The Pentimenti Principle:
The Draft and the Draff in Beckett's Critique of Narrative Reason

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Abstract

Considering deleted passages in a manuscript as a draft's "draff," this article investigates the status of such cancelled passages. Since they did not make it into the published text, are they still part of that work, or where do they belong? The proposed pentimenti model suggests a possible answer to this question by comparing cancelled passages to what in the visual arts are the visible traces of earlier painting beneath the top layer. The manuscripts of Beckett's *Fin de partie / Endgame* in the recent digital genetic edition of the Beckett Digital Manuscript Project serve as a case study to illustrate this pentimenti model.

Résumé

Cet article considère les passages supprimés d'un manuscrit comme les "drêches" et se penche sur les questions que soulèvent ces restes rayés: Ne faisant pas partie du texte publié, ces passages supprimés font-ils encore partie de l'ouvrage? Si non, quelle place leur accorder? Se fondant sur le concept du repentir tel que le conçoivent les arts plastiques—à savoir, les traces visibles de versions antérieures d'un tableau, voire les traces d'un tout autre tableau, qui se distinguent sous la couche supérieure de peinture —le modèle d'interprétation ici proposé suggère une réponse aux questions soulevées par les passages supprimés d'un manuscrit en les comparant à des repentirs. Les manuscrits de *Fin de partie / Endgame*, parus dans l'édition génétique numérique récemment établie dans le cadre du Beckett Digital Manuscript Project, nous permettront de démontrer l'intérêt de ce modèle d'interprétation inspiré du repentir.

Keywords

Genetic criticism – manuscripts – narrative – *Endgame* – *Fin de partie* – pentimenti

Mots-clés

Critique génétique – manuscrits – narratologie – *Fin de partie* – *Endgame* – pentimenti – repentirs

Introduction: Pentimenti

In *Beckett Writing Beckett*, H. Porter Abbott sees Beckett's work in line with Joyce's "work in progress": "though Joyce finally did (as Beckett would with his own work) see the text bound and published, he wrote it in such a way that readers would continue experiencing forever what he had experienced for the last fourteen years of his life. He had succeeded in creating an art without end. Work forever in progress" (20). Against this backdrop, Beckett's work is presented as a "mode of action taken in the moment of writing," a "conscious autography" (x; 20).

As to the notion of "autography" and an "art without end," my sense is that Beckett actually took the Joycean "work in progress" to another level, turning not just one work but the entirety of his works into an "œuvre in gress"—for instead of "progress" Beckett preferred to think in terms of "mere gress," because of what he called its "purity from destination and hence from schedule" (2009b, 186). In this article, I will argue that, in order to further examine his autography in detail and study his work as an œuvre in gress, it may be useful to also take Beckett's *autograph manuscripts* into account. The starting point is the question: What is the

status of a cancelled passage, or in other words: What is the status of a work's textual "draff"? To answer this question, I will work with the concept of *pentimenti* in the study of visual arts.

The French genetic critic Almuth Grésillon advised researchers not to use the term "*repentir*" (the French translation of what in Italian and in visual arts is called *pentimenti*). The reason she dislikes the term is that the word *repentir* has a ring of "psychologism," which would be inappropriate ("empreint d'un psychologisme à nos yeux mal venu"; 76).[1] Still, Beckett himself was well acquainted with these artistic notions and applied them to his own texts, as is evident from his letters. On 5 February 1953, when he wrote to Jérôme Lindon regarding Jean Paulhan's expurgation of his piece (a pre-book publication of a fragment from *L'Innommable*) for the *Nouvelle Nouvelle Revue française* and his resolve to declare an end to his collaboration, he continued: "Suzanne vous aura apporté L'Inno. Il y aura peut-être encore quelques petits *repentirs* au stade des épreuves, j'ai été trop abruti pour pouvoir tout voir." ("Suzanne will have brought you *L'Innommable*. There may perhaps be a few second thoughts at the proofs stage—I've been feeling too knocked about to be able to take it all in"; Beckett 2011, 357-358; emphasis added) And with regard to the American edition, he employed the term *pentimenti* in a letter to Barney Rosset of 22 January 1954: "The galleys have just gone off, by air mail. I found them quite excellent and nine tenths of the corrections are author's *pentimenti*" (447; emphasis added).

