold, for the

darkness backstage' (corresponding with the note 'Action interrupted by Hain 1' in *Faber a.c.* page 11; see section 1.4.4). The annotation 'Faint Hain here?' (*Grove a.c.* 17) has a question mark, as in *Faber a.c.* On page 27, the 'Hain' is described as a 'look into darkness': 'Action interrupted by second look into darkness as before' (*Grove a.c.* 27). The reference to the title of Theodor Fontane's book *Effi Briest* is corrected. The -e in *Effie* is cancelled twice: 'Scalded the eyes out of me reading *Effie*-again, a page a day, with tears again. Effie...' (25).<sup>106</sup>

### ***Suhrkamp 3***

Copy of *Das letzte Band. Krapp's Last Tape. La Dernière Bande*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1974. 'Trilingual edition with revisions of the English text' (TN3 xxxiii).

### ***San Quentin Notes***

Manuscript notes by Beckett for a production of the play by the San Quentin Theatre Company (undated, 3 leaves, 21 × 19 cm and 21 × 14 cm; photocopies of leaves in a narrow-lined exercise book; UoR MS 2101; Bryden, Garforth and Mills 1998, 63).

### ***Haymarket Theatre Notes***

A section of manuscript notes by Beckett for a production of the play at the Haymarket Theatre in Leicester in 1989, on very narrowly lined exercise book paper (22 × 17 cm, 4 (photocopied) sheets; UoR MS 3507; Bryden, Garforth and Mills 1998, 63-64).

106 Here, *Grove a.c.* differs from *Faber a.c.*, where the name is not corrected.

### *Evergreen Review a.c.*

In addition to these annotated copies at the Harry Ransom Center and the University of Reading, an interesting annotated copy of the text as published in the *Evergreen Review* is held among the Alan Schneider papers at UCSD in San Diego. Apart from the dedication by Donald Davis (see above), the annotations (in grey pencil and blue ballpoint) are generally Schneider's, but there is one remarkable annotation in the left margin on page 14, next to the end of the opening mime ('He comes back into light carrying an old ledger and sits down at table. He lays ledger on table, wipes his mouth, wipes his hands on the front of his waistcoat, brings them smartly together and rubs them'). The annotation (divided in two encircled blocks) is written with a green ballpoint in Beckett's hand:

If necessary  
?

(He looks at cover  
of ledger, reads.)  
Krapp year by year.  
(The Krapp annual.)  
(He opens ledger,  
bends over it,  
etc.[]])

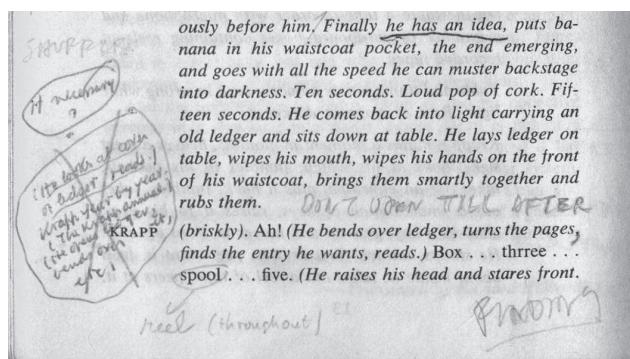


Fig. 8: Marginal annotation in green ballpoint in Alan Schneider's copy of the *Evergreen Review* version of *Krapp's Last Tape* (ER 14). This is the only version in which the ledger has a title: 'Krapp year by year' (The Krapp annual).

## 1.6.2 French

As for the epigenesis of the French text, the Lilly Library in Bloomington, Indiana (IU) holds an annotated copy of the first Minuit edition and ‘notes for the producer’<sup>107</sup> of *La Dernière Bande*, an autograph document (5 pages, 14–27cm). The additional notes are on the front flyleaf, verso of page [74], recto and verso of back flyleaf and the back end paper of the copy (Lilly PQ2603.E367 K814). Beckett made the annotations for Roger Blin in view of the French premiere (22 March 1960 at the Théâtre Récamier, directed by Blin). For a full transcription and discussion of these notes, see chapter 3.

The chronology of editions and the gradual removal of Pierre Leyris’s name can be summarized as follows:

4 March 1959	<i>LLN</i>	‘Traduit de l’anglais par Pierre Leyris’
December 1959	Minuit	‘Traduit de l’anglais par Pierre Leyris et l’auteur’ (limited edition of 40 copies and 7 ‘hors commerce’)
5 January 1960	Minuit	‘Traduit de l’anglais par Pierre Leyris et l’auteur’
13 March 1960	2 <sup>nd</sup> impression	‘Traduit de l’anglais par Pierre Leyris et l’auteur’
21 March 1960	TNP/Minuit	‘Traduit de l’anglais par l’auteur’ (Collection du Répertoire; with Pinget’s <i>Lettre morte</i> )
15 June 1960	<i>L’Avant-Scène</i>	‘Traduit de l’anglais par l’auteur’
2 February 1965	Minuit	‘Traduit de l’anglais par l’auteur’ (‘Reprinted photographically’; Federman and Fletcher 1970, 41)

<sup>107</sup> According to the catalogue description. I owe a debt of gratitude to Isabel Planton at the Lilly Library for all her help with the description of these notes.

According to Federman and Fletcher, ‘M. Jérôme Lindon has said that Beckett entirely reworked his translation but nevertheless insisted on Leyris receiving royalty payments for it’ (1970, 42). Beckett’s view on this relationship is only recorded with hindsight. According to him, Leyris himself preferred his name to be removed. When Alan Clodd asked him why Leyris was mentioned as the translator in the earliest publication, and not in the later ones, Beckett replied his recollection was that ‘Leyris, in view of the small part he had in the translation, preferred to withdraw his name’ (NLI MS 35,293/4-5, SB to Alan Clodd, 25 June 1971). Leyris’s own recollection (communicated in a letter to Pascale Sardin on 20 May 1998) is, as Sardin notes, quite humble and not without humour:

Un ami commun m’ayant demandé, d’accord sans doute côté Beckett, de traduire *Krapp’s Last Tape*, j’ai accepté à la légère, puis me suis aperçu en cours de route que je n’étais pas sûr de bien comprendre certains passages. J’ai continué néanmoins puisque je l’avais promis et suis revenue à Paris incertain et mécontent de mon travail, ce que j’ai fait dire à Beckett. Il s’est alors annoncé. J’ai fait provision de Guinness. Il est survenu... Quelques heures après, le sol de ma chambre était jonché de bouteilles vides et il ne restait plus grand chose de mon mauvais texte.

[A common friend had asked me, undoubtedly with Beckett’s consent, to translate *Krapp’s Last Tape*. I accepted without much thought, then realized along the way that I was not sure I fully understood certain passages. Nonetheless, I continued since I had promised to do so and came back to Paris, uncertain and dissatisfied with my work – which I asked to communicate to Beckett. He then contacted me. I bought a stock of Guinness. He came over... A few hours later, the floor of my room was littered with empty bottles and not much was left of my bad text.] (qtd. in Sardin-Damestoy 2002, 231).

The result of this collaboration is a translation that stays relatively close to the original. For a discussion of this aspect of the epigenesis, see chapter 3.

### ***Opera version***

The play was adapted into an opera, set to music by Marcel Mihalovici, published in 1961 (*Bibliothèque nationale, dépôt légal* date stamp: 23 January 1961). Mihalovici had asked Beckett if he could ‘make a chamber opera out of Krapp’, as Beckett put it in a letter to Barney Rosset (20 March 1959; qtd. in Knowlson 1996, 793). According to the composer, Beckett had ‘an astonishing musical intuition, an intuition that I often used in my composition’ (qtd. in Knowlson 1996, 467). He also asked Mihalovici on occasion to make changes to the score, such as ‘modify certain stresses in the vocal line’ (467). The traces of this close collaboration are preserved in Mihalovici’s original manuscript notebook, kept at the University of Reading (UoR MS 1227-7-10-2; 47 sheets, 26 × 17 cm., inscribed by the artist<sup>108</sup>), with the composer’s French version and music in blue ink, Elmar Tophoven’s German text in pencil and Beckett’s English version in red ink. The French translation served as the basis to write the music, but Beckett and the German translator Elmar Tophoven were closely involved in the vocalisation of the English and German versions as James Knowlson explains: ‘They sat at the piano, one on either side of the composer, adapting the text to the music or modifying the score [...] Beckett sometimes changed his original English text to provide extra “notes” or different rhythms: so, “incomparable bosom” became “a bosom beyond compare” and, because of the need for an extra syllable to accommodate the music, “dunes” became “sand dunes”’ (467). To make the text accord with the music, he made several other changes, for instance: ‘I close my eyes and **try and** imagine them’ became ‘I close my eyes and **do my best to** imagine them’ (UoR MS 1227-7-10-2, 16-7 [Mihalovici’s numbering]); the ‘old P.M.s’ were made more explicit and changed into ‘these old **Post Mortems**’, which Krapp says he finds a help before he embarks ‘on a new inspection of the past’ (27 [Mihalovici’s numbering]); the ‘**flagging** pursuit of happiness’ became ‘**languishing** pursuit of happiness’ (32); ‘**seventeen** copies sold of which **eleven** at trade

108 ‘Ce cahier comporte le travail aux pour les traductions allemande et anglaise que Tophoven (pour l’allemand), Beckett (pour l’anglais) et moi (pour l’accentuation musicale et rythmique) avons faites du texte original français de l’opéra Krapp (ou la dernière Bande) de Samuel Beckett, en 1959-60 – Marcel Mihalovici’ (UoR MS 1227-7-10-2).

price' were reduced (especially in terms of the number of syllables) to '12 copies sold of which 5 to free lending libraries beyond the seas' (79).

The Harry Ransom Center holds a copy of *Krapp ou La Dernière Bande* (text by Samuel Beckett, score by Marcel Mihalovici, Paris: Heugel & Cie [1961]) (see Lake 1984, 110). The opera was first broadcast by R.T.F. (France 111) on 15 May 1961, repeated on 2 May 1965.

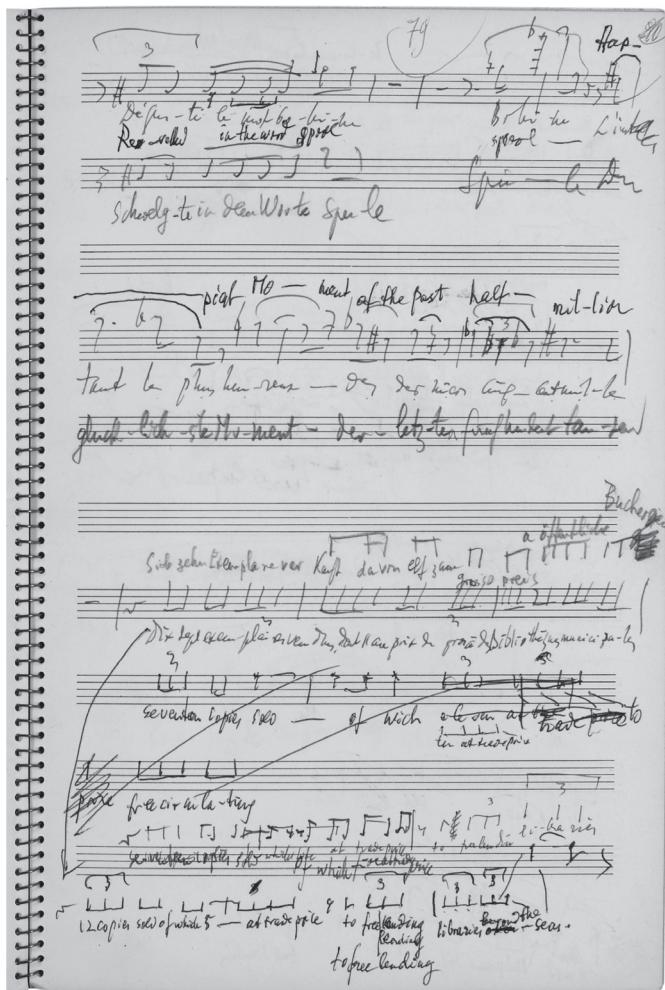
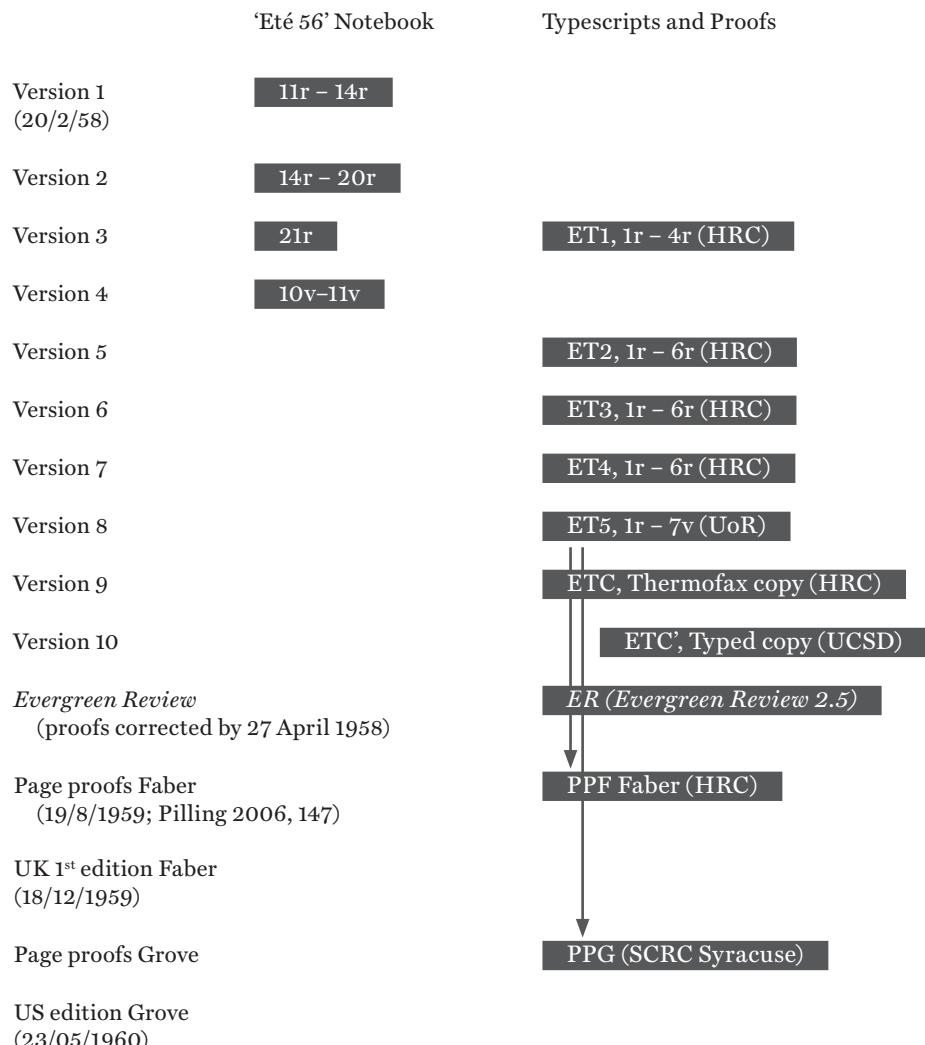


Fig. 9: Page from Marcel Mihalovici's manuscript notebook containing the French (blue), German (pencil) and English (red) versions of the opera *Krapp, ou La Dernière Bande* (UoR MS 1227-7-10-2, 79).

## 1.7 Genetic Map

### English versions





## ***French versions***

[Version 1]

Version 2

Journal publ.  
(4/3/1959)

1<sup>st</sup> edition Minuit  
(limited ed. Dec. 1959;  
commercial ed. 5/1/1960)

FT1

Minuit



*Les Lettres Nouvelles* (4/3/1959)





PART II



## 2 Genesis of *Krapp's Last Tape*





## 2.1 Context

'It all started', according to Donald McWhinnie, 'with *All That Fall*' (interview with James Knowlson 1980, 45). One of the characters in this radio play, Mr Slocum, was played by Patrick Magee. In 1957, *All That Fall* had been broadcast four times on the BBC's Third Programme, on 13 and 19 January, 23 February, and 19 March, followed on 2 May by a recorded studio performance of *Fin de partie* directed by Roger Blin.

But it was Patrick Magee's reading of selected fragments from *Molloy*, broadcast on 10 December, and of *From an Abandoned Work*, broadcast on 14 December, that sparked the enthusiasm noted by Clas Zilliacus and many others. According to Donald McWhinnie, the idea for the readings of prose fiction by Samuel Beckett arose when he and Barbara Bray went to Paris, considering that 'no one knew about the work of this man in Britain', yet at the same time they were worried that they could not 'just ask him to keep on writing new material. There are all these novels...': 'Barbara and I thought it would be quite interesting to try to introduce the work of this man to a wider audience on the Third Programme, which was what the Third Programme was for. And it seemed to me that Pat Magee had this curious voice, which could somehow speak these old men's lines in an interesting way for the audience' (45). The relevant correspondence preserved at the BBC archives shows that Beckett enormously appreciated what McWhinnie describes as Magee's 'cracked voice' (46). In a letter to McWhinnie of 28 January 1958, Beckett writes:

I heard the tapes with the keenest enjoyment and appreciation. Magee's performance is unforgettable. I hope it may be possible for me to acquire them, or have copies made, for my personal use.  
(qtd in Knowlson 1996, 790 note 144)

The recording of the reading from *Molloy*<sup>109</sup> took place in November 1957, shortly after Beckett had suggested another text to be read by Magee, ‘an unpublished meditation “From an Abandoned Work”, as it was called in the continuity announcement (Zilliacus 1976, 148), or simply ‘The Meditation’, as it was entered in the records of the BBC Script Library. This ‘meditation’ was first broadcast only three weeks after the arrival of the script, which – as Zilliacus points out (148) – shows the BBC’s eagerness to get a new text from Beckett. Several letters from McWhinnie and from the Controller of the Third Programme, John Morris, to Beckett attest to this eagerness.

But, as the following short chronology of the first years of Beckett’s work for the BBC shows it was not with *All That Fall* that ‘it all started’:

*Waiting for Godot*:

- 17 March 1953: production in consideration
- 5 May 1955: ‘decided against’
- 20 September 1955: idea taken up again
- 27 April 1960: first BBC broadcast

*Watt*

- 9 September 1955: first BBC broadcast

*All That Fall*

- 27 September 1956: script sent to John Morris
- 13 January 1957: first BBC broadcast

*Fin de partie / Endgame*

- 11 February 1957: copy sent to Morris
- 2 May 1957: first BBC broadcast (French version)
- 22 May 1962: first BBC broadcast (English version)

*Molloy*

- 10 December 1957: first BBC broadcast

<sup>109</sup> For a detailed discussion of Magee’s readings of Beckett’s novels, see Feldman 2014.



*From an Abandoned Work*

14 December 1957: first BBC broadcast

*Malone Dies*

18 June 1958: first BBC broadcast

*The Unnamable*

19 January 1959: first BBC broadcast

*Embers*

November-December 1957: first draft

21 January 1958: temporarily abandoned

24 June 1959: first BBC broadcast

What McWhinnie did not mention when he claimed that ‘It all started with *All That Fall*’ was the long prehistory of this first of Beckett’s radio plays, written for the BBC. McWhinnie and Morris were understandably embarrassed by this prehistory.

### **2.1.1 Prehistory**

It had taken more than two years for the BBC to eventually decide against the possibility of broadcasting *En attendant Godot*. Their Paris Representative, Cecilia Reeves, had sent the text to McWhinnie on 17 March 1953, suggesting that it might be suitable for the Third Programme. Less than a month later, it was positively evaluated: the reviewer E. J. King Bull concluded in no uncertain terms that it would be ‘culpably unenterprising not to undertake the project’ (BBC WAC SB Scriptwriter 53-62, 15 April 1953).<sup>110</sup> What followed was a curiously Kafkaesque bureaucratic process, with a remarkable intervention by the Head of Drama, Val Gielgud, who suddenly thought there was something ‘basically “phoney”’ about the play. This fashionable word – undoubtedly inspired by Salinger’s *The Catcher in the Rye*, which had been published only a few years earlier – turned the

<sup>110</sup> The citation refers to the following file in the BBC written archives: BBC WAC/Rcont1/Scriptwriter/Beckett, Samuel/ File1/1953-62.



tide. On 5 May 1955 it fell to Barbara Bray's lot to return the script of *En attendant Godot* to Cecilia Reeves, more than two years after she had sent it to the BBC, and to inform her that it had 'now finally been decided against'. After this 'culpably unenterprising' episode, the BBC did recognize Beckett's talent, but it is clear that the sudden eagerness to have a Beckett scoop in the second half of the 1950s had to compensate for the feeling of having missed the boat with *En attendant Godot*.

So it was only after this episode that 'It all started with *All That Fall*', in McWhinnie's words. The four broadcasts of Beckett's first radio play were followed by a 'general talk' on Beckett's work by Con Leventhal (BBC WAC SB Scriptwriter 53-62, letter McWhinnie to Beckett, 23 April 1957), broadcast on 30 April (8:50 pm), and a broadcast of *Fin de partie* in French (on 2 May, 8:50 to 10:20 pm). In the same letter in which McWhinnie announced the schedule of these broadcasts to Beckett (23 April), he also mentioned that

John Morris was asking whether there was any possibility of getting from you both a new text with music to open the new style Third Programme for October. [...] I think you know how very excited we should all be at the possibility of something new from you, however short. (BBC WAC SB Scriptwriter 53-62, 23 April 1957)

When Beckett could not deliver a new radio play, or at least not fast enough to follow the BBC's keenness to broadcast his work, it appears to have been he – not McWhinnie – who suggested they might perhaps want to broadcast a reading of a passage from *Molloy*, interspersed with music by his cousin John Beckett, and then *From an Abandoned Work*. On 7 May 1957, Beckett wrote to McWhinnie:

My cousin [John Beckett] was here [...] and we talked of you and the 3<sup>rd</sup> and the possibility of doing something together. You are right in thinking there is little chance of my writing anything new for months to come. I suggested to John that he might do some music for a published text, the end of Part I of Molloy for example, i.e. from the shore to the ditch. He thought it wd. be possible (on the lines of the Diary of a Madman production) [...] This would be just conceivably better than nothing, though I doubt it. (BBC WAC SB Scriptwriter 53-62, 7 May 1957; *LSB III* 46)

McWhinnie reacted immediately, saying that he thought ‘the result might be extremely interesting’ and on 24 May he mentioned the idea to the Controller of the Third Programme, John Morris: ‘Beckett’s suggestion is that we should do a solo reading of the last section of part 1 from the shore to the ditch, that is approximately pages 90 to 124, with a special music score by John Beckett. I think this might make an interesting broadcast of say 45 minutes, and if you are interested I could discuss it in more detail with John Beckett’ (BBC WAC SB Scriptwriter 53-62, 24 May 1957). A month later, he was able to let Beckett know that ‘the Third Programme have accepted the idea of a solo reading of the last section of Part 1 of “Molloy” with special music by your cousin’ (BBC WAC SB Scriptwriter 53-62, 26 June 1957).

Beckett and McWhinnie met in Paris in the week of 11 November, and in no time an extra broadcast was scheduled: on 21 November Barbara Bray asked the Copyright Department to ‘clear copyright on a 20-minute reading of “A MEDITATION”, from an unpublished work by Samuel Beckett (Curtis Brown), which we wish to use *immediately* in the Third Programme’ (emphasis added),<sup>111</sup> and the next day, McWhinnie informed Beckett about the dates of the broadcasts:

<sup>111</sup> On 27 November 1957, Barbara Bray already received notice that the copyright was cleared (BBC WAC SB Scriptwriter 53-62).



Dear Sam, I think the 'Abandoned Work' is beautiful and we should like to broadcast it on the 14<sup>th</sup> December at 8.45 p.m., that is to say in the same week as 'Molloy' which is now to be broadcast on Tuesday, 10<sup>th</sup> December at 9.45 p.m., both to be spoken by Magee. (BBC WAC SB Scriptwriter 53-62, 22 November 1957)

According to Martin Esslin, Magee's readings were so successful that they led George Devine<sup>112</sup> to encourage Beckett to write a monologue for Magee (see Knowlson and McWhinnie 1980, 46), to be performed in tandem with *Endgame*, the English-language première of which was planned to take place at the Royal Court Theatre in the Fall of 1958.

Clas Zilliacus, however, suggests that *Krapp's Last Tape* originated in Beckett's efforts to write 'another text specially for broadcasting', which 'grew directly out of his enthusiasm for the productions based on the trilogy' (Zilliacus 1976, 149). In late November, early December, Beckett indeed tried to write another radio play. But that was an early version of *Embers* (see 2.1.2).

Both Esslin and Zilliacus were right to some extent, as the following chronological account of the three months preceding the first draft of *Krapp's Last Tape* shows.

### **2.1.2 Chronology**

In the fall of 1957, Beckett was struggling with his translation of *L'Innommable*. To Ethna MacCarthy, he wrote that he was 'supposed to be translating *L'Innommable*, which is impossible' (HRC, SB to Ethna MacCarthy, **22 November 1957**; *LSB III* 76). He 'took a week off from *L'Innommable* to try and get something new down in English', as he told his American publisher (FSU, **2 December 1957**). Harvard University's Houghton Library holds a notebook (HU MS THR 70.3) that contains an

<sup>112</sup> On 8 September, Beckett had informed McWhinnie: 'I finished my translation of F. de P. a month ago. It is not quite so bad as I feared. Devine says he likes it. Trouble with the LC is to be expected. I suggested McGowran for the part of Clov' (BBC WAC SB Scriptwriter 53-62, 8 September 1957).

early version of *Embers*,<sup>113</sup> which was written while Beckett was translating *L'Innommable*. Most probably, this was the ‘something new’ Beckett was referring to in his letter to Rosset. *Embers* can be read as an inquiry into the workings of the human mind that was inspired, not just by listening to Magee’s readings of the *Molloy* fragments (10 December 1957)<sup>114</sup> and *From an Abandoned Work*,<sup>115</sup> but also by the act of translating *L'Innommable*. In the manuscript of *The Unnamable*, just before ‘Basile is becoming important’ and the narrator decides to ‘call him Mahood instead’ (HRC MS SB 5-9-1, 21r), he describes the silence and ‘my own voice’, which was ‘like the sea’:

- 113 This notebook was a gift, as the inscription on the cover reads: ‘for / The Harvard Theatre / Collection / with all good wishes / Samuel Beckett / Paris 1976’. The only other word on the front cover is ‘Plombière’ and on the inside of the cover, the only sentence is the question: ‘Où as-tu la tête’, written underneath three doodles, two of which show a head in left profile. The most striking material aspect of this notebook is that the top of several pages has been cut off with scissors: a page-wide strip of a few centimeters high is missing from folios 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 and 12. The first seven recto pages of the notebook contain the holograph fragment ‘Louis & Blanc’ (for a description and discussion of this fragment, see Van Hulle 2015). On page 10r, another dramatic fragment starts, an early English version of the radio play *Embers* (also referred to as ‘Henry & Ada’) in the form of a dialogue between ‘He’ and ‘She’, which ends on page 20r. This dialogue is written in the same black ink (later switching to blueblack ink, from page 17r onwards) but with a finer pen. This version of *Embers* was probably written shortly before 21 January 1958 (in December 1957–January 1958), while Beckett was translating *L'Innommable* into English. The manuscript of the translation, *The Unnamable*, features a note (on page 23v of the second notebook; BDMP 2) referring to the manuscript of ‘Henry & Ada’ (*Embers*): ‘Reprise 21.1.58 après échec de Henry et Ada’ [‘Taken up again 21.1.58 after failure of Henry and Ada’] (HRC MS SB 5-9-2, 23v; BDMP2).
- 114 On 11 December 1957 Beckett wrote to McWhinnie: ‘I was in Paris last night and there listened to ‘Molloy’. Reception execrable, needless to say, but I got enough, knowing the text so well, to realize the extraordinary quality of Magee’s performance.’ (*LSB III* 77)
- 115 In the same letter of 11 December, Beckett wrote he was ‘hoping to get it clearer on Friday, and on Saturday FAAW which I am waiting for with acute curiosity’ (*LSB III* 77-8).

But what a silence, yes, what a silence. For it is all very well fine to keep silence, but one has <sup>also</sup> to consider also what <sup>the</sup> kind of silence it is one keeps. I listened. That is what I mean. One might as well speak and be done with it. What freedom! I strained my ear towards what must have been my own voice still, so weak, so far, that it was like the sea, a calm distant sea far calm sea dying – no, none of that, no beach, no shore, the sea is enough, I've had enough of shingle, enough of sand, enough of earth, enough of sea too. (HRC MS SB 5-9-1, 21r)

*Embers* opens with the directions ‘Sea scarcely audible. HENRY’s boots on shingle’ (*KLT* 1959, 20), recalling the image of Stephen Dedalus walking on Sandymount strand in the ‘Proteus’ episode of *Ulysses*, closing his eyes to concentrate on the ‘ineluctable modality of the audible’). Beckett, who had been reading Joyce’s letters shortly before he started writing *Embers*,<sup>116</sup> chose a similar setting to experiment with the radio medium and give a new shape to the Joycean stream of consciousness. At the same time, the image of the sea was charged with other connotations, especially connotations of death, including the reference to the ‘cliff side’ (HU MS THR 70.3, 19r)<sup>117</sup> as in the blind Gloucester’s attempt to kill himself<sup>118</sup> in Shakespeare’s *King Lear*. And while Beckett tried to develop this image for the radio, he kept translating *L’Innommable*, where he makes the pun on ‘see/sea’ explicit (the same pun with which he closes *Embers*<sup>119</sup>):

116 Faber had sent him ‘Joyce’s letters’ according to a letter to Barbara Bray (18 September 1957) and a month later he wrote to Thomas MacGreevy that he had been ‘reading his letters’ (Pilling 2006, 137). His memories of Joyce were also revived when, a few months later, during the writing process of *Krapp’s Last Tape*, he read Stanislaus Joyce’s book *My Brother’s Keeper*, about which he reported to Con Leventhal on 29 February 1958 (Van Hulle and Nixon 2013, 39).

117 ‘Had you gone round the cliff side?’ (*KLT* 1959, 34)

118 The theme of suicide (also in ‘Your sister said she would throw herself off the cliff’, *KLT* 1959, 33) reverberates in the euthanasia hinted at in the Bolton-Holloway narrative (see Pountney 1988, 112–3; Zilliacus 1976, 86): ‘If it’s an injection you want, Bolton, let down your trousers and I’ll give you one’ (35).

119 The play for the ‘blind medium’ of radio closes with the direction: ‘Sea.’ (*KLT* 1959, 36)



Help, help, if I could only describe this place, I who am so good at describing places, walls, ceilings, floors, they are my speciality, doors, windows, what haven't I imagined in the way of windows in the course of my career, some opened on the sea, all you could see was sea<sup>120</sup>

Immediately after this pun on 'see' and 'sea', the narrator goes on to evoke a windowless room, like a Leibnizian monad:

if I could put myself in a room, that would be the end of the wordhunt wordy-gurdy, even doorless, even windowless, nothing but the four surfaces, the six surfaces, if I could shut myself up, it would be a mine, it could be **black dark**, I could be motionless and fixed, I'd find a way to explore it, I'd listen to the echo, I'd get to know it, I'd get to remember it, I'd get to imagine it, I'd be home<sup>121</sup>

This 'black dark' accords with Beckett's description of the crucial effect of ambiguity in *Embers*, 'which depends on the whole thing's coming out of the dark', as he wrote Barney Rosset on 27 August 1958, noting that his radio plays were intended 'for voices, not bodies'. This insistence on the separation between bodies and voices conjures up the Cartesian body/mind split and suggests that Beckett's hearing the voice of Magee reading his works prompted him to employ the radio medium to experiment with the (im)possibility of separating the mind from the body. The fact that he described *Krapp's Last Tape* as 'definitely non-radio' (see section 1.1.1) indicates that Beckett's approach to cognition was certainly not simply Cartesian or neo-Cartesian, but rather post-Cartesian: he used the radio to test the tenability, or demonstrate the unteneability, of philosophical hypotheses such as Cartesian dualism or Leibnizian monadology. At the same time, he used the stage to emphasize the body. This notion of 'at the same time' is to be taken quite literally in the case of *Embers* and *Krapp's*

120 These are the opening lines of 'Extract from *The Unnamable*', published in the *Texas Review*, BDMP2, www.beckettarchive.org; HRC MS SB 5-10, EXTRACT2-01r.

