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DIRK VAN HULLE

Editing Beckett's Twin Texts

'He [Samuel Beckett] said that as far as the text was concerned,
what existed in the various texts was available to us.'

(Mike Nichols, interview with Mel Gussow)

Among the books in Beckett's library, there is a classic in textual scholarship, a third edition of *The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare* by W.W. Greg (1942; 2nd and 3rd revised editions in 1951 and 1962). There are no marginalia in it and so far no reading notes have surfaced elsewhere, so it is unclear to what extent or how intensively Beckett read this scholarly treatise, yet its very presence in his library implies a certain textual awareness. Since this is the only book on scholarly editing in the extant library, it is also indicative of the dominance of a particular approach to scholarly editing in the Anglo-American tradition of textual scholarship during the twentieth century, which this essay confronts with other editorial approaches to envision and assess the feasibility of a critical bilingual edition of Beckett's works.

Greg's book was an explicit response to Ronald B. McKerrow's *Prolegomena for the Oxford Shakespeare*, published in 1939. Ten years earlier, McKerrow had been asked by Oxford University Press to make a new edition of Shakespeare's works. The work proceeded less swiftly than anticipated and the introduction was published separately as the *Prolegomena*. Considering McKerrow's principles to be conservative, Greg devised an alternative set of 'rules which [he] conceive[d] should govern the procedure of an editor of Shakespeare' (Greg, 1951, ix). Especially in 'Rule 3', Greg introduced his innovative ideas, such as the distinction between 'substantive' and 'derivative' editions. He did try to 'follow so far as possible the lines laid down in McKerrow's *Prolegomena*' (ix), and in 'Rule 1' and 'Rule 2' he did not deviate from McKerrow's suggestions to take the author's final intentions as a guideline and to choose the most 'authoritative' early edition as the copy-text.

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McKerrow had spoken of 'the ideal text' of the works of an early dramatist, which 'should approach as closely as the extant material allows to a fair copy, made by the author himself, of his plays in the form which he intended finally to give them' (McKerrow, 1939, 6). Greg's first rule is: 'The aim of a critical edition should be to present the text, so far as the available evidence permits, in the form in which we *may suppose that it would have stood* in a fair copy, made by the author himself, of the work as he finally intended it' (Greg, 1951, x; emphasis added). To this purpose, the second rule suggested 'an editor should select as the basis of his own edition (as his copy-text, that is) the most "authoritative" of the early prints' (xii). The adjective 'authoritative' in quotation marks refers to McKerrow, who defined the most authoritative text as 'that one of the early texts which, on a consideration of their *genetic* relationship, appears likely to have deviated to the smallest extent in all respects of wording, spelling, and punctuation from the author's manuscript' (McKerrow, 1939, 7-8; emphasis added).¹

Greg pointed out a conceivable conflict between 'the essential readings' of a text and what he called the 'accidents' of spelling and punctuation as criteria of authority. This notion of 'accidents' would lead to Greg's distinction between 'accidentals' and 'substantives' in his famous essay 'The Rationale of Copy-Text' (*Studies in Bibliography* 3, 1950-51), but in *The Editorial Problem in Shakespeare*, he already considered the possibility that an early edition 'which may be supposed to stand at the least remove from the author's original, and so to preserve most nearly the accidents of the autograph, should yet for one reason or another have seriously *corrupted* the words' (Greg, 1951, xiii; emphasis added).

Textual 'corruption' and 'purity'

This notion of textual 'corruption', perverting, contaminating or adulterating a 'purer' state remained a dominant metaphor in textual scholarship, at least until the 1970s, when for instance Fredson Bowers presented the goal of textual criticism as follows: 'The recovery of the initial purity of an author's text and of any revision (insofar as

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this is possible from the preserved documents), and the preservation of this purity despite the usual corrupting process of reprint transmission, is the aim of textual criticism' (Bowers, 1970, 30).

