

‘Learn by heart’:

Beckett’s Schoolboy Copy of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*

When James Knowlson asked Beckett if Winnie’s line ‘I call to the eye of the mind’ in *Happy Days* (Beckett, 2010a, 34) was an allusion to W. B. Yeats’s one-act play *At the Hawk’s Well*, the author responded in the negative by affirming a Shakespeare quotation in a different play, only to deny that as well: ‘The “eye of the mind” in *H.D.* does not refer to Yeats any more than [*for* than] the “revels...” in *Endgame* to *The Tempest*, they are just bits of pipe I happen to have with me.’ (Beckett, 2016, 291) In accordance with this metaphor, Beckett refashions himself as a ‘plumber’ in order to plead ignorance of ‘the history of hydraulics’ (291). As an author, he cannot invoke the same lack of knowledge about the history of literature – in good conscience, at least – for his personal library is full of books that suggest otherwise. Among those surviving volumes in his Paris apartment is not only a copy of *The Collected Plays of W. B. Yeats* (Macmillan & Co, 1960), but also copies of *The Works of William Shakspeare* [sic] (Frederick Warne and Co, n.d.) and *The Complete Works of William Shakespeare* (Oxford University Press, 1957), alongside multiple editions of the sonnets, French translations of the plays and critical studies in both languages.¹ What these books all have in common, however, is a near absence of reading traces, which prompts the question: if Shakespeare is omnipresent in Beckett’s work, as critics seem to agree, why is this not reflected in his personal library?²

A recently found copy of Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* that once belonged to Beckett allows us to start answering this question. Dating back to a period well before he became a writer or had any ambitions in this direction, even before he enrolled as an undergrad at TCD, it shows that Beckett’s exposure to Shakespeare had already taken place much earlier in his formative years and was quite intensive. This, in turn, explains why he was able to draw on Shakespeare with such great ease, often from memory it seems, without needing to check the books on his shelves. Yet for every answer it provides, it raises at least as many conundrums. For example, why had Beckett gotten rid of this particular copy by the time his literary career took wing, while hanging on to others with far fewer annotations, and why did he acquire new books on

Shakespeare later? How does this relate to his adoption of French as a literary language, in an attempt to escape the ‘old associations’ English had for him, as he once confided to Patrick Bowles (2006, 110)? Finally, it leads us to wonder how many other stray volumes of this kind exist(ed) – not only for Shakespeare – and therefore it serves as an important reminder that Beckett’s library is incomplete, despite being exceptionally well-preserved. After an analysis of the *Macbeth* copy and the reading traces it contains, we will first discuss some marginalia and how they resurface in Beckett’s writings. We then move on to what Axel Gellhaus calls ‘non-marginalia’, i.e. passages that authors use in their work but do not excerpt or mark in their library books (2004, 218–19), ending with a grey zone of indeterminate and conceptual references that are harder to classify.

Beckett’s ‘Schoolboy Copy’ of *Macbeth*

During a research stay in 2015 at Indiana University’s Lilly Library, Bloomington, we learned from former director Breon Mitchell that a colleague of his – Helena Walsh, affiliated with the Jazz Studies Department at the university’s Jacobs School of Music – owned Beckett’s ‘schoolboy copy’ of *Macbeth*.³ Beckett acquired it in ‘September 1922’, when he was 16 years old and still a pupil in the ‘VIth form’ at ‘Portora Royal School / Enniskillen / C. Fermanagh’, as the inscriptions on the front and back flyleaves record. About the provenance of the book, the owner told us:

I bought the copy of *Macbeth* from a second-hand bookshop in Dublin when I was studying for my Leaving Certificate – the government examination for high school graduation. I had no idea who Beckett was – that was 1965. I attended an all-girls boarding school in Dublin. Beckett attended an all-boys boarding school for his Leaving Certificate in 1922 and the *Macbeth* would have been what he was studying then. The only thing Beckett and I have in common is: we were both 16 at the time we were separately studying *Macbeth* in school and happened to use the same volume!⁴