121 HRC MS SB 5-10, EXTRACT2-01r.

*Last Tape*, since the latter was written between the two bouts of writing that marked the genesis of *Embers*.<sup>122</sup>

The first bout started toward the end of November 1957, when he ‘took a week off from L’Innommable’ as he told Rosset on 2 December (see above). But after a week Beckett already thought the attempt had ‘failed’, so he continued working on *The Unnamable*. By this time, he had already translated more than 100 pages: ‘back with my Mahoods and Worms, p. 105’ (FSU, SB to Barney Rosset, 2 December 1957). On **11 December**, he wrote to Mary Hutchinson from Ussy that he was ‘still struggling with L’Innommable’ – ‘just beyond half way with the first version’ – and that he had been in Paris the night before ‘and heard dimly the Molloy reading. I thought it was excellently done. I hope to get it more clearly here day after tomorrow’ (HRC, SB to Mary Hutchinson, 11 December 1957). Also to Jake Schwartz he wrote that he ‘liked very much the little [he] could hear of Molloy on Tuesday night’ (HRC, Box 8, Folder 1, SB to Jake Schwartz, **12 December 1957**).

He sometimes took a few hours off from the chore of translating to ‘fiddle at’ his new radio play in English, as he admitted to Barney Rosset on 17 December:

In spite of pertinacious rustication I don’t seem to be able to get more than one nostril above water with L’I. I am now looking for my old battered ball in bad rough near the 10th green. The Chicago Review<sup>123</sup> wrote asking for a contribution and I offered them an extract from L’I, subject to your consent. I sometimes take a few hours off, from translation and supine brooding, to fiddle at the new radio text, and leave it down wishing I had complied with my father’s wishes and gone into Guinness’s Brewery. (FSU, SB to Barney Rosset, 17 December 1957)

- 122 For a more detailed discussion of the genesis of *Embers* and Beckett’s other radio plays, see Pim Verhulst, *The Making of Samuel Beckett’s Radio Plays* (London: Bloomsbury, forthcoming).
- 123 See BDMP2, www.beckettarchive.org, ET1-E1: Extract from *The Unnamable*, carbon copy of typescript submitted to the *Chicago Review*, added to ET1 (first English typescript, HRC SB Box 5, Folder 10), at the back of the full typescript, to replace pp. 45–7.

The next day, Beckett told Jacoba van Velde that he had been working on a play (Pilling 2006, 137) and five days later he wrote to McWhinnie that he was trying to write in English (BBC WAC SB Scriptwriter 53-62, **23 December 1957**). But writing in English turned out to be more difficult than expected, as he mentioned to Barney Rosset on Boxing Day 1957: 'Excited by Magee's readings I have been trying to write another radio script for the Third. It is not coming off. There is something in my English writing that infuriates me and I can't get rid of it. A kind of *lack of brakes*. It goes without saying, if anything ever comes of it, that I'll make sure of your having unrestricted rights in the US. I have laid it aside for the moment and am lashing and cussing about again in the Inno bracken' (FSU, SB to Rosset, **26 December 1957**; qtd. in Ziliacus 1976, 149; emphasis added).

The 'lack of brakes' is interesting against the background of Beckett's decision to write in French, but also in the context of the evolution of his works first written in English. If writing in French was a form of 'literature of constraint', this search for constraint may have played a role in the genesis of *Krapp's Last Tape* in the sense that, without the natural constraint of writing in a foreign language, Beckett seems to have tried – consciously or not – to find other forms of constraint – a play with only one actor with even more constraints in terms of space and action than in *Endgame* – to compensate for the 'lack of brakes'. The result was immediately noticed by McWhinnie, initially in the form of slight disappointment: 'I have to tell you that the first time I read *Krapp's Last Tape*, having done extracts from the novels which are so rich, I thought it was a bit thin for Sam' (McWhinnie 1980, 47). Gradually, however, he came to appreciate the richness of a new 'less-is-more' technique, which according to McWhinnie originated in the genesis of *Krapp's Last Tape*: 'it wasn't until I started to work on it, that I discovered how rich it was. This was the beginning of Sam's much more economical style of writing, compared with the more extravagant novels' (47).

On the last day of 1957, Donald McWhinnie wrote a long letter to Beckett, with all kinds of new suggestions, such as 'What about doing a section from 'Murphy' sometime?' (BBC WAC SB Scriptwriter 53-62, **31 December 1957**). The Lord Chamberlain had just censored the line 'The bastard, he doesn't exist' in *Endgame*. McWhinnie expressed his concern, but immediately saw another opportunity for the Third Programme: 'The news about "End Game" is very disturbing. If there is likely to be an indefinite theatrical postponement would you consider letting us do a broadcast' (BBC WAC

SB Scriptwriter 53-62, 31 December 1957). Beckett must have mentioned to McWhinnie, as he did to Rosset, that he was trying to write something in English (Pilling 2006, 138), to which McWhinnie did not fail to respond encouragingly: 'I am glad to hear that you are writing in English again. If "Molloy" has stimulated you to any thoughts of possible radio expression, I need hardly say that nothing would please us more than to commission you to do something for us, but the thought may be a terrible bore' (BBC WAC SB Scriptwriter 53-62, 31 December 1957).

Two weeks later, on **13 January 1958**, Beckett typed a rather long letter to McWhinnie, which gives a good impression of the interplay between radio and theatre at this junction in Beckett's career:

If your doing Endgame depended on me alone I'd give you the green light straight away. But Devine's consent is necessary. I lunched with him yesterday. He was very understanding. A deadlock seems to have been reached with the prayer passage which I cannot alter and the Lord Chamberlain cannot pass. Devine says he may present the play at the Arts. I spoke to him of your suggestion. He seemed rather taken aback by the thought that you could do it without alteration and he not. He said he would get in touch with you on his return to London. He went back yesterday. I think it is quite possible he will assent to its transmission by the third. He is very worked up about the LC's attitude and seems intent on making a shindy about it in London. If he delays in contacting you don't hesitate to ring him, he is definitely anxious to see you about this. He said he had been very impressed by MacGowran and I think he will certainly offer him Clov. By Magee also, but rather disturbed by his "aloneness". He suggested my writing a monologue for Magee to go with the play. I should like nothing better, but doubt if I can, my recent efforts having failed to produce anything worth having. There is no need to commission me and I prefer not. What I have been trying to write is with thought of you and Magee and the Third. (BBC WAC SB Scriptwriter 53-62, 13 January 1958; *LSB III* 97-8)

In January 1958, it was probably the first time he ever saw a tape-recorder in operation when he went to the BBC studio on the Avenue Hoche in Paris, ‘where Miss Cecilia Reeves played for him the tapes of Magee’s readings that had been sent over from London’, as James Knowlson notes.<sup>124</sup> ‘I heard the tapes in the BBC studio in Paris’, Beckett wrote to Con Leventhal on **20 January**: ‘I have been trying to write another radio text for the Third, but with no success’ (HRC, SB to Con Leventhal, 20 January 1958). The last page of the *Embers* manuscript in the Harvard notebook tellingly contains the words ‘**the fire gone**’ (HU MS THR 70.3, 20r)<sup>125</sup> – which, on the one hand, reflects the situation in the manuscript of *Embers* (the fire of creative energy and the first bout of the radio play’s genesis coming to an end) and, on the other hand, prefigures one of the key metaphors in *Krapp’s Last Tape*. But at this point in the writing history, there was no sign yet of this new play. After admitting his failure at writing his radio play, Beckett added: ‘So back glumly to the grim labour of translating L’Innommable’ (HRC, SB to Con Leventhal, 20 January 1958). The same day, he also told Barney Rosset that his ‘attempt at English ha[d] come to nothing’,<sup>126</sup> and the next day he mentioned it to Mary Hutchinson. But he also told her that he had heard the tapes of the BBC readings in their Paris studio – ‘with great pleasure’.<sup>127</sup> The ‘failure to write another radio text’ had the advantage that he could

- 124 ‘Staring at the reels that held his own words as they revolved on the tape-deck and seeing, in a casual way at least, how the tape-recorder worked helped him to imagine a play in which different moments of time could be captured, juxtaposed and relived later’ (Knowlson 1996, 444).
- 125 Eventually, ‘the fire gone’ became ‘the embers cold’ (*KLT* 1959, 36), to which the play’s title refers. This title was chosen relatively late in the genesis. On the second typescript, the title was still ‘Ebb’. Only on 2 March 1959, after having made the third typescript, Beckett wrote to Barbara Bray: ‘I have changed the title to Embers of which I hope you will not disapprove too highly. If Ebb has already been announced I’m afraid this may inconvenience you. I hope not too much’ (*LSB III* 208).
- 126 FSU, SB to Barney Rosset, 20 January 1958. In this letter, Beckett also mentions the extract from *The Unnamable* for the *Chicago Review* (see Van Hulle and Weller 2014, 72–3): ‘I go back to the Inno with my tail in my stomach. If I can find a short extract for the Chicago Review I shall send you a copy’.
- 127 ‘I heard with great pleasure the tapes of the BBC readings in their studio here. I have been trying to do something else for McWhinnie, but without success. So back in disgust to the Innommable’ (HRC, SB to Mary Hutchinson, 21 January 1958).

concentrate on the translation of *L'Innommable*, which advanced more swiftly. In his manuscript of *The Unnamable*, Beckett marked the moment on page 23v of the second notebook: 'Reprise 21.1.58 après échec de Henry et Ada' (Van Hulle and Weller 2014, 40). By 27 January he had 'done a good three quarters of the first draft', as he told Barney Rosset, and he thought he would not be able to concentrate on a new text until the translation was out of his system.<sup>128</sup>

On 28 January, Beckett told McWhinnie he hoped his 'failure' to write something new for the BBC might be of help in the future.<sup>129</sup> The day after the American premiere of *Endgame*, directed by Alan Schneider,<sup>130</sup> Beckett considered using *From an Abandoned Work* to 'lengthen the programme'.<sup>131</sup> So, apart from the reading of *Molloy* fragments, the fuss about 'the bastard' in *Endgame*, the translation of *L'Innommable* and his early attempts at writing *Embers*, *From an Abandoned Work* was on Beckett's mind as well, although not to the extent suggested by Michael Robinson, who thought it

- 128 'Since my failure to write another radio text I've been lashing away like mad at LINNO and have now done a good three quarters of first draft. I'll never be able to settle down seriously to anything new till I get it out of the way' (FSU, SB to Barney Rosset, 27 January 1958).
- 129 'My attempt to write another text for you failed. But this failure will perhaps help me when I have another go at it, I hope soon. For the moment I am back battering away at the Innommable. I have three quarters done of the first draft' (BBC WAC SB Scriptwriter 53-62, 28 January 1958).
- 130 In a letter to Beckett (23 January 1959) Schneider mentions 'our opening, which is now definite for next Tuesday, January 28' (*NABS* 31). This was also the day Beckett replied to David Hayman's request for a contribution to the *Texas Quarterly*: 'I can't write the thing you ask me for. All I can offer you is a short extract from L'Innommable which I am at present translating for Grove Press. I can heartily disrecommend it, but it's literally the only inédit I have to my name. If you are interested and get the consent of Grove Press, 795 Broadway, I'll send you two or three thousand yelps which needless to say you remain free to accept or reject' (HRC, SB to David Hayman, 28 January 1958). For this contribution to the *Texas Quarterly*, see BDMP2, [www.beckettarchive.org](http://www.beckettarchive.org), TQT1 and TQT2: typescripts of the extract from *The Unnamable* submitted to the *Texas Quarterly*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Spring 1958), and ET1-E2: extract from *The Unnamable*, carbon copy of TQT1, added to ET1, at the back of the full typescript, to replace pp. 129–32.
- 131 Beckett wrote to Schneider about the two BBC readings that were on their way to Barney Rosset: 'The shorter (20 minutes) is of the text published in the last issue of the *Evergreen Review* ['From an Abandoned Work', in *Evergreen Review* 1.3 (1957), 83–91]. The possibility occurred to me of its being used to lengthen the programme' (*NABS* 33).

was ‘almost certain that Beckett abandoned the novel in favour of the play’ (Robinson 1969, 212). Robinson draws attention to ‘the same nostalgia for a lost past; to the memories of the protagonists’ mothers; and the alternation of ‘angry self-disgust with elegiac recollections’ (212). Robinson therefore concludes that ‘its affinity with Krapp’s *Last Tape* is too great to be dismissed as coincidence’ (212). But it is possible to find several other affinities – notably with the *Fizzles* and *Molloy* – if one takes all of Beckett’s works into account, as John Pilling does in ‘From an Abandoned Work: “all the variants of the one”’ (Pilling 2007, 178–81).

What was on Beckett’s mind more than anything else towards the end of January, was the never-ending translation of *L’Innommable*. In his correspondence, he complains about it almost on a daily basis. To Alan Schneider, for instance, he wrote he was ‘slogging away at the *Unnamable*’ and was looking forward to writing a new piece: ‘When it’s out of the way I’ll take what’s left of my head in my shaky hands and have another go’ (*NABS* 33).<sup>132</sup> A week later, George Reavey received a similar message: ‘I am struggling with my translation of *L’Innommable*. No new work in sight’ (HRC, SB to George Reavey, **6 February 1958**).

Beckett seems to have experienced his friends’ eager expectations as a considerable form of pressure. ‘I can’t write to commission’,<sup>133</sup> he told Alan Schneider, ‘and I declined to be commissioned by the BBC in the ordinary sense. I just promised I’d do my best and that’s what I promise to you and Barney as soon as I get the *Innommable* finished. I must confess I feel the old tug to write in French again, *where control is easier for me*, and probably excessive’ (*NABS* 37; emphasis added). Again, it is the lack of control – not unlike the ‘lack of brakes’ (see above) – in English on which Beckett implicitly blames his inability to write a new creative work.

But then, on **7 February**, the mood changed. For the first time in months, Beckett was excited about his progress with the translation of *L’Innommable*,

<sup>132</sup> The head in the hands was to become a recurring image in his later work. See for instance the opening line of *Stirrings Still*: ‘One night as he sat at his table head on hands he saw himself rise and go.’ (*CIWS* 107)

<sup>133</sup> The idea of a commission probably came from Barney Rosset, who wrote to Beckett a few weeks later: ‘I suggested to Allen, and I guess he to you, that we commission you to do a new work. This would certainly mean that we take anything – or nothing – which came forth. Of course I hope at least as much that some prose piece may gurgle up from down below – perhaps even English’ (*FSU*, Barney Rosset to SB, 17 February 1958).

announcing to Rosset with a rare exclamation mark that he had nearly finished it and only had 20 more pages to go.<sup>134</sup>

In the meantime, not only George Devine but also the BBC was increasingly worried about the ‘prayer passage’ – especially the word ‘bastard’ in Hamm’s conclusion, ‘The bastard, he doesn’t exist’. The matter mobilized the entire bureaucratic hierarchy: It had to be examined by the ‘Assistant Director of Sound Broadcasting’ (R. D’A. Marriott), who wrote a page-long report to the Director of Sound Broadcasting, L. Wellington on 29 January. The next day Wellington, in his turn, wrote a note to the Director General; from the Director General it went to the Chairman of the BBC himself, who received a note on 3 February,<sup>135</sup> to which he replied the same day: ‘I think he should be asked to find an alternative for the word’. From the top, the news trickled down again and on **12 February**, the Controller of the Third Programme, John Morris, received a note from Wellington, saying that ‘the Chairman feels obliged to object to the use of the word “bastard” on page 37 – not to the play, or to the episode denying the existence of God, but to the word “bastard”. Will you ask Beckett, when you see him in Paris, whether he would agree to change or omit the word for the purpose of broadcasting’ (BBC WAC SB Scriptwriter 53-62, 12 February 1958).

Possibly by way of compensation, the Third Programme picked up on the idea, suggested earlier by Beckett, to broadcast passages from *Malone Dies*. McWhinnie suggested to Morris on **18 February** that he ‘should like to ask John Beckett to write some music for the production of Samuel Beckett’s “Malone Dies”’. He must have decided that it was easier to discuss the affair on the telephone,<sup>136</sup> for two days later he wrote to Beckett that ‘It was good

134 ‘I have had a terrific onslaught on old Inno and nearly finished it! 20 pages to go. First draft of course. Another week in the country and I’ll write finis after “I can’t go on, I must go on, I’ll go on”’ (FSU, SB to Barney Rosset, 7 February 1958).

135 ‘Chairman, I think you should see this. Having read the play I find it difficult to understand why it should be thought to be so brilliant, but I do not think that the Third Programme should be debarred from broadcasting it if they want to. The audience to whom Beckett appeals will find nothing to shock them in it, & I doubt whether others will listen. Do you agree?’ (BBC WAC SB Scriptwriter 53-62, 3 February 1958).

136 Around the same time, John Morris went over to Paris to bring the bad news personally. A note from Leslie Stokes (John Morris’s assistant), dated 26 February 1958, mentions that Morris ‘rang up from Paris this afternoon, after lunching with Samuel Beckett, to say that he is unwilling to change or cut the

to hear your voice again the other evening. I find the whole business of 'End Game' extremely upsetting' (BBC WAC SB Scriptwriter 53-62, **20 February 1958**). In the same letter, McWhinnie makes a few concrete suggestions for sequences from *Malone Dies* to be read by Magee. The date of this letter is the same as the date of the first draft of *Krapp's Last Tape*.

The coincidence of this re-involvement with *Malone Dies* with the first draft of *Krapp's Last Tape* goes a long way in explaining some of the correspondences between the novel and the play. As mentioned in the Introduction, H. Porter Abbott suggests *Krapp's Last Tape* is one of the only instances of the genre of the 'dramatic diary' (Abbott 1984, 208), and discusses *Malone Dies* as an instance of 'diary fiction'. The main tendency in this kind of fiction is what the subtitle of Abbott's book summarizes as 'Writing as Action'. In Malone's case, there is nothing in the end that he can call 'his', except his exercise book ('No, nothing of all that is mine. But the exercise-book is mine, I can't explain'). As Abbott notes, 'Malone's text is his only thing' (188). What is characteristic of this diary fiction is 'the tendency to close the gap between the time of the narrating and the time of the narrated, between discourse and story' (189). Or, from the reader's perspective: 'Thus, as we read, we are made simultaneously aware of two events, the event recorded and the event of recording' (29). In these terms ('recording') the link with *Krapp's Last Tape* is evident.<sup>137</sup>

On the same 20<sup>th</sup> of February 1958, when Beckett started writing the 'Magee Monologue', Beckett mentioned the BBC's plans 'to do a reading from Malone, by Magee' to Mary Hutchinson, and he told her: 'I have an

word to which we have objected in his play 'End Game'. He feels that, having taken such a firm stand over the Lord Chamberlain's objections to the play, he cannot make any compromise to please the BBC, although he is very keen that the play should be broadcast in the Third Programme. Mr. Beckett also told C.T.P. that he has started work on a new radio play for the Third Programme'. On the same note, Wellington added on 10 March: 'Director General / As spoken. The Chairman said he would wish to be advised by you. For my part, I am still inclined to let the broadcast go forward'. And on 18 March, the Director General coolly added: 'The Chairman has decided against a broadcast' (BBC WAC SB Scriptwriter 53-62, 26 February; 18 March 1958).

<sup>137</sup> The recording in the play thus stages a mechanism which Jacques Derrida would later describe in *Mal d'archive*: 'L'archivation produit autant qu'elle enregistre l'évènement' ['The archivization produces as much as it records the event'] (1995, 34; 1998, 17). In this context, Derrida refers to 'the so-called news media' (1998, 17).

exciting idea for a stage monologue for Magee (George's suggestion), but shall probably break down on the writing of it' (HRC, SB to Mary Hutchinson, 20 February 1958). Although he had told Barney Rosset that he would never be able to settle down seriously to anything new until he got the translation of *L'Innommable* out of the way (FSU, SB to Barney Rosset, 27 January 1958), he now told him in almost the same terms as in his letter to Mary Hutchinson that he was 'rather excited' by an idea for a stage monologue for Magee, with a similar disclaimer - 'but ideas are very easy and the writing of it will probably be too much for me. I'll let you know how it goes. I'd probably be better employed in finishing *L'Inno*' (FSU, SB to Barney Rosset, 20 February 1958). He felt he had to 'make haste' to finish the translation 'and then have another scrape at the old pot' - as he put it. But he apparently did not wait until the translation was finished. While he was writing the first drafts of the 'Magee Monologue' in the 'Eté 56' Notebook, he did continue translating. Three days into the writing process of *Krapp's Last Tape*, on **23 February 1958**, Beckett finished the translation.<sup>138</sup>

Another two days later, on **25 February**, Beckett replied to Donald McWhinnie's letter of 20 February, making suggestions for a revised sequence of passages from *Malone Dies*: 'I had two reasons for excluding the Sapo passages from my sequence, one, I don't like them, two, I think they are less suited to Magee than Malone's monologue proper' (BBC WAC SB Scriptwriter 53-62, 26 February 1958; *LSB III* 110).<sup>139</sup> So, the first draft of *Krapp's Last Tape* coincided with the translation of the last pages of *L'Innommable* and with Beckett's rereading of *Malone Dies* to select passages to be broadcast. Interestingly, he wanted to cut the passages on Sapo (see Feldman 2014) and concentrate instead on Malone's 'monologue proper' while he was writing the 'Magee Monologue'.

<sup>138</sup> 'Just to tell you I finished first draft of *L'Inno* this evening. A month to forget it, a fortnight to revise it, three weeks to retype it, you should have it sometime in the merry month' (FSU, SB to Barney Rosset, 23 February 1958). The end of the translation is marked in the manuscript: '23.2.1958 Ussy' (see Van Hulle and Weller 2014, 48).

<sup>139</sup> McWhinnie however preferred to leave the Sapo passages as they were, to which Beckett replied on 7 March: 'So be it. Straight through then, from the beginning to page 23 "No, I want nothing." If we definitely decide on this extract I shall want to revise it' (BBC WAC SB Scriptwriter 53-62, 7 March 1958; *LSB III* 115).

After mentioning to McWhinnie that he had just finished the first draft of his translation of *L'Innommable*,<sup>140</sup> Beckett was still as uncharacteristically enthusiastic about his work as in his letters of 20 February to Mary Hutchinson and Barney Rosset (see above): ‘I have an exciting idea for a short stage monologue for Magee’, again immediately adding a disclaimer: ‘But I know my exciting ideas and how depressing they can become’ (Beckett to McWhinnie, 25 February 1958; *LSB III* 111). He ends his letter with a short paragraph, noting that he is having lunch with John Morris the next day ‘and shall add a scribble to this to tell you how it went’ (*LSB III* 111). On **26 February** Beckett indeed added a short note telling McWhinnie that he wouldn’t touch the prayer passage ‘nor suppress the two words that stand in the way of its being done on the 3<sup>rd</sup>’ (*LSB III* 111).

On **4 March**, McWhinnie only reacted to Beckett’s finishing his translation of *L'Innommable* (‘That will be a great weight off your mind’), not to the ‘exciting idea’ for the stage monologue. He may have been slightly disappointed that, after so many encouragements from the BBC, Beckett had chosen not to work on a new radio play. And Beckett did not fail to stress that it was not suitable for radio in his next letter to McWhinnie: ‘I have written a short stage monologue for Magee (*definitely non-radio*)’ (BBC WAC SB Scriptwriter 53-62, **7 March 1958**; *LSB III* 115; emphasis added). He also characterized the monologue as ‘rather a s[e]ntimental affair in my best original English manner. Begin to understand why I write in French’ (*LSB III* 115).

Two days earlier, he had also described *Krapp's Last Tape* to Barney Rosset as ‘a rather sentimental affair, as my work in English tends always to be, but with I think an ingenious situation. I have to check up on some details before I let it go. I'll try and get it off to you before the end of the month. I'll give the rights to Devine in the UK and of course to you in your hemisphere’ (FSU, SB to Barney Rosset, 5 March 1958). And again, the next day he told George Reavey his new play was ‘Rather sentimental, but – he added – ‘might be effective’. He was still holding on to the manuscript, though: ‘I am not sure yet whether I will let it go – or add it to my pile of nicely yellowing errors.’

<sup>140</sup> ‘I am just back from Ussy after a heavy bout of translating which has brought me to the end of *L'Innommable*, first draft’ (BBC WAC SB Scriptwriter 53-62, 26 February 1958; *LSB III* 111).

In the same letter to George Reavey, Beckett mentioned the extract for *The Unnamable* for the *Texas Quarterly*: ‘I have been working hard, preparing an extract from the Unnamable for the – tenez-vous bien – Texas Quarterly! I shall soon have to undertake complete revision and retyping. It is an impossible work.’<sup>141</sup> Given the way that Beckett had been struggling with the translation of *L’Innommable* and complained about it in his correspondence of the previous months, it is remarkable that only days after its completion, he wrote to Richard Seaver: ‘I think I shall try and translate the Textes pour Rien myself, they being in the idiom more or less of L’Innommable which I have just finished translating.’ (HRC, SB to Richard Seaver, 5 March 1958; *LSB III* 113).

On 10 March, Beckett told Barney Rosset: ‘I have finished the Magee monologue and sit looking at it with a fishy eye. In English I hate my guts and in French nothing more is possible. However I think I’ll let it forth, in about a fortnight probably’ (FSU, 10 March 1958). During this fortnight, Beckett received a copy of the complete 11<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* from Jake Schwartz. On 15 March, Beckett acknowledged receipt; it ‘is now safely in my possession’, he wrote:

It arrived in five parcels, one small and one large directly here and three large held up by the customs and which I have just cleared. It is a very beautiful edition and I am most happy to have it. My warmest thanks for your great generosity. I am not yet quite sure whether I shall keep it here or take it to the country, probably the latter, since most of my work now is done there and I have more room there. I know I shall <sup>have</sup> great pleasure from it, and instruction, in the years to come – if they do’ (HRC, SB to Jake Schwartz, 15 March 1958; *LSB III* 117).

<sup>141</sup> HRC, SB to George Reavey, 6 March 1958. The day before, he had sent the extract to the *Texas Quarterly*: ‘I enclose Unnamable extract sent this day to the Texas Quarterly. It’s grim, and I told Hayman not to feel he must use it. I haven’t yet begun revision’ (FSU, SB to Barney Rosset, 5 March 1958).

Beckett also told Schwartz that he was keeping the manuscript of *The Unnamable* and four typescripts of *Krapp's Last Tape* for him (see also chapter 1.2.1). Ten days later, on **25 March**, he sent the four typescripts of *Krapp's Last Tape* to Schwartz. The accompanying letter (in which the description of the materials is immediately followed by a paragraph on the encyclopaedia) shows to what extent this exchange resembled a quid pro quo:

I hope the FAAW transcription arrived safely. I am sending you today by registered parcel post MS of Innommable translation (3 exercise books) and 4 typescripts of Krapp's Last Tape. I have written at foot of MS, book 3, and of each typescript. Please no thanks.

The EB very handsome on my shelves here in the wilderness. I have been dipping into it with the greatest satisfaction. What is the missing 29<sup>th</sup> volume? The index I suppose. (HRC, Box 8, Folder 1, SB to Jake Schwartz, 25 March 1958)<sup>142</sup>

After a short writing process, and after Beckett's announcement to Schwartz that he had 'four states, in typescript, with copious and dirty corrections' (15 March), he waited a relatively long period before actually sending them off (25 March). During that period, one of the pre-book publications of a fragment from *The Unnamable* appeared in *Spectrum*.<sup>143</sup> On **17 March**, he told McWhinnie that he had 'finished the Magee monologue' and that he would 'be sending it off to Devine' the same week, carefully adding 'I hope' (BBC WAC SB Scriptwriter 53-62, 17 March 1958). On the same day, he already envisaged the reuse of the play's core idea:

<sup>142</sup> The dating of this letter nuances the statement that 'By 15 March Beckett was already dispersing the preliminary typescripts' (Gontarski 1977, 61; 1980, 14; 1985, 57).

<sup>143</sup> 'The segment of INNO arrived safely here and I trust that Texas was as fortunate. The West Coast magazine, SPECTRUM, is already out – with its portion of the stew, plus two long articles which I have not as yet read. We are sending a copy of the magazine on to you' (FSU, SB to Barney Rosset, 17 March 1958).



I have just written a short stage monologue for him [Magee] and shall be sending it to Barney this week. The idea on which it is based has endless possibilities and I hope to use it again for a French text. (*NABS* 42)

Beckett probably needed the four typescripts to produce the printer's copy for Barney Rosset,<sup>144</sup> to whom he wrote on 18 March: 'Herewith Magee monologue. I have sent copies to George Devine, Magee, Kitty Black and Rosica Colin' (FSU, SB to Barney Rosset, 18 March 1958).

This is not yet the 'pass for press' or 'bon à tirer' moment, but it is the moment Beckett decided the text was ready to be shown to the public. The dynamics of the writing process thus show an interesting pattern: if we can take 5 March as the day Beckett declared his text completed,<sup>145</sup> it took him almost just as long to finetune his play (5–18 March) as it had taken him to write it (20 February–5 March).

<sup>144</sup> And yet, after having sent it to the publisher, he was still holding on to the four typescripts, sending a holding message to Schwartz on 21 March: 'Shall send you later UNNAMABLE MSS. and typescripts of Magee monologue, if you want them' (HRC, Box 8, Folder 1, SB to Jake Schwartz, 21 March 1958).

<sup>145</sup> The present perfect in his letters (to Rosset on 5 March: 'I've written, in English, a brief stage monologue for Pat Magee'; to Reavey on 6 March: 'I have written a short stage monologue for Magee'; to McWhinnie on 7 March: 'I have written a short stage monologue for Magee') suggests that Beckett (at least from his perspective at the time) considered the play to be finished (or 'nearly finished' in Clov's words).

## 2.2 Versions

Beckett's 'table of contents' on the front flyleaf of the 'Eté 56' Notebook may suggest that the notebook contains only one version of *Krapp's Last Tape*, its 'First draft', but as Stan Gontarski has pointed out in his pioneering manuscript analysis in the *Journal of Modern Literature* (1977), 'the material actually represents three distinct stages in the play's development' (62). In his analysis of the genesis, Gontarski speaks of 'stages' ('Beckett thus wrote at least seven *stages* of this play within three weeks, each heavily revised') and of 'versions' ('The first *version* of Krapp is formally different from the other six'; 1977, 63; emphasis added). The use of the word 'version' may give the impression that these are versions of the complete text (as in the German 'Textfassung'), although Gontarski does indicate that some of these are only '*partial* holograph versions' (61; emphasis added). Because of this partial nature, it may be useful to indicate for each 'stage' or 'partial version', which parts or scenes it covers (see overview of 12 scenes in the Introduction). Square brackets indicate that a scene is present, but only in a rudimentary state. The focus is on each of the versions as a syntagmatic unit (as opposed to chapter 2.3, where the focus is on the paradigmatic axis, i.e. the diachronical development of each separate scene):

1	EM1	[I]   II   III   IV   V
2	EM2	III   IV   V   VI   VII   VIII   IX   X   XI   XII
3	ET1	III   IV   V   VI   VII   VIII   IX   X   XI   XII
4	EM3	[I]   II   [III]
5	ET2	I   II   III   IV   V   VI   VII   VIII   IX   X   XI   XII
6	ET3	I   II   III   IV   V   VI   VII   VIII   IX   X   XI   XII
7	ET4	I   II   III   IV   V   VI   VII   VIII   IX   X   XI   XII
8	ET5	I   II   III   IV   V   VI   VII   VIII   IX   X   XI   XII

### 2.2.1 Version 1 (EM1, 'Eté 56, 11r-14r)

In the first partial version, Krapp2 (the taped Krapp, here still called 'A') 'enter[s] upon [his] 31<sup>st</sup> year' (EM1, 13r). He appeals to Providence and expresses the wish to lead a life with less drinking, assuming that the remedy would be a 'fuller', more 'natural', more 'absorbing' or more 'engrossing' sex life, 'with real partners'. The series of adjectives and the 'enthusiastic' exclamation 'Intercourse!' are the only additions on the facing verso page. The monologue is fairly long, interrupted by pauses and hesitations. But the listening 'A' does not yet stop the tape recorder to interrupt his earlier, taped self. This only happens at a moment when his 31-year-old self imagines what it would be like if, instead of consuming the nineteen hundred hours he spends on licensed premises, he were to spend them – and here 'A' stops the tape, thus creating a gap of indeterminacy. The text refrains from spelling out whatever he may have in mind, thereby eliciting the audience's curiosity, following Shakespeare's advice 'To name is to destroy / To suggest is to create' (qtd. in Zilliacus 1976, 155):

This day, being in the third decade of the Ram, I enter upon my 31<sup>st</sup> year, sound <sup>apparently</sup> in wind and limb, apart from my old trouble, and intellectually, I have little doubt, at the ~~height~~<sup>peak</sup> of my powers. (Pause. With fervour.) May the ~~all~~ all-merciful Providence – (Pause. With fervour. <sup>Continues</sup>) May the star which shone on my cradle in ~~xxx Great~~ stood above my ~~eradle~~<sup>bassinet</sup> in North Great Georges Street continue to **burn**, as heretofore, in my breast and in my labours. (Pause. In a lower voice.) In particular may I be given the strength, in the ~~years~~ coming years, to ... (Hesitation. Finally, still lower.) to drink less. (Pause. Solemnly.) In the past ~~year~~<sup>12 months</sup> I spent, ~~in~~ on licensed premises alone, anything ~~between~~ from seventeen ~~and~~ to nineteen hundred hours. (Pause.) Nineteen Nineteen hundred hours. (Pause.) Oh I know, I know, I have had these crises before, but never <sup>at no time</sup> quite so acutely as ~~today~~ this afternoon, ~~sitting~~<sup>lying on</sup> the grass, in the park, in the sun. (Pause.) What would help me more than anything, I think, is a ... fuller ... a ... a fuller ... a more ... more natural ...

a more ... absorbing engrossing (lowering his voice) ... sexual life. (Pause.)  
Enthusiastic, Intercourse! with real partners. (Pause.) These nineteen  
hundred hours, for example, if <sup>in the future</sup> instead of having of spent  
them bibul spending them bibulating, I were to spend them –  
(EM1, 13r)

In this version, the Tape explicitly characterizes the moment as one of ‘these crises’, and a particularly acute one. This notion of a crisis follows immediately after the reference to A’s drinking problem, but also after the pompous line ‘May the star which stood above my bassinet in North Great Georges Street continue to **burn**, as heretofore, in my breast and in my labours’. It is interesting that the image of a burning ‘inner’ fire (which is related to the ‘vision’ in later versions) is already present in this early scene in the first partial version. This first occurrence of the burning adds an extra dimension to the later versions in that it links the fire to the earliest moments in the protagonist’s life, suggesting that A may see himself as a christlike figure, above whose cradle a star stood still to show the magi the way to the newborn, chosen to fulfill a special purpose.