But the editorial problem in Beckett – to paraphrase Greg – is precisely this notion of textual 'purity'. Beckett was extremely sensitive to changes to his text, but this had to do with textual integrity, rather than purity. In fact, if anything had to be kept intact it was the integrity of his text's *impurity*. *Endgame* is a good example. On 30 January 1958, Alan Schneider told Beckett that the only word they had changed for the American production was 'nightman', since no-one understood it. They had changed it into 'dustman' because it was clearer and had a similar beat (Beckett, 2014, 104), which Beckett accepted wholeheartedly ('By all means "dustman"'). But apart from that, Schneider had kept the text intact: 'The rest remains as you wrote it' (Beckett, 1998, 36; Beckett, 2014, 104). And Beckett really appreciated this care about the text: 'I am so glad you have been able to preserve the text in all its *impurity*' (Beckett to Alan Schneider, 6 February 1958; Beckett, 1998, 37; 2014, 103; emphasis added). The most famous 'impurity' is of course the line 'The bastard, he doesn't exist', which the Lord Chamberlain had censored in the UK, and about which Beckett had written to Schneider: "'He doesn't exist" without "the bastard" is simply unacceptable to me' (Beckett, 2014, 95).

This issue of 'impurity' was directly related to the production of his texts, but it also applies to their publication. With reference to the text of *Waiting for Godot*, Beckett wrote a letter to Charles Monteith at Faber and Faber (15 November 1963), explaining to him that the version published by Faber was 'the playing version' and that it differed considerably from 'the unexpurgated version' (Beckett, 2014, 580) published by Grove. The text had been 'purified' by 'the Lord Chamberpot' (Beckett, 1998, 24), and Beckett now thought it was time for Faber and Faber to bring their version 'closer to the original', hoping that in the meantime it would be treated less 'puritanically' (Beckett, 2014, 580) by the Lord Chamberlain's office. In addition to calling his self-translation 'the original', Beckett also employs the term 'the integral [text]': 'The whole question was brought forcibly to my mind by the first volume just published of Suhrkamp's trilingual edition of my plays in which he has used quite unnecessarily your text instead of *the integral one*' (580; emphasis added). This is

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also the term Beckett used when he drew Siegfried Unseld's attention to Suhrkamp's 'erreur majeure' (581) of reproducing the Faber text with its numerous changes and cuts ('nombreux changements et coupures') instead of the integral text, as published by Grove Press ('le texte intégral, tel que Grove Press le publie'; 581).

So if one were to publish one reading text of *Waiting for Godot*, this seems a straightforward suggestion: publish 'the integral text, as published by Grove Press'. But then again, this was Beckett's opinion on 10 November 1962, before he had directed his own play. As S. E. Gontarski has argued, Beckett gradually counted more and more on the performances of his plays to inform his revision of the text before publication (Gontarski, 2009).² And as James Knowlson, Dougald McMillan and S. E. Gontarski have shown in *The Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett*, the successive performances of his plays had such an impact on the texts that in many cases it seemed necessary to create a 'revised text'. These revised texts touch upon another issue in textual scholarship: final authorial intention.

Final authorial intention

After McKerrow and Greg, this notion continued to be an important criterion. In 1976, for instance, G. Thomas Tanselle alluded to Greg's *Editorial Problem* in his essay 'The Editorial Problem of Final Authorial Intention'. Tanselle duly pointed out that influential writings on the subject of intention, such as Wimsatt and Beardsley's 'The Intentional Fallacy' (1946) or E. D. Hirsch's *Validity in Interpretation* (1967), apparently assume 'that the text in each case is the text as the author wished it to be': 'Of course, a corrupt text could equally well be the subject of critical analysis; but the question of the bearing of authorial intention on interpretation would hardly arise unless the text is assumed to be what its author wished' (Tanselle, 1976, 171–2).

The editorial problem here is of course that the author keeps changing throughout his or her career. Beckett was well aware of this issue and the topic of a person's mutability became thematic in several of his works, perhaps most conspicuously in *Krapp's Last Tape*, but also for instance in *How It Is*, where the

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French original's 'ma vie dernier état' is translated as 'my life last state last version'
(Beckett, 2001, 2–3).