While 1965 was still four years before Beckett won the Nobel Prize, bringing him global fame, it is remarkable that Walsh was able to pick up the copy in the way she did, unless of course this is an indication of the author’s obscurity in Ireland of the 1960s. There is no

mistaking it was his, since the back flyleaf and the back inside cover are riddled with his name, in blue ink and grey pencil. Wedged in among those many instances of 'Beckett' is a grey pencil annotation that reads 'A. J. Thomson'. This is most likely a reference to another Irish TCD graduate who, together with A. V. Martinet, published the handbook *A Practical English Grammar* at Oxford University Press in 1960. Given the lateness of this date, Beckett cannot possibly have studied it in the 1920s, so it must be an addition that Walsh herself made to the book, perhaps as an indication of another source she was meant to study for the Leaving Certificate or for class in general. She is possibly also responsible for crossing out 'Beckett' several times in grey pencil, as if to assert her new ownership of the copy – however without substituting his name with hers. As Walsh confessed to us in conversation, writing in books seemed inappropriate to her at the time, at least with a pen.

First published in 1901 by Cambridge University Press, the volume is a 1922 reprint in the 'Pitt Press Shakespeare for Schools' series, edited by A. W. Verity, M. A., who is further identified as a 'sometime scholar of Trinity College [Cambridge]'. The edition has an 'introduction' and a section with 'notes', a 'glossary', an 'appendix', 'hints on metre' and 'indexes' at the back, but if Beckett perused them, he did not leave behind any reading traces. These are all to be found on the title page and in the playtext itself, taking a variety of forms.⁵ By far the most common are underlined passages (pp. 6, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 24, 25, 26, 27, 31, 34, 38, 41, 42, 43, 46, 48, 51, 56, 57, 59, 60, 67, 68, 72, 78), with occasional inline or marginal comments, such as the name 'Macbeth' next to Ross's line 'Till that Bellona's bridegroom, lapp'd in proof' (p. 6; Act I, Scene II). In addition, Beckett corrects 'utterance' to 'uttermost' in Macbeth's 'And champion me to the utterance' (p. 38; Act III, Scene I). Also, multiple lines are highlighted by one or more vertical bars in the margins (pp. 9, 14, 15, 16, 21, 24, 27, 38, 46, 48, 51, 52, 57, 60), sometimes on the same page as the underlined passages. Surely, the most outstanding feature are long sections indicated with a cross or an asterisk and marked with the words 'Learn by heart' (pp. 19, 23–4, 37–8, 52):

Macbeth. If it were done when 'tis done, then 'twere well / It were done quickly' [...] 'I have no spur / To prick the sides of my intent, but only / Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself / And falls on the other. (p. 19; Act I, Scene VII)

Macbeth. Go bid thy mistress, when my drink is ready, / She strike upon the bell. [...] I go, and it is done; the bell invites me. / Hear it not, Duncan; for it is a knell / That summons thee to heaven or to hell. (pp. 23–4, Act II, Scene I)

Macbeth. [...] To be thus is nothing; / But to be safely thus. [...] Rather than so, come, fate, into the list, / And champion me to the utterance!* Who's there?' (pp. 37–8; Act III, Scene I) (In the left margin Beckett has corrected 'utterance' to '*uttermost'.)

Lennox. My former speeches have but hit your thoughts, [...] I hear / Macduff lives in disgrace: sir, can you tell / Where he bestows himself? (p. 52; Act III, Scene VI)

Including some of the most memorable soliloquies in the play, these passages are spoken by Macbeth, except the last one, uttered by Lennox. On p. 37 (Act III, Scene I), three sentences that Macbeth directs at Banquo are numbered as well as underlined: 'Ride you this afternoon? (1)', 'Is't far you ride? (2)', 'Goes Fleance with you? (3)' Finally, Beckett encircles page number '73' for no clear reason. The bottom of that page has a scratch, possibly where his pen slipped, and there is only one more reading trace beyond this point (Act V, Scene I).

Beckett's largest personal contribution occurs on the book's title page, which shows a 'Skeleton of Macbeth' that breaks up the play into the standard five-part structure of classical drama, accompanied by a schematic and a sketch:

a = exposition (method).

(1) 1st stage of dramatic action.

b = complication.

c = climax

(2) turning pt. or 2nd part of dramatic action.

d = declining action

(3) = 3rd stage of dramatic act. or final impulse given to action.

(e) = catastrophe.⁶

The skeleton closely resembles Gustav Freytag's pyramid in *Die Technik des Dramas* (1863), which divides tragedies into five main parts (exposition, rising action, climax, falling action, dénouement; Freytag, 1900, 105). However, Beckett's drawing offers an interesting variation on Freytag's model, in the sense that it presents the climax not as the high point or pinnacle of the play, but as a flattened section, a structure we see reflected in some of his own plays.⁷ And of course he named one after the 'catastrophe', *Catastrophe*, which is a notably self-conscious and meta-reflexive piece of theatre.

Marginalia

This and other marginalia in Beckett's copy of *Macbeth* have had an impact on his works in various ways. In the radio play *All That Fall*, for instance, Beckett presents this dramatic structure as one of several Shakespearean instances of sexual innuendo. With its 'rising' and 'falling action', the dramatic structure serves as a narrative erection, and Beckett combines it with allusions to another play by Shakespeare to illustrate the principle (Van Hulle, 2010, 126). The phrase 'bawdy hour of nine' (Beckett, 2009a, 17) is a reference to a classic example of sexual innuendo from *Romeo and Juliet*, when Mercutio points out to the nurse that 'the bawdy hand of the dial is now upon the prick of noon' (Act II, Scene III; Shakespeare, 2008, 932). In *All That Fall*, the bawdy remark is uttered by Mr Tyler when he explains to Miss Fitt that the twelve-thirty train has not yet arrived: 'No, Miss Fitt, follow the direction of my index. [Miss Fitt looks.] There. You see now. The signal. At the bawdy hour of nine. [In rueful afterthought.] Or three alas!' (Beckett, 2009a, 17) Compared to Shakespeare's metaphor, which is an '[i]mage of erection on way up (hour hand at nine)', the signal Mr Tyler points at is only half-erect, 'on way down (hour hand at three)' (2014, 59), as Beckett explained the 'obscure obscene joke' to Christian Ludvigsen, his Danish translator. The station platform, exaggeratingly compared to 'the Matterhorn' (Beckett, 2009a, 15) or a 'precipice' (21) by Maddy, is in fact only a few steps high – between three or seven, Dan being unable to remember the exact number (21). And with its flat top, it basically becomes a pastiche of the 'Skeleton' drawn in Beckett's copy of *Macbeth*. Also, when the Rooneys are making their way home, Dan suddenly halts to pose Maddy a bizarre question: 'Shall we go on backwards now a little? [...] Or you forwards and I backwards' (23–4). This remark occurs at the exact moment of the 'turning point' in the five-act structure, confirming that Beckett is consciously using the model he became first acquainted with as a young man more than thirty years later in his very first play for the radio medium.

Macbeth's line to Seyton 'my way of life / Is fall'n into the sear, the yellow leaf' (p. 78; Act V, Scene III), explicitly thematizes the falling action as we are approaching the play's catastrophe. This brings us to another remarkable marginal note in the schoolboy copy. Beckett references it on 5 June 1955 to Barney Rosset in a letter that reports on his progress with the English translation of *Malone meurt*: 'Have been very tired and doing no work. But

Malone is well advanced and will be finished before *the sere and yellow*' (Beckett, 2011, 534). The first time the allusion would explicitly find a way into Beckett's fiction was also in the context of translation, when he was working on an English rendition of the *Textes pour rien* in the early 1960s. In 'Text for Nothing III', the narrator states at one point: 'We spend our life, it's ours, trying to bring together in the same instant a ray of sunshine and a free bench, in some oasis of public verdure, we've been seized by a love of nature, in *our sere and yellow*, it belongs to one and all.' (Beckett, 2010c, 13; emphasis added) In the original French, the relevant passage was still quite neutral, so the Shakespearean tone was clearly added in the transition from one language to another: 'on s'est pris à aimer la nature, *sur le tard*, elle est à tout un chacun, par endroits.' (Beckett, 1987, 133–4) This is not uncommon in Beckett's work. When he rendered *Premier amour* into English during the early 1970s, the narrator's description of Lulu/Anna – 'Elle ne semblait ni jeune ni vieille, sa figure, elle était comme suspendue *entre la fraîcheur et le flétrissement*' (Beckett, 2010b, 37; emphasis added) – underwent a similar fate: 'It looked neither young nor old, the face, as though stranded *between the vernal and the sere*' (Beckett, 2009g, 73; emphasis added). While not exactly a word-for-word quotation from Shakespeare, it still uses the term 'sere' in relation to age and leaves, perhaps evoking *Macbeth* as much as it does the 'myrtles brown, with ivy never *sere*' and the '*vernal* flowers' from John Milton's pastoral elegy *Lycidas*. Whatever the case may be, these highly 'poetic allusions to wet and dry foliage', as Marjorie Perloff calls them (2010, 28), stand out as literary lingo, potentially alluding to more than one author.

Much more difficult to identify are seemingly inconspicuous expressions which have become part and parcel of everyday English. Lady Macbeth's line 'It is too full o' the milk of human kindness / To catch the nearest way' (p. 15; Act I, Scene V), underlined by Beckett in his copy, is a good illustration of this. Much like Macbeth's 'multitudinous seas incarnadine' (p. 27; Act II, Scene II), also underlined, Lady Macbeth's 'milk of human kindness' would immediately jump out at the experienced reader as highly crafted, even to one unfamiliar with Shakespeare's play. In comparison, 'the nearest way' is easy to skip over. When it resurfaces in Beckett's work, as it does in *Molloy*, the eponymous narrator seemingly feels an urge to highlight its peculiarity in the report he gives of his conversation with the charcoal-burner: 'I asked him to show me the nearest way out of the forest. I grew eloquent.' (Beckett, 2009e, 85) It is almost as if he is saying to the reader, like the whimsical narrator in *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*: 'We stole that one. Guess where.' (Beckett, 1992, 191)

Non-Marginalia

Beckett's English translation of 'Texte pour rien III' adds yet another reference to *Macbeth*, this time in the passage where the narrator, in the style of *L'Innommable* / *The Unnamable*, tries to describe himself:

With a cluther of limbs and organs, all that is needed to live again, to hold out a little time, I'll call that living, I'll say it's me, I'll get standing, I'll stop thinking, I'll be too busy, getting standing, staying standing, stirring about, holding out, getting to *tomorrow, tomorrow week*, that will be ample, a week will be ample, a week in spring, that puts the jizz in you. (Beckett, 2010c, 11; emphasis added)

By contrast, the original French text only has one 'tomorrow', followed by a paraphrase that does not repeat the word: 'à parvenir au *lendemain*, à *l'autre semaine*, ça suffira, huit jours suffiront, huit jours au printemps, c'est vivifiant.' (Beckett, 1987, 130; emphasis added) This repetition of 'tomorrow' in Beckett's English translation resembles Macbeth's famous last speech that opens with the words:

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,
Creeps in this petty pace from day to day
To the last syllable of recorded time,
And all our yesterdays have lighted fools
The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle!
Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage
And then is heard no more. It is a tale
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,
Signifying nothing. (Act V, Scene V; Shakespeare, 2008, 2628)

While these last five lines are an apt description of Lucky in *Waiting for Godot*, Beckett was never so bold as to use them for a title, like William Faulkner did with his novel *The Sound and the Fury*, the 'idiot' here standing for Benjy Compson. It seems that the first six lines left a stronger impression on Beckett and his work, but not without a twist. Whereas 'out' in 'Out,

out, brief candle’ refers to death, Beckett sardonically applies it to birth in *Not I* (Little, 2021, 161), opening instead with the words ‘out...into this world’ (Beckett, 2009d, 85). The contrast between ‘tomorrow’ and ‘yesterday’ echoes through many of his other works. For example, in *Rough for Radio II*, the Animator and his team of fools go through ‘yesterday’s results’ of their interrogation (Beckett 2009a, 60), in hopes that ‘[t]omorrow, who knows, we may be free’ (69), noting down Fox’s every last syllable thinking it ‘*may be it*’ (60). Similarly, in *Endgame*, Nell ruefully muses ‘Ah yesterday!’ (Beckett, 2009c, 13, 15), before Hamm asks Clov: ‘Yesterday! What does that mean? Yesterday!’ (28) Clov then threatens him with an empty promise: ‘Tomorrow I’ll be gone for ever.’ (23) The clearest reference to this passage comes in *Embers*. At the end, after Bolton ‘lights a candle’ (Beckett, 2009a, 46), Henry takes a look at his appointment book for the weekend, the banality and emptiness of his final words both resonating and contrasting with Macbeth’s:

Little book. [Pause.] This evening ... [Pause.] Nothing this evening. [Pause.]
 Tomorrow ... tomorrow ... plumber at nine, then nothing. [Pause. Puzzled.] Plumber at
 nine? [Pause.] Ah yes, the waste. [Pause.] Words. [Pause.] Saturday ... nothing.
 Sunday ... Sunday ... Nothing all day. [Pause.] Nothing, all day nothing. [Pause.] All
 day all night nothing. [Pause.] Not a sound. *Sea*. (47)

As the emphasis is shifted from a repetition of ‘tomorrow’ to ‘nothing’, with the conjunction in ‘Tomorrow, and tomorrow’ making way for an ellipsis in ‘Tomorrow...tomorrow’, Beckett puts his own spin on Shakespeare. Instead of Macbeth’s hyperbolic ‘sound and fury’, Henry ends his final speech more subdued in silence and seawash, the word ‘sound’ literally being his ‘last syllable of recorded time’ in the BBC broadcast.

While the passage is not marked in Beckett’s copy of the play, Anne Atik recalls that he often ‘recited from *Macbeth*, remarking on how the power of the consonants created the atmosphere, reciting the entire passage of “Tomorrow and tomorrow and tomorrow”, among others’ (Atik, 2001, 54). Among those ‘others’ we may include the famous opening lines of the three witches: ‘When shall we three meet again?’ (Act I, Scene I; Shakespeare, 2008, 2579) Beckett makes a variation on this question when he asks the actor Patrick Magee in a letter of 27 September 1969, alluding to his performance of *Krapp’s Last Tape*: ‘When shall we twain do it again?’ (Beckett, 2016, 176) Just a few years earlier, in *Come and Go*, Beckett had used strikingly similar opening words when Vi asks Flo and Ru: ‘When did we three last meet?’ (Beckett, 2009d, 73) As with the shift from ‘tomorrow’ to ‘yesterday’, the timeframe

is changed again from future to past, which instantly makes it a ‘memory play’. Once more, Beckett is appropriating the text of *Macbeth* to suit his own needs. In *Murphy*, too, he alludes to the witches tongue-in-cheek. At one point, Neary says to Wylie and Miss Counihan, with whom until then he had conspired to track down Murphy: ‘It is high time we three parted.’ (Beckett, 2009f, 133) With a befitting sense of ceremony he adds: ‘Let our conversation now be without precedent in fact of literature’ (133). This is ironic, of course, as it brings to mind the scene in *Macbeth*, and so is not without literary precedent at all. The young Beckett did show an interest in the witches’ threefold doublespeak elsewhere in his copy of *Macbeth*, for example by marking in the margin the passage where they say in turns:

<i>First Witch.</i>	Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.
<i>Second Witch.</i>	Not so happy, yet much happier.
<i>Third Witch.</i>	Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none:
	So, all hail, Macbeth and Banquo! (p. 9; Act I, Scene III)

Yet the witches’ opening lines, which reverberate far more widely in his work, do not show a single reading trace.

‘Sightless Substances’

As some of the previous examples have shown, it is often hard to pin down a Shakespearean reference in Beckett’s works, even if a passage is marked in his books. This is especially the case as his style becomes sparser, and for genres such as plays, which lack a narrator who flags them for us. Take, for example, Beckett’s marking of Macbeth’s line ‘If chance will have me king, why, / chance may crown me, / Without my stir.’ (p. 11; Act I, Scene III) Can the word ‘stir’ be said to still rustle in his last prose text *Stirrings Still*, where the narrating voice draws attention to ‘the hubbub in his mind so-called till nothing left from deep within but only ever fainter oh to end’ (Beckett, 2009b, 115), as the ultimate deconstruction of Shakespearean allusion, or is it just a matter of coincidence? This particularly affects Beckett’s plays for radio, quite fittingly a medium of stirrings and echoes.

To what extent can Animator’s comment in *Rough for Radio II* about the damned souls in Dante’s Purgatory – ‘all sigh, I was, I was [...] like a knell’ (Beckett, 2009a, 62) – be

seen as a deliberate nod to Macbeth's 'I go, and it is done; the bell invites me. / Hear it not, Duncan; for it is a knell / That summons thee to heaven or to hell.' (p. 24; Act II, Scene II)? The thematic connection seems to suggest as much. But can Opener's remark in *Cascando*, 'I have lived on it...till I'm old. Old enough' (Beckett, 2009a, 88), which in an earlier published version read 'I have lived on it ... pretty long. Long enough' (Beckett, 1963, 51), be said to derive from Macbeth's 'I have lived long enough' (p. 78; Act V, Scene III), not underlined but immediately preceding the marked passage with 'the sear, the yellow' on the same line? Here, making a clear-cut division between allusion and non-allusion, or between marginalia and non-marginalia, becomes difficult. Another instance is Lady Macbeth's soliloquy starting with 'The raven himself is hoarse / That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan / Under my battlements.' (p. 16; Act 1, Scene 5) Apart from a connection with Dante's description of Virgil as appearing 'faint/hoarse from long silence' ('*chi per lungo silenzio parea fioco*') in *Inferno*, Canto I, which permeates Beckett's work (see Van Hulle, 2011, 92–6), some of the words that follow in her speech are suggestive in the context of Beckett's radio plays. For example, 'croaks', 'spirits', 'sightless substances', 'thick night' and 'the blanket of the dark' not only chime with *Words and Music*, which features a character called Croak 'cooped up here in the dark' (Beckett, 2009a, 73), but also with Beckett's conception of the medium as a sightless or blind one, for 'voices not bodies', meant to be 'coming out of the dark' (Beckett, 2014, 63).

Especially the word 'spirits' is central to *Macbeth*, riddled as it is with chimeras that exist either in the mind or the outside world. The distinction gradually blurs for Macbeth, as feelings of guilt for his greedy crimes, not least the murdering of Banquo, overwhelm him. This culminates in the scene where Macbeth hallucinates seeing Banquo's ghost at the table during a banquet, soon after learning that the deed has been done (Act III, Scene IV). While he addresses the apparition, who, as the stage directions inform us, '*sits in Macbeth's place*' (Shakespeare, 2008, 2606), Banquo does not utter a word but simply enters and exits a couple of times, letting Macbeth do all the incoherent shouting and leaving the guests to question his (mental) wellbeing. For audiences of the play – as well as its countless film adaptations – it is usually clear that Banquo is merely a spectre, much like Hamlet's father on the battlements of Elsinore castle. Perhaps Beckett drew inspiration from this scene for his radio play *Embers*, which makes it difficult for listeners to ascertain if Ada is real without visible confirmation. He actually vetoed a stage adaptation by Roger Blin, stating that 'when you listen, you don't know if Ada exists or not, whether she only exists in the imagination of the character Henry' (qtd. in Blin, 1994, 310). But then he went one step further in *Footfalls*, where it is impossible

to determine who is the ghost and who imagines who – Amy/May (V) the mother (M) or vice versa – even in a visual genre like theatre. Beckett here outdoes Shakespeare at his own game, effectively upstaging him.⁸

Given the importance of this scene for Beckett's later work, it is again surprising that it bears so little markings. He does underline some of Macbeth's remarks on Banquo's murder and absence in Act III, Scene IV – 'But Banquo's safe?', 'Were the graced person of Banquo present' (p. 46) and 'I drink to the general joy o' the whole table / And to our dear friend Banquo, whom we miss; / Would he were here!' (p. 48) – but the markings betray no interest whatsoever in his absent presence as a ghost. Nonetheless, it is clear that *Macbeth* and the theme of spectrality became closely intertwined for Beckett, not just in theatre and radio, but also in television. According to James Knowlson: 'On the first typescript of *Tryst* [an early title of the TV play *Ghost Trio*], Beckett wrote in by hand the word "Macbeth".' When asked about the meaning of the note, he explained that the description on his recording of the *Geister Trio* 'linked this piano trio with Beethoven's music for an opera based on *Macbeth*' (Knowlson, 1996, 621). From this Knowlson concludes: "'The Ghost" retained for Beckett something of Macbeth's doomladen atmosphere and involvement in the spirit world" (622).⁹

Conclusion

As the examples above have illustrated, non-marginalia are at least as important as marginalia when it comes to assessing the presence of Shakespeare in Beckett's work on the basis of his personal library. Returning to Beckett's metaphor mentioned at the start of this article, taking care of the plumbing is sometimes necessary to investigate the hermeneutic potential of his 'bits of pipe'. We have therefore digitized Beckett's 'schoolboy' copy of *Macbeth* and made it available as part of the Beckett Digital Library 'demo' in the Beckett Digital Manuscript Project's 'Free Features' zone. Rather than attempting an exhaustive analysis, we wanted to share with the Beckett community this extraordinary find that we stumbled upon in the course of our own research and bring it to wider attention. Our hope is that it will help to foster new interpretations of Beckett's relationship with Shakespeare and increase our understanding of the many ways in which 'the Bard' impacted his work.

Notes

1. For a more detailed account of the extant Shakespeare books in Beckett's personal library at his Paris apartment, see Van Hulle and Nixon (2013, 25–9).
2. In addition to the sources cited in this article, critical studies that discuss the presence of Shakespeare in Beckett's work to some extent include Hainsworth (1964), Kott (1964), Berlin (1967), Cohn (1972), Drew (1993), Ackerley and Gontarski (2006), Gunn (2012), and Patey (2014).
3. We wish to express our gratitude to Indiana University and the Lilly Library for awarding us with an Everett Helm Visiting Fellowship in 2015 to make this research possible.
4. Email message to the authors (8 July 2015). We are very grateful to Helena Walsh for allowing us to study the book and digitize it, with the kind help of Breon Mitchell, Zachary Downey and Joel Silver at Indiana University's Lilly Library.
5. For digital facsimiles of these passages, see the free demo of the Beckett Digital Library as part of the Beckett Digital Manuscript Project, <https://www.beckettarchive.org/ldemo/SHA-MAC.html>.
6. An image of this page is reproduced in Van Hulle and Verhulst (2017, 25). For a digital facsimile, see <https://www.beckettarchive.org/bdmp-images/library/SHA-MAC,tp1.jpg>.
7. This connection between Shakespeare and Freytag in Beckett's work is explored more fully in Van Hulle (2010) and Van Hulle and Verhulst (2017, 23–6).
8. For a more detailed analysis of spectrality in *Embers* as an intermedial phenomenon and its relationship to *Footfalls*, see Verhulst (2022).
9. See Maier (2001, 2002) for in-depth discussions of the relationship between Beethoven's music and Beckett's television play *Ghost Trio*.

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