Version 1 ends with the first instance where Beckett uses the technique of winding forward to give shape to the play’s characteristically gappy narrative structure. The unexpected ending ‘jumps’ to a significant moment, ‘a moment in the life of all pioneers’, but then stops short of explaining its context in the life of the protagonist.

### 2.2.2 Version 2 (EM2)

In the second version, ‘A’ is 37 years old. In EM1, scene III containing the passage about ‘separating the grain from the husks’ (*KLT* 5; *CDW* 217) was not yet present. This took shape in EM2. Beckett started this version *in medias res*, skipping the first two scenes and concentrating instead on the further elaboration of scene III, with the celebration of ‘the occasion’, on his own, ‘quietly at the Winehouse’ (EM2, 14r). Beckett tried to introduce the motif of the fire here, but then decided against it:



No one there I knew. Sat by the fire looking into the fire with closed eyes  
turning over in my mind winnowing, out as it went separating  
the grain from the chaff. (14r)

The substitution of ‘by the fire/looking into the fire’ by ‘with closed eyes’ marks the interaction with the environment (sitting by the fire at the Winehouse) and the subsequent, almost Cartesian separation of this bodily presence from the matters of the mind by making ‘A’ close his eyes and turning the act of ‘looking into the fire’ into an ‘internal’ affair. He looks into his own ‘fire’ as it were to see if it is still burning in his labours.

Instead of developing the image of the fire – which Beckett will keep for a later scene (see below) – he replaces it with another metaphor. The biblical image of separating the grain from the chaff has a prehistory in Beckett’s oeuvre. One of his first attempts to write in another language was his translation of his poem ‘Cascando’ into German (‘Mancando’). The image in the original evokes the process of butter-making:

the churn of stale words in the heart again  
love love love thud of the old plunger  
pestling the unalterable  
whey of words (CP 57)<sup>146</sup>

In Beckett’s translation – which he started making in August 1936, shortly before he went to Germany – the image is replaced by the separation of grain from chaff:

146 According to Paul Muldoon, ‘this is truly dreadful stuff’. In a review of *The Collected Poems* (edited by Seán Lawlor and John Pilling), he quotes this passage and adds: ‘Why go to the effort of establishing the metaphorical system of churning butter and then appeal to the quite different system of ‘pestling’? It’s the kind of failure of nerve to which Beckett rarely succumbed in his other work’ (Muldoon 2015, 17). Still, if one considers Beckett’s work as an ‘oeuvre in progress’, the interaction between ‘metaphorical systems’ – also across languages and across genres – is actually quite intriguing.

Es dreschen des Herzens Flegel die faulen Worte,  
 die schalen Worte,  
 die unablässige  
 Spreu von Worten. (CP 250)

In the German version the heart plays a slightly more active role as an instrument ('Flegel', flail) to thresh the words (whereas in the English version the heart is grammatically treated as a direct object). As Thomas Hunkeler notes, the chaff of words is being threshed as if it were still possible to extract grain from it (Hunkeler 1999, 37). The difference between the early Beckett of 'Mancando' (1936) and the Beckett of the 'Magee Monologue' (1958) is that the latter insists on making 'A' ask himself the question: 'The grain, what do I mean by that' (EM2, 14r), defining it as 'those things worth having when all the dust has – when all this dust has settled'. In the first writing layer, this settling of the dust is estimated to take place '20 years' (15, line 1) later, and the mental separation of the grain from the chaff (14r) was originally called 'winnowing', blowing through the grain in order to remove the chaff. 'A' then closes his eyes to 'try and imagine' what those things worth having might be. In the first writing layer, however, this act of imagination is linked to an act of empathy: the 37-year-old Krapp tries '~~to be the old man who one day perhaps will listen to this~~' (15r). But Beckett cancelled the line. The 37-year-old 'A' on the tape does not seem to be capable of much empathy, not even with his older self. The jotting 'Insufferable prig' on the left-hand side (14v) might serve as a concise description of his character.

After having introduced the technique of winding forward toward the end of Version 1, Version 2 introduces the nesting technique that is another characteristic of the play's narrative structure: 'A' briefly mentions that he has been listening to his younger self ('ten or twelve years ago'). He 'was living then with Alba' (see 2.3, Scene III). The reference to Miss Williams (whose name will eventually become McGlome) is a later addition between the lines.

Apart from the 'house on the canal where mother died <sup>lay dying</sup>' and the 'bench by the weir' (16r), 'A' also remembers the 'dark young woman [...] with a <sup>big black</sup> pram'. This memory was not yet part of the first writing layer; it is an addition on the facing leaf (15v; see also 2.3.6). In addition to the techniques of nesting and jumping forward, the playback technique was also introduced for the first time in Version 2, when 'A' winds back the tape and listens to the scene in the punt again. All these concrete techniques enact the abstract

notion of ‘manipulation’ in the description of involuntary versus voluntary memory in Beckett’s essay *Proust*, published 27 years earlier: ‘no amount of voluntary manipulation can reconstitute in its integrity an impression that the will has – so to speak – buckled into coherence’.<sup>147</sup>

### **2.2.3 Version 3 (ET1)**

As noted in section 1.2.1, the first two words of the added parenthesis on the first page of the first typescript are hard to decipher, but the gist of the stage direction is that the word ‘wind’ should rhyme with ‘mind’: ‘Thirty-seven today, sound apparently in wind (~~as he rimes this word with mind~~) and limb, apart from my old trouble’ (ET1, 1r; see Fig. 16). The idea for this remarkable didascalic detail reaches back to Beckett’s student library: in his copy of *The Works of William Shakespeare*, Amiens’s song at the end of Act II, scene 7 of *As You Like It* is marked in blue pencil. Beckett had to study this play for the Michaelmas examination in 1924. The first two rhyming words are ‘wind’ and ‘unkind’, and Beckett had already used the special pronunciation of ‘wind’ in *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*: ‘under the east wind, weind please’ (see Van Hulle and Nixon 2013, 56).

*Ami[ens]. Blow, blow, thou winter wind,  
Thou art not so unkind  
As man’s ingratitude;  
Thy tooth is not so keen,  
Because thou art not seen,  
Although thy breath be rude.*

*Heigh, ho! sing, heigh, ho! unto the green holly:  
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:  
Then, heigh, ho! the holly!  
This life is most jolly.*

*Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,*

<sup>147</sup> See Oberg 1966 for an early interpretation of the treatment of memory in *Krapp’s Last Tape* as informed by Proust.

*That dost not bite so nigh  
 As benefits forgot:  
 Though thou the waters warp,  
 Thy sting is not so sharp,  
 As friend remember'd not.*

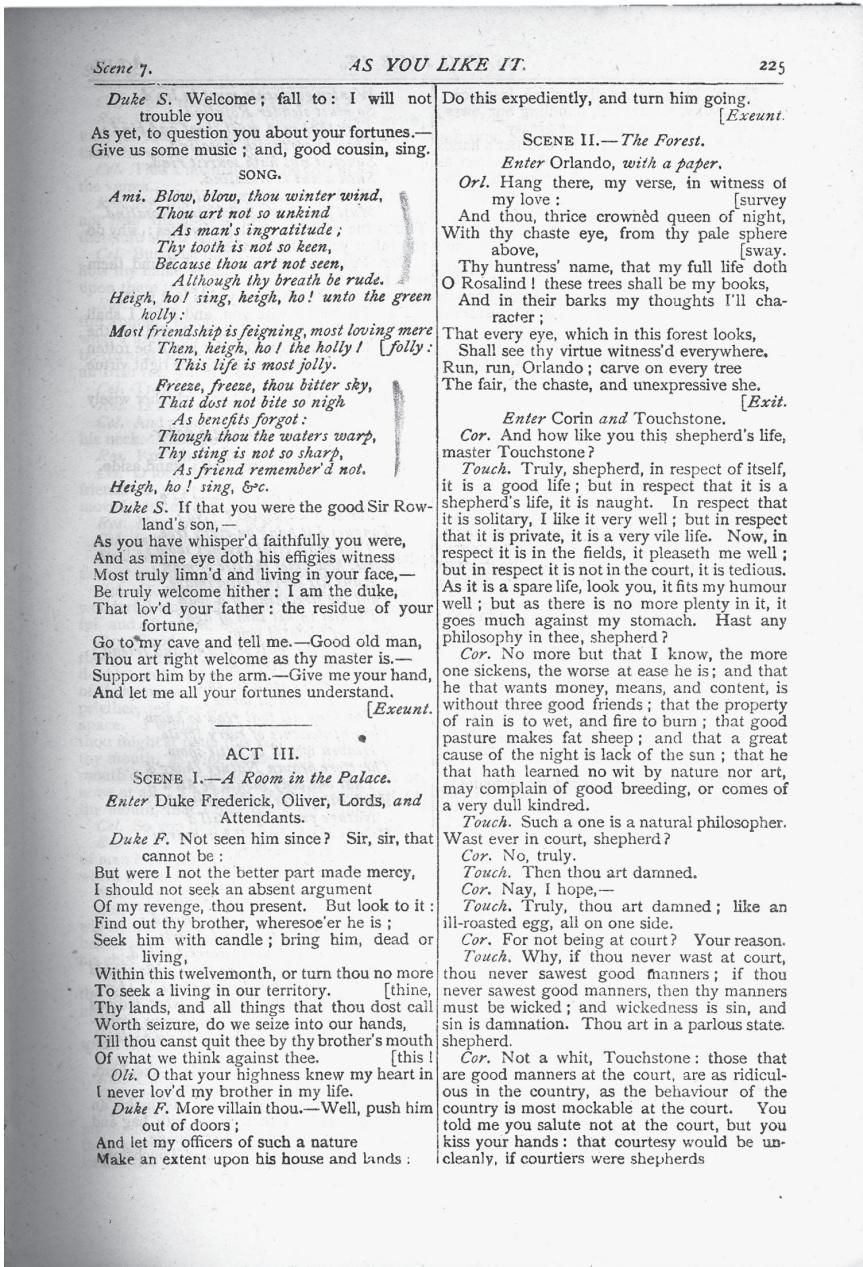
*Heigh, ho! sing, etc.* (Shakespeare, 225; see Fig. 10)

In *Krapp's Last Tape*, the pun was quite appropriate, though perhaps not as 'superb' as the 'pietà' in the story 'Dante and the Lobster'. Apart from connecting the 'wind' with Krapp's winding the tape back and forward, Beckett makes the pronunciation explicit by referring to the word 'mind' – thus suggesting a link between the *wind*, the *mind* and the *winding* back and forward as part of the way the extensive mind works.

The link between 'wind' and 'mind' (the mind of the man who has 'little doubt' that 'intellectually' he is at the peak of his powers) suggests not just the 'loutishness' but also the emptiness of learning. The wind also represents air as one of the four elements, which play a special role in *Krapp's Last Tape*. In this version, the evocation of Krapp's revelation takes place 'at the end of the pier' (ET1, 2r) on the border between *earth* and *water*, 'in the high *wind*', when Krapp has his vision, in this version 'The turning-point, at last' (2r). Later on, Beckett was to add the fourth element, expressed in terms of 'the light of the understanding and the <sup>fire</sup> –' (ET5, 5r; emphasis added).<sup>148</sup> By making 'wind' rhyme with 'mind' and linking it with the winding of the tape back and forward, Beckett suggested an interesting way of looking at consciousness. On the one hand, if viewed as a metaphor, the winding back and forward is perhaps not quite as strong as the image of 'editing' employed by Dennett, Damasio and Gottschall (see Introduction), which implies revisions, overwritings, corrections or adjustments. But on the other hand, if viewed in enactivist terms, it is stronger in that it is more than a mere metaphor. It is part of the workings of the mind. Krapp does not apply the kind of emendation to his tapes that is normally involved in editing (he does not cut or otherwise change the content of his tapes), but the way he manipulates

<sup>148</sup> Other references to the four elements in the published version are 'the fire that set it alight'; 'not with the fire in me now'; 'The earth might be uninhabited'; 'water nice and lively'; 'bit of a breeze'; 'in the biting wind'.

Fig. 10: Page 225 in Samuel Beckett's copy of *The Works of William Shakespeare*, 'The "Universal" Edition' (London and New York: Frederick Warne and Co., n.d.), with the two stanzas of Amiens's song marked with a blue pencil.



the tape recorder as an ‘environmental vehicle’<sup>149</sup> does constitute a form of editing, since he often creates gaps by winding forward and skipping passages.

From a Bergsonian perspective, Krapp’s need to separate different ‘states’ or ‘versions’ of his person on various spools may be criticized as an analytical rather than intuitive approach (see Introduction). But he also realizes that this analytical attempt ‘to isolate i from my multiple Mes’ as Joyce puts it in *Finnegans Wake* (410) is doomed to fail. The winding back and forward complicates the Bergsonian image of the spools, discussed in the Introduction. And it is possible that not only the *practice* of broadcasting in the context of Beckett’s recent contacts with the BBC, but also radio *theory* played a role in Beckett’s development of the tape recorder as a literary image. In the Spring of 1936, when he made plans to go to the State Institute of Cinematography in Moscow and work as a trainee for Sergei Eisenstein (Knowlson 1996, 226; *LSB I* 324), he read a few books on film, notably Rudolf Arnheim’s *Film als Kunst* (1932; translated from the German as *Film* by L. M. Sieveking and Ian F. D. Morrow, with a preface by Paul Rotha, published by Faber and Faber in 1933).<sup>150</sup> The first edition of this monograph contains a chapter on ‘Radio Plays’<sup>151</sup> in which Arnheim discusses the differences between optical montage and acoustic montage:

It must be added that acoustic montage presents certain difficulties which do not exist for optical. An acoustic performance cannot be broken off suddenly at any point, as can an optical one; for this would give the same jerky effect as when a film suddenly breaks off in the middle of a shot, because the strip is torn. (Arnheim 1933, 222)

<sup>149</sup> According to Richard Menary, ‘the manipulation of environmental vehicles constitutes cognitive processes’ (Menary 2010, 21).

<sup>150</sup> In a letter to Thomas MacGreevy of 29 January 1935, Beckett mentions: ‘I borrowed a lot of works on cinema from young Montgomery, who is certainly a curious little card: Pudovkin, Arnheim & back numbers of Close Up with stuff by Eisenstein’ (*LSB I* 305). For a discussion of some reverberations of Arnheim’s theory in Beckett’s radio plays, see Hartel 2010.

<sup>151</sup> I owe a debt of gratitude to Pim Verhulst for lending me a copy of this first edition.



Interestingly, this ‘jerky effect’ – which would be inappropriate in traditional techniques of acoustic montage – is exactly what Beckett accomplishes in *Krapp’s Last Tape*. Whether or not Beckett consciously applied this with the idea of acoustic montage in mind, he was in any case familiar with the theory and with Arnheim’s analysis of its effects: ‘Ordinary optical montage, that is, putting different shots next to one another, does not give this feeling of jerkiness, because image follows image’ (222), as in Zeno’s paradox of the race course (whereby a runner would not be able to traverse the course since it is infinitely divisible). Given Bergson’s lifelong critique of Zeno’s paradoxes as an ‘absurd proposition that movement is made of immobilities’ (Bergson 1911, 335) – notably in *Time and Free Will* (1889; trans. 1913), *Matter and Memory* (1897; trans. 1910) and *Creative Evolution* (1907; trans. 1911) – it is remarkable that Beckett fully exploits what Arnheim calls ‘this feeling of jerkiness’, which would not be such a problem in optical montage: ‘But if a sound passage is interrupted and followed by silence, it causes an intolerable break’ (222–3). In the case of Krapp’s winding forward to the scene with the girl in the punt, however, it seems to be the continuity, rather than the break, that seems to be intolerable. Arnheim explains the ‘intolerability’ of the break as follows:

The difficulty really is that we never have to deal with an unceasing stream of sound (it would be unbearable if we had), but with a succession of isolated sounds which emerge against a background of silence. This silence is not a foreign body, it is an integral part of the progression of sounds, but if the sound stops suddenly the resultant silence is nothingness, a vacuum, cessation. (223)

As Gaby Hartel notes, Arnheim was a trained *Gestalt* theorist, ‘interested in the effects that the artistic material of film and radio had on the human mind’ (Hartel 2010, 222–3). The way he saw the radio medium was indeed in terms of ‘figure’ and ‘ground’, the ether being the ‘background of a silent void’, or in German ‘die Folie des schweigenden Nichts’ (Arnheim 1933, qtd. in Hartel 2010, 222).

Only a year after he read Arnheim did Beckett write his letter to Axel Kaun (9 July 1937) in which he compares his language to a veil, which he needs to tear apart or in which he has to bore holes in order to get at ‘das

hinterliegende Nichts' (*LSB I* 514). In other words, Beckett here combines Arnheim's background of a silent void combined with the image of a veil or film that goes back a long way, at least as far back as the Romantics (Van Hulle 2007, 23), notably Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria* (1817)<sup>152</sup> and Shelley's *Defence of Poetry* (1821):

Poetry turns all things to loveliness; [...] it strips the veil of familiarity from the world, and lays bare the naked and sleeping beauty, which is the spirit of its forms. [...] it purges from our inward sight the film of familiarity which obscures from us the wonder of our being. It compels us to feel that which we perceive, and to imagine that which we know. It creates anew the universe, after it has been annihilated in our minds by the recurrence of impressions blunted by reiteration. (Shelley 2002, 533)

Shelley's text also deals with a key image regarding the workings of the creative mind:

Poetry is not like reasoning, a power to be exerted according to the determination of the will. A man cannot say, "I will compose poetry." The greatest poet even cannot say it; for the mind in creation is as a *fading coal*, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness; this power arises from within, like the color of a flower which fades

<sup>152</sup> In Chapter XIV the 'film of familiarity' is mentioned in the same paragraph as the famous 'suspension of disbelief': 'In this idea originated the plan of the *Lyrical Ballads*; in which it was agreed, that my endeavours should be directed to persons and characters supernatural, or at least romantic, yet so as to transfer from our inward nature a human interest and a semblance of truth sufficient to procure for these shadows of imagination that willing suspension of disbelief for the moment, which constitutes poetic faith. Mr. Wordsworth on the other hand was to propose to himself as his object, to give the charm of novelty to things of every day, and to excite a feeling analogous to the supernatural, by awakening the mind's attention from the lethargy of custom, and directing it to the loveliness and the wonders of the world before us; an inexhaustible treasure, but for which in consequence of the film of familiarity and selfish solicitude we have eyes, yet see not, ears that hear not, and hearts that neither feel nor understand' (<http://www.english.upenn.edu/~mgamer/Etexts/biographia.html>).

and changes as it is developed, and the conscious portions of our natures are unprophetic either of its approach or its departure. (531)

Stephen Dedalus was not the only modern artist who, as a young man, was inspired by this image when he tried to explain his aesthetic theory in terms of the ‘whatness of a thing’: ‘This supreme quality is felt by the artist when the aesthetic image is first conceived in his imagination. The mind in that mysterious instant Shelley likened beautifully to a fading coal’ (Joyce 2000, 231). As Paul Lawley has suggested, the image of the coal and the fire can be related directly to the ‘creative-ontological predicament’ that is a crucial element in ‘the basic structure of all Beckett’s plays, a structure generated by the central figure (Hamm, Krapp, Henry, Winnie, Mouth, May) in the process of his or her response to the creative-ontological predicament’ (Lawley 1980).

Here, it is important to situate the writing process of *Krapp’s Last Tape* within the genesis of *Embers*, that is, the interruption that separates the first stage of the genesis of *Embers* from its second stage. Whereas the image of the fire is dominant in Krapp’s taped chronicle and the pun on ‘wind’ and ‘winding’ recalls Shelley’s image of the ‘inconstant wind’, awakening the coal to transitory brightness, the title of *Embers* emphasizes the ‘fading’ of the coal, and its text ‘dampens’ the faint glow by means of the dominant image of the sea. Again, the chapter ‘Radio Plays’ in Arnheim’s *Film* provides an interesting theoretical context for this image:

Only few of the objects in our surroundings are in the habit of giving off sounds uninterruptedly. Some do it occasionally, most not at all. *The sea murmurs unceasingly*, a dog barks occasionally, a table never makes a sound. (Arnheim 1933, 217; emphasis added)

Since ‘the sea murmurs unceasingly’ it can serve as an acoustic ‘ground’ against which the acoustic ‘figure’ of the voice can appear (the way it appears in *Company*, for instance: ‘A voice comes to one in the dark. Imagine’); ‘c’est entièrement une question de voix’ (Beckett 2004, 63), as the narrator of *L’Innommable* says, ‘it’s entirely a matter of voices’ (*U* 37). And in order to make this faint acoustic figure appear, silence serves as a foil, not unlike

Arnheim's 'Folie des schweigenden Nichts'. It is this background of a silent void, combined with the 'jerky effect' of acoustic montage that Beckett plays with by making Krapp wind back and forward, thus effectively 'bor[ing] one hole after another' (*Dis* 172) in the veil of language, created by his earlier selves.

#### **2.2.4 Version 4 (EM3, 10v-11v)**

One of the remarkable attributes that are added to this new version is the pair of boots: 'Surprising pair of yellow boots white erieket boots, size ten, very narrow & pointed' (EM3, 10v). That the boots are not only yellow but also 'very narrow' may be an allusion to Beckett's own imitation of Joyce in the early years of his career. In 'Remembering Sam', Georges Pelorson recalls a walk they once took together in Phoenix Park around 1929 or 1930:

After a few hundred yards I noticed Sam was walking almost like a duck. I said to him 'What's the matter with you, are your feet hurting?' and he said 'yes'. 'Why, are you tired?' and he answered 'No, it's my shoes. They're too tight.' 'Well, why don't you change them?' (Belmont<sup>153</sup> 1992, 114)

Pelorson got no answer, but he found it years later when he met Beckett with James Joyce in Paris. He noticed that Joyce was wearing 'extraordianary shoes of a blistering canary yellow' and suddenly understood why Beckett had not answered him in Phoenix Park: 'Sam was sitting nearby and as I was looking at him all of a sudden I realized that his shoes were exactly the same size as Joyce's, though evidently his feet were not' (Belmont 1992, 115). According to Pelorson, Beckett was 'really haunted by Joyce' at the time, 'imitating him in all his most characteristic attitudes, dressing like him, eating the same food as him, holding himself like him' (115). In a review of the story *Echo's Bones*, edited by Mark Nixon, Fintan O'Toole makes a direct link with *Krapp's Last Tape*. O'Toole sees *Echo's Bones* as Beckett's first steps in his own shoes, and *Krapp's Last Tape* as an autobiographical 'what-if'

<sup>153</sup> Georges Pelorson changed his name to Belmont after the Second World War, because he was blacklisted as a Vichy collaborator.

experiment, Beckett's attempt to imagine what would have happened to him if he had continued walking in Joyce's: 'Beckett created a version of himself as he might have been if he had not escaped from Joyce's shadow: a crapulous ex-writer tethered to the pomposities of his past' (O'Toole 2015, 34).

Beckett soon replaced the original 'yellow boots' (in the same manuscript), not necessarily to hide what on second thought he might have considered a slightly too overt autobiographical reference, but to emphasize the black and white contrast. While the yellow boots were replaced by white ones the 'Red rusty baggy trousers' were replaced by black ones. As Beckett was partly parodying his own younger self, his cricket past played a small role as well. For the white boots, he briefly considered the specification 'cricket' boots. This detail may have its roots in Beckett's many interactions with the BBC in the years preceding the genesis of *Krapp's Last Tape*. On 16 November 1956 the C.T.P., John Morris, contacted Beckett. McWhinnie had told him about the 'successful meetings' he had had with Beckett. Morris explicitly invited Beckett to 'do some more for us', even suggesting an idea: 'I remember when we met in the summer you told me of your passion for cricket. What about a sort of cricketing Godot?' (BBC WAC SB Scriptwriter 53-62, 16 November 1956).<sup>154</sup>

## 2.2.5 Version 5 (ET2)

In ET2, the title appears for the first time as an autograph addition, in which Krapp is spelled with a capital C: 'Crapp's Last Tape'. Whereas in the first version, the protagonist's birthplace was clearly Dublin (more specifically North Great Georges Street; EM1, 13r), the local references are removed in the typescripts and in ET2 even the location in the room is further abstracted by specifying that the table and immediately adjacent area is

<sup>154</sup> Beckett replied that he hoped indeed that he would be able to do something else for the Third Programme, seizing the opportunity to suggest 'possibly with my cousin John Beckett of whom I spoke to you' and implying that he cannot work on it immediately: 'At the moment I am up to my eyes in the new play and the mime opening here at the Oeuvre probably in January' (BBC WAC SB Scriptwriter 53-62, 16 November 1956).

not simply ‘in strong light’, but ‘in strong <sup>white</sup> light’, thus emphasizing the black-and-white dualism (Fig. 11).

### **2.2.6 Version 6 (ET3)**

In the third typescript, Beckett systematically adds pauses and other ‘gaps’, consistent with his early aesthetics of inaudibilities and the references to Beethoven’s pauses in *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* – ‘compositions eaten away with terrible silences’ (*Dream* 139) – and in his letter to Axel Kaun of 9 July 1937 – ‘die von grossen schwarzen Pausen gefressene Tonfläche in der siebten Symphonie von Beethoven’ (*Dis* 53). One of the ways in which Beckett makes these gaps in the textual surface is by introducing the stage direction ‘(hesitates)’. A comparison of the first three typescripts clearly shows a substantial, systematic introduction of extra moments of hesitation between typescripts 2 and 3:

<u>Documents</u>	‘( <u>hesitates</u> )’
ET1	3 times
ET2	4 times
ET3	11 times

### **2.2.7 Version 7 (ET4)**

The increase of pauses and moments of hesitation noted in ET3 is a tendency that is even enhanced in ET4. For instance, when Beckett changes ‘moonstone’ to ‘chrysolite’, he makes Krapp hesitate more explicitly (with a stage direction) before he finds the word:

like ... moonstone. (EM2; Eté 56, 15v)  
 like...moonstones. (ET1, 2r)  
 like...moonstones. (ET2, 3r)  
 like – moonstone! (Pause.) (ET3, 4r)  
 Like...(hesitates)...moonstone chrysolite! (Pause.) Ah well... (ET4, 4r)

The number of pauses also increases :

Fig. 11: Opening page of the second typescript (ET2), preserved at the HRC.

*2* / CRAPP'S LAST TAPE      3.58

~~He's been sitting  
in an armchair  
for weeks now.  
No one comes to him.~~

*front* *left* *right*  
*front* *left* *right*  
*front* *left* *right*

Front centre, sitting on a small wooden chair before a ~~wooden~~ wooden table, ~~X~~.

Little wearish old man.

Rusty ~~xx~~ black narrow trousers, too short for him. Rusty black sleeveless waistcoat, four pockets. Heavy silver watch and chain. Grimy white shirt, open at neck. No collar. Surprising pair of white boots, size ten, very narrow and pointed.

Pallid face. Purple nose. ~~long~~ grey hair, ~~white~~ <sup>(but not white)</sup>. Very near-sighted and hard of hearing. ~~No glasses.~~ Croaking voice, characteristic accent.

On ~~the~~ table a tape-recorder, ~~a~~ number of cardboard boxes containing recorded tapes. ~~A~~ ledger.

On the left *at Yuno* *Yuno!* Table and immediately adjacent area in strong <sup>white</sup> light. Rest of stage in darkness.

(reading from ledger, his nose down on it). Box...three... spool...five. (He turns his head and stares front. With relish.) Spool! (Pause.) Spool! (Pause. He turns back to table, starts peering and poking at the boxes.) Box...three...three...four...two... (with surprise) nine!...good God...seven...ah!.. the little rascal! (He separates box three from the others.) Box three. (He opens it, peers at the spools inside.) Spool... (He peers at ledger, finds the entry) ...five. (He peers at spools.) Five...five... (He takes out a spool, straightens up, holds up spool between finger and thumb.) Spool five. (He lays it on table, closes box three and puts it back with the others. He takes up spool.) Box three, spool five. (He puts spool on machine, peers at ledger. Reading entry at foot of page.) Mother at rest... The black ball... (He raises his head. Puzzled.) Black ball? (Pause.) He peers again at ledger, reads.) The dark nurse. (He raises his head, broods, peers again at ledger.) Improvement of bowel condition... ~~memorable~~ Memorable...what? (He peers closer.) Equinox, memorable equinox. (He raises his head, stares front. Puzzled.) Memorable equinox? (Pause. He shrugs his shoulders, peers again at ledger.) Farewell to - (he turns the page) - love.

He broods, closes ledger, bends over machine, switches it on and assumes listening posture, i.e. ear cupped towards machine, face front. ~~purple~~ X.

*bending forward, d-*  
*ear facing outwards*  
*over table, eyes*  
*moving with difficulty*  
*feet flat on floor*  
*face front*

Tape

(strong young voice, rather pompous, ~~but~~ obviously ~~an~~ A's at a much earlier time.) Thirty-seven today, ~~and~~ sound - (Settling himself more comfortably ~~A~~ knocks a box off the table. He curses, switches off machine, sweeps boxes



<u>Documents</u>	'(pause)'
ET1	43 pauses
ET2	59
ET3	77
ET4	80

### **2.2.8 Version 8 (ET5)**

To this version Beckett added a few holograph corrections that relate to the four elements. For instance, in the ‘canal’ passage, he added ‘in the biting wind’, as a counterpart to the ‘pier’ passage’s ‘in the howling wind’:

I used to sit there, day after day, wishing she were dead <sup>gone</sup>. (EM2, 16r)  
 I sat there, wishing she were gone. Day after day. (ET1, 2r)  
 There I sat, ~~da~~ wishing she were gone. (ET2, 3r)  
 There I sat, wishing she were gone. (ET3, 3r)  
 There I sat, wishing she were gone. (ET4, 4r)  
 There I sat, ~~day after day~~ <sup>in the biting wind</sup>, wishing she were gone. (ET5, 4r)

With regard to the other elements, especially ‘fire’, Beckett’s letter to Patrick Magee of 11 April 1958 (TCD MS 11313/2; *LSB III* 128-30) in reply to the actor’s queries<sup>155</sup> contains some helpful suggestions:

<sup>155</sup> The first part of the letter deals mainly with the opening mime: ‘Dear Pat Magee / Thanks for your letter. I’m glad you like Krapp. George Devine tells me he’ll do it with Endgame next month or in the early autumn. Please God it doesn’t clash with the Iceman. / I’m afraid you’ll have to draw attention to the first banana skin somehow, so as to be able to throw the second at the audience. All this business could be cut out of course, but I should prefer not. You have a precarious walk in any case and you needn’t slip on the skin. A vague stumble yards away from it would do, then you make it responsible. You are “drowned in dreams” here and a hitch in your locomotion should appear quite natural. It could be “prepared” on your way from table to front’ (TCD MS 11313/2). Towards the end of the letter Beckett invites Magee to let him know if he has any other questions: ‘If any more queries occur to you I’ll be very glad to answer them – or try to. I hope you’ll be able to get over and that we may have an evening together in Paris’ (TCD MS 11313/2; *LSB III* 128-29).



You are quite right about the voice and I should have indicated its tone more precisely. The self-importance is mainly in relation to the “opus” and can therefore disappear in the **canal** and **lake** passages and reappear in the **pier** passage which the old Krapp finds so insufferable.

The sour cud and iron stool are respectively the memories (“all that old misery”) and the constipation (“my old weakness”, “unattainable laxation”).

“Homework” is the old man’s contemptuous description of the “opus magnum”. He is overcome at the memory of this “farewell to love” (renouncement of Bianca and the girl in the punt) as liable to interfere with (“get in the way of”) his intellectual activity.

While I think of it a word to be brought out very strong is **“burning”** (page 7, line 1), in order that “fire” at the end may carry all its ambiguity. (TCD MS 11313/2; *LSB III* 129)

By describing these passages in such an analytical way and emphasizing their setting, Beckett also lays bare a gendered schematic structure linked mainly to the elements water and earth: in the water-related passages ('canal' and 'lake'), linked to female characters (mother, the dark young beauty, the girl in the punt), Krapp's self-importance is to 'disappear'; in the 'pier' passage, Krapp's 'reappear[ing]' self-importance is linked to the self-important, man-made protruding piece of earth which Joyce called a 'disappointed bridge', also connected to the elements air and fire ('in the howling wind' and 'the fire that set it alight'; *KLT* 8; *CDW* 220). To some extent, this gendered division of elements relates to what Steven Connor called Beckett's reading of 'the encounter between Krapp and his tapes in sexualized terms' (Connor 2014, 100). In this connection, Beckett's production notebook mentions 'das Weibliche' (*TN3* 97), referring to 'das Ewigweibliche' in Goethe's *Faust*. The notion of the 'disappointed bridge' is suggested more explicitly in the French translation of the pun 'sound as a bell'; Krapp's early feeling of self-confidence is translated into French as 'solide comme un pont' ['solid as a bridge'], a phrase that looks forward to his vision "at the end of the jetty", as Steven Connor notes: 'The tape provides Krapp with a bridge to his lost past, which he can nevertheless never cross' (Connor 2014, 101).

Beckett's emphasis on the fire in his letter to Magee focuses on one particular instance in the text: “**burning**” (page 7, line 1). This is a reference to typescript 5 (ET5, UoR MS 1659). On page 7, line 1, Beckett changed the word ‘panting’ into ‘burning’. The word ‘panting’ itself was a substitution (in ET4, 6r) for ‘**wishing**’ (Fig. 12). Beckett actually took the decision to emphasize this notion of burning in the preceding typescript: in ET4, on page 6, one of the few substitutions in blue-black ink (made at a later stage than the changes in black ink) is the same replacement of ‘**panting**’ by ‘**burning**’. (Fig. 13)

Krapp remembers sitting and shivering in the park (‘in the middle of the brats and skivvies’ as the earliest drafts specify), dreaming and ‘wishing I were gone’ (EM2, 19r; ET1, 3r; ET2, 5r; ET3, 5r). The ‘wishing I were gone’ was more recognizable as an echo of ‘wishing she were gone’ (referring to Krapp’s dying mother). But Beckett chose to change it into ‘burning to be gone’, wishing Magee to put extra emphasis on ‘burning’ in order that “fire” at the end may carry all its ambiguity. What Beckett meant by the “fire” at the end’ is the sentence: ‘Not with the fire **burning** in me now’. Interestingly, he cancelled the word ‘burning’ in this sentence. Also in this version, Beckett added an extra ‘fire’ to the ‘pier’ passage. Apart from the ‘fire that set it alight’, he added the word ‘fire’ to the ‘unshatterable association until my dissolution of storm and night with the light of the understanding’. The collation of the different versions shows an interesting pattern from ‘peace’, first to a gap and then to ‘fire’:

- with the light of understanding and the peace – (EM2, 16v)
- with the light of understanding and the peace – (EM2, 17r)
- with the light of understanding and the ~~peaee~~ – (ET1, 2r)
- with the light of the understanding and – (ET2, 4r)
- with the light of the understanding and – (ET3, 4r)
- with the light of the understanding and – (ET4, 4r)
- with the light of the understanding and the <sup>fire</sup> – (ET5, 5r)

From the beginning, Beckett deployed the tape recorder to create a mechanized effect that resembles what in rhetoric is termed ‘aposiopesis’, a figure of speech in which the speaker comes to a sudden halt, as if unable or unwilling to proceed. Beckett’s brilliant twist to this rhetorical device was to let the speaker also be the listener, and to make him unable or unwilling to

Fig. 12: On the fifth typescript (ET5, UoR MS 1659), page 7, line 1 – as Beckett specified to Pat Magee – he changed the word ‘panting’ into ‘burning’, which he wanted ‘to be brought out very strong’.

7

Acc 1659

ing in the park, drowned in dreams and ~~panting~~ <sup>burning</sup> to be gone.  
Not a ~~sinking~~ soul. (Pause.) Last fancies. (Vehemently.)  
Keep 'em under! (Pause.) Scalded the eyes out of me reading  
Effie again, a page a day, with tears again. Effie... (Pause.)  
Could have been happy with her, up there on the Baltic, and  
the pines, and the dunes. (Pause.) Could I? (Pause.) And she?  
(Pause.) Pah! (Pause.) Fanny came in a couple of times. Bony  
old ghost of a whore. Couldn't do much, but I suppose better  
than a kick in the crutch. The last time wasn't so bad. How  
do you manage it, she said, at your age. I told her I'd been  
saving up for her all my life. (Pause.) Went to Vespers once,  
like when I was in short trousers. (Pause. Sings.)

Now the day is over,  
Night is drawing nigh-igh,  
Shadows - (Coughing. Almost inaudible.) - of the  
evening  
Steal across the sky.

(Panting.) Went to sleep and fell off the pew. (Pause.)  
Sometimes wondered in the night if a last effort mightn't -  
(Pause.) Ah ~~empty~~ your ~~now~~ now and get to your bed. Finish  
this drivel in the morning. Or leave it at that. (Pause.)  
Leave it at that. (Pause.) Lie propped up in the dark - and  
wander. Be again in the dingle on a Christmas Eve, gathering  
holly, the red-berried. (Pause.) Be again on ~~Frogman~~ Croghan  
on a Sunday morning, in the haze, with the bitch, stop and  
listen to the bells. (Pause.) And so on. (Pause.) Be again,  
be again. (Pause.) All that old misery. (Pause.) Once wasn't  
enough for you. (Pause.) Lie down across her.

Long pause. He suddenly bends over machine, switches off,  
wrenches off tape, throws it away, puts on the other,  
winds it forward to the passage he wants, switches on, listens  
staring front.

Tape - gooseberries, she said. I said again I thought it was hope-  
less and no good going on, and she agreed, without opening  
her eyes. (Pause.) I asked her to look at me and after a few  
moments - (pause) - after a few moments she did, but the eyes  
just slits, because of the glare. I bent over her to get  
them in the shadow and they opened. (Pause. Low.) Let me in.  
(Pause.) We drifted in among the ~~reeds~~ and stuck. They way  
they went down, sighing, before the stem! (Pause.) I lay  
down across her with my face in her breasts and my hand on  
her. We lay/without moving. But under us all moved, and moved  
us,/up and down, and from side to side.

Pause. Krapp's lips move. No sound.

Fast midnight. Never knew such silence. The earth might be  
uninhabited.

Pause.

*finish your booze /  
Go on with /  
flags /  
there /  
gently /*

Fig. 13: On the fourth typescript (page 6r), the only substitution in blue-black ink is the same substitution of 'panting' by 'burning'.

6      burning

Krapp Just been listening to that stupid bastard I took myself for thirty years ago, hard to believe I was ever as bad as that. Thank ~~the~~ that's all ~~done with~~ anyway. (Pause.) The eyes she had! (Broods realizes he is recording silence, switches off, broods. Finally.) Everything there, everything, ~~all the -~~ (Realizes this is not being recorded, switches on.) Everything there, everything on this lousy earth, all the light and dark and famine and feating of... (hesitates)... the ages! (In a shout.) Yes! (Pause.) Let that go! Jesus! Take his mind off his homework! Jesus! (Pause. Weary.) Ah well, maybe he was right. (Pause.) Maybe he was right. (Broods. Realizes. Switches off. Consults envelope.) Pah! (Crumples it and throws it away. Broods. Switches on.) Nothing to say... not a squeak. What's a year now? (Cleared euds and took stool.) (Pause.) Revelled in the word spool. (With relish.) Spooool! Happiest moment of the year. (Pause.) Seventeen copies sold of which eleven at ~~the~~ service to free lending libraries ~~in the dominions~~. Getting known. (Pause.) One pound six and something, eight I have little doubt. (Pause.) Crawled out once or twice, before the summer was cold. Sat in the park, drowned in dreams and ~~wishing~~ I was gone. Not a soul. (Pause.) Last fancies. ~~so mad altogether if I don't keep them under.~~ (Pause.) Resolutions. (Pause.) Aspirations. (Pause.) Scolded the eyes out of me reading Effie again, a page a day, with tears again. Effie... (Pause.) ~~Might have been happy with her,~~ up there on the Baltic, and the pines, and the dunes. (Pause.) Fanny came in a couple of times. Bony old ~~she~~ who. Couldn't do much, but I suppose better than nothing. The last time wasn't so bad. How do you manage it, she said, at your age? Told her I'd been saving up for her all my life. (Pause.) Went to Vespers once, like when I was in short trousers. (Pause. Sings.)

Now the day is over  
Night is drawing nigh - igh  
Shadows - (Fit of coughing. Faintly.) -of the evening  
Steal across the sky.

Went to sleep and fell off the pew. (Pause.) Sometimes wondered in the night if a last effort mightn't - (Pause.) Ah empty your bottle now and get to your bed. Finish this ~~drive~~ in the morning. Or leave it at that. (Pause.) Leave it at that. (Pause.) Lie propped up in the dark - and wander. (Pause.) Be again in the dingle on a Christmas Eve, gathering holly, the red-berried. (Pause.) Be again on Croghan on a Sunday morning, in the haze, with the ~~coffee~~, stop and listen to the bells. (Pause.) And so on. (Pause.) Be again, be again. (Pause.) All that old misery. (Pause.) Once wasn't enough for ~~her~~. (Pause.) Lie down across her. (Long pause. He suddenly bends over machine, switches off, wrenches off tape, throws it away, puts on the other, winds it forward to the passage he wants, switches on, listens staring ~~see~~ front.)

400 |

Tape ~~gooseberries~~ - gooseberries she said. I said again I thought it was hopeless and no good going on, and she agreed, without opening her eyes. (Pause.) I asked her to look at me



let the speaking proceed. It was only in ET4 that he added the word ‘fire’ just before the interruption. By making ‘fire’ the word that marks the aposiopesis and introduces one of the most ‘egregious’<sup>156</sup> gaps in his dramatic works, Beckett did in writerly terms what he asked Magee to do in terms of acting: preparing the text to make ‘fire’ at the end carry all its ambiguity.

What Beckett meant by ‘all’ its ambiguity is hard to fully appreciate, but his student library contains a few hints. For the January 1926 Hilary Term Junior Sophister Examinations, Petrarch’s poems and Dante’s Inferno were among the set texts (Pilling 2006, 11) and Beckett’s library still contains several of the ‘Prescribed Books’. The two-volume set of *Le Rime di Messer Francesco Petrarca* (from the Classica Biblioteca Italiana series, Milan: Nicolò Bettoni, 1824), which Beckett later gave to Avigdor Arikha and Anne Atik, was probably purchased in preparation for this examination. Although the second volume is heavily annotated, Anne Atik notes that Beckett’s favourite line from Petrarch is *not* marked: ‘chi può dir com’egli arde, è ’n picciol foco’ (literally: ‘who can say how he burns is in little fire’) – which Beckett translated as ‘He who knows he is burning is burning in a small fire’ (Atik 2001, 80). Since Beckett liked to quote it on several occasions, it is indeed remarkable that it is not marked in his copy of *Le Rime*. My suggestion is that Beckett did not encounter it here, but in Montaigne’s essays. In the ‘Sam Francis’ Notebook (UoR MS2926, 19v) the same line is quoted in isolation, followed by a reference to the name of the author spelled ‘Pétrarque’, which suggests that Beckett excerpted the line from a French source text (see Fig. 14).

This French source text was most probably Montaigne’s essay ‘De la tristesse’ (one of the first of his *Essays*), in which it is quoted in the context of ardent lovers’ unbearable passion (60). But Beckett’s complex allusion has other connotations. Only two months after Beckett started writing *Krapp’s Last Tape*, he mentioned Petrarch in a letter to Con Leventhal (21 April 1958), who had asked him about his affinities with Italian literature. Beckett quotes the same line as a key to his literary *technique*:

156 H. Porter Abbott introduced the notion of the ‘egregious gap’ to emphasize Beckett’s sustained effort to maintain attention on the experience of unknowing. He admits that ‘gaps are endemic in literature’, but ‘The difference in Beckett is the degree to which he felt the urgency of making ignorance a felt condition of his readership and the corresponding degree to which he capitalized on the same device’ (Abbott 2004, 20).



Perhaps a more interesting approach, from the technical view, is a line from Petrarch –

“Chi può dir com’ egli arde è in picciol foco” –

arde being understood more generally, and less gallantly, than in the *Canzoniere*. As thus solicited it can link up with the 3<sup>rd</sup> proposition (*coup de grâce*) of Gorgias in his Nonent:

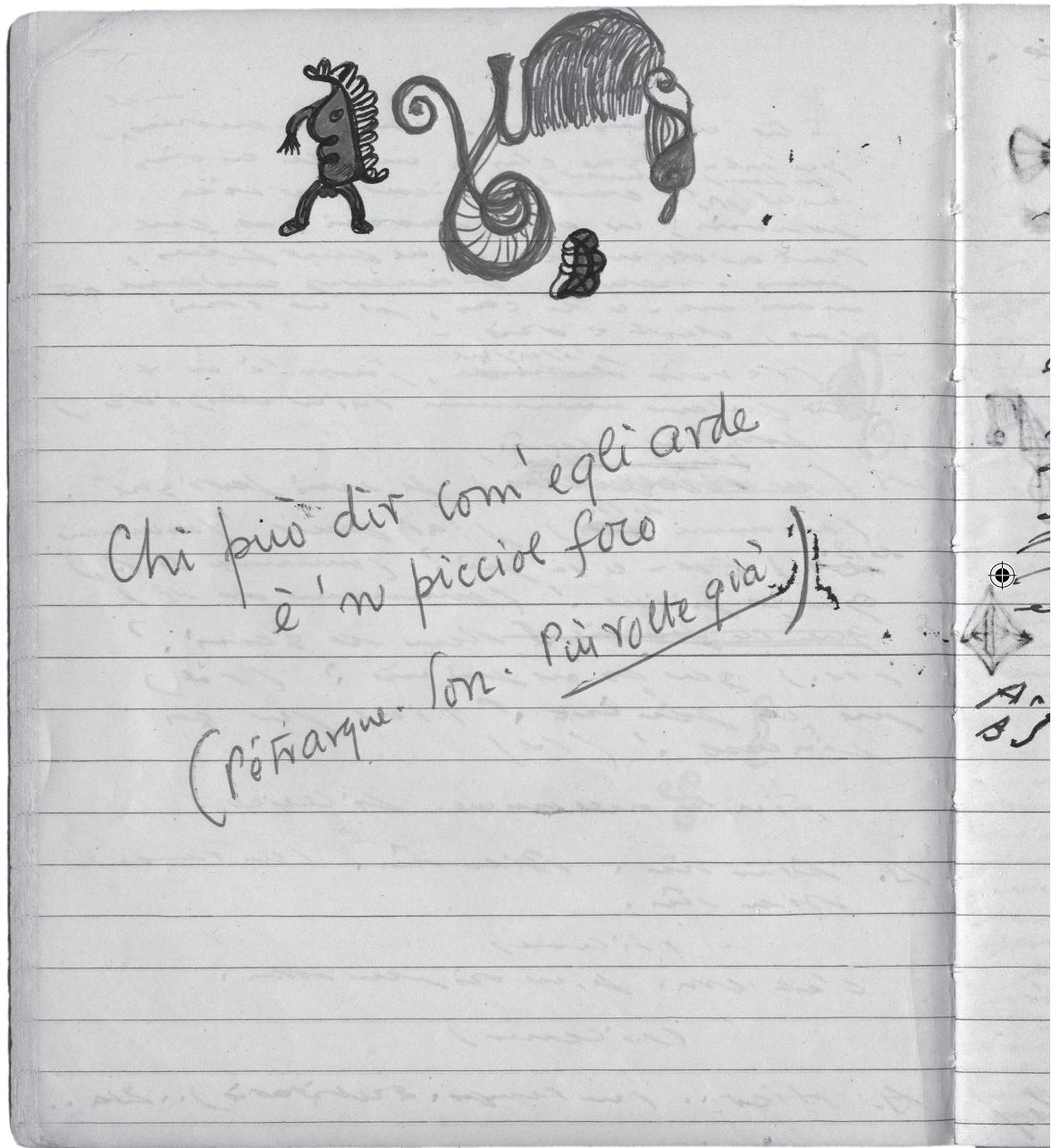
- 1 Nothing is
- 2 If anything is, it cannot be known.
- 3 If anything is, and can be known, it cannot be expressed in speech. (*LSB III* 136)

Here, Beckett seems to have been mainly interested in Petrarch’s linguistic skepticism, the suggestion of language’s limited means of expression (‘può dir’), which is highlighted in the 1777 translation by John Nott: ‘Faint is the flame that language can express’.<sup>157</sup> This emphasis on the limits of language shows the affinity between Petrarch’s line and Beckett’s favourite line from *King Lear*, ‘The worst is not, So long as one can say, “this is the worst”, jotted down in his ‘Sottisier’ Notebook (UoR MS 2901, 14v). In the same (late) period, Beckett excerpted a line by Seneca, ‘Curae leves loquuntur, ingentes stupent’ [‘Light sorrows speak, deeper ones are silent.’] (from Hyppolytus Act 2, scene 3, line 607; UoR MS 2934, 01r). At first sight, the expansion of the intricate network of intertextual references seems to lead us further away from Petrarch, but that is only an impression, for Petrarch and Seneca are brought together by – again – Montaigne, in the same essay ‘De la tristesse’ (Montaigne 1965, 61).

The intertextual detour illustrates the ambiguity of the ‘fire’ in *Krapp’s Last Tape*, in that it exemplifies Krapp’s decision to focus on his intellect rather than to listen to his emotions. For him, the ‘fire that set it alight’ came to him one night in March after a period he describes as ‘creatively’ (EM2, 16r), ‘intellectually’ (EM2, 16r), ‘spiritually’ (ET3, 4r) disheartening. However, the fire, representing the ‘light of the understanding’, is also a reference to

<sup>157</sup> In: *The Sonnets, Triumphs, and Other Poems of Petrarch*, with a Life of the Poet by Thomas Campbell (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1859), 160.

Fig. 14: Last line from Petrarch's sonnet CXXXVII, possibly taken from Montaigne's essay 'De la tristesse', jotted down by Beckett in his 'Sam Francis' Notebook (UoR MS 2926, 19v-20r).





C'est ... à pas un temps ... un  
temps ... une fois ... à côté  
... enfin ... (un instant à l'ancien)  
ça va la saison des chênes, ~~des~~  
des feuilles liées à la saison des  
chênes. Il n'y a rien de ...  
... que quelques feuilles au sol  
qui sont tombées dans le sol et  
une ... une ... une saison d'automne.  
une ... une saison d'automne.  
Tempo. Mais voilà, il fait chaud, il fait chaud,  
il fait à peu près, il fait à peu près,  
il fait à peu près, il fait à peu près ...

(Bonne saison)

A.) (in intellektive)

Petrarch and Montaigne. The intricate web of intertextual allusions is the intellectual's evasion of emotional fire, of ardent and passionate love. So when the middle-aged Krapp on the tape cannot stop talking about the spiritual 'light of the understanding and the fire –', the old, listening Krapp silences him, because to him the word 'fire' evidently has the emotional, rather than intellectual, connotations. Instead of explicitly alluding to Petrarch or to Seneca, the old Krapp performatively enacts the *tristesse* of Montaigne's essay, which combines the two. Light sorrows speak, deeper ones are silent; by effectively silencing the Krapp who kept expressing how he was burning, the older Krapp retroactively shows him how small his fire was by winding the tape forward, forcing him to face the real fire as closely as possible – 'my face in her breasts' – and at the same time suggesting that the only 'fire in me now' is a 'burning to be gone'.

The Montaigne connection is also relevant to the cognitive research described in the Introduction. In his essay 'On Educating Children' Montaigne described his project as follows: 'My aim is to reveal my own self, which may well be different tomorrow if I am initiated into some new business which changes me' (Montaigne 2003, 167). He was one of the first writers who consistently studied what Beckett called the 'individual [as] a succession of individuals' (PTD 19). And this existential insight had some textual consequences: the two-volume edition of his essays came out in 1580; by 1588 his 'self' had changed and so had his text. A new, three-volume edition came out with more than 600 additions. And to his own copy of this 1588 edition, Montaigne kept adding handwritten marginalia. So, not only the essay 'De la tristesse', but the entire project of Montaigne's essays prefigures Krapp's project of taped 'essays' (literally 'attempts') to capture the different stages of his self. By analogy, the same applies to the different versions of the text of *Krapp's Last Tape*.

As for the differences between the corrected typescript (ET5) and the thermofax copy (ETC), the changes are relatively minor. But among the autograph 'proof corrections' in blue-black ink on ET5 (which served as the basis for the text in *Evergreen Review*; see section 1.3.1), there are a few corrections that deserve to be highlighted. At this late stage, the dog was still 'a wire-haired fox-terrier'. It was only at proof stage that Beckett changed it into a 'little white dog', thus creating the contrast between the black ball and the white dog, to which he later referred in his production notebook

to indicate how this gesture complicates and undermines the Manichaean dichotomy between darkness and light (see 2.3.1).

Another important ‘proof correction’ is the deletion of ‘imagine’ and the substitution by ‘fancy’: ‘This I ~~imagine~~<sup>fancy</sup> is what I have chiefly to record’ (ET5, 5r). Beckett had already introduced the verb ‘imagine’ in the second manuscript version, when Krapp wonders what he means by ‘the grain’ and imagines what might be the things worth having when all the dust has settled: ‘I try to be the old man who one day perhaps will listen to this I close my eyes and try and imagine them’ (EM2, 15r, sentence 107; see section 2.2.2). This act of imagination is what the entire play is built upon, for as the deletion indicates, it entails a particular form of empathy with a later self (‘I try to be the old man who one day perhaps will listen to this’). To distinguish this form of imagination from the more casual use of the term in ‘This I imagine is what I have chiefly to record’, Beckett takes recourse to the word ‘fancy’, which Samuel Taylor Coleridge distinguished from ‘imagination’. According to Coleridge, imagination ‘dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate’, whereas fancy is ‘a mode of Memory emancipated from the order of time and space’ (it ‘must receive all its materials ready made from the law of association’ (Coleridge 1907, 202). Coleridge’s theory of imagination is a reaction to what he called the ‘despotism of the eye’ in his *Biographia Literaria* (Chapter VI):

all that laborious conjecture can do, is to fill up the gaps of fancy. Under that despotism of the eye [...] – under this strong sensuous influence, we are restless because invisible things are not the objects of vision. (74)

Since Coleridge’s theory was an alternative to the *tabula rasa* model suggested by empiricists such as John Locke and an ‘emancipation’ from the eye’s despotism, Beckett’s decision to make Krapp first close his eyes before he starts imagining may be an allusion to Coleridge, but as to Beckett’s own position in terms of models of the mind, this passage remains ambiguous, for after Krapp closes his eyes and tries<sup>158</sup> to imagine the things worth having,

158 In Beckett’s translation of Mihalovici’s opera version, this notion of ‘trying’ is replaced by ‘do my best to imagine’ (UoR MS 1227-7-10-2, 16-7 [Mihalovici’s numbering]; see section 1.6.2).



there is no indication of what those things might be, only a ‘Long pause’. Towards the end of the play, it becomes clear that, with hindsight, the only thing ‘worth having’ was the love to which he bid farewell. And this is not something he ‘imagines’ by closing his eyes; it is something he is reminded of by enactively listening and relistening to his tape recorder.





## 2.3 Scene per scene

In the ‘Eté 56’ Notebook, the Krapp-related notes and drafts are immediately followed by a series of notes on *Comment c'est* (see 1.1.1), including the note ‘ontospéléologie’. Krapp’s confrontation with his younger selves arguably fits in with a metaphorical complex around the notion of depth and delving, which marks Beckett’s writings at several instances in his career. Fränzi Maierhöfer applies the image of ‘delving’ in one’s past to Krapp’s pockets and his desk:

Wenn er in seinen Taschen wühlt und in den Schubladen herumwühlt, macht er deutlich, dass er Ausgrabungsarbeiten leistet. Er steht seinen Erinnerungen mit der Haltung eines Archäologen gegenüber, der seine Funde ordnet, in eine Vitrine steckt und sie, desinfiziert und geschützt, zur Besichtigung freigibt [When he rummages in his pockets and in the drawer, he makes clear that he is involved in excavations. He approaches his memories with the attitude of an archaeologist who arranges his findings, places them in a showcase and exhibits them in a disinfected and protected environment.] (Maierhöfer 1970, 162).

Twenty years before writing *Krapp’s Last Tape*, Beckett had noted ‘the geology of conscience – Cambrian experience, cainozoic judgments, etc.’ in the ‘Whoroscope’ Notebook (WN 62r), possibly inspired by a passage in *L’Imagination* (141, 144ff), where Jean-Paul Sartre speaks of ‘a “géométrie” in Husserl’ (Pilling 2005, 46).<sup>159</sup> Beckett drew a ‘Table of Geological Eras’<sup>160</sup>

- 159 The last chapter of Sartre’s *L’Imagination* is devoted to Edmund Husserl, from whom Sartre derives the phenomenological terms ‘noème’ and ‘noëse’ (the object of thought and the act of thought; Sartre 1936, 51). Beckett noted these terms down in the ‘Whoroscope’ Notebook (WN 62r). The next note corresponds with a passage in the last chapter (Sartre 1936, 141; 144ff.), where Sartre compares Husserl’s phenomenology to geometry.
- 160 In the second *Watt* notebook, Beckett tried to capitalize on this table of geological eras:  
‘Never mind that now’ cried Arsene. ‘Dig! Delve! Deeper! Deeper! The Cambrian! The uterine! The pre-uterine!’  
‘The pre-uterine’ we said. ‘No. That reminds us of the rocks at Greystones’ (qtd. in Nixon 2011, 53).

on the back of the page (62v), to develop the idea of a ‘geology of conscience’ – ‘conscience’ used in the French sense, meaning sensibility or consciousness, as John Pilling notes (2005, 46). This link between depth and a phenomenological focus on experience is summarized in an entry in the same notebook, based on Kant’s *Werke*: ‘das fruchtbare Bathos der Erfahrung (Kant)’ with the explanation ‘Bathos = deep (Gr.) !’ (WN 51v). This ‘Bathos’ is criticized as a ‘stupid obsession’ in the passage from *L’Innommable / The Unnamable* quoted in section 1.1.1 (in connection with the notion of ‘ontospéléologie’ in the ‘Eté 56’ Notebook): ‘Y a-t-il d’autres fonds, plus bas? Auxquels on accède par celui-ci? Stupide hantise de la profondeur.’ (Beckett 1953, 11) / ‘Are there other pits, deeper down? To which one accedes by *mine*? Stupid obsession with depth’ (*Un 3*; emphasis added).

This *mine* can also be explored genetically. Whereas the previous chapters took a documentary and chronological approach, focusing on the syntagmatic axis of the genesis (i.e. treating each version as a unit), this chapter is teleological in that it starts from the final structure of the play and follows some of the textual particulars in each of the twelve scenes mentioned in the Introduction, digging ‘shafts’ through the successive versions – to extend the mining metaphor. These textual shafts will be discussed scene per scene (see Introduction for the division into scenes). The focus is on the paradigmatic development of particular details (i.e. the writing process of each separate scene) along the vertical axis in the following table:

<b>Scene</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>II</b>	<b>III</b>	<b>IV</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>VI</b>	<b>VII</b>	<b>VIII</b>	<b>IX</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>XI</b>	<b>XII</b>
EM1	o	o	o	o	o							
EM2		o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
ET1		o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
EM3	o	o	o									
ET2	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
ET3	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
ET4	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
ET5	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o
ETC	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o	o



### 2.3.1 Scene I: Mime I

*Finally he has an idea, puts banana in his waistcoat pocket, the end emerging, and goes with all the speed he can muster backstage into darkness. Ten seconds. Loud pop of cork. Fifteen seconds. He comes back into light carrying an old ledger and sits down at table. He lays ledger on table, wipes his mouth, wipes his hands on the front of his waistcoat, brings them smartly together and rubs them. (KLT 4; CDW 216)*

In the earliest version, the text of the first scene jumps from sentence 21<sup>161</sup> ('rest of stage in shadow') to 36 ('reading from ledger'), for the in-between passage was only added later on. This in-between passage (the mime with the banana) was a relatively late idea, part of the long handwritten passage added to the back of the second typescript's first page (ET2, 1v).

To the next version, Beckett added 'caresses banana' (ET3, 1r), which he then changed into 'strokes banana' (ET4, 1r). The suggestion of masturbation is linked both to the prosthetic device of the tape recorder and to the act of literary creation. Beckett played on the notion of an 'agent provocateur' or undercover agent when, during the rehearsals of his production of the play at the Schiller-Theater Werkstatt, Berlin (October 1969), he described the tape recorder as an 'Agent masturbateur' in his production notebook (TN3 179; see section 1.6.2). This note under the heading 'Psychologique' has more than only psychological connotations. There is also a link with artistic creativity that has a long history in Beckett's oeuvre. In a letter to Thomas MacGreevy (September 1931), Beckett referred to two poems as 'involuntary exonerations (Albas)'<sup>162</sup> – referring to 'involuntary seminal exoneration', a note he made while reading Pierre Garnier's *Onanisme seul et à deux sous toutes ses formes et leurs conséquences* (DN 65). And when, around the same

161 The digital edition (BDMP; [www.beckettarchive.org](http://www.beckettarchive.org)) works with sentence numbers. These numbers are based on the sequence of sentences as they appear in the first English edition (*KLT* 1959), which serves as 'base text'.

162 'I was very pleased to know that you liked the Albas. No, nothing either very new or very beautiful, when I come to think of it. They came together one on top of the other, a double-yoked orgasm in months of aspermatic nights & days. [...] Nothing is so attractive anyhow as abstention. A nice quiet life punctuated with involuntary exonerations (Albas). And isn't my navel worth 10 of anyone else's, even though I can't get a very good view of it.' (*LSB I* 87-8)

time, he started writing his first novel, one of the very first things he made his protagonist do was masturbate. The situation is also a sort of ‘farewell to love’. Belacqua is sitting on a stanchion at the end of a pier – a similar setting as the place where Krapp’s vision takes place –, thinking of Smeraldina with ‘his hands in a jelly in his lap, his head drooped over his hands, pumping up the little blurt. He sat working himself up to the little gush of tears that would exonerate him’ (*Dream 3-4*). But as soon as he ‘felt them coming he switched off his mind’ (4; emphasis added). After having ‘switched off’, he kept thinking of Smeraldina’s béret and ‘sat on working himself up to the little teary ejaculation, choking it back in the very act of emission, waiting with his mind blank for it to subside, and then when everything was in order switching on the tragic béret [...] and starting all over again.’ (4; emphasis added). The switching on and off of what Yoshiki Tajiri calls ‘Belacqua’s masturbation machine’ (2007, 17) arguably corresponds with Krapp’s switching on and off his tape recorder.

The dialectics between exoneration and retention also relate to another aspect of the bananas, which are believed to cause constipation. Beckett’s notes on psychology, notably on Ernest ‘Erogenous’ Jones’s *Papers on Psychoanalysis*, contain several references to constipation (‘Les constipés se promènent’; TCD 10971/8/22) and the ‘postponement of [the] act’ of defecation:

child squatting down supporting anal orifice with heel so as to keep back stool until the last moment & then voiding with intense concentration during which he resents any disturbing influence from without.