One of the most famous examples in German scholarly editing is Goethe's *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*. When Beckett misremembers the colour of Werther's blue coat in reply to Alan Schneider's question why the characters in *Endgame* have red and white faces ('Faces red and white probably like Werther's green coat, because the author saw them that way'; Beckett, 2014, 94), the reference is to a line in *Die Leiden*, where Werther writes that he has bought a new coat, which happens to come right after a set of letters that were not in the original but were added in the 'Ausgabe letzter Hand' – the text according to Goethe's final authorial intentions (Goethe, 1999, 168–9). This 'most authoritative' text was an expanded and revised version by the 'mature' Goethe, who – in retrospect – probably thought there was much to be improved on his young 'Sturm und Drang' creation. From that perspective, the later version would have to be considered 'better' than the original. But this 'improved' version was (re)written by Goethe the 'Klassiker' and was no longer the icon of 'Sturm und Drang' the book is famous for. The way this problem was solved is a notable accomplishment in recent German scholarly editing: both versions were printed in parallel presentation in the popular small-format, affordable yellow Reclam series. Students can thus compare the versions by both the young and the old Goethe at a glance.

The editorial problem in Goethe is paradigmatic of German editorial theory and explains why it is so different from the Anglo-American tradition, which is based on the paradigm of editing Shakespeare. Whereas the latter was defined by solutions to deal with a lack of manuscripts, the German tradition was shaped by a situation characterized by an abundance of manuscripts and revised versions. Since the editorial problem in Beckett is closer to Goethe than to Shakespeare, it might be wise to also take the German editorial tradition into account.

From the point of view of German editorial theory, conflating textual versions would result in what Hans Zeller has called 'an eclectic (contaminated) text' (Zeller, 1975, 237). Zeller doubted 'whether the sum of authoritative readings yields an authoritative text' (237). According to him, an 'eclectic editor contaminatingly

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synchronizes that which occurred diachronically' and thus creates a text that has never existed before, 'in the name of authorial intention' (Zeller, 1995b, 106).

Moreover, if editors try to establish a reading text according to the author's 'final' intentions they assume the role of executor of the author's last will – a role that is problematized by examples such as that of Max Brod, who famously ignored Franz Kafka's explicit wish regarding his *Nachlass*, which was supposed to be entirely destroyed ('restlos und ungelesen zu verbrennen'; Brod and Kafka, 1989, 365). Patrick Sahle regards the edition of Joyce's *Ulysses* by Hans Walter Gabler, Claus Melchior and Wolfhard Steppe as 'the climax of the traditional method' ('der Höhepunkt der traditionellen Methode'), with which it was deemed possible to reconcile the reality of the documents with the ideality of the author's will ('die Realität der Dokumente mit der Idealität des Autorwillens zu vereinen'; Sahle, 2013, 129).

The problem with 'authorial intention' is that it is seldom singular, as for instance *The Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett* make evident. Still, the editorial principle underlying the 'revised texts' in this series is based on the notion of 'final authorial intention', according to the General Editor's Note: 'Our aim in printing (as last with Beckett's full agreement) revised texts that are based on his productions has been to set down the changes that were made there. The texts are now *as close as possible to how Beckett wanted them to be*' (Knowlson in Beckett, 1993a, vii). Against the background of Goethe's *Werther(s)*, this raises the question: *which Beckett?* The situation is more complex than the case of the *Werther* edition. The editors of the 'revised text' of *Waiting for Godot*, James Knowlson and Dougald McMillan, regard it as 'a new version of Godot, shorter, tighter in structure, and visualized much more clearly in theatrical terms, as well as being, in our view, aesthetically more satisfying' (Beckett, 1993a, xii). As Paul Lawley points out, however, this value-judgement 'gives one pause' (Lawley, 2008, 25), for what is 'technically a conflation (following from productions with three different companies)' (26) raises 'the problem of the playwright's authority over the performance of his own script' (26). Lawley appreciates the edition as a rich resource, but also points out that Beckett's cuts and additions are 'enshrined' in the revised text, implying its 'status as prescription' (26). The textual situation is further complicated by the bilingual aspect

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of Beckett's works, for if the 'revised text' of, say *Waiting for Godot*, is treated as the most authoritative one, this raises the question whether the French original needs to be adapted accordingly.

Bilingual editions

Several notable attempts have been made to present Beckett's texts in a bilingual edition, and Beckett gave his full support to these editorial enterprises. For instance, the bilingual Faber edition of *Happy Days / Oh les beaux jours* by James Knowlson points out the differences between the English and French versions by listing the passages that were left untranslated (Beckett, 1978, 121).

But no matter how well this edition set an example for future critical editions, it only represented the author's intentions so far, for it did not stop Beckett from making changes to his text. In June 1979, one year after the publication of the bilingual edition, 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 (UoR MS 1731). The changes were also marked in black ink in a copy of Knowlson's bilingual edition. Whereas the annotated 1973 edition served as his production copy, this marked copy of the bilingual edition (UoR MS BR30HAP) seems to have been prepared by Beckett in view of a new edition of the text, for the nature of the autograph annotations is that of proof-stage corrections.³ But if this revision is to be interpreted in terms of the author's 'final intention', the question is whether this is only his English, not his French 'last will', for Beckett did not mark any changes in the French text on the right-hand pages.

One thing at least is clear from this example: the genesis goes on after the first publication. The most genetically informed bilingual print editions of Beckett's texts are the ones by Charles Krance (Beckett, 1993b; 1996) and Magessa O'Reilly (Beckett, 2001). It is perhaps not a coincidence that the three volumes in this series – which received Samuel Beckett's explicit support – are editions of prose fiction, rather than of dramatic works. The effect of Beckett's direction on the texts of the

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plays, which resulted in the 'revised texts' in the series of *Theatrical Notebooks*, is an extra challenge for bilingual editions.

'a definitive reading text' vs multiple versions

The bilingual focus was the main reason why the series did not include the genetic edition of one of the relatively few works Beckett did *not* translate: *Worstward Ho*. The privately published edition by Ruud Hisgen and Adriaan van der Weel (1998) was a PhD project at the University of Leiden. In the introduction, the editors duly point out that 'the textual corruptions in Beckett's work frequently lead to significant changes in meaning. The shorter and more condensed the text in which they occur, the more potentially damaging they are' (Hisgen and van der Weel, 1998, 9). Their example is the word 'whenceabouts' in *Stirrings Still*, which – as Gerry Dukes noticed – has been normalized and changed into 'whereabouts' in the 1991 publication of the text in *As the Story Was Told*. In a review of the limited edition of *Stirrings Still* (*Irish Times*, 15 April 1989), Gerry Dukes had already pointed out another textual departure ('withersoever' instead of 'whithersoever') in the text. When Barry McGovern drew Beckett's attention to it, Beckett instantly corrected it in McGovern's copy, adding his name to the autograph correction to mark its authority (Van Hulle, 2011, 29). Since the text is only a few thousand words long, the relative impact of a single textual error increases, or as Hisgen and van der Weel put it: 'Beckett's minimalism in the postwar works magnifies the effects of errors' (Hisgen and Van der Weel, 1998, 10). In their conclusion they employ the metaphor of 'ironing out' errors: the twofold aim of their edition was 'to establish a definitive reading text, *ironing out* what errors have crept in during the ordinary course of textual transmission' (10), and 'to present an evolutionary variorum edition' (11; emphasis added).

What the genetic edition of *Worstward Ho* showed above all, however, was the *multiplicity* of intentions that shaped the text. The result is a striking disparity between, on the one hand, the bold announcement of 'a definitive reading text' (10),

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according to 'the author's final intention' (53), as one of the edition's main aims and, on the other hand, the presentation of this reading text as a do-it-yourself kit: 'This edition will, in fact, present fully-fledged reading texts of five versions of *Worstward Ho* (six if the do-it-yourself final reading text is included)' (44).

Deciphering those five versions is a humbling experience and indicates how much interpretation is involved even in the 'mere' transcription of a manuscript or typescript. In this context, Hans Zeller made a famous distinction between 'record and interpretation' ('Befund und Deutung'): 'A separation of record and interpretation, making verification possible, is in the case even of such plain manuscripts, which are yet difficult to decipher, attainable only by means of photomechanical reproduction (record) and transcription (interpretation) of the manuscript' (Zeller, 1995a, 43). This distinction – made in 1971, before the age of the digital scholarly edition – still serves as the Text Encoding Initiative's basic principle underlying the guidelines for genetic editions and the encoding of manuscripts according to a document-oriented and/or a text-oriented approach. Whether it is at all possible to make a strict division between the (relative) objectivity of the record⁴ and the subjectivity of the interpretation is debatable, but the conclusion of Zeller's foundational article may still be relevant to the development of a rationale for a critical edition of Beckett's works: 'The editor should guard [...] against the tendency toward synthesis tempting him or her into viewing the edition as the conclusion and sum of all preceding investigation' (51). The editor is not outside or above the work, but has a 'participatory role in the life of the work' (Eggert, 2009, 236), in which an edition is just an event among many others. Building on Adorno's tenet that subjects, situated in history as they are (like Beckett's Krapp), are not identical with themselves over time, Eggert argues that the work does not stay identical with itself: 'Editions (as documents) represent the work by extending its life, by making further textual encounters possible; there can be no definite closure to a negative dialectic' (236). This negative dialectic between the material medium (the documentary dimension) and meaningful experience (the textual dimension) constitutes the work's fundamental dynamic (237). It is brought to life, not only through reading and performing, but also through editing. As a consequence, editing Beckett implies acknowledging the central roles of agency and time.

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A Rationale

In the course of the 25 years since Beckett's death, textual scholarship has changed significantly due to the development of digital methods of editing. Patrick Sahle notes that the codex format not only determined the technical limits of scholarly editing, but also entailed an ideological bias toward an editorial approach that favours one text over the multiplicity of versions (Sahle, 2013, 300). In the 1990s, S. E. Gontarski called attention to this 'ideological sensitivity' (Gontarski, 1999, 132) against the background of the multiplicity of texts in Beckett's oeuvre (Gontarski, 1995, 196). In the meantime, Beckett studies have embraced new digital forms of editing. The Beckett Digital Manuscript Project (www.beckettarchive.org) is a genetic edition that does not aim at producing a critically edited text. From the perspective of critical editing, this may at first sight seem a way of avoiding the tough choices involved in making a critical edition. But at the same time, critical editors can take advantage of the availability of this digital tool, as it provides them with the necessary materials to guarantee the 'verifiability' Zeller mentions as a criterion (Zeller, 1995a, 51): it enables them both to make informed editorial decisions and to refer readers to the evidence that informs these decisions.

Because the genetic approach was originally not included among the five 'orientations to text' (documentary, sociological, authorial, bibliographical, and aesthetic) as they were defined by Peter Shillingsburg in *Scholarly Editing in the Computer Age* (3rd ed., 1996), they were recently 'revisited' to add a 'genetic orientation' and fine-tune the other orientations (Van Hulle and Shillingsburg, 2015, forthcoming). These orientations guide what editors do with textual materials, determining the way the narrative of composition, revision, and publication is framed. At the risk of doing injustice to the intricacies and nuances of each of these orientations (Van Hulle and Shillingsburg, 2015), the following survey can serve as a brief summary:

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- (1) A material orientation (encompassing both a lexical and a bibliographic approach) focuses on the documentary evidence.
- (2) A causal orientation emphasizes the personal involvement of all agents of textual change (the author and any other agent involved in the writing, revising and production of texts). This orientation consists of two subsets: both the authorial and the social subsets regard the work, not primarily as documentary or historical, but as a record of human actions.
- (3) A temporal orientation stresses the moment in time when a text came into being, examining whether there are textual elements that do not fit the period of its production. Whereas for a material orientation, authority resides in the material document, for a temporal orientation it resides in periods of (re-)inscription.
- (4) A genetic orientation focuses on the actions of written invention and the dynamics of the writing process as implied by the chronological succession of versions and the transformations within and between them.
- (5) A performance orientation focuses on the way a work's instructions for performance are carried out.
- (6) An aesthetic orientation is arguably the most subjective approach, and in its most shallow form it comes down to a commercial interest in 'pimping' an old-fashioned textual object to make it more lucrative. But it can also have a historical dimension when it seeks to respect the known aesthetic principles of an author or of a historical publisher.

Apart from the genetic orientation, all the other orientations were originally developed in view of making a critically edited text, and in that sense they confirm what Patrick Sahle sees as an ideological bias toward the one text. On the other hand, one can also present the recently increased attention to textual multiplicity as just another ideology. As Peter Shillingsburg notes, 'New gods are always arising to fill the vacuums left by fallen gods' (Shillingsburg, 2006, 25). Thus 'the gods of "definitive texts" and of "final authorial intentions"' have been replaced by 'the gods of diversity, multiplicity, process, and fluidity combined with a scrupulous observance of the limitations and integrity of surviving artifacts' (26).

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Against this ideological background, it may be possible to find ways to present Beckett's works both as process and as product, and to combine a genetic orientation with other orientations. It is hard to find one single orientation that does full justice to all the aspects of all of Beckett's works. If a critical bilingual edition of Beckett's works may be envisioned, it is perhaps not necessary that each and every volume sticks to the same orientation, as long as each separate volume is consistent in its chosen orientation. My suggestion for a rationale is therefore a modular approach that works with this plurality of orientations, guided by one underlying principle: each module or volume says what it does and then does what it says, by means of

- a preface that clearly states which orientation was chosen and argues why,
- and the consistent application of this orientation to the 'twin texts' (critically edited reading texts English/French or French/English), preferably printed in parallel. Given Beckett's close collaboration with the German translators of his texts and his work as a director in Germany (working with, and often annotating, the German texts) a possible approach is a layout that presents two columns on the left-hand side with the English/French or French/English texts in parallel, and two columns on the right-hand side, one with the German translation and another with the revision narratives.

The critical apparatus, which traditionally follows after the reading text in a critical edition, can be provided online. At www.beckettarchive.org, the Beckett community already has a digital space for textual matters. The variants between published versions (i.e. transmissional departures and possibly translation variants) can be listed in the open-access zone of this digital environment. For researchers who are also interested in the genetic variants, the Beckett Digital Manuscript Project (BDMP) contains the entire genetic dossier with facsimiles and transcriptions of the manuscripts. The possibility to refer to this digital resource has the advantage that, whatever orientation an editor chooses for her or his volume, it can always be combined with the genetic orientation of the BDMP, resulting in a modular scholarly edition that pays respect to Hans Zeller's 'Baukastenprinzip' (1984) in the digital age. This does not imply that the genetic edition should be reduced to the function of a critical apparatus. The suggested model comes closer to what Peter Robinson called 'The One Text and the Many Texts' (2000), combining the many versions and

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variants in an electronic edition with a critically edited text, 'to call the reader's attention to the variation itself, and to lead the reader from this into the labyrinth of the manuscripts' (Robinson, 2000, 13). There are of course differences. Whereas Peter Robinson calls for eclectic editing to establish 'the one text', I suggest this is only one of several possible orientations; instead of 'the one text', the case of Beckett's works requires a bilingual 'twin text' approach; and instead of 'many texts' consisting mainly of medieval, scribal manuscripts, the Beckett Digital Manuscript Project contains modern, autograph manuscripts. But the fundamental idea in both cases is that 'the various texts' (as Beckett called them according to Mike Nichols, cf. the epigraph to this article) are not reduced to an apparatus but exist alongside a critical edition. The model is designed to call readers' attention to crucial points of textual variation. Whereas, traditionally, manuscript research used to be at the service of a critical edition, genetic criticism has emancipated this research and genetic editing has become an independent orientation in its own right. The relationship I suggest for an edition of Beckett's works is one of mutual respect and interaction between different orientations to text.

One of the editorial principles of the BDMP is to present uncertain readings (in the transcriptions) by presenting them in grey, rather than in black, as a typographical translation of a principle suggested by Paul Maas, which still stands even though textual scholarship has changed drastically in the past few decades: 'to present what is doubtful as certain is to remain farther from the goal than if one were to confess one's doubt' (Maas, 1958, 17). This principle can also be applied to reading texts. It is not always easy to reconcile the publishing market's demand for single, clear reading texts with genetic criticism's interest in the creative process, with a focus on textual multiplicity or a theory of the fluid text (Bryant, 2002). But in their edition of Melville's *Moby-Dick* (2007), John Bryant and Haskell Springer have shown that it is possible to produce a reading text that does make its readers aware of textual issues by interrupting the text with 'revision narratives'.⁵

At first sight, this kind of interruption may seem intrusive, but it has the advantage that it makes readers aware of revision sites in the text, in accordance with Hans Zeller's argument against clear reading texts and in favour of texts that engage their readers and prompt them to discover the variant readings. As Peter Shillingsburg

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notes, 'foregrounding some aspect of the many aspects that are buried in the mass of variant texts of a work' is the purpose of editing (Shillingsburg, 2011, 21). If anything needs to be foregrounded as a constant in Beckett's oeuvre, it is the mutability of his texts. So, instead of 'ironing out' textual instabilities, the best service a critical edition can offer students of Beckett's works is to make them conscious of these revision sites. Its aim, I suggest, is to address the question of textual integrity by providing its readers with texts that do not bury problematic passages in a cemetery of variants, but draw attention to them and thus contribute to an enhanced textual awareness.

NOTES

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¹ From a 21st-century vantage point, when the adjective 'genetic' is more readily associated with the hard sciences than with textual scholarship, it is interesting to see that McKerrow employed the adjective long before it gained currency in biology and the life sciences (before Watson and Crick determined the structure of DNA in 1953) and long before 'critique génétique' became a discipline in its own right.

² With reference to *Krapp's Last Tape*, for instance, Beckett wrote to Alan Schneider: 'In the course of rehearsals we established a certain amount of business which is not indicated in the script and which now seems to me indispensable. If Barney ever brings out the work in book form I shall enlarge the stage directions accordingly' (Beckett, 1998, 50).

³ For instance, page 66 even contains a correction of a correction: 'Now the one, ~~then~~ the other.' The word '~~then~~' is deleted in black ink and substituted by the marginal correction 'now'. Subsequently, '~~now~~' was cancelled in pencil with the note 'stet' next to it, restoring the original 'then'.

⁴ After all, not even a facsimile is entirely objective; as Zeller notes, 'the only objective thing is the original manuscript itself' (Zeller, 1995a, 43).

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⁵ For instance, toward the end of the first chapter of *Moby-Dick*, the following lines are printed in grey, bold typeface: ‘Do you think the archangel Gabriel thinks anything the less of me, because I promptly and respectfully obey that old hunks in that particular instance? Who aint a slave?’ At the bottom of the page, the text is interrupted by a ‘revision narrative’ explaining that ‘Melville’s British editor altered two passages, presumably objecting to the blasphemy and grammar of Ishmael’s playful musings. The editor cut Ishmael’s first question, probably because of its flippant reference to Gabriel, who in the Bible heralds the Judgment Day. The word “aint” in the second, and elsewhere, was also “corrected” to “is not”’ (Melville, 2007, 23).

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