It should also be pointed out that Grésillon's remark about *repentirs* does not imply that we should not study cancellations *per se*; her remark only relates to the habit of labelling any cancellation as a form of "regret" (*repentir*). Possibly the uneasiness vis-à-vis this term may be related to literary criticism's sensitivity to authorial intention. For regret suggests an underlying motivation for the act of cancelling a passage, the intention behind the cut.

In this respect, the situation in literary studies is quite different from art history, where the study of *pentimenti* has always been evidently inherent to the study of paintings. The term is derived from the Italian *pentirsi*. A painter may regret that, at an early stage, he painted something that turned out to be not that great after all; he may correct it by painting something else on top of this early layer. But all these phases of regret are still part of the painting. They contribute to the colour and texture of the final result, even if they are no longer visible with the naked eye.

There is some difference of opinion regarding the definition of pentimenti. Some art historians only apply it to early traces that gradually become visible to the naked eye due to the deterioration of the top layer of paint. Others define it more broadly. According to this more inclusive definition, pentimenti are also traces of earlier stages in the creative process that can be made visible thanks to new techniques such as infrared scanning or multispectral imaging, but also thanks to older techniques such as archival materials (diaries, letters and other documents) (Livingston, 90). Paisley Livingston defines pentimenti as follows: "A *pentimento* is, first of all, an artist's *intentional action* of non-trivially reworking, replacing, or covering over some expressive or representational feature of an artifact or design that had previously and provisionally been established, *either intentionally or not*, by that artist as part of a work in progress" (92; emphasis added).

As Livingston's definition indicates, the study of pentimenti involves the notion of 'authorial intention,' which inevitably invokes New Criticism's "intentional fallacy" or poststructuralism's "death of the author" and is therefore slightly more charged in literary studies than in art history. But in literary studies, authorial intention usually relates to the question: what did the author mean, what did she want to say with this passage, this expression, this work? In Livingston's definition, however, the notion of 'intention' relates, on the one hand, to the purposeful reworking of something that had previously been established; and, on the other hand, to an act in the past, which may have been intentional "or not" (92). In other words, in the examination of pentimenti the key question is not only what the artist wanted to convey or intended to mean, but also and especially what the artist *did*. What the notion of pentimenti helps us make clear is the difference between what Peter Shillingsburg called "the intention to mean" and "the intention to do" (37). The first kind is "experienced internally," as

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1 All translations are mine, unless marked otherwise.

Sally Bushell describes it, and is therefore not recoverable (Bushell, 54) or only "inconclusively recoverable" (Shillingsburg, 38). The second kind is "an intention to record on paper, or in some other medium, a specific sequence of words" that is "almost completely recoverable" (36).

With pentimenti, however, we are dealing, not so much with either "intention to mean" or "intention to do," but with the intention to *undo*, or in S.E. Gontarski's terms "the intent of undoing" (1985). Against the backdrop of Livingston's definition, it is interesting to see that the *doing* is characterized as either intentional "or not," whereas the *undoing* is unequivocally defined as an "intentional action" (Livingston 92).

The following list of pentimenti is not meant to be exhaustive and the different categories can also overlap. For the purposes of this article, I discern six types: (1) conceptual; (2) structural; (3) biographical; (4) textual, (5) translational, and (6) intertextual pentimenti. To discuss these six types, I will use examples based on our work on the genetic edition and analysis of *Endgame* (BDMP7; Van Hulle and Weller 2018). The textual versions that are discussed below are identified by the following abbreviations as used in the genetic edition of this play in the Beckett Digital Manuscript Project (BDMP7) and their corresponding catalogue numbers (in chronological order):

A. 1st 2-act version (FT2: MS-UoR-1660)
A*. Four notesheets (FM1: MS-OSU-RARE-29-2)
B. 2nd 2-act version (FM2 + FM3: MS-OSU-RARE-29-1 + MS-TCD-4663)
C. 3rd 2-act version (FT3: MS-OSU-RARE-29-3)
D. 1st 1-act version (FN3: MS-OSU-RARE-115, "Tara MacGowran" Notebook)
E. 2nd 1-act version (FT4: MS-OSU-RARE-29-4)
F. 3rd 1-act version (FT5: MS-OSU-RARE-29-5)