Large number of acts unconscious symbols for defaecation: [...] tasks intrinsically disagreeable (‘chores’, boring routine, *writing up diary*, etc.), tasks involving objects that are unconscious symbols for excretory products (dirt, paper, waste products, money). All these groups characterized by alternation between procrastination & feverish activity. Cp. Inability over a long period to write a letter & then producing an epistle. (TCD 10971/8/18-19; emphasis added).

As Krapp's annual recordings can be regarded as a form of keeping a diary or annual,<sup>163</sup> Beckett's knowledge of psychological literature adds an extra dimension to the play. Yoshiki Tajiri makes a link between Sigmund Freud's essay 'Character and Anal Eroticism' and Krapp's constipation or 'Unattainable laxation' (*KLT 6; CDW 218*), which finds its correlative in 'Krapp's parsimonious retention of his memory in tapes (his name itself is explicitly anal)', noting that 'Freud attributes the constipation that is common among neurotics to the infantile retention of faeces' (Tajiri 2007, 18).

Apart from these connotations, the bananas may also have a Manichaean implication (see Introduction). The last sentence of scene 1 is: '*wipes his mouth, wipes his hands on the front of his waistcoat, brings them smartly together and rubs them*'. Martha Fehsenfeld and Dougald McMillan interpret this in Manichaean terms, the three gestures involving the mouth, the breast and the hands, corresponding to respectively the *signaculum oris*, *signaculum sinus* and *signaculum manus*. These Latin terms are explained in the article on 'Manichaeism' by Adolf Harnack and Frederic Cornwallis Conybeare in the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*,<sup>164</sup> which Beckett consulted during the direction of the 1969 performance of *Krapp's Last Tape* at the Schiller-Theater Werkstatt in Berlin:

The *signaculum oris* forbids all eating of unclean food (which included all bodies of animals, wine, &c. – vegetable diet being allowed because plants contained more light [...] The *signaculum manus* prohibits all traffic with things generally, in so far as they carry in them elements of darkness. Finally, by the *signaculum sinus* every gratification of sexual desire, and hence also marriage, are forbidden. (*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11<sup>th</sup> edition, vol. 17, 574)

<sup>163</sup> 'Krapp year by year' or 'the Krapp annual' as it is called in the annotated *Evergreen Review* copy among the Alan Schneider papers at UCSD (see section 1.6.1).

<sup>164</sup> For a discussion of this article as the source of Beckett's notes, see Van Hulle 2009.

The bananas can be interpreted as a criticism of Manichaeism in that they suggest a mixture of light and dark elements. Their consumption observes the *signaculum oris* and in that sense they accord with ‘light’, but if their caressing or stroking is to be linked with (auto)sexuality, they relate to darkness and the violation of both the *signaculum sinus* and the *signaculum manus*. Beckett’s production notebook contains three pages about this religion of Mani, based on the strictly separated realms of light and darkness. Beckett summed up the moments in the play that emphasize the dualism between light and darkness. On the second page of his notes on Mani, he made two lists:

*Light emblems*

the mild zephyr / cooling wind / bright light / quickening fire /  
clear water

*Darkness emblems*

Mist / heat / sirocco / darkness / vapour (UoR MS 1396-4-16,  
24r; TN3 135)

Beckett’s two lists of light and darkness emblems are based on the following passage in the *Encyclopaedia* article: ‘As the earth of light has five tokens (the mild zephyr, cooling wind, bright light, quickening fire, and clear water), so has the earth of darkness also five (mist, heat, the sirocco, darkness and vapour)’ (vol. 17, 573).

The encyclopaedia explains that ‘The Manichaean system is one of consistent, uncompromising dualism, in the form of a fantastic philosophy of nature’:

The physical and the ethical are not distinguished, and in this respect the character of the system is thoroughly materialistic; for when Mani co-ordinates good with light, and evil with darkness, this is no mere figure of speech, but light is actually good and darkness evil. From this it follows that religious knowledge involves the knowledge of nature and her elements,



and that redemption consists in a physical process of freeing the element of light from the darkness. Under such circumstances ethics becomes a doctrine of abstinence in regard to all elements which have their source within the sphere of darkness. (vol. 17, 573)

In Chapter 5 of *Beckett in the Theatre*, Dougald McMillan and Martha Fehsenfeld suggest a sustained ‘Manichaean’ reading of *Krapp’s Last Tape*. James Knowlson’s earlier lecture *Light and Darkness in the Theatre of Samuel Beckett* (1972) is more reticent with regard to the possible links with Manichaeism. In January 1972 Knowlson had contacted Beckett about this and received the following reply on 29 January 1972: ‘By all means refer to Krapp notebook. Whole Manichaean analogy highly tentative on my part’ (JEK, correspondence with SB). In his introduction to *The Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett: Krapp’s Last Tape*, Knowlson notes that Beckett told him a few months later (19 April 1972) that the reference to Mani was ‘wild stuff’ (TN3 xxii). Beckett ‘intimated later that too much could and perhaps has already been made of the Manichaean side of the play’ (xxii), and according to Knowlson, Beckett ‘discovered it there only when he came to direct it’: ‘The implication is that the Manichaean pages represent very much of an intellectual gloss and that this Gnostic interpretation was one of which he was unconscious as he wrote the play’ (TN3 xxii).

Whether Beckett was entirely unconscious of this Manichaean dimension is uncertain. Given Beckett’s preoccupation with Augustine, it is not implausible that he may have been conscious (however dimly) of a dualism that might be interpreted in Manichaean terms, and by making the notes on ‘Mani’ in his production notebook, he gave occasion to these interpretations himself. But to what extent the (potentially) Manichaean elements were consciously written into the play is hard to determine.

As noted above (section 2.1), Beckett wrote a letter to Jake Schwartz<sup>165</sup> to thank him for the ‘beautiful edition’ (HRC, SB to Schwartz, 15 March 1958; *LSB III* 117), the day he mentioned the four typewritten drafts of *Krapp’s*

165 ‘The Great Extractor’ (Knowlson 1996, 482) visited Beckett in March 1958 (Pilling 2006, 139). According to Deirdre Bair, Beckett admitted to Jake Schwartz that he had an ‘innate passion for knowledge, which demanded periodic satisfaction’ and that secretly he even dreamed of reading through all the volumes of an encyclopaedia – after which he received a complete set

*Last Tape* and ten days before he actually sent them to him (25 March 1958). On the one hand, it is therefore unlikely that Beckett used this copy of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* in a structural way to compose his play (since at least four typescripts had already been completed). On the other hand, this does not exclude the possibility that he consulted the encyclopaedia before he sent the typescripts to Schwartz, or that he consulted another copy of the encyclopaedia or a different source of information.

So, Beckett was aware of Manichaeism (see Introduction),<sup>166</sup> but his use of it is not as equivocal as the production notes may suggest. The Manichaean elements are merged with other notions that derive from sometimes even older religious or philosophical systems. For instance, Beckett's notes on Heraclitus, 'the weeping philosopher' (TCD MS 10967/24r) contain two excerpts from Burnet and Windelband that express the same idea: on the way down, fire changes – by condensation – into water and earth; on the way up, earth and water change – by rarefaction – into fire. The way up and the way down are one and the same, according to Burnet's paraphrase: 'And these two ways are forever being traversed in opposite directions at once' (Burnet 1920, 61). Beckett not only played with the same four elements earth, air, water and fire in *Krapp's Last Tape*, he was also fascinated with the reversibility suggested by Heraclitus. Putting this reversibility to paper, he switched the initials of the laughing and the weeping philosophers around and wrote on the inside of the back cover of his production notebook: 'Hemocritus et Deraclitus, / philosophes muets' (TN3 247).

Two years before he wrote the play, when he explained in an interview to Harold Hobson that he was mainly interested in 'the shape of ideas', he gave an example in which a negative element (despair) was linked to a positive pole (salvation) and vice versa:

There is a wonderful sentence in Augustine: 'Do not despair, one of the thieves was saved. Do not presume, one of the thieves was damned.' That sentence has a wonderful shape. It is the shape that matters (qtd. in Ackerley and Gontarski 2004, 593).

of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* to quench his thirst for knowledge (Bair 1978, 493–94).

<sup>166</sup> He would also have been familiar with the term through Voltaire's *Candide*, in which Pangloss's pessimistic counterpart Martin introduces himself to Candide as a manichaeist.

Five years later, he gave the same example to Tom Driver when he emphasized the dramatic qualities of this shape. This time he linked it to light and darkness. The idea that there may be some light in the darkness, makes the human situation inscrutable:

If there were only darkness, all would be clear. It is because there is not only darkness but also light that our situation becomes inexplicable. Take Augustine's doctrine of grace given and grace withheld: have you pondered the dramatic qualities in this theology? (1961, 24).

That one of the thieves was saved was a 'reasonable' percentage according to Didi in *Waiting for Godot* (WFG 7; CDW13) and a 'generous' one according to the text of *Malone Dies* (MD 255). But as Beckett told Hobson, he preferred to take no sides.

The shape that mattered to Beckett in the two interviews in 1956 and 1961 seems to have been useful to the writing process of *Krapp's Last Tape*, which took place in the period between those two interviews. Saint Augustine, to whom Beckett attributed the wonderful sentence because Robert Greene did (Ackerley 1996), converted to Christianity in the year 387, after nine years of adhering to Manichaeism (see Introduction). On the three pages about the religion of Mani in the production notebook, Beckett summed up all the moments in the play that emphasize the pair of light and darkness (TN3 131; UoR MS 1396-4-16, 23r). He then made the two lists of 'Light emblems' and 'Darkness emblems', emphasizing the many instances where light and darkness do merge and thus violate the Manichaean doxa. As Sue Wilson notes, the notebook lists more than two dozen instances of 'explicit integration light dark' (2002, 131). Beckett's critical analysis is quite explicit about the play's undermining of the Manichaean separation of light and darkness and, again, emphasizes the '**form**' or the shape of ideas: 'Note that if the giving of the black ball to the white dog represents the sacrifice of sense to spirit the **form** here too is that of a mingling' (25r).

When Beckett used the word 'mingling' in his note on page 25r, his wording seems to have been inspired by the article as well: 'the five dark elements had already mingled themselves with the generations of light' (EB vol. 17: 574). The note 'Separation of light from darkness' is based on a description of Mani as a prophet who 'first brought full knowledge': 'It is only

through his agency and that of his imitators, “the elect”, that the separation of the light from the darkness can be completed’ (*EB* vol. 17: 574). Beckett’s subsequent note reads: “Man created by Satan. Cain and Abel sons not of Adam but of Satan and Eve” (24r) – which is almost a literal excerpt: ‘The first man, Adam, was engendered by Satan [...] Cain and Abel indeed are not sons of Adam, but of Satan and Eve’ (*EB* vol. 17: 574).

Beckett also read the passages printed in a smaller font in the encyclopaedia, as the subsequent note evidences: ‘ascetic ethics, particularly abstinence from sensual enjoyment. Sexual desire, marriage forbidden (*signaculum sinus*)’ (24r) – one of the ‘three seals’ mentioned above.<sup>167</sup> Finally, the last entry on page 24r of the production notebook is copied directly from the same passage in smaller print: ‘The worshipper turned towards the sun, or the moon, or the north, as the seat of light’ (574).

Dougald McMillan and Martha Fehsenfeld see many parallels between these three ‘seals’ and the play: ‘In spite of “resolutions and aspirations” he [Krapp] remains in violation of the three ‘seals’ or principal prohibitions of the Manicheans’ (244). One of the most concentrated evocations of this ‘breach of the three seals’ they identify is ‘my “face [*signaculum oris*] in her breasts [*signaculum sinus* ...] my hand on her [*signaculum manus*]” (246). According to McMillan and Fehsenfeld, the Manichaean elements were already part of the play from the earliest stages of its genesis: ‘Already in the first draft there were the basic elements of the Manichean ethics’ (243). But the ‘Magee Monologue’ did not yet contain the gestures that relate to the three ‘signacula’ (‘wipes his mouth, wipes his hands on the front of his waistcoat, brings them smartly together and rubs them’), which were only introduced as a handwritten addition to the second typescript (ET2, 1v). The sentence ‘my face in her breasts and my hand on her’, which McMillan and Fehsenfeld also interpret from a Manichaean perspective, was introduced in the second manuscript version (EM2, 17r).

The light/darkness dichotomy was also developed gradually, for instance by replacing the yellow boots and red rusty trousers by white boots and black trousers in EM3 (on page 10v; see 2.2.4). In this version, the setting was originally described as follows: ‘Table and immediately adjacent area

<sup>167</sup> The *Encyclopaedia* article explains that ‘the ethics of Manichaeism’ was ‘thoroughly ascetic’: ‘The Manichaean had, above all, to refrain from sensual enjoyment, shutting himself up against it by three seals – the *signaculum oris*, *manus* and *sinus*’ (*EB* vol. 17: 574).



in strong light. Rest of stage in shadow' (10v). This shadow may not have been dark enough to emphasize the contrast. Beckett crossed out the word 'shadow' and replaced it by the more abstract term 'darkness', which is arguably more readily relatable to the dualistic religious-philosophical system. The same replacement occurs further on in the text: by the time the second typescript version was ready, the manuscript's 'shadow' (14r) and 'the shadows' (15r) were systematically replaced by 'darkness'.

With reference to this darkness, Laura Barge has interpreted the moment of Krapp's vision as the conviction that 'he will overcome the terror and mystery of the darkness of his inner self by using it to create a reason for being' (1977, 279). The entry in the *Encyclopaedia* explains that 'Light presents itself to us as' – among many other things – 'wisdom [...] knowledge, understanding' (EB vol. 17, 573). But Krapp's vision is a mingling of 'light' with 'night'. The whole system is first deployed to eventually undermine and parody its alleged explanatory force. In scene VII, Krapp mentions the 'unshatterable association until my dissolution of storm and night with the light of the understanding' (KLT 9; CDW 220). One of the ironies of this scene is that it comes right after the scene with the word 'viduity', which old Krapp has to look up so that he is no longer in the dark, enlightened thanks to the dictionary (see also section 2.3.6). Beckett's scepticism vis-à-vis this enlightenment becomes clear in a letter to Jacoba van Velde (12 April 1958) in which he mentions that he had received a copy of the 1911 edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* in 28 volumes. The only laconic comment he adds to this simple announcement is: 'Trop tard' ['Too late'] (BN, NAF 19794, 53; LSB III 130).

### 2.3.2 Scene II: 'Spooool!'

KRAPP: [Briskly.] Ah! [He bends over ledger, turns the pages, finds the entry he wants, reads.] Box ... thrree ... spool ... five. [He raises his head and stares front. With relish.] Spool! [Pause.] Spooool! (KLT 4; CDW 216)

The scene with Krapp relishing the pronunciation of the word ‘Spooooo’ was one of the first theatrical ideas for the ‘Magee Monologue’ (EM1, 11r). The text of the earliest version of this scene (EM1, 11r-12r) jumps from peering at the ledger (sentence 61) to starting up the machine (sentence 82). Sentence 82 (EM1, 12r, line 2) is written with a new writing implement,<sup>168</sup> suggesting that this was the start of a new writing session after a short break – resulting in a rather abrupt transition.

On the facing page (11v), Beckett later added the in-between segment concerning the content of what he reads in the ledger. The proximity of these two pages gives the impression that the two scenes were written successively, but after having written page 12r (EM1) and before writing page 11v, Beckett wrote several other passages: he first wrote EM2, typed it out (ET1), and then wrote the note on page 21r of the ‘Eté 56’ Notebook (see section 1.1.1):

Opening

Consults register and reads out rubrics.

“Memorable equinox”

“Death of mother” “Mother at peace” “Farewell to love” etc. “The black ball” improvement of bowel condition – Farewell to – love (he turns page) – love.

Beckett’s experience with *En attendant Godot* had taught him that a stage direction of the type ‘*Échange d’injures*’ was too vague. Directors and actors wanted to know how exactly Didi and Gogo were to abuse each other, so the insults had to be made explicit. He therefore added to the prompt copy: ‘V. Andouille / E. Tordu / V. Crétin / E. Curé / V. Dégueulasse / E. Micheton / V. Ordure / E. Architecte’<sup>169</sup>

Similarly, in the ‘Magee Monologue’, A could not just be peering at the ledger; he had to read out the various items. The idea of turning the page between ‘Farewell to’ and ‘love’ came to Beckett while he was writing it out (see chapter 1.1.1), and took shape in an instant substitution: first he wrote

168 The first line and the word ‘Passim!’ are written in blue ink (the same blue ink as on page 11r); the rest of line two is in black ink, as is the rest of the page. The initial blue-ink ‘P’ of ‘Passim!’ is overwritten with a ‘P’ in black ink.

169 Prompt copy of *En attendant Godot* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1952), 127, held at TCD, reproduced in Sotheby’s catalogue of the auction ‘English Literature and History’ (London, 13 December 1990), 209.

just a hyphen, to mark a pause before ‘love’; then he crossed out ‘love’ and replaced it by ‘(he turns page) – love’ (Eté 56’, 21r).

Only then did he write the scene on page 11v, maximizing (as in the case of the word ‘viduity’) the dramatic potential of the difficult word ‘equinox’, which ‘A’ appears to have forgotten: ‘Memorable ... what? (He peers closer) Equinox. Memorable equinox. (He raises his head, stares ~~xx~~ front. Puzzled.) Memorable equinox? (Pause. He shrugs his shoulders, peers again at ledger.) Farewell ... to – (he turns the page) – love’ (EM3, 11v).

### **2.3.3 Scene III: ‘My condition’**

**TAPE:** [Strong voice, rather pompous, clearly Krapp’s at a much earlier time.] Thirty-nine today, sound as a—[Settling himself more comfortably he knocks one of the boxes off the table, curses, switches off, sweeps boxes and ledger violently to the ground, winds tape back to beginning, switches on, resumes posture.] Thirty-nine today, sound as a bell, apart from my old weakness, and intellectually I have now every reason to suspect at the ... [hesitates] ... crest of the wave—or thereabouts. [...] The new light above my table is a great improvement. With all this darkness round me I feel less alone. (KLT 5; CDW 217)

Opening with an aposiopesis by making ‘A’ switch off and interrupt himself was one of the earliest ideas for the play. In the first manuscript version, the ‘Tape’ part even opens with a double aposiopesis: ‘This day, being in the third –’ (EM1, 12r, sentence 84), then again ‘~~This day~~ This day, being in the third –’ (12r), before he finally allows himself to finish his sentence: ‘This day, being in the third decade of the Ram, I enter upon my 31<sup>st</sup> year’ (13r, sentence 86). In the subsequent versions, he is 37 years old, and only in the fourth typescript does he turn 39 (ET4, 2r).

Sentence 85 (‘Settling himself more comfortably ...’) is followed by a long stage direction, which is omitted in subsequent versions. It is a mime that takes place after ‘A’ has violently swept the boxes and the ledger off the table. ‘A’ moves his table out of the ‘zone of light’:

The weight of boxes and ledger off the table he feels it unsteady on its legs, curses, stops the machine, tries to steady it, fails, gets up and carries it laboriously towards front. This brings him **out of zone of light**. He sets down table in shadow, goes back **into** for a chair, carries it to table and sits down in shadow. **The light moves** and comes to rest on him in his new position. (EM1, 12r; see Fig. 15)

The passage did not make it into the published version, but its content is still intriguing. The light follows the protagonist wherever he moves and ‘comes to rest on him’ as if it were a curse. If the light is to be linked to the notion of Enlightenment, it might suggest that the burden of knowledge is inescapable – a topic that becomes particularly prominent in *Comment c'est*. The light could also be related to Manichaeism and the powers of the mind. In the first manuscript version, ‘A’ has ‘little doubt’ that, intellectually, he is at the ‘height peak’ of his powers (EM1, 13r). In EM2, this ‘peak’ is followed by ‘or thereabouts’ (14r). The pompous tone is enhanced in the third typescript, but at the same time Beckett also introduces more moments of hesitation: ‘and intellectually I have little ~~don~~ now every reason to believe <sup>suspect</sup> at the  $\frac{1}{2}$  the... (hesitates)...peak <sup>apogee crest</sup> of my powers – or thereabouts (ET3, 2r). And in the next typescript, ‘my powers’ was replaced by ‘the wave’ (ET4, 2r).

Whereas in EM1, ‘the light moves’ after A has moved the table and is sitting in the shadow, in EM2 the light is immobile. In this second version, A moves about in the shadow surrounding him and comes back to the zone of light, which he calls ‘here’ and ‘myself’:

With all this darkness round me, I am less alone. (Pause.) In a way. (Pause.) I like to get up and move about in it, then come back here to ... (he hesit he hesitates) ... myself. (14r)

The text insists on an internalist model of cognition, as Krapp is first said to be sitting ‘**by the fire**’ (that is, an external fire), then ‘with closed eyes’, to concentrate on his ‘fire within’:

Sat **by the fire** ( $\rightarrow$  with closed eyes  $\rightarrow$ ) separating the grain from the chaff. (Eté 56, 14r)

Fig. 15: 'Eté 56' Notebook, page 12r.

12

12  
Dances upon him. Finally, (up to him.)  
Tarzan! / He turns back to  
talk, stands up in a chair, completely  
turns over table, cupping his cheek  
his face turned front.

Tarzan (turns singing on, immediately after  
at a new call in front). This day,  
sings in the bird - ~~the~~

writing brushes over comfortably  
to works out of the table at  
10 AM. He writes, turns the  
mechanism, turns times and  
times, violently off the table,  
~~turns~~ starts to do the mechanism again,  
removes this place.

Tarzan This day the day, comes in the  
bird -

The wife of home and leaves  
the table he feels it unstable  
in its top, writes, songs the  
mechanism, turns it back up -  
turns, gets up and carries it  
turning round front. She  
brings them out of home by light.  
They move to the shadow,  
you call ~~for~~ for clay, comes  
it to table and sets down in  
shadow, He lights more  
and comes out a bit in  
his new position, his eyes are so burn else  
to stage. He makes one  
the table is firmly in its  
top. Turns back out of  
beginning turning round in  
position



Not only is the protagonist closing his eyes, he even makes it explicit. He records himself saying out loud that he is closing his eyes in order to imagine those things worth having when all the dust has settled:

I try to be the old man who one day perhaps will listen to this I  
**close my eyes** and try and imagine them. (EM2, 15r, sentence  
107)

Here, two models of the mind diverge: while Beckett the author is thinking on paper, interacting with the material environment (a form of what Malafouris would call ‘material engagement’, a form of enactive cognition; see Introduction), his protagonist momentarily insists on thinking *without* interacting with his environment by closing his eyes. But he cannot prevent the environment from entering the cognitive process: having closed his eyes and switched off his visual sense, the focus immediately moves to the aural sense. He does not hear a sound, only silence, which is ‘extraordinary’ because ordinarily ‘Old Miss McGlome’ (*KLT* 6; *CDW* 218) sings every evening. ‘But not tonight’ (218). The name of the old lady changed six times, from Williams, to Beamish, to Hare, to Scovell, to McGlome, to McGlome:

Miss Williams Old Miss Williams (EM2, 15r)  
Old Miss Williams Beamish (ET1, 1r)  
Old Miss Beamish Hare (ET2, 2r)  
Old Miss Hare <sup>Scovell McGlome</sup> McGlome (ET3, 3r)  
Old Miss McGlome<sup>me</sup> (ET4, 3r)

Since she is not singing this evening, ‘A’ wonders: ‘I hope nothing has happened to her’ (EM2, 15r). And in the first typescript this was changed into ‘Please Heavens nothing’ (ET1, 1r) but then Beckett interrupted and deleted the sentence. This instance of empathy may not have befitting Krapp’s character, although a few sentences further he does say ‘I admire her’ (ET1, 1r), which in the next version is changed to: ‘Wonderful woman’ (ET2, 2r). And in ET3 he tries to imagine her when she was young: ‘Hard to think of her as a girl’ (ET3, 3r).

### **2.3.4 Scene IV: 'Aspirations'**

Just been listening to an old year, passages at random. I did not check in the book, but it must be at least ten or twelve years ago. At that time I think I was still living on and off with Bianca in Kedar Street. Well out of that, Jesus yes! Hopeless business. [Pause.] Not much about her, apart from a tribute to her eyes. Very warm. I suddenly saw them again. [Pause.] Incomparable! [Pause.] Ah well.... (KLT 6; CDW 218)

In EM1 the reference to 'Bianca in Kedar Street' was not present yet. It appeared for the first time – rather cursorily – in EM2:

I was living then with **Alba**, in the xxx alley At that time I was living off and on in ? street. (EM2, 15r)

The girl only briefly appeared in the first writing layer and was called '**Alba**', the name of the character in *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* that is modeled on Ethna MacCarthy, who was ill when Beckett was writing *Krapp's Last Tape*. Shortly before she died of cancer in 1959 he wrote to Aidan Higgins in this connection: 'Poor Ethna is dying [...] Fucking fucking earth' (LSB III 219). The use of the name 'Alba' reveals just how much Beckett was thinking of his old friend while writing this play. In the addition she is not mentioned anymore; the name of the street was still a blank with a question mark. In the next version (ET1), she reappears, but this time first as '**Celia**', which was then replaced by '**Furry**'; and the name of the street was still left open:

I have just listened to an old year [...] it must be at least ten or twelve or fifteen years ago. At that time I was living on and off with **Celia** Furry in Street. Hopeless business. I must say I—(A switches off machine, broods at length, switches on again.)—find this a great help before embarking on a new...er....review eonspectus. I find it hard It is hard to believe that young man was I. (ET1, 1r)

Fig. 16: First page of the first typescript (ET1, 1r)

*Tape I - 1 March 1958 3.58.*

(Strong young voice, but unmistakably H. later formless.)

*(With music the words will mind.)*

Tape / Thirty-seven today, sound apparently in wind and limb, apart from my old trouble, and intellectually I have little doubt at the peak of my powers, or thereabouts. Celebrated the ~~seventy~~ occasion, as in recent years, quietly at the Winehouse. No ~~one~~ there I knew. Sat before the fire with closed eyes separating the grain from the chaff. Jotted down a few notes, on the back of an envelope. It is good to be home again, in my old ~~things~~. The new light over my desk is a great improvement. With all this darkness round me I feel less alone. (Pause.) In a way. (Pause.) I like to get up and move about in it, then back here to... (hesitates)...

myself.

Pause.

The grain, what do I mean by that, I mean... (Pause.) I suppose I mean those things worth having when all the dust has - when all this dust has settled. I close my eyes and try and imagine them.

*If I were you,*

Pause.

Extraordinary silence this evening. I strain my ears and do not hear a sound. Old Miss ~~misses~~ always sings at this hour. But not tonight. ~~None nothing has happened to me.~~

*Message at random.*

I have just listened to an old year, (I did not check ~~when~~ in the register, but it must be at least ten or twelve years ago. At that time I was living on and off with ~~some~~ in Street. I must say I - (A switches off machine, broods at length, switches on again.) - find this a great help before embarking on a new... or... review. I find it hard to believe that young man was I. Even the voice is unfamiliar. Aspirations, Resolutions. To drink less, in particular. He speaks of Seventeen hundred hours, out of the preceding eight thousand odd, consumed on licensed premises alone. Plans for a ~~faller~~ sexual life. Last illness of his father. References to his little work. Closing with a - (brief laugh) - Providence. (Prolonged laugh.) What remains of all that lumber? A girl in a shabby green ~~dress~~ coat, on a railway-station platform?

Pause.

When I look - (A switches off machine, broods, gets up and goes backstage into shadows. Pause of ten seconds. Sound of cork popping. Ten seconds. Second cork. Ten seconds. Third cork. Ten seconds.) He comes back into light from an unexpected angle, ~~the~~ front right, sits down, resumes his pose, switches on machine.) - back on the year that is gone,

*Under the magnifying glass.*

To replace the cancelled text, Beckett wrote ‘insert’ in the margin (Fig. 16).

This ‘insert’ refers to the first passage on page 21r of the ‘Eté 56’ Notebook, where ‘this’<sup>170</sup> (which Krapp finds a great help before embarking on a new conspectus) is made more explicit (‘these old P.M.s P.M.s’)<sup>171</sup>:

For page I.

Well out of that. Hopeless business. Not much allusion reference to her. A queer passage about her eyes. **I don't x remember what colour they were. suddenly saw them again. Incomparable Matchless**. Ah well. I find these ... (He switches off, broods, switches on) ... (Pause) I find – (he switches off, broods, switches on) – these old P.M.s a \*\*\* help before embarking on a new ... (hesitates) ... conspectus. Hard to believe I was ever that young pup. (Fig. 3)

Interestingly, ‘A’ / Krapp initially did not remember the colour of his girlfriend’s eyes (‘**I don't x remember what colour they were**’). This passage was cancelled and instantly replaced by something closer to a Proustian ‘mémoire involontaire’ than just an average remembrance: ‘**suddenly saw them again**’. But it does not lead to an epiphany or any other modernist ‘moment of being’. Instead, it is followed by the stopgap ‘Ah well’.

This is the first time the earlier versions of Krapp’s self are declared dead and the yearly recordings are presented as post-mortem examinations, suggesting failure, since a post-mortem usually only takes place to determine the cause of death, or – in a more metaphorical sense – soon after an event in order to determine why it was a failure. In his letter to Alan Schneider of 4 January 1960, Beckett also referred to Krapp in terms of a ‘dying self’ and a ‘dead one’: ‘Krapp has nothing to talk to but his dying self and nothing to talk to him but his dead one’ (*NABS* 59).

In EM2 and the first typescript, one of the reasons why it is ‘hard to believe that young man was I’ is that ‘Even the voice is unfamiliar.’ This line

170 Originally, in EM2, Beckett first wrote ‘it’: A finds ‘it’ a great help – which is replaced by ‘this’ (‘Eté 56’ Notebook, 15r).

171 Beckett made the P.M.s even more explicit in a letter to Alan Schneider (*Post Mortems* by all means; 4 January 1960; *NABS* 59). In the director’s copy held at UCSD, Alan Schneider has added ‘post mortems’ to the ‘P.M.s’ (see chapter 1.5).

was then changed into 'The voice is not mine', emphasizing the notion that the individual is a succession of individuals.

Although the girl was not yet mentioned in the first version, EM1 did mention sex as a possible cure for A's drinking problem:

What would help me more than anything, I think, is a...fuller  
... a ... a fuller ... a more ... more natural ... a more ... absorbing engrossing (lowering his  
voice) ... sexual life. (Pause.) Enthusiastic, Intercourse! with real partners.  
(Pause.)

Here, 'A' is thinking out loud. In version 2 (EM2) this stammering search for words is replaced by the concise summary 'Plans for a fuller sexual life':

Aspirations, resolutions. To drink less, in particular. He speaks of 17 hundred hours, out of the preceding 8000 odd, spent <sup>consumed</sup> on licensed premises alone. Plans for a **fuller sexual life**. Last illness of his father. References to his life-work. Closing with a – (brief laugh) – an appeal to Providence. (Prolonged laugh.)

As several scholars (Gontarski 1985; Pountney 1988; McMillan and Fehsenfeld 1988, 251) have pointed out, the 'fuller sexual life' becomes the opposite in the typescripts:

Plans for a **fuller** less aspiring less exhausting **sexual life**. (ET1, 1r)  
Plans for a **less** wearing **sexual life**. (ET2, 2r)  
Plans for a **less** wearing **engrossing** **sexual life**. (ET3, 3r)

Beckett thus returned to the original wording of the first draft ('engrossing'), changing 'more' into 'less'. The first draft's hesitation (the ellipsis in '**more ... engrossing**') is reintroduced in ET4, this time making the hesitation explicit in the stage direction:

Plans for a **less**...(hesitates)...engrossing sexual life (ET4, 3r)

### **2.3.5 Scene V: Song**

[KRAPP switches off, broods, looks at his watch, gets up, goes backstage into darkness. Ten seconds. Pop of cork. Ten seconds. Second cork. Ten seconds. Third cork. Ten seconds. Brief burst of quavering song.]

KRAPP: [Sings.] Now the day is over,  
Night is drawing nigh-igh,  
Shadows—

[Fit of coughing. He comes back into light, sits down, wipes his mouth, switches on, resumes his listening posture.] (KLT7; CDW 219)

This short scene was first drafted in the ‘Eté 56’ Notebook (EM1). Krapp goes backstage. A series of 3 times ‘10 seconds’ is followed each time by the pop of a cork:

Third cork. Ten seconds pause. Sudden <sup>Brief</sup> burst of song from A in shadow. (EM1, 14r)

In EM2, the ‘Brief burst of song’ was first omitted (in the first writing layer), but then (re)inserted by means of an addition on the facing page (14v). The song became a ‘raucous song’ in ET1 and ET2; then a ‘quavering song’ in ET3 (3r); and in ET4 and ETC, Beckett hesitated between a ‘wavering song’ and a ‘quavering song’, eventually choosing the latter.

