

A History of Genetic Criticism in the Works of Samuel Beckett: the Authorial, the Textual and the Contextual

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Declaration

I confirm that this is my own work and the use of all material from other sources has been properly and fully acknowledged.

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Abstract

This study charts how genetic criticism relating to the works of Samuel Beckett has developed since the inception of Beckett Studies. It offers a novel perspective upon this history by providing a comparative account of the cases of Joyce Studies and Proust Studies. The investigation focuses upon not only the social, cultural and institutional factors which have influenced the way genetic Beckett criticism has developed, but it also focuses upon the influential concepts and ideas of genetic criticism themselves. What is revealed through such a multifaceted analysis is Beckett Studies' uniquely direct concentration upon the authorial intention past the textual matters.

Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to the thesis. Chapter 2 gives a general outline of the circumstances and atmosphere surrounding the reception of Beckett in academia during the 1960s. Chapter 3 provides a detailed account of the establishment of the Beckett Collection at the University of Reading, which has played the most instrumental role in introducing and founding genetic studies of Beckett. The chapter also takes note of James Knowlson's and John Pilling's announcement of the arrival of the second generation of Beckett scholars. Chapter 4 elaborates upon the general landscape of coexistence and competition during the 1980s, between the institutionalised authorial focus and emergent theoretical trends as they pertain to Beckett. Chapter 5 follows the ascendancy of the authorial focus, precipitated by several monumental publications produced by Knowlson and Pilling during the 1990s. Chapter 6 offers in-depth coverage of the mature status of genetic Beckett criticism's systematisation, its diversification and its movement away from dominant notions of authorial intention in so far as this has been achieved by the third-generation of Beckett scholars. The thesis ends by questioning and positing future directions of study regarding Beckett and the archive.

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1. Introduction

I

Since the first performance of *En attendant Godot* took place at the Théâtre de Babylone in early 1953, Samuel Beckett's works have attracted much public and scholarly enthusiasm as well as perplexity.¹ Beckett's erudition and original concerns in philosophy and aesthetics have fascinated critics in their studies of modern literature and the works have often been characterised as leading a new trend in portrayal of the existential misery of post-WWII Western civilisation. His scanty and haunting images and calculated linguistic economy have attracted diverse interpretations inside academia, which have contributed to enlarging Beckett Studies to the extent of comparability with Joyce or Proust Studies, where a great amount of professional research is published every year and in many different languages. This breadth of research can be glimpsed in *The International Reception of Samuel Beckett* published in 2009.

It is yet to be seen whether the celebrity and influence achieved so far will be maintained or enhanced. But what stands without dispute is that Beckett's esoteric art and reticent voice has become a consistent critical focus thanks in large part to the effort of founding scholars of Beckett Studies and by Beckett's willingness to work with them. Beckett was unlike his two modernist predecessors Joyce and Proust, in that he was able to help out with the writing of an authorised biography and in supplying scholars with additional interesting material. This was

¹ Mark Nixon and Matthew Feldman, "Introduction: 'Getting Known' – Samuel Beckett's International Reception," in *The International Reception of Samuel Beckett*, Mark Nixon and Matthew Feldman, eds. (London: Continuum, 2009), 1.

fortunate for the scholars, who were able to "devote more attention to manuscript variants than is usually possible in an author's lifetime," since Beckett was interested in opening his composition-related materials for academic consultation and studying them as if they had been "written by someone else."² Furthermore, where Joyce was interested in confusing critics over interpretation, and Proust was appalled at the very idea of scholarly approach to his material, Beckett sent his material piecemeal for individual scholarly consultations and donated much of it to university libraries. His confidant and advisor, James Knowlson was the first to ask for a quantity of them when he organised a tributary 1971 exhibition of his art, and University of Reading (henceforth UoR) - Knowlson's institution as well as the venue of the event - became the first major beneficiary thereof, right afterwards.

Having acquired a vast range of Beckett's material, what Knowlson and John Pilling, who had then recently joined the UoR, tried to do with it was to break away from the first generation of "general criticism" on Beckett's works, thus announcing the arrival of the second generation of Beckett scholars. The first generation started to form in the beginning of the 1960s with influential criticism published by scholars such as Hugh Kenner and Martin Esslin. This group was mostly composed of Joycean or comparative literary or drama scholars established in the United States. They scarcely sought proof for their interpretation in Beckett's unpublished materials, as these were still very limited in availability and the general New Critical atmosphere in American literary academia of that time did not encourage focus outside the published text. But, not being exempt from the notorious hermeneutic

² James Knowlson, ed., *Happy Days: Samuel Beckett's Production Notebook* (London: Faber and Faber, 1985), 13

challenge Beckett's published texts pose, they sometimes tried to access a small quantity of his unpublished material via personal contact or otherwise, mostly using them for minor illustrative usages.

Knowlson's and Pilling's dissatisfactions with this first generation were expressed in their trailblazing joint 1979 publication *Frescoes of the Skull* and elsewhere: Beckett's generosity in opening up his material for research had "had the effect of putting commentators on their guard and discouraging them from offering general criticisms, when it is always possible that there exist typescripts in Beckett's personal files that will disprove their contentions";³ commentators had until then tended to "hypostatise Beckett's ideas as they were at the time of Proust or at the time of the Three Dialogues," owing to the "inaccessibility of much of the material";⁴ the Proust-Beckett parallel found over Beckett's scribbled copy of Proust were "so important, especially in view of the pervasive and misleading tendency in early Beckett criticism that attempted to derive Beckett from Joyce."⁵ The "second-generation" Beckett criticism needed to build and enlarge upon the illustrative but haphazard findings of the first generation, according to Knowlson and Pilling.⁶ For them, the "inaccessibility of much of the material" was ultimately what "prevented Beckett's criticism gaining the currency it deserves, and diverted attention away from a body of work that is substantial, intelligent and coherent."⁷

However, although the importance of consulting Beckett's unpublished

³ Knowlson and John Pilling, *Frescoes of the Skull: The Later Prose and Drama of Samuel Beckett* (London: John Calder, 1979), 131.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 255.

⁵ Pilling, "Beckett's 'Proust,'" *Journal of Beckett Studies*, No. 1 (1976).

⁶ Knowlson and Pilling, *Frescoes of the Skull*, xii.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 255.

material for the study of his published work was promoted by the arrival of a new generation at the end of the 1980s, such material corroboration was still not regarded as crucial in interpretation or superior to general criticism. Throughout the history of Beckett Studies, the importance of material corroboration has gradually increased as more and more unpublished material by Beckett has been collected, made available and analysed. Before the publication of his landmark edition of the *Theatrical Notebooks* series, what Knowlson had in mind in 1980 was an equal two-way exchange between "doers" handling first-hand theatrical material and "thinkers" offering an intellectualised approach, where drama critics can enhance their understanding of a play by discussions with directors and actors and the latter can benefit from the former's informed critical opinion.⁸ Later in his 1985 edition of *Happy Days: Samuel Beckett's Production Notebook*, although he did not intend to present Beckett's production notes in order "to provide a model for imitation," he added at the same time that Beckett's "notes can contribute significantly to a much better understanding of the plays themselves," as "another dynamic stage in the writer's attempt to give appropriate theatrical form to his own vision."⁹

Knowlson's promotion of the importance of Beckett's unpublished material, specifically that of his directorial notes, was most radically expressed in his 1987 article "Beckett as Director: The Manuscript Production Notebooks and Critical Interpretation," which served as an introduction to the then upcoming *Theatrical Notebooks* series. There Beckett's post-publication directorial notes seem to have been accorded a status of constituting the better text more fully reflecting Beckett's

⁸ Knowlson, ed., *Theatre Workbook 1, Samuel Beckett: Krapp's Last Tape* (London: Brutus, 1980), 7.

⁹ Knowlson, ed., *Happy Days: Samuel Beckett's Production Notebook*, 13-4.

artistic vision. The singularity lies in Knowlson's contention that the "distinction between practical staging (what has been called 'the local situation') and issues of vision, theme and structure is a purely artificial one that for much of the directorial material simply cannot be sustained." Thus Beckett's directorial notes do not succumb to the usual textual analysis of sorting out what is essential to authorial intention. Knowlson distrusts the "notion of the writer-director translating one sign system into another" (from writer to director, from textual to visual), "since Beckett's plays were written specifically with the possibilities and the constraints of the medium for which they were intended very much in mind." Beckett's directorial material thus seems to exist somewhere between artistic vision and text, half textual, half visual. It cannot comply with "naive 'intentionalism' on the part of the critic" and the usual relationship between "the text on the printed page and the work as it appears on the stage."¹⁰

The usual distance between text and author tends to be transgressed in this, and textuality tends to be discredited. Knowlson had previously expressed his indifference to genetic business of "tracing the various stages in the composition of *Krapp's last tape* through the manuscript and different typescript versions" in his 1976 article "Krapp's late tape: the evolution of a play, 1958-75." His concern rather lay in looking at the way in which the play had evolved on stage since its first

¹⁰ Knowlson, "Beckett as Director: The Manuscript Production Notebooks and Critical Interpretation," *Modern Drama*, vol. 30, no. 4 (Winter 1987): 452; it is notable that this principle of Knowlson's was shared by his fellow drama scholars Dougald McMillan and Martha Fehsenfeld, who said in their *Beckett in the Theatre* published in 1988: "Our guiding principle has been to present Beckett's own statements and choices as free from extraneous commentary as possible." See MacMillan and Fehsenfeld, *Beckett in the Theatre: The Author as Practical Playwright and Director* (London: John Calder, 1988), 11.

production.¹¹ Such indifference was stated to have been confined to the purpose of the article at that time, but Knowlson has almost never concerned himself with and written on genetic business in its own terms, which was instead taken up by Stanley Gontarski, Rosemary Pountney and some other scholars from the field of comparative French literature.

There can be several external factors contributing to such an inclination. First, the first generation's traditionally textual concern may have been discredited together with their haphazard general criticism. Secondly, as Steven Connor observes, in contrast with the fiction's claustrophobic inwardness which ultimately undermines the author's presence, drama tends in nature to assert such presence by offering "opportunities for an altogether more familiar narrative of mutual engagement and self-definition between self and 'the world'".¹² Thirdly, as the artist was reaching the final years of his life, it may have become more urgent for Knowlson to preserve and convey Beckett's final artistic vision authentic and intact upon his confirmation than to involve himself in any other business. Directorial notes were a sort of text but were much more than textual, and not to be merely approached in a mode of textual exegetics, as if they had been textual remains of a long-deceased novelist, owing to their intimate correlation with Beckett's controlled visual and sensorial cognitive processing for theatre. This primarily theatrical origin in genetic pursuits inside Beckett Studies determinately distinguishes it from textual and exegetical ones in Joyce or Proust Studies, where scholars started to consult their authors' composition material first and foremost in the interest of looking into

¹¹ Knowlson, "Krapp's late tape: the evolution of a play, 1958-75," *Journal of Beckett Studies*, No. 1 (1976).

¹² Steven Connor, *Samuel Beckett: Repetition, Theory and Text* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1988), 192.

their writing process and poetics.

This is a loss for the interests and development of textual discussions, but it may also be that Beckett Studies is starting an appropriate new thing in its own way. This empirical context of theatrical directorship, which posits a direct confrontation between artistic vision and its medium, had the consequence of circumventing complicated textual discussions of interpretation and authorial intention and fostering a commonsensical conception of authorial intention, which textual scholar Peter Shillingsburg has glossed as the view that “the work of art is a personal communication from an author to an audience.”¹³ Although the debate over authorial intention in the literary has been developing in literary academia ever since W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe C. Beardsley’s 1946 essay “The Intentional Fallacy” and then through the disputes over problems such as biographism, Death of the Author, intentionalism and Popperian falsificationalism, up to the recent discussions introduced by Shillingsbrug’s digitally-adjusted definition of text and genetic critic Pierre-Marc de Biasi’s elaborate typology of genetic phases, these arguments and elaborations had not been taken up by leading scholars of genetic orientation inside Beckett Studies, until they started to be pointed out from the 2000s by a new generation of scholars who are more familiar with the issues.¹⁴

Knowlson did not only contribute to setting a formative tone for the study

¹³ Peter Shillingsburg, *Resisting Texts: Authority and Submission in Constructions of Meaning* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 147, quoted in Dirk Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics, Joyce’s Know-How, Beckett’s Nohow* (Tallahassee: University of Florida Press, 2008), 37.

¹⁴ For a brief account of the history of the debate, see Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics*, 24-46; for de Biasi’s typology and its implication for analysing authorial intention, see Sally Bushell, “Intention Revisited: Towards an Anglo-American ‘genetic criticism,’” *Text*, vol. 17 (2005): 55-91.

of Beckett's material with his leadership of the *Theatrical Notebooks* project but also presented a model for what scholars can achieve by consulting it, in his authorised biography of Beckett published in 1996. In keeping with his attempts to revise the first generation's anecdotalism and naive intentionalism, Knowlson minimised anecdotes and guesswork throughout the account, intending to keep as close to the facts and sources as possible, as a desired correction to Deidre Bair's first biography published in 1980.¹⁵ Its wealth of scrupulously made source citations and clarifications not only brought about a successful refocusing upon Beckett as the author but also came to effect a change in the whole critical landscape of Beckett Studies: now it is not only that interpretations upon Beckett's published texts can be aided or supported by contextual resources including unpublished materials – such as manuscripts, notebooks and letters – as the need arises, but that they are strongly encouraged to be. Even though more and more unpublished materials of Beckett's had been collected and made available for study since the 1970s, making their way into some of the important studies published in the interim, Knowlson's *Damned to Fame* served as the ultimate model of what all of that collected contextual evidence can achieve for relevant interpretation.

If a new group of scholars joining this discussion of Beckett and his material since the 2000s with a hitherto unprecedented preference for systematicity and methodology can be described as the third generation of Beckett Studies, it is this third generation of Beckett scholars – especially the specialised ones such as Dirk

¹⁵ Deidre Bair, *Samuel Beckett* (London: Vintage, 1980); For general accounts of the shortcomings in Bair's biography and of comparison between three biographies so far published, see John Banville, "The Painful Comedy of Samuel Beckett," *The New York Review of Books*, November 14, 1996, accessed April 24, 2018, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/1996/11/14/the-painful-comedy-of-samuel-beckett/>.

Van Hulle and Matthew Feldman – who saw *Damned to Fame* as a catalyst for genetic inquiry inside Beckett Studies. Knowlson's biography specifically motivated it not only by identifying a great variety of resources for Beckett's art and person and showing what scholars can do with them, but also by indicating what further to look for in relation to them. Knowlson's meticulous accounts of Beckett's lifelong pilgrimage through books, historical events and arts, rich with details and testimonies, have since promoted and facilitated various research into Beckett's historical, cultural and non-literary artistic influences. If the *Theatre Notebooks* series promoted an empirical approach to Beckett's material by focusing on their direct reflection of Beckett's artistic vision, *Damned to Fame* exemplified a supreme model of what such empirical scholarship dedicated to Beckett's material can achieve for explaining what that artistic vision consisted of. It is as if, ever since Knowlson and Pilling announced the arrival of the second generation of Beckett Studies at the end of the 1970s, scholars have been probing the inside of Beckett's skull through his material.

Again, this markedly unmediated and empirical focus upon the author in the genetic inquiry inside Beckett Studies distinguishes it from those inside Joyce or Proust Studies, which are comparable to the former in terms of historical connection, sizeableness and influence. It was after their authors' demise that Joycean and Proustian scholars first approached their authors' material, meaning that they had no effective ultimate authorial signature against which they could check their own interpretations nor could they effectively defend against false or partial ones. Even Richard Ellmann's landmark biography of Joyce could not enjoy the same status of integrity as Knowlson's biography of Beckett, as, despite all its

similarly painstaking scholarship undertaken, the same signature of authorial confirmation and involvement was lacking and had instead been bridged up by Ellmann's outstanding abilities as New Critical critic and stylist.¹⁶ Joycean scholars may not have wanted to imagine any direct, empirical access to Joyce's artistic mind, for the business of establishing Joyce's published text alone was painful enough, as there were just too many textual corruptions and scandals to deal with from the first place, especially in the case of *Ulysses*.

In terms of genetic criticism, for which Joyce's works are generally acknowledged to provide a paradigmatic case, this original severance from the authorial voice has tended to make interpretation not into a matter of application or non-application of empirical corroboration, as is currently the case in Beckett Studies, but into that of how much to read into the empirical evidence of Joyce's composition history. The situation is similar for Proust Studies: the headquarters of its genetic business were all situated in Paris where the author died, and its markedly anti-positivist atmosphere has tended to forfeit empiricism in treating Proust's material and foster instead what David Ellison called "an ease in erudition" between theoretical criticism and philological scholarship, which characterises Proust Studies.¹⁷

If the *Theatrical Notebooks* series set down the empirical tone in approaching Beckett's material, it was *Damned to Fame* which established a paradigm. These two landmark scholarly outputs seem to have created together

¹⁶ Wim Van Mierlo, "Reading Joyce in and out of the Archive," in *Joyce Studies Annual*, Thomas E. Stanley, ed. (2002), 40n9.

¹⁷ David R. Ellison, "Proust and Posterity," in *The Cambridge Companion to Proust*, Richard Bales, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 208.

this early tendency of author-centeredness in genetic studies of Beckett's works. Although the word "genetic studies" was introduced into the main forums of discussion since the middle of the 2000s,¹⁸ this empirical author-centeredness may better be represented by the term 'archival criticism'. Archives are collections of historical documents and records always in service of a certain place, institution or group of people, by way of providing information about them: this particular author-centeredness observed in the formation and development of the genetic inquiry inside Beckett Studies satisfactorily goes along with these tenets of archive.¹⁹ Furthermore, and more importantly, the umbrella definition of archival criticism fitly and recently given by Feldman, as a shared interest in "providing historical context, examining the literary compositional process, or engaging in letter- or source-based transcription," seeking all the while "corroboration by objects and information outside the text," escapes genetic criticism's purview of composition history as well as its textual dimension.²⁰ As Knowlson had been tackling Beckett's post-publication notes and Pilling his pre-writing ones, Beckett's writing process in the midst had not been given the same consistent and concentrated efforts, until the Beckett Digital Manuscript Project (henceforth BDMP) was inaugurated in the early 2010s. This inattention to textuality and poetics may also have been aggravated by the utterly

¹⁸ Van Hulle, "Introduction: Genetic Beckett Studies," *Journal of Beckett Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 2 (2005): 1

¹⁹ As its exponent Feldman himself made clear in 2008: "another [more desirable] option is to engage with these revealing manuscripts, through an attempt at empirically acquiring scholarly knowledge about our shared subject, Samuel Beckett"; see Feldman, "In Defense of Empirical Knowledge: Rejoinder to 'A Critique of Excavatory Reason,'" *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui* 20 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008), 395.

²⁰ Feldman, *Falsifying Beckett: Essays on Archives, Philosophy, and Methodology in Beckett Studies* (Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag, 2015), 24.

specialised and ungeneralisable character of Beckett's poetics; the short stints into Beckett's bilingual self-translation taken by scholars such as Brian Fitch and Mary Bryden around the 1990s made them accept in the end that Beckett's writing is "governed by the logic of its own development."²¹ This is also what is now hoped to be better addressed in the near future by new genetic narratology, as recently formulated by Van Hulle and other Antwerp scholars.²²

Again, this does not necessarily mean a loss but also a chance for Beckett Studies. Genetic criticism will grow, flourish and continue inside Beckett Studies but probably as a branch of its archival criticism without the same status as accorded to those inside Joyce or Proust Studies. Beckett is not merely textual, and textuality is most profoundly and severely tested and interrogated in Beckett's art, which is nevertheless written as texts, first of all. It may be that genetic criticism in its strictly textual sense is most suited to the half-Romanticist practices of high modernism, where literary geniuses, unknown to the public but revered by a small circle of aristocratic connoisseurs during their lifetime, leave behind them a bundle of intriguing manuscript notes to be found in a trunk in their cellar. This is partly also Beckett's own story which made Beckett's heirs present a substantial new collection of his material to Beckett's alma mater in 1997,²³ but there was already much information circulating in the forms of donated material, interviews, anecdotes and

²¹ Brian Fitch, "The Status of the Second Version of the Beckettian Text: The Evidence of the Bing/Ping Manuscripts," *Journal of Beckett Studies*, Nos. 11-12 (1989); also see Mary Bryden, "Pour finir encore: A Manuscript Study," *Journal of Beckett Studies*, Vol. 8, No 1 (Autumn 1998): 1-14.

²² See Lars Bernaerts and Van Hulle, "Narrative across Versions: Narratology Meets Genetic Criticism," *Poetics Today*, Vol. 34, No. 3 (Fall 2013): 281-326.

²³ Everett C. Frost, "'Notes Diverse, Holo[graph],' Preface," in *Samuel Beckett Today / Aujourd'hui*, 16 (2006), 19.

even video clips, owing to Beckett's late post-Nobel prize celebrity. What troubles Beckett scholars is therefore not the sheer amount of textual corruptions or transmission errors and the knowledge and understanding of textual matters, but the sheer variety of their resources and the different skills and specialisations required for their analysis.

Nevertheless, all these circumstances more strengthen than weaken the case for genetic Beckett criticism, for our present study. As so many diverse archival discoveries and findings are added piecemeal every year, it becomes all the more required to present an updated, synthetic picture of Beckett and his literature made out of all this piecemeal information. Knowlson, Pilling and the second generation of Beckett scholars did right in severing themselves from the first-generation critics for a more exact, scrupulous and material-based inquiry into Beckett's work, but in so doing they have tended to sacrifice synthesis for analysis. As much as the early, popular images of Beckett as well as the myths about his writing were misleading and in need of correction, they would need to be replaced by a more updated, informed picture over and over. As shown in the Beckett Manuscript Chronology, a digital tool recently introduced by Van Hulle and Pim Verhulst which combines the archival information relevant to dating of Beckett's writings with specific documents in the BDMP to draw up the writing chronology,²⁴ all this archival information can be put together to effectively and dynamically represent Beckett's writing process.

Therefore, anyone working in the field of genetic criticism within Beckett Studies now faces two major tasks, other than their individual genetic findings and

²⁴ Van Hulle and Pim Verhulst, "A *Beckett Manuscript Chronology*. Linking the Letters to the Manuscripts" (paper presented at the London Beckett Seminar Conference, London, June 1-2, 2018).

accounts: to clarify the textuality in Beckett; and to construct a synthetic picture of Beckett as writer. This study aspires to prepare the ground on which such tasks can be performed, by providing a historical account of how scholars have been regarding and treating Beckett's unpublished texts in connection with textual meaning or authorial intention. Ever since those first-generation scholars had limited access to Beckett's materials, genetic text has been part of interpretative business within Beckett Studies, and in that sense forms an indispensable part of the question of textuality in Beckett. In an expanded and more detailed account of this discussion which is to ensue, the drama of this troublesome Beckettian textuality, ungraspable between author's hand and eyes, will be brought to full view.

II

It is now more than half a century since Samuel Beckett's genetic material started to be treated as an important academic resource, and the process of library acquisition of Beckett manuscripts exhibits a convoluted history. Beckett first started to sell his manuscripts to American booksellers in a piecemeal way, out of economic necessity, between the beginnings of his theatrical success and his Nobel Prize award in 1969.²⁵ Those first migrations of papers from Beckett's Paris apartment across the Atlantic mostly arrived in the libraries of some of the most forward-looking universities in the United States, such as the University of Texas at Austin and Ohio State University. During this period, these institutions were eagerly trying to compete with established collections of manuscripts held in the libraries of

²⁵ Mark Nixon, "Beckett's Manuscripts in the Marketplace," *Modernism/Modernity*, vol. 18, no. 4 (November 2011): 823-31.

the Ivy League universities, or in public institutions such as the New York Public Library, which already had considerable modern or contemporary holdings.²⁶

This initially somewhat offhand attitude on the part of Beckett toward his own material displays a clear difference to that of his modernist predecessors, such as Proust and Joyce. Modernist writers on the whole still followed Romanticist self-consciousness with regard to their writing, and were much interested in literary genesis to the extent of preserving the material evidence of their work as “the imprint of an author’s signature.”²⁷ Proust abhorred the idea of “literary critics being able to follow their thoughts and second-guess their decisions” by consulting his manuscripts, yet he also ensured that they were preserved.²⁸ Conversely, it was unthinkable for Joyce to disseminate his writing traces for commercial purposes.²⁹ This clear difference in attitudes also bears witness to the cultural and material

²⁶ For an illustration, see Cathy Henderson, “The Birth of an Institution: The Humanities Research Center, 1956-1971,” in *Collecting the Imagination: the First Fifty Years of the Ransom Center*, Megan Barnard, ed. (Texas: University of Texas Press, 2007), 19-49.

²⁷ Van Hulle, *Textual Awareness: A Genetic Study of Late Manuscripts by Joyce, Proust, & Mann* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 8; also see Graham Falconer, “Genetic Criticism,” *Comparative Literature*, vol. 45, no. 1 (Winter 1993): 8n3.

²⁸ Elizabeth Emery, *Photojournalism and the Origins of the French Writer House Museum* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2012), 160.

²⁹ “Proust’s manuscripts have been available for scholarly enquiry since 1962, when the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, purchased the quasi-totality of his drafts, typescripts and corrected proofs from his niece Suzy Mante-Proust,” Marion Schmid, “The birth and development of *A la recherche du temps perdu*,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Proust*, ed. Richard Bales (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 73n1. The Joycean manuscripts evince a more complicated story as his patron, admirers, publishers and lawyer all had their part in acquiring and disseminating them. Yet they still bear a clear difference from the author’s own active role in distributing his material for commercial or academic purposes – as in the case of Beckett – as is clear from the full account included in Michael Groden, “A Textual and Publishing History,” in *A Companion to Joyce Studies*, Zack Bowen and James F. Carens, eds. (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1984), 71-117.

contexts the authors variously belonged to, from the earlier to the latter half of the twentieth century. Proust's and Joyce's era still privileged circles of artists, aristocratic or bourgeois patrons, lofty critics and artisan publishing houses. By contrast, Beckett's postwar career benefited from an extended public education, the expansion of the literary public sphere, the ascendancy of American capitalist power, the postwar media revolution (especially radio and television) and the rapidly commercialising and internationalising of the literary publishing market. In Proust's and Joyce's day, literary artists could still aspire to the appreciation of aristocratic connoisseurship, but writers belonging to the 'Veteran Generation' like Beckett needed public attention for themselves, at least to make ends meet. The instances of Beckett's self-effacement over booksellers' aesthetic and financial appreciation of his writing cannot be further from the artistic aloofness and arrogance found in Joyce and Proust.³⁰

However, this environment around Beckett changed drastically. This was especially due to his Nobel Prize award in 1969 (which signaled his incorporation into the Western literary canon³¹), but Beckett's attitude towards his literary archive was also transformed. He assumed an active attitude, sending manuscripts off to interested parties without seeking financial gain. Large parcels of his manuscripts were dispatched to those academic institutions with which he had some direct connection, such as his alma mater, Trinity College, Dublin (henceforth TCD). These

³⁰ Nixon, "Beckett Manuscripts in the Marketplace," 824-6.

³¹ Harold Bloom, "Beckett...Joyce...Proust...Shakespeare," in *The Western Canon* (London: Papermac, 1996), 493-514; George Bataille, "Molloy's Silence," in *Samuel Beckett: The Critical Heritage*, ed. Lawrence Graver and Raymond Federman (New York: Routledge, 1979), 60-69, both quoted in Arka Chattopadhyay, "'One loses one's classics': Samuel Beckett and the Counter-canonical Use of Canon," *COLLOQUY text theory critique* 30 (2015): 62-63.

deposits were sometimes signs of gratitude for the recognition shown by such institutions in honoring his literary achievements. Sometimes, he simply sent them to expand upon a collection of manuscripts he knew was already accumulated. Likewise, he sent smaller selections of papers to several early career researchers who were passionate and inquisitive about his works. Earnest academic interest and appreciation were well rewarded by Beckett. That is why he eventually donated the biggest portion of his manuscripts to UoR from the 1970s. The town and institution had no personal relationship with him but the presence of two young and very able critics of his work – Knowlson and Pilling – enabled the building up of the largest collection of his manuscript material in the world. Knowlson was quickest at that time in honoring Beckett by way of holding an archival exhibition of his material at the University Library in 1971 – and as part of this Knowlson demonstrated proper plans for curating Beckett’s literary afterlife – with the original material used for the exhibition coming to stay at Reading indefinitely. Since then, the material has been considerably supplemented by Beckett himself, and also by bequests and purchases after the author’s death.

Although Beckett may have spent a more difficult, complicated and eventful time before his rise to fame than Proust and Joyce, he was certainly luckier than them afterward: he could take advantage of a markedly post-Romanticist attitude toward his material, both as an attraction of devoted younger scholars’ attention, and as offering counterevidence to the existing New Critical consensus in the academy at the time. That latter trend suggested that academic criticism might be founded upon close reading of the published text; Beckett’s bequest of materials via Knowlson to Reading Special Collections coincided with a growing interest in the

process of literary creation, from first sketches to final work. It also happened around the arrival into Anglophone literary consciousness of a poststructuralist or deconstructive emphasis on a (allegedly) democratising 'textuality', which viewed *all* text, drafts or 'complete' work as worthy of study and comment. It is a lucky and rare coincidence to find this mutual convergence between creative work and criticism in the lives of classic writers, as Knowlson and Pilling affirm.³² Beckett's initial donation of material across the world took place during a shift of critical hegemony – away from the established New Critics and Joycean commentators who form the first-generation of Beckett critics. That "first generation" of scholars, who were often focused upon analysing published texts by their author, had for the most part only shown "a desire to use, where relevant, unpublished material or rejected drafts that illustrate the genesis of the work in question." The arrival of a "second-generation,"³³ however, was much more comprehensive in exploring the archive in order to "write more authoritatively about the nature of the Beckettian creative process" by devoting "more attention to manuscript variants."³⁴ This firmer anchorage in material evidence especially characterises the British-based consideration of Beckett, and explains the strong authorial orientation found in the three Beckettian formations, all initiated by Knowlson at Reading: the Beckett Collection; the early *Journal of Beckett Studies* (henceforth *JOBS*), and the Beckett International Foundation (henceforth BIF). These institutions all actively support the archival 'input' to consideration of Beckett's work, and eventually led, as this thesis will show, to the definitive 'genetic' turn of Beckett criticism in the 2000s, whereby

³² Knowlson and Pilling, *Frescoes of the Skull*, 131.

³³ *Ibid.*, xii.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 131.

the process behind the creation of Beckett's published texts was intricately unraveled by a younger generation of scholars. An earlier moment in the 1980s, however, which witnessed the formation of the BIF – partly through monetary support provided by Beckett himself – saw the institutionalisation of Beckett Studies as a substantially archived-centred pursuit which was, at the same time, also focused upon the figure of the author and upon his intentions towards his written texts.

This strong authorial emphasis since the 1980s gradually came to overwhelm theoretical and more speculative criticism based on Beckett's published texts, and finally achieved a hegemony with the publication of the initial 'Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett,' edited by Knowlson, and then of Knowlson's authorised biography, *Damned to Fame*, in 1996. Both of these initiatives came about with the original support of Beckett himself, who died in December 1989. Knowlson, through this friendship with Beckett and its consequences for the development of the Reading archives, must have found himself operating as a mediator between a reticent author and an interested but baffled public, especially in those last years of Beckett's life. In so doing Knowlson, to whom the current institution of Beckett Studies is primarily indebted, sometimes risked the accusation of "theater empiricism" in his apparent disregard of the subtle and complex businesses of interpretation.³⁵ Yet at other times, Knowlson seems to have gone even further than the author himself in his conception of an ideal performance of Beckett's work, at least as Beckett himself once expressed it to Knowlson.³⁶ At any

³⁵ P. J. Murphy, "Beckett Criticism in English," 41.

³⁶ Knowlson, "Beckett's 'Bits of Pipe,'" in *Samuel Beckett: Humanistic Perspectives*, Morris

rate, this strong authorial focus shaped the later genetic turn in Beckett Studies, and in a way very different from that in which the genetic studies of two major modernist predecessors had developed.

In the cases of genetic Joyce and Proust criticism, the focus on authorial intention and the author's artistic vision has tended to be secondary to the textual business of identifying and correcting corruptions, establishing an authoritative text, and analysing or reconstructing the writing process. Both authors were long deceased before the establishment of critical forums dedicated to them. Coincidentally but crucially for how this aspect of criticism of their work evolved, for both Joyce and Proust their canonical works exhibit notoriously extreme cases of textual corruption and variants. Academic forums primarily dedicated to their major novels were developed during the interwar years as well as the 1970s, roughly the same periods when the traditional type of genetic criticism flourished with its post-Romanticist interest in writers' originality and craftsmanship.³⁷ Early key publications in genetic criticism, which is "critical commentary or interpretation based on" the investigation of the writing act,³⁸ all evince interest in the origin and development of the authorial process, whereas early genetic Beckett scholars' efforts in editing and publishing Beckett's early conceptual notebooks and diaries and later directorial notebooks mainly cover his compositional ideas and sequential drafts. A more familiar type of genetic criticism was attempted by scholars such as S. E. Gontarski, Rosemary Pountney, Charles Krance, Brian T. Fitch and Magessa O'Reilly, but their faithfully textual focus was not given due attention and interest, considering that

Beja, S. E. Gontarski and Pierre Astier, eds. (Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1983), 16.

³⁷ Falconer, "Genetic Criticism," *Comparative Literature*, Vol. 45, No. 1 (Winter 1993): 9-12.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

'authorial intent' was hegemonic at least up until around 2005.

The culmination of this authorial focus was largely prepared by *Damned to Fame*, as mentioned above. In his monumentally informative thoroughness and detailed meticulousness, Knowlson wove together not only a complete, well-made and empathetic picture of the artist, but also a rich and helpful guidebook to Beckett's cultural, philosophical and aesthetic influences. As a new generation of genetic Beckett scholars appearing in the 2000s came to appreciate later on, Beckett's authorised biography was to become even more influential than Ellmann's biography had been in Joyce Studies. This is partly due to the former's authorial approval. Knowlson's biography formed the true starting point of genetic Beckett criticism. Knowlson's careful, factual and detailed account, together with Pilling's unrivalled intellectual and philological scholarship, remains the model for any authoritative argument concerning Beckett and his works. Genetic Beckett criticism properly commenced in the 2000s with individual, more small-scale mixtures of contextual overview, biographical glimpses, source clarification and verification, brief illustrations from the writing and a carefully circumscribed, archive-centred commentary. This is a landscape very different from that of mature genetic Joyce and Proust criticism, where a legion of experienced scholars already well grouped into different schools, methodologies and perspectives. The incipient genetic Beckett criticism largely succeeded by making its scholarship less partisan and more open. Yet if it was accessible only to a relatively few well-informed advocates, in the new century it was resolutely often operating in the 'Knowlson and Pilling' manner.

Nevertheless, genetic Beckett criticism has also had a price to pay for its shorter history and development. As an illustrative example, the methodological

dispute which occurred between Feldman and Dowd during the 2000s was not the same as that which had already taken place between maximalists and minimalists in as informed and systematic a manner in genetic Joyce criticism, but was rather a conflict between a quite dogmatically literal application of falsifiability (a concept imported from the philosophy of science) and the interpretative business of genetic criticism, and the outright and equally dogmatic rejection of any limitation on the hermeneutic scope and latitude on the part of theoretical criticism. More experienced genetic scholars from Joyce Studies might have acknowledged the unavoidability of guesswork – even for the most rigorous cases of empirical philology – as well as the indispensability of manuscript information for a better and more informed understanding of authorial intention and context. Genetic scholars from Proust Studies may well have warned, in a manner fitting their characteristic “ease in erudition,”³⁹ against positing incompatibility between authorial and readerly intentions. In Beckett Studies, this tension seems only now to be resolving itself, as the new generation of scholars of the 2000s feature more sophisticated methodological perspectives and innovative genetic readings. One of these scholars is Van Hulle, who tries to conceptually reconcile two mutually antagonistic traditions by distinguishing between instances of “exogenetics” and “endogenetics.” These are terms originally coined by the genetic scholar Raymonde Debray-Genette, who assigned the former to empirical and philological scholarship, and the latter to theoretical and speculative criticism.⁴⁰

³⁹ David R. Ellison, “Proust and Posterity,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Proust*, Richard Bales, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 208.

⁴⁰ See Van Hulle, “Modern Manuscripts and Textual Epigenetics: Samuel Beckett’s Works between Completion and Incompletion,” *Modernism/Modernity*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (November

In consideration of the unique way it was founded and has developed, the study of Beckett's genetic material might rather more aptly be called "archival scholarship" than "genetic criticism," for it has focused primarily upon the authorial intention behind his works rather than upon their poetic dynamism and hermeneutical meaning. It has tended to avail itself of various historical and biographical details, as well as correspondence and even miscellaneous resources, both documentary and physical; it has adopted a comprehensive and eclectic methodology. It may be that genetic Beckett criticism will stop following in the wake of its more advanced Joycean and Proustian precedents at some further stage, and will instead build for itself another model of its own. This might be especially desirable given its strengths in digitalisation, and in both cognitive- and neuro-science. However, because the current leading figures in Beckett Studies, such as Van Hulle, understand the post-*Damned-to-Fame* upsurge of the study of Beckett's manuscripts as the "'emerging field' of genetic criticism"⁴¹ – and as the terms of genetic criticism are employed in related research and academic conferences and projects since the 2000s – this thesis also largely applies the term "genetic criticism", and considers itself in line with that criticism's broad concepts. Even if genetic Beckett criticism only emerged as a definite field of research in the 2000s, interest in Beckett's genetic material has been gathering pace since the inception of Beckett Studies, gaining a gradual increase in coverage, application and relevance. The strictly anti-authorial and anti-teleological – and radically textual – French 'critique génétique' may not properly characterise what and how genetic Beckett criticism

2011): 801-12.

⁴¹ Van Hulle, "Introduction: Genetic Beckett Studies," 2.

has so far developed; but the wide and general sense of the term "genetic criticism" will suffice, especially as it has been formulated by Graham Falconer.

Therefore, it can be seen that these first fifty years of the history of Beckett Studies bear out a certain ebb and flow in the allure of this foundational concept, as it has strictly been applied to the elucidation of authorial intention. The 1960s and 1970s generally saw relatively marginal, haphazard and illustrative usages of mostly tangentially genetic resources such as interviews, correspondence and personal accounts by some of the prominent New Critical and Joycean scholars as well as early career scholars of the time. This initial drive in Beckett Studies fitted both Knowlson's and Pilling's above-mentioned periodisation and was reflective of the general shortage of genetic material at the time. As Beckett's fame was still being established, these rare resources sometimes came to be used as a demonstration of Beckett's intricate writing process and ideas.

However, as Beckett came to prepare his institutional authorial foothold on the other side of the Atlantic in the 1970s, and as more authoritative research outputs based upon genetic material were published one after the other since the middle of the 1980s, Beckett's authorial intention became the most important factor in the study of his genetic material, if not in Beckett Studies more broadly. Although there had been some noteworthy outputs of genetic criticism produced by US-based scholars such as Gontarski, J. M. Coetzee and Breon Mitchell, these tended to be eclipsed by the perceivedly necessary business of clarifying the origin and originality of Beckett's art. The Beckett Collection at Reading, by the 1980s completely catalogued and collated, proved to be the archival institution most instrumental in propagating Beckett and his art by means of having recourse to his

genetic material. This role has remained in place largely to the time of writing this thesis.

Meanwhile, mature genetic Joyce and Proust criticism encountered antagonism between empirical scholarship and theoretical criticism, and scholars had already started to think about making the two more compatible in mutually beneficial ways. Having already experienced a heated debate over the editing of *Ulysses'* genetic material between Hans Walter Gabler's textual experimentalism and John Kidd's textual conservatism during the 1980s, genetic Joyce criticism started to settle more systematically into the two schools of Dublin-Antwerp minimalists, who favour the circumscribed approach of source clarification, and the Madison-Paris maximalists, who focus on interpretive ingenuity in explication as based upon sources – over the editing of the even more cumbersome and intractable genetic material of *Finnegans Wake* – in the 1990s. By the mid-1990s, the situation even looked to be the opposite to that of genetic Beckett criticism, where proponents of rigorous philological scholarship such as Geert Lernout were voicing rather lonely protests against the staunchly established tradition of theoretical criticism founded by the influential theories of Derrida, Lacan, Kristeva and others, theories which had originally been formed in reference to Joyce's texts. As for genetic Proust criticism, the faithfully theoretical and anti-positivist atmosphere in Paris would not have generated a clear foothold for the direct claims of empirical philology if not for its own theoretically-invested and inflected 'critique génétique', formed around the end of the 1970s. The earliness of this gambit enabled a comparably easier practice, one harmoniously weaving together genetic information and interpretative ingenuity, which would for the most part hold sway in Proustian archive-based criticism

through the 1990s and beyond.

However, the strong focus on authorial presence in genetic Beckett criticism, which is unique when compared to the more textual focuses found in genetic Joyce and Proust criticism, faced interesting challenges from the 2000s. A new generation of genetic Beckett scholars such as Feldman, Van Hulle and Mark Byron entered the fray with their own variety of more systematic, knowledgeable and sophisticated approaches. This new generation called for the systematisation of empirical and philological scholarship more so than had previous Beckett scholars. Some advocated a firm demarcation between methodological "scaffolding" in the interest of increasing knowledge about Beckett, and "interior decorating" in the interest of increasing understanding of something other than Beckett, that is, a more principled investigation of Beckett's authorial intention, to use the terms advanced by Feldman.⁴² But Van Hulle makes clear that it is impossible to read Beckett's authorial mind, and that genetic criticism can only aim to analyse his extant manuscript traces for purposes such as exploring his poetics or influences.

As an exemplary demonstration of such a perspective, as well as the most accomplished genetic criticism Beckett Studies has thus far produced, Van Hulle's *Manuscript Genetics: Joyce's Know-How and Beckett's Nohow*, published in 2008, convincingly argues that sensible guesswork is not only unavoidable, but also part and parcel of genetic processes themselves. Van Hulle's work offers a more theoretical tone and tries to explore the ways in which Beckett's "author-functions" work across his texts and intertexts. This new generation of Beckett scholars all calls attention to the fact that traditional notions of authorial intent cannot effectively

⁴² Feldman, "Beckett and Popper," 373-91.

capture the ways in which Beckett's writing paradoxically places its own authorial signature in question, subverting old notions of literary hermeneutics.

But it is not only during the last decade of this history in which remarkable progress in the discussion of genetic criticism on Beckett's works has been made. Preparation made throughout the decade for the BDMP in 2011 laid a surer foundation for performing the so far much-neglected and long postponed task of drawing up Beckett's complete writing and textual history. It is a project set to run until at least 2036, by which time the BDMP will have brought forth all twenty-six online research modules of digital archives of Beckett's works, together with their corresponding twenty-six print publications exploring textual genetics.⁴³ The usual focus in genetic criticism on the writing process had been long eclipsed by the more pressing concerns of representing Beckett's artistic development, and even the pre-BDMP skirmish of the 1990s – a result of the Variorum Editions of Bilingual Works initiated by Krance – was largely dedicated to analysing the poetics of Beckett's self-translation, working between French and English, rather than to examining the whole composition process of a single work through its related and frequently bilingual manuscript drafts.⁴⁴ It is as if genetic Beckett criticism is achieving, in a digital fashion, what genetic Joyce criticism achieved in its tremendous but not very affordable *James Joyce Archive* in a textual fashion at the end of the 1970s. The latter had surprisingly been proposed not by scholars but by

⁴³ Van Hulle, *The Making of Samuel Beckett's Stirrings Still*, 7.

⁴⁴ For the purposes and objectives of these Variorum Editions, see the prefaces and introductions to those aforementioned three related publications and Krance, "Pour une édition synoptique de l'œuvre bilingue de Samuel Beckett," *Éditer des Manuscrits: Archives, Complétude, Lisibilité*, eds. Béatrice Didier and Jacques Neefs (Saint-Denis: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 1996).

the then-emerging Garland Publishing as the apotheosis of scholarly publishing and photocopying technology of the time.⁴⁵ The current situation of Beckett Studies therefore poses an urgent need to examine and be aware of the implications, differences and impacts that this digital innovation has for the usually textual nature of genetic criticism.

This thesis raises a number of interrelated questions because it establishes, for the first time, a comprehensive account of the role of archival scholarship within Beckett Studies. For instance, given its characteristic archival concerns, how has Beckett criticism integrated the findings from material culture into its thinking? What have been the benefits and shortcomings of the "authority" of archival resources within readings of Beckett's works? How might we need to reorient our ideas about the implications of the archive in future scholarship?

In addressing these questions, this thesis adopts a straightforward approach to narrating this history, that is demarcating the major ebbs and flows as they occur in roughly decade-long periods. Each chapter, therefore, will consider the roughly chronological development of genetic criticism regarding Beckett, from its origin in the 1960s to the present day. Chapter 2 covers the social, cultural and academic atmosphere of the 1960s surrounding Beckett's not-quite-established fame during this period. Beckett's strikingly innovative literary art attracted the attentions of some of the more established modernist literary scholars – especially Joycean ones – and was passionately engaged by some early career scholars who finished their doctoral degree around the time. These scholars even had the benefit of contact

⁴⁵ Gabler, "The James Joyce Archive: A Publisher's Gift to Joyce Studies," *Genetic Joyce Studies* (Summer, 2002), accessed October 26, 2016, <http://www.antwerpjamesjoycecenter.com/GJS/JJAGabler.htm>.

with Beckett for various reasons. Some simply quizzed him about textual conundrums, while others asked for access to pre-published texts, and still others inquired about editing or creating a bibliography of his works. Yet it was a distinctive response on the part of Beckett that he often willingly allowed access to some of his compositional material and it would prove decisive for these scholars.

Chapter 3 features a more detailed look at the first major exhibition of Beckett's holdings at UoR in 1971, and its ensuing permanent settlement in the Beckett Collection. This is considered to be the most important turning point in the history of genetic Beckett criticism. The Reading duo Knowlson and Pilling began to study the vast range of material thus acquired shortly after the event, and founded *JOBS* partly, but importantly, in order to enable the dissemination of such archival-based scholarship. This partly genetic and partly broader empirical focus is emphasised in their individual publications but most emphatically in their joint publication of 1979, *Frescoes of the Skull*, which announced the arrival of the next generation of Beckett criticism. This generation extensively engaged with Beckett's unpublished material to establish more "authoritative" readings of his published texts, in contrast with the passive and haphazard usages of it which the first generation had previously made. They were careful, however, to not advocate the optimality of the interpretation evidenced by such authorial material, as the established New Criticism and more speculative criticism based on published texts were still powerful. A strictly textual and interpretative reading of Beckett's pre-published texts was still the focus in the US at that time, led by scholars based in academic institutions who had possession of Beckett's material, such as Gontarski, Coetzee and Mitchell. This chapter also provides both a detailed analysis of the

differences in focus among those important early genetic scholars, as well as comparative timelines from Joyce and Proust Studies.

Chapter 4 turns to the new authorial focus represented by Knowlson and Pilling on one hand, and the existing textual and theoretical focus maintained foremost by Gontarski on the other. It particularly examines the way Knowlson carefully shifted the interpretative focus from Beckett's text to his artistic vision by emphasising the value of "finality" in post-publication theatrical material. In contrast to Gontarski's and Pountney's remarkable investigations of Beckett's theatrical art – also traced through his published and pre-published texts – Knowlson's authorial focus can be said "to discredit interpretation in advance, and to harness it to the idea of origin in the artist."⁴⁶ This strong adherence to authorial intention seems to be unique to genetic Beckett criticism, at least in comparison with genetic Joyce and Proust criticism, where direct access to artistic origination has tended to be discredited, and scholars have instead vied over optimal interpretations of their author's published and unpublished materials. Some of the monumental publications representing these textual efforts produced by genetic Joyce and Proust criticism and their related stories are also featured in the chapter.

Chapter 5 tracks the way mature and more ably resourced studies of genetic criticism began to be produced during the 1990s, and how they influenced the character of genetic Beckett criticism. The newly-founded BIF started to publish exemplary books and pamphlets, and their focus on details, early conceptual notes, and academic as well as intellectual sources, significantly shaped the nature of genetic Beckett criticism during this growth phase. In the process, those various

⁴⁶ Connor, *Samuel Beckett: Repetition, Theory and Text*, 185.

resources of texts, records, visual traces and artifacts tended to form, together with Beckett's archival material, the more familiar practices of genetic criticism. The watershed impact of publications in the series of the *Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett* and Knowlson's *Damned to Fame* are covered in detail, together with other archivally-based publications of the period, including the eclipsed but ongoing genetic efforts and achievements on the part of more textually oriented scholars such as Krance, Fitch and O'Reilly.

Finally, Chapter 6 examines the way in which a schism along the lines of scholarship versus criticism has opened up in Beckett Studies during the last decade of this history. As a result of the limited communication between empirical and authorial scholarship on one hand, and theoretical and speculative criticism on the other – and of the former's critical hegemony – such a schism was made manifest through the methodological dispute between Feldman and Dowd in *SBT/A*, with each representing respectively the dogmatism of empiricist scholarship and poststructuralist theoreticism. Their dispute offers an interesting comparative case with similar ones found in Joyce and Proust Studies, which will be fully covered in this chapter. As much as such a conflict surfaces inside an academic forum, other scholars appear who try to solve it by various means of their own, and form together something worthy of being called the third generation of Beckett Studies. This most recent generation are now trying to move away from an entrenched focus upon authorial intention. The rest of the chapter is dedicated to a close examination of their various strategies as the most advanced and elaborate stage genetic Beckett criticism has yet reached in its fifty year' history. The term "Genetic

Beckett Studies⁴⁷ has now entered public terminology through the participation of more experienced and specialist genetic scholars such as Van Hulle, who represents this third generation; this new driving force paves the way for developing the more specifically and uniquely Beckettian possibilities of genetic criticism than it has hitherto been possible to discern.

⁴⁷ Van Hulle, "Introduction: Genetic Beckett Studies," 1.

2. The 1960s: Marginal, Random and Illustrative Usages

While it was Georges Bataille who was the most prescient in perceiving the significance of Beckett's art, as indicated by his article titled "Le Silence de Molloy", published in 1951,⁴⁸ Anglophone Beckettian scholarship started to form in the 1960s.⁴⁹ According to Raymond Federman and John Fletcher's less-than-perfect landmark bibliography, Kenner's *Samuel Beckett: A Critical Study*, published as early as 1961, was the first book-length study devoted to Beckett written in English. In terms of doctoral dissertations, Ruby Cohn's "Samuel Beckett: The Comic Gamut," accepted at the University of Washington at St. Louis in 1960, is the very first full-length study in English.⁵⁰ In terms of influence, Esslin's groundbreaking section dealing with Beckett in *The Theatre of the Absurd*⁵¹ must be counted as another major contribution as well. It is noteworthy that the initial mold of Anglophone Beckett Studies was shaped by established modernist literary scholars like Kenner, Esslin, William York Tindall and Frederick J. Hoffman, as well as other aspiring younger scholars of the period including Cohn, Federman, Fletcher, David H. Hesla, Angela Moorjani, Robin J. Davis and Knowlson. These scholars are mostly Americans.

⁴⁸ Raymond Federman and John Fletcher, *Samuel Beckett: His Work and His Critics* (Berkeley (CA): University of California Press, 1970), 169.

⁴⁹ In their valuable historiographies, Murphy and David Pattie both ascertain as well that Anglophone Beckett Studies started at the beginning of the 1960s. See Murphy, "Beckett Criticism in English," 17; David Pattie, "Beckett and Bibliography," in *Palgrave Advances in Samuel Beckett Studies*, ed. Lois Oppenheim (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), 229.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 131; for the elusiveness of the information in their bibliography, see Robin J. Davis, "Beckett bibliography after Federman and Fletcher," *Journal of Beckett Studies* 2 (Summer 1977), accessed March 1, 2016,

<http://www.english.fsu.edu/jobs/num02/Num2RobinDavis.htm>.

⁵¹ Martin Esslin, *The Theatre of the Absurd* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1961).

The British ones among them were more dedicated to Beckett's dramatic output. All of them earned their doctoral degrees writing on the then yet-to-be-established Beckett of the 1960s (with the only exception of Knowlson).⁵²

Beckett came to be acknowledged as a major literary figure with the award of the Nobel Prize of 1969. The 1960s still found him communicating more freely with scholars before being advised to "go into hiding."⁵³ Beckett had already been assisting some of those early critics writing on his works since the 1950s by way of the occasional provision of his composition material, together with permission to publish them.⁵⁴ This shy but serious attitude of Beckett's toward the academic approach to, and reception of, his works befits his profile as a scholar-manqué, and it marks a difference from the attitude of earlier twentieth-century writers towards the academy. Joyce's expressed intention was to confuse and complicate the business of interpreting his works, and Proust completely concealed his composition material.⁵⁵ His interest in the academic reception of his works is well captured by his counter-suggestion to that put forward by Federman and Fletcher of including a study of compositional variants regarding "L'Expulsé" and "La Fin" in the appendices to their then forthcoming bibliography. Beckett offered to furnish

⁵² Knowlson's doctoral project is dedicated to the universal language movement of Europe. See James Knowlson, *Universal Language Schemes in England and France: 1600-1800* (Toronto and Buffalo: University of Toronto Press, 1975); Federman and Fletcher, *Samuel Beckett*, 113-34.

⁵³ For the telegram from Jérôme Lindon about the news of his Nobel award, see David Pattie, *Samuel Beckett* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2000), 43.

⁵⁴ Nixon, "Beckett's Manuscripts," 827.

⁵⁵ Michael Groden, "A Textual and Publishing History," in *A Companion to Joyce Studies*, Zack Bowen and James F. Carens, eds. (Westport: Greenwood, 1984), 105-6; Fiachra Gibbons, "Sale not Proust's cup of weak tea," *The Guardian*, April 19, 2000, accessed November 2, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2000/apr/19/books.booksnews1>.

them instead with "more interesting material" related to his French *Ping* and its English translation *Bing*, both of which had just been submitted for publication.⁵⁶ This peculiar attitude is further manifested in a more sustained fashion by his allowing some of his then yet unpublished or only recently published texts to be published in early issues of *JOBS*, one text for each issue from Number One to Number Six (except for Number Two).⁵⁷

So, this decade was not yet ripe for fully-fledged genetic criticism, as Beckett's material was yet to attract archival interest. The material had only just begun to be collected and catalogued, and the methodologies of sophisticated genetic criticism were only introduced into Anglophone literary criticism in the 1980s.⁵⁸ The above-mentioned scholars all tended to use Beckett's compositional material more or less marginally and offhandedly, as a kind of illuminating supplement to their argument, without much means of collating the material. As for the back story of how the earliest of Beckett's material found its way into archives, this owes something to financial necessity on Beckett's part during the middle period of his career, necessity which does not seem to have been much appeased by the then recent success of *En attendant Godot*. Beckett sold his manuscripts during a period roughly from the late 1950s until the late 1960s. Those first

⁵⁶ Nixon, "Beckett's Manuscripts," 827.

⁵⁷ In the editorial for the issue Number Four published in 1979, especially, one of the then joint editors Pilling expressed his thankfulness to Samuel Beckett for allowing "to publish his text 'neither' for the first time, and thus to reassert the important reciprocal relationship between 'studies' of Beckett's work and the author's continuing refinement of the medium in which he is working." Pilling, "Editorial," *Journal of Beckett Studies* 4 (Spring 1979).

⁵⁸ The Joycean textual scholar Hans Walter Gabler chronologises the advent of genetic criticism as happening after the 1970s. See Hans Walter Gabler, "The James Joyce Archive: A Publisher's Gift to Joyce Studies," *Genetic Joyce Studies: Special Issue JJA* (2002).

acquisitions, most notably by book dealers Jake Schwartz and Henry Wenning, were destined for the then burgeoning literary manuscript marketplace in America. The manuscripts largely arrived at famous holding libraries of rare books and manuscripts including The Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center (henceforth HRHRC) at the University of Austin, Texas and Washington Library in St. Louis, Missouri. By the end of the 1960s some had also entered the hands of a few close academic friends of Beckett's, or of some unidentified private collectors. The list of the works whose manuscripts were traded during the time testifies to the fact that, together with his then increasing but not yet established fame, Beckett's more copious prose writings before and after the success of *Godot* formed a prime focus of insightful book dealers of the time. These acquisitions eventually made American collections the biggest holding libraries of Beckett's prose manuscript material.⁵⁹

Such was the situation in which those first-generation Beckett scholars—those mostly included among the contributors to the celebratory volume titled *Beckett at Sixty*⁶⁰—wrote and published during the 1960s. As those abovementioned American collections were used by scholars with better access to them in the 1970s, scholars like Kenner, Esslin, Cohn, Duckworth, Fletcher and Lawrence Harvey naturally approached Beckett in person and used what they received from him for their discussions, with or without his permission. Sometimes this material found its way into introductory sections in the first published editions of major theatrical works like *En attendant Godot* and *Fin de Partie* in an attempt to draw attention to the interesting compositional history behind Beckett's art of

⁵⁹ Mark Nixon, "Beckett's Manuscripts in the Marketplace," 823-8.

⁶⁰ John Calder, ed., *Beckett at Sixty* (London: Calder and Boyars, 1967).

shaping his material, and to contextualise some peculiar passages.⁶¹ It is interesting to see this early discussion sometimes assume a defensive tone for Beckett's yet-to-be-established canonical status, in the manner found in the introduction to the Methuen edition of *Fin de partie*, edited by John and Beryl Fletcher in 1970:

In pruning his work Beckett undoubtedly improved it, but sometimes he compressed things so drastically that the surviving statement is somewhat obscure. Where this is the case, the Notes indicate the original intention.⁶²

The passage might be read today as outdated in what is now the fifth decade of Beckett Studies, which no longer hopes to find Beckett's original intention in such an effortless way. However, it encapsulates some earlier modes of critical approach. Beckett's much-tackled genetic process of "vaguening"⁶³ – which becomes a focus of the discussion of his poetics since the 1970s – is acknowledged and defended at the same time. The Fletchers' apologetic tone is made more manifest in the following:

⁶¹ Nixon also mentions those names as the first academics having access to Beckett's manuscript material in the same article: Nixon, "Beckett's Manuscripts," 827-828; A selection of those first academic accessors' contributions are: Hugh Kenner, *Samuel Beckett: A Critical Study* (London: John Calder, 1962); Esslin, *The Theatre of the Absurd* (Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1961); Ruby Cohn, "The Beginning of Endgame," *Modern Drama*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (December 1966): 319-23; Samuel Beckett, *Fin de Partie*, eds. John Fletcher and Beryl Fletcher (London: Methuen, 1970); Samuel Beckett, *En attendant Godot*, ed. Colin Duckworth (London: Harrap, 1966); Lawrence Harvey, *Samuel Beckett: Poet and Critic* (New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1970).

⁶² Beckett, *Fin de partie*.

⁶³ Rosemary Pountney, *Theatre of Shadows: Samuel Beckett's Drama 1956-76* (Totowa, NJ: Colin Smythe, 1988), 149.

One of the silliest things said about Beckett in earlier days was that he tossed off his books and sent them uncorrected and unrevised to the printer. The absurdity of this tale is revealed by any reasonable close textual analysis of the published texts, but if any doubt remains it is dispelled by inspection of the unpublished drafts.⁶⁴

Such comments further reveal Beckett's rising but not yet established status. It is clear that the Fletchers thought it necessary to come to Beckett's assistance in this early edition of his major dramatic work by defending him against unfounded myths. Later on, such myths are actually shown to be partially true, and closer inspection of the unpublished material is found to bring more serious complications to the problems of authorial intention, definitive versions and publication by Beckett. When it now comes to Federman's and Fletcher's abovementioned bibliography of 1970, that defensiveness adopts its starkest tone in the Fletchers' Introduction, regarding those ten drafts of *Bing*, followed by the English translation *Ping* that Beckett donated:

[T]hese should convince the skeptics that Beckett is neither a hoax nor a

⁶⁴ Duckworth seems, in similar circumstances, to take a more cautious attitude towards the matter, though his conclusion is much the same: "However, genetic study and reference to statements of intention by the author himself cannot produce definitive solutions, even if these were considered desirable. To curtail speculative exegesis would result in impoverishment, but if unpublished material and the author's own comments help to rectify the wilder flights of fancy, no harm has been done." *En attendant Godot: pièce en deux actes*, lxxv.

careless writer, since it is doubtful if many pages written by more prolific authors have required more labor than the few that make up *Bing*.⁶⁵

This passage gives a glimpse of the specialised and particular usage to which Beckett's genetic material was put, especially in comparison to the more wide and general usage it enjoyed from the 1980s on. But the defensive efforts of the first decade of Beckett study did not have to suffer for long, as the award of the Nobel Prize in 1969 drastically changed the landscape and helped make genetic inquiry into Beckett a more intense business.

Among those first-generation Beckett scholars, the majority of whom belong to the domain of the study of novels, Cohn stands out as a devotee to the dramatic work, one even more fully committed than Esslin. In 1962 Cohn published the most thorough monograph produced on Beckett during the decade, based on her doctoral thesis, *Samuel Beckett: The Comic Gamut*.⁶⁶ The book serves various purposes, including biography, publishing and production history, and discussion of Beckett's self-translation, while it also reprinted some lesser-known short texts and even a critical comparison with Bergson's theory of humor. In this multifacetedness, Cohn's work presages another acclaimed-doctoral-thesis-based-monograph by Pilling from the following decade, and several others to come. Cohn set an example for the kind of textual analysis later identified as "genetic", one which typified Beckett criticism of the 1960s and 1970s as seen in her articles like "The Beginning

⁶⁵ Federman and Fletcher, *Samuel Beckett*, xiii.

⁶⁶ Cohn, *Samuel Beckett: The Comic Gamut* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1962).

of *Endgame*", published in 1966.⁶⁷ Cohn justifies this title via her typical recourse to personal encounter with Beckett, biographical and contextual narrative and genetic accounts, all dedicated to the illumination of the play's germination and development towards its final definitive version. Cohn captures the predominantly textual, critical and retrospective interests which characterise the genetic approach of the first-generation of Beckett critics:

The definitive *Endgame* is a superior play by the very economy of its inclusiveness, and yet I hope that I have suggested some of the fascination of the earlier version—particularly the two Clov disguise-scenes. I for one would like to see the two-act version played by some enterprising group; or, should Beckett not permit that, I highly recommend a Variorum *Endgame* to supplement Duckworth's recent publication of a Variorum *Godot*, and to fill out my own sketchy account of differences. And I remain unconvinced that *Endgame* is a "worse affair" than *Godot*.⁶⁸

This approach is diametrically opposed to that of second-generation Beckett criticism inaugurated at the end of the 1970s, wherein Knowlson makes a break with this existing textual drive. Knowlson introduced issues of practical design and performance into the discussion, and thus laid the foundation for his paramount project, *The Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett*, launched in the 1980s. This coolness on the part of Knowlson towards textual genetics is exemplified first in his

⁶⁷ Cohn, "The Beginning of *Endgame*," 319-23.

⁶⁸ Cohn, "The Beginning of *Endgame*," 323.

Happy Days/Oh les beaux jours, the only bilingual edition of Beckett's published work that he edited and published in 1978. The edition excludes any account of the work's textual genesis, in clear contrast to those abovementioned first scholarly editions in similar formats, which all contained accounts related to textual genesis.⁶⁹

These early Beckett enthusiasts shared further common ground in their familiarity with modern French literature. The way they treated Beckett's unpublished material would not have been seen as deviating much from the fashion of the analytic and editing practices of the entrenched Lansonian historical school criticism from France.⁷⁰ In the same article Cohn clarified the source material of her study as held at the Ohio State University library, but her next monograph in 1980 would deploy a much vaster range of source material from other and larger holding libraries at UoR of Britain and TCD of Ireland. That alma mater of Beckett's had already approached him for the acquisition of manuscript material as early as 1969, shortly before the Nobel Prize.⁷¹ At the same time, Knowlson, who had already been admiring Beckett's plays since the mid-fifties, gathered the courage in late 1969 to propose both to the author himself, and to the librarian of the UoR, "an exhibition on the life and writings of the recent Nobel Laureate."⁷²

⁶⁹ See Colin Duckworth, ed., *En attendant Godot: piece en deux actes* (London: Harrap 1966); Cohn, ed., *Samuel Beckett: Waiting for Godot: A Casebook* (London: Macmillan 1987); Cohn, "The Beginning of Endgame," 319-23; Cohn, ed., *Samuel Beckett: Waiting for Godot: A Casebook* (London: Macmillan 1987); Samuel Beckett, *Fin de Partie*, eds. John Fletcher and Beryl Fletcher (London: Methuen, 1970); Lawrence Harvey, *Samuel Beckett: Poet and Critic* (New Jersey: Princeton UP, 1970).

⁷⁰ Van Hulle, *Textual Awareness: A Genetic Study of Late Manuscripts by Joyce, Proust, and Mann* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2004), 31-2.

⁷¹ Nixon, "Beckett's Manuscripts," 826-27.

⁷² James Knowlson, "The Beckett Archive," in *As No Other Dare Fail: for Samuel Beckett on His 80th Birthday by His Friends and Admirers*, ed. John Calder (London: Calder, 1986), 30-31.

As a whole, this first decade of Beckett Studies was largely dominated by the existing New Critical interpretative trend based on Beckett's published texts. There was participation by some of the established Joyce scholars and from the enthusiastic early career scholars mostly working in the field of drama, all based in America. Things could not have been otherwise, as those earliest Beckett manuscripts had just been traveling to America and were still in the process of being catalogued, let alone being published. So those earliest scholars writing on Beckett mostly had contact with the reticent author himself in order to inquire about interpretative matters and gain clues about his arcane published texts. Beckett frequently responded and argued about his ideas "cogently and stimulatingly", if not "with clarity and rigour that would attract a professional aesthician." As much as such authorial clues were far from being clear, often bringing a further interpretative challenge rather than a solution, they tended to be cited in full. This contrasts with subsequent critical practice, as we shall see later in the thesis. By the 1990s, Beckett's own quoted pronouncements were often made into a confirmatory or validating ratification, after the expansion, organisation and institutionalisation of a genetic study of the oeuvre.

It also seems that some of those earliest commentators on Beckett's works were not yet entirely convinced about those particular textual obscurities and economies characterising Beckett's literary art which scholars gradually came to appreciate later on as its distinctive and characteristic quality. He seemed to achieve canonised status with the award of the Nobel Prize award at the end of this decade. But throughout this first decade some of those scholars, working with the mind of "a professional aesthician", were not entirely favorable or committed to study of

Beckett. Some well-established New Critical and Joycean scholars stayed interested but a little half-heartedly, and some enthusiastic early career scholars such as Cohn became more cautious. However, Knowlson was prescient and made a difference by holding the first public exhibition of Beckett's art and material at UoR whose staff he just joined shortly after Beckett's Nobel Prize awarding. These events held much significance for the later reception of Beckett's paradigm-shifting aesthetics of "indigence"⁷³, as we shall see in the next chapter.

⁷³ Knowlson and Pilling, *Frescoes of the Skull*, 255.

3. The 1970s: From Fame to Institution

Though once "little known outside a small circle of avant-garde artists"⁷⁴ during the early 1950s, Beckett's fame soared after the successes of the 1960s which were marked first but not foremost by his joint awarding with Jorge Luis Borges of The Prix Formentor in 1961. The Beckett of the 1970s was, therefore, not that of the late 1950s, when the first devotee Cohn could publish an article and Special Issue on Beckett in 1959 only after a prior rejection.⁷⁵ As Gontarski testifies, while the aforementioned bibliography of 1970 by Federman and Fletcher registers 580 articles (up to 1966) and 31 books (up to 1968), *Cahiers de L'Herne* (edited by Tom Bishop and Federman) in 1976 estimates, still in the near aftermath of the Nobel Prize award of 1969, that there were sixty-odd books and five thousand articles published on Beckett.⁷⁶ In the same year J. C. C. Mays abandoned the project of compiling a supplement to the Federman and Fletcher bibliography because "even the system of decimal numeration that Federman and Fletcher designed to allow for the volume's expansion was already insufficient to accommodate the post-Nobel Prize critical surge."⁷⁷

As his literary material and private papers had concomitantly risen in value, Beckett's alma mater TCD approached him in early 1969 regarding possible

⁷⁴ Gontarski, "Critics and Criticism: 'Getting Known,'" in *On Beckett: Essays and Criticism*, ed., Gontarski (New York: Grove Press, 1986), 1-2

⁷⁵ About the related comment "We like your criticism, but we don't feel your author merits publishing space," see Cohn, *A Beckett Canon* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005), 1.

⁷⁶ Gontarski, "Critics and Criticism," 3.

⁷⁷ Gontarski, "Critics and Criticism," 14n4.

acquisition of manuscript material, shortly before his Nobel Prize award.⁷⁸ But it was the author's future confidante Knowlson, who had been admiring his plays since the mid-fifties, who had the courage in late 1969 to propose to the author himself, as mentioned previously, "an exhibition on the life and writings of the recent Nobel Laureate."⁷⁹ Such an initiative on the part of Knowlson was brought to fruition in the event *Samuel Beckett: An Exhibition*. Held at Reading University Library from May to July 1971,⁸⁰ it led directly to the establishing of a permanent Beckett Archive at the University.⁸¹ When Pilling, who finished his doctoral thesis at Reading on Beckett in 1971,⁸² joined the Department of English at the university in the same year, Reading was equipped with two main Beckett scholars of the era. Crucially, as we shall see, both academics were dedicated to illuminating Beckett's authorial intention: Knowlson would see as Beckett sees and Pilling think as Beckett thinks.

As if doing justice to the presence of these faithful advocates of his artistic will, Beckett continued adding his manuscript material to the existing collection of 1971, which consisted of various published works and ephemera, eventually making the current Beckett Collection at Reading the largest holding library of his material in the world.⁸³ This was the case even though Beckett also kept adding to already

⁷⁸ Nixon, "Beckett's Manuscripts," 826-27.

⁷⁹ Knowlson, "The Beckett Archive," in *As No Other Dare Fail: for Samuel Beckett on His 80th Birthday by His Friends and Admirers*, ed. John Calder (London: Calder, 1986), 30-31.

⁸⁰ Knowlson, *Samuel Beckett: an exhibition* (Turret Books, 1971), 3.

⁸¹ Knowlson, "The Beckett Archive," 32.

⁸² Pilling, "The conduct of the narrative in Samuel Beckett's prose fiction" (PhD diss., University College London, 1971).

⁸³ *Ibid.*, 32-35. It is notable that Knowlson still evaluates the Reading manuscript collection as second to that held at Austin in this article published in 1986.

established collections at HRHRC and TCD, as well as to other academic institutions, charities and friends in need.⁸⁴ Beckett's gradually improving financial situation – thanks primarily to the impactful productions, and successful sales of the printed version of *Godot* in America⁸⁵ – may have partly contributed to this change in the nature of his dealings with manuscript materials. But the event of his Nobel award, and its ensuing effects, both on public responses to him and on his own self-consciousness as an artist, provided, together with his hindsight of that bittersweet experience of trading his own compositional material, a ripe context for donating his material in a consistent manner.⁸⁶ These acts of generosity testify partly to Beckett's abovementioned more stable financial situation but, more significantly, also to his direct engagement with academic approaches to his literary art. This engagement betrays a clear difference from the attitude of modernist predecessors such as Proust and Joyce, who also retained their manuscripts as precious traces of their creative originality at work, but who tended to try to preserve them intact as an essential part of their artistic integrity.⁸⁷

Although it is beyond the scope of this study to verify if Beckett had any categorical plan for the types of manuscripts to be sent to the different holding libraries, it is interesting to note that the three main holding libraries of Beckett material (HRHRC, TCD and UoR) exhibit their own roughly-definable characteristics

⁸⁴ Nixon, "Beckett's Manuscripts," 827.

⁸⁵ Stephen John Dilks, "Portrait of Beckett as a Famous Writer," *Journal of Modern Literature* 29, no. 4 (Summer 2006): 170; Nixon, "Beckett's Manuscripts," 830.

⁸⁶ For an anecdotally brief but important account of Beckett's early transactions of his material, see Nixon, "Beckett's Manuscripts," 824-27.

⁸⁷ Van Hulle, *Modern Manuscripts: The Extended Mind and Creative Undoing from Darwin to Beckett and Beyond* (London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 4-12.

in terms of the types of material they hold, as well as the time periods that their materials belong to. The manuscripts currently held at HRHRC, for example, date roughly over from the 1930s until the middle of the 1970s, and are chiefly characterised by material pertaining to the novels from *Murphy* until *Comment c'est*,⁸⁸ having largely built on the draft English translation of *L'Innommable* that Beckett sold in 1958 to the dealer Jake Schwartz, who was then working for the library.⁸⁹ This was supplemented by *Molloy* material sold to another book dealer, Henry Wenning, in 1964.⁹⁰ The TCD compositional material roughly derives from the 1930s until the 1960s and is enhanced by important student and study notebooks, abandoned or intervening works and, even more prominently, the largest holding of Beckett's correspondence. The latter covers an extended period from the 1920s until Beckett's final years and includes letters to over twenty-five different people of varying degrees of closeness to the author.⁹¹

But it is beyond dispute that the Beckett Collection at UoR has been the most instrumental and pioneering in promoting genetic scholarship in Beckett Studies, owing to its holdings and to its role as the institutional centre of Beckett Studies. The Beckett Collection is significant in having the largest collection of poetry-related manuscripts, for example, as well as in its almost complete body of dramatic material, which encompasses the whole timeline of Beckett's dramatic

⁸⁸ "Samuel Beckett: A Collection of His Papers at the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center," Harry Ransom Center, accessed February 25, 2016, <http://norman.hrc.utexas.edu/fasearch/findingAid.cfm?eadid=00140>.

⁸⁹ Nixon, "Beckett's Manuscripts," 824-25.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 825-26.

⁹¹ Jane Maxwell, "Catalogue of the Samuel Beckett Manuscripts at Trinity College Library Dublin," in *Notes Diverse Holo*, 183-99.

career, as well as across different media he employed, and in its unique resources related to his early and late prose works, other miscellaneous writings and a few compositional notebooks as well as drama-related objects and artifacts.⁹²

The course of events which led UoR to become the headquarters of international Beckett Studies, with its extensive archive and the presence of the BIF, established there in 1988, exhibits a rare element of serendipity in the world of literary institutions. It is certain that Beckett's fame as a literary artist was rising in public during the period, but also that fame was already competing with the existing influence in modern literary scholarship of his major predecessors. Among the scores of scholars who had published a book-length study on Beckett by the 1960s, the most committed were mainly early career researchers who had recently earned their doctoral degree; only a few renowned critics of the time such as Kenner, Esslin and Tindall evinced proper recognition of Beckett's art.⁹³ In terms of journalistic coverage of the period, which was becoming more and more instrumental in shaping the fame of literary artists, the tone had not much changed from that of the intrigued bafflement concerning the first productions of *Waiting for Godot* staged during the later part of the 1950s.⁹⁴

Another interesting manifestation of Beckett's still-not-quite-prominent artistic status around the time is the fact that the existing major publishing houses

⁹² Bryden, Julian Garforth and Peter Mills, *Beckett at Reading: Catalogue of the Beckett Manuscript Collection at The University of Reading* (Reading: Whiteknights Press & Beckett International Foundation, 1998), vii-xvi.

⁹³ Together with the aforementioned books by Kenner and Esslin, see William York Tindall, *Samuel Beckett* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 1964).

⁹⁴ See the related media coverage in America of the 1970s reported in Gontarski, "The Business of Being Beckett: Beckett's Reception in the USA," in *The International Reception of Samuel Beckett*, 19-20.

in Europe were dismissive of Beckett's works, which were accepted instead by the then pioneering and now classic innovators like Minuit, Calder and Suhrkamp, whose own fame grew thanks to Beckett's.⁹⁵ When Beckett's strikingly innovative art was eluding acceptance by existing academics and the public, and the ambiguous nationality in his career and works was not appealing to the nationalist interests within the Irish or French governments, Knowlson was prescient in archiving Beckett's inheritance. Beckett later said to Knowlson that the priority fell on Reading, which had no direct links with him at all, because Knowlson and other organisers for the 1971 exhibition were "the first to honour him" in the way they did.⁹⁶

It may be wondered why the better-resourced American university collections, or those early American Beckett enthusiasts, did not first form an official institution for the appreciation of Beckett and his works. A possible reason would be that in the general atmosphere of American literary academia in the 1960s, modernist literature was still establishing itself and earning a status equal to that of Chaucer, Shakespeare and Milton in terms of "serious study." So, it seems that as institutions they were yet to come up with any administrative plan to take up the work required of a high-profile writer and his art, something which is especially understandable in consideration of the fact that his Nobel Prize confirmation only occurred at the end of the decade. However, if it had not been for Knowlson's initiative, the conservatism in British literary academia might not have fared any better in acquiring Beckett materials. Regarding the circumstances surrounding the acquisition of literary archives, in a stark contrast to those of American universities

⁹⁵ Nixon, "Beckett's Manuscripts," 826.

⁹⁶ Knowlson, "The Beckett Archive," 33.

which had started to buy Joycean material from Europe in the late 1940s,⁹⁷ even the most prestigious and affluent UK libraries still maintained negative attitudes towards acquiring modern literary manuscripts, and were even more passive about acquiring those of a living author, instead solely depending on “the charity of donors.”⁹⁸ Those circumstances had still not improved by the time of Philip Larkin’s 1979 essay “A Neglected Responsibility: Contemporary Literary Manuscripts.”⁹⁹

It is unlikely, therefore, that leading institutions like Oxford’s Bodleian Library would have then been willing to host the exhibition of Beckett material, even if it had been offered the opportunity. With Beckett’s own issues related to cultural belonging, which must also have encouraged Ireland’s and France’s lack of interest in regarding him as one of their proper cultural assets, no options than a Knowlson-style exhibition would have been affordable for establishing a permanent archive dedicated to the study of Beckett’s work by the 1970s. The UoR archive derives from a serendipitous coincidence of three factors: Knowlson’s personal initiative; the more flexible and liberal circumstances at one of the then fast-growing universities of Britain; and the generosity of the author himself.¹⁰⁰ But this groundbreaking deed by Knowlson did not limit itself to the boundaries of

⁹⁷ Wim Van Mierlo, “Reading Joyce,” 32-63.

⁹⁸ Zachary Leader, “Cultural Nationalism and Modern Manuscripts: Kingsley Amis, Saul Bellow, Franz Kafka,” *Critical Inquiry* 40 (Autumn 2013), 173; The sole major British claim to classical Joycean material was only secured when Harriet Weaver, Joyce’s patron, donated the primarily *Finnegans Wake*-related materials to the British Library in 1950. See Groden, “Library Collections of Joyce Manuscripts,” in *A Companion to Joyce Studies*, 783.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 173-74.

¹⁰⁰ As Knowlson clarifies in the Editorial for the third issue of the journal, the first official American academic community bearing the name of the author, “Samuel Beckett Society” was formed in 1978. See Knowlson, “Editorial,” *Journal of Beckett Studies* 3 (Summer 1978).

organisation and administration. As much as he appreciated Beckett's art, person and friendship and as much as he was endowed with an abundance of Beckett's rare genetic material, Knowlson tried to bring into focus Beckett's own intention and perspective within the incipient forum of Beckett criticism which until then had been largely based on the existentialist and humanistic readings of the 1960s. After that signal event of the 1971 exhibition, the first official and hugely influential academic forum solely devoted to Beckett's art and works was formed via launching *JOBS* in 1976 under Knowlson's editorship.

JOBS is often regarded as the most important venue within Beckett Studies not only because of its groundbreaking and entirely Beckettian focus, or its critical and scholarly contributions of esteemed quality, but also because of the mark of authoriality it bore, at least throughout its first period of publication (1976-1984). Beckett continued donating material to the collection that formed after the exhibition and formed a "working relationship" with Knowlson regarding their shared interest in drama. Knowlson advised Beckett on his productions in Britain and Beckett supported the scholarly work taking place at Reading, especially as it related to his dramatic works. He allowed some of his short dramatic or prose pieces to be published for the first time throughout the first five issues of *JOBS* with the exception of Number Two (in the US he also allowed publication in Grove's *Evergreen Review*).¹⁰¹ These formative circumstances must have contributed to the way that the study of Beckett material focused, first and foremost, upon the dramatic material, primarily in the form of editing and publishing Beckett's own production revisions and directions. Beckett was a celebrated dramatist more than

¹⁰¹ Nixon, "Beckett's Manuscripts," 828.

he was considered a revolutionary novelist, at least in a conservative Shakespeare country.¹⁰² Knowlson, a drama scholar passionate about Beckett's art and based at UoR where the richest holding library of Beckett's material was being established, saw the very first task was to address the need to *authentically* explicate and clarify the ever reticent author's sophisticated art, whose difficulty had made the first generation of scholars turn toward more general readings of humanism and existentialism.¹⁰³

However, Knowlson was not alone in promoting Beckett's authorial intention as traceable across the vast range of material for which he was responsible. In the wake of Knowlson, who had finished his doctoral thesis in 1964, Pilling finished his, which was dedicated to Beckett's prose fiction, in 1971. After joining UoR, Pilling enhanced a material-based project of authentication of Beckett's sources and methods within the prose works, thus complementing Knowlson's focus on drama. In his article "Beckett's 'Proust'", included in the very first issue of *JOBS* published in 1976 by John Calder Ltd in association with the Beckett Archive at Reading, Pilling appreciated the author's generosity in donating the *Nouvelle Revue Française* edition that he used for writing *Proust* to the Beckett Archive at Reading. He then rather moderately estimated the value of those marginal manuscript comments included in those volumes by the author, not as being necessarily more important than "the available critical commentaries", but as enriching our understanding of Beckett's "remarkable mental and emotional apparatus." Drawing up the contents and chronology of the development of that apparatus has since become Pilling's

¹⁰² See the related account included in Bryden, "Beckett's Reception in Great Britain," in *The International Reception of Samuel Beckett*, 40-54.

¹⁰³ Knowlson and Pilling, *Frescoes of the Skull*, xi-xiii.

lifetime commitment. He goes on in the same article to take this chance of accessing the privileged manuscript material as a way of refuting "the pervasive and misleading tendency in early Beckett criticism that attempted to derive Beckett from Joyce."¹⁰⁴

This same attitude is fleshed out in the introduction to *Frescoes of the Skull*, a joint publication by Knowlson and Pilling of 1979. This book is momentous in the development of genetic Beckett criticism, with its authors claiming that they attempted an "original kind of criticism" which corresponds to "such density and uniqueness" of Beckett's oeuvre.¹⁰⁵ So they denounced, for their part, any "attempt at uniformity of style or method" which is, they claimed, impossible in the case of Beckett's works, and the first generation of critics naturally come to be criticised by them due to their "divided focus" on "the one genre or the other." While thus expressing reservations toward the first generation of Beckettian scholars up to the 1970s due to this genre-limitation, what Knowlson and Pilling inherit from and much expand and develop upon is their "desire to use, where relevant, unpublished material or rejected drafts that illustrate the genesis of the work in question."

They used, therefore, to bring "the prose work and the drama as close together as is feasible," despite acknowledging "the fundamental dissimilarity of modes."¹⁰⁶ Yet it appears that the singularity of their approach lies in the fact that their symbolic model for such amalgamation between Beckett's prose and drama is a cerebrum stocked from the outset with specific imagery then frequently revisited

¹⁰⁴ Pilling, "Beckett's 'Proust.'"

¹⁰⁵ Knowlson and Pilling, *Frescoes of the Skull*, xi.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, xii.

in the later works, as the title of their book specifies.¹⁰⁷ The foregrounded skull picture may have much to do with an emphasis on the artistic vision over the writing hand or textuality in Beckett Studies. This cerebral model works to facilitate artistic vision not only because the eyes are located near the brain. The interior fresco reminds us of the way that many modernist writers keep expanding and revising their writing, only to be stopped by their own physical demise. But, in its meditation on the matter of the skull, it is primarily a vision that does not necessarily depend on the outer action of writing and its material traces.¹⁰⁸ In his article titled "*Krapp's Last Tape: the evolution of a play, 1958-75*," included in the first issue of *JOBS*, Knowlson makes clear that his interest does not lie in "tracing the various stages in the composition of *Krapp's last tape* through the manuscript and different typescript versions" but in looking "at the way in which this play has evolved since its first production [...] until the most recent [...] version, linking this evolution with dramatic and thematic elements of the text and the sub-text." Yet, in seemingly shifting attention towards performance over textual study, Knowlson is notably both assisted by his "personal knowledge of most of the productions discussed" and "the manuscript notebook which Beckett prepared for his own production."¹⁰⁹ These three core elements of a production-oriented approach –

¹⁰⁷ "The title itself, *Frescoes of the Skull*, ... is peculiarly appropriate to his 'late' period, in which an always cerebral artist has been engaged in an unprecedented archaeological investigation, or better, 'onto-speleology,' as Beckett himself describes it." Ibid., xiii.

¹⁰⁸ This attitude of putting higher value on vision than on text is also glimpsed from Ruby Cohn's article included in the same first issue of *JOBS* as: "Textual changes were easier than 'trying to see.' While on summer vacation, Beckett spent long hours at the beach imagining *Godot* in the theatre of his mind, dissatisfied with scene after scene." Cohn, "Beckett's German *Godot*," *Journal of Beckett Studies*, No. 1 (1976).

¹⁰⁹ Knowlson, "Krapp's last tape."

intertextual inquiry, biographical factuality, and the study of Beckett's directorial notes – are consistently found throughout Knowlson's immense contribution to the development of genetic Beckett criticism and of Beckett Studies more widely. The actual genetic business of tracing various compositional stages through different manuscript and typescript versions was, however, largely pursued by Gontarski and Pountney within the same territory of dramatic works in this dawning of the second generation.

Knowlson's and Pilling's determination to break away from the first generation of Beckett critics is also glimpsed in their quasi non-reference to those predecessors, which is especially true in the case of the first issue of *JOBS*. Their method can be contrasted with more eclectic figures like Gontarski who, while dealing with the same manuscript material, freely cites those prominent figures of the 1960s and 1970s such as Esslin, Ihab Hassan, Cohn and Fletcher. Knowlson and Pilling particularly appreciated Beckett's generous donation of his material which "has enabled the new generation of Beckett critics to write more authoritatively about the nature of the Beckettian creative process, and to devote more attention to manuscript variants than is usually possible in an author's lifetime." Their appreciation of Beckett's generosity also extended to its "effect of putting commentators on their guard and discouraging them from offering general criticisms, when it is always possible that there exist typescripts in Beckett's personal files that will disprove their contentions."¹¹⁰ This illustrates much about the position not only of this second-generation, but also of Beckett himself. For this very accusation of generalism, once having been raised against generalist critics since

¹¹⁰ Knowlson and Pilling, *Frescoes of the Skull*, 131.

the end of the nineteenth century by established philologists, is raised again against the same group who managed to secure a position inside an English department under the aegis of New Criticism from the 1920s and 1930s.¹¹¹

If New Criticism loosened the grip of philological rigour and procured a foothold for modernist literature inside the Anglophone literary academy, what gave Beckett Studies its importance in this postmodern literary era was, according to those two founders of post-1970s Beckett criticism, the archival scholarship Knowlson and Pilling were trying to introduce. The accusation of reductivity, which was charged against a trend of attribution to a single source, came once more to be raised against the “commentators who tend to hypostatise Beckett’s ideas as they were at the time of *Proust* or at the time of the *Three Dialogues*, and who have thereby contrived to suggest that little change is to be observed since the late 1920s.” They indicate that such failure was “unavoidable”, due to “the inaccessibility of much of the material.” Knowlson and Pilling claim that Beckett himself did not argue “his ideas with the clarity and rigour that would attract a professional aesthete”, even if he would discuss “cogently and stimulatingly” when compelled to do so. Other critics are thus accused of diverting “attention away from a body of work that is substantial, intelligent and coherent” when much more is hidden in, and expected from, Beckett’s body of work, which they call his “poetics”. Concentrating upon that poetics is what promises Beckettian criticism its due importance.¹¹²

In the preface to *Theatre Workbook 1, Samuel Beckett: Krapp’s Last Tape*

¹¹¹ Van Mierlo, “Reading Joyce.”

¹¹² Knowlson and Pilling, *Frescoes of the Skull*, 255.

edited by Knowlson in 1980 – thought to have served as a springboard for the upcoming series of *The Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett* that was to be published over the period of 1985-1999 – Knowlson again makes clear his position on archival scholarship. While regretting the “rift which exists between ‘doers’ and ‘thinkers’” in the world of drama criticism, he seems to see it as more problematic on the part of drama criticism to lose sight of the performative elements that are essential to plays, and thereby risking such work becoming “fanciful, impoverished or insecurely grounded.” His edited *Theatre Workbook* was prepared with a “two-way exchange” in mind, whereby critics benefit from performative elements and theatre practitioners from informed critical opinions, accommodating both the production reports and analyses as well as critical material on the genesis and interpretation of the play. Its aim was “to throw light not just on a written text but on a work specifically intended for the stage.”¹¹³ Notably, *The Theatrical Notebooks* series largely exempts itself from the critical business of genesis and interpretation.

The careful but implicitly directive tone taken by Knowlson and Pilling seems to inform most of their arguments of import about Beckett. The almost circular reasoning taken by those two foundational scholars of Beckettian archival scholarship is especially noteworthy, for it seems to be informed by, and to imitate, Beckett’s own reaction to questions concerning his authorial intention or the interpretive and performative dimension of his works. For example, of his most famous play Beckett repeatedly said that he wrote everything one needs to know, to the best of his knowledge, in the text of *Waiting for Godot*, and, when an actor asked about the motive behind a certain line of his character Beckett merely

¹¹³ Knowlson, ed., *Theatre Workbook 1*, 7.

redirected him to the same line again.¹¹⁴ It is not that Beckett invariably avoided providing authorial insight into his own works or aesthetics, but, when compelled to do it, he rendered such in a manner neither clear nor systematic but certainly cogent and stimulating in the moment, as Knowlson and Pilling themselves noted.¹¹⁵ In his aforementioned article in the first issue of *JOBS*, Pilling notes that "Beckett's images are so universal that it would be dangerous to offer only one source, or indeed any source." Pilling noted elsewhere that "Beckett's own writing is so individual that it cannot be diminished by the discovery of deep-seated parallels."¹¹⁶ Beckett remains Beckett, the only origin of this unique complexity.

It can easily be understood that Pilling and Knowlson's defensive caution is intended to ward against the relatively reductive comparative interpretation by critics of the 1960s and 1970s. Valiantly, Knowlson tried to shift the focus from textual dramatic criticism to performance analysis and Pilling from general comparative criticism to enhanced scholarly contextualism. That this core archival scholarship is seen to have been more separate and independent from the general critical atmosphere than in the case of Joyce Studies or Proust Studies may well owe something to the fact that the author and donor of the Reading material was still alive. When genetic Joyce criticism commenced around the 1960s, and genetic Proust criticism in the 1980s, each was long after those authors had died. Archival research into Proust and Joyce could not assume the same urgency against critical

¹¹⁴ Beckett to Barney Rosset, 18 October 1954, quoted in Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, 412; also see a programme note by George Devine for the National Theatre production of *Play* at the Old Vic, London, April 7, 1964, quoted in Alex Reid, *All I Can Manage, More than I Could: An Approach to the Plays of Samuel Beckett* (New York: Grove Press, 1971), 31.

¹¹⁵ Knowlson and Pilling, *Frescoes of the Skull*, 255.

¹¹⁶ Pilling, "Beckett's 'Proust.'"

license as well as the same authoritative force that Knowlson and Pilling did for Beckett Studies. The problem is that their same presentation of Beckett as an exemplary literary figure is a view which needs to be ascertained and qualified carefully, while it also introduces a kind of myth which informs an understanding of Beckett, his art and works.

Knowlson's and Pilling's premises need to be adjusted by questioning how far the problems of Beckett's artistic vision and the universality of his writing can in fact be "resolved" by recourse to the archive. How much of his writing derives from artistic judgment and how much to more practical compromises and ad-hoc circumstances? How universal is the allusive system working in Beckett's writing in terms of its cultural, intellectual, historical or literary references? How universal is the range of his literary influences? Answers to those questions are still forming after forty years. Indeed, such questions remain speculative until tackled on the proper scale, i.e. BDMP completion in 2036, but Knowlson and Pilling needed to raise such issues in order to shift the critical focus onto Beckett's archive. It is not very clear, furthermore, if Knowlson's focus on artistic vision, to which textuality is regarded as subordinate, quite coincides with Beckett's own authorial intention regarding the matter. As Beckett told his first biographer Bair in 1973, "[t]he best possible play is one in which there are no actors, only the text! I'm trying to find a way to write one."¹¹⁷ In this later period of his life, Beckett showed interest in and even encouraged the theatrical adaptation of some of his prose pieces, whose most successful example would be Joseph Chaikin's adaptation of *Texts for Nothing*

¹¹⁷ Bair, *Samuel Beckett*, p. 433.

performed in 1981.¹¹⁸ As will be seen later on, this firmly authorial perspective held to by Knowlson sometimes even led to the systematisation of Beckett's authorial intention, perhaps even beyond the measure of that very intention.¹¹⁹

If Knowlson thus tried to be in tune with Beckett's mind, Pilling tried to show its expression in an informative mode by trying to capture Beckett's aesthetic thinking itself as it developed in specific intellectual, historical and cultural circumstances. In the preface to his first book on Beckett, based on his PhD thesis, titled *Samuel Beckett* and published in 1976, Pilling notes that while there had been a sufficient number of Beckettian "commentators in recent years," he is "dissatisfied with all the other available accounts, which, however helpful they were in one area, seemed misleading, or insensitive, in others." Such incompletenesses and imbalances can, he argues, only be redressed by "a full-length account of Beckett's complete work to date, based on Beckett's own aesthetic thinking, and on the intellectual, historical and literary tradition and milieu that had sustained it." He tries to mitigate this "arrogance of dissatisfaction" and to express his indebtedness to the earlier generation via carefully prepared acknowledgements and bibliography, yet what this criticism signifies is not so much the high-handed attitude of a distinguished early-career scholar, but an announcement of the direction his research would take in the future. His apologetic tone, expressed in the words "[t]he

¹¹⁸ "It was at Samuel Beckett's suggestion that Chaikin adapted his *Texts for Nothing* to the stage in 1981." SF Weekly Staff, "Speech Effects," *SF Weekly*, January 29, 1997, accessed December 6, 2016, <http://www.sfweekly.com/culture/speech-effects>; for a general account of Beckett's involvement in, and theatrical practitioners' attraction to, the adaptation of his prose pieces, see Katharine Worth, "Sources of Attraction to Beckett's Theater," in *Palgrave Advances in Samuel Beckett Studies*, 214-7.

¹¹⁹ Knowlson, "Beckett's 'Bits of Pipe,'" in *Samuel Beckett: Humanistic Perspectives*, eds., Morris Beja, S. E. Gontarski and Pierre Astier (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1983).

picture of Beckett which emerges is no doubt as coloured and as partial as any other",¹²⁰ would sound almost like a condescension in the light of his position contemporaneously disclosed in "Beckett's 'Proust'", considering that the same strong and privileged evidence of correspondences, conversations and unpublished material applies here as well.

It is interesting to see how archival scholarship comes to be foregrounded in comparison to its once modest status as being illuminating but dispensable, important but circumscribed. In his "Beckett's 'Proust'" Pilling says that, while Beckett's marginal manuscript comments are not more important than the available critical commentaries or than the published monograph itself, our understanding of Beckett's mind is "immeasurably enriched by them."¹²¹ *Frescoes of the Skull* does not camouflage, in a manner fitting the importance of the publication as the second-generation critical manifesto, its intention to prioritise the authority of unpublished or manuscript material over general criticisms by commentators.¹²² It presents a more complete, coherent and focused criticism through its access to the material than the hypostatizing tendency of commentators who wrote without recourse to such material.¹²³ In a similar fashion, while in his 1980 publication *Theatre Workbook 1: Samuel Beckett: Krapp's Last Tape* Knowlson seems to postulate a workshop where critics and theatrical practitioners exchange and benefit from one another's strengths in a more egalitarian mode,¹²⁴ and he carefully but resolutely promotes the authorial manuscript notes. In his 1985 *Happy*

¹²⁰ Pilling, *Samuel Beckett* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1976), ix.

¹²¹ Pilling, "Beckett's 'Proust'".

¹²² Knowlson and Pilling, *Frescoes of the Skull*, 131.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, 255.

¹²⁴ Knowlson, ed., *Theatre Workbook 1*, 7.

Days: Samuel Beckett's Production Notebook, the prototype version to the then upcoming *Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett*, Knowlson claims Beckett's production notes to be "a much better guide to the way that Beckett now 'sees' his plays in the theatre." They contribute "significantly to a better understanding of the plays themselves," and as "the most comprehensive record of the plays as they have been revised in the light of the author's own staging." Beckett's production notes allow for a studying "of his plays" in this way, even though they are not "sacrosanct" or taken to be "a model for imitation," while nevertheless they are of course "valuable."¹²⁵

Manuscript notes in the notebooks are, therefore, regarded as a valuable source of interpretation for they are more intimately authorial, more teleological and more extensively complete. Claims of their being merely 'valuable,' 'not sacrosanct' or 'not [a] model' are an understatement in consideration of the evident direction in which Knowlson and Pilling were trying to lead. The following statement may aptly capture this attitude of those archival scholarship pioneers: what this material tells us is not necessarily definitive but leads to a better, more correct and more resourceful understanding of the author's mind and works. Considering that nobody really argues for ultimate truth in this post-modern era, where the mistrust of any single hermeneutical authority regarding cultural artifacts is one of the most fundamental working rationales in the cultural industries, such a gesture would work no otherwise than as a way of making those materials 'sacrosanct' – without actually saying that they are 'sacrosanct.' When even the author himself is not sure or communicative about the true intent of his works,

¹²⁵ Knowlson, ed., *Happy Days: Samuel Beckett's Production Notebook*, 11-4.

what leads to the deeper, richer and fuller understanding of them cannot but always emerge. So, it is clear that this archival material started to be promoted from 'one of the valuable resources' to 'the qualitatively better resource for interpretation' around the mid-1970s.

It is instructive here to compare this stance of Knowlson with that of Gontarski, another prominent scholar mainly of Beckett's theatrical works, and a contrasting figure to Knowlson. Based in America, Gontarski finished his doctoral thesis in 1974 at Ohio State University, ten years later than Knowlson. That thesis is titled "Shaping the mess: the composition of Samuel Beckett's *Happy Days*." Gontarski was one of the earliest scholars who approached Beckett's manuscript material, and, as might be inferred from the title of his doctoral thesis, his approach is differentiated from that of Knowlson in that it consulted the pre-publication compositional material in order to analyse Beckett's creative process. This more critical effort was made public by his first publication, *Beckett's Happy Days: A Manuscript Study*, which was based on his doctoral thesis and published in 1977, when Knowlson was deliberately concerning himself not with "tracing the various stages in the composition" but with the way in which the "play has evolved since its first production."¹²⁶ But more than that, Gontarski assumed the perspective of aesthetic universalism in order to find a certain pattern in Beckett's shaping of theatrical language and images throughout the composition process. This bears witness to contrasting and mutually supplementing points between Knowlson and Gontarski despite their shared formalism, for while Knowlson prioritises vision over writing and takes a practical approach, Gontarski follows the development of the

¹²⁶ Knowlson, "Krapp's last tape."

text first and takes a universal and theoretical approach in analysing linguistic patterns forming within it.

It is of further interest to find in Duckworth's review of *Beckett's Happy Days*, included in the third number of *JOBS* published in 1978, a tension between the existing humanist and existentialist readings of the first generation and Gontarski's new archival and theoretical reading. Referring to some blurred literary allusions added in the composition process, Duckworth tries, recalling Cohn, to see them as functioning in order to emphasise the unhappiness of Winnie's condition, while he argues that Gontarski sees them as achieving a universal form of irony, assuming Winnie is never fully aware of her plight.¹²⁷ This announces another fissure in the critical discourse between early humanist and existentialist readings and the succeeding poststructuralist and theoretical readings, which would flourish later through the 1980s and 1990s within and outside Beckett Studies. This theoretical discussion of language and rhetoric, both inheriting and extending the scope of the late-humanist and formalist accounts of Cohn, will test out in those periods the very accommodative capacity of Beckett's texts for all these diverse readings and interpretations which arise in response to the wide spectrum of postmodern literary theories.

Gontarski evinces a further difference from Knowlson in remaining more consistent with the first generation, and also in being more accommodating toward then emerging post-structuralist critical theories. He is now one of a few remaining living scholars who had been in personal contact with Beckett for a substantial period of time via correspondence or conversation, but he has, while vigorously

¹²⁷ Duckworth, "Beckett's *Happy Days*. A Manuscript Study by S. E. Gontarski," 100-3.

participating in the BIF's academic or publishing projects at the same time, stayed for the most part non-aligned to the authorial focus of those founders of *JOBS* and the BIF. As the foremost specialist on Beckett's dramatic pre-publication material, he has also been a leading voice in pointing out the sloppy editing practices apparent throughout the publication of many of Beckett's dramatic works, and in encouraging the assembling and correcting of multiple versions of each work in order to come up with 'definitive' versions.¹²⁸ While Knowlson firmly argues that Beckett's own directing rendered the workings of his plays more successful – and better fulfilled his plays' performative and thematic potential as "a further phase in the writer-director's creative effort"¹²⁹ – Gontarski sees that, contrary to the "cry that Beckett's texts need protection" and even in some instances the author's own protective reaction during his lifetime, what seems to guarantee the success "for the future of Beckett's theatrical texts is the promise of continued rethinking and adapting of his work."¹³⁰ So it is that, if Knowlson is trying to see as Beckett himself sees from inside Beckett's skull, Gontarski is looking from the outside.

When we come back to Pilling in this light, it is possible to see that he would not immediately be regarded as being as vocal as Knowlson and Gontarski who represent the second generation in the study of Beckett's dramas. The latter two have been more celebrated and influential than scholars working on Beckett's prose works at least in the Anglophone world. If Knowlson tried to break with traditional and textual dramatic criticism and to introduce instead a kind of practical

¹²⁸ See Gontarski, "Editing Beckett"; Gontarski, "A Centenary of Missed Opportunities."

¹²⁹ Knowlson, ed., *Happy Days: Samuel Beckett's Production Notebook*, 13-4.

¹³⁰ Gontarski, "Beckett's Reception in the USA," in *The International Reception of Samuel Beckett*, 22.

performance analytics, and Gontarski pursued a more continuous transition from textuality to vision as Beckett's artistic development exhibits it, Pilling does not seem to be putting forward such a definitive programme himself, or enjoying such exciting differences of approach with his generation. If the comparison could reach outside his generation a few first generation prose scholars like Fletcher, Federman or Harvey would be included, but Fletcher's allegiance to French literature and existentialism as glimpsed from his close textual reading and analysis is very different in nature from Pilling's approach. Pilling's interest rather more conforms with the tradition of German philological scholarship, with its emphasis on the historical and biographical circumstances of the author and on the meaning of words and the literary resources of words. Pilling's dissatisfaction with then available accounts could thus be read as coming from their incompleteness in scope, resources and reference.¹³¹

Pilling's 1976 publication, with its ambitious and eponymous title, can thus be seen as a trial for the most complete, definitive and thorough book-length introduction to Beckett and his art and works to that time, rendered with proper philological fervour and rigour and finished with a carefully selected bibliography. His two ensuing publications, which deal with subjects other than Beckett, further substantiate this same philological allegiance. A 1981 publication, titled *Autobiography and Imagination*, tries to bring into relief the much eclipsed tradition of autobiographical writing by key authors like Henry Adams, Henry James, W.B. Yeats, Michel Leiris, Jean-Paul Sartre, Vladimir Nabokov and others.¹³² His 1982

¹³¹ Pilling, *Samuel Beckett*, ix.

¹³² Pilling, *Autobiography and Imagination: Studies in Self-Scrutiny* (London: Routledge &

book, *An Introduction to Fifty Modern European Poets*, introduces poets of different linguistic and cultural traditions in English translation on an enormous scale.¹³³

What is noteworthy in both these extraordinary critical forays into European literature is Pilling's rigour investigating every available resource related to the subject and his trying to establish the fairest account possible based on such an evidential base.¹³⁴ Another point of note lies in his distinguished ability to deal with all the important critical points pertinent to his argument, without recourse to grand theoretical rubrics, an approach which has its pros and cons. The fact that Pilling had been taught by Frank Kermode, who was one of the first influential British introducers of French critical theory, makes his preference for philological rigour over critical dissection appear as arising not from the generation gap but from a well-informed decision of his own. Pilling has dedicated the same philological rigour to the investigation of Beckett's intellectual and artistic development ever since. If Knowlson is trying to see as Beckett sees from inside his skull and Gontarski is looking down on Beckett's writing hand from outside, Pilling is beginning his quest into Beckett's brain "far behind the eye."

Genetic Beckett criticism in the 1970s benefitted from more than the contribution of these representative figures. Acquisition of Beckett's manuscript material had only been possible via personal contact with Beckett during the 1960s.

Kegan Paul, 1981).

¹³³ Pilling, *An Introduction to Fifty Modern European Poets* (London, Pan Books, 1982).

¹³⁴ For his way of tracing the change in Adams's aesthetic opinion via referring to his correspondence material of different dates which reminds of his evidence-based chronologisation and contextualisation of Beckett's intellectual and artistic development, see Pilling, *Autobiography and Imagination*, 8-22; for his exhaustive reference to the bibliography and adherence to chronology rather than to some "generalised" subjects, see Pilling, *An Introduction to Fifty Modern European Poets*, 9-12.

In the 1970s major collections across America, Britain and Ireland were established. Scholars such as J. M. Coetzee, Richard Admussen, Breon Mitchell and Sighle Kennedy, who had access to those first collections, could thus benefit from the author's unpublished materials. Coetzee's contribution, as a brief spin-off from his research on Beckett's English fiction for his PhD degree, is marked as one of the first ventures into manuscript material of Beckett's prose work and as one of the closest examinations so far rendered of Beckett's stylistic characteristics in prose.¹³⁵ An equally important figure is Kennedy, whose *Murphy's Bed*, published in 1971, forms a pair with Coetzee's in the attention given to Beckett's prose, as well as in providing the first full-scale source analysis of a single prose piece. Kennedy specifically expounded the underlying astronomical design for, as well as the surrealist influence on, the writing of Beckett's first published novel, *Murphy*. However, her attention to related genetic material is largely limited to skimming them for a general impression and including a photocopy image of one of the manuscript pages as a mere illustration of Beckett's elaborate artistry.¹³⁶

Mitchell's 1976 article on *Come and Go* affords a glimpse of Beckett's painstaking revision process throughout his manuscripts, as well as a chronology of all available and even partially postulated manuscript stages.¹³⁷ Another brief essay providing an overview of Beckett's minute reworking process for achieving harmony

¹³⁵ J.M. Coetzee, "The Manuscript Revision of Beckett's *Watt*," *Journal of Modern Literature*, Vol. 2, No. 4 (November 1972): 472-280; Coetzee later confesses his formalist and structuralist drive at the time of writing his thesis in his following interview: Lawrence Rainey, David Attwell, and Benjamin Madden, "An Interview with J.M. Coetzee," *Modernism/modernity*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (November 2011): 847-53.

¹³⁶ Kennedy, *Murphy's Bed*, Drawing on Front Cover.

¹³⁷ Breon Mitchell, "Art in Microcosm: The Manuscript Stages of Beckett's *Come and Go*," *Modern Drama*, Vol. 19, No. 3 (Fall 1976): 245-54.

of form and content, even across its translated versions, was published in 1973 by Admussen, with *Play* as the case study.¹³⁸ Admussen made an incomparably more important contribution to Beckett manuscript studies with his 1979 publication *The Samuel Beckett Manuscripts: A Study*, which provides a comprehensive catalogue and guide for all then identifiable manuscript materials held in Washington University, HRHRC, Ohio State University, Dartmouth College, TCD, UoR and even those in private ownership.¹³⁹ This study served as a unique database until those library institutions later published their own catalogues. In comparison, *Samuel Beckett: His Works and His Critics* published about ten years earlier by Federman and Fletcher only gives a selective catalogue of the items held at HRHRC and Ohio State University, together with an illustrative glimpse over the *Bing* variants. Admussen's by then exhaustive guide to manuscript contents and holdings, finished by the inclusion of a number of manuscript images via the then-fashionable technology of photocopy, symbolises the status of Beckett's genetic material as having attained one of the important resources to enrich the understanding of Beckett and his works by the end of the 1970s.

What is unique in this foregrounding of genetic material in Beckett Studies is that it first focused on the author and not the material, whereas genetic criticism for the great modern masters like Joyce and Proust tended to first focus on the

¹³⁸ Richard L. Admussen, "The Manuscripts of Beckett's *Play*," *Modern Drama*, Vol. 16, No. 1 (Spring 1973): 23-7.

¹³⁹ Admussen, *The Samuel Beckett Manuscripts: a study* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1979); For the evaluation of its many strengths and negligible weakness, see J. C. C. Mays, "'The Samuel Beckett manuscripts: a study' by Richard Admussen," *Journal of Beckett Studies*, No. 6 (Autumn 1980), accessed February 5, 2015, <http://www.english.fsu.edu/jobs/num06/Num6Mays.htm>.

material in order to shed light upon how the authors wrote their works, and then went on to infer authorial intention from there. There could be various causes for this unconventionality. Beckett was still alive and so could exert an influence, however indirectly and passively, upon the direction of the study of his material let alone upon the interpretation of his works. This was supposed to work especially well as a small number of early-career scholars, who were so conscientious about his authorial mind and material, were ready to break away from the existing power of general critics who had been influential since the 1950s. Beckett's minimalist art and the ascendancy of his theater works over his prose must have contributed to the causes as well, for minimalism always tends to attract overinterpretation. The performance-based contingent nature of dramatic art naturally brings forth the problem of compliance or otherwise with authorial will. Finally, Beckett's published works are not troubled by such complications in editing and printing as are notoriously found in Joyce's published works due to Joyce's eccentric writing methods, the limited printing technology of the time, censorship and pirate editions. Genetic Beckett criticism was not as forced to tackle textual problems through the pre-publication material as genetic Joyce criticism was.

In consideration of the broader context outside Beckett Studies, however, this focusing of genetic Beckett criticism upon the authorial mind may be seen as foreshadowing the new direction that Anglophone and Francophone literary academia took during the period of the 1980s and 1990s, when Beckett Studies rapidly expanded. As Falconer points out, the "heyday of traditional genetic criticism occurred between 1920 and 1970," just bordering the upcoming period of growth

for Beckett Studies.¹⁴⁰ This traditional genetic criticism traces its origin back to the late Enlightenment, when writers started to regard “the work of art as an organic whole with life of its own”, which reflects “the writer’s own life.” Around the same time authors came to explain their intentions to the then increasing reading public through the form of Prefaces. Many started to retain the material evidence of their work as an integral part of their art, and art began to supplant religion as the primary medium of expression of spiritual or metaphysical truth under the dominant spirit of Romanticism in the nineteenth century.¹⁴¹

But the modern version of genetic criticism that Falconer refers to as having occurred between 1920 and 1970 is further characterised by its effort to analyse manuscripts and the compositional process in a pragmatic manner in order to interpret the published work.¹⁴² In terms of Joyce Studies, where genetic criticism can be said to have matured more than that of any other modern masters, the general descriptive accounts of Joyce’s manuscripts, especially the overall geneses of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, of source clarification for those works and of the chronology of manuscripts and notebooks, had already been drawn up over previous decades.¹⁴³ It would be illuminating to point out here that this early success of genetic Joyce criticism coincided with “the golden days of academic affluence of the States.”¹⁴⁴ As eminent independent Joyce scholar Fritz Senn recounts, in America during the 1960s “young assistant professors just walked into

¹⁴⁰ Falconer, “Genetic Criticism,” 11.

¹⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 8-9.

¹⁴² Groden, “Genetic Joyce,” 232-33.

¹⁴³ Van Hulle, “Genetic Joyce Criticism,” 116-17.

¹⁴⁴ Fritz Senn, “The Joyce Industrial Evolution According to One European Amateur” *Journal of Modern Literature*, vol. 22, no. 2 (Winter, 1998-1999): 193.

their dean's office and came out with the money for air fare and expenses", while Europeans "hardly even believed they were allowed to participate" in the late Spring and intra-term schedule of the James Joyce Symposium.¹⁴⁵ It was predominantly through American universities' early efforts at acquiring Joyce material that the "sophisticated textual and genetic studies that began to appear within ten or fifteen years of Joyce's death were possible," with the sole exception of the James Joyce Collection at the British Library.¹⁴⁶ At the same time, those who dedicated their research career to genetic Joyce criticism over that period from 1920 to 1970 were for a large part scholars working in major American universities such as the State University of New York at Buffalo, Cornell University and Yale University, and on the material held there.¹⁴⁷

Entering the 1990s, those North American circumstances have drastically changed for, as Falconer himself can imagine, departmental heads would now view it as problematical for any specialist in genetic criticism in his department to spend his coveted sabbatical leave engaging in genetic inquiries into any other figure than

¹⁴⁵ This account nuances that by Morris Beja of a similar and contemporary recounting of the period when "American university travel budgets didn't ordinarily include expenses for getting to international conferences." But it is clear that the American presence and contribution was indispensable during the earlier years of the International James Joyce Foundation, as is witnessed by the Irish press's "parodic reports of how pedantic and Americanised the whole fascination with Joyce was". Reports on the membership of the seventh symposium of 1979 stated that it was the first time that "more than half the participants came from outside North America" and on the eleventh of 1988 that it was the first time "in the two decades in which there had been International James Joyce Symposia, not one of the coordinators, directors, or organisers was an American." See Morris Beja, "A Symposium All His Own': The International James Joyce Foundation and Its Symposia," *James Joyce Annual*, vol. 12 (Summer, 2001): 124-49.

¹⁴⁶ Groden, "Library Collections," 783.

¹⁴⁷ Van Hulle, "Genetic Joyce Criticism," 116-17.

the author whom they specialise in.¹⁴⁸ So it seems that the previous atmosphere of largesse within North American academic institutions, which had rendered possible this painstaking, time-consuming and unpopular task of genetic scholarship for Joyce Studies, underwent substantial change after the 1980s. In his monograph *Samuel Beckett: Repetition, Theory and Text*, which was published in 1988, and which represents the postmodern atmosphere of the time in many aspects, Connor notes that this was the period “when criticism and its institutions in Britain and the USA have been increasingly drawn to the centres of state-based power while being simultaneously stripped of their cultural and ideological effectiveness.”¹⁴⁹ Connor further connects the unique authorial drive found within the critical discourses of Beckett Studies to the need for ensuring the cultural values of literature against the dominant trends of the time. Under such circumstances as increasing centralisation and capitalist state control, genetic criticism’s “inherently specialised nature” and its scholars’ difficulties when it came to how they might “theorise or generalise about their findings” fostered a situation in which its own “impact on adjacent disciplines remains slight” and it is made to appear not very attractive in an era of effectiveness and efficiency.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁸ Falconer, “Genetic Criticism,” 16.

¹⁴⁹ Connor, *Samuel Beckett*, 199.

¹⁵⁰ Falconer, “Genetic Criticism,” 16; Falconer’s diagnosis of the situation appearing on the article published in 1993 sounds specific as well as sardonic: “Given a modicum of time, tenacity, and tenure, most Flaubert specialists – I should limit myself here to the field I know best – may be expected to show a more than casual interest in the other great precursors of modern fiction: James, Conrad and, one would hope, Chekhov [...] But when I come to report that two months of a recent sabbatical leave were spent studying the differences between the first five editions of *Pamela* [...] I shall count myself fortunate if there is not a slight rise of the chairmanly eyebrows.” See Falconer, “Genetic Criticism,” 16-7.

Therefore, genetic criticism became less popular and supported as a whole entering the 1980s. Whereas Joyce Studies could produce the gigantic sixty-three volumes of the magnificent *James Joyce Archive*¹⁵¹ in 1978 with help from a voluntary offer from the publishing house – volumes which comprised the high-quality facsimile reproduction of all-then available manuscript material of Joyce –¹⁵² Beckett Studies' only comparable undertakings in print are the four volumes of *The Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett* published from 1993 to 1995 and the three volumes of *Variorum Editions of Bilingual Works* from 1993 to 2001.¹⁵³ It seems that the initial period of full-scale genetic Beckett criticism of the 1980s, which had just been inaugurated by Knowlson and Pilling's announcement of the "'second-generation' of Beckett criticism" in 1979,¹⁵⁴ arrived after the heyday of genetic Joyce criticism in print form and coincided with the latter's ensuing

¹⁵¹ Michael Groden, Hans Walter Gabler, David Hayman, A. Walton Litz, and Danis Rose, eds., *The James Joyce Archive* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1978).

¹⁵² For an overview of the *James Joyce Archive* and the event of its publication, see Phillip F. Herring, review of *The James Joyce Archive*, *James Joyce Quarterly*, vol. 19, no. 1 (Fall, 1981), 85-97; Gabler, "The *James Joyce Archive*: A Publisher's Gift to Joyce Studies," *Genetic Joyce Studies*, no. 2, Special Issue: 25th Anniversary of the *James Joyce Archive* (Summer, 2002), accessed April 4, 2016, <http://www.geneticjoycestudies.org/JJAGabler.htm>; Luca Crispi, "The *James Joyce Archive* from an Archival Perspective," *Genetic Joyce Studies*, no. 2, accessed April 4, 2016, <http://www.geneticjoycestudies.org/JJALuca.htm>.

¹⁵³ For those published editions, see Samuel Beckett, *Company/Compagnie and A Piece of Monologue/Solo: A Bilingual Variorum Edition*, ed. Charles Krance (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1993); Beckett, *Mal vu mal dit/III Seen III Said: A Bilingual, Evolutionary, and Synoptic Variorum Edition*, ed. Krance (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1996); Beckett, *Commen c'est/How It Is and/et L'image: A Critical-Genetic Edition/Une édition critico-génétique*, ed. Edouard Magessa O'Reilly (New York and London: Routledge, 2001).

¹⁵⁴ The task of that second-generation scholars is to "build upon the findings of the first generation," who desired to "use, where relevant, unpublished material or rejected drafts" as they "illustrate the genesis of the work in question." See Knowlson and Pilling, *Frescoes of the Skull*, xi-xii.

downfall due to the changed circumstances of the period, including “the battle of the intentional fallacy,” which was raised by Phillip Herring in 1981¹⁵⁵ and was still noted in 2002 by Luca Crispi.¹⁵⁶

When it comes to the Francophone world, Proust Studies, which evolved over the same period as Beckett Studies, offers another comparative account which is helpful in characterising genetic Beckett criticism. What distinguishes the development of Proust Studies is a state-centered, organised and concentrated initiative. Though ‘Fonds Proust’ had been established by the Bibliothèque nationale in 1962 as the quasi-entirety of Proust’s composition material, a fully-fledged scholarly impetus was formed with the foundation of the Centre d’Études Proustiennes (henceforth as CEP) in 1972, which merged with the Centre d’Histoire et d’Analyses des Manuscrits Modernes (henceforth as CAM) in 1974. This steadily expanded to become the Institut des Textes et Manuscrits Modernes (henceforth ITEM) in 1982, the very heart of French modern literary manuscript scholarship today.¹⁵⁷ Its specific research unit, titled Équipe Proust, commenced the labors of cataloguing, chronologising, transcribing and describing the immense volume of

¹⁵⁵ Herring, review of *The James Joyce Archive*.

¹⁵⁶ Crispi, “The *James Joyce Archive*.”

¹⁵⁷ See Schmid, *Processes of Literary Creation*, 124; Deppman, Ferrer and Groden, eds., *Genetic Criticism*, 17; Whereas the official website of Équipe Proust informs that ‘Fonds Proust’ was assembled in 1962 and made complete in 1985, Schmid points out via her book published in 1998 that it has only four carnets (small notebooks), which she classifies according to her important related typology as being dedicated to taking random notes or composing short sketches, compared to its much vaster body of seventy-five cahiers (normal-sized exercise books) bearing the author’s drafting of narrative fragments, further mentioning that the fifth carnet, which Suzy Mante-Proust gave to André Maurois, now belongs to a private collector. See “Équipe Proust,” ITEM, accessed April 26, 2016, <http://www.item.ens.fr/?id=13857> and Schmid, *Processes of Literary Creation*, 119.

materials of carnets, cahiers, typescripts, proofs, loose leaves, residua and even early writings. It started publishing its journal *Bulletin d'informations proustiennes* (henceforth BIP) in Spring 1975, under the directorship of Bernard Brun.¹⁵⁸

As Marion Schmid asserts, this first wave of genetic Proust criticism came about in the 1970s.¹⁵⁹ According to her delineation, it is within that decade that the preliminary and overall description, qualification and chronology concerning Proust's writing process and method were drawn up, as witnessed in some representative resources published in the years to follow. Maurice Bardèche's 1971 publication ascribes "some sort of chaos theory" to them. An analysis of Proust's important exercise book *Contre Sainte-Beuve* was edited and published by Pierre Clarac and Yves Sandre in 1971. More nuanced points concerning the same exercise book were raised by Claudine Quémard in 1976. A transversal reading of the exercise books of the period 1908-11 was published by dedicated Flaubertian scholar Raymond Debray-Genette in the same year. An important macro-analysis of the novel's developmental stages is included in Alison Finch's book published in 1977, and, finally, an observation into one of Proust's lesser-known small notebooks is included in Christian Robin's article published in 1977.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ See "Équipe Proust" and Schmid, *Processes of Literary Creation*, 124-25.

¹⁵⁹ She identifies Maurice Bardèche as "one of the first scholars who had access to the manuscripts," especially in regard to his *Marcel Proust romancier* published in 1971. See Schmid, *Processes of Literary Creation*, 121n8.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 120nn4-5, 121nn7-8, 123n10; Reference for those publications is as following according to the order of their listing: Maurice Bardèche, *Marcel Proust romancier* (Paris: Les Sept Couleurs, 1971); Marcel Proust, *Contre Sainte-Beuve*, eds. Pierre Clarac and Yves Sandre (Paris: Éditions Gallimard [Bibliothèque de la Pléiade], 1971); Claudine Quémard, "Autour de trois avant-textes de l' 'Ouverture' de la *Recherche*: Nouvelles approches des problèmes du *Contre Sainte-Beuve*," *Bulletin d'Informations Proustiennes* 3 (Spring 1976); Raymonde Debray-Genette, "Thème, figure, épisode: Genèse des aubépines," *Poétique* 25 (1976): 49-71;

When genetic Beckett criticism was moving its focus from textuality toward authorial intention via the initiative of a handful of innovative and highly enthusiastic early-career scholars, Proust Studies was vigorously covering the problems of textuality first and foremost, led by the French government's initiatives. This trend may well have reflected the aforementioned Falconer's timeline of the development of genetic criticism, but it is also true that this particularly French emphasis on textuality was further strengthened by a certain theoretically-inclined and anti-authorial branch of genetic criticism formed in post-1968 France, under the title of 'critique génétique'. This strand had been spearheaded by the launching of a research unit led by Louis Hay for the collection of Heinrich Heine manuscripts acquired by the Bibliothèque Nationale in 1966, and had first been shaped by Jean Bellemin-Noël's 1972 case study, *Le Texte et l'avant-texte: Les Brouillons d'un poème de Milosz*.¹⁶¹ The French literary tradition itself was largely formed in competition with German philology, so its focus on the mechanism of writing rather than on interpretative reading revealed the direction that genetic Proust criticism was to take. Whereas studies on writing and reading are well articulated and balanced in genetic Joyce criticism, genetic Beckett criticism contrasts with genetic Proust criticism by its clear focus on close reading and the resulting consistent marginalisation of Beckett's writing. The next decade would demand the promotion of Beckett's genetic material from the status of *one of the important resources* to that of *the most valuable resource*.

Alison Winton [Alison Finch], *Proust's Additions: The Making of 'A la recherche du temps perdu'* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Christian Robin, "Une édition du 'Carnet de 1908'", *Bulletin d'Informations Proustiennes* 6 (Autumn 1977).

¹⁶¹ Deppman, Ferrer and Groden, eds., *Genetic Criticism*, 7.

Therefore, as we have seen, the academic and material foundations for the promotion and appreciation of Beckett's literary art were laid during the 1970s. It is a unique factor in Beckett Studies that the early expansion of scholarship relied not upon general and theoretical criticism, but substantially upon an empirical and material-based scholarship, c.f. Linda Ben-Zvi's 1978 work on Mauthner. In terms of Joyce and Proust Studies, the critical legacy had already been formed by a speculative and theoretical critical tradition, and later initiatives of institutionalisation regarding critical activity (under the auspices of the author's estate or of state bodies) were met with antagonism and opposition. This tension is illustrated by the most exemplary case where Derrida declared in 1988 that "[t]here can be no Joycean foundation, no Joycean family; there can be no Joycean legitimacy".¹⁶² His claim was made directly against the International James Joyce Foundation, originally founded by Thomas F. Staley at the University of Tulsa in 1967, and its canonical and institutional import. For Proust Studies, a genetic, material-based enterprise had been growing more in harmony with theoretical criticism in the first place under the influence of the anti-positivist and anti-philological atmosphere of Paris.¹⁶³ But Beckett Studies faced relatively little opposition in its authorial and institutional efforts. The means to its distinctive critical power lay in the sensible recourse to the abundance of Beckett's hitherto unpublished material. The radically pronounced and innovative visual and musical

¹⁶² Jacques Derrida, "Hear say yes in Joyce," in *The Augmented Ninth: Proceedings of the Ninth International James Joyce Symposium, Frankfurt 1984*, Bernard Benstock, ed. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1988), 49, quoted in Geert Lernout, *The French Joyce* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), 227.

¹⁶³ See Van Hulle, *Textual Awareness*, 29-36; David Ellison, "Proust and Posterity," in *The Cambridge Companion to Proust* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 2001), 207-8.

nature of his theatrical works also made this recourse to the illuminating genetic material more urgent for matters of interpretation – and it is the visual aspect of Beckett’s manuscripts which has in several instances proved galvanising in reconsidering the potential of materials in the archive.

Meanwhile, Knowlson and Pilling, the Reading duo most responsible for this institutionalisation of the study of Beckett’s art “of such density and uniqueness,” were still careful in announcing the full application of this “correspondingly original kind of criticism, which will not depart so far from tradition as to become esoteric, but which will not be afraid to be unconventional when the need arises.”¹⁶⁴ As has been found in this decade, however, they were still cautious not to prioritise the interpretative validation by means of those unpublished manuscripts and other records over conventional interpretative insights based on the published text. This was a cogent as well as reasonable stance, for that wealth of authorial material had just been collated and began to be studied, and it would take some time before the depths of such material could be fully explored in order to be able to gauge the full range of relevant detail for individual and diverse studies. This somewhat awkward coexistence between the empirical, material-based scholarship and theoretical, text-based criticism would extend into the next decade, as we shall see, even with regard to the same objects of genetic inquiry, Beckett’s dramatic works.

¹⁶⁴ Knowlson and Pilling, *Frescoes of the Skull*, xi.

4. The 1980s: From Institution to Agency

Federman and Fletcher's *Samuel Beckett: His Works and His Critics*, published in 1970, was the first full-scale reference work covering primary and secondary materials from 1929 to 1966, to be "biblioglorified"¹⁶⁵ in Beckett Studies. Yet Admussen's *The Samuel Beckett Manuscripts*, published in 1979, which was a guide to "the nature and location of this body of material,"¹⁶⁶ meant 'scripto-glorification' for genetic Beckett criticism. The former was an attempt to impose order as well as to produce a testimony of the then nascent phenomenon of academic Beckett criticism. The latter signaled the preparation of a material base which would enable genetic work within Beckett Studies. But the creation of reference works has not actually been the field where Beckett Studies proved itself to be strongest. Ever since J. C. C. Mays abandoned the project of updating the 1970 bibliography due to the inability of its bibliographical system to accommodate the post-Nobel Prize critical explosion,¹⁶⁷ there has not been any attempt to draw up a complete annotated bibliography of criticism written in English (other than in the forms of introductory summary, appendices or selections like that published in 2011 by

¹⁶⁵ David Hayman, "A Coming of Age: Beckett Biblio-glorified," *James Joyce Quarterly* Vol. 8, No. 4 (1971), quoted in P.J. Murphy et al., eds., *Critique of Beckett Criticism: A Guide to Research in English, French, and German* (Columbia, S.C.: Camden House, 1994), 7.

¹⁶⁶ Admussen, *The Samuel Beckett Manuscripts*, 3, quoted in Murphy et al., eds., *Critique of Beckett Criticism*, 8.

¹⁶⁷ J. C. C. Mays, "Beckett Bibliography: A Revised Edition of Federman and Fletcher, or Not?" *The Beckett Circle / Le Cercle de Beckett: Newsletter of the Samuel Beckett Society*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Fall 1978), quoted in Gontarski, "Introduction," in *On Beckett: Essays and Criticism*, ed. Gontarski (New York: Grove Press, 1986), 14n4.

Charles A. Carpenter of publications about Beckett's dramatic works).¹⁶⁸ Admussen's reference book on manuscript material has not been followed by an updated version. The exponentially expanding scope of Beckett Studies seem to have prospered in terms of a multidirectional critical progression, but certainly not in terms of focused location registers or bibliographies.

This short supply of retrospective surveys of criticism means that researchers could be prone to the pitfall of failing to refer to existing research. Therefore, critics might be prone to ignoring gaps in the field that need to be filled, and even to publishing their own unique but isolated projects. In such a situation, independent and dedicated contributions, such as those provided by P. J. Murphy in 1994 and by David Pattie in 2004, assume huge importance despite their necessary limitations in scope, as well as their need for immediate updating.¹⁶⁹ In his more expansive version, Murphy classifies the early 1960s as "the Early Studies" and the post-1965 period until 1980 largely as "the General Studies," thus confirming the arrival of the second-generation criticism announced by Philip H. Solomon in 1975, and by Knowlson and Pilling in 1979.¹⁷⁰ For the general critical landscape, the 1980s are the period when the criticism of Beckett's prose works began to embark

¹⁶⁸ Charles A. Carpenter, *The Dramatic Works of Samuel Beckett: A Selective Bibliography of Publications about his Plays and Their Conceptual Foundations* (London and New York: Continuum, 2011).

¹⁶⁹ Murphy, "II: Beckett Criticism in English," 7-65; David Pattie, "Beckett and Bibliography," in *Palgrave Advances in Samuel Beckett Studies*, ed., Lois Oppenheim (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2004), 226-46.

¹⁷⁰ According to Murphy, Solomon's rationale behind his declaration seems not very different from that of Knowlson and Pilling in its staunch emphasis on "detail" against "inclusiveness," as is found in Philip H. Solomon, *The Life After Birth: Imagery in Samuel Beckett's Trilogy* (University, MS: Romance Monographs, 1975), quoted in Murphy, "II: Beckett Criticism in English," 29.

on full-scale scrutiny of individual published works. At the time, a critical dramatic counterpart was crucially expanding its existing boundaries of existentialist and formalist readings regarding the actualities of performance, spurred most significantly by Beckett's own directing from 1966 until his final years. This period was one of specialisation and, while the prose criticism occupied itself primarily with trying to understand individual published works, the drama criticism was able to draw upon a wider range of research methodologies from Performance Studies, the study of literary and cultural context, and early genetic pursuits, beside the existing humanistic and formalist readings of individual or combined works.¹⁷¹ The later part of this period also met with the upsurge of poststructuralist critical theory, whose more notable proponents are Moorjani, Ben-Zvi and Connor.

The earlier part of the decade was comparatively quiet regarding publication of any genetic criticism-related study, except for Knowlson's ongoing project of promoting an audience-response type of performance criticism, which was first signaled by his monograph *Light and Darkness in the Theatre of Samuel Beckett*, published in 1972 and expanded by his co-authored *Frescoes of the Skull* of 1979 as well as his edition *Krapp's Last Tape: A Theatre Workbook* of 1980. In his article "State of play: performance changes and Beckett scholarship," published in *JOBS* Number 10 in 1983, Knowlson for the first time mentions his plan to publish all Beckett's production notebooks for different dramatic pieces, notebooks donated by Beckett to the collection of Reading University Library, in a series titled *The Production Notebooks of Samuel Beckett*.¹⁷² It is notable that Knowlson defines the

¹⁷¹ Murphy, "II: Beckett Criticism in English," 40-54.

¹⁷² Knowlson, "State of play: performance changes and Beckett scholarship," *Journal of*

production notebooks as theatre material and differentiates them from objects of textual studies:

As scholars we are perhaps so conditioned to working only with books and manuscripts that the importance of this kind of theatre material is only gradually coming to be recognised.¹⁷³

This idiosyncrasy on the part of Knowlson can be understood in relation to those circumstances in which genetic criticism was yet to arrive fully within Anglophone literary criticism, as Hans Walter Gabler points out.¹⁷⁴ It also underscores Knowlson's original purpose of involving himself not in textual criticism but in "theatrical empiricism" – though not necessarily with the negative connotations that Murphy implies with the phrase.¹⁷⁵ The production notebooks are clearly textual material, and they belong, especially in the light of later practice in genetic Beckett criticism of the post-2000 and BDMP era, to "epigenetics," which deals with the idea that the genesis of a text continues after publication.¹⁷⁶

In line with this category, furthermore, Knowlson promotes the

Beckett Studies, No. 10 (Autumn 1983).

¹⁷³ Knowlson, "State of play."

¹⁷⁴ Hans Walter Gabler, "The James Joyce Archive: A Publisher's Gift to Joyce Studies," *Genetic Joyce Studies* Special Issue: 25th Anniversary of the *James Joyce Archive* (Summer 2002).

¹⁷⁵ Murphy, "II: Beckett Criticism in English," 41; Thus having made an accusation, Murphy clarifies that Knowlson is an exemplary exception as a creative balancing between painstaking interpretation and theatre empiricism.

¹⁷⁶ Van Hulle, "Modern Manuscripts and Textual Epigenetics: Samuel Beckett's Works between Completion and Incompletion," *Modernism/modernity*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (November 2011), 804.

interpretative authority of epigenetic material in a manner similar to that of Pilling's in "Beckett's *Proust*." This is because it represents "a further phase in his [Beckett's] efforts to perfect his own work for the stage." Knowlson points out that the "preservation of his directorial efforts is of added interest and can also be of value as an aid to critical understanding of the plays." Knowlson's "study of the theatre notebooks, interviews with actors, directors, lightning and set designers offers perhaps the best chance we have of establishing what might be called a Beckettian 'theatrical poetic.'" Now the tone has changed from comparatives to (qualified) superlatives. Knowlson emphatically concludes this defensive overture on a positive note:

"[s]tudy of the production notebooks and related materials should, therefore, if properly conducted, not only reveal much about Beckett's practice as a director, but finally, and in some ways more enduringly, assist in formulating an optimum reading of his plays."¹⁷⁷

This position is certainly stronger than that found in his edited *Krapp* of 1980, where critics and theatrical practitioners are supposed to benefit from each other's abilities in a more egalitarian mode.¹⁷⁸ And, in his 1985 publication, *Happy Days: Samuel Beckett's Production Notebook*, the prototype version of the then upcoming *Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett*, Knowlson makes clear the reason for differentiating these production notebooks. This is his focus upon their

¹⁷⁷ Knowlson, "State of play."

¹⁷⁸ Knowlson, ed., *Theatre Workbook 1*, 7.

textuality, according to which he appreciates them as "a much better guide to the way that Beckett now 'sees' his plays in the theatre", as contributing "significantly to a better understanding of the plays themselves", and as "the most comprehensive record of the plays as they have been revised in the light of the author's own staging." Therefore, the study of Beckett's plays through their performance history, even though not "sacrosanct," nor "a model for imitation," proves "valuable."¹⁷⁹ This subjugation of textual epigenetics to the task of clarifying Beckett's artistic vision explains a lot about the character and circumstances of genetic Beckett criticism at this time. Genetic Joyce or Proust criticism involves, first and foremost, dealing with exogenetic material, which pertains to external source texts, together with the endogenetic process, which is the way these exogenetic elements are incorporated into literary or dramatic drafts. Genetic Beckett criticism's first and foremost endeavour, however, was dedicated to analysing the theatrical epigenetic stage in order to clarify Beckett's theatrical poetics and artistic vision.

One might think that this uniqueness on the part of genetic Beckett criticism, especially in the Anglophone sphere, would be explained by the fact that Beckett is primarily a dramatist, whereas Joyce and Proust are novelists. But the state of things is not so simple. Subsuming the stage of textual endogenetics indiscriminately under the problem of clarifying his artistic vision without defining the status of the published text complicates many issues related to textuality in Beckett's work. If performance elements really had mattered so greatly to Beckett that he would regard textuality as subservient, why did he not correct existing published texts? How to explain his well-known defensiveness of textual fidelity in

¹⁷⁹ Knowlson, ed., *Happy Days: Samuel Beckett's Production Notebook*, 11-4.

staging his works? Furthermore, not every contemporary dramatist or director concurs with belief in the superiority of performance over textuality. Antoine Vitez, one of the greatest theatre directors of the twentieth century but who denies the specificity of performance, contends that "what is performed is the work, the work is eternal; only the written work has the durability of cinematographic work."¹⁸⁰ The French genetic critic Jean-Louis Lebrave argues that "it is impossible to avoid a paradox that is seemingly inherent to theater and to the performing arts in general". This is the paradox of the ephemerality of performance, the fact that "the genesis of a staging leaves traces of the creating process, but the result of this process vanishes forever at the very moment it comes to fruition."¹⁸¹ For Lebrave as well, "it is the existence of the finished work as a fully autonomous object that, by granting the status of *avant-texte* to the traces of the creating process, makes genetic criticism possible."¹⁸²

However, Knowlson's foregrounding of artistic vision does not acknowledge this paradox, and, in terms of that regressive analysis of the creative process, chooses to ignore it. But this clearly progressive projection toward a more evolved artistic vision does not always render things clear. One important problem posed is this: do those specific and one-off staging circumstances not necessarily force some aesthetic compromises, and reveal a gap between the artistic vision and its manifestation? Further, if that should be the case, is there not a need for

¹⁸⁰ Emile Copferman, *Conversations avec Antoine Vitez* (Paris: P.O.L., 1999), 156-57, quoted in Jean-Louis Lebrave, "Can Genetic Criticism be Applied to the Performing Arts?" in William Kinderman and Joseph E. Jones, eds., *Genetic Criticism and the Creative Process: Essays from Music, Literature, and Theater* (New York: University of Rochester Press, 2009), 79.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Ibid., 80.

distinguishing between a more intact version of artistic vision and practical or circumstantial compromises? The artistic vision that Knowlson here postulates seems somehow to transcend the prerequisites of these questions. He addresses this in a similarly focused article published four years later. In promoting *Theatrical Notebooks*, Knowlson contends:

[I]t seems to me that the distinction between practical staging (what has been called 'the local situation') and issues of vision, theme and structure is a purely artificial one that for much of the directorial material simply cannot be sustained. The notion of the writer-director translating one sign system into another is not, of course, entirely appropriate here, since Beckett's plays were written specifically with the possibilities and the constraints of the medium for which they were intended very much in mind.¹⁸³

This argument could sound odd, for there would be no dramatist who would write without a consideration of the possibilities and the constraints of the dramatic medium for which his works are intended. This is the reason that dramatic writers like Alan Schneider and Rosemary Pountney point out the need to differentiate between Beckett's production changes as practical decisions or artistic judgments.¹⁸⁴ It would certainly not be possible to pin down Beckett's authorial intention or his changing authorial intentions once and for all, but it would certainly be worthwhile

¹⁸³ Knowlson, "Beckett as Director," 452.

¹⁸⁴ Pountney, *Theatre of Shadows*, 189-90, 300n59; and Alan Schneider, "Working with Beckett," in *Samuel Beckett: The Art of Rhetoric*, eds., Morot-Sir, Harper, and McMillan (Chapel Hill, 1976), 280.

to try to measure, describe and isolate authentic commonalities across the different production histories, thus 'failing better' and better again. This is also the reason that the more textual-minded dramatic scholar Gontarski advocates the creation of an accurate and thus definitive volume of Beckett's dramatic texts, which have become varied and inconsistent due to production changes or inconsistent editing.¹⁸⁵ Knowlson's radical implication is that performance is not dependent upon the text, but the text is rather dependent upon performance. Furthermore, what ultimately "counts" is what is in Beckett's mind, not what is written by Beckett's hand.

The seemingly transcendental self-sufficiency of this all-encompassing notion of the artistic vision, which is not approachable via textual history or decentred via dramaturgical analysis, would in the long run be able to significantly limit the hermeneutic scope of understanding Beckett's works. This unanchored projection would, in the end, defy materialisation and comparison at the same time. Knowlson's interpretation of Beckett's dramatic art has obviously been highly enlightening and influential. However, this self-sufficient notion of artistic vision, together with his strictly formalist appreciation of Beckett's dramatic art – striking balances between light and darkness, movement and stillness, sound and silence – is partly responsible for the quite formalist turn that Beckett Studies took before Knowlson's next project. His authorised biography inaugurated a new era in the study of the cultural and historical contexts for Beckett's work in the late 1990s. But it is yet to be clarified whether Beckett's dramatic art truly merits this radical autonomy.

¹⁸⁵ Gontarski, "A Centenary of Missed Opportunities."

Other than this authorial initiative by Knowlson, the 1980s produced the first two full-scale monographs of genetic criticism within Beckett Studies, respectively by Gontarski and Pountney. They heralded a new era in genetic inquiry, characterised by the combination of close pre-textual and textual analysis with sophisticated interpretation, which Murphy introduces, perhaps a bit too soon, as “‘third generation’ Beckett criticism.”¹⁸⁶ Murphy sees this as a development of the “second-generation” announced in 1979, wherein genetic materials had been used in illustrating the genesis of the works.¹⁸⁷ Gontarski’s *The Intent of Undoing in Samuel Beckett’s Dramatic Texts*¹⁸⁸ is a more updated work from that he published regarding *Happy Days* in 1977, and it incorporates all his close examinations of Beckett’s composition material for theatre. What Gontarski achieves in this second monograph is a recapitulation of the making of Beckett’s texts, or “a biography of texts,” which mostly covers the theatrical works published from the 1950s until the 1980s. The book also features an overview of Beckett’s aesthetics pertaining to his artistic decisions as these were inspired by his early philosophical interests and were applied throughout his writing practice.

In the history of genetic Beckett criticism, *The Intent of Undoing* will be remembered as a memorable mixture of textual scrutiny and critical dissection. Gontarski’s previous account of *Happy Days* had taken a more critical stance, dealing with the universal nature of Beckett’s literature as one which contains the philosophical, literary and religious mythologies of western man, manifest in the

¹⁸⁶ Murphy, “II: Beckett Criticism in English,” 10.

¹⁸⁷ Knowlson and Pilling, *Frescoes of the Skull*, xii.

¹⁸⁸ Gontarski, *The Intent of Undoing in Samuel Beckett’s Dramatic Texts* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985).

play's rich array of allusions in its typically "vaguening"¹⁸⁹ pattern. However, Gontarski also captured a dialectical and thus more dynamic relationship between writing practicalities and Beckett's critical ideas, especially those of his younger days. Beckett's aesthetics are thus presented as a process of "undoing", which initially allows and then struggles to depart from the Kantian "phenomena" in a creative tension with the critical convictions professed earlier.¹⁹⁰ That process ranges across complicated dialectics in theme and form, and finally reaches the formal "noumena," which approaches Schopenhauerian music and the Dionysian art of Nietzsche in its formal characteristic of repetition, having sometimes made this process of dialectics itself the very subject of its theatrical writing.¹⁹¹ Other than insight into Beckett's sometimes complicated writing process and the discussion of that writing's aesthetic implications, a glance at Beckett's early formation as a literary scholar with a huge appetite for philosophical ideas stands out as another point of interest in this book.

The ambitious but sensitive task of comprehending both textual empiricism and theory sometimes leaves discussion lacking in consistency and strictness. Gontarski's brilliant technical arrangement comprising the charting of manuscript drafts, source clarification and terminology of textual criticism – all conveniently set up together at the heading of each section – most of the time exhibits a facility in textual criticism which is rare among Beckett scholars. But contradictions are found when Gontarski challenges Enoch Brater's linking of the genesis of *Not I* to the

¹⁸⁹ The origin of this coinage lies with Beckett's own revision note to one of his manuscripts for *Happy Days*, as confirmed in Gontarski, *Beckett's Happy Days*, 36.

¹⁹⁰ Gontarski, *The Intent of Undoing*, 183.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 184.

surrealist tradition in light of Beckett's creative struggle as found in his drafts.¹⁹² At the same time, Gontarski argues that the final surrealist image of the film *Un chien andalou* suggests Winnie in *Happy Days* – without giving any supporting explanation.¹⁹³ Gontarski even goes so far as to summon some grand theoretical interpretations invoking Schopenhauer and Nietzsche in the Afterword, which are out of place in light of the manuscript information he consulted throughout the book.¹⁹⁴ The drafts of the play form, finally, a spur to a variety of speculation not necessarily tied to or derived from them.

On another occasion, Gontarski acknowledges Beckett's professed formative experiences in Morocco and Malta of February 1972 as a source for writing *Not I*. Yet at the same time, he further tracks its origin back to the "Kilcool" material written as early as August 1963 and then discarded.¹⁹⁵ Gontarski here seems to abide by the "centrality of texts." According to his book, Beckett responded to his question of whether he was consciously working, in 'Kilcool', with the same dramatic vision as in the upcoming *Not I*: "I cannot tell if it was still there when I wrote *Not I*. Possibly, but not necessarily.... Comparison of texts should give the answer."¹⁹⁶ But Gontarski ends up weakening this principle of his genetic inquiry by a contradictory stance he takes in the following observation:

Despite this complete record of the gestation of *Not I*, from its beginnings in the 'Kilcool' fragment, the number of certain comments one can make

¹⁹² Ibid., 149.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 215n11.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 183-5.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 131-49.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., xvii.

about Beckett's creative process are few, for so much of Beckett's thinking is never set down on paper. That said, however, we can also say without contradiction that the *Not I* manuscripts bring us quite close to Beckett's creative process.¹⁹⁷

One cannot be too cautious about dealing with genetic material and drawing definitive interpretation from the process. But it is to be wondered whether Gontarski, given his acknowledgement that so much of the creative process relies upon unrecorded "thinking", would then have been able to effectively challenge Brater's (surrealist) conjecture. As this is one of the first full critical encounters with the vast body of Beckett's genetic material after it had been made available to the public in the 1970s, the disparate and recondite clues of anecdote, text and context are still difficult to be folded into a coherent genetic account with a consistent focus – even when focused on a single piece of work. Gontarski may have tried at this point to handle too many things at once, making efforts to fill in gaps and to round off ambiguities with poststructuralist terms and concepts. It is interesting to note here that Gontarski's and Knowlson's focuses are sharply contrasted, even in their similarly genetic inquiries for *Not I*. Contrary to Gontarski's stress on the centrality of texts, Knowlson is reported to have conjectured that "Beckett may [...] have concentrated upon the text simply because that was what remained to be written, the two initial elements being already clearly in his mind before he set pen to paper."¹⁹⁸ Thus, even for the same genetic material, its perception and

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 148.

¹⁹⁸ Knowlson, "Figures in Space: Samuel Beckett's Recent Writing for the Stage and

interpretation can significantly vary according to the focus of the researcher. Nevertheless, in terms of a focused and coherent account, Knowlson's progressive genetic account, with its emphases on artistic vision and theatre empiricism, proves stronger than Gontarski's regressive one, with its emphases on the centrality of texts and critical discretion.

This equivocality of focus found in the first full-scale textual genetic accounts in Beckett Studies is partly due to the specific critical trend of the 1980s then predominant across literary studies, that of poststructuralism. Poststructuralism certainly contributed to the radical diversification of areas and applications for criticism of Beckett and his works. Its all-purpose tools and system of symbolical analysis gave humanistic discourse the means to analyse cultural artifacts philosophically, linguistically, psychoanalytically, culturally and politically at the same time. As Pattie explains, these poststructuralist theories later facilitated an introduction of cultural studies into Beckett criticism in the 2000s, largely on the strength of the authorised biography of Beckett published by Knowlson in the mid-1990s.¹⁹⁹ Notwithstanding, it is regrettable that this first decade of full textual genetics in Beckett Studies coincided with the blooming of poststructuralist critical theories within Anglophone literary studies, in that, within this context, textual genetic scholars were motivated more to solve interpretative conundrums than to fully introduce and collate them as they are. The latter scenario would have definitely made things easier for successive researchers to take up subsequent enquiries and, in the long run, might have more effectively aided the cause of

Television," paper presented at the "Time and Space in Samuel Beckett" Special Session, MLA Convention 1977, quoted in Gontarski, *The Intent of Undoing*, 133.

¹⁹⁹ Pattie, "Beckett and Bibliography," 244-6.

genetic Beckett criticism, which is always a laborious and deservedly communal task.

This ambitious critical voyage ventured by Gontarski – between the Scylla of poststructuralism and the Charybdis of Beckettian texts – is counterbalanced by Pountney's carefully systematised and applied pragmatism, as embodied in her 1988 *Theatre of Shadows: Samuel Beckett's Drama 1956-76*.²⁰⁰ The book has as its target texts Beckett's theatrical pieces covering the period specified by the title, but it also includes a preliminary study of Beckett's first three plays in French and an update on the most recent ones, up to *What Where* written in 1983 plus a genetic reading of "Lessness". Its scope thus exceeds that of Gontarski's, and its conveniently structured design for scholarship as well as its systematic and empirical approach focused on theatrical practicalities as an aspect of Beckett's aesthetics, compensates for Gontarski's narrower approach. Considering that theatre and performance studies was still in the process of establishing itself as a well-defined subdiscipline of Drama Studies at that point, this is the area where Beckett Studies definitely commands an edge in innovation.²⁰¹

Being a professional actor herself, Pountney had the clear-cut interest, vision and training necessary to grasp Beckett's radical innovations in theatre in terms of ambiguity, structure and stagecraft. Consequently, Pountney organised her contents

²⁰⁰ Pountney, *Theatre of Shadows: Samuel Beckett's Drama 1956-76* (Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble Books, 1988).

²⁰¹ As a symbolic illustration, the Graduate Drama Department at New York University was renamed as the Department of Performance Studies in 1980. The first international performance studies conference took place at the same Department in 1990, and the first world-wide organisation devoted exclusively to performance studies held its first conference in 1995 at the same University; See James Harding and Cindy Rosenthal, eds., *The Rise of Performance Studies: Rethinking Richard Schechner's Broad Spectrum* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011), 6-7.

according to Beckett's patterning, drafting, vaguening and stagecraft, which are enhanced by such resourceful appendices as charts, tables, photocopies and transcriptions of composition manuscripts. She hints at Gontarski's influence by citing his 1977 publication²⁰² and proves to be familiar with both the terminology and presentation of textual genetics. But she does not follow the full account of textual evolution in her chosen works, and concentrates on a selective presentation of the strongest manuscript examples.²⁰³ This preference is further evinced by her less-than-complete cataloguing of the manuscript material, dealing with only six typescripts containing changes among the total eight versions of *Not I*, for example, while perceiving a single catalogued holograph manuscript of the same piece (UoR MS1227/7/12/1) as two holographs, whereas Gontarski provided a thorough reference of all manuscript and typescript versions.²⁰⁴ But technical adroitness compensates for this, as she employs diacritical signs – allowing consideration of the dynamic aspect of the writing process into Beckett Studies for the first time – an approach subsequently taken up by many Beckettian genetic inquiries.

It is noteworthy that Gontarski and Pountney come to very similar conclusions about the pattern and character of Beckett's writing process. That is, the pattern of transition from the specific to the abstract. This is the "universal" for Gontarski and "vaguening" for Pountney.²⁰⁵ This pattern is found across the manuscript and typescript drafts in the process of undoing or vaguening, a process

²⁰² Pountney, *Theatre of Shadows*, 60, 157.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, xiv.

²⁰⁴ See *Ibid.*, 244-6; Gontarski, *The Intent of Undoing*, 142-9.

²⁰⁵ Compare the following: *Ibid.*, 3, 184; Pountney, *Theatre of Shadows*, xi, 100-2.

approaching ultimately the aesthetic state of music.²⁰⁶ They also share an insight into the specific nature of Beckett's artistic turning-point of this middle period of his theatrical writing, which is the genre fusion of prose and drama into the use of monologue form.²⁰⁷ Pountney, however, goes much further in considering both the influence of Beckett's encounter with the radio medium as well as the potential of his art for visual media.²⁰⁸ But the two critics diverge when Gontarski finds some instances of inconsistency, indecision and improvisation across Beckett's writing process, and frames them under the heading of a dialectic between "contrary impulses."²⁰⁹ Pountney, on the other hand, seems to endow these features with a more teleological character, seeing Beckett as "intentionally working toward ambiguity", and his dramatic method rather as having "remained consistent."²¹⁰

A vital point for genetic Beckett criticism is raised when Pountney evaluates Beckett's directorial practice. Pountney points to the practice of alteration of script or stage effects that usually happens in Beckett's theatre directorship and qualifies it as happening sometimes as ad-hoc.²¹¹ Pountney thus questions the status of the production alterations by Beckett and observes a set of complexities related to their status. She suggests that the broad issue as to whether such decisions need to be included in any new critically edited text is one of the most important problems to

²⁰⁶ Compare the following as well: Gontarski, *The Intent of Undoing*, 183; Pountney, *Theatre of Shadows*, 10.

²⁰⁷ See Gontarski, *The Intent of Undoing*, 1-21, 145; Pountney, *Theatre of Shadows*, 10.

²⁰⁸ Compare the following: Gontarski, *The Intent of Undoing*, 112-27, 187-92; Pountney, *Theatre of Shadows*, 10, 163-233.

²⁰⁹ Gontarski, *The Intent of Undoing*, 145.

²¹⁰ Pountney, *Theatre of Shadows*, xiii, 100.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 89-90.

be discussed within Beckett Studies.²¹² It is another strength of Pountney's book that such problems proceed not only by theoretical and discursive means but also by illustrating some specific technical complications encountered in performing Beckett's works. She considers, for example, the difficulty of handling the lighting distinctively in *Not I*, so as to efficiently shift the audience's attention between the illuminated mouth and the shrouded figure. It is also interesting to note that she accepts Beckett's experiences of Caravaggio and North Africa as inspirations for those two figures, as invoked respectively by Knowlson and Brater.²¹³ However, Pountney sees Beckett's removal of this listening figure in performance to be a consequence of an unexpected failure in the communication of its intended effect.²¹⁴ These views run counter to related points made by Gontarski, who, given his strictly textual analysis, saw the auditor as an incidental and thus disposable figure. Pountney's is an argument also challenged by Brater's surrealist (and stricter) interpretation, which sees such recursion to practical issues as oversimplifying as well as unfounded.²¹⁵ But Pountney reaffirms in the end that those instances of failure are only "infinitesimal" in comparison to the radical and revitalising innovation that Beckett brought to theatrical convention.²¹⁶ It is not just because Beckett's writing reached the essential as Gontarski argues, but also because it radically challenges the audience to realise the generic implications of Beckett's writing at the same time, according to Pountney's stance as a trained actor.²¹⁷

²¹² Ibid., 189-90, 300n59.

²¹³ Ibid., 190.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 191.

²¹⁵ Gontarski, *The Intent of Undoing*, 148-9.

²¹⁶ Pountney, *Theatre of Shadows*, 191.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 193.

Regarding the specific issue of Beckett's late inclusion of the note about the auditor's "gesture of helpless compassion,"²¹⁸ Gontarski seems to implicitly accept the fact, whereas Pountney tackles it full-on. Gontarski locates the earliest stage of the note in the corrected copy of the Royal Court script deposited at HRHRC and detects a duplicated copy in the corresponding TS8, which is the final *Not I* typescript held at UoR, but which contains no such corrections.²¹⁹ For Pountney, the addition of this stage direction is not found within the drafts but had suddenly appeared in the Faber text.²²⁰ From Gontarski's standpoint of textual criticism, that particular authorial intervention is justified as "a concrete manifestation of the narrator's (and author's) confessional voice", or "the visual representation of the internal conflict within the narrator of 'Kilcool'."²²¹ Yet it stands out from Pountney's theatrical practicality, together with the typed synopsis of the play listing "Life scenes" as a unnecessary description, as "alien to Beckett's general practice of keeping his options open."²²² Here Pountney strikes a skeptical tone, similar to that of Gontarski, about the validation offered by the study of an author's discarded drafts. For her, it is not because they fail to include the totality of the author's thought process, as in the abovementioned case of Gontarski,²²³ rather it is because, even when a comprehensive set of pre-publication materials is available, there must be an equally well-founded intention behind their discarding, which is to "free the

²¹⁸ Samuel Beckett, *Collected Shorter Plays of Samuel Beckett* (London: Faber, 1984), 215.

²¹⁹ Gontarski, *The Intent of Undoing*, 142-3.

²²⁰ Pountney, *Theatre of Shadows*, 101.

²²¹ Gontarski, *The Intent of Undoing*, 148.

²²² Pountney, *Theatre of Shadows*, 101.

²²³ Gontarski, *The Intent of Undoing*, 148.

plays from limiting identifications."²²⁴

Pountney goes on to criticise John and Beryl Fletcher's inclusion of an alleged original intention in their Introduction to *Fin de partie*, which they edited and published in 1970. While acknowledging the usefulness of clarifying the origin of some obscurities in expression, Pountney fears the destructive effect it may have upon Beckett's meticulously constructed text, "unless the full evolutionary process is stressed." She thereby encourages expansive versions of genetic criticism regarding Beckett's theatrical texts.²²⁵ For Pountney, Beckett is not a careless cutter who naively aims for ambiguity per se, nor for simple impenetrability, but evinces a clear aesthetic vision with which he communicates enough information to stimulate the audience's imagination into actively fleshing out his artistic aims.²²⁶ This is one of the biggest achievements of Beckett's theatrical innovation as described by Pountney,²²⁷ who brings a combination of professional acting experience and serious scholarship relating to Beckett's theatrical pieces which was at the time unique in Beckett Studies.

These brief considerations of the two most important genetic inquiries of Beckett's theatrical works of the decade help bring into sharper contrast the aforementioned positions of Knowlson concerning problems of authorial intention, the status of post-publication revisions, and the wider validity of genetic evidence. Knowlson published *Happy Days: The Production Notebook of Samuel Beckett* in 1985, which is the same year as that in which Gontarski's *The Intent of Undoing*

²²⁴ Pountney, *Theatre of Shadows*, 101-2.

²²⁵ John and Beryl Fletcher, eds., *Samuel Beckett: "Fin de partie"* (London: Methuen Educational, 1970), cited in Pountney *Theatre of Shadows*, 101-2.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, 102.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, 193-5.

appeared, some three years before Pountney's *Theatre of Shadows*.²²⁸ It does not seem that either Gontarski's or Pountney's publications took into account this very first edition of Beckett's production notebooks. Gontarski only referred, and via Cohn at that, to the existence of one of Beckett's directorial notebooks in his 1977 publication on *Happy Days*.²²⁹ He even more lightly touched on Beckett's self-directorial practice in his second book.²³⁰ Pountney did not cover any post-publication stages of Beckett's theatrical writing closely in her book either, beyond source clarification and general commentary upon Beckett's directorial practices.²³¹

Their inattention is largely due to the limited access to, these post-publication materials. Beckett was still alive and in the last years of his career, and his more intimate authorial traces like letters and conceptual or production notebooks were yet to be extensively acquired or made available, even if Pountney and Gontarski could write to him. Thus, Knowlson was, in his understanding and confidence of Beckett and his works, the only one who was trusted with the task of editing and publishing this extensive portion of authorial material. It is worthy of note here, as mentioned previously, that Knowlson and Beckett "formed a working relationship."²³² Such experiences of direct consultation on the matters of interpretation and production must have inspired Knowlson to supersede the normal given boundaries of the published texts and para-texts.

Therefore, it is no great wonder that Knowlson takes a much more

²²⁸ Pountney explains that her book is based on her doctoral thesis and its main content had been completed in as early as 1978; See Pountney, *Theatre of Shadows*, xi.

²²⁹ Gontarski, *Beckett's 'Happy Days'*, 7, 14-5, 16n1, 50, 53, 70,

²³⁰ Gontarski, *The Intent of Undoing*, 147.

²³¹ Pountney, *Theatre of Shadows*, 189-191

²³² Nixon, "Beckett's Manuscripts," 828.

affirmative and almost authorising tone toward Beckett's production changes than that of Pountney. As mentioned, Knowlson considers Beckett's production notebooks to be "a much better guide" than the "printed texts," for they reflect the way the author actually "sees" his plays on stage.²³³ Pountney points out the need to distinguish between alterations of practical compromise and of artistic judgment,²³⁴ but Knowlson sees that even the presupposed notion of "translating one sign system into another" is not "entirely appropriate here," advising extreme caution against "naïve 'intentionalism' on the part of the critic" as well as "critical reductionism."²³⁵ For Knowlson it is clear that Beckett's "cuts and changes have improved the balance, pace, rhythm and resonance of the play."²³⁶ Pountney also accuses John and Beryl Fletcher of this critical reductionism, when she laments their locating "the original intention" in their notes to *Fin de partie* without involving a full genetic account. This can be seen in the following remark: "It is like trying to place the husk of a seed on top of a flower, without explaining that, during the process of germination, one thing has become the other."²³⁷ In similar botanical terms, Knowlson may be seen as dispensing with the need to analyse the process of germination since the flower is beautiful, has the ovary in which the seed is found, and is what the seed would have become in the end anyway. His is strictly not the mind of a botanist, but that of a gardener.

For all his carefulness, Knowlson's consideration of the production notebooks as not simply an "amended text" but as a "further phase in the writer-

²³³ Knowlson, ed., *Happy Days: Samuel Beckett's Production Notebook*, 12.

²³⁴ Pountney, *Theatre of Shadows*, 189-90, 300n59.

²³⁵ Knowlson, "Beckett as Director," 452, 462.

²³⁶ Knowlson, ed., *Happy Days: Samuel Beckett's Production Notebook*, 13.

²³⁷ Pountney, *Theatre of Shadows*, 101-2.

director's creative effort" does not sit harmoniously with his cautiousness regarding presenting them as a "model for imitation."²³⁸ So he seems to choose an indirect way of promoting the material in terms of authenticity and resourcefulness. But, if the notebooks do form a further stage in the author's compositional process, it is a matter of course that they take precedence over the published text in authority, bearing in mind their fidelity to Beckett's sometimes baffling decisions. But still Knowlson does not make that authority very clear, for he deals very cautiously with the business of interpretation with a similar gesture to that of Beckett, staying very descriptive and general even in his account of that artistic vision that he considers to be so privileged and definitive. More specific parts of Knowlson's criticism tend to be dedicated to matters of performance studies and intertextuality.

Another marked feature of this critical stance of Knowlson in the 1980s is that he started to publish on authorial traces in works authorised by the author. The aforementioned *Happy Days: Samuel Beckett's Production Notebook* is thus the first of a kind in which Beckett not only allowed Knowlson to reproduce and quote manuscript material, but which also looked through the typescripts "with a view to minimizing errors."²³⁹ This multifaceted critical approach primarily consisted of presenting first-hand information via biographical accounts, personal acquaintance and documentary evidence. It thus comes to assume even more authority than the most authoritative biography written after the author's death due to the direct authorial signature it bears, whereas similar accounts by Gontarski and Pountney largely relied on second-hand biographical information and the pre-textual drafts

²³⁸ Knowlson, ed., *Happy Days: Samuel Beckett's Production Notebook*, 13.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.

based on which they came up with their own more speculative interpretations.²⁴⁰

It is pertinent at this point to conduct another comparison with Joyce Studies. Joyce is known to have been active in promoting his authorial intention for his works and in trying to direct both their interpretation and the reception of that intention, sometimes even before publishing a work itself. But one confusing facet of all this is that such authorial focus is not singular but actually plural and even mutually contradictory. For instance, the pioneering studies of *Ulysses* of Stuart Gilbert and Frank Budgen were helped by Joyce himself. Joyce guided Budgen to focus on the central character Bloom on the one hand, and Gilbert on the technical and stylistic matters of the novel on the other, as his "concern was not with encouraging a single approach to *Ulysses* but rather with establishing a critical pluralism that, even by its existence alone, testified to the complexity of the book."²⁴¹ This was also meant as a way of insuring immortality for Joyce.²⁴² But this pluralism of authorial intention contributes to forming a more egalitarian environment for criticism and interpretation in Joyce Studies, as no one even tries to find "a general 'key' to Joyce's work" anymore, despite the decades of its mature

²⁴⁰ It would be interesting here to compare Gontarski's and Knowlson's attitudes of appreciation towards Beckett's self-directing. While Gontarski assumes a more practical tone by pointing to the "fuller" information that the author's own directing necessarily brings into staging, Knowlson does not, while taking care not to sound too authoritative, hide his admiration for Beckett's own production being "the most beautiful productions." For the former, see Gontarski, "Greying the Canon: Beckett in Performance," *Beckett after Beckett*, eds. S.E. Gontarski and Anthony Uhlmann (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2006), 155; For the latter, Samuel Beckett, *The Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett: Waiting for Godot*, Vol. 1, eds. Knowlson and McMillan (New York: Grove Press, 1994; London: Faber, 1993), vi.

²⁴¹ Groden, "A Textual and Publishing History," 106.

²⁴² Richard Ellmann, *James Joyce* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 521, quoted in Groden, "A Textual and Publishing History," 106.

and advanced genetic and textual studies.²⁴³ Even Ellmann's celebrated biography of Joyce, which had been "stamped 'definitive' from the beginning," was criticised for reading "too clearly the life through the fiction", of favouring "the testimony of some of Joyce's entourage over that of others", of "making Joyce always right and the world always wrong", or of there being "too much" of the man. However enormous the impact of the biography was, however consistently and strongly Ellmann maintained that "he simply stuck to the facts,"²⁴⁴ the biography was written after the author's death and thus lacked the author's confirmation, such as that given to Knowlson's publications.

The circumstances are quite different for Beckett Studies. Compared to Joyce, Beckett took quite a negative stance regarding interpretation. He remained inactive in revealing his authorial intention while trying to guard against deviation from the text, especially when it comes to his theatrical works. It was Knowlson, furthermore, who adopted a similarly modest and reticent attitude toward clarifying authorial intention. He rather tried to turn the critical gaze toward the treasure house of archival material instead, which does not guarantee any closer access to authorial intention but does give abundant clues. And now it is ordinary scholars who could not remain aloof, even from so discredited a task, and came to resort to such authorial material in order to bring more authority to their interpretation. If Joyce's intended pluralism brought forth a more egalitarian coexistence of different readings, Beckett's overriding hostility toward interpretation may be seen to rather encourage a more hierarchised atmosphere, in the end, within Beckett Studies.

²⁴³ Ibid., 73.

²⁴⁴ Wim Van Mierlo, "Reading Joyce."

But it is a matter of fact that Knowlson cannot represent Beckett completely in terms of his artistic vision or authorial intention, and it needs to be fully discussed whether Beckett's authorising Knowlson to represent him and his material is a confirmation per se. A brief but illuminating account here is found in Knowlson's article "Beckett's 'Bits of Pipe'", published in 1983.²⁴⁵ At the beginning of the article, Knowlson quotes Beckett's letter of 11 April 1972, which was written as a reply to Knowlson's questions about quotations found in *Happy Days*. Beckett shrugs them aside in the same sincere but slightly irritated tone:

I simply know next to nothing about my work in this way, as little as a plumber of the history of hydraulics. There is nothing/nobody with me when I'm writing, only the hellish job in hand. The 'eye of the mind' in *Happy Days* does not refer to Yeats any more than the 'revels' in *Endgame* (refer) to *The Tempest*. They are just bits of pipe I happen to have with me. I suppose all is reminiscence from womb to tomb. All I can say is I have scant information concerning mine – alas.²⁴⁶

Concerning this reply, Knowlson poses the following three questions: Is Beckett just "adopting a favorite defensive stance" here? Is he "assuming the perspective of the worm in the core of the apple, unable to perceive the outside of the apple in the way that others can"? Or, finally, "does Beckett's comment (as I

²⁴⁵ Knowlson, "Beckett's 'Bits of Pipe,'" in *Samuel Beckett: Humanistic Perspectives*, eds., Morris Beja, S.E. Gontarski, and Pierre Astier (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1983), 16-25.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 16.

believe it does) say something perfectly valid about the status of quotation in *Happy Days* in particular, but also in his plays in general"?²⁴⁷ As these bracketed words testify, Knowlson believes, contrary to what Beckett said, that there is a science of piping in Beckett, one tempered by the whole history of hydraulics. For Knowlson "*Happy Days* is almost all quotation," and those quotations perform a function much more important than that of referentiality: "they are of exactly the right shape, length, thickness, bore, even ring, for the job in hand", and are a part of Beckett's essential dramatic technique.²⁴⁸ So it needs to be questioned whether Knowlson is not here trying to make Beckett appear more ordered and systematic than he actually was. Was Knowlson involved in editing Beckett into the frame he designed ultimately of his own accord, no matter how authorised, to be efficient in making Beckett's works and art intelligible for and beyond contemporary literary criticism?

However, it cannot be denied that this strategy by Knowlson proves itself to have been efficient in promoting Beckett's authorial intention. Knowlson differentiates Beckett's artistic vision from his textual intent, and even subsumes the latter into the former,²⁴⁹ whilst not trying to define the former but keeping his discussion at a descriptive level. By so doing he bypasses the needs of textual and genetic criticism, but successfully situates Beckett at the centre of Beckett Studies, which was rapidly bifurcating upon the new waves of poststructuralist critical theories of the period. Knowlson's approach avoids the danger of being engaged in

²⁴⁷ Ibid., 16-7.

²⁴⁸ Ibid., 18-20, 23-4.

²⁴⁹ Knowlson sounds as if he understands these two as inseparable in the first place, as can be glimpsed in his phrase: "the apparent openness of Beckett's technique of verbal and visual allusiveness." See Ibid., 18.

a huge dispute with any textually-informed argument or interpretation. Furthermore, Knowlson's strictly formalist and empiricist discussion of theatrical aesthetics tends to defy comparative inquiries about completeness and sufficiency, but has the advantage of not conflicting with more conjectural and theoretical readings such as Cohn's humanist one or Gontarski's philosophical one. With all these pros and cons, Knowlson successfully foregrounds, via the archive, Beckett's authorial figure and material in this third decade of Beckett Studies, by making the study of these the most important task.

On the other hand, the political and anti-authoritarian voice of poststructuralism had started to sound within Beckett Studies as well. As Pattie argues, "the full impact of the postmodern paradigm was not felt in literary studies as a whole, and in Beckett studies, in particular, until the 1980s." This rivalry between textuality and performance study in Beckett Studies knew no ceasefire, even during this period of the ascendancy of the author and his material. As "one of the most frequently cited examples of postmodern Beckett criticism,"²⁵⁰ Connor's *Samuel Beckett: Repetition, Theory and Text* "invokes a staple feature of poststructuralist textual analysis." As this poststructuralist concept of repetition is foregrounded as that which radically "undermines the unique status of the original," Connor's book poses an informative confrontation to this contemporary trend of the promotion of the authorial and archival Beckett.²⁵¹

In his final chapter, titled "Repetition and Power," Connor qualifies Beckett's turn to theatre in the 1950s as intensifying the problem of his typically self-aware

²⁵⁰ Pattie, "Beckett and Bibliography," 238.

²⁵¹ Connor, *Samuel Beckett*.

art regarding writing and its medium, which had also been an important part of his preceding prose writings. In theatre, the meaning tends not to be decided solely across the textual networks but to be dependent upon the outcome of the struggle between text and production.²⁵² Connor then finds Beckett's insistent disengagement from public involvement in interpretation of his works to be a strategic solution to his artistic and authorial struggle for more control over the medium of his writing.²⁵³ Beckett's reticence over the meaning of his works thus becomes "an attempt to discredit interpretation in advance and to harness it to the idea of origin in artist."²⁵⁴ This extraordinary will of Beckett to control interpretation is witnessed, according to Connor, in various instances, but it especially relates to Beckett's theatrical career. Connor sees Beckett's directing of his own plays as "policing the post-textual afterlife", with his production notebooks compiled beforehand and corrected during rehearsals. For Connor, Beckett's attraction to the more technologically sophisticated media of radio and television facilitated an increased control of dramatic execution.²⁵⁵ Finally, Beckett's stage directions and script become, across his career, ever more detailed – to the extent of leaving little room for actors to intervene.²⁵⁶ Beckett's theatrical notebooks thus bear a special worthiness. In consideration of Beckett's propensity for a more covert type of authorial control, this directorial record is seen as intended to fill in that elusive gap between text and performance through a paradoxical yet powerful ensemble of specificity and practicability, blueprint and record, precedence and subsequence.

²⁵² Connor, *Samuel Beckett*, 171.

²⁵³ *Ibid.*, 173.

²⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 185.

²⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 186.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 187.

Apart from the author's own struggle for more power and control, individual and institutional contributions for canonising and promoting that authorial intervention are also placed under Connor's review. It is now that Knowlson enters the focus. Knowlson is portrayed as a representative of the writers who claimed not just more importance of those notebooks for studying Beckett's plays and directorship, but as someone who went so far as to assert the notebooks' superiority to the drafts of dramatic texts, as a furtherance of the revision process by the author.²⁵⁷ Connor's challenge is timely and pertinently rendered in the circumstances of Beckett Studies of the late 1980s, where Knowlson establishes the BIF in the same year as the publication of Connor's book and was soon to publish through the 1990s *The Theatrical Notebooks* series under Beckett's approval. It is the series prototype, published in 1985, however, that Connor is here specifically concerned with. These critical and institutional efforts at extending and centralising Beckett's authorial "intention" not only close the gap between text and performance, but ultimately that between author and text, by prioritising the author's vision, and relegating any textual scrutiny into it at the same time. This discursive strategy of negativism successfully harnesses interpretation to "the idea of origin in the artist," for, when the author is effectively foregrounded whilst the interpretation of his words is not to be quite valorised, there is not much choice left. This supreme, omnipresent, omniscient but quite inapprehensible figure of Beckett thus portrayed almost seems to approach the Judeo-Christian concept of God whose name is introduced as meaning both "I am that I am" and "I will be what I will be."

But it does not seem that Connor here fully recognises that the tension lies

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 188.

between textuality and performance study more fundamentally than it does between interpretation and authority. It is well known that Beckett is reported as saying of his last dramatic piece *What Where*, "I don't know what it means. Don't ask me what it means. It's an object." This is one of many of Beckett's aesthetic stances that have been preserved since his early defensive essay about Joyce's *Work in Progress*, where he said, "It is not written at all. It is not to be read – or rather it is not only to be read. It is looked at and listened to. His writing is not *about something; it is that something itself*."²⁵⁸ It is tempting to avoid taking this comment at face value, but, by so doing, the integrality and balance of the discussion would be lost. The comment on *What Where* given above tersely sums up all three main arguments by Beckett around this kind of discussion, which are authorial ignorance, the discredit applied to interpretation, and the significance of intention and performance history in the dramas. It has often been appreciated by notable critics that Beckett's art strives to defy language by way of written words and to approach the status of music and of the object on its pages. Equally, Beckett's art situates itself in the context of the cultural and media revolution of the postwar era, in comparison to Joyce's art in relation to early twentieth-century print culture.²⁵⁹ The uniquely paradoxically intermediate nature of Beckett's art tends to make purely textual, critical and theoretical inquiries seem less up-to-date, effective and important than in the case of Joyce. That may have contributed to the trend according to which those early scholars and theatrical practitioners closer to Beckett

²⁵⁸ Samuel Beckett, *Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragments*, ed., Ruby Cohn (New York: Grove Press, 1984), 27.

²⁵⁹ Jeffrey S. Drouin, *James Joyce, Science, and Modernist Print Culture: "The Einstein of English Fiction"* (New York and London: Routledge, 2015).

in person were encouraged to cite, reproduce and circulate Beckett's oral and written references to his own works as well as the stories and anecdotes related to him, in order to impart more power to their argument than would have been obtainable through seeking it from their own strength of analysis, logic and understanding.

It is certainly understandable that, when the author is unwilling to make clear his own artistic intention and aesthetics in the way of Borges or Nabokov while only allowing his own piecemeal cryptic aphorisms to be circulated critics did not have many more options than to depend on those authorial evidences. As a consequence, the authorial figure comes to be treated like a sole guarantor of the confirmation of interpretations as well as a supreme point of origination that will ever have been the seed and germ of different interpretations of different persuasions. Taking into account Beckett's notorious occasional lack of memory, the natural elusiveness in oral transmission itself and the context and purpose of the occasion, the trend of privileging orality and anecdotalism is better avoided if there is little supportive evidence or reasoning from across Beckett's writings. Based on the observations made above, Connor then diagnoses three phenomena particular to Beckett Studies of the period: difficulty in separating text from interpretation; continued affirmation of the myth of the author; and the persistence of the "authored" drama of an Anglo-American criticism.²⁶⁰

The true status of those theatrical notebooks would be properly clarified only after having carefully examined Beckett's general writing practices from his early conceptual notes through to the brief references from his last years, but the

²⁶⁰ Connor, *Samuel Beckett*, 187-92.

genetic scholarship of Beckett of the period was still very much at the stage of compiling the requisite material, and it would need to wait two more decades for a more definitive project to be launched. This complicated authorial intervention in the midst of Beckett's canonical fame stands as a truly unique case in the history of Western literature, for most of the modern masters of literary writing tended to be canonised after death, and contemporary postmodern writers rarely enjoy such fame as that of Beckett. As a rarefied authorial voice expressed via the medium of his close academic or artistic confidants comes to exert more authority than that author's published works, the distance between author and text is transgressed, as is that between text and interpretation.

One characteristic paradox of Beckett Studies is that it champions the notion of authoriality while dealing with the highly depersonalised works of an author who strongly denied his own artistic control over them.²⁶¹ But, for Connor, this continued affirmation of the myth of the author is what gives Beckett Studies "importance and cultural centrality" in the midst of the era of the death of the author.²⁶² This affirmation is especially necessitated at the period "when criticism and its institutions in Britain and the USA have been increasingly drawn to the centres of state-based power while being simultaneously stripped of their cultural and ideological effectiveness." So Beckett Studies can stand, in the midst of it, as "a site in which cultural values of great importance may be repeated and recirculated with authority," even though this positions Beckett Studies in a paradoxical situation

²⁶¹ Ibid., 190.

²⁶² Ibid., 191.

with regard to Beckett's artistic and writing practices.²⁶³

In a broader context, the fact that the larger chunk of the prose material from Beckett's novelistic heyday was kept on the other side of the Atlantic must not have been very helpful either striking a balance between prose and drama for genetic Beckett criticism, which had just broken ground at Reading.²⁶⁴ Genetic Beckett criticism's strong drive toward authoriality from its very inception may largely be explained by the dominantly "dramatic" character of the Reading Beckett Collections, which was the result of an intersection between the specialisation of its founding scholar and the interests of the author as a donor.²⁶⁵ Connor sheds some light on the matter when he observes that Beckett's authority has been more strongly asserted "in the concrete forms of a visible art" of drama "rather than in the shifting dimness of narrative prose" because "if the fiction presents us with an art of claustrophobic inwardness, a recession into the self which is ultimately an undermining of the author's 'presence', then the drama offers opportunities for an altogether more familiar narrative of mutual engagement and self-definition between self and 'the world'" in which "the private self must struggle with the recalcitrantly objective forms of the public world."²⁶⁶

In the case of genetic criticism of the prose works, relative textual stability

²⁶³ Ibid., 199.

²⁶⁴ Seeing that Knowlson only mentions "an exchange of photocopies with Washington University, Missouri" in his commemoration both of Beckett's eightieth birthday and the Beckett Archive published in 1986, the much more liberal scale of photocopy sharing between the related holding libraries which they enjoy today had still not been facilitated. Knowlson, "The Beckett Archive," 34-35.

²⁶⁵ For the catalogue published in 1978 still exhibiting a much bigger portion of theatrical material, see *The Samuel Beckett Collection* (University of Reading, The Library, 1978).

²⁶⁶ Connor, *Samuel Beckett*, 192.

would make the question of authorial intention less urgent than the technical tasks of identifying and removing the work's possible corruptions or reconstructions during the process of its textual transmission. The process included reconstructing a text's compositional process from its earliest notes until its final proof typescript and even of comparing those various reconstructions to different works in order to define the author's overall compositional method. But, on the other hand, a relative textual instability with regard to dramatic works in terms of their intrinsic openness to, and possible extrinsic compromises with, ever-varying and ever-renewing staging circumstances and performative contingencies would rather more directly confront the question of what was in the mind of the author. Textual and other personal or marginal records might, in some instances, register as supplementary information. The bulkier textual presence of prose works disallows, furthermore, a more direct access to the question of authorial intention, but the inherently half-heuristic nature of dramatic works tends, together with their relative textual brevity, to place the more direct question of the intention of the author as an experiential and interpersonal subject over, if not in parallel with, that of textual matters like the reconstruction of the composition process, textual analysis and definitive versions.

For a still further complication of the situation, it would be much harder to concentrate primarily on textual matters if the author commented on his/her own works and aesthetics widely but not quite coherently during his/her lifetime. If those comments arrived via letters, journalistic interviews, anecdotes and, more significantly especially for Beckett Studies, theatrical preparations and rehearsals which are scrupulously recorded, the process of reconstructing the "story" behind any one work would be especially complex. Those interwar modernist champions

like Joyce and Proust had shown themselves to be largely skeptical about the desirability and effectiveness of critical consultation of their genetic material, possibly out of their high-modernist spirit, and their manuscript circulation was mostly limited to a privileged circle of family members, publishers, patrons and close fellow writers,²⁶⁷ yet Beckett's related attitude was sharply distinguished in that, while trying to remain aloof of any wholesale commentaries or generalisations, he actively distributed his manuscripts through donations to academic institutions or to scholars with genuine and serious interest. He allowed access to or publication of some of his material, involved himself in various interviews, responded to the queries of academic or artistic devotees via correspondence and even formed working relationships with chosen scholars and theatrical practitioners. It is predictable that scholars would be less interested in resorting to the copious, convoluted and often nearly illegible manuscript material, when there are plenty of more direct, clear and concise (if cryptic) clues regarding his writing and aesthetics.

Hence, as a consequence of all this, genetic Beckett criticism's particular preoccupation with the authorial figure. It was originally triggered in the late 1970s as a counterbalancing reaction against the "rhetorical excesses of the first period of Beckett scholarship"²⁶⁸ based on textual readings, and, having entered the 1980s, especially took the form of the promotion and recording of Beckett's artistic vision

²⁶⁷ For a brief story of the transmission of Joycean manuscripts, see Groden, "Library Collections," 783-85; For Proust's unfavourable statement about critical inquiry into his compositional manuscripts, see Proust to Mr and Mrs Schiff, around July 21, 1922 in *Correspondance de Marcel Proust*, ed. Philip Kolb, vol. 21 (Paris: Plon, 1993), 372-73, quoted in Schmid, *Processes of Literary Creation*, 122; For Joyce's famous statement of the similarly sinister glee, see Ellmann, *James Joyce*, 535, quoted in Groden, "A Textual and Publishing History," in *A Companion to Joyce Studies*, 106.

²⁶⁸ Murphy, *Critique of Beckett Criticism*, 21.

as embodied in his directorial notes. As Falconer observed, "the heyday of traditional genetic criticism," with which the Anglo-American literary criticism is more familiar, "occurred between 1920 and 1970,"²⁶⁹ and still, according to Gabler, "large-scale reproductive publishing of aids to scholarship [is] so characteristic of the 1960s and 1970s."²⁷⁰ So, as with Beckett's disputable intermediate position in Western literary history between modernism and postmodernism, Beckett Studies as a whole or, more specifically, genetic Beckett criticism, is seen to have been suffering the same problem of intermediateness. It had been estranged from textual business at the moment when most likely to engage it and, when it afterwards chose to work on textual aids to genetic scholarship, the textual-critical model was rather perceived to be unfit for clarifying the artistic vision. As poststructuralist literary theories and cultural studies came to flourish during the 1990s, this traditional and immanent textual focus was bound to become further diluted by many metatextual perspectives and semiotic tools of analysis to come.

Toward the end of the 1980s, that survival of textual focus in genetic Beckett criticism was secured by the attention given to questions regarding Beckett's bilingualism in his writing, in terms of the relationship between the original version and the translated second one. This included the possibility of finding any insight behind the work of self-translation compared to the ordinary activity of translation. Those questions were taken up and dealt with by Fitch in his 1988 *Beckett and Babel: An Investigation into the Status of the Bilingual Work*.²⁷¹

²⁶⁹ Falconer, "Genetic Criticism," 11.

²⁷⁰ Gabler, "The James Joyce Archive."

²⁷¹ Brian T. Fitch, *Beckett and Babel: An Investigation into the Status of the Bilingual Work* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1988).

The reason why the problem of self-translation is related to manuscript studies is that, when we suppose the second translated version to be a kind of post-publication revision and as reflecting final authorial intention, the original version is considered to form another composition stage. Fitch actually showed from his manuscript examination that Beckett sometimes referred to the requisite passage of the previous manuscript stage, when faced by difficulties while translating,²⁷² thus making the representation of manuscript stages an indispensable business for any future scholarly bilingual edition of Beckett. This is an insight which would be realised in the Bilingual Variorum Editions of the 1990s.²⁷³ In a somewhat similar fashion to Coetzee's computer-based stylistic analysis, Fitch executed a meticulously formalist poetic analysis at the level of the sentence, and, still in a similar manner to Coetzee's, ended up reconfirming local structures in Beckett's writing. This led to a definition of that writing as one difficult to describe other than as being "governed by the logic of its own development."²⁷⁴ This type of an "inherently specialised nature" of textual genetics, which usually encourages the "reluctance on the part of professional geneticists to theorise or generalise about their findings," is thus found to aggravate even this limited scope of Beckett's bilingualism. This pragmatic focus may have partly encouraged the reluctance on the part of genetic Beckett criticism to commit itself to textual genetics in the era of theory. Things have not much changed for the inquiry into Beckett's bilingualism from Murphy's observation in

²⁷² Fitch, "Pour une édition critique de l'œuvre de Beckett," *Sur la Génétique Textuelle*, 179-180.

²⁷³ *Ibid.*, 185.

²⁷⁴ Fitch, "The Status of the Second Version of the Beckettian Text: The Evidence of the Bing/Ping Manuscripts," *Journal of Beckett Studies*, Nos. 11-12 (1989), accessed February 5, 2015, http://www.english.fsu.edu/jobs/num1112/016_FITCH.PDF.

1994 that "[t]here is certainly a great deal of scholarly work still to be done in this area."²⁷⁵ Up to this moment, little advance had been made, other than the short-lived three series of Variorum Editions of Samuel Beckett's Bilingual Works published from 1993 to 2001.

As for a comparative picture of the decade, having now finished with drawing the general outline of the author's writing process, genetic Proust and Joyce criticism began making enquiries into more specialised subjects like stylistics and thematics. For each author, this study gave birth to monumental critical and genetic editions arising out of their accumulation of dedicated communal scholarship, despite some troubles and controversies. The celebrated Proustian Bernard Brun called for a closer scrutiny in genetic Proust criticism and published a series of close analyses of some core themes of *Le Temps retrouvé* as they are found in its avant-textes over the earlier part of the decade.²⁷⁶ The Équipe Proust published both the first established chronology of Proust's exercise books and annotations of the entries in the Combray exercise books in 1982, the former of which was then modified by Akio Wada's two alternative chronologies presented by way of his doctoral dissertation published in 1986.²⁷⁷ Even editions of some

²⁷⁵ Murphy, *Critique of Beckett Criticism*, 10.

²⁷⁶ Schmid, *Processes of Literary Creation*, 128n27, 129n29; Reference for his corresponding publications is as following: Brun, "Note sur la genèse du *Temps retrouvé*," *Bulletin d'Informations Proustiennes* 11 (Spring 1980); Brun, "Le dormeur éveillé, genèse d'un roman de la mémoire," *Cahiers Marcel Proust* 11 (1982): 241-316; Brun, "Le Destin de notes de lecture et de critique dans le *Temps retrouvé*," *Bulletin d'Informations Proustiennes* 13 (1982); Proust, *Matinée chez la Princesse de Guermantes: Cahiers du 'Temps retrouvé'*, eds. Henri Bonnet and Bernard Brun (Paris: Gallimard, 1982); Brun, "Brouillons des aubépines," *Cahiers Marcel Proust* 12 (1984).

²⁷⁷ Schmid, *Processes of Literary Creation*, 127, 127nn22-23; Reference for the corresponding publications is as following: "Classement chronologique des cahiers de

incomplete parts of the composition manuscripts leading up to *A la recherche* already began to be published in 1978 and were published in regular fashion across this decade.²⁷⁸

But no other publishing event of the decade is more remarkable than that of the monumental new Pléiade edition of the novel of 1987, which had been planned to happen in that year because its copyright expired.²⁷⁹ It was published by Gallimard under the editorship of Jean-Yves Tadié between 1987 and 1989 as a bold and clever compromise between a traditional critical edition and a genetic edition. As well as being a brilliant scholarly achievement in itself, it nicely and in a timely way invited comparison with Hans Walter Gabler's 1984 edition of *Ulysses* in terms of scale, controversy and influence.²⁸⁰ Meanwhile, studies of more specific thematic, chronological or editorial interests, owing to the accumulated achievements of analyses of the manuscripts, were published by scholars like Carla Tammenoms-Bakker, Takaharu Ishiki, Loïc Depecker, Anthony Pugh, Françoise Leriche, Franck Lhomeau and Alain Coelho, Jürg Bischoff, Anne Herschberg-Pierrot, Enid

brouillon de Marcel Proust," *Bulletin d'Informations Proustiennes* 13 (1982); Akio Wada, "L'Évolution de *Combray* depuis l'automne 1909" (PhD diss., Université Paris-Sorbonne, 2 vol., 1986).

²⁷⁸ Schmid, *Processes of Literary Creation*, 129, 129n29; Reference for the corresponding publications is as following: Luzius Keller, *Les Avant-textes de 'L' Episode de la madeleine' dans les cahiers de brouillons de Marcel Proust* (Paris: Editions J.-M. Place, 1978); Proust, *Matinée chez la Princesse de Guermantes*, Proust, *'Briquebec': Prototype d' 'A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs'*, ed. Richard Bales (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

²⁷⁹ Proust, *A la recherche du temps perdu*, ed. Jean-Yves Tadié, 4 vols. (Paris: Gallimard, 'Pléiade', 1987-9).

²⁸⁰ James Joyce, *Ulysses: A Critical and Synoptic Edition*, eds., Hans Walter Gabler, Wolfhard Steppe, and Claus Melchior, 3 vols. (New York: Garland Publishing Inc., 1984).

Marantz and Richard Bales.²⁸¹

As could be expected from the scale of republishing such an established literary masterpiece in such an original form, the following early 1990s saw a series of important debates around the new Pléiade edition's appropriateness, sensibleness and opportuneness. Such debates had originally been triggered by Brun's condemnatory foreword to *BIP 17* published in 1986 and would eventually be given a better public forum by *The New York Review of Books* in 1999 wherein Roger Shattuck, Antoine Compagnon and Tadié exchanged their considered opinions. This debate was an earnest but less vituperative one than that of their Joycean forebears ten years earlier.²⁸² The main dispute points about that new

²⁸¹ Schmid, *Processes of Literary Creation*, 127n23, 127nn25-26, 128n26, ; Reference for the corresponding publications is as following: Carla Tammenoms-Bakker, "The Figure of Swann in the Cahiers of Marcel Proust" (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 1983); Takaharu Ishiki, "Maria la Hollandaise et la naissance d'Albertine dans *A la recherche du temps perdu*" (PhD diss., Université Paris-Sorbonne nouvelle, 2 vol., 1985); Loïc Depecker, "Préhistoire d'un épisode du roman proustien: la rencontre avec Madame de Villeparisis dans quelques brouillons pour *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*," *Bulletin d'Informations Proustiennes* 17 (1986); Anthony Pugh, *The 'Birth' of 'A la recherche'* (Lexington, KY: French Forum Publishers, 1987); Françoise Leriche, "Note sur le cahier 'Querqueville', les thèses d'Akio Wada et de Takaharu Ishiki et sur l'activité de Proust en 1909," *Bulletin d'Informations Proustiennes* 18 (1987); Franck Lhomeau and Alain Coelho, *Marcel Proust à la recherche d'un éditeur: A la recherche du temps perdu face à l'édition* (Paris: Olivier Orban, 1988); Jürg Bischoff, *La Genèse de l'épisode de la madeleine* (Bern; Frankfurt Am Main; New York; Paris: Peter Lang, 1988); Anne Herschberg-Pierrot, "Éditer Proust," *Problèmes de l'édition critique*, ed. Michel Contat (Paris: Minard, 1988); Enid Marantz, "La Genèse du personnage proustien," *Bulletin de la Société des Amis de Marcel Proust* 39 (1989); Proust, *'Briquebec.'*

²⁸² For the series of the related discussions, see Brun, "Avant-propos," *BIP 17* (1986): 5; Herschberg-Pierrot, "Éditer Proust"; Nathalie Mauriac Dyer, "Les Mirages du double: *Albertine disparue* selon la Pléiade (1989)," *BIP 40* (1990): 117-53; Elyane Dezon-Jones, "Éditer Proust: hier, aujourd'hui et peut-être demain," *Littérature* 88 (1992): 46-53; Schmid, "Teleology and Textual Misrepresentation: The New Pléiade Proust," *French Studies Bulletin* 56 (Autumn 1995): 15-7; for those dignified exchanges held on that privileged forum of *The*

Pléiade edition were, as recapitulated by Schmid just before that public exchange of opinions, concerns raised about its “teleological and thematic premiss”²⁸³ in classifying, organising and presenting the manuscript drafts. It had principally also concerned the edition’s not complying with that late discovery of the corrected typescript of *Albertine disparue*, which had been discovered in 1986 and which contained an astonishing scribbled note with a direction to eliminate almost two thirds of the original chunk of text, which is most importantly allotted to the story of the protagonist’s investigations into his mistress’s homosexuality.²⁸⁴ (The implications of this important textual decision will be discussed in connection to Beckett’s work later in this thesis.)

It seems that the editors and publishers had to reach a compromise somewhere between a traditional critical edition and the then much desired but sure-to-be-hefty genetic edition. Marketability, utility, and a double appeal both to specialists and general readers, must have driven the decisions which defined the nature of the edition. The Pléiade Proust came, in the end, and despite its many other strengths, in its combination of convenience and scholarship, to be seen as both “normative” (by only selecting “the best sketches” from the draft material), and

New York Review of Books, see Roger Shattuck, “The Threat to Proust,” *The New York Review of Books*, March 18, 1999, accessed May 27, 2016, www.nybooks.com/articles/1999/03/18/the-threat-to-proust; Antoine Compagnon and Tadié, “‘The Threat to Proust’ by Antoine Compagnon, Jean-Yves Tadié, and Roger Shattuck: An Exchange,” *The New York Review of Books*, May 6, 1999, accessed May 27, 2016, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/1999/05/06/the-threat-to-proust-an-exchange/>

²⁸³ Schmid, *Processes of Literary Creation*, 130.

²⁸⁴ For the recapitulation of the dispute see *ibid.*, 129-31; for the brief account of the astonishing discovery and its aftereffects, see Schmid, “The birth and development of A la recherché du temps perdu,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Proust*, ed. Richard Bales (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 70-3.

"simplifying" (by reproducing only "'the most important' deletions and additions in the manuscripts" sometimes even "without use of diacritical signs"). Yet it could sometimes also seem "random", by indiscreetly making a "division between 'esquisses' and 'notes et variantes'"; and, finally, it might be perceived as artificial, by choosing to "synchronise" the highly convoluted diachronic dimension of Proust's sheer "metonymical and dynamic writing" process. This was achieved through reorganising the manuscript material according to its different thematic threads and to their direct and teleological correspondence to their final state of distribution across the published text.²⁸⁵ This scandal about the Proustian text was the one brought on by all its editorial difficulties, complexities and disputes related to this tricky and onerous task of analysing, representing and publishing its genetic material. This task, however, pales before the much more troublesome ones of the Joycean text, with its exemplary late-twentieth-century testimony to the uniquely complex, protean and unstable character of the modern text, in terms of its composition, printing and publishing histories.

It would be very interesting to draw a comparison between these Joycean and Proustian textual scandals here, for they each exhibit informatively different cases of textual circumstances and ensuing problems to be tackled when editing text that has an archival hinterland which needs to be attended to. Whereas the Pléiade edition was criticised for plotting a teleological narrative of the Proustian textual drama which might be dovetailed with the existant published version, Gabler's 1984 *Synoptic Edition* and its ensuing 1986 *Corrected Text* of *Ulysses* were subject to a barbed criticism by John Kidd in 1988 that they did not choose to fully

²⁸⁵ Schmid, *Processes of Literary Creation*, 129-31.

scrutinise all the bewildering traces of Joyce's textual revisions. These can be found scattered across the novel's plural published versions and are further complicated by the mishmash of dates, intentions and hands involved. But, given this situation, the yearning exists to take flight into the earliest published text of *Ulysses*, supposing from there "an ideal state that is free of all transmissional errors" and that avoids Joyce's forced, compromised but still valid intentions as revealed in his corrective and sometimes creative wrestles until late in the process against all error. Kidd advocates such travails as "Bloomisms", whilst Gabler explicitly rejected Joyce's lack of response to some mistakes in the textual transmission as "passive authorisation" in the Afterword to his 1984 edition.²⁸⁶ So it is that, in Proust's case, after many years of labour the Pléiade team were accused of too much textual conservatism. After seven years of labour Gabler and his graduate students were, in turn, accused of too much textual radicalism. Even if a large part of these seeming scandals was largely set up by the media's sensationalism, to the extent that it "put off many readers and possibly created an image of philologists as mean academics

²⁸⁶ For a glimpse into that dreadful embroiling of edged specialist opinions, see John Kidds, "The Scandal of 'Ulysses'," *The New York Review of Books*, June 30, 1988, accessed May 31, 2016, www.nybooks.com/articles/1988/06/30/the-scandal-of-ulysses-2/; John Updike et al., "'The Scandal of Ulysses': An Exchange," *The New York Review of Books*, August 18, 1988, accessed May 31, 2016, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/1988/08/18/the-scandal-of-ulysses-an-exchange/>; Alistair McCleery and Kidds, "'The Scandal of Ulysses': Yet Another Exchange," June 1, 1989, accessed May 31, 2016, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/1989/06/01/the-scandal-of-ulysses-yet-another-exchange/>; Groden, "A Response to John Kidd's 'An Inquiry into 'Ulysses: The Corrected Text''", *James Joyce Quarterly*, vol. 28, no. 1 (Fall, 1990); Warren St. John, "James Joyce and the Nutty Professor," *Observer*, December 29, 1997, accessed May 31, 2016, <http://observer.com/1997/12/james-joyce-and-the-nutty-professor/>; for that idealist keynote of Gabler's editing project, see Groden, "A Textual and Publishing History," 109-10; and for the aftereffect of that scandal, see Stacey Herbert, "Composition and Publishing History of the Major Works: An Overview," *James Joyce in Context*, 11.

who blight each other's lives for the sake of a comma,"²⁸⁷ those scandals had also the opposite effect. They contributed to bringing an enhanced awareness of the significance, importance and complexity of modern textual problems, not only to communities of scholars, but also to a wider audience of general readers.²⁸⁸

More specifically, the new four-volume Pléiade edition, the culmination of the philological and editorial efforts by CNRS at the end of the 1980s and undertaken in the spirit of French genetic criticism, with all those intellectual quibbles covering each stage fully in the public domain, made Proust's manuscripts in his country the focus of critical debate ever since.²⁸⁹ The fierce "Joyce Wars" over Gabler's edition of *Ulysses* "made all Joyce's readers, critics, and scholars and even the general reading public aware of textual matters" at around the same period.²⁹⁰ But this concentrated, collaborative but public and flexible approach, which was realised by those Proustian genetic scholars-cum-editors, may have also been partly influenced by the attitude of those staff who had been long working as full-time researchers under the French government project of genetic Proust scholarship.²⁹¹

²⁸⁷ Van Hulle, "Genetic Joyce Criticism," in *James Joyce in Context*, ed., John McCourt (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 113.

²⁸⁸ For brief accounts of the repercussions of that Joycean textual scandal, see Van Hulle, "Genetic Joyce Criticism," 113; Herbert, "Composition and Publishing History," 11. For the Proustian follow-up, a similar trend of publishing alternative versions is observed in the following: Dezon-Jones, "Éditer Proust"; Schmid, "Birth and development of *A la recherche*," 70-2.

²⁸⁹ Ellison, "Proust and Posterity," 206-7.

²⁹⁰ Groden, "Genetic Joyce," 234.

²⁹¹ ITEM was founded in 1968 as the Proust unit of the CNRS, and had had full-time researchers and research assistants working together with professors and academics from various universities and having participated in all of the republications of the Proust's novel since 1987. See "Useful Links," University Library, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, accessed May 30, 2017, <http://www.library.illinois.edu/kolbp/links.html>; Michel Grimberg,

This fact must have greatly contributed to the "ease in erudition" which characterises Proust Studies from the late 1980s on, where Proustian scholars could easily consult that accessible, convenient and shrewdly compacted Pléiade body of the collection of the text, annotations, transcriptions and chronology, and more freely integrate such knowledge into their different thematic, stylistic and historical analyses.²⁹² By contrast, the overwhelmingly specialist and strictly philological nature of genetic Joyce scholarship as it had begun in the 1960s, and progressed ever since largely in the academic environment of America, had tended to uphold rigorous dissensions over public convenience. Even in this matter of publishing a critical and genetic edition of *Ulysses*, the process has failed to bring forth a new definite version in a confused market which has ended up reprinting several different versions. This alarming outcome has meant shifting the responsibility of specialist appraisal to general readers.

As a final recapitulation of the decade, it is possible to see that definitively different characters have already emerged around the treatment of our three authorial case studies. As the foremost exemplar in its scale, achievements, scholarly rigour and influences for the whole literary genetic scholarship, genetic Joyce criticism exhibits marked pedanticism wherein its leading scholars try to make scholarly judgment as rigorous as possible without compromise or eclecticism. From the 1920s on, it has focused foremost on excavating and clarifying Joyce's

Marie-Thérèse Mourey, and Elisabeth Rothmund, eds., *Recherches sur le monde germanique : Regards, approches, objets : en hommage à l'activité de direction de recherché du professeur Jean-Marie Valentin* (Paris: PU Paris-Sorbonne, 2003), 210; Daniel Ferrer and Michael Groden, "Introduction: A Genesis of French Genetic Criticism," in *Genetic Criticism*, Deppman, Ferrer, and Groden, eds., 8-9.

²⁹² Ellison, "Proust and Posterity," 207-8.

writing process. Its cutting-edge expertise, achievements and influences had by the end of the 1970s achieved the monumental project of transcribing and publishing in its quasi-entirety Joyce's genetic material under the title of *James Joyce Archive*. Yet, ironically, this exposure of all archival sources also impeded the full launch of a critical and synoptic edition of *Ulysses* during the 1980s, one which would have displayed flexibility between scholarship, relevance and public utility.

Genetic Proust criticism started at full-scale during the 1970s, about twenty years later than the publication in Joyce criticism of the first article on the genesis of *Finnegans Wake* in 1954. This despite the fact that Proust was senior in age to Joyce and died almost twenty years earlier than Joyce did.²⁹³ But under the assured auspices of government-led initiatives, support and organisation, Proust scholarship produced a general description and chronology of Proust's writing process and practice over the 1970s. It then pushed onto the close analyses and debates on competing theorisations thereof and succeeded in publishing the new critical edition over the later part of the 1980s. This was achieved with admirable progress and efficiency and eventually made way for mature reflections on methodological issues related to the perception and treatment of genetic material that, as we shall see, were to come during the 1990s. This archive-based initiative showed foremost interest in clarifying Proust's writing process and practice from the beginning, as genetic Joyce criticism also did. But, as its genetic material did not display such a profound mess of corruptions and enigmas as is the case with Joyce's text, it had

²⁹³ Van Hulle picks Joseph Prescott's article titled "Concerning the Genesis of *Finnegans Wake*" and published in PMLA in 1954, which was an offshoot from his own PhD dissertation which was passed ten years ago, most likely as the first instance of contribution made by the general academic public. See Van Hulle, "Genetic Joyce Criticism", 116.

more room to be flexible toward, and to integrate, questions and reflections on the author, his intention and context. It was much more difficult for genetic Joyce criticism to engage the same perspectives without first dealing with a number of textual perplexities, as Gabler struggled to do. Based on those outcomes of textual genetics with regard to Proust's relatively less corrupted genetic material, Proustian scholars were then also able to engage sustained discussions over Proust's intention regarding the above-mentioned typescript for *La Fugitive* when it was discovered in 1986.²⁹⁴

Now to come to genetic Beckett criticism. Its scholars started to publish small-scale introductory archival descriptions or analyses of ur-materials towards publication, in article or chapter length, from the 1960s. This came about, thanks to the author's liking for communicating with enthusiastic scholars, as well as because a bulk of the material had already traveled to and was held in America. But the full launch of genetic Beckett scholarship, i.e. growing professionalisation and collaboration, cannot be considered to have happened before the beginning of the 1980s, right after Knowlson and Pilling announced the arrival of the "second-generation" of Beckett critics, who "can build upon the findings of the first generation" by way of consulting "unpublished material or rejected drafts that illustrate the genesis of the work in question" in 1979.²⁹⁵ As previously discussed, when making such claims the two scholars especially had in their mind the Beckett Collection at UoR. But this powerhouse for genetic Beckett criticism, which had been serendipitously bestowed on one of the medium-sized UK universities, has not

²⁹⁴ Adam Watt, *The Cambridge Introduction to Marcel Proust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 115.

²⁹⁵ Knowlson and Pilling, *Frescoes of the Skull*, xii.

been able to enjoy the same financial and administrative support and ensuing system and specialisation of highest academic standards as genetic Joyce criticism did since the 1950s. Joyce criticism at that stage was spread across affluent American state universities backed by large multinational companies.²⁹⁶ Similar if not equivalent support was visible around Proust criticism from its inception, and genetic Proust criticism has been largely sustained with the initiatives of the French government. The offshoot from the Reading Beckett exhibition through to the creation of the BIF in 1988 notably took the form of the creation of a charitable trust, and the archive and scholarship relating to it has since been largely dependent upon donation, subscription, and occasional university or government endowment funds.

Genetic Beckett criticism's less-grand origins and centralised study have their own advantages in making it more agile, flexible and responsive to the fast-changing critical environment. But also, sometimes, its looseness and lack of focus "typify one of the oddities and perplexities of Beckett criticism"²⁹⁷ wherein the focus is spread between either broad large-scaled inquiries or small-scaled ones of particular source-hunting, as again pointed out by Murphy. It may thus be that the aforementioned anachronous focus on authorial intention on the part of genetic Beckett criticism was called for, not just for the cultural effectiveness of Beckett Studies as a whole in the late twentieth century, but also for the survival of its institution. Beckett died in December 1989, an event that surpasses the sum of all the significant "genetic events" which happened throughout the decade. It was now

²⁹⁶ Groden, "Library Collections," 783-4.

²⁹⁷ Murphy, *Critique of Beckett Criticism*, 15.

simply impossible for his "authorial ratification" to confirm any upcoming related publications, and that alone is enough to make things fundamentally different once and for all. Derrida remarked in 1988 at the ninth international Joyce symposium, "There can be no Joycean foundation, no Joycean family; there can be no Joycean legitimacy."²⁹⁸ If this typically deconstructionist comment rather paradoxically sounds like the highest praise for lost Joycean splendor, the same simply does not work for Beckett; Derrida himself is known to have refused to even comment on Beckett.²⁹⁹ If Joyce's text is "'a hypermnesia machine' that contains the complete Western memory,"³⁰⁰ that of Beckett would be a perpetual amnesiac machine that effaces and is haunted by the complete Western memory at the same time. Derrida also remarked that Beckett's texts are "both too close to me and too distant for me even to be able to 'respond' to them."³⁰¹ At the end of the 1980s, Beckett Studies based in the archive was also in desperate need of some new bearings to proceed forward, beyond the two emphases that had marked this relatively early moment: that of deploying the archive to recover some original authorial intention and purpose behind the published texts, and that of institutionalising the archive itself through such initiatives as the Beckett-authorized BIF. The next chapter will think about the ways in which Beckett Studies encounters new influences and theory in the 1990s.

²⁹⁸ Geert Lernout, *The French Joyce* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1992), 227.

²⁹⁹ Elisabeth Marie Loevlie, *Literary Silences in Pascal, Rousseau, and Beckett* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 193.

³⁰⁰ Lernout, *The French Joyce*, 227.

³⁰¹ Shane Weller, "Beckett among the Philosophes: The Critical Reception of Samuel Beckett in France," in *The International Reception of Samuel Beckett*, 31.

5. The 1990s: Authoriality in the Suppression of the Textual

The 1980s witnessed broad coexistence between textual and authorial focuses, though with little communication between the two. In his typically wide-ranging and genealogical perspective, Gontarski covered Beckett's avant-textes for the theatre work published between the 1950s and the early 1980s, and generally qualified the stylistic characteristics discernible throughout their textual histories in aesthetic and philosophical terms. What is noteworthy in Gontarski's contribution is that he treated these published and pre-publication texts equally in terms of their evidential importance for interpretation. For him, they are all subjected to theoretical and speculative guesswork in so far as they form texts, and it is not that the published text merely needs to be explained away by the pre-publication one. Gontarski tried to define Beckett's obscure and intricate poetics through his own strictly textual approach.

Knowlson took a very different approach. He was not interested in looking back to pre-publication texts at this point, but rather at Beckett's post-publication theatrical texts and contexts such as production notebooks and stage design. The relevant archival sources do not altogether form another unique text which might be subjected to interpretation, but instead, according to Knowlson, offer a privileged direct glimpse into the artistic vision of the author. Knowlson in this sense had to be careful to guard against too hasty an interpretation. As long as he was casting light upon the artistic mind of this highly important author now towards the end of his celebrated career, the stakes lay not in interpretative ingenuities, but in accumulating as many facts and details as possible about

Beckett's directorial practice, many of them coming from Beckett himself. This careful, objective focus on facts and details influenced by authorial concerns characterises Knowlson's approach and in its turn influences the monumental projects of the 1990s. Knowlson had been careful not to argue for the optimality of materially-evidenced interpretation in the 1980s, but the actuality would be different in his scholarly practice from the 1990s on. By that time, archival and manuscript scholarship had become systematised and well-enough advanced to be able to provide validating evidence within individual studies.

The intermediate position taken by Pountney between those textual and authorial stances respectively of Gontarski and Knowlson, was a sensible, well-balanced and rare one, as she involved a proper but not too overblown critical ingenuity at the same time as she was scrupulous in dealing with theatrical and compositional facts and details. That third decade of Beckett Studies was a truly special one in that we witness there the wide range of disparate critical approaches that it has not been possible to recover since: from Gontarski's textual focus through Knowlson's authorial one and down to Connor's poststructuralism and deconstructionism utilising material-based scholarship. However, this somewhat awkward but quieter type of coexistence is not going to be possible after this fourth decade of the 1990s.

If the 1980s were characterised by the introductory efforts in genetic scholarship of a few scholars close to the author and to his material, the decade after Beckett's death is characterised by the beginnings of full-scale genetic criticism. By then, the relevant material was well classified and prepared for use on both sides of the Atlantic. The BIF was established, together with its focus on authorial marks

and traces. As is seen in the list of contributors to the BIF's first collection of essays based on archival material, *The Ideal Core of the Onion*³⁰² (1992), this establishment started to attract new scholars such as Bryden, Lionel Kelly, Andrew Renton and Paul Davies, who earned their doctoral degrees between the late 1980s and the early 1990s. Now, with *The Ideal Core of the Onion*, the importance of Beckett's archival material was "officially" announced and foregrounded, all of which was achieved thanks to the practices promoted in the previous decade.

It is noteworthy that the word "archive" was foregrounded in the subtitle to *The Ideal Core of the Onion*. The material held at UoR was originally named "The Samuel Beckett Collection"³⁰³ and then shortened to "The Beckett Collection", which is still the official title found in the homepage of the BIF,³⁰⁴ and for the updated catalogue for the collection, hosted by Special Collections at UoR.³⁰⁵ The alternative "The Beckett Archive", which was first mentioned in the title of Knowlson's contribution to the volume of appreciation for Beckett's eightieth birthday,³⁰⁶ sounds in this light like a lesser byname or description. As the definition of the term itself indicates, "archive" connotes the historicity of material as well as the conscientious nature of data filing, more than the more neutral "Collection" does. More than that, "archive" offers a denotation enlarged enough to include not just

³⁰² Pilling and Mary Bryden, eds., *The Ideal Core of the Onion: Reading Beckett Archives* (Reading: The Beckett International Foundation, 1992).

³⁰³ J. A. Edwards, *The Samuel Beckett Collection* (Reading: The Library, University of Reading, 1978), i.

³⁰⁴ "The Beckett Collection," *Beckett International Foundation*, accessed 11 July, 2017, <http://www.beckettfoundation.org.uk/collection/>.

³⁰⁵ *Beckett at Reading* (Reading: Whiteknights Press and the Beckett International Foundation, 1998).

³⁰⁶ Knowlson, "The Beckett Archive," in *As No Other Dare Fail* (London: John Calder, 1986).

manuscript material but also theatrical miscellanea such as “acting scripts, first-hand reports of actors, lighting, costume and set designers and other theatre technicians,” more than “Collection”, which is a term usually preceded by “manuscript.” Especially in light of Knowlson’s discontent with manuscript scholarship, which he had expressed as early as 1983,³⁰⁷ this foregrounding of “archive” in the early 1990s can be seen as a reply to such a need to accommodate the theatrical, technical and visual dimensions of Beckett’s literary art.

The profoundly troubling dual character of Beckett’s literary art, which not only defies a purely textual approach but also disrupts the well-purposed project of textual genetics, is worth comparing with that of his modernist predecessors such as Joyce, Proust and Flaubert. Every writer would naturally come to be influenced by a certain writing style that is prevalent and/or favored by him/her in their generation. It has been pointed out, for example, that Flaubert’s style was informed by the Encyclopedists,³⁰⁸ Joyce’s by journalistic publishing,³⁰⁹ and Proust’s by John Ruskin’s scholarly travel writings.³¹⁰ Beckett was ardently interested from early on in

³⁰⁷ Knowlson, “State of Play,” 108-20.

³⁰⁸ Kenner, *Flaubert, Joyce and Beckett: The Stoic Comedians* (London: Dalkey Archive Press, 1962), 92-107.

³⁰⁹ Although Kenner only refers to newspapers once as one of the possible “various delimiting devices” that Joyce uses as one of his stylistic strategies for writing, his introduction to the two Joycean stylistic principles, which are reassessed ones from those of Flaubert, of “an encyclopaedic capacity for fact” and a novelistic capitalisation on the “social material by parody” are evidently pointing (together with “print” defined as “the very form of this last work” by Joyce) to the definitive influence on Joyce of the journalistic publishing of his time, as expounded in *ibid.*, 72-105; This same point is much more extensively dealt with in Jeffrey S. Drouin, *James Joyce, Science, and Modernist Print Culture: “The Einstein of English Fiction”* (New York and London: Routledge, 2015).

³¹⁰ See Diane R. Leonard, “Ruskin and the cathedral of lost souls,” *The Cambridge Companion to Proust*, 42-57.

his writing life in exploring a very progressive type of prose aesthetics which transcends the boundaries of narrative, figurative and rhetorical textual construction to the extent of subsuming and embodying certain material effects from the audio-visual dimension. This is to be witnessed in his polemical 1929 treatise for Joyce's then *Work in Progress* which "is not only to be read" but "to be looked at and listened to."³¹¹ But Beckett's one major step forward from Joyce is that he was not satisfied with just taking on those audio-visual effects in his writing but rather pushed himself as far as he could in the direction of the paradoxical task of materialising such audio-visual dimensions in his writing. This is in no way similar to, but is rather a diametrical counterpoint to, George Herbert's stanza-pruning or Wagner's grandiose Gesamtkunstwerk, as witnessed via Beckett's own 1937 references to "the sound surface" of "Beethoven's seventh Symphony" and to "[n]ominalist irony".³¹² Such aesthetic and philosophical inventiveness is similar to that praised by Gilles Deleuze as marking "language III," which is "a language of images, resounding and coloring images."³¹³ The high European humanist education that Beckett received at TCD, and his affluent Dublin upper-middle-class background, facilitated access to diverse cultural tastes and entertainment, and must have contributed toward this peculiarly progressive aesthetic aspiration in a then young, sophisticated, sensitive and enormously self-conscious Beckett.

This idiosyncratic drive for such a perilous sharpening of aesthetic paradox between media and genres sometimes finds its expression in Beckett's

³¹¹ Beckett, "Dante...Bruno.Vico..Joyce," in *Disjecta: Miscellaneous Writings and a Dramatic Fragment*, ed. Ruby Cohn (New York: Grove Press, 1984), 27.

³¹² Beckett, "German Letter of 1937," in *Disjecta*, 172.

³¹³ Gilles Deleuze, "The Exhausted," in *Essays: Critical and Clinical*, trans., Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 159.

compositional drafts. As a feature distinguishing Beckett's draft texts from those of his predecessors, which are largely and much more focusedly documentary, programmatic, narrative or revisionary,³¹⁴ Beckett's draft material exhibits a peculiar collusion with the visual from its early stages. Though there is almost no conspicuous liaison with the visual found amongst Flaubert's, Proust's or Joyce's genetic materials, what stands out as easily noticeable in that of Beckett is a repeated reference to visual matter as expressed in the form of doodles as well as in permutative tables and diagrams. Those visual forms would well constitute a part of any compositional efforts for theatre, but what is of particular note here is that they form a marked part of Beckett's early prose composition as well. Kennedy described (and reproduced) instances of Beckett's doodles and sketches found in a part of the TCD notebooks as early as in 1971 in her *Murphy's Bed*,³¹⁵ and

³¹⁴ Among other myriads of the related important secondary sources written in English, the fore-cited *Processes of Literary Creation* by Schmid offers an informing and convenient overview of the scope and manners by which Flaubert and Proust kept their compositional materials. As a valuable and more recent English source on that subject, *Genetic Criticism* edited by Deppman, Ferrer and Groden provides sharp glimpses into those classic writers' genetic practices; for some conveniently descriptive and panoramic accounts of genetic processes and manners of Proust and Joyce, see Finch, *Proust's Additions*; Pugh, *The Birth of 'A la recherche du temps perdu'*; Finch, *The Growth of 'A la recherche du temps perdu': A Chronological Examination of Proust's Manuscripts from 1909 to 1914*, 2 vols. (Toronto; Buffalo; London: University of Toronto Press, 2004); A. Walton Litz, *The Art of James Joyce: Method and Design in Ulysses and Finnegans Wake* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1964); Frank Budgen, *James Joyce and the Making of 'Ulysses,' and Other Writings* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), Philip F. Herring, ed., *Joyce's Ulysses Notesheets in the British Museum* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1972); Groden, *'Ulysses' in Progress* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977); Danis Rose, *The Textual Diaries of James Joyce* (Dublin: Lilliput Press, 1995); Luca Crispi and Sam Slote, eds., *How Joyce Wrote 'Finnegans Wake': A Chapter-by-Chapter Genetic Guide* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007).

³¹⁵ Sighle Kennedy, *Murphy's Bed: A Study of Real Sources and Sur-Real Associations in Samuel Beckett's First Novel* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1971).

Pountney scrupulously reproduced visual structures mostly designed for Beckett's middle-career dramatic work in *Theatre of Shadows*.³¹⁶ But a closer insight on the matter is afforded by the Joycean genetic scholar David Hayman in 1987 when he concluded as follows, after consultation of the *Watt* manuscripts:

It should be clear that very little that pertains to an evolving manuscript is negligible. Even the most casual jottings can shed light on the process, if only on the writer's state of mind at various stages in a text's development. This is as true of Beckett's doodles for *Watt*, produced in tight conjunction with the manuscript in a matter of months, as it is of Joyce's elaborate and extremely various notetaking for *Finnegans Wake* in separate notebooks during the 17 years of that book's gestation. Of more immediate interest is the probability that the images Beckett created were an essential part of the drafting process to which they seem only tangentially related, that they complement and reflect upon and even illuminate the process and content of his evolving text, and that they provided another, and perhaps a vital, outlet for creative energy.³¹⁷

Beckett's doodles and Joyce's notetaking, visual material and textuality, are illuminatingly contrasted.³¹⁸ Other more recent glimpses into some visual

³¹⁶ Rosemary Pountney, *Theatre of Shadows: Samuel Beckett's Drama 1956-76* (Totowa, NJ: Barnes & Noble Books, 1988).

³¹⁷ David Hayman, "Beckett's *Watt* – the Graphic Accompaniment: Marginalia in the Manuscripts," *Word & Image: A Journal of Verbal/Visual Enquiry*, 13:2 (1997), 181.

³¹⁸ Hayman adds that instances of suchlike graphic illustration and design for the text "abound in the manuscript" in Beckett, suggesting the same for "the proliferating images"

representations found in the manuscript drafts of Beckett's later prose works suggest their strong affinity to those found in Beckett's own directorial notebooks for his later theatrical works.³¹⁹ Such observations of Beckett's targeted, yet tangential and paradoxical, movement from textuality toward visuality are certainly not lacking in number.³²⁰

It is also worth noting that Joyce largely belongs to the era of letterpress and linotype³²¹ and Beckett to that of offset and photocopy,³²² in terms of the printing technology of their times. Letterpress, the original Gutenberg technology of

though warning against facile conclusions about it. See *ibid.*, 177.

³¹⁹ See Bruno Clément, "De bout en bout (la construction de la fin d'après les manuscrits de Beckett)," in *Genèses des Fins: De Balzac à Beckett, de Michelet à Ponge*, eds., Claude Duchet and Isabelle Tournier (Vincennes: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 1996); Iain Bailey, "Allusion and Exogenesis: The Labouring Heart of Samuel Beckett's *Ill Seen Ill Said*," in *The Boundaries of the Literary Archive: Reclamation and Representation*, eds., Carrie Smith and Lisa Stead (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013). Those glimpses, especially into the way Beckett made "page-programmes" of the paragraph scenes of *Mal vu mal dit*, are worth comparing with various programmings of sectional division, tableau and diagrams found frequenting the directorial notebooks Beckett kept in his later career.

³²⁰ It should also be noted here, regarding that tangentiality, that Beckett does not necessarily uphold visuality over textuality indiscriminately, for he said in a remark made to Bair in 1973 that "[t]he best possible play is one in which there are no actors, only the text! I'm trying to find a way to write one". See Bair, *Samuel Beckett*, 433.

³²¹ Even that more advanced and updated choice, linotype which facilitates the automatic arrangement of characters into lines of type, was not the option for the printing of *Ulysses*, every one of whose six-hundred pages were carefully and painstakingly crafted "one letter at a time"; See Jeffrey R. Di Leo, "Who's Afraid of Self-Publishing?," *Notre Dame Review*, Issue. 41 (Winter/Spring, 2016), accessed October 20, 2016, https://ndreview.nd.edu/assets/187982/who_s_afraid_of_self_publishing_web_version.pdf

³²² Gontarski, who is foremost in pointing out and calling attention to textual and editing problems regarding Beckett's published works, accuses, for example, the American edition of *Come and Go* of carelessly photooffsetting the incomplete British Calder edition for convenience's sake; See Gontarski, "Editing Beckett," *Twentieth Century Literature*, Vol., 41 (Summer, 1995): 190-207.

relief printing, secures the topography of letters. Yet linotype, which means the industrial automation of arranging letters into lines, secures the topography of lines. The subsequent technology of offset lithography, which enabled printing by plates with the help of rotary presses, pushed these limits, and together with photocopying ensures an immediate reproduction of plates, and so the controllability of page topography. Thus, greater controllability of the textual and graphic features of pages was achieved and this was reflected in then developing journalism and art publications, which were expanding their access to the European public at the time and must thus also have significantly influenced Beckett's artistically sensitive mind. It is certainly not difficult to find this echoing within Beckett's appreciation of Joyce's literary art as consisting in something where "[w]hen sense is sleep, the words go to sleep. ... [and when] the sense is dancing, the words dance."³²³ This is then extended in Beckett's thinking wherein "that terrible materiality of the word surface" should be "capable of being dissolved."³²⁴ With both writers aspiring to create work wherein form and content are one and the same, such materiality consisted in words for Joyce, whereas for Beckett it consisted in the word surface thus objectified.

This archival turn across genetic Beckett criticism of the early 1990s is further characterised by its neutrality of approach, as a great amount of the material was still being acquired for archives and, in most cases, had only started to be analysed during this period. Knowlson showed that it is largely possible to reconstruct a plausible version of Beckett's biographical person out of the richness

³²³ Beckett, "Dante...Bruno.Vico..Joyce," in *Disjecta*, 27.

³²⁴ Beckett, "German Letter of 1937," in *Disjecta*, 172.

of archive material by publishing the only authorised and scrupulously fact-based biography of Beckett in 1996, and Pilling did the same in terms of reconstructing Beckett's intellectual self by publishing *Beckett before Godot* in 1997. Both publications testified to the scale, promise and authority of archival scholarship and decisively contributed to the historical and cultural turn that Beckett Studies was to take around the beginning of the new millennium.³²⁵ Before a certain program or rationale came to be introduced into archival inquiry, there existed a short period in which scholars encountered and freely commented on the manuscript material as they did with the published texts. So, it is found in those earlier publications of the decade that scholars approached Beckett's genetic material from both the perspective of philological empiricism and of then flourishing philosophical theoreticism, without drawing a strict methodological distinction between them. That distinction was to be introduced in the next decade, in a way similar to that of Gontarski in the previous decade.

Such coexistence between theoretical synthesis and scholarly analysis is well witnessed by the abovementioned first collection of essays of genetic criticism published by the BIF. Bryden compares Beckett's Christological doodles found in "a dramatic fragment from the early 1950s" and "an earlier sketch from the aborted *Human Wishes* project of 1936/37" with Francis Bacon's tortured figures as analysed by Deleuze.³²⁶ Connor summons a hoard of critical theory masters from Martin Heidegger to Luce Irigaray to elucidate "[t]he critique of the sight-reason conjuncture" found in the final drafts of the abandoned prose piece *Long*

³²⁵ Pattie, "Beckett and Bibliography," 246.

³²⁶ Bryden, "Figures of Golgotha: Beckett's Pinioned People," in *The Ideal Core of the Onion*, 45-62.

Observation of the Ray.³²⁷ Connor's and Bryden's pieces sit alongside other essays characterized by philological empiricism. Elsewhere, Krance, the Céline scholar-cum-initiator of the short-lived series of variorum editions of Beckett's bilingual works, invoked the poststructuralist concept of the simulacrum in order to qualify the idiosyncratic nature of Beckett's self-translation traced across its dual geneses,³²⁸ and Phil Baker engages Oedipal terminology and narrative as scrutinised by Freud and Lacan, to illuminate the "disintegrations of the father" encountered in *Molloy*.³²⁹ The same eclecticism of approach holds true for The Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett series,³³⁰ the grandest genetic project of the decade. Whereas as general editor Knowlson insisted on a balance between capturing and promoting "the rightness" of Beckett's final directorial decisions whilst acknowledging directorial freedom and individual judgment,³³¹ Gontarski, one of its separate

³²⁷ Connor, "Between Theatre and Theory: Long Observation of the Ray," in *The Ideal Core of the Onion*, 79-98.

³²⁸ Samuel Beckett, *Company/Compagnie and A Piece of Monologue/Solo: A Bilingual Variorum Edition*, ed. Krance (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1993), xiii-xxvi.

³²⁹ Beckett, *Trilogy: Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable* (London: John Calder, 1959), 158, quoted in Phil Baker, "The Stamp of the Father in Molloy," in *The Beckett Critical Reader: Archives, Theories and Translations* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 114.

³³⁰ The four-series joint publication by Faber and Faber and Grove Press is as follows: Samuel Beckett, *The Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett: Waiting for Godot*, Vol. 1, eds. Knowlson and McMillan (New York: Grove, 1994; London: Faber, 1993); Samuel Beckett, *The Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett: Endgame*, Vol. 2, ed. S.E. Gontarski (New York: Grove; London: Faber, 1993); Samuel Beckett, *The Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett: Krapp's Last Tape*, Vol. 3, ed. Knowlson (New York: Grove; London: Faber, 1992); Samuel Beckett, *The Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett: The Shorter Plays*, Vol. 4, ed. S.E. Gontarski (New York: Grove; London: Faber, 1999); In his following review for the Volumes 2 and 3 of the series, David E. Liss also acknowledges that such a forced balancing "rings a bit false coming from someone so close to Beckett": David E. Liss, review of *The Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett*, edited by Gontarski and Knowlson. *Text*, Vol. 8 (1995): 503.

³³¹ Knowlson, "General Editor's Note," in *The Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett*,

editors, sees "something like a postmodern performance text" in its "processive text" or in "a multiplicity or plurality" of its texts.³³²

This archival disposition behind the now institutionalised genetic Beckett criticism naturally tended to reconstruct the figure of the author out of his material and legacy. This involved, in a manner fitting the practices of an accumulated depository that the archive involves, the promotion of two trends: 1) a reconstruction of Beckett's intellectual and compositional process in chronological order across his career, and 2) an exact and scrupulous case-by-case investigation. At this period, the task of transcribing, annotating and publishing Beckett's manuscript material now launches at full-scale, spearheaded by Pilling's work on Beckett's early notebooks. As the related major and minor research projects start to accumulate, some insight into Beckett's writing method and poetics naturally emerges. It is notable, however, that in a more limited approach, fewer scholars have been involved in genetic Beckett criticism in comparison with their Joycean or Proustian counterparts. Especially during the 1990s, there were few scholars who were informed in matters of textual and genetic criticism. Within Anglophone boundaries, Gontarski was an exception, and the opinions of the small circle of such devoted but privileged scholars came to exert perhaps excessive influence, regardless of their intention, due to the lack of scholars who could access these new resources.

It is significant that the expression "poetical excavation," which was invoked as a way to characterise the general context of the process of Beckett's composition,

Volume I: Waiting for Godot, vi.

³³² Gontarski, "Editing Beckett," *Twentieth Century Literature*, Vol. 41 (Summer, 1995): 190-207.

first appears in Pilling's preface to *The Ideal Core of the Onion*.³³³ In the follow-up article in the book, Pilling examines the *Whoroscope* notebook – the most remarkable scholarly material among early Beckett writings, used during the composition of the novel *Murphy* – by describing its entries grouped under five categories of literature, philosophy, religion, science, mythology and history.³³⁴ The article opens with a markedly critical tone toward stylistic criticism that had flourished in the past, as might well be expected from his obiter dictum put at the end of the preface that “no public could otherwise ever have done more than guess at” this “very large amount of work.”³³⁵ “The very nature of creativity remains something of a mystery,” Pilling asserts, noting that “the construction of a mathematical model or equation between the inception and completion of a work, however figurative or suggestive, cannot be expected to succeed.”³³⁶ But what is more noteworthy in this very first specialist exploration of Beckettian philology, for which Pilling is still best known, is his emphasis on Beckett's earliest conceptions as they are found across his notebooks. This prioritisation might be intriguingly contrasted with Knowlson's emphasis of Beckett's final artistic vision, and was expressed as follows:

There are materials vital to the understanding of the genesis of *Murphy* at present unavailable to scholarly scrutiny, but even if these should ever enter the public domain priority will continue to reside here, rather than with

³³³ Pilling, “Preface,” in *The Ideal Core of the Onion*, v.

³³⁴ Pilling, “From a (W)horoscope to *Murphy*,” in *The Ideal Core of the Onion*, 1-20.

³³⁵ Pilling, “Preface,” vii.

³³⁶ Pilling, “From a (W)horoscope to *Murphy*,” 1.

newly released sources. In any event it seems unlikely that the *Murphy* notebook will be diminished in significance by subsequent discoveries, however rich.³³⁷

It is thus that genetic criticism in its accepted sense, that of the consultation of the evolutionary process of writing, has been subordinated to philological clarification of source material by Pilling, whilst it was already put aside as compared to the perceived exigencies of final artistic vision and theatrical empiricism as focused on by Knowlson. Both Pilling and Knowlson have contributed to advancing the study of Beckett's archival material more than any other scholars, and as such they bear much responsibility for their influences. It was not only reasonable but also even necessary for those two founding figures to each start working on Beckett's initial and final intentions respectively. For Knowlson it must have been the more urgent to distinguish Beckett's ultimate aesthetic rationale in the midst of the era of critical conjectures and theoretical re-readings, while the author was still alive. For Pilling as well, in the same manner, it must have been necessary to identify, annotate and compile Beckett's initial source ideas set down in manuscript material before doing anything else with it, in order for the still quite unprecedented Beckettian philology to begin properly. Therefore, strictly speaking, the lack of the number of scholars committed to genetic or archival Beckett scholarship would be the only source of regret for the cause of such systematic inquiry into Beckett's writing material.

The problems this lack of participation causes are not limited to those of slow progress in genetic or philological scholarship. Compared with the affluence of

³³⁷ Ibid., 2.

genetic Joyce criticism, which developed together with genetic and textual criticism throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, or the state-supported system in genetic Proust criticism, which in its inimitable efficiency achieved the macro- and micro- analyses of the quasi-entirety of its genetic material in twenty years, this limited number of Beckettian scholars fostered an atmosphere in which each one pursued their own untrodden ways. It is the same with the abovementioned observation of "poetical excavation" in the analysis of one of Beckett's early notebooks, which connects with Beckett's habit as a one-time academic of keeping an archive of a vast range of knowledge of stray words and phrases and drawing from it whenever and whatever the need arose. Pilling's approach at this time may have been more largely case-specific, but it is still to be found, about fifteen years later, when Mark Nixon expands it into a more general insight into Beckett's poetics:

Beckett later in life looked back on the 1930s, with its intense note-taking enterprise, as a period during which he thought he "had to equip myself intellectually." Yet even as his reliance on any such knowledge "collapsed," remnants of his erudition could never be entirely eradicated from his writing as he continued to rely on "dear scraps recorded somewhere" (*How It Is* 28).³³⁸

What this suggests is that the innovations in Beckett Studies of the 1990s, which were initiated partly through a sudden noticing of the visual qualities of Beckett's

³³⁸ Nixon, "'Guess where': From Reading to Writing in Beckett," *Genetic Joyce Studies*, Issue 6 (Spring 2006).

manuscripts and partly through an awareness of his 'note-snatching' (his winding allusion or direct quotation into his texts), proved decisive for subsequent scholarship. The "poetics of excavation" in particular, that is deploying notebooks from the archive, are continued in the foreground of subsequent inquiry, despite some reservation about such methods expressed by the author himself. Nixon, who finished his PhD thesis in 2005 at Reading under the supervision of Pilling³³⁹ (and is since leading a successful career in filling in and adding to his old teacher's philological achievements as well as holding co-directorship of the BIF), now participates in the project with new evidences. But his following argument leaves room for conjecture in interpreting such evidence:

After 1936, and even more so after 1945, Beckett not only drew less frequently on material taken from his reading, which also accounts for the absence of notebooks containing reading notes until he started keeping the "Sottisier" notebook in 1976, but also pushed literary and other allusions deeper below the surface. Indeed, there is much evidence to suggest that Beckett perceived the writing process as a site of excavation, and geological terminology is scattered throughout manuscript material. ...Similarly, Beckett in his post-war work tended to keep intertextual borrowings out of sight, at least until 1976 when he began working on the short poems known as the *Mirlitonnades*. ...Beckett's letters from the late 1970s and early 1980s contain many references to the struggle to continue writing. ...It appears as

³³⁹ Nixon, "'what a tourist I must have been': Samuel Beckett's German Diaries" (Unpublished PhD. Thesis: University of Reading, 2005).

if this return to an old note taking strategy helped Beckett to go on writing at this time. Equally, Beckett tended to use references to his reading in his writing more openly again.³⁴⁰

The reservation Beckett expressed against his habits of the past would make one wonder if such a notable suppression of the excavating practice should rather not have been read as a profound change of direction rather than a period of dormancy. Such an image of wearied vertical movement in writing, which is also dual and causes conflict between revealing and concealing, does not tend to be registered by scholars who consulted the French manuscripts belonging to the abovementioned interim – but most productive – period of Beckett's writing career, as Magessa O'Reilly describes concerning the manuscript version of *Texte pour rien XIII*.

La version manuscrite du «*Texte pour rien XIII*» est plus ou moins conforme à la version définitive. Les variants sont en majeure partie de l'ordre de la rectification stylistique et modifient peu le contenu de l'œuvre. ...Comme les autres œuvres de la fin des années 50, ce *Texte* fut composé plus ou moins d'un trait. Pendant cette période, Beckett couchait sur papier, dans l'ordre, des tranches de texte déjà composés mentalement et, la rédaction faite, il passait à la tranche suivante. Ainsi a-t-il composé dans une période relativement brève un assez grand nombre de textes, la plupart

³⁴⁰ Nixon, "'Guess where': From Reading to Writing in Beckett."

parmi ses titres les plus connus.³⁴¹

But this contrasting image of horizontal, smooth and measured movement in writing does not limit itself to this intermediate period. O'Reilly also appreciates the way Beckett transforms writing into a game of construction in later prose works such as *Compagnie* and *Mal vu mal dit*, works which are based closely upon detailed plans elaborated on the first manuscript pages.³⁴² For other texts, Bruno Clément discerns a paradoxical poetics of writing in revision and decomposition as the end of writing across the manuscripts of *Not I* and *Mal vu mal dit*,³⁴³ and Jacques Neefs distinguishes Beckett's beginning of writing as imagining a space without exterior circumstances or interior dwelling, which then is recapitulated until that space becomes a dwelling place in a properly descriptive manner. Neef's argument is based on his consultation of the manuscripts of *Molloy*, *Malone meurt*, *L'Innommable*, *Assez*, *Mal vu mal dit* and *Le Dépeupleur*.³⁴⁴ These two contrasting observations of manuscripts belonging to different periods may well owe something to Beckett's bilingualism, as illuminatingly summarised by Alain Badiou:

For we can say that Beckett, from a French perspective, is an entirely

³⁴¹ Magessa O'Reilly, "'Texte pour rien XIII' de Samuel Beckett: édition critique et étude de variants," *Revue d'Histoire littéraire de la France*, 90e Année, No. 2 (Mar – Apr, 1990): 234.

³⁴² O'Reilly, "'Texte pour rien XIII' de Samuel Beckett," 235.

³⁴³ Bruno Clément, "De bout en bout (La construction de la fin, d'après les manuscrits de Samuel Beckett)," in *Genèses des fins: De Balzac à Beckett, de Michelet à Ponge*, eds., Claude Duchet and Isabelle Tournier (Saint-Denis: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 1996), 119-66.

³⁴⁴ Jacques Neefs, "Commencements chez Samuel Beckett," in *Genèses du roman contemporain*, ed., Louis Hay (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 1993), 121-50.

'English' writer. He is so even in the translations made on the basis of his own French, which amount to something quite different than translations. ...They are more sarcastic, more detached, more mobile. In short, more empiricist. French served Beckett as an instrument for the creation of an often very solemn form of distance between the act of saying and what is said. The French language changed the paradoxes of the given into metaphysical problems. It inscribed into verdicts and conclusions what, in the English, led to irony and suspension. French—the language of Descartes, Beckett's great philosophical referent—changed picaresque characters into the witnesses of the reflexive Subject, into victims of the *cogito*. It also permitted the invention of a colder poetics, of an immobile power that keeps the excessive precision of the English language at bay. Beckett's French substitutes a rigid rhetoric that spontaneously lays itself out between ornament and abstraction for the descriptive and allusive finesse of English. There is something of the 'grand style' in Beckett's French.³⁴⁵

This is telling, in that it presumes that Beckett's mind is "English" when at its most allusive. As a consequence, the manuscript drafts are therefore more inclined to show greater traces of this and of sources deployed. Therefore, archival scholarship is vital to understanding one of the "national" resonances of Beckett's work. As we have seen above, it is Beckett's own "academic" past, which was on display across his life (it is notable that Nixon as cited above was discussing the so-called

³⁴⁵ Alain Badiou, "Author's Preface," in Alain Badiou, *On Beckett*, trans. and eds., Alberto Toscano and Nina Power (Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2003), XXXV-XXXVI.

"Sottisier" Notebook) that underwrites the "archival turn" taken in his work most concerted from the 1980s onwards.

However, more pressing questions concerning the general characterisation of Beckett's writing method spring up at the same time. Is the "poetics of excavation" a fair portrayal of Beckett's whole writing career? Is it rather not informed by and specific to the early period? Is the late Beckett's apparent return to his early practice of excavating truly a return per se without any qualitative differences in application? Is this "poetics of excavation" really unique to Beckett? Is it not that such a reading has rather been constrained by the reader's interests, specialisation and capacities?³⁴⁶ Are there not any other contemporary writers who engage similar practices? Or it may be that the matter reflects larger trends since the 1970s in literary studies in France and the Anglo-American world, the former focused more on writing and its author and the latter on the reading experience and reader response,³⁴⁷ which Esslin pointed out as being the most justifiable approaches to Beckett as early as 1961 and Murphy also appreciates as having been particularly successful within Anglophone Beckett Studies.³⁴⁸ To be able to fully address these difficult questions, genetic Beckett criticism would need to equip itself with a better community, e.g. BDMP, focus and outwardness, than it currently possesses.

Therefore, this particular "pedantry" characteristic of Anglophone Beckett

³⁴⁶ For Pilling's characteristically frank confession, "Considerations of space, combined with a disinclination to parade my own ignorance, effectively obliges me to concentrate on them, and more specifically on Beckett's interest in English literature and German philosophy," see Pilling, "From a (W)horoscope to *Murphy*," 7.

³⁴⁷ Toril Moi, "How the French Read," *New Literary History*, Vol. 44, No. 2 (Spring 2013): 311.

³⁴⁸ Murphy, "Beckett Criticism in English," 18.

Studies, as criticised by Murphy,³⁴⁹ comes to have its own counterpart in the way in which the now official and institutionalised genetic Beckett criticism develops. One of the characteristics of genetic Beckett criticism of the 1990s is that a slightly expanded group of scholars, which has gradually grown further since that time, dealt with Beckett's genetic material as a way of developing the findings of their predecessors. This was more in line with Pilling's archival style than it was with the more general and macro-analyses rendered by Gontarski and Pountney in the previous decade. Looking back to some of the essays included in *The Ideal Core of the Onion*, it is to be found that Kelly built upon Bair's anecdotes about the aborted *Human Wishes* to analyse Samuel Johnson's influence on Beckett through the manuscripts and typescripts held at UoR.³⁵⁰ Bryden tried to read Beckett's use of crucifixion imagery by focusing on doodles found in the notes and drafts - also toward *Human Wishes*.³⁵¹ Murphy attacked, out of a characteristic realist zeal, the traditional formalist focus on language and irony in Beckett's Biblical references by counter-discoveries he made in the manuscripts of *The Voice*, a draft piece which preceded *Company*.³⁵²

We can see similar developmental trends in the contributions to JOBS, which had been dormant since 1984 but was reinvigorated by Gontarski in 1992. Francis Doherty added Beckett's TCD forebear J. P. Mahaffy's *Descartes* as a significant source for the poem *Whoroscope* alongside Adrien Baillet's *La Vie de*

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 15.

³⁵⁰ Lionel Kelly, "Beckett's *Human Wishes*," in *The Ideal Core of the Onion*, 21-44.

³⁵¹ Bryden, "Figures of Golgotha: Beckett's Pinioned People," in *The Ideal Core of the Onion*, 45-62.

³⁵² Murphy, "On First Looking into Beckett's *The Voice*," in *The Ideal Core of the Onion*, 63-78.

Monsieur Des-Cartes, as previously ascertained by Fletcher.³⁵³ Chris Ackerley departed from Harvey's fine textual interpretation of the poem "Malacoda", basing an argument on the correspondence between the poem and Beethoven's final quartet, Opus 135, in lyrics, structure and theme. Phil Baker illuminated the "disintegrations of the father"³⁵⁴ in Moran by focusing on the image of the postage stamp Timor 5 Reis Orange that appears in *Molloy*.³⁵⁵ J. D. O'Hara connected Beckett's first formally published piece "Assumption" and Balzac's *Louis Lambert* and *Seraphita* via Knowlson's biographical accounts.³⁵⁶ Concurrently, in the newly launched *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui* (henceforth as *SBT/A*), founded in 1991 in Amsterdam by the Dutch scholars Marius Buning and Sjef Houppermans as an annual bilingual review, Giuseppina Restivo's research proved that the earliest known draft of *Endgame* has been found to be not MS 1227/7/16/7 of no earlier than 1952 but MS 2926, dated 1950.³⁵⁷ While acknowledging that it looks forward to "amicable relations" with JOBS, the editors of *SBT/A*, mostly comprised of Dutch and other European representatives, made clear their different and more egalitarian intentions for "a forum for the whole Beckett community in which it is not only called upon to listen but also to speak and write."³⁵⁸ By way of reminding the world

³⁵³ Francis Doherty, "Mahaffy's Whoroscope," *Journal of Beckett Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (Autumn 1992): 27-46.

³⁵⁴ Beckett, *The Beckett Trilogy* (London: Pan Books/Picador, 1979), 158.

³⁵⁵ Phil Baker, "The Stamp of the Father in *Molloy*," *Journal of Beckett Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 1 & 2 (Autumn 1995/Spring 1996): 143-55.

³⁵⁶ J. D. O'Hara, "'Assumption's Launching Pad,'" *Journal of Beckett Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 2 (Spring 1999): 29-44.

³⁵⁷ Giuseppina Restivo, "The Genesis of Beckett's *Endgame* Traced in a 1950 Holograph," in *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui 3* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1994), 85-96.

³⁵⁸ Marius Buning, "Editorial," *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui 1* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1992), 3-5.

of its lowlands' neutrality, SBT/A has since become the point of liaison between Anglophone and Francophone voices, and has hosted a wider spectrum of diverse critical approaches, including some noteworthy contributions of genetic criticism.³⁵⁹

Together with the publication of *The Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett* and *Damned to Fame*, the most remarkable event for genetic Beckett criticism of the 1990s is that of the Series of Variorum Editions of Samuel Beckett, originally initiated in 1986 by Krance with the permission and support of the author. Though launched by the BIF, it was the first official project of genetic criticism ever witnessed in Beckett Studies, yet it only lasted until a third volume, published by O'Reilly in 2001. This trend towards variorum editions was to be taken up again later by the BDMP, which launched in 2011.³⁶⁰ It can be seen that if the greatest motives for genetic Joyce criticism involved the interpretive and publishing conundrums of his texts, and for genetic Proust criticism these motives were the rising significance of critique génétique of the late 1970s, genetic Beckett criticism coalesced, in its proper, official and communal sense, around the problem of the bilingual aspects of Beckett's works. At the same time, it is also remarkable to find that, since the earliest days, Canadian or French scholars or those from the field of

³⁵⁹ The 1990s' selections are as follows: Krance, "Traces of Transtextual Confluence and Bilingual Genesis: A Piece of Monologue and Solo for Openers," *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui* 2 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1993); Ruud Hisgen and Adriaan van der Weel, "Worsening in Worstward Ho: A Brief Look at the Genesis of the Text," *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui* 6 (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1997).

³⁶⁰ The first three publications are as follows: Beckett, *Company/Compagnie and A Piece of Monologue/Solo: A Bilingual Variorum Edition*, ed. Krance (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1993); Beckett, *Mal vu mal dit/III Seen III Said: A Bilingual, Evolutionary, and Synoptic Variorum Edition*, ed. Krance (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1996); and Beckett, *Commen c'est/How It Is and/et L'image: A Critical-Genetic Edition/Une édition critico-génétique*, ed. Edouard Magessa O'Reilly (New York and London: Routledge, 2001).

French or comparative literary studies have tended to show more interest in the dynamics and subtleties in Beckett's writing process than their Anglophone counterparts.³⁶¹

This Variorum Editions project, originally inspired by the ideals of critique génétique expressed by Éric Marty,³⁶² offers a synoptic page-to-page view of English and French versions, together with document description as well as an evolutionary reconstruction of Beckett's composition process. This latter is rather complexly simplified by a system of diacritical signs, which follow the practice of the genetic Céline scholar Henri Godard in affording maximum dynamism and textual fidelity. However, at the same time, the volumes are notably constrained by a lack of space which makes the presentation quite confused and the edition therefore of questionable utility.³⁶³

The project had, unfortunately, limited impact due to the lack of scholars at

³⁶¹ Still quite earlier than Fitch who is the first in genuinely highlighting the bilingualism in Beckett in the late 1980s, Cohn did suggest a Variorum Endgame as a response to Duckworth's publication of a Variorum Godot in her "The Beginning of Endgame" and Gontarski also reminded himself of Fletcher's earlier anticipation for the future genetic Beckett criticism and reference to the existing achievement of early Flaubertian genetic critics like Gabrielle Leleu in Fletcher, "The Arrival of Godot," *The Modern Language Review*, Vol. 64, No. 1 (January 1969): 37, quoted in Gontarski, *Beckett's Happy Days*, 3; For the effect of New Criticism on the Anglophone critics faced with the poststructuralist critique génétique, see Morris, "Metaphors for Writing," n35, accessed February 5, 2015, http://www.academia.edu/675503/Metaphors_for_Writing_Genetic_Criticism_and_Finnegans_Wake_I.1.

³⁶² Krance, "Pour une édition synoptique de l'œuvre bilingue de Samuel Beckett," *Éditer des Manuscrits: Archives, Complétude, Lisibilité*, eds. Béatrice Didier and Jacques Neefs (Saint-Denis: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes, 1996), 116.

³⁶³ Krance, "Pour une édition synoptique de l'œuvre bilingue de Samuel Beckett," 117-21; For Godard's model for Krance's project, see Henri Godard, *Les Manuscrits de Céline et leurs Leçons* (Tusson: Du Lérot, 1988).

that time deploying textual and genetic criticism who could utilise such progressive textual apparatus. It may also have been the case that the well-defined poststructuralist tone sustained throughout the series, exemplified by Krance's especially passionate and fascinated approach, pushed back the philological and theatrical empiricists of the time who were trying, first and foremost, to accumulate facts about the origins of Beckett's works. The final and third reason for a lack of interest in the series might be the particularly specialised, untheorisable and ungeneralisable nature of this genetic business as a whole, something pointed out by Falconer.³⁶⁴ More specifically, the sheer unpredictable character of Beckett's bilingual self-translation, noted by Fitch,³⁶⁵ and succinctly demonstrated by Bryden,³⁶⁶ must not have appeared very appealing in this era of high critical theory. The editorial board for the series discussed the viability of electronic editions only to be met with skepticism in 1996, and the project was laid to rest until technology was more amenable to electronic manuscript editions, such as those by Van Hulle and Nixon in 2007.³⁶⁷

In the midst of this lack of genetic and textual awareness, meanwhile, the always liberal-minded Gontarski, who is at the same time the most genetic and textually-centred scholar before the arrival of Van Hulle, still did what he could. Having consulted the overall writing process of Beckett's theatrical works throughout the 1980s, he now investigated the publishing history of those writings

³⁶⁴ Falconer, "Genetic Criticism," 16.

³⁶⁵ Fitch, "The Status of the Second Version of the Beckettian Text."

³⁶⁶ Bryden, "Pour finir encore: A Manuscript Study," *Journal of Beckett Studies*, Vol. 8, No. 1 (Autumn 1998): 1-14.

³⁶⁷ Van Hulle and Nixon, "'Holo and unholo': The Beckett Digital Manuscript Project," *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui*, Vol. 18, No. 1. (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), pp. 313-322

and found that there were frequent textual discrepancies between published versions, as well as omissions between final typescripts and printed texts. Such discrepancies are caused by Beckett's indecision, the publishing houses' commercial interests, careless editing and other factors. There are two versions of *Dream of Fair to Middling Women*, for example, instead of the one Beckett wrote. The short prose work "neither" had been printed erroneously in JOBS No. 4 and even more erroneously later in *The Collected Shorter Prose 1945-1980*. Faber and Faber secured the unfinished typescript of *Footfalls* from Beckett, the version they then rushed into print ready for the opening night of the play. Faber also kept reprinting the 1956 bowdlerised text of *Waiting for Godot* with its hundreds of variants from the Grove Press version of 1954. Even the otherwise-reliable Grove Press shocked the inattentive (and so partly responsible) Beckett when it became clear there existed multiple printed versions of *Cascando* when Beckett tried to produce one for the American Beckett Festival of Radio Plays.³⁶⁸ Those are the circumstances which led Gontarski to campaign for the publishing of accurate editions of Beckett's works, a campaign which has fueled similar arguments made by John Banville, Eoin O'Brien and Gerry Dukes.³⁶⁹ Gontarski seems to have become more frustrated in this regard as time has worn on.³⁷⁰ His two related articles published during the

³⁶⁸ Gontarski, "Editing Beckett."

³⁶⁹ Banville, "The Last Word," *The New York Review of Books*, August 13, 1992, accessed July 31, 2017, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/1992/08/13/the-last-word/>; Eoin O'Brien, letter to the editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, July 16, 1993; Gerry Dukes, letter to the editor, *The Times Literary Supplement*, January 7, 1994, all quoted in Gontarski, "Editing Beckett."

³⁷⁰ It would be sensed from the titles that Gontarski is losing his patience with the affair: Gontarski, "A Centenary of Missed Opportunities: A Guide to Assembling an Accurate Volume of Samuel Beckett's Dramatic 'Shorts'," *Modern Drama*, Vol. 54, No. 3 (Fall 2011): 357-82; Gontarski, "Still at Issue after All These Years: The Beckettian Text, Printed and

1990s are both focused on promoting the most important Theatrical Notebooks, especially in their comparison with Gabler's editions of *Ulysses*, and on illuminating the characteristics of Beckett's texts and textuality. These pieces present Gontarski's position as a middle ground between Knowlson's fidelity to the authorial vision and the decade's ideological sensitivity towards poststructuralist egalitarianism, thus of encouraging a prioritisation of readers' own good readings.³⁷¹

However, the sum of all these projects and publications would not be able to compete in significance with the publication of Knowlson's authorised biography of Beckett in 1996. *Damed to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett* draws its eminence from its authorial blessing, strictly factual focus, informative comprehensiveness and engaging and sympathetic tone.³⁷² Based on interviews, personal material and final authorial confirmation, Knowlson succeeded in constructing a portrayal of Beckett across family scenes, personal intimacies, juvenile and intellectual errandries, political terrors, artistic maturity and success and remorse in old age. Many artistic myths and tabloid "truths" as originally included in Bair's biography thus came to be corrected on the one hand, but, on the other hand, Beckett's artistic picture tends to be seamlessly merged with his personal picture. The overall effect cannot help but be partial, selective or colored by the author's self-consciousness, his estate's interests and Knowlson's fidelity to his friendship with the author.

This perennial self-completeness of the Beckettian world as constructed by

Performed," *Journal of Beckett Studies*, Vol. 24, No. 1 (2015): 104-15.

³⁷¹ See Gontarski's "Editing Beckett" together with its following more detailed, expanded and clarified version: Gontarski, "Revising Himself: Performance as Text in Samuel Beckett's Theatre," *Journal of Modern Literature*, Vol. 22, No. 1 (Fall 1998).

³⁷² Banville's following brief comparative account over different biographies so far published would be instructive here: Banville, "The Painful Comedy of Samuel Beckett."

Beckett and his foundational scholars is truly the greatest strength as well as the greatest vulnerability of Beckett Studies. It has been putting aside the interests of comparative studies for the sake of its more urgent business of completing Beckett's authorial figure. As he previously responded to disputes over authorial intention and directorial practicalities by coming up with the highest possible accommodation around authorial vision (one that always subsumes and will have considered every possible nuance that was to be raised in Beckett's theatre), Knowlson now drew up a comprehensive picture of Beckett's creativity. That picture encompasses the full extent of European intellectual and aesthetic traditions and post-1960s North Atlantic art media. It also attempts a comprehensive response to the myths, misunderstandings, gossip, conjectures, mis-readings and over-interpretations of the man and his work. It is very well to right wrongs and defend what needs to be defended, but this blanket practice of only righting wrongs without ever positively objectifying what is right is obviously questionable as an approach. Whereas Ellmann's biography of Joyce, written long after Joyce's death, was criticised for mixing biography with criticism,³⁷³ Knowlson's biography of Beckett, authorised and helped by the still alive author, deserves criticism due to its absolute mixing of creativity with the personal history of the artist.³⁷⁴ It does not, in other words, set limits to its scope *as* biography.

³⁷³ Joseph Kelly, *Our Joyce: From Outcast to Icon* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), 152, quoted in Van Mierlo, "Reading Joyce," n9.

³⁷⁴ The foremost and most vocal examples would be those of Stephen John Dilks as following: Stephen John Dilks, "Portrait of Beckett as a Famous Writer," *Journal of Modern Literature*, Vol. 9, No. 4 (Summer, 2006): 161-188; and its more expanded Dilks, *Samuel Beckett in the Literary Marketplace*, foreword by Gontarski (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2011).

However, this authorised biography perhaps exercised an even greater impact through how others received it than in what it tried to convey. Before anything else, it successfully demonstrated that one can draw a much more grounded, integral picture of Beckett with facts and evidence alone, keeping conjectures and theories to a minimum. As Feldman wrote in 2006, "prior to the publication of Knowlson's paradigm-shifting biography in 1996, *Damned to Fame*, most of the documents and primary-source material needed to challenge existential readings" or any other speculative interpretation were "either unknown or unavailable to the scholarly community." But "[t]his has changed dramatically in recent years, and a substantial reevaluation of Beckett's literature is now underway."³⁷⁵ Van Hulle also sees that genetic criticism in Beckett Studies was "notably precipitated by the publication of Knowlson's groundbreaking biography, which drew attention to numerous hitherto barely studied manuscripts."³⁷⁶

So, for most of the 1990s, Beckett Studies enjoyed a temporary phase of coexistence (in Joycean terms) between "minimalists," who "use genetic material in a philologically circumscribing manner," and "maximalists," who "use genetic material more theoretically to address questions of textuality," even if both parties were probably not very conscious of their own opposing natures and domains, as was the way of Joyce Studies in that same decade.³⁷⁷ Fitch, Krance and O'Reilly can be

³⁷⁵ Feldman, "Returning to Beckett Returning to the Presocratics, or, 'All their balls about being and existing!'" *Genetic Joyce Studies*, Issue 6 (Spring 2006).

³⁷⁶ Van Hulle, "Introduction: Genetic Beckett Studies," 2.

³⁷⁷ The minimalist/maximalist division appears in R. J. Schork, "By Jingo: Genetic Criticism of *Finnegans Wake*," *Joyce Studies Annual* 5 (1994): 108, quoted in Van Hulle, "Introduction: Genetic Beckett Studies," 4-5; concerning the corresponding Dublin/Antwerp and Madison/Paris schools, see Nicholas Morris, "Metaphors for Writing: Genetic Criticism and

said to belong to the group of Beckettian maximalists, whereas Knowlson and Pilling belonged to that of Beckettian minimalists. But these scholars for the most part pursued their separate ways without acknowledging, contending against or competing with each other for most of the 1990s. This is another oddity of genetic Beckett criticism, and may be attributed to the aforementioned small number of participants, the scale of studies undertaken, and expertise.

But it may also be doubted whether such quietude had not rather been a political stratagem on the part of those foundational BIF scholars for the purpose of promoting philological scholarship, as they sought to avoid the Joycean trench war between two established camps. Knowlson overwhelmingly unveiled the significance of archival scholarship, and Pilling also showed what can be achieved through it, and even how to do it, by his publications of *Beckett's Dream Notebook* and *Beckett before Godot* respectively.³⁷⁸ Having met these two groundbreaking, formative and monumental contributions, genetic Beckett criticism now sees that it cannot any more read genetic material as another kind of text, but only in the context of and in accordance with other genetic material. Such Beckett criticism involves itself with the discussion of interpretive methodologies in the next decade. This moment, then, is tantamount to the announcement of the genuine third generation of Beckett criticism, compared to the first that had used unpublished

Finnegans Wake I.1" (master's thesis, University College Dublin, 2008), n35; Geert Lernout, "The *Finnegans Wake* Notebooks and Radical Philology," in *Probes: Genetic Studies in Joyce*, eds. David Hayman and Sam Slote (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995), 19-48; Pim Verhulst, "Interview with Professor Geert Lernout," *Manuscritica*, No. 28 (2015): 6-12.

³⁷⁸ Pilling, ed., *Beckett's Dream Notebook* (Reading: Beckett International Foundation, 1999); Pilling, *Beckett before Godot* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).

material "where relevant"³⁷⁹ for the purpose of illustration and the second that had then started to read and analyse those materials in full scale in connection with Beckett's published texts.

Even if such a philological upsurge in the late 1990s offset poststructuralism, however, it not only got along well with, but even benefited from and strengthened by it thanks to its cultural and postcolonial possibilities. These had originally been triggered by Michel Foucault and started to be introduced into Anglophone literary academia during the 1980s via celebrated agents such as Edward Said, Fredric Jameson and Terry Eagleton. There had been a growing sense of dissatisfaction with the blanket notion that Beckett is an ahistorical writer and that his artistic concern is primarily a formal one,³⁸⁰ and Knowlson's biography revealed a truly rich array of cultural, historical and intellectual influences in the formation of Beckett's personal and artistic self which scholars could investigate further.³⁸¹ Consequently, the timely emergence of Irish postcolonial studies acted as a springboard and offered good

³⁷⁹ Knowlson and Pilling, *Frescoes of the Skull*, xii.

³⁸⁰ Murphy is one of the most vocal opponents to this trend dominant at least for the first three decades. For a glimpse of the atmosphere, see Murphy, "II: Beckett Criticism in English," 7-65; Pattie, "Beckett and Bibliography," 244-6; and Seán Kennedy, "Introduction to 'Historicising Beckett,'" *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui 15* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2005), 21-7.

³⁸¹ Lois Oppenheim edited and published about Beckett's influences from the arts around the turn of the new decade, and Bryden edited an important collection of essays in 1998, including anecdotes by and interviews by eminent and promising figures, all dedicated to illuminating the relationship between Beckett's literary art and music, followed by Catherine Laws from the side of musicology and later by Helen Bailey. See Lois Oppenheim, ed., *Samuel Beckett and the Arts: Music, Visual Arts, and Non-Print Media* (New York: Garland, 1999); Oppenheim, *The Painted Word: Beckett's Dialogue With Art* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000); Bryden, ed., *Samuel Beckett and Music*; Catherine Laws, *Headaches Among the Overtones: Music in Beckett/Beckett in Music* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2013); and Helen Bailey, *More Nearly Pure Spirit: Beckett, Music and Spirituality* (Forthcoming).

initial case studies involving Beckett.³⁸² The next decade would see philological scholarship and cultural studies starting to work side by side to provide a more comprehensive view of Beckett's intellectual and cultural memories.

It has been witnessed here that, about ten years after Beckett's death, this authorised and factual reconstitution of the figure of the author efficiently disrupts the brief balance between questions of authoriality and textuality and, in the end, overwhelms the latter. This zero-sum game between authoriality and textuality seems unique to Beckett Studies, in comparison with what was happening in Proust and Joyce Studies in the same decade. As Ellison appreciates, Proust Studies started to produce important works that "make admirable use of rhetorical, psychoanalytical and narratological modes of analysis coupled with a solid knowledge of the recent advances in Proustian genetic philology." However, this did not preclude genuine interpretations nevertheless "always attuned to Proust's distinctive voice."³⁸³ Genetic Proust criticism, prepared during the 1960s and established in the 1970s and finished with the analysis of the macro-structural

³⁸² Among those first contributors to the historical Beckett, there are found many Beckettian scholars studying in the field of Irish postcolonial studies, such as David Lloyd, Kennedy, Sinéad Mooney, Patrick Bixby, Mark Quigley and others. See David Lloyd, "Writing in the Shit: Beckett, Nationalism and the Colonial Subject," in *Anomalous States: Irish Writing and the Post-Colonial Moment* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1993), 41-58; Kennedy, "A lingering dissolution': All that Fall and Protestant fears of engulfment in the Irish Free State," *Assaph: Studies in the Theatre*, No. 17/18 (Winter 2002): 247-62; Sinéad Mooney, "Kicking against the Thermolaters: Beckett's 'Recent Irish Poetry,'" *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui* 15, 29-41; Patrick Bixby, "Watt Kind of Man Are You?: Beckettian Anthropology, Cultural Authenticity, and Irish Identity," *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui* 15, 71-86; and Mark Quigley, "Unnaming the Subject: Samuel Beckett and Colonial Alterity," *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui* 15, 87-100.

³⁸³ Ellison, "Proust and Posterity," 207.

genetic development of the novel sequence by the 1980s,³⁸⁴ has ever been molding itself as an amalgam between the existing particularly French tradition of Saint-Beuvean and Lansonian historical and biographical criticism³⁸⁵ and the post-1968 tradition of the poststructuralist textual jouissance.³⁸⁶

Genetic Joyce criticism has been produced since the 1920s, was fully established in America during the 1960s, and has always experimented with the forefront philological and textual ideas, methodologies and perspectives. The *James Joyce Archive* and Gabler's edition of *Ulysses* during the 1970s and 1980s formed a well-established opposition between the more philologically inclined minimalists and the more critically inclined maximalists entering the 1990s, especially around *Finnegans Wake* material.³⁸⁷ If Geert Lernout's observation is correct, it is rather seen that those scrupulous practitioners of circumscribed genetic criticism are fighting for their ground against the more pervasive influence of the 1975 Paris Symposium and the ITEM.³⁸⁸

However, genetic Beckett criticism was brought to the fore only at the beginning of the 1990s, when also the scope of its archival potential fully emerged. Beckett criticism has needed to stand on its own without any government initiatives or state university bursaries. The tide of the time was not very amenable to this move. The decade was already dominated by poststructuralist theories together

³⁸⁴ Schmid, *Processes of Literary Creation*, 128.

³⁸⁵ For the lingering pre-1968, Lansonian and historical mold of la critique génétique, see Geert Lernout, "Genetic Criticism and Philology," *Text*, Vol. 14 (2002): 61-4.

³⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 53-9.

³⁸⁷ For the related historical account, see, among others, Lernout, "The *Finnegans Wake* Notebooks and Radical Philology"; and Van Hulle, "Genetic Joyce Criticism."

³⁸⁸ Lernout, "The *Finnegans Wake* Notebooks and Radical Philology"

with the lingering influence of New Criticism and its hostility towards the intentional fallacy. The particularly specialised nature of genetic studies must not have been very attractive at the time when centralisation and state control began to pull tight on the reins of academic institutions' effectiveness and efficiency. Beckett's fame and status as a dramatist rather than a prose-writer, and the overlap between his later celebrated life and the period when his genetic materials were being deposited and receiving attention, must also have encouraged this atmosphere. The question of his authorial intention became more readily a matter not of unraveling textual or pre-textual intricacies but of consulting the direct confrontation between his artistic vision and material according to the practices of dramaturgy.

To make matters worse, the dispersion of Beckett's material over as many as twenty different holding libraries either side of the Atlantic,³⁸⁹ even if its main storage come down to the three at UoR, HRHRC and TCD, must have contributed to the intractability of the problem. Beckett's over fifty pieces of prose and theatrical work of various lengths must have made it an onerous task to track down, identify and collate all the pre-publication material belonging to each. Tackling those ponderous bulks of Joycean and Proutian material must have required similar effort, but this notorious Beckettian fragmentation between archives must have added a particular disorientation. Still another encumbrance is the archival content. As befitting both his well-known anti-Joycean artistic manifesto³⁹⁰ and wry

³⁸⁹ Van Hulle, "Notebooks and Other Manuscripts," in *Samuel Beckett in Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 418-20.

³⁹⁰ "The more Joyce knew the more he could. He's tending toward omniscience and omnipotence as an artist. I'm working with impotence, ignorance. I don't think impotence has been exploited in the past." Graver and Federman, eds., *Samuel Beckett: The Critical Heritage* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), 148.

hermeneutic challenge,³⁹¹ Beckett's particularly unyielding textual embodiments would make one more easily, readily and immediately resort to consulting the author's and others' related interviews, correspondences and memoirs than to laboring to excavate their compositional history and development for clues regarding thematic interpretation. This must be especially so under Anglophone circumstances where questions of the reading experience tend to be prioritised over those of authorial background. Beckett was a more organised writer than his two modernist predecessors and the substantial part of his career overlaps with the adulthood of baby boomers where barriers of censorship, communication, transportation and printing technology were being rapidly lifted, and cases of corruption were generally marginal³⁹² compared to those life-consuming complexities that were encountered by Joycean genetic scholars. Such complexities around Joyce necessitated scholars' massive textual engagement as well as cutting-edge genetic scholarship.

Therefore, all in all, Beckett Studies was not quite prepared for its own textual and genetic scholarship to proceed. Other than some former individual achievements such as by Gontarski and Pountney, their first collective textual and genetic project was dedicated to Beckett's post-publication and epigenetic material to capture his final artistic vision for theatre during the 1980s. This occurred in parallel with the same authorised stint on the part of scholars working in the field of French literature in scanning Beckett's translation variants, alongside a limited

³⁹¹ Beckett, *The Collected Shorter Plays of Beckett*, 316.

³⁹² Gontarski is the main and lonely figure among Beckett scholars who pinpoints those marginal but important textual issues caused by "inept editing" and "publication blunders" as covered in his following articles: Gontarski, "Editing Beckett"; Gontarski, "A Centenary of Missed Opportunities."

range of endogenetic material. These foundational scholars' next sustained efforts were devoted to investigating Beckett's exogenetic material for the publications of the authorized biography and for one of the early notebooks during the 1990s. So, Beckett's endogenetic material tended to be neglected, and its inquiry tended to be disregarded throughout. As if taking the author's revenge on all those early liberal and arbitrary interpretations of his works rendered by classic and domineering journalistic literary critics, textuality and textual inquiries have now been effectively placed beneath author-centric criticism. If textuality overwhelms authorship in genetic Joyce criticism and the two rather compete with each other on the same standing in genetic Proust criticism, it is definitely authority which takes hold for genetic Beckett criticism.

The author is now dead, and it was time for scholars to concern themselves not only with those fresco works that had been going on inside his skull, but also with their separate textual embodiment as they had been scribbled by his hand. But the atmosphere of Anglophone literary academia was not very amenable, for, as Pattie notes, the 1990s were characterised by "a shift in the theoretical paradigm, from a loosely described humanism to the multiple varieties of textual uncertainty uncovered by the postmodern theorist."³⁹³ With the archival material made available now, it was time for scholars to engage in some collective project to collate, narrativise and publish the so-far neglected endogenetic material, the better to penetrate Beckett's literary art. Yet that move was to be envisaged not before the later part of the 2000s, for, as found in the first collection of essays written on archival material published in 1992, scholars seem to have then been keener to

³⁹³ David Pattie, "Beckett and Bibliography," 237.

devise their own more or less authentic hermeneutic eccentricities out of the just discovered, and therefore much more exciting, new material. This was also the period which would draw strong criticism from archival empiricists or philological minimalists within Beckett Studies such as Feldman in the next decade, as the debate on methodology arises alongside the course of development and expansion of genetic scholarship. The Beckettian equivalent to "The Scandal of 'Ulysses'"³⁹⁴ or "The Threat to Proust"³⁹⁵ is now to ensue.

³⁹⁴ Kidd, "The Scandal of 'Ulysses'."

³⁹⁵ Shattuck, "The Threat to Proust."

6. The 2000s: Scholarship's Sophistication and Diversification Away from Authorial Focus

I

The first decade of the new millennium was, for genetic Beckett criticism, the period in which archival and philological scholarship finally overwhelmed text- and/or theory-based criticism in their mutual struggle for interpretive hegemony. It is striking with regard to this shift that, across the key collections of essays edited by leading scholars, fewer contributors based in North America are included in the list of essayists. Those prominent names of the 1970s and 1980s such as Esslin, Harvey, Rubin Rabinovitz, Connor, Brater and Porter Abbot – who are mostly known for their contribution to textual analysis and interpretation – are not much to be seen, but nor have they been replaced by similarly-minded successors.³⁹⁶ Those three monumental outputs of archival scholarship – the *Theatrical Notebooks Series*, *Damned to Fame* and *Beckett before Godot* – mostly produced during the 1990s by scholars closely involved with the BIF, exerted an enormous influence upon the direction of Beckett Studies, radically shifting its course from text- and/or theory-based criticism to archival and empiricist scholarship. It should thus be no surprise that New Criticism-imbued North American scholars do not have as strong a voice as before. Any American tendency to postmodern theories is now overcome by studies centred upon Beckett's process of preparation and composition. There was not much conceptual or biographical exploration, with the exception of Ben-Zvi,

³⁹⁶ See Gontarski, ed., *On Beckett: Essays and Criticism* (New York: Grove Press, 1986); Pilling, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Beckett* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); and Gontarski, ed., *A Companion to Samuel Beckett* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010).

Moorjani, Lois Oppenheim, Andrew Gibson and Lois Gordon.

As the result, during this decade the interpretive authority of genetic material also started to overwhelm that of the published texts. If genetic material was put to limited use in illustrating the published text "where relevant" during the 1980s, and was more or less treated as vital during the 1990s, the 2000s saw a situation in which readings of the published text were now necessarily informed by genetic material. As more and more material was analysed it became possible and even desirable to ground entire individual analyses on the empirical evidence of the requisite genetic or biographical material, minimising hypotheses and conjectures in a way that had been earlier shown by Knowlson in his authorised biography. The situation may be analogous to the process of the scientific method which largely consists of three procedures of hypothesis, experimentation and conclusion, with the only difference being that the experimentation is the consultation of genetic material and the empirical evidence thus acquired is its content.³⁹⁷ Naturally, therefore, some debate over methodology came to be sparked during the decade, if not so widely as in Joyce Studies. The first part of this chapter will weigh up several of the key tensions within the treatment of the archive in Beckett Studies as they emerged in the early 2000s. It will bring to bear ideas that might cast light upon these issues from the perspective of Joyce and Proust criticism, and it will offer suggestions regarding how disputes about the archive in Beckett Studies might be mediated moving forward. The second half of the chapter will take these

³⁹⁷ "Some scholars have argued that the archive functions for the humanities and social science disciplines as the laboratory functions for the sciences," Marlene Manoff, "Theories of the Archive from Across the Disciplines," *Libraries and the Academy*, Vol. 4, No. 1 (2004): 13.

debates forward into the later 2000s, revealing how difficulties remain over the treatment of Beckett's archive, and which are finding partial solutions amongst a younger generation of scholars.

As is understandable considering the relatively short history of genetic scholarship within Beckett Studies, debates around interpretive methodology took on an aspect of direct conflict between speculative, theoretical criticism on the one hand, and genetic, philological scholarship, during the 2000s. This contrasts starkly with the situation in Joyce Studies where even genetic and philological scholarship had already been qualified between more theoretical maximalists and more philological minimalists by the 1990s, particularly around the genetic material of *Finnegans Wake*, the work whose long composition history "has shown to be paradigmatic for genetic criticism."³⁹⁸ Within Joyce Studies there was no huge qualitative difference assumed between theoretical and philological pursuits, as those two approaches are rather described as two extremities on the same scale. But it was with exactly that qualitative difference in mind that Feldman sparked debate with his 2006 essay "Beckett and Popper" (*SBT/A* 16).³⁹⁹ Drawing upon the theory of falsifiability from the philosopher Karl Popper, Feldman argued that increases in scholarly knowledge of Beckett could best be obtained by corroboration of empirical evidence acquired by a methodology well-defined enough to allow the process of falsification.⁴⁰⁰

Furthermore, Feldman distinguished between what he called "interior decorating," which is "a comparison or synthesis of otherwise disconnected subjects

³⁹⁸ Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics*, 5.

³⁹⁹ Feldman, "Beckett and Popper," 373-91.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 16.

in the interest of adding to an understanding of something other than Beckett”, and “scaffolding,” which is interested in “adding to knowledge about our literary subject,” so applying a clearly-cut distinction to interpretations of Beckett’s works.⁴⁰¹ By marking along these pragmatic lines, Feldman obviously did not champion the role of theoretical interpretation in adding to knowledge about Beckett and his works, and thus invited some severe ripostes from adherents of poststructuralism. Carrying such dissent further, Feldman attacked the theory-driven critical accounts going on in Beckett Studies since the 1980s, criticising them for failing to significantly increase scholarly *knowledge* of Beckett, due to synthetic and reductive methodologies governed by the theoretical discourses of poststructuralism. Specifically, Ben-Zvi’s influential but unsupported dating of Beckett’s reading of the Austrian philosopher Fritz Mauthner, the psychoanalyst Didier Anzieu’s subjectivist theorisation regarding Beckett’s inner psychology, and Richard Lane’s rhetorical strategy for comparative philosophical discourses about Beckett – thus building one illustrative case for each of the three repertoires of poststructuralist discourse of historicism, psychoanalysis and philosophy – were chastised for their lack of methodological rigour and thus of failing the test of falsifiability and thereby demonstrable contributions to knowledge.⁴⁰²

This manifesto for methodological clarity, based in the archive, subsequently met with a counterblow from the poststructuralist critic Garin Dowd in his essay “Prolegomena to a Critique of Excavatory Reason,” printed four issues later in the same review. Dowd retorted that Ben-zvi’s erroneous dating was rather an

⁴⁰¹ Ibid., 388.

⁴⁰² Ibid., 373-91.

exemplary falsificationist case according to Feldman's own logic of argument, that Feldman simply misread the intended genre of fictional psychoanalytic account by Anzieu, and, in the case of Lane, Feldman's rigidity of methodology could recognise only commitment to philosophy as governed by time-specific evidence and not as a broader confluence of intellectual circumstances.⁴⁰³ He further doubted the adequacy of Feldman's employment of concepts from scientific discourse, regretted Feldman's narrow embrace of authorship and the objectivity of empirical science which poststructuralism had been making such efforts to contradict, and raised concerns about the restrictive implications that Feldman's standardisation of methodology could effect in the hermeneutic scope of future critical accounts. Finally, Dowd went so far as to charge what he perceived in Feldman's writing as a typical Anglophone literary studies' dogmatic bastardisation of continental critical theory.⁴⁰⁴ In his essay "In Defence of Empirical Knowledge", included right after Dowd's in the same issue, Feldman mostly rejoined his attack by fending off some overinterpretations of his assumptions, reconfirming his own ground, and maintaining and further clarifying his points about the need for the distinction between theoretical criticism and empirical scholarship. He also raised the problematic nature of empirically unfalsifiable critical assertions and stressed the general relevance of rational inquiry across academic disciplines.⁴⁰⁵

With Feldman not trusting speculative criticism with the role of increasing knowledge about Beckett and his works, and Dowd rejecting outright the notion of authorship in any empirical sense, the discussion was fated to run on parallel lines

⁴⁰³ Dowd, "Prolegomena to a Critique of Excavatory Reason," 381-83.

⁴⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 376-77, 383-85, 378-81, respectively.

⁴⁰⁵ Feldman, "In Defense of Empirical Knowledge," 389-99.

which could never really meet. Feldman's criterion of falsification needs to be better qualified, as Popper's own falsifiability criterion has long been criticised even within philosophy of science. Some critics saw its application as being limited to revolutionary periods of the history of science, and not speaking to how normal science actually operates, thus they perceived insufficiency in defining what constitutes and advances scientific knowledge.⁴⁰⁶ There is no newness in Dowd's argument either, since poststructuralism's anti-authorial ethos also comes to undergo qualification from within its own discourse, and rules do sometimes need to exist to guide and provide standards of study.⁴⁰⁷

Again, this type of stark collision between empiricist philology and theoretical criticism reflects the relatively short history of genetic Beckett criticism, but is not unique to Beckett Studies. In Joyce Studies, interest in Joyce's writing process had begun in the later part of Joyce's lifetime, having been instigated by Joyce himself, and it was soon launched in an early version of Anglophone genetic criticism of the 1950s and the 1960s.⁴⁰⁸ Such study was generally teleological,

⁴⁰⁶ Thomas Kuhn, Imre Lakatos and Larry Laudan are representative critics of Popper's theory of falsifiability; see Massimo Pigliucci and Maarten Boudry, "Why the Demarcation Problem Matters," in *Philosophy of Pseudoscience: Reconsidering the Demarcation Problem*, eds. Massimo Pigliucci and Maarten Boudry (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 1-6; Pigliucci, "The Demarcation Problem: A (Belated) Response to Laudan," in *Philosophy of Pseudoscience*, 9-28; and Soazig Le Bihan, "Part I The Demarcation Problem," *Soazig Le Bihan*, accessed September 7, 2017, <http://www.old.soaziglebihan.org/1001-PHIL411/2010-PHIL411-Chapter2.pdf>.

⁴⁰⁷ See François Dosse, "The Subject of the Return of the Repressed," in *History of Structuralism, Volume 2: The sign sets, 1967-present*, trans. Deborah Glassman (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 324-35; Deleuze, "Foldings or the Inside of Thought Subjectivation," in *Foucault*, trans. and ed. Seán Hand (London: A&C Black, 2009), 78-101.

⁴⁰⁸ For the accounts regarding the notorious *Our Exagmination Round His Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress* and Joyce as a diplomat with careful schemes for his fame

interpretive, pragmatic and untheoretical.⁴⁰⁹ By the 1970s, as the more theoretical and anti-teleological trend of French 'critique génétique' was introduced and made influential by the formulation of the Institut des Textes et Manuscrits Modernes at Paris, genetic Joyce criticism partly came to assimilate contemporary theories.⁴¹⁰ Thus at least around twenty years ahead of genetic Beckett criticism, the once pragmatic genetic Joyce criticism came to be doubly inflected by critical theories, first by the abovementioned French textual haute couture, and then following the 1975 Paris International James Joyce Symposium, where radical theoretical pursuits were promoted. The focus was on the avant-gardism of Joyce's language alongside political and cultural studies, and sometimes bore witness to a deeply ingrained divide between the apolitical, practical Anglophone approach on one hand, and Francophone critical theories on the other.⁴¹¹ A better pedigree therefore seems to be secured for theoretical perspectives in Joyce Studies than in Beckett Studies, for the most significant figures in poststructuralism, including Derrida and Cixous, built both their theories and authority through their interpretation of Joyce's text from the outset. Although some of these figures produced useful work also on Beckett, nonetheless theory has tended to enter Beckett Studies more sporadically and as a secondary methodological framework.

The path of such debate within Proust criticism is instructive when

and his works' reception, which is diametrically opposed to Beckett's manner, see Rabaté, "Classics of Joyce Criticism," 253-263.

⁴⁰⁹ For the characteristics of early Anglophone genetic criticism, see Michael Groden, "Genetic Joyce," 232-9.

⁴¹⁰ David Hayman, "Genetic Criticism and Joyce: An Introduction," *Probes: Genetic Studies in Joyce*, eds. David Hayman and Sam Slote (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1995), 6-12.

⁴¹¹ Rabaté, "Classics of Joyce Criticism," 266-269.

considering the crucial Feldman/Dowd dispute in the mid-2000s, and therefore the path will now be followed in some detail. In the process, the ambition here is to offer a way that translates from outside Beckett Studies a way of thinking that might be useful within it. The Proust "example" offers a corrective to the polarising tendency which took hold within Beckett Studies in the early 2000s, whereby an empiricism around archival research (Feldman) seemed to clash irrefutably with a more theorised approach (Lane, Dowd), which could not conquer its skepticism at such a methodology. It is noteworthy that a similar Popperian debate was featured inside Proust Studies during the 1990s. Considering the monumentality of the new Pléiade edition, which Shattuck estimated to in effect be proposing "to influence the way we read Proust and, to some degree, the way we approach all great literary works,"⁴¹² it is understandable that a typical scholarship-theory dispute should occur, touching upon the problem of "l'existence de norms communes de la discussion critique"⁴¹³ in a way comparable to that which would occur in Beckett Studies a generation later. Antoine Compagnon, one of the main specialists in Proust's genetic material as well as a collaborative editor on the Pléiade edition, asked about the nature of the relationship between critical editions and literary interpretation in his 1992 article "Ce qu'on ne peut plus dire de Proust", taking as an example the several cases of newly-established textual discoveries included in the edition of *Sodome et Gomorrhe*. Intending this inquiry to be applicable to other writers as well – especially as a model with which to evaluate falsifiability in the study of literature – Compagnon wondered if everything was now permitted in

⁴¹² Shattuck, "The Threat to Proust."

⁴¹³ Compagnon, "Ce qu'on ne peut plus dire de Proust," *Littérature* 88 (1992): 61.

literary criticism, or if it is still possible to confirm that a certain reading is false and to refute it after positivism and structuralism. Compagnon conclusively suggests that a critical edition should be taken as indispensable in reading and appreciating in the study of literature, for any interpretation that is unfalsifiable and thus unwarranted is, according to Popper, ideological and constitutive of a certain worldview alien to the textual actuality of the work under study.⁴¹⁴

Compagnon further points out that, when we consider the effect of a critical edition as against literary analyses that are based upon external models of interpretation such as phenomenology, psychoanalysis, thematics, anthropology or social criticism – as has been practiced in recent Racine and Proust criticism – we can see that the text in question is not to be limited to that of any particular published work, but extended to cover the whole range of a given author's writing output, both published and unpublished. There has actually been no legitimate boundary established between published and unpublished texts, and variants and sketches have been widely consulted, either with a view to founding or invalidating a reading.⁴¹⁵ The first example of this tendency is taken from Alain Roger's 1985 book *Proust, les plaisirs et les noms* where the author carries out an onomatopoeic psychoanalytic criticism regarding a certain chain of words appearing in *Sodome et Gomorrhe*. "Cerfs, cerfs, Francis Jammes, fourchette" closes and recapitulates the protagonist's dream, on his first night at the Grand-Hôtel when he visited Balbec, having just recovered from belated grief over the loss of his grandmother. Roger evokes the Proustian obsession with female breasts, which is pervasive around that

⁴¹⁴ Ibid., 54.

⁴¹⁵ Ibid., 54-5.

passage, and interprets the prior manuscript inclusion of the word "succinctement" after "cerfs, cerfs", and its absence in the edition published in 1954 (both of which were pointed out in a related note to the passage included in the same edition), as Proust's deliberate and symptomatic action of erasure, with all its acoustic and semantic associations with lactation.

But Compagnon shows that, on the basis of the corrected typescript of *Sodome et Gomorrhe*, which stands at an intermediary stage between the manuscript and the 1954 edition, and his reflection upon it which forms the main source of divergences between the 1954 edition and the new Pléiade edition, the erasure was not a deliberate one by Proust himself. Instead, it was the result both of an original omission on the part of the typist, who failed to decipher the adverb and left a blank space in the script, and then that of Proust, who also failed to catch the omission and correct it while proofreading the typescript.⁴¹⁶ As cases of typescript corruption were frequent in Proust as they were in Joyce, it would be difficult in cases like this to decide if the author intended the omission himself or not, let alone what he intended by it. Following this new discovery, confirmed in Proust's new critical edition, only two options are left for a critic: to interpret some intention in the typist's action, or to just acknowledge his or her error regarding the related adverb.⁴¹⁷ Another discovery included in the new edition not only corrects Roger's dated and less-informed interpretation, but even transforms the whole setting of his inquiry. The 1912 drafts of "Intermittences du coeur" retain an earlier version "succinctement, Francis Jammes, fourchette, te recomposer," the "te recomposer" at

⁴¹⁶ Ibid., 55.

⁴¹⁷ Ibid., 55-6.

the phrasal end, more plainly eliminated by Proust himself, indicating that this should be regarded as providing a better opportunity for psychoanalytic interpretation to intervene.

It is important to notice that, rather than directly employing those very rubrics of Popperian falsifiability in the aforementioned manner of Feldman, by seeking recourse to that Popperian principle Compagnon here tends to highlight the general necessity for literary criticism to take into greater account the findings and authority of a new critical edition. Updated findings in a critical edition are helpful in avoiding scholarly mistakes, such as that made by Roger, and in further informing psychoanalytic interpretations. Even if, according to Popper, psychoanalysis is not falsifiable and not quite deserving of the status of scientific discourse, Compagnon nonetheless accepts the possibility of a more substantial and sensible type of psychoanalytic criticism as duly furnished by the critical edition.⁴¹⁸ As will be covered more extensively later, this more careful and compromised position held by Compagnon, which would be seen as more in line with the theoretical strengths of the Francophone intellectual climate, will prove itself to be a more sensible one than that of Feldman in taking full account of the principle of demarcation – originally used for the discussion of methodologies in scientific discourse – into the study of literature. For, unlike Compagnon's and Feldman's apparent presupposition, the universal applicability of that very concept of falsifiability even inside scientific discourse remains under constant dispute.⁴¹⁹

⁴¹⁸ Ibid., 56.

⁴¹⁹ See Larry Laudan, "The Demise of the Demarcation Problem," in *Physics, Philosophy and Psychoanalysis: Essays in Honor of Adolf Grünbaum*, eds. Robert S. Cohen and Larry Laudan (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1983), 111-27; Sebastian Lutz, "On an Allegedly Essential Feature of

Following its more troublesome psychoanalytic counterpart, the second example for Compagnon involves the case of historical criticism, a category which includes both biographical criticism and literary history, centering on the figure of the character Albertine.⁴²⁰ Before the publication of the new Pléiade edition, it had generally been accepted that the character did not exist before 1914 and was even outside Proust's writing plan at the time of the 1913 publication of *Côté de chez Swann*. Scholars had tended, therefore, to presume that Albertine was indebted for her character to Proust's driver-cum-secretary Alfred Agostinelli, who was hired by the author in 1913, but fled from his employer's unrequited emotions and was tragically killed in a monoplane accident off the coast of Antibes on 30 May 1914, at the time when he had been learning aviation under the pseudonym Marcel Swann. Proust is found to have written the first sketch of *Albertine disparue* in Exercise Book 54, titled "Dux" right after the tragic event. In doing so, Proust aligned the whole episode of the protagonist's second arrival at Balbec, the revelation about Albertine's relationship with Miss Vinteuil, a draft for *La Prisonnière* and, finally, the young lady's departure in Exercise Book 71, all under the title of "Roman d'Albertine," which along with the Exercise Book 54 dates from spring 1914. Before this, Albertine would not have existed.

But certain findings included in the new Pléiade edition establish, based on the multiple clues, that even before 1914 Proust had already been envisaging a new female character and as such was planning to redirect the novel's narrative toward the future *Sodome et Gomorrhe*. That female character takes the name Maria most

Demarcation Criteria of Science," *The Reasoner*, Vol. 5, No. 8 (August, 2011): 125-26; Massimo Pigliucci, "The Demarcation Problem," 9-28.

⁴²⁰ Compagnon, "Ce qu'on ne peut plus dire de Proust," 56.

frequently in his related drafts, a name which especially appears side by side with the names Balbec, Montargis and Albertine in a setting titled "2e année à Balbec", included in Exercise Book 13, which dates the composition to the spring or summer of 1913. The presence of the name Albertine in the composition first appears to be an alteration of the old name Maria, and afterward occurs more and more frequently before being fully introduced during the scenarios for *A l'ombre des jeunes filles en fleurs*, *Le Côté de Guermantes* and *Sodome et Gomorrhe*, and especially in the aforementioned "Danse contre seins". Therefore, the very fact that the writing of the composition occurred over the period 1913 to 1914 establishes that the character Maria, whose traits were soon to be cannibalised for the character Albertine, had already been living among the drafts before Agostinelli ran away.⁴²¹

Those new manuscript discoveries from the period 1913 to 1914 also help correct another habitualised reading concerning the following well-known addition to the scene at Montjouvain included in *Du côté de chez Swann*: "On verra plus tard que, pour de tout autres raisons, le souvenir de cette impression devait jouer un role important dans ma vie."⁴²² Like the previous general conception that Albertine is modeled on Agostinelli, it has been widely accepted that this addition points to the conclusion of *Sodome et Gomorrhe* and more specifically to its "Désolation au lever du soleil," where the protagonist, haunted by the same scene from his memory, leaves together with Albertine for Paris and directs the narrative toward the following *La Prisonnière* and *Albertine disparue* sequences. But here the

⁴²¹ Ibid., 57.

⁴²² Proust, *À la recherche du temps perdu*, Vol. 1, ed. Jean-Yves Tadié (Paris: Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, Gallimard, 1987), 157.

new critical edition also informs us that the addition was included between the third proof of *Du côté de chez Swann* dated August 1913 and the published version of November the same year. Both moments, therefore, also predate the event of Agostinelli's flight and ensuing death. Therefore, as shown by Compagnon himself, additions must have actually been pointing to a recollection of Montjouvain originally included in the drafts for the scene of "Danse contre seins", and not to the more popular but anachronistic one of "Désolation au lever du soleil."⁴²³

It is interesting to note the way that Compagnon here evokes the three interpretative criteria of historical criticism: life, literature and material. The existing interpretation of the aforementioned addition is a strange case in which literature precedes life, for scholars and readers often approach it as pointing to an unexpected incident which had not yet occurred at the time of its publication. Compagnon seems here to accept the possibility of such a case, especially for Proust and his novel. Although Sainte-Beuve and later, George Painter-like practitioners of biographical criticism assert the precedence of life over literature, Compagnon acknowledges that sometimes compositional drafts reveal some vague fictional plans whereby the life of the author allows them to take form or credibility, as if by way of providing a spark for them. Maria is actually found in the genesis of the novel as early as an old red notebook, Notebook 64, which was written over 1909-1911 and covers the three years that the protagonist spends at Querquville. The first year involves a scene where the painter Elstir introduces a band of girls to the protagonist and is finished by the time of the refused kiss, while the second year is where his suspicions are triggered by the kindness shown by Maria and

⁴²³ Compagnon, "Ce qu'on ne peut plus dire de Proust," 57.

Andrée. The third year covers his stay at Madame Chemisey's place with Maria. Together with Exercise Book 46, which prepares *Sodome et Gomorrhe* as set during the First World War, returning to Maria and to a lost page of the red notebook for the episode of "Danse contre seins," the early situating of Maria itself does not count for much. Rather, it is another episode adding to the series on the protagonist's ever-retarded sexual initiation, just without the post-1914 story of Albertine giving all those earlier clues their significance, scope and location.

The better scenario that Compagnon here suggests concerning the origin of Albertine, based on the newly acquired evidence included in the Pléiade edition, is that Albertine rather replaces a series of women related to the protagonist's pursuit of sexual initiation, and more specifically to two contrasting types. There is the fin de siècle, unchaste and faintly androgynous adolescent in Maria, or in the young girl in red roses who gazed and leaned her bosom onto him at a ball. Or there is the rotten and withered beauty in the servant woman of Madame Putbus, who appeared as an important figure in the 1912 version of the novel but later disappeared from the published one, a figure similar to the woman that Montargis slept with at a brothel. But as Albertine is invented, that last decadent couple, who reminds Compagnon of the images of Salome and Helen as painted by Gustave Moreau, comes to be eclipsed by another one of Albertine and Morel, which is that of Gomorrah and Sodom. As Albertine replaces both the young girl in red roses and the servant woman, therefore, Morel undergoes a comparable transformation in the way that Proust dictates, in the margin of a related manuscript page, imparting unquestionable good masculinity to him, with disguised femininity made more apparent in the 1912 version. Thus, two conclusions can be reached regarding

this second example of historical criticism: it is not to be considered that the biography of the author parallels, or is equated with the work. Instead, the biographers of Proust need, accordingly, to take Maria into greater account in their established and almost exclusive attribution of the invention of Albertine to Agostinelli.⁴²⁴

It is also noteworthy to see that Compagnon here tries, while stressing the inalienable significance of the findings of the new critical edition, to take a careful stance in acknowledging a range of mutual interdependencies among the three criteria of life, literature and material. A case in point further arises where the existing tendency to equate literature with life comes to be attenuated, but not quite degraded, by material evidence. It should be regarded as giving less reason to equate Proust's life with his writing or to attribute the genesis of Albertine to the figure of Agostinelli entirely. Yet still, it is not that archival material has the final word about the verification of the question. Rather, with its relevant supporting information, it rather points discussion towards the direction of more validity. That should be the reason why Compagnon maintains here a more cautious, realistic and egalitarian position concerning the politics between those three interpretive criteria, stressing that scholars need to take into greater account the figure of Maria in their analyses of the question.⁴²⁵

It is opportune to compare here the different lines that Feldman and Compagnon are taking, whilst touching upon questions of a similar nature. For Compagnon, it is vital to uphold the writing over and against the (however remote)

⁴²⁴ Ibid. 57-59.

⁴²⁵ Ibid.

possible sources for it in "the life." For Feldman, what the archive offers is the possibility to correct facts about the life, such as the chronology of an author's reading, in order to properly establish the dating of the written creative works. The dating of Beckett's reading of Mauthner's *Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache* (hereafter *Beiträge*) by Feldman, for example, provides us with an exemplary case where material is upheld over life in developing a version of historical criticism, this time with literature forming the neutral middle ground.

Three instances of theorisation over the dating of Beckett's first reading of *Beiträge* are summoned for Feldman's discussion: Ellmann's dating it as taking place in 1932, following his 1953-4 interviews with Beckett in the run-up to the preparation for his biography of Joyce; Ben-Zvi's dating it to 1929, based on a significant letter and a series of interviews; and his own dating it to 1938, according to the archival revelations scrutinised by Van Hulle, Pilling and by Feldman himself. Feldman especially involves this case for an illustration of the applicability of Popper's concept of empirical corroboration to Beckett Studies as one of the methodological pillars under the overarching principle of falsifiability. Curious here is a gambit on the part of Feldman to take the author's decades-later reminiscences, and his own carefully processed documentary evidence, as being mutually inconsistent. For, as feared by Dowd, the principle of falsifiability and its norms of application in empirical corroboration, relevance and explanatory power can be misleading to, and misled by, the nature of, and stakes in, the discourse of the study of literature, especially if they come to be applied to the latter in an unequivocal manner.⁴²⁶ However, something of this gambit is also evident in

⁴²⁶ Dowd, "Prolegomena to a Critique of Excavatory Reason," 377.

Feldman's source for this "case study", which is Van Hulle's empirical establishment that "1938 was the first substantial period since 1930 when Beckett and Joyce were in the same city for any length of time" and that Beckett was helping out the poor-eyed Joyce in 1938 when the latter's *Work in Progress* was entering its final stage. Beckett did this by reading and making notes of *Beiträge*, as ascertained in two related notebook entries proven to have been kept at that time. This may strengthen the case that a more substantial encounter between Beckett and Mauthner occurred in 1938. Yet this does not sufficiently refute the author's own dating it as to around 1930 as he reminisced in a letter and series of interviews.⁴²⁷

Likewise, with Pilling's empirical clarification that Mauthner was seemingly not brought to Joyce's awareness before the latter's trip to Zurich over Winter 1934/5, and that entries preceding and following Beckett's transcription of *Beiträge* within the Whoroscope Notebook could have only been added after late 1937 or January 1938. This is based on a consideration of the putative chronological order by which the notebook was kept. Bruno Cassirer's 1922/3 complete works of Kant, whose volume XI contained the entries preceding Beckett's transcription of *Beiträge*, make an appearance in Beckett's 1938 French poem "ainsi a-t-on beau," which wryly smacks of Mauthner as well.⁴²⁸ They may form the sufficient reason for establishing that Beckett first tackled Mauthner in 1938 – to the extent of keeping his own notes on *Beiträge* in one of his important notebooks – and even for choosing to reflect some of its inspiration in his creative output, if only indirectly, during that period. But again, this is not unfalsifiable evidence for effectively refuting the

⁴²⁷ Feldman, "Beckett and Popper," 379.

⁴²⁸ *Ibid.*, 380.

author's much later personal reminiscences of his first genuine encounter as having occurred nearly a decade earlier. Feldman argues at this point that "one need not be a Beckett aficionado to know that memory is oftentimes an imperfect indicator of past events", or that Beckett's related letter to Ben-Zvi in 1979 also needs to be corroborated by supplementary evidence. Yet that view of memory's occasional fallibility itself is applied to this individual case in a manner unfalsifiable, and one also need not be an admirer of Popper to know of a situation where memory is the sole indicator of a totally undocumented event of the past, or where it can be more accurate than the questionable documentation relating to it.⁴²⁹

Feldman also adds further analysis to his argument by empirically clarifying that Beckett's proficiency in German seems to have been developed enough to be able to make use of *Beiträge* only after the mid-1930s and, furthermore, that the pages 473-479 in Volume II of the *Beiträge* correspond to the entries on Mauthner included in Joyce's notebook, VI.B.41, and to those transcribed in Beckett's *Whoroscope* Notebook in a larger portion, at the same time.⁴³⁰ This is an empirical corroboration duly equipped with relevance and explanatory power, as well as being one that makes an indispensable contribution to the historical study of Beckett's life and writing. But it also fails to form a sufficient reason for refuting outright the author's late reminiscence that his first encounter with Mauthner occurred very early in the 1930s, which was especially maintained in the later part of the author's life. For it is still possible that, despite having been mistaken in his exact dating of the event of his reading Mauthner to Joyce, Beckett could have

⁴²⁹ Ibid., 379.

⁴³⁰ Ibid. 380-1.

rather been pointing to the reliable date of his first genuine encounter with Mauthner. If it is possible to dismiss this acknowledgement by Beckett by reason of fallibility of memory, the same experience also informs the notion that limited proficiency in a certain language does not always fend off the approach of a literarily capable mind toward its classics by which it has been impassioned. In a word, to discard outright Beckett's own dating still stands as a matter of choice on top of the empirical evidences for his seemingly more substantial engagement with Mauthner about a decade later.

The urge, in all these approaches, to prove the fallibility of the author as against the infallibility of other kinds of textual and lived experience – such as language learning – shows something of the insufficiency of an archive-dominated approach in Beckett Studies in the early 2000s. It might be taken to prioritise one kind of “privileged knowledge” over other evidence, which retains equally possible validity. Without lapsing into a false dichotomy that recourse to theory might offer at this point, the archive might be rather taken perhaps as *one* element in a more complex picture of literary understanding.

Therefore, a less dogmatic and more flexible historical approach is missed here, similar to that which was taken by Compagnon in his investigation of the origination of *Albertine* as scattered through the writing process of Proust. Such a more cautious stance was actually taken by Knowlson regarding the account of this same moment of reading Mauthner, as included in his authorised biography of Beckett. Knowlson allows the possibility, while emphasising that although the Mauthnerian notes certainly recorded in the *Whoroscope* notebook at the end of the 1930s may have been intended for his assistance to Joyce, and thus Beckett's own

dating to Ben-Zvi may have been mistaken, that in those notes Beckett “may be taking up an old interest”, which should by then have already been established.⁴³¹ It is rather curious that this more cautious and reconciliatory gesture, which had been put forth by one of the most eminent Beckett scholars, published ten years earlier, and even specifically concerned the matter at hand, was not covered in Feldman’s argument. Knowlson’s position purports to be a way of trying to coordinate the instances of life and material, which are sometimes mutually independent and not always synchronous, into a balanced whole, whereas Compagnon tried to do justice to the interdependence between life and literature. But this generalist approach should not be regarded as forming a mere eclecticist and reconciliatory gesture. Insofar as that very Popperian concept of falsifiability has been criticised for its singularity and insufficiency as the criterion for the basic demarcation of science and pseudo-science – even within the forum of the philosophy of science itself – its availability in, and applicability to, the discussion of literary ideas and practices ought to be carefully checked and duly circumscribed.

The third and last instance from Compagnon is that of narratological or structuralist criticism, whereby critics tend to deal with the published text independently of its genetic context or the related life story of the author. Some of the ideas thus conceived by Proustian commentators need to be attenuated in the light of the genetic evidence included in the new critical edition. Concerning the 1912 draft of “Intermittences du coeur,” for example, which has already been touched upon in the first case by Compagnon, the widely accepted reading is that the protagonist dreamed, remembered his grandmother and realised anew her

⁴³¹ Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, 291, 760n142.

death via a series of involuntary memories. Similarly, the Duomo cathedral, yet to be seen and so far only conceived in his mind, reminded him of a church situated nearby at Saint-Loup, which becomes the future Doncières.⁴³² But allusion to the theory of involuntary memory, first invoked in the published text at the beginning of "Combray" – specifically within the famous episode of the madeleine, and originally planned to constitute the first and last parts of his novelistic writing ever since the earlier days of *Contre Sainte-Beuve*⁴³³ – tends, in the magnetism of its widely-accepted overarching tenor, to make the "intermittence" moment in the intermediate part of the novel read as too readily fitting into its dogmatism. But those intermittences of the heart are actually described in the published text in much simpler terms as "Bouleversement de toute ma personne," and the related scene cannot be more than one of reminiscence, which is even made definitive by the linkage that Proust makes between these two phenomena: "Car aux troubles de la mémoire sont liées les intermittences du coeur."⁴³⁴

But here Compagnon does not just correct the established reading of the passage but proceeds rather to offer an alternative or auxiliary one. Even though it somewhat fails to form the keystone of that grand literary arch design of involuntary memory – which starts with "Combray" and ends with "L'Adoration perpétuelle" – "Intermittences du coeur" does retain another constant theme, which also applies to the whole *Sodome et Gomorrhe* and to its gestation: that which Proust himself called "entre-deux." By this, Compagnon tries to draw attention to the real account of the novel's genesis, whereby the original diptych structure that

⁴³² Compagnon, "Ce qu'on ne peut plus dire de Proust," 59.

⁴³³ Schmid, "Birth and development of *A la recherche*," 64.

⁴³⁴ Compagnon, "Ce qu'on ne peut plus dire de Proust," 59.

had started to become unwieldy came to be attenuated, and erased – which conclusively softened and elasticised the overriding dogmatism of the theory of involuntary memory. One example of this attenuation is the mysterious allusion to a “morceau de lustrine verte bouchant un carreau cassé,” which appears in the second chapter to “Intermittences du coeur” and elicits a profound emotional reaction in the protagonist during his first visit to La Raspelière. As a memory-scene intended for the denouement in *Le Temps retrouvé*, it originates quite early in the genesis of the novel and is actually found as early as Notebook 1 of 1908. It is also in *Contre Sainte-Beuve*, and in the first drafts of “L’Adoration perpétuelle” included in Exercise Book 58, and even in the manuscript of *Sodome et Gomorrhe*, even if the published passage cited above only makes a fleeting allusion to it.

Another example in the same vein is an instance where Proust seems to have partly suppressed an expanded recapitulation of the theme of “Intermittences du coeur” around the joint part between the second and third chapters, which corresponds to that between Exercise Books 5 and 6. The originally intended draft was to introduce bouts of dreaming, where the protagonist’s grandmother appears again, together with a reflection on his memory related to it – and even with that incipient dream of the drafts of 1912 – over fifteen manuscript pages. Yet those passages came to be cancelled out and only at the very last stage of composition were substituted by a reflection on deep sleep and dreaming, which was provoked by Proust’s conversation with Bergson, which happened in September of 1920, and which runs over eight manuscript pages written in the mixed hands of Proust and his secretary Céleste. Reluctance on the part of Proust about conceptualising and supporting that representative theory of involuntary memory at this intermediate

stage is indicative, at least for Compagnon, of the author's confidence in his work. This confidence runs through digressions from that dogmatic theme and its schematic plan that the novel would be taking, and was evident in the fact that the theme and plan had now attained enough flexibility to be able to accommodate those digressions.⁴³⁵

These digressions ultimately raise the issue with that very guiding system around memory, which is made complete and consistent by itself, as well as by philosophical theory or structuralist narratology, and whose most famous crystallisations are respectively put forth by Deleuze and Gérard Genette.⁴³⁶ The auxiliary reading of "entre-deux" offered by Compagnon sidesteps the dogmatic structure leading from *Du côté de chez Swann* to *Le Temps retrouvé*, and introduces contingency and indeterminacy into that rigid symmetrical structure, especially as his *Proust entre deux siècles* works like a historical and genetic antidote to *Proust et les Signes* and *Discours du récit*. Another novelty in Compagnon's attitude here is his gesture of endorsement, even if it is a shy one, of Vincent Descombes's similar perspective, deployed in his *Proust: philosophie du roman*, but without having recourse to the new critical edition.⁴³⁷ This is another generalist gesture taken by Compagnon, which marks another contrast with the strict methodology put forth by Feldman about fifteen years later as, for instance, it works against Lane's synthetic and thus unfalsifiable statements regarding Beckett's alleged influence upon Nietzsche.⁴³⁸ Feldman argues that "the position of empirical

⁴³⁵ Ibid., 60.

⁴³⁶ Ibid., 60-1.

⁴³⁷ Ibid., 61.

⁴³⁸ Feldman, "Beckett and Popper," 385-6.

strength is inherently preferable to not doing so." Yet such a reading as Compagnon's, similarly informed by his new empirical findings from genetic material, whilst also remaining informed by structuralist theory, is not to be confused with Descombes' similar reading, which nevertheless stands accused of "disregarding methodological considerations altogether."⁴³⁹

This tripartite revisionist gesture by Compagnon, as against the respective three anathemas of literary falsificationalism in psychoanalysis, historical and theoretical criticisms, exactly matches the troublesome trio accused by Feldman in *Beckett Studies* about fifteen years later. This has now been explored for the purpose of illustrating the need for adherents of those critical models to take account of the potential revelations sustained through any new critical edition. Compagnon admits that philologically oriented scholars would most readily seek to capitalise on a new critical edition's apparatus of notes, descriptions, variants and transcriptions, but at the same time he invites theoretical critics to follow suit for the sake of relevance in their discussion, in the interests of falsifiability of their analyses, and for their discourse to enter the field of discussion and validation.⁴⁴⁰ Here Compagnon's much milder way of urging on synthetic theorists – diluted by his realism and even by this relativist stance⁴⁴¹ – marks a clearly contrasting case to

⁴³⁹ *Ibid.*, 386.

⁴⁴⁰ Here Compagnon refers to the philological model as the principle of external or internal criticism (the former exemplified by the establishment of the text and source clarification, the latter by the restoration of historical meaning), and to those literary critical theories as the models of external or immanent explanation (the former exemplified by all forms of psychological or social criticism, the latter by all forms of structuralism and narratology).

⁴⁴¹ Compagnon here acknowledges that every interpretation learns in effect to defend itself against the text it interprets, and that nothing is less certain than the existence of common norms of critical discussion.

Feldman's explicitly Popperian deployment. But one clear target of his discussion, which he shares with Feldman, is discerned in conclusion, which engages deconstructionism as the latest and most prevalent model of literary analysis (which was particularly flourishing in America at that time). Deconstruction, Compagnon judges, forms the other side of the model of immanent explanation.⁴⁴² Compagnon belittles the fascinated tone of its advocates such as Jonathan Culler as well as the magnitude of its influence, and connects Culler's quite circular definition of its "two principles of contextual determination of meaning and of the indefinite extension of the context" (my translation) to its unfalsifiable character. According to Compagnon's generalist stance, the particularly unfalsifiable character of deconstructionism even sets it apart from other more or less synthetic models of criticism. Indeed, it even constitutes a certain world-view in itself.⁴⁴³

The Proustian and Joycean pioneers of genetic scholarship each undertook an arbitration of their own regarding this troublesome dispute between empiricist philology and theoretical criticism within a decade after that first Popperian challenge rendered by Compagnon. Compagnon there tried to solve the problem he raised himself in his *Le Démon de la littérature: Littérature et sens commun* published in 1998. There, he seems to offer an erudite but easy solution, in a manner befitting both the "ease in erudition" characterising genetic Proustian criticism and the theoretical climate of literary studies in France. Regretting the Barthean 'death of the author' and announcing it to be untimely, Compagnon concludes that one should not be forced to choose between authorial intention and

⁴⁴² Refer to Note 419.

⁴⁴³ Compagnon, "Ce qu'on ne peut plus dire de Proust," 61.

an outright rejection of it. He thereby acknowledges "two ways of reading a text, either in reference to its original context, or to that of the reader." Compagnon's following account sounds ostensibly similar to what the Joycean scholar, Geert Lernout, had argued three years earlier, but with an intent and emphasis that cannot be more opposed:

Toute interprétation est une assertion sur une intention, et si l'intention d'auteur est niée, une autre intention prend sa place, comme dans le *Don Quichotte* de Pierre Ménard. Extraire une œuvre de son contexte littéraire et historique, c'est lui donner une autre intention (un autre auteur: le lecteur), c'est en faire une autre œuvre, et ce n'est donc plus la même œuvre que nous interprétons.⁴⁴⁴

As a representative of the minimalist Dublin-Antwerp school, on the other hand, Lernout's related argument forms an important contrast:

A radical philology limits the inquiry to the original desire-to-say of any form of writing and to its participation in a saturable and constraining context. If it did not, it would forfeit all relevance. Take away intention and context, and the only thing left to say about a text is that it can mean anything at all.⁴⁴⁵

⁴⁴⁴ Lernout, "Genetic Criticism and Philology," *Texts*, Vol. 14 (2002): 64.

⁴⁴⁵ Lernout, "The *Finnegans Wake* Notebooks and Radical Philology," in *Probes: Genetic Studies in Joyce*, eds. David Hayman and Sam Slote (Amsterdam; Atlanta: Rodopi, 1995), 47.

If the Proustian solution was ventured by Compagnon as justifying the domain of readerly interpretation, by contrast Lernout here tries to remind theoretical criticism in general (and more specifically the maximalist and more theoretical trend of genetic criticism in Joyce Studies) of their shared philological base. This base French genetic critic Louis Hay calls "an objective core", which he takes to be common ground between empiricist philology and theoretical criticism. The published text itself cannot be established without due philological research and reasonable decisions from the outset. Neither can the representation of genetic and empirical evidence, nor can the establishment of genetic records be achieved without establishing the documents' chronology. That chronology, in turn, cannot be completed without recourse to empirically identifiable materials such as the author's diaries, letters and testimonies from his or her relatives, friends and acquaintances.⁴⁴⁶ In this way, as he has consistently been doing since his first monograph in 1990, *The French Joyce*, Lernout establishes the empirical common ground between theoretical criticism and empiricist philology by showing what is not only shared by, but even constitutive of, both of them.⁴⁴⁷ Thus he deploys theoretical ideas without risking theoretical polemics. That is precisely what Lernout urges "French editors, genetic critics, sociologists and historians of literature, German and American editors" to avoid, and advises them instead to identify their group differences and to "attempt to define a common ground" for a better scholarly understanding. It is this very conflictual situation he warns against in Joyce Studies that is staged within Beckett Studies some fifteen years later.

⁴⁴⁶ Lernout, "Genetic Criticism and Philology," 74.

⁴⁴⁷ Lernout, *The French Joyce* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1990).

In this first section of the chapter, discussing the treatment of the archive in Beckett Studies, therefore, I have considered the ways in which early strategies for thinking about the treatment of archival materials have remained largely unresolved. The examples derived from Proust and Joyce criticism have worked, however, to suggest that similar tensions previously existing in both areas have come to be reconciled. It is to be hoped that a similar communally established path forward can be discovered in Beckett Studies over the next few years.

It is, after all, not the case that such prudence amongst Proust and Joyce scholars had completely been unheard of within Beckett Studies before the methodological dispute was sparked over the later part of the 2000s. Van Hulle, once a student of Lernout at the University of Antwerp but now portrayed as forming an intermediate figure between the Dublin/Antwerp school and the Madison/Paris school,⁴⁴⁸ was already establishing similar circumstances in his Introduction to the Spring 2004 *JOBS* thematic issue, *Beckett the European*.⁴⁴⁹ This issue has huge significance for the development not only of genetic Beckett criticism but also Beckett Studies as a whole, for it was for the first time that the study of manuscripts, directly linked with genetic criticism, was promoted within Beckett Studies. For the first time, archival materials were viewed to be not just in service to the blanket causes of authorial intention, artistic vision or the study of archives per se. The theme of the journal was intended to analyse both the way Beckett assimilated parts of European culture – as witnessed in his exogenetic material of notebooks, diaries, letters and notes – and the way these were

⁴⁴⁸ Morris, "Metaphors for Writing," n36.

⁴⁴⁹ Van Hulle, "Introduction: Genetic Beckett Studies," 1-9.

processed during his writing process, as evinced in his endogenetic material of drafts, typescripts, revisions and translations. Various inquiries into the theme are accordingly organised into four sections of "Diaries and Letters," "Notes," "Drafts" and "Published Versions and Translations," which form the typical setting for genetic inquiry. With articles by older critics and some celebrated Joycean contributors, as well as some memorable names among the new generation of genetic Beckett scholars, it can be seen that it germinated at once archival Beckett criticism as a fully formulated scholarly possibility.

Van Hulle's contribution to the discussion is highly beneficial as well as timely to the development of genetic Beckett criticism in general, due to his familiarity not only with different traditions of textual and genetic criticisms, but also regarding their application to the cases of modernist writers such as Proust, Joyce and Thomas Mann.⁴⁵⁰ He was subsequently to assume a guiding role for many conferences, edited collections of essays and projects concerned with genetic criticism. He has also been instrumental in an effort within genetic Beckett criticism to systemise and elaborate its scholarship in the manner of genetic Joyce criticism. With this arrival of a new generation of genetic criticism-oriented scholars such as Van Hulle, Nixon, Feldman, Ackerley and Caselli in the 2000s, genetic Beckett criticism could begin to sidestep wholesale notions current in the previous decades – such as authorial intention, artistic vision or "transtextual confluence"⁴⁵¹ – and to

⁴⁵⁰ Van Hulle's command of multiple languages especially puts him in an advantageous position to study and compare different traditions and developments of the study of modern manuscripts in Anglophone countries, France and Germany. See Van Hulle, *Textual Awareness*.

⁴⁵¹ Krance, "Traces of Transtextual Confluence and Bilingual Genesis: A Piece of Monologue and Solo for Openers," in *Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui 2*, eds. Marius Buning and Lois

analyse manuscript materials as they are with less drive towards philological provincialism or theoretical insobriety.

In the aforementioned Introduction, heralding not only a new content for the journal but also the new era for genetic Beckett criticism, Van Hulle touches upon two problematic issues arising from the development of the latter, one neglected and the other peremptory: poetics and authorial intention. He initially describes genetic Beckett criticism at the time as an emergent field, and highlights Knowlson's biography for its role in bringing attention to Beckett's manuscript material. He identifies a steady current of manuscript-related researches across the past decades of Beckett Studies, and evaluates it as having largely been affected by the recent flourishing of literary and critical theories, which coincided with the growth and expansion of Beckett Studies. This amalgamation is found in the case of Gontarski in terms of poststructuralist theories on one hand, and in the cases of Fitch and Krance in terms of structuralist poetics on the other hand. What such an evaluation implies is that the use of manuscript material in Beckett Studies had previously been limited to matters of interpretation and to the synchronic dimension of structuralist poetics. Van Hulle pinpoints the much-neglected area of the diachronic dimension of poetics. That is, the writing process as the main focus of this genetic criticism, now regularly introduced to track down the effects in Beckett's texts. This impetus is both separate from and complementary to the hermeneutic quest for what those texts mean.⁴⁵²

It is with this doubled-edged dimension of a poetics of synchronic and

Oppenheim (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1993), 133-7.

⁴⁵² Van Hulle, "Introduction," 2.

diachronic structures that Van Hulle deflects the influential claims of a New Criticism hostile to an inquiry into manuscript material, being largely concerned with the synchronic, not the diachronic, structure. While reaching further beyond the business of source-seekers with this focus on diachronic poetics, however, Van Hulle does not lose sight of the general importance of the empirical basis of genetic research. For example, he employs two cases where genetic critics falsified some over-reaching or unfounded interpretations by other critics of manuscript analysis: the much commented-upon adverb "silencieusement" in Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* was found to be a copying mistake from the word "délicieusement" by Raymonde Debray Genette, and the aforementioned falsification by Compagnon of Roger over the word "succinctement", which is missing in the final published version. Van Hulle then shares the observation that Feldman is the most explicit applicator of Popper's theory of falsifiability among Beckett scholars, and also rejects the positive implication of Popper's falsificationist rationale of using empirical approaches for increasing scholarly knowledge according to a clear-cut methodology as espoused by Feldman: "the validity of scientific statements is not conclusively verifiable, only falsifiable." Based on such a negative connotation, "manuscript analysis allows researchers to make interpretive statements that can be proven wrong."⁴⁵³

Therefore, genetic criticism, having thus forfeited the right to ultimate and definitive verification, becomes more of a matter on the quantitative spectrum of how much one can read into a literary text than of qualitative touchstone regarding whether a certain interpretive statement is verifiable or unverifiable. That is why Van Hulle invokes the case of genetic Joyce criticism, which has been split into the

⁴⁵³ Ibid., 3-4.

aforementioned minimalists and maximalists since the 1990s. As a pupil of the Dublin/Antwerp school, however, Van Hulle refuses to leave the business of genetic interpretation in such a relative state but tries to provide some anchorage to notions such as "contextualisation" and "reassessment of the author's role." By "contextualisation," he means that genetic critics need to be the ferrymen, incessantly operating between the author's extant manuscript traces and scholarly and readerly audiences. By the "reassessment of the author's role," he means avoiding an "exclusive focus on authorial intentions" via, instead, the translation of the authorial figure into the sum of "the visible traces left on the extant leaves." Van Hulle makes clear that "it is impossible to read an author's mind" and "manuscript analysis cannot reveal what Beckett *wanted* to write" but "only what he has written, inasmuch as it is extant."⁴⁵⁴ This dual response may sound similar to Feldman's position in the end but, in such carefully constructed ideas, Van Hulle seems less interested in depreciating the interests of contradictory arguments than in finding a sensible common ground between them, as Lernout has done in *Joyce Studies*.⁴⁵⁵

This concept of authorial intention seems to form *the* hot issue of Beckett Studies during the 2000s. The debate was originally incited by Feldman in the name of methodology, but it was not further taken up thereafter. Wherever it emerged, it was perceived as a threat to the hermeneutic scope of criticism liberated by Foucauldian and Barthesian challenges, or as the surreptitious resuscitation of the

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 5-6.

⁴⁵⁵ See Van Hulle's muffled reconciliatory intervention between Feldman and Dowd by way of distinguishing and apportioning exogenetics for the former and endogenetics for the latter in the following article published in 2011: Van Hulle, "Modern Manuscripts and Textual Epigenetics: Samuel Beckett's Works between Completion and Incompletion," *Modernism/modernity*, Vol. 18, No. 4 (November 2011): 801-12.

figure of the author.⁴⁵⁶ Beckett Studies had just started to handle Beckett's genetic material in its own right, and therefore it was not yet ready to regard Feldman's empirical and falsificationist challenge as some kind of hard-line philological pursuit, although a similar contextual-philological vein had been maintained throughout the development of Beckett Studies by notable scholars such as Pilling. As its scanty contributions testify, this notable lack of retrospection and self-awareness amongst Beckett scholars bears witness to another of the "oddities and perplexities" of Beckett Studies,⁴⁵⁷ in addition to that of lack of focus pointed out by Murphy.⁴⁵⁸ Thus, rather than directly responding to methodological concerns, the main commentators around genetic Beckett criticism of the 2000s tended to locate their perspective based on an attitude toward authorial intention and context. Scholarly tendencies vary according to their negotiations with these two parameters: some aim to approach Beckett's original intentions via evidential contextualisation, still others only deal with contextual evidence having disposed of the concept of authorial intention. Even others argue that Beckett did not fit in with, but rather renewed, those old parameters of author and context. And this decade's resulting picture is that of *a close and careful study of context* taken in the broadest (and sometimes loosest) senses. This can be contrasted with Lernout's radical philology, which tries to salvage intention and context at the same time, and thus forms a

⁴⁵⁶ "Feldman's faith in the observer is complemented by an implicit embrace of authorial intent unshaken by decades of the reverberations of Derridean and Barthesian challenges," Dowd, "Prolegomena to a Critique," 384.

⁴⁵⁷ By the middle of the 2000s, Anglophone Beckett Studies needed to satisfy itself with only two contributions with a concern with their own history and development, all of less than book-length. Namely, the aforementioned second chapter by Murphy of *Critique of Beckett Criticism* and "Beckett and Bibliography" by Pattie.

⁴⁵⁸ Murphy, "Beckett Criticism in English," 15.

cautious compromise between maximalism and minimalism.

Feldman's bent toward establishing the balance of probabilities behind the authorial presence in, and perspective upon, texts, can be inferred through the case of American literary critic E. D. Hirsch, Jr. Dowd reminds us, in his reply to Feldman, of Hirsch's distinction of the reader's normative choice in the act of interpretation between "autocratic" and "allocratic" norms. Respectively, these refer to "the reader's choice of his or her own preferred cypher key", and the reader's decision to submit to someone else's "past choice of a cypher key."⁴⁵⁹ Dowd's purpose here is to criticise Feldman's direct employment of a demarcation from scientific discourse in literary criticism. In a gesture ostensibly similar to that of Compagnon (who also paid attention to Hirsch's arguments), Dowd here points to the incontestable existence of two indissoluble dimensions of context-based and reader-based readings in any discursive domain.⁴⁶⁰ But, in his adamant rejoinder to Dowd, Feldman does not pass over Hirsch's pursuit of validity and truth, nor its kinship to Popper's position.⁴⁶¹ Hirsch's goal of putting forward a normative principle for interpretation as located in authorial meaning, alongside his argument that the interpretive act is founded on the "logic of validation" – despite the fact that there can be no ideal method of interpretation – is made clear in the following statements:

⁴⁵⁹ E. D. Hirsch, Jr., "The Politics of Theories of Interpretation," *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 9, No. 1 (September 1982): 240.

⁴⁶⁰ Dowd, "Prolegomena to a Critique," 377.

⁴⁶¹ In the Afterword to his book *The Aims of Interpretation*, Hirsch sides with Popper in the latter's critique of Kuhn's theory of paradigm as "[t]he Myth of the Framework" which "is, for our time, the central bulwark of irrationalism." Hirsch points out that such a maneuver "simply exaggerates a difficulty into an impossibility." See Hirsch, *The Aims of Interpretation* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 148.

[T]he goal of interpretation as a discipline is constantly to increase the probability that they [our guesses] are correct [...] only on interpretive problem can be answered with objectivity: 'What, in all probability, did the author mean to convey?'⁴⁶²

However, as Sally Bushell rightly points out, coming to the aid of Dowd at this juncture, Hirsch's Popperian position includes some "near-contradictions," not least in "trying to establish an objective argument on the basis of the author's subjective experience."⁴⁶³ The circumstances are similar to those of the aforementioned case of dating Beckett's first encounter with Mauthner's *Beiträge*. Trying to identify the exact date places "objective" accounts in the realm of observation, even if such ideas and arguments are subjective decisions.

Here some Wittgensteinian insights may be able to shed light on this complicated picture in ways able to explain the complex path of Beckett criticism in the latter part of the 2000s. For the later Wittgenstein, uses of language constitute, together with words and sentences, bearers of meaning, which are objects of understanding rooted in the rules and customs of its speakers' social life. In stressing the social and public dimension of the linguistic world and practical activities of human beings, as against the empiricist tradition, Wittgenstein did not think that "explanation of intentional action in terms of the agent's reasons for acting is a form of causal explanation." Neither did he believe that "the grammar of

⁴⁶² Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1967), 207, quoted in Bushell, "Intention Revisited," 65.

⁴⁶³ Bushell, "Intention Revisited," 65n11.

'a reason' nor the epistemology of reasons resembles that of 'a cause' and causes." People attribute reasons and not causes to action and being, as causes are what make things happen as a necessity. Reasons are what guide and justify an agent's acting as they do. Thus, "specification of the agent's reason does not specify a sufficient condition for the performance of the action for which it is a reason," but casual explanations specify sufficient conditions. In other words, "[e]xplaining an action as done *for a reason, or for the sake of a goal or in order to* bring about a certain state of affairs is not giving a casual explanation."⁴⁶⁴

As P. M. S. Hacker argues, together with Wittgenstein and his successor G. H. von Wright, such denouncing of reductionism and the doctrine of the methodological uniformity of understanding does not constitute a form of anti-rationalism, but holds that "the canons of understanding in the study of nature and in the study of man differ"; moreover, "the forms of explanation appropriate for the one are typically inappropriate for the other."⁴⁶⁵ Individual actions, especially linguistic acts, need to be understood and sometimes interpreted in a way in which the action of inanimate matter and much of animal action do not. Written or oral speech by human beings has a meaning that can be many-sided and multi-layered, and therefore needs to be understood with respect to the rules of the language in question. Explaining human discourse and its consequences at least requires grasping how it is interwoven in the context – especially in the participants' understanding of that context and in their motivational history. Philosophers like

⁴⁶⁴ P. M. S. Hacker, "Wittgenstein and the Autonomy of Humanistic Understanding," *Wittgenstein, Theory and the Arts*, Richard Allen and Malcolm Turvey, eds. (London and New York: Routledge, 2001), 66.

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 67.

Wilhelm Dilthey and Max Weber even take this implication beyond the level of human discourse. The former holds that "human life can be understood only by reference to categories alien to the natural sciences, namely categories of meaning," while the latter includes "social action," the subject matter of sociology: "those acts and activities to which the agent attaches 'subjective meaning.'"⁴⁶⁶

Therefore, and as Wittgenstein also emphasised, an intention is rooted in human customs and institutions, and its description demands an appropriate context for the behavioural criteria to constitute adequate grounds of ascription. This leads to the conclusion that "the description of the phenomena that are the concern of humanistic studies requires concepts which are not needed by the natural sciences for the description of their subject matter."⁴⁶⁷ Far exceeding the range of psychological concepts needed for the description of mammalian action in zoological sciences, the manifold speech-acts of human beings and the acts and activities involved in human discourse and forming history and culture, can only be rightly described by reference to linguistic rules and to conventions. These include systems of beliefs, values and social institutions which are intrinsically related to those acts. Although "the meaning or significance of such behavior can therefore be grasped only historically and contextually,"⁴⁶⁸ it is not that Wittgenstein here only allows the particular and unique, and not any generalisation, to history, psychology, sociology or economics. What he tries to show instead is that even generalising insights in the domain of the study of man "are not monothetic, i.e. do not specify strict, exceptionless laws." The whole account by Hacker is worth citing:

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid., 68.

⁴⁶⁷ Ibid., 69.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid., 70.

The valid generalisations that can be achieved through the study of history, economics and society are not akin to laws of nature, and their explanatory value is not akin to that of scientific laws. For what underlies the generalisations of the study of culture and society is not the blind movements of matter in space, but the actions and activities of man—sometimes intentional, often done for reasons, typically moved by motives and directed to ulterior goals, and only intelligible as such. Statistical correlations abound in the social sciences, as they do in the natural sciences, but no understanding of the phenomena described by such correlations in the social sciences, e.g. of divorce rates or illegitimacy rates, is achieved in the absence of further investigations of the beliefs, motivations and values of the agents, which will render their behavior intelligible.⁴⁶⁹

Even what experimental psychology identifies as general laws of human nature are the conditions under which human capacities can be exercised, which are still at the level of the investigation of human capacities and not at that of explaining individual human behavior. To understand “why particular people under specific social and historical circumstances do what they do, the ways in which they understand the situation in which they act and the reasons they have for doing what they do” – that is, the true causes for their action – attention must be given to “the specific agent and his unique life, to the way he views the world, to his beliefs

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., 71.

and goals, to the reasons that weigh with him and to the values he embraces – which is why the greatest of psychologists are the great biographers, and, above all, the great novelists.”⁴⁷⁰ This is a task requiring sensitivity and imagination. As Wittgenstein noted, “[w]hat one acquires here is not a technique; one learns correct judgments. There are also rules, but they do not form a system, and only experienced people can apply them right. Unlike calculating rules.”⁴⁷¹ As Hacker concludes, “many aspects of historical understanding are similar, save that such understanding also needs to be informed by scholarship, and not merely the sensitivity and judgment that is the product of life.” Again, arguing that there are fields of inquiry which lie beyond the purview of science involves no depreciation of science and reason, for the “forms of rational understanding and explanation are diverse and logically heterogeneous.”⁴⁷²

The above account provides a reason why Feldman’s perspective in which “it is inherently preferable to theorise from a position of empirical accuracy” sounds dogmatic and one-sided.⁴⁷³ According to Hacker and Wittgenstein, it is inherently essential for historical understandings to derive from a combination of sensitivity and judgment, together with the aid of scholarly information. Rules for theorising do not necessarily form a homogeneous system. There is of course “the cross-checking of material” and “the collection and subsequent employment of all available evidence,” but, as seen above, some of this empirical evidence does not

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., 72.

⁴⁷¹ Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. G.E.M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell, 1953), 227, quoted in Hacker, “Wittgenstein and the Autonomy,” 72.

⁴⁷² Hacker, “Wittgenstein and the Autonomy,” 72.

⁴⁷³ Feldman, *Beckett's Books: A Cultural History of Samuel Beckett's 'Interwar Notes'* (London: Continuum, 2006), 3.

offer a transparent answer as to confirmation of the facts. Some still allows for interpretive choices to intervene in order to fill in logical connections and, all in all, this does not constitute a nullifying of other possible turns of the event, including, for our purposes with regard to the Mauthner dating problem, Beckett's own memories. So, "minimising guesswork" would be preferable and secure, but there is ultimately no way out of guesswork, and guesswork is rather necessitated by such empirical evidence from the first.⁴⁷⁴

Concerning Ben-Zvi's dating of Beckett's first reading of Mauthner criticised by Feldman, the case might have needed to be approached differently. Ben-Zvi did offer her own empirical evidence from Beckett's letter, and further strengthened her subsequent 1929 dating of Beckett's first reading of Mauthner with her reading of Mauthnerian influence in his *Proust* written in 1930. If Feldman's guesswork-mixed evidences can be taken as empirical, then Ben-Zvi's textual reading of Mauthnerian influence is empirical as well, as it is also composed of both observation and speculation. If the message of empirical evidence is not self-evident and in need of interpretation, how can one be sure of corroborating and discerning truth or falsity based on it, given also that it is impossible to read the author's mind? As the act of coming to know in a thinker belongs to categories of subjective meaning happening in a social and public environment, it would be extremely difficult to pin down a date of the encounter on the basis of documentary evidence, even if there is sometimes a need to narrow down or generalise the result of such investigations for the sake of providing scholarly commentary at a required standard. But, as Wittgenstein again reminds us, rules provide standards of correctness because they

⁴⁷⁴ Feldman, "Beckett and Popper," 382.

are based upon communal agreement.⁴⁷⁵ It is not just that falsifiability can now provide standards of methodological correctness for Beckett Studies, but also that such standards can exist and work because scholars of different persuasions and styles have so far been working together and falsifying each other. Space here does not permit further engagement, but it would be beneficial to look into different forms of rational understanding and explanation that psychoanalysis or deconstructionist readings exhibit with regard to the archival insights they might present for Beckett's work.

II

Feldman's position is, in the end, instructive for the main discussions characterising this fifth decade of Beckett Studies, and particularly how they centre upon the established concept of authorial intention. Feldman tried to establish new ground on which to defend the factual base of Beckett's authorial influence on the basis of empirical evidence. The situation whereby multiple scholars debate the dating a particular event in an author's life – on the basis of different circumstantial or empirical evidence, and from different perspectives – reflects the maturity that genetic Beckett criticism has attained by this time, as genetic Proustian scholars had been doing since the end of the 1980s.⁴⁷⁶ This paradigmatic stance of Feldman's, comparable to those of Compagnon and Lernout in Proust and Joyce Studies respectively, is deployed most systematically and expansively in his *Beckett's Books*, published in the same year that "Beckett and Popper" was published in *SBT/A* 16. It

⁴⁷⁵ Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 241, quoted in A. C. Grayling, *Wittgenstein: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 96.

⁴⁷⁶ Schmid, *Processes of Literary Creation*, 127-9.

is advantageous for Feldman's book, based on his doctoral thesis and one which has become a clear-cut keynote of empirical scholarship, to have a generalising and illuminating Foreword by Shane Weller, who represents a new, post-*Damned to Fame* theoretical approach which has also been informed by contextual and genetic inquiries and discoveries. Weller rightly points out two dominant suppositions inside Beckett Studies, the first being that of Beckett's possession of wide, first-hand erudition across the history of Western philosophy from the Presocratics to the French existentialists, and the second that Beckett's essential vision was Cartesian.⁴⁷⁷ It was perceptive of Weller to introduce Feldman as "one of a new generation of Beckett scholars to have set themselves the task of pursuing those lines of enquiry indicated by Knowlson [and his 1996 biography] in particular."

Weller's intervention works most appositely when he evaluates Feldman's archival discoveries of Beckett's not quite academic practice, that of often deploying secondary textbooks for philosophical and psychological materials and regarding his literary and whimsical note-taking, both prominently sustained during the 1930s. Feldman's scholarly contribution, as Weller characterises it, challenges certain details in Beckett scholarship, but does not fundamentally change those two old assumptions mentioned just above. The tone of Weller's Foreword is quite different from that of those two aims Feldman clearly sets himself to achieve in the Introduction to *Beckett's Books*, in "remaining faithful to Beckett": "to emphatically affirm the importance of these extant materials in the evolution of Beckett's artistic approach, and to quietly negate overarching readings of Beckett that attempt to say

⁴⁷⁷ Feldman, *Beckett's Books*, vii.

what he (or 'it') actually 'means'.⁴⁷⁸ At the conclusion of this argument, Feldman also sees that new perspectives offered by his investigation of the main intellectual sources constituting the "Interwar Notes" have "challenged several critical approaches long dominant in Beckett Studies." Yet he does not fail to point out the weakness of those traditional critical approaches in terms of their basis upon empirical accuracy, as for example in the claim that: "we have seen that Beckett's flirtation with Descartes was a short one, effectively only resulting in poetic pastiche in the 1930 *Whoroscope*."⁴⁷⁹

This forms another occasion where unwarranted empiricist dogmatism intervenes, for poor documentation is not always the same as limited significance, as Pilling said with regard to Beckett's elliptical recording of citations from Schopenhauer in his *Whoroscope* (or, as Pilling calls it, the *Murphy*) Notebook: "Schopenhauer, one of and perhaps *the* most important points of reference in Beckett's *Proust* study, must – one supposes – by the time of the *Murphy* notebook have become so much second nature to him as not to need recording, with chapter and verse attached to facilitate re-reading."⁴⁸⁰ Considering that Beckett mainly studied French as an undergraduate and is even known to have seriously been delving into Descartes during his years of teaching experience at the *Ecole Normale Supérieure*⁴⁸¹ – and to have still owned on his death books about Descartes originating from those years⁴⁸² – it should be no wonder that Descartes also became his second nature by that time. Many commentators detect habitualised

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid., 204.

⁴⁷⁹ Ibid., 1.

⁴⁸⁰ Pilling, "From a (W)horoscope to *Murphy*," 14.

⁴⁸¹ Oppenheim, "Introduction," *Palgrave Advances in Samuel Beckett Studies*, 5.

⁴⁸² Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, 97.

Cartesian influences across Beckett's published texts in different forms and uses. Significant interests in an artistic mind need not always appear in preserved texts in an empirically falsifiable manner. They even need not always be written down anywhere in the first place. Feldman's valuable discoveries argue for a set of circumstances which has not hitherto been taken into account in Beckett Studies, but they do not effectively negate literary criticism's ground for aesthetic judgment and interpretation, which belongs to a language game quite different from that of falsification, as Wittgenstein would have it. Even this same method of falsification would exhibit quite different language games across different disciplines in the humanities and social sciences.

However, there are some important watershed contributions that Feldman's book has made to broader Beckett Studies as well as to genetic Beckett criticism. After Knowlson had identified many philosophical, literary and artistic sources formative in Beckett's achievements in his biography, and Pilling had started to retrace Beckett's intellectual development and at the same time to compile Beckett's exogenetic material, Feldman's interventions were timely. They also formed a proper reaction to this genetic groundwork by providing an exemplary case study of the endogenetic process, the first book-length account, exploring "the relationship between these archival deposits and Beckett's life and writings at this time",⁴⁸³ while locating "some notable changes in Beckett's literature"⁴⁸⁴ as part of an argument that Beckett's creative breakthrough happened earlier than the late 1940s and early 1950s, which had previously been presumed. Those contributions are the result of

⁴⁸³ Feldman, *Beckett's Books*, 3.

⁴⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

reappraisals that could only have been obtained from a scrupulous investigation of the 'Interwar Notes,' comprising Beckett's 'Philosophy Notes,' 'Psychology Notes' and lengthy transcriptions and translations of Geulincx and Mauthner. Feldman's principal conclusions were summarised as follows: "Beckett's literature was underpinned by wide-ranging erudition" while "exploring impotence and ignorance,"⁴⁸⁵ and existing Cartesian themes and assumptions must be "re-evaluated against the much larger backdrop of the system of European philosophy in Beckett's art."⁴⁸⁶ This is especially so with reference to the Presocratics. Relatedly, Beckett may have "sought to understand the tradition of philosophy *qua* systematic thought" via recourse mainly to secondary expositions and rarely to originals, while Geulincx and Mauthner seem to be major figures in Beckett's intellectual heritage in view of his painstaking manner of recording them.⁴⁸⁷

These telling contributions have also contributed to setting the tone for the careful contextual genetics of Beckett Studies going towards the 2010s. The new generation of Beckett scholars in the wake of this empiricist conviction of Feldman's and his methodological dispute with Dowd needs to put more careful consideration into theorising his or her own findings or readings based upon the published or pre-published texts. Weller strikes a more balanced tone when he reminds us, together with Feldman, of "the risks entailed by attempts to think of Beckett in relation to poststructuralism", which tend to forfeit both the specific historical situation, and the empirical history of Beckett's intellectual development. But Weller appreciates at the same time that "[t]he poststructuralist approach to Beckett has

⁴⁸⁵ Ibid., 5.

⁴⁸⁶ Ibid., 149.

⁴⁸⁷ Ibid., 149-51.

undoubtedly produced some of the most innovative recent readings of his work", and he especially praises the response of Deleuze in this regard.⁴⁸⁸ Thus, according to Weller, the problem seems to boil down to a lack of contextual consideration, which forms the chief genetic concern of the decade.

Finally, it does not seem likely that Feldman would be happy with Weller's descriptions of his argument as Beckett's "much more general indebtedness to the philosophical" as making "the intertextual relation in Beckett something other than either a tidy one-to-one relation between two texts or two writers, or a purely anonymous textuality of the kind proposed by Roland Barthes"⁴⁸⁹ – not least taking into account certain dubious implications that the concept of intertextuality has for authorship.⁴⁹⁰ Such positions are in turn inconsistent with Feldman's Hirschean faithfulness to the authorial figure. Feldman's conviction that "literary interpretation has a scholarly responsibility"⁴⁹¹ might have led him to assert a uniform method for rationally constructing more empirically grounded theories for literary scholarship. "Responsibility" shifts in practice perhaps to a more or less uncompromising and fortified position for the sake of setting a standard of scholarliness. Feldman's book provided one such standard for the community of Beckett scholars and contributed much to the development of Beckett scholarship out of the archives, as well as to genetic Beckett criticism more broadly conceived. What Weller described in

⁴⁸⁸ Ibid., viii.

⁴⁸⁹ Ibid., ix.

⁴⁹⁰ Intertextual theory has long been challenging the role of the author as responsible for the multiple meanings readers can find within literary texts, together with notions of stable meaning and objective interpretation. See Graham Allen, *Intertextuality* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), 3-4.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid., ix.

Feldman's argument as the intertextual relation in Beckett's intellectual indebtedness must have helped shape the argumentative style of contextual genetics in the following decade as well. Now that it has been shown that such indebtedness does not feature in any clearly definable sense, any subsequent scholarly observation will need to be intense, the tone modest and, when it comes to theorising, careful. Such complicated compositional transference is illuminated foremost by Van Hulle in his book published two years after Feldman's. As for the intertextual relation signaled by Weller as the alternative, it is Daniela Caselli who has been most shrewd in rethinking the relation of Beckett's published works to the archival materials surrounding them. The final phase of this chapter, therefore, will pivot around close consideration of these two scholars' work in their characteristic modes.

Van Hulle must be one of those who have inquired most deeply into Beckett's compositional material. As another watershed contribution to both Beckett Studies in general and especially to genetic Beckett studies, his 2008 *Manuscript Genetics* aims, by comparing the writing methods of Joyce and Beckett, to "demonstrate that the composition process is an integral part of what these authors' works convey."⁴⁹² Van Hulle, in the book's Introduction, makes clear again that the object of his study is not Beckett's authorial mind but his poetics:

Since any attempt to look inside a writer's mind is doomed to fail, genetic criticism does not try to reveal what an author wanted to write, but focuses instead on what he has written. And what he has written can be studied

⁴⁹² Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics*, 2.

only on the basis of what is still extant. As a consequence, the material evidence of the writing process will play a central role in this book.⁴⁹³

That is why Van Hulle particularly tries to avoid “biographism,” and even limits the usage of epistolary material to any relation it has to the writing process. To him, manuscript genetics does not consist in finding authorial intention behind textual meaning, but in tracking the trajectory of the authorial role by reconstructing the writing process. An examination of the genesis of literary works can elucidate an author’s poetics, as well as assist in interpreting his or her published text.⁴⁹⁴ Befitting his experience in matters of textual and genetic criticism, furthermore, Van Hulle is careful enough, “from a twenty-first-century vantage point,” to be concerned with the “inevitable (dis)advantages of hindsight,” which means a sort of historian’s fallacy, or “the retrospective tendency to project the shadow of recent developments backward onto the preceding period.” This constitutes one of the issues that need to be dealt with in both genetic Joyce and Beckett criticisms.⁴⁹⁵ This is tantamount to another sign of the maturation of genetic Beckett criticism, which compares with the aforementioned dispute sparked around the end of the 1980s over the teleological perspective involved in editing the Pléiade edition of *À la recherche du temps perdu*.⁴⁹⁶ Such distinguishing between retrospective projection by scholars and Beckett’s own creative practice forms one of the deepest observations that Van Hulle’s *Manuscript Genetics* provides for Beckett Studies.

⁴⁹³ Ibid., 3-4.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid., 2-4.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibid., 3.

⁴⁹⁶ Schmid, *Processes of Literary Creation*, 129-31.

It is significant that in his focus on poetics Van Hulle here refers to those less appreciated poetic scrutinisers of the past in Beckett criticism, such as H. Porter Abbott and Krance.⁴⁹⁷ By so doing, Van Hulle reveals his own position as sympathetic toward such text-based and bilingual textual analyses. Rather than qualitatively depreciating them for their lack of references to genetic material, he tries to appreciate theorisations such as that of "autography," or self-writing by Porter Abbott, within his genetic approach. As such, Van Hulle discovers some important general characteristics of Beckett's writing: "the tension between his criticism of 'onwardness' and his own creative urge to write on"⁴⁹⁸; the writing process being an integral part of the writing product;⁴⁹⁹ and his anti-Joycean and anti-Wordsworthian 'decreation' as being phased through personal and intertextual decomposition.⁵⁰⁰

Upon closer inspection, Beckett is found to have shown "a fascination with dead ends," actively seeking out "dead ends that stimulate the ingenuity to find a way out" and make himself go on "with greater resolve, only to 'fail better' again," according to the composition history examined by Van Hulle.⁵⁰¹ As for the comparative genetic criticism of Joyce and Beckett as the main feature of the book, together with the big, familiar and troublesome question of the degree to which Beckett's poetics differs from that of Joyce, Joyce is seen to proceed from the abstract toward the concrete, while Beckett moves oppositely, from the concrete toward the abstract. Van Hulle adds an important nuance here: Beckett "does not

⁴⁹⁷ Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics*, 4, 137-8.

⁴⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 4.

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 5.

⁵⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁵⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 121.

simply present his writing as the complete opposite of Proust or Joyce's work", but as "proceeding in a direction, a movement *toward* nothingness."⁵⁰² Capitalising upon the nominalist tension between uniform concepts and different individuals in a way similar to yet different from Joyce, furthermore, Beckett problematises "the undue reduction of complexity in uniform concepts" by using "homophony as a potentially defamiliarising tool." So, as featured by the decreasing number of leaves traced over the later self-translated or revised variants for *Waiting for Godot* (1949), the writing regresses as those abstract universals decrease, thematising the abstract self's doomed search across its instantiations as "particular, ever-changing individual versions."⁵⁰³ This theme also gets temporally structuralised in a rigid but chance- and randomness-infused framework of the paragraph-making grid of sentences, which is featured in *Lessness* (1969), while he more generally comments upon the similarly doomed human conventions to systemise time.⁵⁰⁴

Concerning the second subject of the "combination of existential and (inter)textual recollection," Beckett's complex relationship to Romanticism is brought into focus. The concept of the multiplicity of *Is* as described in Beckett's *Proust*, the "succession of individuals", is thematised in many of his own works, and especially in *Krapp's Last Tape* (1958), as "numerous reminiscences that characterise Beckett's later works." Beckett himself calls this characteristic in his synopsis of *Not I* (1972) "life scenes."⁵⁰⁵ What is then traced in Beckett's pre-publication drafts for *Not I* is, significantly, the dynamic of the writing process as reflecting "a dynamic process in

⁵⁰² Ibid., 122-3.

⁵⁰³ Ibid., 125-6.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid., 127.

⁵⁰⁵ Ibid., 130-2.

the mind." This is the textual genesis performing "an imaginative reconstruction of the way memory works" – a process Van Hulle calls "genetic mimesis." Whereas the Fichtean idea, as entered in his *Dream* notebook, or the "stream of consciousness" noted by Ellmann, hold that the I posits itself by opposing something else outside consciousness, with the not-I Beckett contrasts an I who "tries to act as a detached observer of its own will." This self decomposes itself and emerges instead as *Not I*, as instantiated in his writing dynamics across the manuscript versions of *Not I* itself.⁵⁰⁶ As Van Hulle notes, together with Gontarski, Beckett primarily utilised this "hesitation between the third- and the first-person singular in the first version", transforming it into "a conflict that was to become characteristic of the whole play," namely, that between revealing and concealing, between positing and undoing.⁵⁰⁷

In *Company* (1979), this intermittent and itinerant quest for recollection was doomed to fail: "the act of recollection as an endless process of revision" takes a form of the Jamesian "community of self," which consists of a voice, a hearer and a "cankorous other" who devises all for company. Its fifty-nine paragraphs of recollective anecdote are all figments, and as such trace the "ways in which the 'self' is constantly being rewritten" as self-construction and reconstruction, signifying in the end a state of an "unstillable" mind, or "unformulable gropings of the mind", foreshadowing Beckett's last prose piece *Stirrings Still* (1988). Regarding its genetic variants, it is interesting to find that such an intermittent movement of "imaginative and retrospective reconstructions" is featured in Beckett's translation variants as well, in which the original English version has a trace of revision employed from its

⁵⁰⁶ Ibid., 132-4.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid., 134-5.

French translation, which then finds its way into the final English adaptation as pointed out by Krance. This textual process, visible and retrievable through archival sources, is described by Van Hulle as "fugal dynamics," whereby "the original follows the translation which follows the original, until it is no longer clear which is in pursuit of which." As *Company* was written around the same time as *A Piece of Monologue* (1979), furthermore, it provides a valuable glimpse into some mutual generic influences between them, as exemplified in the traces of Beckett's "inserting a piece of the play in his prose text" as the latter's fifty-fourth paragraph, and of the stronger emphasis upon visual elements in the dramatic piece. Beckett's case is revealing not only in terms of genetic variants between different manuscript versions, but also about generic boundaries between genres and translation variants.⁵⁰⁸

Finally, the form of recollection shaping Beckett's compositional method not only involves personal reminiscences but also memories of reading other texts. Among those formative and memorable texts, Dante's *Divina Commedia* definitely stands out as foremost for, ever since the 1920s when Beckett discovered and thoroughly studied it, Dante has profoundly guided his writing. This remained the case until the end of his writing career. Beckett's reading notes reveal that his academically-disciplined method consisted of reading, summarising and note-taking; the latter he particularly seems to have grown into the habit of under the influence of Joyce, in a manner similar to that of the *Finnegans Wake* notebooks in the early 1930s. His use of reading notes was quite direct in the earlier days as annotated by Pilling in the *Dream* notebook, but became less so later on, in a manner different

⁵⁰⁸ Ibid., 135-41.

from Joyce's practice of "recycling of notes in his C-notebooks and notesheets." Beckett seems to have processed his notes in a more varied and intimately dependent way, sometimes recycling particular old phrases, other times quoting them from memory.⁵⁰⁹

As an illustration, reminiscence sometimes takes the form of a specific phrase that persistently which recurs throughout Beckett's oeuvre, such as "never being properly born."⁵¹⁰ Thanks to biographical information published by scholars such as Knowlson, Davyd Melnyk and Charles Juliet it has been established that Beckett attended the third of Carl Jung's lectures, held in London on 2 October 1935. This informed him about a little girl who "had never been born entirely,"⁵¹¹ in Jung's words, and revealed that "Beckett showed little sign of interest in the theories themselves, rewriting phrase and incident for his own very purposes."⁵¹² And it is thanks, again, to Feldman's empirical scholarship that it has been found that Beckett's repeated motif about the hat across his work might be based upon his note from Otto Rank's *Trauma of Birth*, which relates it to "embryonal caul."⁵¹³ The position of sitting with one's back to the engine, which Rank links to the "separation from the mother" as a trigger for many dreams of traveling, is also

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid., 141-2.

⁵¹⁰ Ibid., 142.

⁵¹¹ Carl Gustav Jung, *The Collected Works of Carl Gustav Jung*, Vol. 18, R.F.C. Hull, trans. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966-79), 95-6, cited in Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics*, 142.

⁵¹² Davyd Melnyk, "Never Been Properly Jung," in *Historicising Beckett/Issues of Performance, Samuel Beckett Today/Aujourd'hui 15*, Marius Buning et al., eds. (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2005), 361, cited in Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics*, 142.

⁵¹³ Feldman, "Beckett's Poss and the Dog's Dinner: An Empirical Survey of the 1930s 'Psychology' and 'Philosophy Notes,'" *Journal of Beckett Studies*, Vol. 13, Issue. 2 (Spring 2004): 83, cited in Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics*, 143.

frequently taken up by Beckett's protagonists and is found among his notes on the same book. It is another noteworthy instance of Van Hulle's synthetic approach that he here takes this empirical discovery in order to acquire "an extra connotation" from the title of Gontarski's monograph on Beckett's writing method, *The Intent of Undoing*, and from the theory of Jungian "impersonal creative process" a movement toward the Kantian "thing-in-itself" in Beckett.⁵¹⁴ This approach by Van Hulle is sophisticated enough to distinguish between "enough proof that Beckett read Rank" and the assessment of "his attitude toward the trauma of birth theory," as hinted at in his Rank notes.⁵¹⁵

This phrase "never been properly born" is first found in the Addenda to *Watt* and relates to other instances in Beckett's oeuvre, forming, together with the pre-textual archive of the Addenda, a sort of belated precedence in opposition to the belatedness of the published text, and to the aforementioned fugal dynamics. This is especially the case in terms of the formal structure of writing.⁵¹⁶ The complex fugal structure within single works, and between works across his career, is featured all across Beckett's works, notably in the following occasions: the phrase "tentatives ou de fuite et de poursuite" found in the manuscripts of *Stirrings Still*;⁵¹⁷ the script for *Film* where O is persistently being followed and watched by E, "only to eventually realise that all the time he has been chased by himself"; the text of *Worstward Ho*, where the skull is described as "the scene and seer of all" and thus, by its homophony with "seen", enacts human consciousness as continuously being

⁵¹⁴ Gontarski, *The Intent of Undoing*, xiii and 185.

⁵¹⁵ Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics*, 143-4.

⁵¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 144.

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 141.

watched by self-consciousness; and the tables of Arrivals and Departures found in the draft material for the opening scene of *Mercier et Camier*, which represents both the “contrapuntal relationship between ‘self and second self his own’” and a development of the fugue.⁵¹⁸ This contrapuntal relationship relates to polyphony and fugue as a special type of polyphonic composition. Beckett attributes such models, according to a note in his German Diaries of March 1937, to the significance of *Work in Progress* in making literature accomplish this musical quality of “the miteinander & the simultaneous,”⁵¹⁹ which defies teleology and thus represents “the only possible development from *Ulysses*.”⁵²⁰ This defiance of teleology is implied in the original title of *Mercier et Camier, Voyage de Mercier et Camier autour du pot dans les Bosquets de Bondy*, and can be witnessed on many occasions across the novel, where the protagonists cannot stay still, but keep making journeys and returning; they are satisfied with the fact that they are going, irrespective of where.⁵²¹

As in the previous case of the homophony appearing in the text of *Worstward Ho*, this preference for a fugue structure in Beckett’s work is sometimes compactly applied to the level of word or phrase, and forms a minimalist style in writing, as exemplified foremost in his phrase “Nohow on,” which captures a dead-end situation, an unaccountable impulse and “know-how” to go on nevertheless, all at the same time.⁵²² This fascination with impulsive forward movements toward an unattainable goal is what makes Beckett not allow his characters to commit suicide,

⁵¹⁸ Ibid., 144-5.

⁵¹⁹ Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, 258, cited in Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics*, 145.

⁵²⁰ Ibid.

⁵²¹ Ibid., 145-6.

⁵²² Ibid., 146.

even in the face of an impasse, in compliance with Beckett's favorite philosopher, Schopenhauer, who argued that suicide is not the denial of the will-to-live, but forms "a phenomenon of the will's strong affirmation."⁵²³ It constitutes a "constant striving without aim and without rest" in a disengaged way.⁵²⁴ This fuga mortis of Schopenhauer, which "comes simply and solely from the blind will,"⁵²⁵ reflects Beckett's "highly ambiguous attitude toward modernity's faith in Progress and the resulting movement for the sake of mere movement"; it also constitutes Beckett's own miteinander of simultaneous creation and undoing this impasse via the homophony of "no" and "know," as exemplified in *Ill Seen Ill Said*, *Worstward Ho* and *Stirrings Still*. The crystallisation of this principle by Beckett does not take the form of teleological progress nor of simple regress towards "an undoing of the primal trauma," as in the case of the aforementioned book by Gontarski, but of a never-ending circular journey, according to Van Hulle.⁵²⁶

Beckett's use of his Dante notes in multimedia "figures of script" pertains to the most elaborate application of this fugue-like stylistic principle of "Nohow on," and Van Hulle's analysis of that processing forms the most significant part of his manuscript genetics. The latter bears witness, above all, to a case in which exogenetic and empirical source clarification needs to be complemented by the explication of its endogenetic textual incorporation, contrary to the aspiration of

⁵²³ Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol. 1, E. F. J. Payne, trans. (New York: Dover, 1969), 398, cited in Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics*, 146.

⁵²⁴ Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol. 1, 311-2, cited in Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics*, 147.

⁵²⁵ Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, Vol. 2, 468, cited in Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics*, 147.

⁵²⁶ *Ibid.*, 147-8.

both proponents of circumscribed genetic criticism, and of radical philology, who are all in favour of constraining context for the sake of relevance. Such a Dantean processing appears in *Mercier et Camier* as a direct quotation: "lo bello stilo che m'ha fatto onore." But as a quotation it is deployed ignorantly by the two protagonists, in a mode more befitting Beckett's aforementioned tendency to use direct quotations during his early writing career. In connection with a passage in *Watt*, where the narrator describes a Mauthnerian, nominalist linguistic skepticism via Watt's attempt to name a pot as a pot, there is another passage where the appearance of a new character is described in such an obscure way that its information entirely hinges upon the way it is described, and whose head is particularly described as resembling "a depressed inverted chamber-pot."⁵²⁷

The allusion elsewhere to the first appearance of Virgil in *Divina Commedia* aptly illustrates Beckett's own recapitulation of the "famous ambiguity that has puzzled several Dante scholars." In the passage "Mentre ch'i' rovinava in basso loco, dinanzi a li occhi mi si fu offerto chi per lungo silenzio parea fioco"⁵²⁸ ("While I was fleeing to a lower place, / Before my eyes a figure showed, / Faint, in the wide silence"⁵²⁹), the line "chi per lungo silenzio parea fioco" merges visual and aural senses together. Together with "chi," which is a relative pronoun that functions without a referent – and thus like the aforementioned quite unnamable pot – "fioco" turns aural, in connection with the preceding "per lungo silenzio" and sometimes has tended to be translated as "hoarse". Yet it also turns visual in connection with

⁵²⁷ Beckett, *Watt* (London: Calder, 1981), 225, cited in Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics*, 149.

⁵²⁸ Canto 1, lines 85-87.

⁵²⁹ Alighieri Dante, *The Inferno*, Robert and Jean Hollander, trans. (New York: Anchor Books/Random House, 2002), 7.

"a li occhi" in the previous line, which at some other times has been translated as "faint" as well. This type of textual aporia is also found in another place in the short story "Dante and the Lobster," where Belacqua asks his Italian teacher Signorina Adriana Ottolenghi to translate the "superb pun."⁵³⁰ The latter derives from *Inferno's* canto 20: "qui vive la pieta quando è ben morta." Belacqua's suggestion is met by hesitation, however. Beckett especially marked the word "pieta," which can be translated both as "piety" and "pity," in his transcription of line 21 of canto 4. This is found among his Dante notes in the notebook he kept during the latter part of the 1920s, a notebook now held in TCD as TCD MS 10966. He also noted, in the same place, his qualms about the account, where "[c]ompassion legitimate in Limbo, but not among the damned proper."⁵³¹ This too is expressed by Belacqua in the same story: "Why not piety and pity both, even down below?"⁵³²

Dante's phrase becomes absolutely untranslatable in the situation where piety and pity cannot exist at the same time, as it thus brings to bear, in the syntactic economy of Medieval Italian, two contradictory and mutually effacing translations: "here piety lives when pity is quite dead"; or "here pity lives when piety is quite dead". And it is Beckett who discovered creative potential in this "act of failing to translate", and he described his discovery as a "Dantean revelation,"⁵³³ which happened during his undergraduate days. By not resigning but resolving to fail in the face of this failure of translation, "the full power of the aporia comes to the fore," harbouring at the same time all its contradictory options as well as their

⁵³⁰ Beckett, *More Pricks Than Kicks* (London: Calder and Boyars, 1970), 18, cited in Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics*, 150.

⁵³¹ TCD MS 10966, f.7r-7v, cited in Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics*, 150.

⁵³² Beckett, *More Pricks Than Kicks*, 20, cited in Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics*, 151.

⁵³³ Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, 772n55, cited in Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics*, 151.

mutual decomposition. Beckett fails in translating and lets the text perform its content as a fugue, as he applies the appearance of Virgil to the following account in *Watt*. "Watt felt them suddenly glow in the dark place, and go out, the words, *The only cure is diet*," where the same fugue plays between aural and visual.⁵³⁴

According to Van Hulle, this act of failing to translate relates, crucially, to Beckett's equivocal attitude toward the notion of authorial intention. Such an attitude has been strongly supported by Foucault's important quotation of Beckett's line "Qu'importe qui parle", in his essay titled "Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?"⁵³⁵, which Beckett scholars of a poststructural persuasion such as Connor and Dowd consider as sounding skeptical and critical about any attempts to construct or fetishise the authorial figure.⁵³⁶ "[i]t is paradoxically necessary to find out who is speaking in order to be able to examine whether it matters or not."⁵³⁷ As Beckett seems to have been intimately concerned with this allusive or intertextual business, more than his modernist predecessors Proust and Joyce, it is all the more important to not just pursue the "what." It is vital, on the back of such a critical achievement deploying archival resources, such as that on display here from Van Hulle, to seek out Beckett's intellectual sources across the different periods he consulted them. It is vital also to map out an intellectual history for Beckett. Yet it remains crucial to track the "how" in his writing process, examining his attitudes toward his quoted

⁵³⁴ Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics*, 151.

⁵³⁵ Michel Foucault, "What Is an Author?" in *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Poststructuralist Criticism*, Josué V. Harari (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1979), 141, cited in Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics*, 152.

⁵³⁶ See Connor, "Repetition and Power," *Samuel Beckett: Repetition, Theory and Text*, 170-201 and Dowd, "Prolegomena to a Critique of Excavatory Reason."

⁵³⁷ Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics*, 152.

source material in different periods of writing. The latter is different from constructing “[a]n essentially coherent Beckett projecting a self-same identity”, or “[t]he unified Beckett” speaking “with one voice across works, notes and letters.”⁵³⁸ Rather, it constitutes a modest groping in the poststructuralist dark, to the extent that the manuscript material forms the ground upon which to do so.

While “Dante recognises Virgil as his ‘master’ and his ‘author’” in the same aforementioned lines 85-87 of canto 1 of *Inferno*,⁵³⁹ Beckett jotted this “bello stilo” on a verso page in a French manuscript of *Mercier et Camier* and later incorporated it into the text. He included with it a sentence which he later excluded: “C’est certainement une reminiscence d’un texte quelconque.”⁵⁴⁰ He then completely suppressed the whole passage from the English translation. So *Divina Commedia* apparently was not just “a random text” to Beckett, but, as Caselli persuasively argued, “the relationship between the two texts is under the author’s control,” as Beckett’s words “comment on the absence of Dante while reinforcing the presence of the author.”⁵⁴¹ So it is seen that this persistent favoritism of fugue around the omitted centre of Beckett’s writing finds its application not just on the levels of theme, scenes from memory, translation, narrative, sentence, phrase and word, but even still on that of quotation and authorial conversation with prior authors across the centuries. It penetrates through Beckett’s poetics, and the abovementioned

⁵³⁸ Gowd, “Prolegomena to a Critique of Excavatory Reason,” 384.

⁵³⁹ “Tu se’ lo mio maestro e ‘l mio autore; / tu se’ solo colui da cu’ io tolsi / lo bello stilo che m’ha fatto onore.”

⁵⁴⁰ *HRHRC* SB 6.1, f. 40v, cited in Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics*, 153.

⁵⁴¹ Daniela Caselli, *Beckett’s Dantes: Intertextuality in the Fiction and Criticism* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2005), 115, cited in Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics*, 154.

scene of the "fioco" phrase especially finds many similar examples across his oeuvre such as the following, either in their published or draft versions: "the figure, without any interruptions of its motions, grew fainter and fainter, and finally disappeared" in *Watt* (1941-5);⁵⁴² "speechlessness due to long silence, as in the wood that darkens the mouth of hell" in *The Calmative* (1946);⁵⁴³ and "so on till stayed when to his ears from deep within oh how and here a word he could not catch it were to end where never till then" in *Stirrings Still* (1983-7).⁵⁴⁴ The last selection especially includes a mark of Beckett's hesitation over "faint / hoarse from long silence" in one of its related draft pages.⁵⁴⁵

Therefore, this type of "persistent intertextual reference" forms a "figure of script" for Beckett's writing, as a text used sometimes in a figurative and other times in a not so referential a sense. On his equivocal stance regarding the notion of authorial intention Beckett tends to desperately, intimately but cleverly depend on those classical source texts, which were used not for illustrating but for starting, shaping and characterising his own text. Another "figure of script" that Beckett primarily employed in the later part of his writing career is "a phrase that captures a strong image, a form of realisation or 'coming to,'" as he called it in his late unpublished prose poem *Ceiling* written in 1981.⁵⁴⁶ As the closest glimpse possibly offered by the genetic material into the moment of creative initiative, the text starts

⁵⁴² Beckett, *Watt*, 227, cited in Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics*, 155.

⁵⁴³ Beckett, *The Complete Short Prose 1929-1989*, S. E. Gontarski, ed. (New York: Grove Press, 1995), 66, cited in Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics*, 152.

⁵⁴⁴ Beckett, *The Complete Short Prose 1929-1989*, 264, cited in Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics*, 156.

⁵⁴⁵ *RUS MS 2934*, f. 9v, cited in Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics*, 156.

⁵⁴⁶ *HRHRC Lake 17.1*, f. 1r, cited in Van Hulle, *Manuscript Genetics*, 157.

with the following phrase soon to be crossed out: "On coming to himself his first sight was of white." In a still more fundamental and thorough way than with the previous scene of the "fioco" phrase, this phrase performs across its words the act of coming to, as consciousness "appears and is confronted with the whiteness of the ceiling" simultaneously as "the figure of script encounters the whiteness of the page." It also performs the writer's ensuing repetitive elaboration of the phrase as found over the drafts for the prose poem, and also over the drafts and published text of *Stirrings Still*.⁵⁴⁷

As that elaborating process involves development, summarisation, avowal met by disavowal and the further and further taking away of explicit references, it formulates in the end "[t]he paradox of composing by means of decomposing," but not quite touching the worst but rather attaining a form of going on, as "[t]he worst is not / So long as one can say, This is the worst," as Shakespeare's *King Lear* has it, in another phrase crucial to Beckett's self-script. So as the poetic landscape of the ultimate text by Joyce features an epic of self-reflexive development through its textual history towards writing a history of the world, Beckett's penultimate and ultimate texts display brief pieces of writing based in a cognitive poetics which combines the developments of the text and the individual. As life is an ongoing death, Beckett's composition is a form of decomposition which thematises the failing recollection of life scenes, quotations, writing and even the recollection as well.⁵⁴⁸

Van Hulle hoped that with this eloquent account of manuscript genetics he

⁵⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁸ Ibid., 158-9.

would arrive at a point where "the manuscripts allow us to approach the moment of creative initiative."⁵⁴⁹ But his book (and this is the reason for describing it at such length, given that it involves so much that has been traced previously in this thesis about the history of archival study around Beckett) also constituted the closest Beckett Studies had ever got to Beckett's writing process based on his genetic material by the time of the 2010s. Van Hulle clearly showed the qualitative difference between exogenetic source-finding and its endogenetic incorporation into the text. But crucially, he also convincingly illustrated the way the investigation of the process of such endogenetic incorporation necessarily involves lots of guesswork and is sometimes informed by theoretical insights offered by textual scholars such as Porter-Abbott, Krance and Gontarski. This is not least because in Beckett "the published text is not necessarily considered better than its preceding drafts, but merely a version among other versions – which is reflected in titles such as *Residua*, *Disjecta*, *Fizzles*." Therefore, through Van Hulle's synthesising project, theoretical insights mostly based on the published text have a relevance and are confirmed or nuanced by Van Hulle's close manuscript genetics which has been facilitated by related biographical or epistolary material. This close endogenetic investigation as a sensible compromise between a rigorous material base and an informed criticism which recapitulates the history of Beckett scholarship captured in this thesis, reflects Van Hulle's midway position between Joycean minimalists and maximalists, and forms another major trend for future genetic Beckett criticism to follow, different from that led by Feldman.

Among the three fresh indicators of the progress, maturity and

⁵⁴⁹ Ibid., 157.

establishment of genetic Beckett criticism of the 2010s, two of which have been touched upon, the last but not at all the least is Caselli's contribution made via her monograph *Beckett's Dantes: Intertextuality in the Fiction and Criticism*.⁵⁵⁰ Caselli also tackles the persistent Dantean presence throughout Beckett's texts that Van Hulle analyses in terms of its usage for Beckett's compositional method, and does it in order to examine its radical implications for the concepts of intertextuality and authority. As she mainly engages the originally Kristevan concept of intertextuality which does not necessarily presuppose intentionality but can involve inadvertent utilisation and pure reader-response, Caselli takes a still further flight from the notion of authorial intention than Van Hulle does. This position has been made clear as early as 1996 in her study on the intertextual relationship between Beckett and Leopardi, to quote the whole related paragraph:

My aim in analysing Beckett's texts is, then, not to reconstruct his authorial intentions, but to explore what kind of Leopardi we find in Beckett. In other words, I shall not focus on how much Leopardi Beckett knew and read, but on how we can read Leopardi's presence in Beckett. This is not to circumvent the problem that current evidence on Beckett's access to Leopardi is still inconclusive, but to reflect on the changing value of literary quotations, allusions and parodies in Beckett. There are no surviving notebooks for the years 1928 to 1930, so that the textual occurrence of Leopardi in the early works (together with Kant, Proust, