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Translation and genetic criticism: Genetic and editorial approaches to the 'untranslatable' in Joyce and Beckett[1]

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Genetics of translation may suggest a unidirectional link between two fields of research (genetic criticism applied to translation), but there are many ways in which translation and genetic criticism interact. This article's research hypothesis is that an exchange of ideas between translation studies and genetic criticism can be mutually beneficial in more than one way. The main function of this exchange is to enhance a form of textual awareness, and to realize this enhanced textual awareness translation studies and genetic criticism inform each other in at least five different ways: genesis as part of translation; translation of the genesis; genesis of the translation; translation as part of the genesis; and finally the genesis of the untranslatable. To study this nexus between translation and genetic criticism, the works of James Joyce and Samuel Beckett will serve as case studies.

1. Genesis as part of translation

Translation involves one of the most meticulous ways of reading a text; and if any text needs to be read meticulously in order to be appreciated, it is James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*. According to the Dutch translators Robbert-Jan Henkes and Erik Bindervoet (2012), it is almost impossible to translate this book without recourse to its genesis: "In the mid-1990s, we started translating the *Wake* into Dutch, and soon it became apparent that going back to the inception of the work and its gestation, its 'genetic' history, was vital for even a semblance of understanding, and hence for a translation worthy of the name" (p. xlviii). One of the most direct reasons for this need was that in the course of the long composition and publishing history of *Finnegans Wake* several passages inadvertently got lost along the way.

For instance, how does one read – let alone translate – a passage like the following 23-line sentence, which – stripped to its basic syntax – opens as follows: "It may be […] that with his deepseeing insight […] he […] prayed […] that his wordwounder […] might […] unfold into the first of a distinguished dynasty of his posteriors […], his most besetting of ideas […] being the formation […] of a truly criminal stratum […],

thereby at last eliminating from * all classes and masses with directly derivative decasualisation" (Joyce, 2012, pp. 75–76). The * indicates a lost line. As early as 1944, in *A skeleton key to 'Finnegans Wake'*, Campbell and Robinson drew attention to the discrepancy between the version of this sentence as published in *transition* and the version published in *Finnegans Wake*. The first draft runs as follows: "With deepseeing insight he may have prayed in silence that his wordwounder might become the first of a ~~long~~**distinguished** dynasty his *most* cherished idea being the formation, as in more favoured climes, of a truly criminal class, thereby eliminating much general delinquency from all classes and masses" (Joyce, 1963, p. 75). Joyce later added (among many other things) the words "from the oppidump" and changed "general" into "desultory": "thereby eliminating *from* the oppidump much desultory delinquency *from* all classes and masses" (British Library MS 47475-122; emphasis added). While preparing the galley proofs, the printer of *Finnegans Wake* apparently jumped from the first "*from*" to the second, thereby eliminating the direct object "much desultory delinquency". It is not easy to translate a transitive verb without a direct object, so the Dutch translators, Robbert-Jan Henkes and Erik Bindervoet, restored it in the Dutch version: "om op die manier eindelijk uit de oppidump *veel ongeregelde delicten* uit te bannen van alle klassen en massen met aanstonds afgeleide afschaffing van losse dienstverbanden" (Joyce, 2002, p. 76; emphasis added).

On the website of the online journal *Genetic Joyce Studies*, several of these textual disappearances are gathered in a separate section, conceived of as a 'Lost & Found' counter. Thus, for instance, Sam Slote discovered a discrepancy between the transition pages and the *Finnegans Wake* version of the so-called 'The Ondt and the Gracehoper' episode. In *transition*, the passage reads: "Or, if he *was not done doing that, improbably he* was always striking up funny funereels" (Slote, 2011, n.p., emphasis added). The passage in italics went missing because the typesetter skipped it, jumping from the first 'he' to the second, a twentieth-century equivalent of a scribal error (the so-called 'saut du même au même'). Again, this loss has syntactic consequences. In *transition*, the conditional sentence or protasis was followed by the expected apodosis ('if he was not doing X, he was doing Y'); in *Finnegans Wake*, the sentence has become a protracted conditional sentence ('if he was not doing Y'). It should not come as a surprise, then, that readers find it hard to make sense of the *Wake*, which is already more than difficult enough without 'transmissional departures'. The 'dutchification' by Henkes and Bindervoet is one of the only versions of *Finnegans Wake* that restores the lost fragment and presents its readers with a sentence that is syntactically correct (albeit with a twist): "Of, als hij daar niet klaar mee was, zette hij onwaarschijnlijk altijd vrolijke funerelia inzette" (Joyce, 2002, p. 414). Without the lost fragment, it would have read: "Of, als hij onwaarschijnlijk altijd vrolijke funerelia

inzette". The (ungrammatical) double usage of 'zette … in-' and 'inzette' may be a transmissional departure in itself, or an instance of what Daniel Ferrer (1996) has called "contextual memory" (p. 233), a grammatical oddity that draws attention to a textual history and reminds us of things lost in transmission.

Whether these transmissional departures need to be restored or not is debatable. In his *Soundbite against the Restoration* Sam Slote (2001) argues that it is better to leave "ill enough alone" since it is impossible to find watertight criteria for a restoration (n.p.). The last item in the 'lost & found' list is a good example. It is a tiny 'transmissional departure' in the typescripts of the last lines of *Finnegans Wake*, brought to the 'lost & found' desk in December 1999: "Given! A way a lone *a lost* a last a loved a long the" (Van Hulle, 1999, p. 201). Between the first typescript and the next the words 'a lost' disappeared. The question is whether Joyce ever noticed that 'a lost' was lost in transmission, whether he actively instructed the typist to make this change, or whether he only 'passively authorized' it. The effect of adding the appendix with transmissional departures is that the text ends twice: once with 'a lone a last' on page 628, and once with 'a lone a lost a last' at the end of the transmissional departures, which is the last page of both the bilingual Athenaeum edition with the Dutch translation (2002) and the Oxford World's Classics edition (2012).

In their translation, Henkes and Bindervoet have systematically taken these losses into account. Their translation could be seen as a continuation of Joyce's 'Work in Progress', which – as Fritz Senn (1998) argues – is "already an act of translation" (p. 191) in and of itself. If this applies to the 'original' version of *Finnegans Wake*, Joyce's act of 'translation' would accord with what Lawrence Venuti (1995) calls a foreignizing strategy: from a linguistic vantage point *Finnegans Wake* can be regarded as an attempt to enrich the English language with as much foreign lexical 'local colour' as possible. Against this background, it is remarkable that the translators were asked by the Joyce Estate not to call their work a 'translation' but a 'dutchification' (as they explain in the 'Note to the Text', Bindervoet & Henkes, 2012, p. xlvi, note 1). According to a similar 'foreignizing' principle, Bindervoet and Henkes have not tried to 'domesticate' Joyce's text. Rather than adapting Joyce's 'Wakese' to Dutch, they have adapted the Dutch language to that of the *Wake*.

2. Translation of the genesis

To answer the most direct question "what is *Finnegans Wake* basically about?" the introduction by Finn Fordham (2012) in the same edition resorts to the work's genesis, notably to the early sketch of the "proverbial loser" Roderick, the last king of Ireland. One half of the book