As with the ‘échange d’injures’ in the French version of *En attendant Godot* (see above), the ‘Brief burst of song’ was not specified in the early versions of *Krapp’s Last Tape*. Only in ET3 did Beckett add an autograph annotation in the left margin (3r), writing out Sabine Baring-Gould’s lyrics:

“Now the day is over  
Night is drawing xx” nigh-igh”  
Shad Shadows (fit of coughing). (ET3, 3r)



### 2.3.6 Scene VI: 'Viduity'

**TAPE:** —back on the year that is gone, with what I hope is perhaps a glint of the old eye to come, there is of course the house on the canal where mother lay a-dying, in the late autumn, after her long viduity [KRAPP gives a start] and the—[KRAPP switches off, winds back tape a little, bends his ear closer to machine, switches on]—a-dying, after her long viduity, and the—  
[KRAPP switches off, raises his head, stares blankly before him. His lips move in the syllables of 'viduity'. No sound. He gets up, goes backstage into darkness, comes back with an enormous dictionary, lays it on table, sits down and looks up the word.]

**KRAPP:** [Reading from dictionary.] State—or condition—of being—or remaining—a widow—or widower. [Looks up. Puzzled.] Being—or remaining? ... [Pause. He peers again at dictionary. Reading.] 'Deep weeds of viduity.' ... Also of an animal, especially a bird ... the vidua or weaver-bird .... Black plumage of male .... [He looks up. With relish.] The vidua-bird!  
[Pause. He closes dictionary, switches on, resumes listening posture.] (KLT 7; CDW 219)



The 'viduity' scene is worth analyzing in detail as it is particularly interesting in the context of cognitive philosophy, especially the 'extended mind' theory and 'enactivism' (see Introduction), in the first instance from the viewpoint of the text's production (the writer at work).<sup>172</sup>

**MS2:** Initially, 'widowhood' was the word Beckett employed in the manuscript version of the play.

**ET1:** The first typescript also simply read 'widowhood': 'there is of course the house on the canal where mother lay dying, in the early autumn, after her long widowhood, and the bench by the weir from where I could see her window' (page 2r).

<sup>172</sup> The following discussion of the 'viduity' scene is based on a section in chapter 9 of *Modern Manuscripts: The Extended Mind and Creative Undoing* (Van Hulle 2014).

ET2: But the word was changed into ‘viduity’ at the next stage in the series of multiple drafts that constitute the genesis of *Krapp’s Last Tape*. More than just a variant, this change constitutes a moment of invention that would eventually lead to the gradual development of an extra scene.

- (1) In a first attempt on the second typescript, after hearing the word ‘viduity,’ Krapp gives a start, switches off the tape recorder, gets up, goes backstage and returns with a dictionary (ET2, 3r).
- (2) Beckett immediately cancelled this passage, not to discard it, but to develop it.

(3) In this more elaborate version on the same page, Krapp not only gives a start and switches off the tape recorder; he also winds back the tape a little, bends his ear closer to the machine and hears the word ‘viduity’ again; he switches off the machine, looks puzzled, asks himself ‘Viduity?’, pauses, gets up, goes backstage, returns with a large dictionary, lays it on the table, sits down, looks up the word ‘viduity,’ reads, nods, closes the dictionary, switches on the recorder again, and resumes his listening pose. The ‘large dictionary’ was crossed out and replaced by the more concrete ‘volume of the Concise Oxford’. This was an instant substitution (*currente calamo*), made while Beckett was typing the text.

(4) To this typed layer of the text he later added a few corrections and marginal passages in ink. Thus, to the ‘volume of the Concise Oxford’ he added ‘or Johnson’s dictionary and quotes example’ (ET3, 3r). Before he could make this addition, Beckett first had to reread his typed text. The above description can be analysed in terms of interactions with the manuscript or according to Flower and Hayes’ dynamic model of writing in terms of a constant interacting with the ‘text produced so far’ (TPSF; see section 1.2.1). Beckett first served as scribe or typist, copying the preceding version; he then acted as his own first reader; in this capacity, he reacted to his own typescript by adding a few words in the margin. This is not only a matter of Beckett playing several roles. It also involves an enactive engagement with the ‘text produced so far’. The interaction with

the typescript thus triggered a small, but nonetheless decisive step in the process of invention.

ET3: In the next version, the idea that Krapp should quote an example is turned into the stage direction ‘quotes definition if possible’ (ET3, 3r).

ET4: And in the next version, Beckett – again after reading his own typescript – carried out his own suggestion by taking the dictionary and adding the following marginalia in black ink:

Krapp (reading from dictionary). State of being – or remaining – a widow – or widower. (Looks up. Puzzled. Being – or remain?... remaining?... (Peers (Returns to Peers again at dictionary. Reading) “Deep weeds of viduity”... Also of an ~~an~~ animal, especially a bird ... the vidua or weaver-bird ... black plumage of males. (looks up. With relish.) The vidua-bird! (ET4, 4r)

As Dougald McMillan and Martha Fehsenfeld have shown, the definition is ‘a composite’ (253), based on the Oxford English Dictionary entry for ‘viduity’, which defines it as a ‘state of being or remaining a widow’, and the entry for ‘widowhood’, which mentions the quotation ‘Lucretia’s deep weeds of widowhood’ from Bulwer-Lytton’s novel *Lucretia* (Part II, XVIII). Beckett changed it to ‘Deep weeds of viduity’. According to the second definition of ‘widowhood’, the term applied not only to widows but also to widowers, as well as to animals: ‘also of animals, especially of birds’. It mentions the species ‘Vidua’, the ‘weaver bird’ and the ‘dark plumage of the males’.

The author’s enactive way of thinking on paper clashed with his character’s insistence on thinking *without* interacting with his environment (see above, section 2.3.3). Still, there are moments when the text *enacts* an enactive cognitive process, notably when Krapp looks up the word ‘viduity’ – which can also be analysed in stages of interaction:

- a he hears the word ‘viduity’ and doubts whether he has heard correctly;
- b he rewinds, listens to the word again and has to conclude that he does not know its meaning;
- c he looks up the word in a dictionary and assimilates its meaning;
- d he is puzzled by the locution ‘Being or remaining’;

- e he is confronted with the word's wider lexical context, notably the word 'vidua-bird';
- f he relishes in the sound of the word 'vidua-bird' with the same stem (vid-), emphasizing the notion of emptiness.
- g The pleasure only makes the realization of the emptiness more painful, for Krapp's lexical discovery is a laborious *rediscovery*. He has forgotten a word he used to know and employ when he was thirty years younger. Or, in enactivist terms, his present vocabulary shows a semantic lacuna and he needs the 'material engagement' (Malafouris 2013, 239) with all the 'environmental vehicles' (Menary 2010, 21) he has at his disposal to patch up his mind.

So, Beckett evokes a fictional mind at work along the lines of what 21<sup>st</sup>-century cognitive philosophers call 'enactive cognition': it is thanks to an element in his environment (the tape recorder) that Krapp's 69-year-old mind is re-minded of this term, whose meaning he recovers with the aid of yet another environmental vehicle (the dictionary).

The character's relish in the pronunciation of the word 'vidua-bird' is another expression of the workings of the extended or extensive mind. By providing more context and referring to the black plumage of the vidua-bird, the dictionary introduces a new element that fits in with the *clair-obscur* of the play. Beckett commented upon the stark contrast between black and white in his production notebook immediately after the excerpts from the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* article. Particularly interesting in the context of the post-Cartesian paradigm is the way Beckett linked the (un-Manichaean) 'mingling' of light and darkness to the notions of 'mind' and 'anti-mind':

Note that Krapp decrees physical (ethical) incompatibility of light (spiritual) and dark (sensual) only when he intuits possibility of their reconciliation intellectually as rational-irrational. He turns from fact of anti-mind alien to mind to thought of *anti-mind constituent of mind*. He is thus ethically correct (*signaculum sinus*) through intellectual transgression, the duty of reason being not to join but to separate (UoR MS 1396-4-16, 25r; *TN3* 139; emphasis added).

When Beckett wrote this, the theories of the ‘extended mind’ and ‘enactivism’ had not yet been developed. Only with the advantage and disadvantage of hindsight can one argue that Beckett’s idea that ‘anti-mind’ is ‘constituent of mind’ presages the post-Cartesian view that the mind is not a pre-given. It is unlikely that Beckett had thought out a philosophical system before he gave shape to the mind of his character. He did not develop a model of the mind of his own, and in that sense he was ‘not a philosopher’, as he claimed in 1961.<sup>173</sup> But he did develop a complex character in a text that ‘performs’ conflicting models of the mind. For instance, Krapp<sup>2</sup> closes his eyes to ‘try and imagine’ what he meant by the grain and the husks (enacting an internalist model of the mind), whereas Krapp<sup>3</sup> uses all the tools he can find for cognitive purposes (enacting an enactivist model of the mind). In that sense, ‘anti-mind’ can be seen as ‘constituent of mind’, as Beckett noted in his production notebook, not as a premeditated model, but as an afterthought that took shape during the epigenesis (the continuation of the genesis after publication). It was especially this aspect of the Mani notes (not so much the Manichaeist system as such, but the proto-enactivist consequences of its undermining) that Beckett discovered in the play only when he came to direct it.

In EM2, the first writing layer mentioned the canal where mother ‘died’, which was replaced with ‘lay dying’. Only in ET2 did Beckett add the archaic prefix ‘a-’:

where mother **died** <sup>lay dying</sup>, in the early autumn, after her long  
**widowhood** (EM2, 15r)  
 where mother lay **dying**, in the early autumn, after her long  
**widowhood** (ET1, 1r)  
 where mother lay **a-dying**, in the early<sup>174</sup> autumn, after her long  
**viduity** (ET2, 3r)

173 ‘One cannot speak anymore of being, one must speak only of the mess. When Heidegger and Sartre speak of a contrast between being and existence, they may be right, I don’t know, but their language is too philosophical for me. I am not a philosopher. One can only speak of what is in front of him, and that now is simply the mess.’ (to Tom F. Driver, Summer 1961, qtd. in Graver and Federman 1997, 219)

174 The ‘early autumn’ was changed to ‘late autumn’ in ET5, 4r (UoR MS 1659).

That this change took place in the same version in which the ‘widowhood’ is changed to ‘viduity’ suggests that Beckett, at this stage, made a conscious effort to make Krapp sound more erudite. John Fletcher singles ‘a-dying’ out as an ‘example of the pompous speech of the earlier Krapp that irritates the old Krapp’ (Fletcher 1985 [1978], 128),<sup>175</sup> playing on ‘a-flying’ in the poem ‘To the Virgins, to Make Much of Time’ by Robert Herrick, which is also alluded to in *Happy Days* (‘Where are the flowers? [Pause.] That smile today; HD 36) and in *Rough for Radio II*: ‘What is it, Miss, can’t you see that old time is a-flying?’ (ATF 62):

Gather ye rosebuds while ye may,  
Old Time is still a-flying;  
And this same flower that smiles today  
To morrow will be dying.

As in the transition from scenes III to IV, moving from ‘Old Miss McGlome’ to ‘Bianca in Kedar Street’ (*KLT* 6; *CDW* 218), the text again moves from an old to a young woman, from the dying mother to the ‘dark young beauty’ (219). The transition is marked by the ‘bench by the weir’ (219). Before Beckett wrote the first draft of this scene (EM2, 16r), he already jotted down this image (‘bench by the loek <sup>weir</sup>’) at the top of the left-hand page (15v).

Not unlike the first reference to a girl (Alba/Celia/Furry/Bianca), which only gradually became prominent in the text, the second reference to a girl was originally only a cursory mention. While A is waiting for his mother ‘to be gone’, he encounters several people: ‘Quite a number of people I got to know then, by appearances, nurses <sup>nursemaids</sup> and children, old men, and dogs. I was there when the blind went down’. Between these two sentences (after ‘dogs’), Beckett added a circumflex-like metamark, referring to an addition on the opposite page:

<sup>175</sup> James Knowlson disagrees with Fletcher, arguing that it is ‘not so much “an example of the pompous speech of the earlier Krapp” [...] as a syllable inserted for its impact on the rhythm of the sentence. It also seems to belong to an ironically incongruous Elizabethan style of lyric’ (1980, 26).

One dark young woman I remember particularly, with a <sup>big black</sup> pram. Whenever I look Day after day. Whenever I looked in her direction she had her eyes on me. But when at last I spoke<sup>ventured to speak</sup> to her she threatened to call a policeman. Lovely face she had, eyes like ... moonstone. (EM2, 15v)

In this version, Beckett did not yet add 'Ah well....' That only happened in the fourth typescript, the same document in which Beckett changed 'moonstone' into 'chrysolite' (see 2.2.7). As Rosemary Pountney notes, Beckett wrote a scholarly annotation in the margin of the text he used for the 1973 London production, making an explicit reference to Shakespeare's *Othello* as the source of the word 'chrysolite' (see Fig. 7):

If heaven would make me such another world  
Of one entire and perfect chrysolite  
I'd not have sold her for it.

*Othello* V.2 (qtd. in Pountney 1988, 139)

In the text of *Othello*, the passage is preceded by the line 'Nay, had she been true', i.e. if Desdemona had been faithful to Othello, he claims, he would never have given her up or exchanged her, not even for a world made entirely of green topaz. As Martha Fehsenfeld and Dougald McMillan note, the reference to *Othello* strengthens the themes of betrayal and the exchange of love for other values' (248).

By adding 'Ah well' to the chrysolite eyes in ET4, Beckett made a connection with scene IV and the first girl (Alba/Celia/Furry/Bianca in Kedar Street), whose eyes were said to be 'incomparable'. This is followed by the same 'Ah well', introduced for the first time in the third version ('Eté 56', 21r, the 'insert' for ET1, 1r):

Incomparable Matchless. Ah well.  
Matchless. (Pause.) Ah well. (ET2, 2r)  
Incomparable. (Pause.) Ah well... (ET3, 3r)  
Incomparable! (Pause.) Ah well... (ET4, 3r)

The entire scene (VI) is marked by the viduity and death of A's/Krapp's mother. At the moment of his mother's death ('when [...] the blind went down') he was 'throwing a ball for a dog as it happened' (EM2, 16r). Given the changing pronouns (1<sup>st</sup>-person/3<sup>rd</sup>-person) Krapp uses to refer to himself, it is remarkable that in the earliest version of this scene 'A' (twice) says that he held out the ball to 'me' before it is corrected to 'him': 'Then I held ~~out the ball to me~~ <sup>it out to me</sup> him and he took it in his mouth, very gently' (EM2, 16r).

In the first writing layer, the ball was simply 'An old tennis ball'. Beckett first added 'black', then deleted it again, and drew more attention to the blackness by adding a more elaborate description: 'An old ~~black~~ tennis ball ~~it was~~, all black and sodden, but not punctured.<sup>176</sup> In EM2, 'A' pauses and originally wonders: '~~is that the kind of thing~~' – which is then cancelled and replaced with:

I wonder ~~is that the kind of thing~~<sup>how much there is there.</sup> (EM2, 16r).

What exactly he is wondering remains implicit. To create this gap of indeterminacy, it took Beckett many versions to find the right balance between on the one hand leaving the gap open and on the other hand giving enough information to keep the audience inquisitive enough to wonder what 'A'/Krapp means by 'the kind of thing':

I wonder ~~how much there is there.~~<sup>will that ever mean anything.</sup> (ET1, 2r)

I wonder will that mean something some day. (ET2, 3r)

~~I wonder will that mean something some day.~~<sup>I shall feel it, in my hand, until my dying day.</sup> I shall feel it, in my hand, until my dying day. (ET3, 4r)

I shall feel it, in my hand, until my dying day. (ET4, 4r)

176 Dougald McMillan and Martha Fehsenfeld interpret this description as part of a systematic Manichaeist categorisation of each element in the play: 'The ball, originally white, is now black. It is unpunctured – still containing undefiled air – one of the five Manichean 'elements of light'. It has become sullied with impure water (an element of darkness)' (McMillan and Fehsenfeld 1988, 245).



The original gap of indeterminacy or *Leerstelle* in Wolfgang Iser's terms ('I wonder is that the kind of thing') thus eventually becomes thematic as a palpable absence: he will always feel it, but never as a presence, for he gave the 'thing' to the dog. In ET3, Krapp adds 'I wish I had kept it', which becomes 'I might have kept it' in ET4, followed by 'But I gave it to the dog'. Again, this scene ends with 'Ah well...' (KLT 8; CDW 220), but this refrain was only added in ET4. By adding 'Ah well' at different stages of the writing process,

- 1 after 'the eyes she had' (EM2, 18r);
- 2 after the reference to the first girl's 'incomparable' eyes (insert ET1);
- 3 after the reference to the second girl's 'chrysolite' eyes (ET4);
- 4 after the reference to the dog (ET4)

Beckett thus turned the phrase into a leitmotif. This leitmotif suggests that there might be a direct connection between the black ball and the eyes. The ball recalls what 'looks like a kind of ball' in *All That Fall* (ATF 31; CDW 198), about which the blind Dan Rooney (twice) says 'It is a thing I carry about with me' (198). Beckett's note in the production notebook suggests that, if the white dog stands for 'spirit', the black ball would represent the senses (including the eyes).

In ET1, after 'A' wondered 'will that ever mean anything', there was originally only a pause, before Beckett considered adding 'Bowels are better on the whole' (added in the top margin, 2r). The improvement in the protagonist's bowel condition is repeated in ET2 (addition in the left margin, 3r), but not in ET4, where in its stead Beckett typed 'Ah well...' (4r). This is the same version in which he added 'Ah well...' to the chrysolite eyes of the 'dark young beauty' (see above), which suggests that this is the moment he consciously tried to turn the 'Ah well...' into a sort of refrain. He even considered calling the play 'Ah Well', as he told afterwards to Barney Rosset: 'The thing is fraailer than perhaps it looks. I nearly entitled it "Ah Well". Would you have preferred that?' (SB to Barney Rosset, letter of 1 April 1958; *LSB III* 123).



### 2.3.7 Scene VII: ‘The vision’

Spiritually a year of profound gloom and indigence until that memorable night in March, at the end of the jetty, in the howling wind, never to be forgotten, when suddenly I saw the whole thing. The vision at last. This I fancy is what I have chiefly to record this evening, against the day when my work will be done and perhaps no place left in my memory, warm or cold, for the miracle that ... [hesitates] ... for the fire that set it alight. (KLT 8; CDW 220)

The year that is being recounted on the tape has been disheartening. The opening adverb of this scene was originally: ‘Creatively’, which was changed to ‘Intellectually’ (EM2, 16r) and eventually to ‘Spiritually’ (ET3, 4r). The ‘disheartening year’ became a ‘year of discouragement’ (EM2, 16r), a year of ‘deep gloom’, of ‘profound gloom’ (ET1, 2r), of ‘profound gloom and indigence’ (ET2, 3r) – until the moment in March, that ‘unforgettable’ (EM2), ‘wonderful’ (ET1), ‘memorable’ (ET2) night, when ‘A’/Krapp ‘suddenly saw the whole thing’. In the first two typescripts, this moment is called ‘The turning-point, at last’; in ET3, it is changed into a ‘vision’ (ET3, 4r). In the winehouse, ‘A’ realized that this was what he had chiefly to record ‘against the day when all my work is <sup>will be</sup> done and perhaps no [...] place left in my memory, and no thankfulness, for the wonder that made it possible’ (EM2, 16r). The ‘wonder’ became a ‘moment’ in the typewritten layer of ET1. This ‘moment’ is reminiscent of Virginia Woolf’s ‘moments of being’. The potential association with Woolf was immediately undone again. Beckett canceled the word ‘moment’<sup>177</sup> and replaced it with ‘miracle’ (ET1, 2r). He also changed the simple statement ‘for the miracle that made it possible’ into an instance of epanorthosis:

fot<sup>r</sup> e<sup>t</sup>he moment miracle that made it possible. – (Pause) – for the fire that set it alight. (ET1, 2r)

<sup>177</sup> The first version (EM1, 14r) also ends with a significant moment, ‘a moment in the life of all pioneers’ (see section 2.2.1).

This rhetorical technique of using self-correction for extra emphasis is one of the most prominent figures of speech in *L'Innommable / The Unnamable* (Clément 1989; Van Hulle and Weller 2014, 28). But, whereas in the novel the narrator uses it to proceed ‘by affirmations and negations invalidated as uttered’ (*U* 1), it seems to be used in the more traditional, rhetorical way in *Krapp's Last Tape*. By making ‘A’/Krapp correct himself in mid-speech, correcting ‘the miracle’ and replacing it with ‘the fire that set it alight’, Beckett drew attention to the word ‘fire’. In ET3, he also added the stage direction ‘...(hesitates)...’ to mark the epanorthosis.

This rhetorical device introduces the other figure of speech discussed above: aposiopesis. As noted in section 2.2.8, this is not an aposiopesis in the traditional sense. It is not the speaker (the 39-year-old Krapp) who suddenly stops as if he is unable or unwilling to proceed, but his later self. First Krapp<sup>3</sup> interrupts the discourse when Krapp<sup>2</sup> starts talking about the belief he had been going on all his life, ‘namely –’. Originally, Krapp<sup>2</sup> talked about his ‘principles'; these were immediately crossed out in EM2 (16r) and instantly replaced by ‘assumption’, which was changed into ‘belief’ in ET3 (4r). The aposiopesis is only the preparation for the more teasing one that immediately follows, ‘... is in reality my most—’ (*KLT* 9; *CDW* 220). This was one of the only passages in the manuscript that required three attempts to get written, starting with the jotting ‘clear to me <sup>at last</sup> that this’ on the verso page 16v. Immediately underneath it, Beckett elaborated on the scene, adding ‘granite rocks the foam flying up in the light of the beacon and the ~~anemo~~ anemometer spinning like a propeller’ (16v). What became clear to Krapp was linked, from the manuscript version onwards, to ‘the dark’, which he had

‘struggled to keep out of my work’ (EM2, 16v-17r),  
‘struggled to keep out of my work <sup>at bay</sup>’ (ET1, 2r),  
‘struggled to keep at bay <sup>been fighting off all this time</sup>’ (ET2, 4r),  
‘~~been fighting against~~ <sup>off</sup> have always struggled to keep under’ (ET3, 4r).

This is in reality ‘its true –’ (EM2), which became ‘my most valuable –’ in ET1. And even ‘valuable’ was omitted in the next version (ET2, 4r): ‘my most –’. This is followed by the third aposiopesis in short succession (see section 2.2.8 above). Krapp<sup>3</sup> silences Krapp<sup>2</sup>, winds forward and ‘buries’ his face in his girlfriend’s breasts: ‘– my hand across <sup>face buried in</sup> her breasts and my hand on her’ (EM2, 17r).



### 2.3.8 Scene VIII: 'Farewell to love' I

my face in her breasts and my hand on her. We lay there without moving. But under us all moved, and moved us, gently, up and down, and from side to side.

[*Pause.*]

Past midnight. Never knew such silence. The earth might be uninhabited.

[*Pause.*]

Here I end— (*KLT 9; CDW 220-1*)

The first 'version' of the scene in the punt is only a short fragment (only the very last part of it). As Gerald Dawe suggested at the 2014 Beckett Summer School at Trinity College, Dublin, the image of 'her breasts and my hand on her' recalls the first four lines of W. B. Yeats's poem 'Aedh Wishes His Beloved Were Dead' from *The Wind Among the Reeds* (1899):

Were you but lying cold and dead,  
And lights were paling out of the West,  
You would come hither, and bend your head,  
And I would lay my head on your breast (Yeats 1903, 59)

The manuscripts support this intertextual reading in that all the versions up till the fourth typescript have the variant 'reeds'. Not until ET5 (UoR MS 1659) was 'reeds' changed to 'flags' – a word choice that creates an echo with the 'flagging' pursuit of happiness in scene IV.

Since, in ET1, Beckett noted that 'wind' (in the expression 'sound in wind and limb') should rhyme with 'mind', this creates an interesting intertextual complex: in Yeats's poem, the verb 'to wind' (as in the winding back and forward of Krapp's tapes) gets another dimension when it is used to describe the loved one's hair: 'But know your hair was bound and wound / About the stars and moon and sun'.



The biographical background of Ethna MacCarthy's terminal illness<sup>178</sup> also adds a moving dimension to the possible allusion to some of the other lines in Yeats's poem:

And you would murmur tender words,  
Forgiving me, because you were dead [...]  
O would beloved that you lay  
Under the dock-leaves in the ground,  
While lights were paling one by one.

The paling lights not only echo Sabine Baring-Gould's 'Night is drawing nigh', but also recall Krapp's 'light of the understanding', in which Krapp still believes. In EM2, 'Past midnight' was followed by an interesting extra line, in which all his hope is deferred to the next year: 'The coming year will decide. May I be given the strength and the -' (EM2, 17r); in ET1, this is replaced by 'Here I end this -' (ET1, 2r).

### 2.3.9 Scene IX: 'Farewell to love' II

[KRAPP switches off, winds tape back, switches on again.]  
— upper lake, with the punt, bathed off the bank, then pushed out into the stream and drifted. (KLT 9; CDW 221)

The writing of scene IX seems to have proceeded smoothly. In EM2, the lovers pushed with the punt 'to the island', but this was cancelled and replaced by 'into the stream' (EM2, 17r). Some of the sentences were written without a single cancellation and were kept entirely unchanged in all the subsequent versions, for instance: 'She lay stretched out on the floorboards with her hands under her head and her eyes closed' (EM2, 17r, sentence 264). One of the very few phrases that were added (apart from the insertion of extra pauses in ET2 and ET3) was 'Let me in' (which appears for the first time in ET2, 4r).

178 On 2 June 1958, Beckett wrote to Ethna MacCarthy: 'I've written in English a stage monologue for Pat Magee which I think you will like if no one else. It will appear in the next number of the Evergreen Review and I'll send you a copy as soon as it's out' (HRC, SB to Ethna MacCarthy; *LSB III* 147).



### **2.3.10 Scene X: Mime II**

[*KRAPP switches off, broods. Finally he fumbles in his pockets, encounters the banana, takes it out, peers at it, puts it back, fumbles [...] loads virgin reel on machine, takes envelope from his pocket, consults back of it, lays it on table, switches on, clears his throat and begins to record.*] (KLT 10; CDW 222)

The mime with the envelope and the loading of a virgin reel on the machine was almost entirely in place from EM2 onwards (18r). The sentence ‘looks at his watch’ was added in ET1 (3r). While ‘A’ goes ‘right into shadows’ in EM2 and ET1, he goes ‘backstage into darkness’ from the second typescript onwards – according to the same pattern (‘shadows’ substituted by the more abstract notion ‘darkness’) discussed in 2.3.1.

### **2.3.11 Scene XI: Recording**

**KRAPP:** Just been listening to that stupid bastard I took myself for thirty years ago, hard to believe I was ever as bad as that. [...] And so on. (KLT 10-11; CDW 223)

‘A’/Krapp starts recording, calling his former self a ‘stupid bastard’ (from the first version onward, EM2, 18r). It took Beckett an extra version (on the facing leaf, 17v) to write the brooding over ‘The eyes she had’. Only in ET2 does ‘A’ call this period ‘The unpardonable ages!’ (which are immediately cancelled again; ET2, 5r). He addresses himself in the third person: ‘Take his mind off his exercises!’ (EM2, 17v); the ‘exercises’ are changed into ‘homework’ in the same manuscript (EM2, 19r). The exclamation ‘Pah!’ (when he takes another look at his envelope and crumples it) is a late addition (ET3, 5r).

The writing of the word ‘constipation’ seems oddly performative in that it took several attempts to express it:

- Reverie and **econstipation** <sup>obstipation</sup>. **The old trouble. The odd hard stool.** (EM2, 19r)
- Reverie and **obstipation**. <sup>galloping constipation.</sup>

- Reverie and galloping constipation irreversible constipation.  
(ET2, 5r)
- Chewed cuds and irreversible constipation. hard stools. (ET3, 5r)
- Chewed ~~sour~~ cuds and hard ~~amounting~~ hard stools. The sour cud and the hard stool.  
(ET4, 6r)
- The sour cud and the iron stool. (ET5, 6r)

In ET2, Krapp also mentions that he revelled in the word spool, repeats it with relish – ‘spool’ – and calls this the highlight of the year. The ‘highlight’ is replaced by the ‘Happiest moment’, which eventually became the ‘Happiest moment of the past half million’ (ET4, 6r). Some of the less happy moments were the few times he went out, when he was in the park ‘in the middle of the brats and skivvies’, which were omitted in ET4 (6r). He just sat there, ‘burning’ to be gone (as discussed in 2.2.8).

The old Krapp, recording his ‘last tape’, recalls the sales of his early work, which many Beckett scholars have related to Beckett’s own work:

Seventeen copies sold, of which eleven at trade price to free  
circulating libraries beyond the seas. Getting known. [Pause.]  
One pound six and something, eight I have little doubt. (KLT 10)

According to Fintan O’Toole, ‘The book in question is undoubtedly Beckett’s first creative work, a collection of ten linked stories, *More Pricks Than Kicks*, published by Chatto and Windus in London in May 1934, when the author was twenty-seven’ (O’Toole 2015, 34). John Pilling has investigated the sales of the collection of stories: by March 1935, it had sold 377 copies and until 1946 it continued to sell at an average rate of only two copies a year (Pilling 2011, 3). The fictional number of sold copies in *Krapp’s Last Tape* was ‘seventeen’ from the beginning (EM2, 19r); that eleven of them were copies for overseas (initially ‘Tanganyika’) was a later addition (ET2, 5r). His ‘Last fancies’ are followed by a vehement ‘Keep ’em under!’ This short exclamation was originally more elaborate and Beckett needed several versions to find the economy of words of ET5:

Swore to resist them fight them off. Resolutions. A Aspirations.  
Resolutions. (EM2, 18v)

Swore to ~~fight~~<sup>keep</sup> them off<sup>at bay</sup>. Aspirations. Resolutions. (ET1, 3r)

Swore to fight them off. Aspirations. Resolutions. (ET2, 5r)

~~Swore to fight them off.~~ <sup>Keep them under.</sup> Go mad altogether if I don't keep them under.  
(Pause.) Resolutions. (Pause.) Aspirations. (ET3, 5r)

~~Go mad altogether if I don't keep them under.~~ <sup>Go mad altogether if I don't.</sup>  
Keep 'em under! (Pause.) Resolutions. (Pause.) Aspirations. (ET4, 6r)

Keep 'em under! (ET5, 7r)

'A/Krapp mentions that he has 'Read Effie again' (EM2, 19r), which Beckett deleted and replaced with 'Burnt the eyes out of me reading Effie again' on the facing page (18v). In the context of the Petrarchan background of the 'burning' and the fire' (see section 2.2.8), it is worth noting that the later variant 'Scalded the eyes out of me' was originally another instance of burning, directly related to Krapp's reading of one of Beckett's favourite books, Theodor Fontane's *Effi Briest*. As James Knowlson notes, it is a book 'over which [Beckett's cousin] Peggy [Sinclair] often used to cry' (Knowlson 1996, 443). There are several biographical references in *Krapp's Last Tape* to Peggy 'Smeraldina' Sinclair, who 'often wore green' (443), although the model for the girl in the punt was Ethna MacCarthy (the 'Alba' in *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*; see 2.1). In the course of the 1950s, Beckett mentioned *Effi Briest* on several occasions. On 25 November 1952, in a letter to Jacoba van Velde he called 'Effie Biest' [sic] a book that was 'not well known and tremendous', listing it among a series of great literary works – including 'Deirdre of the Sorrows (Yeats ou Synge), Manon Lescaut, Aucassin et Nicolette, La Princesse de Clèves, Effie Briest de Theodor Fontane (livre peu connu et formidable). [...] Et Paolo et Francesca? Et Tristan et Yseult? Merde alors, les grands mamoureux, il n'y a que ça' (LSB II 342). Four years later, he recommended *Effi Briest* to Barney Rosset as a book that deserved to be translated into English. In a letter of 26 May 1956, he told Rosset that he had 'read it for the fourth time the other day with the same old tears in the same old places' (LSB II 621). The correspondence with Krapp's statement 'with tears again' is striking and reinforces the genuine nature of Beckett's



famous statement in his interview with Gabriel d'Aubarède in *Nouvelles littéraires* (16 February 1961): 'Je ne suis pas un intellectuel. Je ne suis que sensibilité' (7).