Conceptual pentimenti

One of the most remarkable conceptual pentimenti in the drafts of *Fin de partie* is the line "Tous stériles dans notre famille" (All sterile in our family; BDMP7, FM1, 04r)[2]—a conceptual note on the four notesheets (FM1: MS-OSU-RARE-29-2), written between versions A and B. It contrasts sharply with a passage that was also cut: the scene in version A in which A (cf. Hamm) asks B (cf. Clov) to read from the Bible (see also below, "Intertextual Pentimenti"). Like the long-lived patriarchs in the Book of Genesis, A/Hamm epitomizes longevity: "je suis un exemple de longévité" (I am an example of longevity; FM1, 4r), but unlike the biblical patriarchs, he does not engender a large family, for everyone in his family is sterile. From the Book of Genesis, more specifically the story of Noah and his progeny, B/Clov reads the lineage of Shem, son of Noah: "Et Sélah […] engendra Héber. […] Et Héber […] engendra Péleg. […] Et Péleg […] engendra Réhu. […] Et Réhu, ayant vécu trente-deux ans, engendra—" (And Salah […] begat Eber. […] And Eber […] begat Peleg. […] And Peleg […] begat Reu. […] And Reu, having lives thirty-two years, begat—; BDMP7, FT2, 41r; see Genesis 11:14-21).

At first sight, this passage seems to corroborate what H. Porter Abbott has dubbed the "begat structure" of Genesis as a paradigm of the story of parents begetting children, which he calls "the oldest narrative of identity, older than the quest" (12). The conceptual note ("Tous stériles…") undermines this "begat structure" and implies the opposite starting point, a narrative of *non*identity—building on the notion of "not I" (Beckett 2010, 1) from *L'Innommable* which will eventually lead to texts such as *Not I*. I agree with Porter Abbott to the degree that Beckett's work can be seen as "disassembling narrative," but it seems to be a step too far to genderize "narrative itself" as "the formal equivalent of generative fatherhood" (19). Instead of opening his play with a begetting à la Tristram Shandy, A/Hamm's first spoken words in version A evoke his birth: "Né en—" (Born in—; BDMP7, FT2, 01r), not unlike the

[2] S.E. Gontarski reads this as "Pas stérile dans notre famille" and translates it as "No one sterile in our family" (52). The first word is not very legible, but I think it reads "Tous." The anti-creative idea that everyone in his family is sterile underpins the general theme of decreation.

first word ("birth") of the earliest versions of *Not I*, spoken by Mouth. If the oldest narrative of identity is connected to the "linear procreation of narrative" (Abbott, 13-14) Beckett's rebellion against it is not necessarily Oedipal (as suggested in Abbott's subtitle "Unwriting the Father") but directed against "philoprogenitiveness" in general (Beckett 2009, 33). Even though Beckett undermines this procreative model, he apparently did need it as a scaffolding before he could start disassembling it.

In many respects, the thematic focus of *Endgame* is the notion of 'beginning again.' The opening word "Fini" immediately implies its opposite—incompletion. This is a familiar Beckettian dramatic and narrative strategy. Just as the "bare interior" (Beckett 1974, 8) of *Endgame*'s setting entices both characters and audience to imagine an exterior beyond ("the without"; Beckett 1974, 44), the very utterance of the end ("Fini") creates the possibility of a new beginning or a continuation: "Tout cesse, sans cesse" ("Everything is coming to an end, endlessly"; tr. in Mori 2008, 116), as Beckett phrased it in 1948 in his essay *La Peinture des van Velde ou le monde et le pantalon* (1984, 128). Beckett described the situation as "the impossibility of catastrophe": "Ended at its inception, and at every subsequent instant, it continues, ergo can never end." (2014, 73). And every beginning implies a search for closure, according to what Frank Kermode in *The Sense of an Ending* dubs the tick-tock model, an organization which humanizes time by giving it a form (45). From a different perspective, Daniel C. Dennett argues that telling stories is "our fundamental tactic of self-protection, self-control, and self-definition" (418), and Jonathan Gottschall claims that storytelling is "a crucial evolutionary adaptation": "It allows us to experience our lives as coherent, orderly, and meaningful" (102). According to this paradigm, order would be not only that of which Clov dreams, but also what Hamm tries to create by telling his chronicle. The difference between Gottschall and Beckett, however, is that the former embraces the storytelling impulse, whereas Beckett constantly criticizes it, having it fail to render either identity or experience coherent or meaningful.