"can be said to concern the comic doddering fall of a man from fame and fortune to rack and ruin – from 'Rex' to 'wreck'" (p. ix). This sketch is also referred to in *Brouillons d'un baiser* (2014), a translation by Marie Darrieussecq of the early genesis (*Premiers pas vers 'Finnegans Wake'*, as the subtitle indicates), edited and annotated by Daniel Ferrer, director of the Joyce team at the Institut des textes et manuscrits modernes (ITEM-CNRS, Paris). But whereas Fordham makes a link with the protagonist HCE ("he'd been spotted by three young men behaving in an 'ungentlemanly' way in Dublin's Phoenix Park opposite two maidservants while they were responding to a call of nature"), Ferrer focuses on the subsequent sketches as the 'first steps toward *Finnegans Wake*', as the subtitle indicates. The drafts of a kiss are five sketches centred around the kiss of Tristan and Isolde, preserved partially at the National Library of Ireland in Dublin, and partially at the British Library in London. They have been given the following titles in square brackets, preceded by a letter: A) [*Portrait of Isolde*], B) [*Tristan & Isolde*], C) [*Tristan & Isolde, the kiss*], D) [*The Four Old Men and the kiss of Tristan & Isolde*], E) [*Mamalujo*]. By presenting the sketches in this sequence, Daniel Ferrer shows how the seemingly unrelated sketches A and E are nonetheless connected by (a sequence of versions of) a kiss.

The portrait of Isolde enumerates examples of virtues such as her prudence, her learning, her charm ("she knew how to stagemanage her legs in nude stockings under a straight as possible skirt"), her health, her domestic economy and her piety, which is illustrated by her version of the Lord's Prayer: "Howfar wartnevin alibithename […]" The translation on the facing recto pages not only manages to keep the language as playful as the original: "Norepère quiètesosseu ctonom soixantifié […]" (Joyce, 2014, pp. 64–65), but it also draws attention to textual problems.

Enhancing textual awareness is one of the major roles translation can play in the nexus between genetic criticism and translation. For instance, Darrieussecq's translation draws attention to manifest contradictions such as the so-called "decasyllabic iambic hexameter": "Roll on, thou deep and darkblue ocean, roll!" (Joyce, 2014, p. 82). The text claims it is a 'hexameter', but the line itself manifestly isn't. The French translation has taken the liberty to turn the line into a hexameter, exceeding the limit of ten syllables imposed by the adjective 'decasyllabic'. By doing so, Darrieussecq creates a tension between the original and the translation, thus highlighting a textual problem with an interesting genesis, relating to a set of missing typescripts that was first described by Richard Brown (1988). In 'Tristan & Isolde, the kiss' (sketch C in the Gallimard edition), Joyce incorporated the line as a direct quotation from Byron's *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. In later versions, he gradually started distorting the wording: "Roll on, thou deep and darkblue ocean, roll!" (Joyce, 2014, p. 82) became "Rollon thoudeep anddark blueo ceanroll!" in the third fair copy and the first typescript, grouping the syllables and making the meter prominent so as to emphasize the

clash between the actual (penta)meter and its presentation as a hexameter. In the next typescript Joyce added "andamp": "Rollon thoudeep andamp anddark blueo ceanroll!" (Van Hulle, 1999, p. 198), by means of which he turned Byron's pentameter into a hexameter. He sent this typescript to his maecenas Harriet Shaw Weaver in August 1923. Fifteen years later, at a much later stage in the writing process (Summer 1938), he decided to incorporate this early sketch in the text of *Finnegans Wake*. But by that stage, his 'Wakese' had developed to such an extent that he had to seriously distort the original wording in order to integrate it in the discourse of his text, which is also the way Byron's line appears in the published text of *Finnegans Wake*: "Rolando's deepen darblun Ossian roll!" (Joyce, 2012, p. 385). But in the meantime, Joyce had forgotten the typescript he had sent to Harriet Shaw Weaver fifteen years earlier. As a result, the decasyllabic hexameter became a textual oxymoron. The English pentameter is turned into a French version "en hexamètres iambiques décasyllabiques" that is really more than decasyllabic: "Roule tes profonds flots bleus, ô toi vieil océan, roule!" (Joyce, 2014, p. 83). Thus, instead of smoothing out the textual contingencies of the complex genesis, the translation calls attention to them, enhancing the readers' textual awareness.