Beckett also alluded to *Effi Briest* in other plays. In his first radio play, *All That Fall* (written in the summer of 1956), Mr Rooney suggests to Mrs Rooney: 'Let us hasten home and sit before the fire. We shall draw the blinds. You will read to me. I think Effie is going to commit adultery with the Major' (*ATF* 21).<sup>179</sup>

The tears are another link between *All That Fall* and *Krapp's Last Tape*. When Dan Rooney refers to 'Dante's damned, with their faces arsy-versy', he adds: 'Our tears will water our bottoms' (*ATF* 23-24). Beckett noted down the reference to 'Dante's damned - indovini / Inf 20 watering their buttocks / with their tears' in the 'Eté 56' Notebook, on page 3r,<sup>180</sup> preceding the first draft of *Krapp's Last Tape* (11r). The 'indovini' used to be visionaries and foretellers. In Dante's *Inferno* (the eighth circle or Malebolge) they are forced to look back forever and the tears from their eyes water their bottoms. At this instance in the *Divina Commedia*, Dante addresses his readers directly, asking them to imagine his situation and hoping to find some understanding for his tears, which according to Virgil (and according to the Medieval catholic doctrine) was undue, because weeping for the damned would imply that one questioned God's judgement:

Se Dio ti lasci, lettore, prender frutto  
di tua lezione, or pensa per te stesso  
com'io potea tener lo viso asciutto,

quando la nostra imagine di presso  
vidi sì torta, che l' pianto de li occhi  
le natiche bagnava per lo fesso.

Certo io piangea, poggiato a un de' rocchi  
del duro scoglio, sì che la mia scorta  
mi disse: 'Ancor se' tu de li altri sciocchi?'

179 In a way, one could argue that with Mr. and Mrs. Rooney Beckett had already written the second part of the Krapp triptych he described to Alan Schneider (see Conclusion).

180 On page 2r, Beckett also noted 'Arsy-versy'.



Qui vive la pietà quand' è ben morta;  
chi è più scellerato che colui  
che al giudicio divin passion comporta? (Inf. XX, lines 19-30)

[Reader, so may God let you gather fruit  
from reading this, imagine, if you can,  
how I could have kept from weeping

when I saw, up close, our human likeness  
so contorted that tears from their eyes  
ran down their buttocks, down into the cleft.

Yes, I wept, leaning against a spur  
of the rough crag, so that my escort said:  
'Are you still witless as the rest?

'Here Piety lives when pity is quite dead.  
Who is more impious than one who thinks  
that God shows passion in His judgment?' (Dante 2002, 360-3)]

Krapp's tears are those of a 'visionary' – at least of someone who thinks he has a vision – and who is now forced to constantly look back upon his past. The Dantean detour shows that the seemingly close relationship between Krapp's revelation and Beckett's biography is in fact quite misleading, as Beckett warned his readers from the start: 'The danger is in the neatness of identifications' (*Dis* 19). Krapp's 'vision' has often been linked to Beckett's so-called revelation immediately after the Second World War, but the vision behind *Krapp's Last Tape* is also based on what Beckett called his 'Dante revelation', which took place much earlier (Knowlson 1996, 715n35). His thematisation of Dante's superb pun on 'pietà' in his early story 'Dante and the Lobster' already prefigures the later 'sensibilité'. Although, in his letters, Beckett disparagingly spoke of the 'sentimental' nature of *Krapp's Last Tape*, the play actually expresses a vision that was already latent in the early works. Belacqua's question 'why not piety and pity both' in his early story (*MPTK* 13) undermines Medieval catholic orthodoxy as much as it does the clear Manichaean separation of good and evil, light and darkness.

Fig. 17: First typescript (ET1), page 3r.

3

— pause — after a moment or so

her to look at me and after a moment or so she did, but her eyes just slits, because of the glare. I leant over her to get them in the shadow and they opened. (Pause.) We drifted in among the reeds and ~~we~~ stuck. The way went down, sighing, under the ~~water~~ stem. I lay down across her with my face in her ~~breast~~ breasts and my hand on her. We lay without moving. But under us all moved, and moved us, up and down, and from side to side.

Pause.

Past midnight. Never knew — *fumbles in waistcoat, looks at his watch,*  
He switches off, sits brooding, *fumbles in his pockets*, takes out an old envelope, fumbles, puts back the envelope, *eyes up and goes* right into shadows. Ten seconds. Sound of bottle against glass, then brief siphon. Ten seconds. Bottle against glass alone. Fifteen seconds. He comes back front left into light, with an unused tape in his hand, sits down, takes tape off machine and lays it on table, puts other tape on machine, takes envelope from his pocket, lays it on the table, switches on and begins to record.

Just been listening to that stupid bastard I was 30 years ago, find it hard to believe I was ever as bad as that. The eyes she had! (Broods, realizes he is recording silence, switches off, broods.) Everything there, everything, all the — (Realizes this is not being recorded, switches on.) Everything there, every bleeding thing, all the light and dark of the... (hesitates)... ages. Let that go! Jesus! Take his mind off his homework! Jesus! (Pause.) Ah well, maybe he was right. (Pause.) Maybe he was right. (Broods. Switches off. Consults envelope. Crumples it and throws it away. Broods. Switches on.)

*morning tooo* *falling contemplation.*  
Not a thing to tell. What's a year now? Reverie and ~~abstination~~. Seventeen copies sold, one pound six and something, eight probably. Getting known. Crawled out once or twice, before the summer was over. Sat in the park in the middle of the brats and skivvies, dreaming and wishing I were gone. Last fancies. Swore to ~~light them off~~. Aspirations. Resolutions. Burnt the eyes out of me reading Effie again, a page a day, with tears again. Could have been happy with her, up there on the cold sea, and the pines, and the dunes. (Pause.) Fanny came in a couple of times. Fat old whore. Couldn't do much, but better than nothing. The last time wasn't so bad. How do you do it, she said, at your age? I told her I'd been saving up for her all my life. (Pause.) Went to vespers once, *like when* ~~was a child~~. Slept. (Pause.) Sometimes wondered in the night if a last effort mightn't — (Pause.) Empty the bottle now and get to your bed. Finish this ~~work~~ tomorrow. Or leave it at that. (Pause.) Leave ~~work~~ it at that. (Pause.) Lie propped up on my back in the dark, and wander. (Pause.) Be again in the dingle on a Xmas Eve, picking holly. (Pause.) Be again on Croghan on a Sunday morning, in the ~~snow~~ snow, ~~aston~~ and listen to the bells. (Pause.) And so on. (Pause.) Be again. (Pause.) All that old misery. (Pause.) Once wasn't enough. (Pause.) Lie down across her. (Long pause. He suddenly bends to machine, switches off, wrenches off tape, throws it away, puts on

*gloried in the world I hate.*  
*desires*  
*hurts*  
*with the bitch /*

Among the few things that Krapp (*Krapp3*) deems worth recording, Beckett seems to have considered introducing an extra item. In the left margin of page 3r of the first typescript (ET1, 3r), Beckett jotted down a note that is hard to decipher but which seems to read ‘Chinese (Chinks) occupied Dublin. Poor devils’. It possibly alludes to what was in the news in February 1958, when the Chinese occupied Khurnak Fort in Ladakh after having constructed a highway (in 1956–57) connecting Rudok (Tibet) with Sugat Qarawal (Xinjiang) across the Aksai Chin plateau of Ladakh, thus effectively cutting off substantial parts of Jammu and Kashmir state, and merging them with Tibet. If the occupied territory in Beckett’s note is Dublin, the ‘Poor devils’ not only add another infernal reference, but also emphasize the ambiguity of who would actually have to be pitied in case of such an (imaginary) occupation. Eventually, the addition (or note) never made it into the next version. Its insertion in the text (judging from the position on the page between ‘reading *Effie*’ and Fanny’s visits)<sup>181</sup> would have created a brusque change of tonality.

The singing of the stanza from Sabine Baring-Gould’s ‘Now the day is over’ was added at a relatively late stage (ET2, 5r). In the next typescript, Beckett made a ‘fit of coughing’ interrupt the singing, not accidentally after ‘Shadows –’. After the coughing, Krapp resumes, but ‘Faintly’ in ET5 became ‘almost inaudible’. The history of the word ‘faint’ is fascinating and goes back at least to Beckett’s so-called ‘Dante revelation’ and what Belacqua called an ‘aesthetic of inaudibilities’ (*Dream* 141). But eventually, when he directed his own play, Beckett omitted the song again. As James Knowlson noted in the first issue of the *Journal of Beckett Studies*, it had become ‘in Beckett’s personal view, too clumsily explicit’ (Knowlson 1976, 54). Krapp eventually decides to ‘Finish this vomit tomorrow’ (EM2, 19r). The ‘vomit’ became ‘puke’ in the first typescript (ET1, 3r) and ‘drivel’ in the fourth (ET4, 6r). There was, however, one thing Beckett did want to add before Krapp would call it a day. He noted down ‘Croghan’ (twice) on the verso page (18v), before he wrote Krapp’s memory of walking: ‘Walk over <sup>Be again on</sup> Croghan on a Sunday morning, in the snow, stop and listen to the bells’ (EM2, 19r). Then he added, on the next verso: ‘And so on. (Pause.)’ (19v).

<sup>181</sup> After the ‘Pah!’, added to the crumpling of the envelope (see above), another ‘Pah!’ was added at an even later stage (ET5, 7r), just after Krapp has been wondering if he and she could have been happy together, and just before he evokes the scene with the prostitute Fanny.

### 2.3.12 Scene XII: 'Farewell to love' III

TAPE: ‘– gooseberries, she said.’ (KLT 12)

The repetitiveness suggested by ‘And so on’ (or ‘Etc.’) also marks the moment when Krapp starts relistening to the scene in the punt: ‘– gooseberries, she said. Etc.’ (EM2, 20r). He did not write out the same scene again, leaving that chore for the first typescript. In terms of the narrative sequence, the ‘farewell to love’ scenes (VIII, IX and XII) form a ‘shaft’ of their own, a projection of the paradigm onto the syntagm:

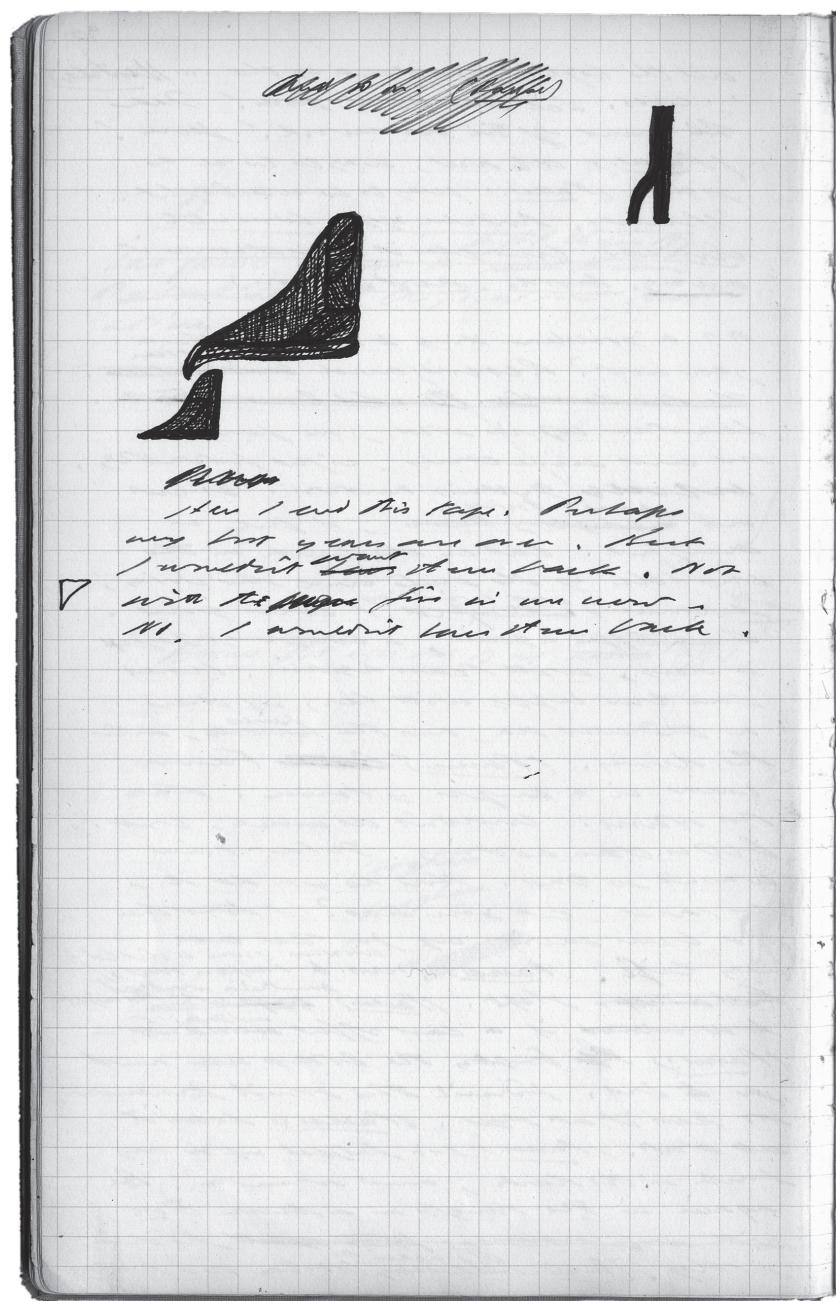
I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII				
								IX	X	XI	
											XII

In EM2, the final words on the tape before it ‘runs on in silence’ (20r) were prepared on the facing leaf: ‘Here I end this tape. Perhaps my best years are over. But I wouldn’t have <sup>want</sup> them back. Not with the ~~flame~~ fire in me now. No, I wouldn’t have them back’ (19v; Fig. 18). As Marion Dieckmann (2011) has suggested, this passage is probably based on Elisabeth’s song in chapter 33 of Theodor Fontane’s *Unwiederbringlich*:

‘Denkst du verschwundener Tage, Marie,  
Wenn du starrst ins Feuer bei Nacht?  
Wünschst du die Stunden und Tage zurück,  
Wo du froh und glücklich gelacht?’

‘Ich denke verschwundener Tage, John,  
Und sie sind allezeit mein Glück,  
Doch die mir die liebsten gewesen sind,  
Ich wünsche sie nicht zurück...’ (Fontane 1958, 1046)

Fig. 18: 'Eté 56' Notebook, page 19v.





[‘Do you think of vanished days, Marie, / As you stare in the fire at night? / Do you wish for those hours & days / To return when you laughed full of joy and happiness?’ // ‘I do think of vanished days, John, / And always they fill me with happiness / But those which were dearest to me, / I do not wish them back again’  
(Fontane 1964, 293)]

Especially the last line, but also the general context of ‘vanished days’ (or ‘temps perdu’ in Proustian terms) and the specific reference to ‘the fire’ echo in Beckett’s closing lines of the play. Most probably, Beckett read *Unwiederbringlich* in the two-volume edition of Fontane’s works that is still extant in his personal library (Van Hulle and Nixon 2013, 270).

Beckett seems to have been re-reading, not only *Effi Briest* at regular intervals, but also *Unwiederbringlich*. On 2 February 1975, while Beckett was in Berlin for the direction of *Waiting for Godot*, he told Barbara Bray (TCD MS10948/1/572) that he was reading *Unwiederbringlich*, quoting the closing lines of the last poem at the end of the book: ‘Wer hasst, ist zu bedauern, / Und mehr noch fast, wer liebt’ [Who hates, is to be pitied and almost more, one who loves] (Fontane 1958, 1051; 1964, 52 fn.1; see Van Hulle and Nixon 2013, 238).





### 3 Genesis of *La Dernière Bande*



As with all of Beckett's works, the genesis continued after the work's publication. In the case of *Krapp's Last Tape*, this epigenesis took shape in the form of both the translation into French and the adaptation of the stage directions during rehearsals. As soon as Beckett had sent the typescript to the publisher, and even before he sent the four typewritten drafts to Jake Schwartz, he already started making notes on the *mise en scène*, albeit initially only in general terms. To Patrick Magee he wrote on 24 March 1958 that he looked forward keenly to hearing him read the fragments from *Malone Dies*, adding:

I hope you like your monologue. If there is anything about it you want to ask me do not hesitate to write. I wish we could meet and go through it together.

Krapp's face as he listens is of course three quarters of that battle. I made no attempt to indicate its changes and unchangingness, feeling that these could safely be left to you. (TCD, SB to Patrick Magee 24 March 1958; *LSB III* 120)

To Barney Rosset he admitted he was particularly concerned about the integrity of this work: 'I'd be grateful for an Evergreen proof. I feel as clucky and beady and one-legged and bare-footed about this little text as an old hen with her last chick' (1 April 1958; *LSB III* 123). And ten days later: 'I feel – to a disturbing degree – the strangest of solicitudes for this little work' (FSU, SB to Rosset, 10 April 1958; *LSB III* 127). By 27 April, the Evergreen proofs had been corrected and Beckett drew Alan Schneider's attention to the changes.<sup>182</sup> And on the same day, he mentioned to Mary Hutchinson that the play was going to be translated by her friend Pierre Leyris: 'He is an excellent translator and I hope he won't mind if I have suggestions to make' (HRC, SB to Mary Hutchinson, 27 April 1958).<sup>183</sup>

But by the end of the summer, Beckett was disappointed about the result. To Ethna MacCarthy he commented on the French translation, which he had

<sup>182</sup> 'I have corrected proofs of *Krapp* for Barney and made a few minor changes which please note. I have no further news from George Devine' (*NABS* 45).

<sup>183</sup> See also Beckett's letter to Barbara Bray of 26 April 1958: 'Krapp's L. T. is to be translated into French by Pierre Leyris, who is an excellent translator. I have corrected American proofs already and made a few small changes' (TCD 10948/1/005).

just received: ‘very mediocre, have to change half of it’ (HRC, SB to Ethna MacCarthy, 29 September 1958). As Leyris’s own recollection (see section 1.6.2) shows, the translator had not been satisfied with his translation either, and in retrospect he openly admitted that the collaboration with Beckett had led to such an improvement of the translation that nothing much was left of his ‘bad text’ (qtd. in Sardin-Damestoy 2002, 231).

The most conspicuous translation variant is Krapp’s absence from the title in *La Dernière Bande*, which is compensated for by means of the pun on ‘bande’ (meaning both ‘tape’ and ‘erection’). Daniel Katz suggests – and at the same time qualifies – a reading of the farewell to love scene that may be Krapp’s own reading, one that directly relates to the title: ‘l’amour que Krapp a fait l’erreur de se refuser était, dans sa singularité, sans doute l’objet perdu primordial, dont tous les autres – banane, boisson, bobine – ne sont que les substituts malheureux. C’est peut-être la lecture de Krapp, quand il bande pour la dernière fois’ [‘the love which Krapp has made the error of refusing, was, in its singularity, undoubtedly the primordial lost object, of which all the other objects – banana, booze, spool – are but sorry substitutes. This is perhaps Krapp’s reading, when he has an erection for the last time’] (Katz 2006, 153). But this would be a reading that ‘descend[s] to the level of the sentimental’ as Beckett calls it in his production notebook; or to use his own neologism: ‘tomber dans le sentimentique’ (MS 1396/4/16, 35r [numbered 67 by Beckett], TN3 177).

On the same page, under the heading ‘Psychologique’, Beckett calls the tape-recorder an ‘Agent masturbateur’ (TN3 179; see above, section 2.6.1). There is no direct connection between ‘Krapp’ (excrement) and ‘bande’ (erection), but both these elements play a role in a complex motif that is connected to Beckett’s psychology notes of the 1930s. One of the notes Beckett excerpted from Otto Rank’s *The Trauma of Birth* was his description of the situation of being in the mother’s womb as ‘*interfaeces et urinas*’ (TCD MS 10971/8/34). One of the first translation variants between the English and French versions is the translation of ‘Rusty black’ by ‘noir pisseeux’. The adjective ‘pisseeux’ indicates a dingy colour, but etymologically it refers to the colour of urine. In a way, Beckett thus situates his bilingual work between English ‘crap’ and French ‘pissee’, ‘*interfaeces et urinas*’. Otto Rank refers to Herbert Silberer (who is also mentioned in Beckett’s psychology



notes, 10971/8/14ff.), notably to the article ‘Der Homunkulus’,<sup>184</sup> in which Silberer explains how alchemists believed that, in order to produce gold, the ingredients had to fully decompose first to become fertile. Silberer speaks of ‘die spermatische Kraft des Kotes’ [‘the spermatic power of faeces’] (Silberer 1914, 39). In other words, crap is seen as the *prima materia* (39), and Silberer does not fail to refer to numerous creation myths and legends (53) that situate the origins of man in mud or dung, thus making the same direct link between mud and excrement as in the pun on Faust’s ‘Die Erde hat mich wieder’ in the Addenda to *Watt*: ‘Die Merde hat mich wieder.’ Silberer also makes a connection with the human form of mandrake roots, which have sometimes been called ‘homunculi’. As legend has it, mandrakes grow under the gallows; when a young man is hanged, has an erection and ejaculates, mandrakes grow where his sperm falls – or as Didi puts it: ‘Là où ça tombe il pousse des mandragores’ / ‘Where it falls mandrakes grow’ (CDW18). The homophony between ‘ça tombe’ (it falls) and the overtone ‘sa tombe’ (his tomb) recalls the Beckettian wombtomb theme and, with reference to the translation of Krapp’s *Last Tape*, provides the context for the fact that his ‘bande’ is said to be his last one, ‘la dernière’.

Another famous psychological reference is the connection between the word ‘spool’ and the ‘Spule’ (or ‘Holzspule’ [wooden spool]) in the story of the *fort/da* game in Freud’s *Jenseits des Lustprinzips*, which Matthijs Engelberts has linked to *La Dernière Bande*: ‘Au début de l’essai où la notion de pulsion de mort est introduite, Freud décrit un enfant se livrant à ce que l’auteur appelle le jeu *fort/da* [...] le jeu d’un enfant qui jette une bobine de bois pour qu’elle disparaisse, et qui la rapproche ensuite au moyen d’une ficelle attachée à la bobine. Le jeu est accompagné d’une exclamation particulière’ (Engelberts 1990, 74). In *La Dernière Bande*, Krapp’s voice is described as ‘très particulière’, whereas in the English version it has a ‘distinctive intonation’. Freud describes this exclamation as an elongated ‘o-o-o-o’, which recalls Krapp’s revelling in the pronunciation of the word ‘spooool’. According to Freud, throwing away the spool, symbolizes the departure of the child’s mother (‘fort’); the game allows the little boy to deal with this departure as it enables him to (symbolically) bring her back (‘da’). Against the background of the *fort/da* game, it is indeed interesting that, after

184 Herbert Silberer, ‘Der Homunkulus’, *Imago* 3 (1914), 37–79; see Van Hulle 2008, 171.



recording his tape, Krapp ‘throws it away’, which is translated as ‘la jette au loin’ (HRC MS SB 4-2-6, 8r) – with slightly more emphasis on the distance to suggest the impossibility of ever being able to retrieve anything from the past, to deal with the departure of his mother or to come to terms with the farewell to love.

In Alan Schneider’s prompt book, all the spools were replaced by ‘reel’ (see section 1.5), but Beckett explicitly asked to reintroduce ‘spool instead of reel’ in his letter to Schneider on 4 January 1960 (*NABS* 59). Whereas he did allow Schneider to replace other words by synonyms (e.g. ‘sluice or lock’ instead of ‘weir’), the insistence on the word ‘spool’ may corroborate the link with Freud. As Engelberts notes, the word choice in the French translation – ‘bobine’ – entails the same possibility of an allusion to the ‘Spule’ in Freud’s essay.

In the English version, Krapp uses the expression ‘separating the grain from the husks’, and then wonders what he ‘means’ by that. In the French version the expression is ‘séparer le grain de la balle’ and the idiomatic translation ‘je me demande ce que j’entends par là’ expresses less the intention inherent in the verb ‘to mean’ than the notion of understanding and hearing, which recalls the idea of the voice that is so pervasive in Beckett’s novels, notably *L’Innommable / The Unnamable*. Since this notion of reception (‘entendre’ in the sense of ‘hearing’) is slightly more prominent in the French version, it reinforces Daniel Katz’s suggestion that *La Dernière Bande* is a staging of *L’Innommable*: ‘la pièce est sans aucun doute une mise en scène de *L’Innommable*, dont le drame n’est rien d’autre que celui d’une voix absolument intime mais qui arrive à celui qui la profère’ (Katz 2006, 147). This interpretation is corroborated by the chronology of the early genesis (20–23 February 1958), when Beckett was working in parallel on both the earliest version of *Krapp’s Last Tape* and the last pages of the translation of *L’Innommable*. The scene in which Krapp does not remember the meaning of the word viduity, which he used to know, and needs an ‘external memory’ in the form of a dictionary to look it up, is written in the wake of the translation process of *L’Innommable*. The problem of the voice that is exterior to the subject (‘l’extériorité au sujet lui-même de la voix’; Katz 2006, 147) is staged in *Krapp’s Last Tape*, also by means of the ‘extériorité de la mémoire’ (147). Translation plays a special role in this staging, to such an extent that Katz calls *Krapp’s Last Tape* not only ‘un drame de la mémoire

et de la répétition' but also 'un drame de la traduction' (146).<sup>185</sup> The French translation plays an interesting part in this drama as it sometimes reinforces the drama of repetition. Thus, for instance, the 'balle' as translation of 'husks' is echoed in the 'balle' as translation of the black ball.

Here and there, the translation also shows traces of what Daniel Ferrer has called 'mémoire du contexte' (Ferrer 2011, 109), places in the text where some of the cuts and other forms of creative undoing in the genesis have left a trace. For instance, the 'Chewed cuds' in ET3, scene XI (see section 2.3.11), became 'The sour cud' in ET4:

Chewed cuds and irreversible constipation. hard stools. (ET3, 5r)  
 Chewed ~~sour~~ cuds and hard ~~amounting~~ hard stools. The sour cud and the hard stool.  
 (ET4, 6r)

The sour cud and the iron stool. (ET5, 6r)

But the notion of 'chewing' that was lost in this process reemerged in the French translation: 'Merde remâchée et bouchon au cul' (HRC MS SB 4-2-6, 7r). By presenting the act of rumination as re-chewing faeces, the French translation recalls the notion of 'coprolalia' (mucktalk), a term Beckett encountered in Max Nordau's *Degeneration*.<sup>186</sup> As Michiko Tsushima notes, the focus on chewing can be linked to Saint Augustine's *Confessions*, in which he suggests that 'memory is a sort of stomach for the mind' (Tsushima

185 Moreover, Krapp is called 'a man of translation': 'si on pense à la traduction comme une forme de répétition, de réélaboration, et de substitution par une différence qui tâche de rester dans le registre de l'identique, on peut dire que Krapp est sans aucun doute un homme de la traduction' (154).

186 Ulrika Maude argues that Beckett is 'perhaps the most coprolalic of all the modernist writers, for so-called obscenities figure prominently in his writing, as does the Tourette's notion of language speaking itself, compulsively and convulsively' (Maude 2015, 176). Beckett read the 1895 translation of Max Nordau's book and took notes on Tourette's syndrome, notably its symptoms of coprolalia ('obsessional explosions of blasphemies and obscenities') and echolalia: 'A perception arouses a representation which summons into consciousness a thousand other associated representations. The healthy mind suppresses the representations which are contradictory to, or not rationally connected with, the first perception. This the weak-minded cannot do. The mere similarity of sound determines the current of his thought. He hears a word, and feels compelled to repeat it, once or oftener, sometimes to the extent of "Echolalia"' (Nordau 1986, 65). Krapp's relishing in the words 'spool' and 'vidua-bird' suggests a mild form of echolalia.

2008, 125). In the *Dream* Notebook, under the heading ‘Mind not memory’, Beckett excerpted a passage from the *Confessions* in which he underlined the sentence ‘The memory is the belly of the mind & joy & sadness the sweet and bitter food; which, when committed to the memory, are, as it were, passed into the belly, where they may be stowed, but cannot taste’. Even the notion of the ‘cud’ is mentioned in the *Confessions*: ‘Perhaps these emotions are brought forward from the memory by the act of remembering in the same way as cattle bring up food from the stomach when they chew the cud’ (Augustine qtd. in Tsushima 2008, 125).

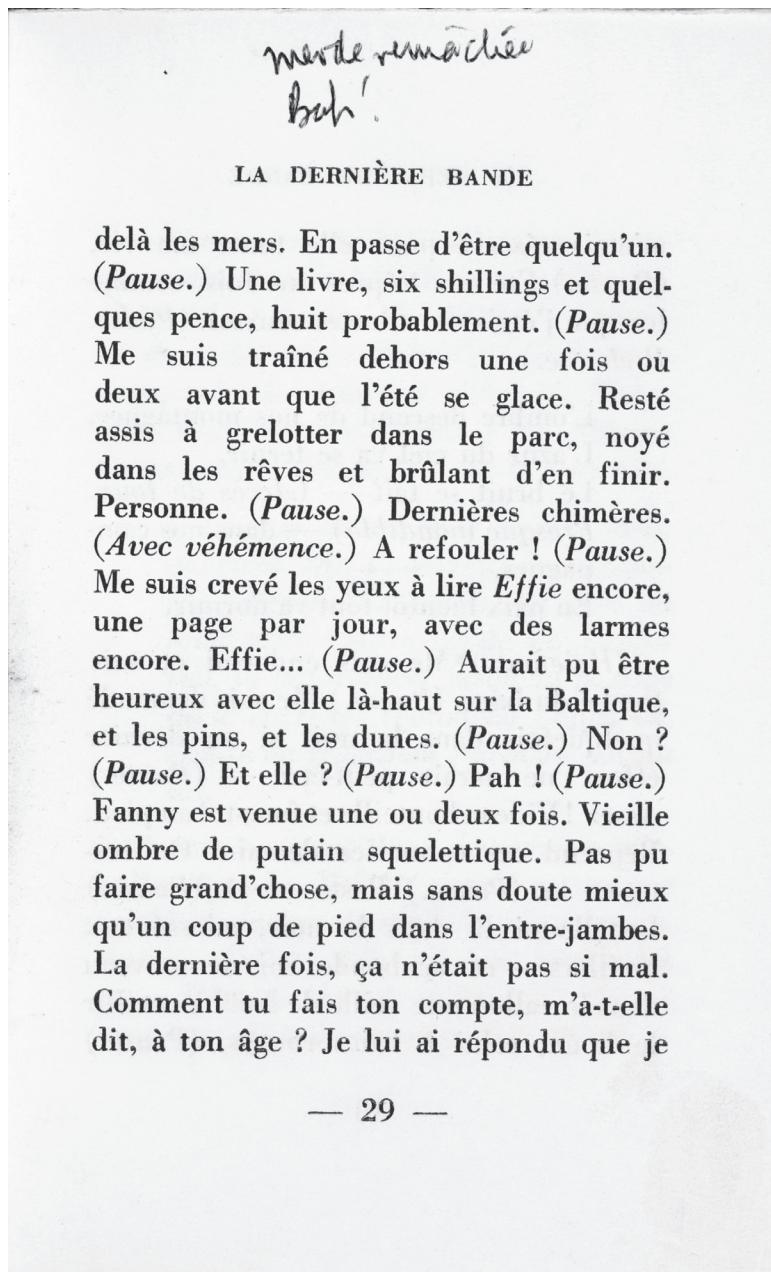
By 11 October 1958, Beckett had finished the revision of Leyris’s translation (Pilling 2006, 142), and to Alan Schneider he admitted that he had been ‘sweating on the French text of Krapp’, but that he had ‘now a more or less tolerable version at last – and agreeable to the translator!’ (*NABS* 49). A day later he confided to Thomas MacGreevy that the decision not to translate the play himself had been a great mistake (Pilling 2006, 142). And when, a few years later, he re-read the text of *La Dernière Bande* for a performance by Roger Blin, he still ‘thought it stank of translation’ (TCD 10948/1/071/1, SB to Barbara Bray, 18 February 1961).

The solicitude Beckett felt for his play is not only noticeable in what he thought of the French translation, but also in the way he carefully watched the rehearsals of the first French performance. A copy of the first Minuit edition of *La Dernière Bande* with annotations for Roger Blin’s production of the French première at the Théâtre Récamier in Paris on 22 March 1960 (preserved at the Lilly Library in Bloomington; see 1.6.2) contains marginal notes such as ‘très articulé’ (linked to the word ‘viduité’, page 19), ‘trop vigououreux’ (next to the passage ‘Tout était là [...] Rien à dire’, page 28), and ‘merde remâchée / Bah!’ (in the top margin of page 29, probably referring to ‘Pah! [...] Merde remâchée et bouchon au cul’ on page 28; see Fig. 19).

This copy contains loose sheets with notes. The first 5 loose sheets (1–5) are catalogued under the item *Lilly English Literature mss.*, 1951–1993, ‘Notes for the producer of *La Dernière Bande*. Autograph Document 5p. 14–27cm’. They were removed from the copy of Beckett’s *La Dernière Bande*, traduit de l’anglais par Pierre Leyris et l’auteur (Paris, Les Éditions de Minuit, 1960), preserved at the Lilly Library (Lilly PQ2603.E367 K814).

These notes complement a set of notes on (6) the front flyleaf, (7) the verso of p. [74], (8) the recto and (9) verso of the back flyleaf and (10) the back end paper of the same copy. Judging from the writing tools, the (pencilled) notes

Fig. 19: Annotated copy of *La Dernière Bande*, held at the Lilly Library in Bloomington, Indiana



on pages (1), (2), (6) and (10) belong together, as do the notes in red ballpoint on pages (3), (4), (7), (8), and (9). The notes on page (5) in black ink are in a more regular handwriting and are probably the only ones that were not taken down during the rehearsals.

(1)

The first loose sheet of paper contains a series of notes in grey pencil:

aujourd'hui une /année

larmes dans les yeux

bientôt tout va / dormir

---

après “coule-toi”<sup>187</sup> pause + / longue

---

écartier micro avant fin

---

après “la terre pourrait être inhabitée”

---

table trop propre

---

The notes are very elliptic, probably because they were noted down during the rehearsals and only served as *aide-mémoire* to make comments after the performance.

(2)

The second loose sheet also contains notes in grey pencil.

Début

187 Cf. ‘Une fois ne t'a pas suffi. (*Pause.*) Coule-toi sur elle’ (*LDB* 1959, 31).

après 1<sup>er</sup> bouchon  
bobine  
petite coquine  
petit temps avant fermer  
registre  
Bruit déclic

---

Etat – ou etc<sup>188</sup>  
avant instants du chien

---

ne pas s'asseoir avant  
2<sup>me</sup> barque

---

verre trop

---

lumière et l'obscurité

---

coupé trop vite après  
“peut-être qu'il a[vait] raison”

(3)

The third leaf contains notes in red ballpoint. It is remarkable how precise the instructions are (e.g. ‘serrer les mains sans les frotter’), how much attention is paid to the length of the pauses (e.g. ‘premier viduité – plus long avant de rebrancher’) and to the pronunciation (‘opus ? opus’):

coquine fripouille

---

188 Cf. ‘Etat – ou condition – de qui est – ou demeure – veuf – ou veuve’ (*LDB* 1959, 20).

écarteur magnétophone

---

opous ? opus

---

serrer les mains sans les  
frotter

---

premier viduité – plus long  
avant de rebrancher

---

banc pr[x]

---

~~une~~ affaire finie

---

la balle sans [xxx]endre les mains

---

m'ai demandé (?)<sup>189</sup>

[written upside down at bottom of page]

Lorsqu'ils salient  
(+ cérémonieux)

(4)

The same red ballpoint is used for the notes on the fourth leaf. One of the notes is followed by a sketch (on the right-hand side of the page) and the sheet has been shifted to landscape format.

189 Beckett's question mark.

Gueuler le cru au  
magnétophone

[the following is written in landscape format underneath the sketch ]  
Ce qui est

(5)

The notes on the fifth page are in black ink and are clearly more structured and written more carefully than the jottings in pencil and red ballpoint. It is striking that – even though at that time Beckett had not yet directed any of his own plays – his notes already show a clear vision on the *mise en scène*, emphasizing the attempt to simplify the actor's performance. This approach accords with what Stan Gontarski has dubbed 'the intent of undoing', as some of the simplifications have textual implications, for instance the decision to undo the song twice ('Pas de chanson'; 'supprimer chanson'):

- 1 Bande enregistrée. Rien à faire
- 2 Synchronisation.
- 3 Animer l'écoute
- 4 Intensifier enregistrement.
- 5 Simplifier jeu de l'acteur:

a	montre seule pas de clefs rien dans 1 <sup>er</sup> tiroir simplifier et accélérer bananes. Première dans l'avidité. 2 <sup>me</sup> empochée sans être épluchée.	8-11
b	un seul bouchon. Pas de chanson. Toux seule.	18
c	montre seule. Pas de verre. Un seul bouchon. Il revient	26

Fig. 20: Beckett's notes (black ink) for the first French performance at the Théâtre Récamier on 22 March 1960

1. Rendre magistrale. N'en à faire  
2. Spectacle sans attrice.  
3. Annuler les cartes.  
4. Interprétation magistralement.  
5. Soi-même plus que de l'autre :

a. montre seule  
pas de clefs  
Mise en place 19/11/59  
Si implications et accès libres  
évanouissement dans  
l'irréalité : 2<sup>e</sup> embûche  
sans être énervée.

b. sur scène bouchon. Pas  
de dramaturg. Toute seule. } 18

c. montre seule. Pas  
de temps. Sur scène  
bouchon. Se ressusciter  
avec grande violence, en  
mort à la facette.

d. supprimer distractions  
(2) et dérangement (2) 27/8

e. supprimer chuchot. 20

Couper le passage de l'inimitié  
au mouvement.  
Démarche plus rapide. Justement.

avec bande vierge, va  
droit à la table.

d supprimer débranchements 27/8  
(2) et rebranchements (2)

e supprimer chanson. 30

brusque passage de l'immobilité  
au mouvement.

Démarche plus rapide: [trot]inement.

(6)

The notes on the front flyleaf are in grey pencil:

10.13  
en arrière vers  
 l'année écoulée  
 viduité?  
 oiseau veuve  
 d'un funèbre  
 pour les femmes – main  
 à sa gorge

---

avant 1<sup>ere</sup> reprise  
 de la barque il  
 a + de temps

---

après repr siphon

---

oeil

---

Resté assis dans le parc

(7)

The notes in red ballpoint on the verso of page [74], taken down during the rehearsals, indicate the same concern about the actor R.-J. Chauffard's performance, which needed to be 'simplified'. His performance was 'trop agité', his gestures were 'trop vifs', and the phrase 'instants du chien' had to be '(simple)'. Beckett was 'disappointed', as he told McWhinnie on 6 April 1960: 'very unsatisfactory performance by Chauffard, simply unfitted, vocally and every other way, for the part' (qtd. in Knowlson 1996, 794n129).

se penche pour regarder  
après "soufflé" – trou

—  
écoute + immobile

—  
main sur le bouton tout le  
temps

—  
trop agité  
gestes trop vifs

—  
regarde l'appareil dans les  
pauses de la bande

—  
n'évite pas les boîtes  
par terre

—  
instants du chien (simple)

Fig. 21: Notes for the first performance of *La Dernière Bande* on the verso of page [74] of the copy of the 1959 Minuit edition, preserved at the Lilly Library, Bloomington, Indiana

se penche pour regarder  
après "rouffle" — t'voi  
écouté + immobile  
main sur le bouton tout le  
temps

trop agité  
sentes trop rifs

regarde l'appareil dans les  
pauses de la bande

n'écris pas les voix  
par terre

restants du chien (simple)

part fort de nuit sur  
bouche banane

Avais chanté? (Passe, et  
je veux l'appareil.) Non.  
3 fois

3 fois ne pas lâcher la  
Fête — laisser cet des secondes —  
toute manipulation de la main  
droite — moyen  
à — moyen  
main — pendre

part tout de suite sur  
bouché banane

---

jamais chanté? (Pause. il  
regarde l'appareil.) Non.  
3 fois

---

tiroirs ne pas [lâcher] la  
table – laisser clef dans serrure –  
toute manipulation de la main  
droite –

---

a – mour  
neutre tendre

As the last note indicates, the actor had to express two different moods corresponding to the two syllables of ‘amour’, moving from a neutral to a tender mood. And immediately after this evocation of love, the first note on the facing recto page seems to serve as a *memento mori* – an abrupt transition from Eros to Thanatos: ‘bouche ouverte – il la ferme – / elle se rouvre aussitôt’.

(8)

The notes in red ballpoint on the recto of the back flyleaf open with a description of Krapp’s mouth: it is open; when he closes his mouth, it immediately falls open again, as if his facial muscles can barely hide the skull underneath.

bouche ouverte – il la ferme –  
elle se rouvre aussitôt

---

débrancher fera rôvasser sans



regarder l'appareil

---

$$\begin{array}{r} 1660 \\ 500 \\ \hline 830000 \end{array}$$

---

enveloppe | moins de  
éclairage | parti[cipation]

---

tête tombe sur “visage sur ses seins”

---

Déception que bobine pas banane

---

passage immobilité – mobilité + brusque

---

- 1 1 bouchon
  - 2 2 ”
  - 3 verre et siphon
- 

à moi. (Pause. Il regarde  
l'appareil qui lui crache.) Krapp!  
(Il recule)

---

(9)

The last page with notes in red ballpoint is the verso of the back flyleaf:

1 seule “bobine”  
“quoi” + bas

couper x “mémorable équinoxe?”  
rêvasser plus longtemps  
rire après “boire moins”  
main sur “petite balle”  
banane poche côté droit  
Effie + tendre  
2<sup>ème</sup> Restes-en là

---

rêver

(10)

Like the notes on the front flyleaf, the notes on the inside of the back cover are in grey pencil again.

promenade tourner  
vers salle

---

porter dictionnaire comme  
régistre sans feuilleter

---

boîte 3 mal placé

---

en mettant bande garder xxarder  
“bobine cinq”

[in the left margin:] d'au delà les mers

---

après n'entends pas un souffle



(pause + longue)

chanson + bas

l'oiseau veuve – souffle comme  
bobine

garder yeux fermés pour mon visage  
dans ses seins

[in the left margin:]  
oeil à la magnétophone  
avant “les yeux qu'elle  
avait” (lorsqu'il enregistre)

[in the right margin:]  
bah! après  
Effie

In 1970 and 1975, Beckett directed the French version of the play himself.<sup>190</sup> James Knowlson lists the changes Beckett made to the French text for these productions (*TN3* 281-2). There are a few notable differences in comparison with the notes for the first French performance directed by Blin. The notes indicate that the actor had to emphasize the split of the word ‘amour’ in ‘Adieu à l'a... (*il tourne la page*) ...mour’, suggesting that ‘a –’ be pronounced in a neutral way and ‘– mour’ in a more tender way (see above, leaf (7), last note). In his own Théâtre Récamier production (1970), Beckett chose not to split the word:

Adieu à... (*il tourne la page*) ...l'amour (*TN3* 281)

190 Respectively at the Théâtre Récamier (which opened on 29 April 1970) and Théâtre d'Orsay (April 1975).



One of the changes Beckett made in both his 1970 and 1975 productions is the substitution of ‘refouler’ with ‘éliminer’. This occurs twice: once in the description of the ‘vision’ (“the fire in me now”):

l'obscurité que je m'étais toujours acharné à **refouler** (*LDB* 1959, 23)  
l'obscurité que je m'étais toujours acharné à **éliminer** (*TN3* 281)

And once again after Krapp mentions the seventeen sold copies of his work, just after another fire-related image (“brûlant d'en finir”): ‘A **refouler!**’ (*LDB* 29) becomes ‘A **éliminer!**’ (*TN3* 281). The affix ‘é-’ in ‘éliminer’ reinforces the pattern discussed with regard to the variant ‘consumé’ / ‘éteint’ (a tendency toward increased negativity) between the typescript and the Minuit edition (see section 1.4.2).







# Conclusion



Beckett famously considered several variations on the theme of *Krapp's Last Tape*. In a letter to Alan Schneider (21 September 1959), he considered writing a triptych:

Have an idea for 2 variants on the Krapp theme [...] One would be situation if instead of sacrificing the girl in the boat for the opus ... magnum he had done the reverse. You see the idea, triptych, three doors closed instead of one, the one we have already no. 3:

- |   |                                      |   |                  |
|---|--------------------------------------|---|------------------|
| 1 | Krapp, M <sup>rs</sup> Krapp, child. |   |                  |
| 2 | " " childless                        | } | <sup>191</sup> ? |
| 3 | " alone                              |   |                  |

(LSB III 241)

On the same day, he also mentioned the 'idea for a *Krapp* triptych' to Mary Hutchinson (LSB III 242), and Dougald McMillan and Martha Fehsenfeld quote yet another version of this idea: 'I thought of writing a play on the opposite situation with Mrs. Krapp, the girl in the punt, nagging away behind him, in which case his failure and his solitude would be exactly the same' (McMillan and Fehsenfeld 1988, 288–9). In a letter to Pamela Mitchell (30 March 1968), Beckett mentioned that he considered writing a second version of the play, in which Krapp prefers a life with his girl instead of devoting himself to his 'silly "opus"', but as soon as he had mentioned the idea, he already dismissed it again as a 'gratuitous exercise'. In their report of Beckett's San Quentin Theatre Workshop production, Rick Cluchey and Michael Haerdter write that, 'During a relaxed break, Beckett depicts with a smile the image of an old Krapp who had made the opposite decision: surrounded by an aged wife and many, many children ... "good God!"' (Cluchey and Haerdter 1980, 128).<sup>192</sup> James Knowlson suggests that, in a sense, M. Henri Krap in Beckett's play *Eleutheria* can be regarded as this other Krapp – a Krapp who is married and has a son (Knowlson and Pilling 1979, 90).

191 The curled bracket spans the three items.

192 Pierre Chabert also quotes Beckett during a rehearsal, laughing: 'I thought of writing a play about the situation in reverse: Mrs Krapp, the girl in the boat, would be prowling around behind him, and his failure, and his solitude would be just the same' (qtd. in Chabert 1980, 87).



But even without these projected alternatives (the versions that were never realized, the roads not taken), Krapp in *Krapp's Last Tape* is a succession of Krapps and they are their own antagonists, according to Dennett's 'multiple drafts model' or according to Beckett's analysis in his essay *Proust* (1931): 'the individual is a succession of individuals' (PTD 19).

A difference between Dennett's model and Beckett's, however, is the role of the tape recorder.<sup>193</sup> As early as 1931, Beckett noted that the world is a projection of the individual's consciousness – '(an objectivation of the individual's will, Schopenhauer would say)'. Consequently, this consciousness and the world continuously need to renew the 'pact' between them: 'The creation of the world did not take place once and for all time, but takes place every day. Habit then is the generic term for the countless treaties concluded between the countless subjects that constitute the individual and their countless correlative objects' (PTD 19). Memory and Habit are what Beckett calls 'attributes of the Time cancer' – 'for every tumour a scalpel and a compress' (18). And although Habit is 'the ballast that chains the dog to his vomit' (19), it is also the 'compromise effected between the individual and his environment' (18). In *Proust*, Beckett also employs the metaphor of 'decantation': 'The individual is the seat of a constant process of decantation, decantation from the vessel containing the fluid of future time, sluggish, pale and monochrome, to the vessel containing the fluid of past time, agitated and multi-coloured by the phenomena of its hours' (PTD 15). The flux of time is expressed in the last stage direction of *Krapp's Last Tape*, when the tape 'runs on' in silence (KLT 12).

The direct link between this flux of time and Krapp's tape recorder is Henri Bergson's spool metaphor (see Introduction). While the reel-to-reel tape is unwound on one spool (the future decreasing as one ages) the other winds it up (as one's past increases). As Dustin Anderson notes, Bergson problematizes his own metaphor as soon as he has introduced it, for 'no

193 Radical enactivists would probably consider Dennett's model to be still too 'internalist' (Richard Menary and Erik Myin made comments to that effect during the colloquium 'Enactive Cognition in Philosophy and Literature', 22-23 May 2014, University of Antwerp) and thus still too reminiscent of the Cartesian body/mind split. In Beckett studies this split is noticeable, for instance, in Ruby Cohn's *Back to Beckett*, when she clearly separates an 'outside' from an 'inside' of Krapp's memory: 'His past is on tape, not in his head' (Cohn 1976, 168).



image can represent duration, because the image is immobile, while duration is “pure mobility” (Anderson 2010, 59). Stan Gontarski paraphrases Bergson’s objection to his own image and applies it to Krapp as follows: ‘Krapp seems to have sullied his “spools” with language, accepted the representation, as the tape captures only a series of moments or still points, and so is itself testimony of his failures’ (Gontarski 2011, 72). The spool metaphor ‘implied a static or quantitative quality instead of a fluid qualitative multiplicity’ and thus it unwittingly seemed to suggest ‘a storage model of memory’ (Anderson 2010, 63). In that sense, Ruby Cohn interpreted Krapp’s tape recorder as ‘a stage metaphor for time past’ (Cohn 1976, 165). Bergson’s image and Krapp’s tape recorder, however, imply a simultaneity of past and present experiences. Krapp re-experiences a memory simultaneously with the experience of hearing the recorded memory anew.<sup>194</sup> The notion of ‘duration’, according to Bergson, needs to be understood as a qualitative multiplicity: ‘the unrolling of our duration resembles in some of its aspects the unity of an advancing movement and in others the multiplicity of expanding states’ (Bergson 1903).

In this Bergsonian sense, it is understandable that Krapp refers to himself both with first-person and with third-person pronouns. Or to paraphrase Bergson: the ‘unrolling’ of Krapp’s ‘duration’ resembles on the one hand ‘the unity of a movement which progresses’ (an ‘I’ in successive stages), and ‘a multiplicity of states spreading out’ (a succession of individuals). The content of *Krapp’s Last Tape* thus adds special meaning to the textual form of its genesis, and vice versa. The multiple drafts and textual versions constitute various states of this work’s duration. To ‘unroll’ the work’s duration, this book has analysed the ‘making of’ this play, hoping to inform new performances and readings, based on the idea that knowing how something was made can contribute to an understanding of how it works.

194 Dustin Anderson links this to Proust’s *A la Recherche du temps perdu*: ‘We see in Proust’s explanation of the extra-temporal convergence of the past and the present within memory that memory can conserve both the virtual and actual elements of the past experience’ (Anderson 2010, 59).



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# Index

Abbott, H. Porter 23, 25, 97, 149, 176

Ackerley, C. J. 190, 191

Albee, Edward 107

Anderson, Dustin 252, 253

Arikha, Avigdor 176

Armstrong, Paul B. 27

Arnheim, Rudolf 163, 164, 165, 166, 167

Artaud, Artonin 75

Atik, Anne 176

Aubarède, Gabriel d' 220

Augustine 24, 25, 31, 189, 190, 191, 233, 234

Bachelard, Gaston 37

Bair, Deirdre 189, 190

Balzac, Honoré de 21

Barge, Laura 193

Baring-Gould, Sabine 203, 216, 223

Barr, Richard 107

Barthes, Roland 75

Becker, Joachim 27

Beckett, John 48, 136, 137, 148, 168

Beckett, Samuel

*Act Without Words II / Acte sans paroles*

*II* 82

*Acte sans paroles I / Act Without Words I*

48, 80, 82, 158

'Alba' 175

*All That Fall / Tous ceux qui tombent* 43,

44, 45, 62, 73, 74, 82, 90, 133, 134, 135,

136, 212, 220

'Cascando' / 'Mancando' 55, 158, 159

*Cascando* 56, 57

*Come and Go / Va et vient* 73, 74

*Comment c'est / How It Is* 35, 43, 58, 183,

196

*Company / Compagnie* 166

'Dante and the Lobster' 161, 211

'Ding Dong' 31

'Dream' Notebook 24, 63, 65, 234

*Dream of Fair to Middling Women* 24, 160,

169, 186, 199, 219, 223

'Echo's Bones' 158

*Eh Joe / Dis Joe* 73, 74

*Eleutheria* 251

*Embers / Cendres* 43, 60, 68, 73, 74, 79, 80,

82, 85, 86, 90, 99, 135, 139, 140, 141, 142,

145, 166

*En attendant Godot / Waiting for Godot* 31,

89, 98, 134, 135, 136, 158, 191, 194, 203,

226, 231

*Esquisse radiophonique / Rough for Radio*

*I* 56, 57

*Film* 55, 73, 74

*Fin de partie / Endgame* 31, 43, 44, 45, 48,

62, 105, 133, 134, 135, 136, 138, 143, 144,

146, 148, 149, 154, 156, 158, 171

*Foirades / Fizzles* 147

*Footfalls / Pas* 156

*From an Abandoned Work / D'un ouvrage*

*abandonné* 133, 134, 135, 136, 138, 139,

146, 147, 153

*Happy Days / Oh les beaux jours* 31, 43, 59,

87, 90, 156, 209

'In memoriam' 51, 52

- 'Journal of a Melancholic' 25
- L'Innommable / The Unnamable* 26, 31, 44, 59, 63, 78, 88, 135, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 145, 146, 147, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 166, 184, 214, 232
- Malone meurt / Malone Dies* 24, 25, 26, 59, 135, 148, 149, 150, 191, 229
- Mercier et Camier / Mercier and Camier* 31
- Molloy* 26, 44, 133, 134, 136, 137, 138, 139, 142, 144, 146, 147
- More Pricks Than Kicks* 31, 218, 221
- Murphy* 21, 143
- Not I / Pas moi* 31, 80, 105, 156
- 'Peintres de l'empêchement' / 'The New Object' 54, 55
- Play / Comédie* 90
- Pochade radiophonique / Rough for Radio II* 209
- Proust* 33, 36, 160, 170, 252
- 'Sam Francis' Notebook 176, 178
- Stirrings Still / Soubresauts* 147
- Textes pour rien / Texts for Nothing* 152
- 'The Time of My Life' 45
- Watt* 134, 183, 231
- 'Whoroscope' Notebook 63, 183, 184
- Words and Music / Paroles et musique* 43, 56, 59
- Beethoven, Ludwig van 169
- Bergson, Henri 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 163, 164, 252, 253
- Bettoni, Nicolò 176
- Biasi, Pierre-Marc de 22
- Black, Kitty 68, 154
- Blin, Roger 61, 88, 116, 124, 133, 234, 247
- Bray, Barbara 56, 57, 79, 133, 136, 137, 140, 145, 226, 229, 234
- Breuer, Rolf 32
- Brown, Harry Joe 107
- Bryden, Mary 43, 59, 67, 88, 91, 115, 116, 117, 122
- Bulwer-Lytton, Edward 206
- Burnet, John 190
- Burrows, Rachel 21, 30, 31, 32, 33
- Campbell, Thomas 177
- Canaris, Volker 113
- Chabert, Pierre 80, 100, 251
- Chalmers, David 28
- Chauffard, René Joseph 88, 116, 242
- Clark, Andy 28
- Claudius, Matthias 91, 92
- Clément, Bruno 214
- Clodda, Alan 125
- Cluchey, Rick 81, 109, 251
- Cohn, Ruby 32, 56, 57, 252, 253
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor 165, 181, 182
- Colin, Rosica 68, 154
- Connor, Steven 30, 172, 163
- Corneille, Pierre 21
- Cornwallis Conybear, Frederic 187
- Cronin, Anthony 62
- Cusack, Cyril 108
- Daiken, Leslie 21
- Damasio, Antonio 26, 27, 161
- Daniels, William 107
- Dante 44, 58, 176, 220, 221, 223
- Davis, Donald 105, 107, 114, 123
- Dawe, Gerald 215
- Dawkins, Richard 23
- Delor, Margot 60
- Democritus 190
- Dennett, Daniel C. 22, 23, 26, 27, 37, 161, 252
- Derrida, Jacques 149



- Descartes, René 26, 27, 31, 141, 158, 207, 208, 252
- Devine, George 68, 105, 138, 144, 148, 150, 151, 153, 154, 171, 229
- Dieckmann, Marion 224
- Dittrich, Nicole C. 81, 82, 85
- Driver, Tom F. 106, 191, 208
- Eisenstein, Sergei 163
- Ellmann, Richard 63
- Engelberts, Matthijs 231, 232
- Esslin, Martin 56, 138
- Faustus 25
- Fayette, Madame de la 219
- Federman, Raymond 60, 80, 87, 88, 108, 124, 125, 208
- Fehsenfeld, Martha 187, 189, 192, 202, 206, 210, 211, 251
- Feldman, Matthew 134, 150
- Ferrer, Daniel 37, 65, 232
- Fifield, Peter 53, 54, 55
- Finney, Albert 80, 117
- Fitzgerald, Prudence 108
- Fletcher, John 60, 80, 87, 88, 108, 124, 125, 209
- Flower, Linda 63, 205
- Fontane, Theodor 99, 122, 219, 220, 223, 224, 226, 237
- Freud, Sigmund 187, 231, 232
- Garforth, Julian 43, 59, 67, 88, 91, 115, 116, 117, 122
- Garnier, Pierre 185
- Gide, André 21, 31
- Gielgud, Val 135
- Gilbert, Sandra M. 27
- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von 172, 221
- Gogol, Nikolai 127
- Gontarski, S. E. 33, 36, 37, 153, 155, 190, 202, 239, 253
- Gorgias 177
- Gottschall, Jonathan 22, 23, 26, 27, 161
- Graver, Lawrence 208
- Greene, Robert 191
- Haerdter, Michael 109, 251
- Harnack, Adolf 187
- Hartel, Gaby 163, 164
- Hayes, John R. 64, 205
- Hayman, David 146, 152
- Heidegger, Martin 208
- Held, Martin 80, 112
- Heller, Paul M. 112
- Helme, Kathleen 80
- Hensel, Georg 28
- Heraclitus 190
- Herman, David 29
- Herrick, Robert 209
- Higgins, Aidan 199
- Hilton, Adrien 81
- Hobson, Harold 190, 191
- Homan, Sidney 28, 29
- Hoye, Cicely 80
- Hugo, Victor 59
- Hulme, T. E. 34, 35
- Hunkeler, Thomas 159
- Husserl, Edmund 183
- Hutchinson, Mary 142, 145, 149, 150, 151, 229, 251
- Hutto, Daniel 28
- Ionesco, Eugène 80
- Iser, Wolfgang 212

- Jesus of Nazareth 66  
Johnson, Samuel 25, 205  
Jones, Ernest 186  
Joyce, James 53, 63, 97, 140, 163, 166, 167, 168, 172  
Joyce, Stanislaus 63, 140  
Juez, Brigitte Le 21  
  
Kafka, Franz 135  
Kant, Immanuel 184  
Katselas, Milton 107  
Katz, Daniel 97, 230, 232  
Kaun, Axel 53, 164, 169  
King Bull, E. J. 135  
Knowlson, Elizabeth, 32  
Knowlson, James 21, 27, 32, 54, 62, 77, 80, 81, 100, 116, 126, 133, 138, 145, 163, 189, 209, 219, 221, 223, 242, 247, 251  
Kootz, Samuel M. 54, 55  
Kozdon, Sabine 27  
  
Lake, Carlton 64, 65, 66, 67, 73, 77, 96, 118  
Lawley, Paul 166  
Lawlor, Seán 158  
Lehrer, Jonah 23  
Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm 141  
Leijten, Mariëlle 64  
Leventhal, Con 63, 90, 136, 140, 145, 177  
Leyris, Etienne 60  
Leyris, Pierre 60, 73, 76, 77, 85, 86, 88, 124, 125, 229, 230, 234  
Lindon, Irène 60, 61  
Lindon, Jérôme 89, 125  
Locke, John 181  
Lord Chamberlain 89, 138, 143, 144, 149  
Luke, Peter 108  
Lutz, H. B. 107  
  
MacCarthy, Ethna 138, 199, 216, 219, 229, 230  
MacGowran, Jack 80, 114, 106, 138, 144  
MacGreevy, Thomas 24, 79, 140, 163, 185, 234  
Magee, Patrick 48, 63, 68, 80, 105, 112, 114, 133, 134, 138, 139, 141, 143, 144, 145, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 159, 171, 173, 174, 176, 192, 194, 216, 229  
Maierhöfer, Fränzi 28, 183  
Malafouris, Lambros 28, 29, 31, 198, 207  
Malkin, Jeanette R. 33  
Mani 24, 188, 189, 191, 208  
Marriott, Richard D'Arcy 148  
Martin, Jean 80, 116, 117  
Maude, Ulrika 233  
McGovern, Barry 80  
McKinley, Grace 32  
McMillan, Dougald 187, 189, 192, 202, 206, 210, 211, 251  
McWhinnie, Donald 25, 48, 80, 105, 112, 115, 117, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 143, 144, 145, 146, 148, 149, 150, 151, 153, 154, 168, 242  
Menary, Richard 163, 207, 252  
Mendel, Deryk 80  
Mennemeier, Franz Norbert 27, 28  
Meyer, Franz 54  
Michael, Kathleen 80  
Mihalovici, Marcel 126, 127, 181  
Mills, Peter 43, 59, 67, 88, 91, 115, 116, 117, 122  
Mitchell, Breon 61  
Mitchell, Pamela 251  
Montaigne, Michel de 176, 177, 178, 180  
Montgomery, Niall 163  
Moorjani, Angela 30, 31  
Morris, John 44, 45, 134, 135, 136, 137, 148, 151, 168  
Morrow, F. D. 163

- Muldoon, Paul 158  
Myin, Erik 28, 252
- Nadeau, Maurice 76  
Nixon, Mark 25, 53, 62, 63, 91, 140, 160, 167,  
183, 226  
Nordau, Max 233  
Nott, John 177
- Oberg, Arthur K. 160  
O'Casey, Sean 107  
O'Neill, Eugene 107, 171  
O'Reilly, Édouard Magessa 58  
O'Toole, Fintan 167, 168, 218  
Outler, Albert C. 24, 25
- Page, Anthony 80, 105, 117  
Paulhan, Jean 78  
Pelorson, Georges 167, 168  
Petrarch 176, 177, 178, 180, 209  
Piazza, Ben 107  
Pilling, John 79, 128, 140, 143, 144, 147, 158,  
176, 183, 184, 189, 218, 234, 251  
Pinget, Robert 60, 86, 88, 116, 124  
Planton, Isabel 124  
Postlewait, Thomas 29, 30  
Pountney, Rosemary 27, 29, 31, 140, 202, 210  
Prévost, Abbé 219  
Proust, Marcel 33, 160, 201, 226, 253  
Pudovkin, Vsevolod 163  
Putman, André 54  
Putman, Jacques 54  
Pusey, E. B. 24
- Racine, Jean 21, 27, 29, 30, 31, 32  
Rank, Otto 230  
Reavey, George 147, 151, 152, 154
- Reeves, Cecilia 135, 136, 145  
Richman, Mark 107  
Robbe-Grillet, Alain 75  
Robinson, Michael 146, 147  
Rosch Eleanor 29, 30  
Rosset, Barney 68, 79, 81, 113, 126, 138, 139,  
141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 150,  
151, 152, 153, 154, 212, 219, 229  
Rotha, Paul 163
- Salinger, J. D. 135  
Sardin, Pascale 125, 230  
Sartre, Jean-Paul 183, 208  
Schneider, Alan 55, 70, 71, 75, 84, 106, 107,  
108, 109, 111, 112, 113, 114, 123, 146, 147, 187,  
201, 220, 229, 232, 234, 251  
Schopenhauer, Arthur 53, 252  
Schwartz, Jake 62, 63, 64, 66, 67, 73, 76, 77,  
79, 86, 142, 152, 153, 154, 189, 190, 229  
Searle, Humphrey 56  
Seaver, Richard 152  
Seneca 177, 180  
Shakespeare, William 119, 140, 156, 160, 161,  
162, 177, 210  
Shelley, Percy Bysshe 165, 166  
Sieveking, L. M. 163  
Silberer, Herbert 230, 231  
Sinclair, Peggy 219  
Stokes, Leslie 148  
Suhrkamp, Peter 98, 99  
Synge, John Millington 219
- Tajiri, Yoshiki 186, 187  
Thompson, Evan 29, 30  
Tophoven, Elmar 73, 89, 126  
Tophoven, Erika 89  
Tsushima, Michiko 233, 234

- Unseld, Siegfried 73, 89, 90
- Van Hulle, Dirk 26, 53, 61, 62, 63, 81, 88, 91, 139, 140, 145, 146, 150, 160, 165, 187, 204, 214, 226, 231
- van Velde, Bram 52, 53, 54, 55
- van Velde, Geer 55
- van Velde, Jacoba 143, 193, 219
- van Waes, Luuk 64
- Varda, Agnès 88
- Varela, Francisco J. 29, 30
- Verhulst, Pim 45, 79, 81, 98, 142, 163
- Vilar, Jean 88
- Virgil 220
- Voltaire 190
- Weller, Shane 26, 88, 145, 146, 150, 214
- Wellington, Lindsay 148, 149
- Wenning, Henry 62
- Wilson, Sue 23, 191
- Windelband, Wilhelm 190
- Woolf, Virginia 213
- Wordsworth, William 165
- Wright, Mark 113
- Yeats, W. B. 97, 215, 216, 219
- Zeno 37, 164
- Zilliacus, Clas 109, 111, 115, 133, 134, 138, 140, 143, 156
- Zimmer, Heinrich 53