A good example is P's life story (P or Pépé being the early version of Nagg). The story is situated in the middle of the second act of versions B and C (FM2-FM3 and FT3). In version B, the characters are still called A (cf. Hamm), B (cf. Clov), P (Père, cf. Nagg), and M (Mère, cf. Nell). A wonders why P has begotten him and starts forcing P to tell his life story: "Raconte ta vie." (FM3, 29r; FT3, 47r) B, who at that moment enters with the news that there is a rat in the kitchen, thinks the question is addressed to him and starts telling his life story, using the same words as the ones with which Beckett opened version A: "Né en—" (FM3, 29r; FT3, 47r). A immediately interrupts B, telling him he did not ask him, but his father. He starts beating his father on his head ("Coup sur le crâne") and even threatens to beat him with a hammer. P yields and opens his story with "Je naquis—" (I was born—; FM3, 29v; FT3, 47r), explaining that he was born much too early and that he has never caught up with this head start: "Je naquis d'abord, avant terme. Bien avant. Je n'ai jamais rattrapé cette avance. C'est pourquoi—" (First I was born, before term. Well before. I have never caught up this advance. That's why—; FM3, 29v; FT3, 48r) But A interrupts him by hitting him on the head; he does not want to hear any psychology, he only wants facts: "(coup sur le crâne). Pas de psychologie. Des faits." ((Blow to the head). No psychology. Facts.; FM3, 29v; FT3, 48r) Here, A echoes Beckett's own statement in his "German Diaries" that what he wanted was "the straws, flotsam, etc., names, dates, births & deaths" (15 January 1937; qtd. in Nixon, 177-178). So P gives his son "the facts" (BDMP7, FT3, 48r; cf. FM3, 30r) and, whenever he stops, A hits him on the head. A wants to know the details about P's sexual life and about his philosophy, giving P another blow to the head whenever he does not react immediately: "Philosophie. (Un temps. Coup sur le crâne.) Weltanschauung!" (Philosophy. (Pause. Blow to the head.) Weltanschauung; FT3, 46r). P's reply is that it is "souriante" (smiling), which—in Beckett's own *Weltanschauung*—would bring P closer to the side of Democritus, the 'laughing' philosopher, than to his 'weeping' counterpart, Heraclitus. Then again, A concludes that everything P has just said is a lie; that he has sold sardines all his life. And P has to admit: "Tant qu'il y a eu des sardines j'ai ~~vend~~ vendu des sardines! C'était plus fort que moi!" (As long as there were sardines, I sold sardines! It was stronger than me; FT3, 46r) After P has told his life story against his will, A suggests they pray

to God together, but he soon has to conclude that "le salaud" does not exist (the bastard; FM3, 30v; FT3, 47r).

What is remarkable about *Endgame* with regard to Beckett's critique of narrative reason is that he chooses the genre of theatre (rather than prose fiction) for his criticism of storytelling. Beckett *stages* this storytelling urge. His characters do not simply tell stories, they enact the apparent compulsion to create what Dennett calls a "narrative selfhood" (418). In the manuscripts of *L'Innommable*, this urge is called the obligation to produce oneself: "Si seulement je ~~pouvais me taire.~~ n'étais pas dans l'obligation de me produire" (literally: If only I ~~could keep quiet.~~ was not obliged to produce myself; BDMP2, FN1, 3v-4v).

Whereas Dennett and Gottschall tend to see these narrative urges as necessary evolutionary strategies, Beckett constantly stresses the deficiencies in his characters' attempts to "tell" a self. Thus, for instance, after having (re)told the joke of the tailor, Nagg has to admit that he has never told it worse. But it is not just the manner that is mocked; the very concept of telling a self ("narrative selfhood") is questioned, for as soon as one starts telling it, one turns it into a protagonist of one's own fictions. Malone therefore concluded: "J'ai fini de me raconter" (literally: I finished telling myself; BDMP5, FN1, 87r), which became: "J'ai fini de me chercher" in the published text ("The search for myself is ended"; 1951, 44; 1956, 23). But again, as soon as he says "fini," as soon as he draws this line, he creates a space *beyond* it, which is the creative engine that drives the dramatic and narrative action in *Endgame*. To some extent this creative engine is modelled *ex negativo* after the procreative urge (not only in terms of "generative fatherhood" but of philoprogenitiveness in general—as indicated above). The dismantling of this urge was concisely formulated in the note "Tous stériles dans notre famille"—which still faintly shines through in the published text, as a conceptual pentimento.