3. Genesis of the translation

The genesis of a translation can be complex, sometimes even more complex than the genesis of the original text. That is arguably the case in Samuel Beckett's *L'Innommable / The Unnamable*, as the genetic map of the digital edition in the Beckett Digital Manuscript Project (BDMP) indicates (Van Hulle & Weller, 2014, pp. 87–88). The earliest stage in the genesis of Beckett's English translation is rather complex in terms of the chronology of the extant documents. The manuscript of the translation is written in three notebooks (EN1/EN2/EN3, preserved at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center, Austin, TX with catalogue numbers MS-HRC-SB-5-9-1/2/3).[2]

Given the pattern of Beckett's customary way of working, the expected chronology would be that this manuscript precedes the two extant typescripts (ET1 and ET2). But a collation of the extant documents suggests that the first part of the first typescript (ET1, until and including folio 24r) is older than the first 23 pages of the manuscript (EN1). For instance, the substitutions in the sentence "Low types they ~~were~~ must have been, the~~y~~ir pockets full of ~~venom~~ poisons and ~~caustic~~ antidotes'" in typescript ET1 (MS-HRC-SB-5-10, folio 8r) have all been incorporated in the manuscript: "Low types they must have been, their pockets full of poisons and antidotes" (EN1, MS-HRC- SB-5-9-1, folio 9r.

This chronology offers an explanation for the changed order of the novel's opening questions. The French version reads: "Où maintenant?

Quand maintenant? Qui maintenant?" (Beckett, 1953, p. 7; Beckett, 1971, p. 7, emphasis added). The first English typescript presents the questions in the same order: "Where now? *When now?* Who now?" (ET1, folio 1r, emphasis added), whereas the order is changed in the manuscript: "Where now? Who now? *When now?*" (EN1, folio 1r, emphasis added).

The first English typescript (ET1, folio 25r) is marked with the comment "end of revision". Of the first 24 original pages, the first 5 seem to have been replaced by the 6 pages of the typescript used for the pre-book publication of the opening fragment in the magazine *Spectrum*. For these first 6 pages, the order is generally [1] typescript ET1, [2] pre-book publication in *Spectrum*, [3] ET1, holograph revisions, [4] manuscript EN1, [5] second typescript (ET2). The following sentence from the opening page may illustrate this order. The original French sentence "Les oui et non, c'est autre chose, ils me reviendront à mesure que je progresserai, et la façon de chier dessus, tôt ou tard, comme un oiseau, sans en oublier un seul" is translated in the first typescript as: "With the yesses and noes it is different. They will come back to me as I go along, and how to shit on them, sooner or later, like a bird, without omitting any" (ET1, folio 1r). The closing words "without omitting any" also appear in the version in the magazine *Spectrum*. Then, Beckett revised the first typescript by means of a substitution: "without ~~omitting any~~ exception" (ET1, folio 1r). When he started copying this version in his notebook, he incorporated the substitution in the running text: "without exception" (EN1, folio 1r) and that is also how it reads in the second typescript. The chronology therefore seems to have been: Typescript 1, *Spectrum*, Manuscript, Typescript 2.

But this basic chronology is complicated by another *campagne de révision* on the first typescript. The French sentence "Quels trucs que ces histoires de clarté et d'obscurité!" (MS HRC SB 3-10, folio 16v) is translated in the first English typescript as "What nonsense all this business about light and dark" (ET1, folio 20r), and subsequently revised on the same typescript: "all this ~~business~~ stuff" (folio 20r). The manuscript incorporates the substitution in the body of the text: "all this stuff" (EN1, folio 18r). So far the scenario is the same as in the case of the previous example. But then, Beckett made a second revision on the first typescript: "What ~~nonsense~~ rubbish" (ET1, folio 20r). And all these revisions were subsequently incorporated in the second typescript: "What rubbish all this stuff about light and dark" (ET2, folio 19r). Judging from these material traces of the translation process, Beckett most probably used both the manuscript and the first typescript to make the second typescript.