Structural pentimenti

For a long time, Beckett intended to write a two-act play, the first part of which would be hilarious, the second deadly sad: "Act 1. Hilare / Act 2. Mortellement triste" (BDMP7, FM1, 04v). In version A, the dustbins were not yet in place. In its stead there was a black trunk onstage. According to the notesheets, this single black trunk had to be replaced in the next version by two dustbins for A's mother and father: "2 poubelles: pépé et mémé" (FM1, 4r). Beckett also immediately added the explanation for this situation: "ont perdu leurs jambes dans un accident de tandem" (have lost their legs in a tandem accident; FM1, 4r). In version B (FM3, 23r), the second act opens with a stage direction indicating that M's dustbin has been removed: "Un peu plus tard. Même endroit. Poubelle à M partie. Poubelle à P à la même place." (A little later. Same place. M's bin gone. P's bin in the same place; 23r)

According to the four loose notesheets, the end of the first act was to be a dialogue between A and his father, and the beginning of the second act a mime in which B opened the lids of the two dustbins (FM1, 4v). The first uttered words of the second act (in the last two-act version) were A/Hamm's "Finie la rigolade" (BDMP7, FT3, 37r). In the next versions, Beckett kept the line, but incorporated it in one continuous act. In the first typescript of his own English translation, he originally left open a blank space, apparently because he did not immediately know how to translate it. In a second writing layer (a handwritten addition to the typescript), he added Prospero's line from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*: "Our revels now are ended" (BDMP7, ET1, 28r)—the beginning of a longer passage, which contains the famous lines "We are such stuff / As dreams are made on, and our little life / Is rounded with a sleep." (IV.1) Against this background, Beckett wrote the "dreamer's mime" ("Mime du rêveur A"), which chronologically almost coincided with version D.[3] In this first one-act version (in the "Tara MacGowran" Notebook), the "rigolade" is a structural pentimento, the only trace to mark the place where the second act once started.

Biographical pentimenti

3 For the details corroborating this new chronology, see Van Hulle and Weller (2018, 240).

When part of *L'Innommable* appeared as pre-book publication in the *Nouvelle Nouvelle Revue Française* (*NNRF* nr. 2, 1 February 1953, 214-34), Beckett was furious when he saw that the editor, Jean Paulhan, had made a substantial cut and thus effectively expurgated his text (see above; Van Hulle and Weller 2014, 60). When, on 4 February 1953, Jérôme Lindon informed the author about it (Beckett 2011, 358 n. 1), Beckett replied that he would write to Paulhan (357; 358), but he sent a draft of the letter to Lindon first, inviting his publisher's suggestions, notably regarding the word "escroquerie" (swindle; dishonest act; 359; 360 n. 3). Although the drafted letter has not been found (360), the word "escroquerie" is enough to get a sense of what Beckett thought of this censorship. On 10 February 1953, he finally received a copy of the publication of his text in the *Nouvelle Nouvelle Revue Française* and was so indignant that it made him "littéralement malade" ("literally ill"; 360; 361). A letter was no longer enough, and he considered taking legal action against Paulhan, whom he described as a "salaud" ("bastard"; 361; 362; see Van Hulle and Weller 2014, 60).

Before Beckett started translating *L'Innommable* into English (February-March 1956) he seems to have been preoccupied by Paulhan's cuts, to such an extent that he found it necessary to write a satirical passage on it in the first two-act version of *Fin de partie* (BDMP7, FT2). In this version, A/Hamm throws himself onto the floor and it takes several pages before B/Clov manages to get him back up into his armchair (BDMP7, FT2, 48r). When A/Hamm is back in his armchair, a head emerges from the black trunk, which listens—without any expression—to a story A/Hamm starts telling about a man: "J'ai connu un homme […] Dans un bordel de la Rue Sébastien-Bottin." (I knew a man. […] In a brothel on the rue Sébastien-Bottin; FT2, 48r). This brothel may be a reference to the *NNRF*, located at the offices of the publisher Gaston Gallimard in the rue Sébastien-Bottin (number 5; see Myriam Jeantroux's article in this volume). This is possibly the "Gaston" that is referred to in the coinage "gastonfoutistes," suggesting that Paulhan was preoccupied by the "Gaston fuckers" of the sixth arrondissement or "Luxembourg" (part of the "Quartier Latin" on the left bank, close to where the Gallimard offices were located): "il s'était fait une petite spécialité des gastonfoutistes du sixième et en parlait d'abondance" (he had specialized in the Gaston fuckers of the sixth and talked a lot about them; FT2, 50r; Van Hulle and Weller 2018, 246).[4] The rue Sébastien-Bottin is abbreviated to "Rue S.B." to get it out of one's mouth more quickly ("pour en débarrasser plus vite la bouche"; FT2, 50r), which ironically draws attention to Beckett's initials. In this way, Beckett apparently marks the biographical dimension of this passage, before he cut it in the next version. Whether or not he "regretted" having written this passage, it did become a pentimento which left almost no trace in the published text.

Textual pentimenti

In the *avant-texte* of *Fin de partie*, the idea of (bad) role-playing was much more elaborate. Even in the dramatic fragments that precede version A, such as the 'X&F' fragments, X (cf. Hamm) concludes that they play so badly that it does not look like a game any more: "Nous jouons si mal que ça n'a plus l'air d'un jeu." (BDMP 7, FN2, 2r; FT1, 21r) All in all, version A (FT2) contains three scenes with disguises: (1) a scene with a wig and a false beard; (2) B dressing up as a woman; and finally (3) B disguising himself as a boy. The three disguises emphasize the metatheatrical character of version A, which constantly makes "the audience conscious that it is watching a play" (Gontarski, 48). When Beckett directed his own play in Berlin, he explained this notion of play in connection with the "impossible heap" and Zeno's paradox. As time is divided into a multiplicity of moments, "becoming" is not possible, only "going on," and the formula for this process—according to Beckett—is "play/game."[5] Later (the day after the opening night of the production at the 1967 Schiller-Theater Werkstatt in Berlin) Beckett told his German publisher Siegfried Unseld that his direction of the play was not an interpretation but a precise presentation of the text; that *Endgame* was exactly what it

4 For a full transcription, see BDMP7, FT2, 50r.

5 "Ein Werden kann es nicht geben. Nur ein Weitermachen. Die Formel dafür ist 'Spiel'" (Haerdter, 106).

said it was, a game, to be played. He explained that he was interested in "das Spiel von Menschen," not in an idea, and even less in an ideology.[6]

Beckett's emphasis on "play" in his play corresponds to the emphasis on narration in his novels. And the undoing of this meta-narrative element leaves textual scars, such as the moment in *Molloy* when Moran starts talking about the economy of Ballyba, asking rhetorically what the source of Ballyba's prosperity was. His own reply—"Je vais vous le dire. Non, je ne dirai rien." ("I'll tell you. No, I'll tell you nothing."; BDMP4, FN3, 66r; FT, 214r)—hides the long cut of more than a dozen pages about the economy of Ballyba, based on its citizens' excrements. But at the same time the sentence "No, I'll tell you nothing" marks the pentimento and suggests the cut's underlying presence. There are several of these textual scars in Beckett's works, some of them more extensive than others, such as the three dots after 'Est-ce …' in *En attendant Godot* and the en dash after 'Do you – ' in *Waiting for Godot* as the only textual scars testifying to the long cut of the 'Est-ce que c'est la peine' scene (see Van Hulle 2014). Whereas in *Molloy* the narrative is interrupted by the metafictional comments, the element of play in *Endgame* is marked by the metatheatrical statements.

This metatheatrical dimension was gradually downplayed throughout the genesis and even in the epigenesis (the continuation of the genesis after publication). After the Berlin performance, Suhrkamp gave Beckett the chance to revise his text for the 1974 paperback version of the trilingual edition. One of the textual variants between the 1963 trilingual edition and the edition of 1974 is the omission of the scene where Clov turns the telescope to the audience and says he sees "a multitude … in transports … of joy" (Beckett 1963, 471; cf. Beckett 1974, 44). So Beckett eventually undid the shattering of the fourth wall, thus creating a stronger sense of confinement at the cost of a loss of metatheatricality. Nonetheless, the idea of "playing" still shines through. In the end, none of the three disguises made it into the published version, but the idea of the "play"/"game" did receive a prominent place, when Hamm marks the pentimento by saying: "A moi. (*Un temps*.) De jouer" (1957, 16).

Translational pentimenti

After the publication of the trilingual paperback edition, Unseld had a conversation with Beckett in Paris in 1981 relating to the twelve-volume *Collected Works* by Grove Press: "Er hatte sich geärgert, dass die Nachdrucke ohne Revision von ihm erschienen sind. Jetzt freilich ist er 'müde' und will in seiner englischen Fassung die letzten Änderungen, die er nun für die deutsche Ausgabe gemacht hat, nicht einbringen". ("He was annoyed that the reprints had appeared without his revisions. Now, he says, he is 'tired' and no longer wants to integrate in the English version what he has changed in the German edition.")[7] The discrepancies between the German and American editions thus make the omitted scenes reappear, like pentimenti, in a similar way as the discrepancies between the French and English version of, for instance, *Mercier et Camier*, where, instead of long dialogues in the French version (Montini, 215), the narrator in the English version just summarizes them laconically, reducing the original dialogue to a pentimento: "Before going any further they asked and told each other how they felt" (qtd. in Montini, 215). As noted above, Beckett himself often used the term "pentimenti" or "repentir" to denote revisions, which were not without relevance to his translators. For instance, on 19 April 1964, he wrote to his German translator Elmar Tophoven: "Cher Top, Ultime repentir pour *Tous ceux qui tombent*: aspirine à la place de illustrés p. 61 de l'édition française."

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6 "Es ginge [Beckett] nicht um eine Interpretation, sondern um eine sehr präzise Darstellung des Textes. *Endspiel* sei ein Spiel, keine Weltanschauung […] Ihm ginge es um das Spiel von Menschen. Zentral sei nicht eine Idee und schon gar nicht eine Ideologie" ("Werkstattgespräch" with Siegfried Unseld, 27 September 1967; Deutsches Literaturarchiv (DLA), Marbach, Suhrkamp Archive (SUA)).

7 "Reisebericht" Siegfried Unseld, 9-11 August 1981, Paris, SUA, DLA.

("Dear Top, Final change for *Tous ceux qui tombent*: aspirine instead of periodicals; qtd. in Tophoven, 102).[8]

Intertextual pentimenti

In versions A, B and C, A/Hamm wants to hear the story of the origins of humanity. He therefore orders B/Clov to read from the Bible: "Lis-moi un peu dans la Bible" (Read me a little from the Bible; FT2, 40r). B disappears and reappears with the word of God (FT2, 40r). A decides he wants to hear the story of the deluge and B reads Genesis 7:21-23. When, a few pages further, B/Clov reads the passage on the lineage of Shem, son of Noah (see above; Genesis 11.14-21; BDMP7, FT2, 41r), A/Hamm interrupts him and orders B/Clov to go and fetch "Sophie," because he himself wishes to "beget": "Va me chercher Sophie, je vais engendrer. Tu m'aideras." (Go get me Sophie, I am going to beget. You will help me; FT2, 41r) B exits and enters again, dressed up in a pink outfit. A worries he might actually make 'her' pregnant: "Et si je te faisais un enfant?" (What if I gave you a child?; FT2, 42r). But B/Sophie reassures him: "Mais nous le noyerions [sic], mon chéri, je te promets, nous le noyerions tout de suite, *il* n'aurait pas le temps de souffrir." (But we would drown it, honey, I promise you, we would immediately drown it, *it* wouldn't have the time to suffer; FT2, 42r; emphasis added). The subsequent versions are even more cruel, for now the baby would be killed immediately so *A/Hamm* (rather than the baby) wouldn't have the time to suffer: "*tu* n'aurais pas le temps de souffrir" (*you* wouldn't have the time to suffer; FT3, 30r; emphasis added).

In the published version, there are some remnants of this story of humanity's origins and of the anti-creation theme, mixed with traces of Beckett's reading of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, notably the passage with the flea, which needs to be killed lest humanity evolve all over again. In version A, the character of A/Hamm throws away all the props he is holding: the gaff, the dog, his drum, and his stick. Then he says: "Ah Noé, Noé toi aussi il fallait se *repentir* de t'avoir fait!" (Ah Noah, Noah one should also regret having made you!; FT2, 43r; emphasis added) Here, the notion of regret or "*repentir*" underlying the concept of *pentimenti* is made explicit. When A/Hamm exclaims one should regret that Noah was ever created, his comment closely resembles Beckett's own remark in his letter to Pamela Mitchell of 7 February 1955: "I've been reading in your grand Baudelaire and in the Holy Bible the story of the Flood and wishing the Almighty had never had a soft spot for Noah" (522). According to the Book of Genesis, the Almighty did regret having made the human being. The King James Bible even uses the verb "to repent" to mark His regret: "And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart." (Genesis 6:6) Beckett's copy of the *Teacher's Bible* shows a few relevant reading traces in the Book of Genesis. In Chapter 10, three verses are marked with a pencil in the right margin, next to Genesis 10.20 (the sons of Ham), 10.31 (the sons of Shem) and 10.32 (the families of the sons of Noah).[9] Beckett would later remove the more explicit references to the Book of Genesis in *Fin de partie*, but he eventually decided to name A after one of Noah's sons, first "HAAM" and then "Hamm," which may be seen as another relic of his re-reading of the story of the Flood (see also Van Hulle and Nixon, 176-177).

As for his re-reading of Baudelaire, the most direct trace is the quotation from the poem "Recueillement," addressed to pain and suffering ("Douleur"): "Sois sage, ô ma Douleur, et tiens-toi plus tranquille. / Tu réclamais le Soir; il descend; le voici: / Une atmosphère obscure enveloppe la ville, / Aux uns portant la paix, aux autres le souci." ("Behave, O my Grief, and keep still. / You asked for Evening; it is descending; here it is: / A dark atmosphere covers the

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8 The change to "aspirines" was made after Erika Tophoven had told Beckett she thought it was strange that, in *All That Fall*, Dan Rooney—being blind—buys periodicals (see Van Hulle and Verhulst 2018, 30).

9 See the *BDL*, http://www.beckettarchive.org/library/HOL-BIB-2.html (OT, 6).

city, / Bearing peace to some, and worry to others." (Baudelaire, 140; Fowlie, 72))[10] The first time it occurs, in version B, it is quoted incorrectly ("vient" instead of "descend"): "Tu réclamais le soir; il *vient*: le voici." (FM3, 39v; emphasis added) First, Beckett corrected it in version E (FT4, 34r). Then, in version F, he fully exploited the dramatic potential of his (inter)textual pentimenti by deliberately reinserting the misquotation and then making Hamm correct himself: "Tu *appelais*—(Un temps. Il se corrige.) Tu *réclamais* le soir; ~~il *descend*: le voici.~~ il *vient*—(Un temps. Il se corrige.) Il *descend*; le voici (FT5, 37r; emphasis added). Thus, Beckett used his own "repentirs" and made them productive by thematizing the process of having second thoughts in the published version, making his characters *enact* the pentimenti principle.

Conclusion: the Pentimenti Principle

In one of the proto-versions of *Fin de partie* (BDMP7, FN1), the Hamm-like X tells a story about his mother, who was barely recognizable after she fell or jumped from a cliff: "Dans quel état elle était! Quantum mutata!" (48r). The reference to Virgil's *Aeneid*—when Aeneas sees Hector in a dream, terribly wounded from battle against Achilles, "Quantum mutatus ab illo" (How changed from what he once was; 2.274)—is at the same time an allusion to Milton. In *Paradise Lost*, Milton alludes to Virgil's line when Satan is shocked to see the fallen angel Beëlzebub, completely changed after his fall: "how chang'd / From him, who in the happy Realms of Light / Cloth'd with transcendent brightness didst out-shine / Myriads though bright" (1.84-87). With this intertextual background, "Quantum mutata!" (indicating a change, for better or worse) is an excellent motto to characterize the pentimenti principle that is at work in Beckett's writings. According to this pentimenti principle the distinction between drafts and published text sometimes fades or is being compromised. The effect is that readers are regularly made aware of the changes the text has undergone and invited to bring this textual awareness to bear on their reading. What the "Quantum mutata" motto stresses, then, is that textual pentimenti are changes for better or worse; they are not always an improvement. The succession of textual versions does not necessarily represent "progress," but they all play a necessary role in Beckett's "works in gress."

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[10] Beckett had a few copies of Baudelaire's poetry, notably the 1951 Pléiade edition of the *Œuvres complètes*, which he received from Pamela Mitchell (see the *BDL*, http://www.beckettarchive.org/library/BAU-OEU.html).

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