Beckett's correspondence helps explain this complicated genesis of the translation. In a letter of 22 February 1956, Beckett (2011, p. 602) told his American publisher Barney Rosset that he had started translating *L'Innommable* into English. Less than a month later, however, he told Pamela Mitchell that he "gave it up the other day in loathing" (Beckett,

2011, p. 606). In early April, he did mention to Rosset that he had made "a little further headway" (Beckett, 2011, p. 614), but throughout the rest of 1956 he kept complaining to friends that it was "an impossible job" (Beckett, 2011, p. 640), "effroyablement difficile" (Beckett, 2011, p. 684), and even "un supplice" or "torture" (Beckett, 2011, p. 658). It took him a year to find the courage to really start working on the translation (February 1957) and this moment of renewed courage seems to coincide with the beginning of the manuscript, marked with the date "February 1957" (Van Hulle & Weller, 2014, p. 180).

The last words of the manuscript are as interesting as the incipit. Whereas the French version of the novel ends with the words "il faut continuer, je vais continuer" (Beckett, 1953, p. 261), the English translation ends as follows: "you must go on, *I can't go on*, I'll go on" (MS HRC SB 5-9-3, folio 54r, emphasis added). As a result of the tension between the last two sentences, this line became one of the most famous Beckett quotes. But one tends to forget that it is a translation. Before Beckett translated it, the original was the only version and therefore 'complete' by definition. Due to the addition in the translation, Beckett paradoxically made the original less complete. The translation retroactively created a sort of 'gap' in the original:

il faut continuer, [ ] je vais continuer.

After Beckett received the Nobel prize for literature in 1971, Les Éditions de Minuit decided to publish a new edition, which allowed Beckett to revise his text. On this occasion, he filled the gap created by the translation, completing the French text by means of the words "je ne peux pas continuer": "il faut continuer, je ne peux pas continuer, je vais continuer" (Beckett, 1971, p. 213).

4. Translation as part of the genesis

With regard to drama, Beckett evidently gained more experience by directing his own work, but the plays are not only interesting from a theatrical perspective. As some of the stage directions indicate, they can also be savoured as reading texts, and as translations. A case in point is the moment when Vladimir and Estragon discuss the option of hanging themselves from the tree, until Estragon says to Vladimir: "Mais réfléchis un peu, voyons", after which the stage directions indicate that "*Vladimir réfléchit*" (Beckett, 2006, p. 44). In the English translation, Estragon's exhortation "Use your intelligence, can't you?" is followed by the playful stage direction "*Vladimir uses his intelligence*" (Beckett, 2006, p. 45). Such an instruction is hardly performable on stage, but it shows how translation plays a role in the genesis of the text, even after publication.

Several attempts have been made to present Beckett's texts in a bilingual edition, and Beckett gave his full support to these editorial enterprises. Apart from the genetic bilingual editions by Charles Krance and Magessa O'Reilly (Beckett, 1993, 1996, 2001), there is also a notable bilingual Faber edition of *Happy Days / Oh les beaux jours* by James Knowlson, who points out the differences between the English and French versions by listing the passages that were left untranslated (Beckett, 1978, p. 121). One of the items in Knowlson's list relates to the parasol in the following passage in the text of the original 1961 Faber edition (printed on the left-hand pages of the bilingual edition):

> Reason says, Put it down, Winnie, it is not helping you, put the thing down and get on with something else. (*Pause.*) I cannot. (*Pause.*) **I cannot move.** (*Pause.*) No, something must happen, in the world, take place, some change, I cannot, **if I am to move again**. (*Pause.*) Willie. (*Mildly.*) Help. (*Pause.*) **No? (*Pause.*)** Bid me put this thing down, Willie, I would obey you instantly, as I have always done, honoured and obeyed. (*Pause.*) **Please, Willie. (*Mildly.*)** For pity's sake. (*Pause.*) No? (*Pause.*) **You can't? (*Pause.*) Well I don't blame you, no, it would ill become me, who cannot move, to blame my Willie because he cannot speak. (*Pause.*)** Fortunately I am in tongue again. (Beckett, 1978, p. 48)

The passages in bold were left out in the French version:

> La raison me dit, Dépose-la, Winnie, elle ne t'aide en rien, et attèle-toi à autre chose. (*Un temps.*) Je ne peux pas. (*Un temps.*) Non, il faut que quelque chose arrive, dans le monde, ait lieu, quelque changement, moi je ne peux pas. (*Un temps.*) Willie. (*D'une petite voix.*) A moi. (*Un temps.*) Ordonne-moi de la déposer, Willie, j'obéirais, sur-le-champ, comme je l'ai toujours fait. (*Un temps.*) Par pitié. (*Un temps.*) Non? (*Un temps.*) Une chance, que le moulin tourne. (Beckett, 1978, p. 49)

Knowlson's critical bilingual edition clearly indicates which versions are used as base texts and it provides ample information on the context of Beckett's works, on stage productions and on the critical response. The texts are preceded by an 'Editorial Note', explaining that Beckett himself agreed 'to the inclusion of the changes which he made in the copy of the Faber and Faber English text, annotated for the National Theatre, London, production, directed by Peter Hall, with Dame Peggy Ashcroft as Winnie' as well as the inclusion of references to Beckett's production notebook, prepared for his own production of the play in German at the Schiller Theater Werkstatt in Berlin in September 1971, with Eva Katharina Schultz as Winnie. Beckett's experiences as a director of his own plays had an impact on the texts as well. And this process did not stop when

Faber and Faber published Knowlson's bilingual edition of *Happy Days*. In June 1979, one year after this edition came out, Beckett directed a new production of his play at the Royal Court Theatre. He used a copy of the 1973 Faber edition of *Happy Days* to make annotations in pencil (held at the University of Reading, UoR MS 1731). This annotated 1973 edition served as his production copy. Beckett also copied most of the annotations and changes (in black ink) in a copy of Knowlson's bilingual edition (UoR MS BR30HAP), apparently in view of a new edition of the text, which never materialized.

In terms of the nexus between translation and genetic criticism, this raises the question whether these annotations have any consequence for the translation into French, for Beckett did not mark any changes in the French text on the right-hand pages. As for the passage quoted above, after Beckett had already left out the passages in bold in his French translation, he cut the English text even more drastically (the symbol | indicates the cut):

> Reason says, Put it down, Winnie, it is not helping you, put the thing down and get on with something else. | (*Pause.*) Fortunately I am in tongue again. (Beckett, 1978, p. 48)

Even though Beckett's last revisions of the English text were not marked in the French version on the facing pages, the French translation did play an important role in this process of textual reduction from the original 117-word passage to the final 28-word version. Since the French translation marked the start of this reduction process it represents a crucial part of the genesis.

5. Genesis of the untranslatable

Texts that are deemed untranslatable, such as *Finnegans Wake*, can sometimes be translated thanks to genetic research, as was the case with the Dutch translation by Henkes and Bindervoet, discussed in the first section of this article. In Beckett's case, the most untranslatable work, according to the author-translator himself, was *Worstward Ho* (1983). In 1998, Ruud Hisgen and Adriaan van der Weel published a genetic edition, which could not be included in the series of genetic bilingual editions, coordinated by Charles Krance, because it was not a bilingual work. Nonetheless, this 'untranslatable' work is quite relevant to the theme of the nexus between translation and genetic criticism.

The twofold aim of Hisgen and van der Weel's 1998 edition was "to establish a definitive reading text, ironing out what errors have crept in during the ordinary course of textual transmission" (p. 10), and "to present an evolutionary variorum edition" (p. 11). The order in which these two aims are presented (a "definitive" reading text and a "variorum

edition") corresponds with the traditional relation between text and apparatus variorum in most editorial traditions. Genetic criticism, however, has shifted the emphasis from the final product to its production process. And even though, for the theoretical framework in their introduction, Hisgen and van der Weel (1998) employed bold phrases such as "establish a definitive reading text" (p. 10) and "the author's final intention" (p. 53), the praxis resulted in a much more inventive genetic edition. The editors started from the observation that "few efforts of textual criticism have been lavished on Beckett's oeuvre" (Hisgen & van der Weel, 1998, p. 8): "Surprisingly, even the ambitious series of bilingual variorum editions published under the general editorship of Charles Krance does not aim to establish a critical text" (p. 8). The Garland/Routledge editions take the text of the Grove edition as their reading text. This implies that misspellings such as the word "philogenitiveness" in *Company* (paragraph 51), which "should read 'philoprogenitiveness'" (Hisgen & van der Weel, 1998, p. 10), are not emended in the Garland bilingual edition.

But editorial emendation is more difficult than the *ad hoc* correction of misspellings here and there. The key issue is of course to find watertight criteria to fit preferably all the textual situations of Beckett's works. In the case of *Worstward Ho*, Hisgen and van der Weel collated the US and UK versions with the typescript Beckett submitted to John Calder for the UK edition (typescript E). The result is a short list of only six variants. Interestingly, the UK edition does not follow typescript E faithfully, whereas the US edition does. According to John Calder, the discrepancies between typescript E and the Calder edition resulted from revisions made by Beckett at proof stage, which raises the interesting question "whether the author's copy or the author's proofs represent most closely the author's final intention" (Hisgen & van der Weel, 1998, p. 53).

Unfortunately, no proofs have been found for either edition. Based on evidence found in the earlier versions, Hisgen and van der Weel suggest different choices for each of the six variants. Even though the Calder text deviates from typescript E, the documentary evidence appears to support the Calder text in three of the six cases; in the other three cases, it supports the Grove edition (Hisgen & van der Weel, 1998, p. 67). Apart from these six variants, there is also one instance (paragraph 61, segment 21), where Hisgen and van der Weel (1998) suggest an emendation – changing "worser worst" (a reading found in the three versions under consideration) into "worser worse" – because it is "a reading also found in the previous two sources ([typescripts] C and D)" (p. 70).

This raises the rather fundamental question whether the reconstruction of the genesis can serve as a basis to conjecture that a certain reading is a textual error and that it should be emended accordingly (a procedure most genetic critics would reject since it reduces

genetic criticism again to a subservient role at the service of establishing a restored, corrected, or edited text). The problem with this procedure is what Pierre-Marc de Biasi (1996/1998) sees as a difference in kind between endogenesis (the writing of the drafts) and the continuation of the genesis after the so-called 'pass for press' moment. In the case of *Worstward Ho*, the document Beckett submitted to John Calder for the UK edition (typescript E) represents the moment he decided that his text was ready to be presented to the public, 'bon à tirer'. The subsequent versions constitute the 'epigenesis'. Traditionally, this post-publication phase is the realm of textual scholarship, and genetic criticism has tended to treat this realm as being outside of its research focus because, as Pierre-Marc de Biasi writes, it generally does not correspond to "the logic of a process comparable to the pre-textual one" ("la logique d'un processus comparable à celui de l'avant-texte"; de Biasi, 1996, p. 41; 1998, p. 43).

In Beckett's case, however, the logic of the epigenesis is not entirely incomparable with the process of the *avant-texte*. The difference is not in kind but in degree. Although the 'endogenesis' is supposed to take place 'inside' the private sphere of the author's workspace, it is never entirely immune to outside elements, such as 'exogenetic' sources or suggestions by partners, friends, editors, correctors and publishers. Around the 'pass for press' moment, the intensity of the latter kind of interaction only increases. And the epigenesis may play a similar role in the process of "written invention" (Ferrer, 2011, p. 184), as the examples of *L'Innommable* and *Happy Days* have shown.

The epigenesis of *Worstward Ho*, however, is special in that it is marked by its 'untranslatability'. Beckett did try to translate it, but as James Knowlson notes:

> His efforts to translate *Worstward Ho* into French soon ground to a halt. How, he asked me, do you translate even the first words of the book "On. Say on" – without losing its force? It was not until after his death that his friend, Edith Fournier, translated the book, although she had discussed it with him and he had chosen her title, *Cap au pire*, from among several that she suggested. (Knowlson, 1996, pp. 684–685)

As John Pilling notes, Beckett stressed the impossibility, from the very first word ("On"), of translating the text into French as early as 6 July 1983 (only two months after the publication of *Worstward Ho* by John Calder; Pilling, 2006, p. 221). In consultation with Lauren Eileen Upadhyay, Lois Overbeck and the team working on the correspondence of Samuel Beckett, we recently discovered that a typed manuscript fragment, sent by Beckett to his French publisher, Jérôme Lindon, contained in the Beckett/Minuit Correspondence files at the Institut mémoires de l'éditions contemporaine (IMEC) in Caen is a compilation

of fragments from *Worstward Ho*, translated into French by Beckett. It consists of a translation of parts of paragraphs 19, 20, and the last lines of the text (the last part of the penultimate paragraph and the last paragraph):

> Bit by bit an old man and child. In the dim void bit by bit an old man and child. Any other would do as ill. // Hand in hand with equal plod they go. In the free hands – no. Free empty hands. Backs turned both bowed with equal plod they go. […] Slowly with never a pause plod on and never recede. [§19-20] […] Nohow less. Nohow worse. Nohow naught. Nohow on. // Said nohow on. (Beckett, 2009, p. 84; p. 103)

In Edith Fournier's translation this corresponds with:

> Peu à peu un vieil homme et un enfant. Dans la pénombre vide peu à peu un vieil homme et un enfant. N'importe quoi d'autre ferait aussi mal l'affaire. // Main dans la main ils vont tant mal que mal d'un pas égal. Dans les mains libres – non. Vides les mains libres. Tous deux dos courbé vus de dos ils vont tant mal que mal d'un pas égal. […] Lentement sans pause tant mal que mal s'en vont et jamais ne s'éloignent. [§19-20] […] Plus mèche moins. Plus mèche pire. Plus mèche néant. Plus mèche encore. // Soit dit plus mèche encore. (Beckett, 1991, pp. 14–15; p. 62)

Beckett's solution for the insistent repetition of "nohow" was quite different. Instead of Fournier's "Plus mèche" he worked with the phrase "ne se peut" (that is, the sequence of 'nohow less / worse / naught / on' became 'moins / pire / néant / plus loin ne se peut'). And the most 'untranslatable' word "on", was not translated as "encore" but as "plus loin". Beckett presented this to Lindon as a mere sample of what he is sparing him, but even though this is only a tiny fragment (or compilation of fragments), Beckett's solution for the last lines indicates that what he told James Knowlson may create the wrong impression that he already stopped trying after the first few words. For the last words echo the first: "On. Say on" (Beckett, 2009, p. 81). Beckett's solution for "nohow" was "ne se peut" (applied to 'less', 'worse', 'naught' and 'on', that is, 'moins', 'pire', 'néant' and 'plus loin'). So, extrapolating from this solution, the translation he had in mind for the opening words was: 'Plus loin. Dire plus loin'. But whereas the English text opens with "On. Say on" and ends with the participle "Said nohow on", the French fragment does not end with a participle, but with the same infinitive as the opening infinitive.[3] As a result, the closure of the English version effectuated by means of the opening infinitive (or imperative) "Say" and the closing "Said" is undone in the translation, which opens up the closed space of this so-called 'untranslatable' text. Thus, the nexus between translation and genesis turns out to be a bidirectional interaction that plays an active

role in the dynamics of what H. P. Abbott (1996) called "continuing incompletion" (p. 20).

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2 All further references are to the document names and folio numbers used by the online genetic edition of *L'Innommable* / *The Unnamable* in the Beckett Digital Manuscript Project, to be found at www.beckettarchive.org.

3 I owe a debt of gratitude to Lauren Eileen Upadhyay for the transcription of the fragment in the correspondence preserved at IMEC.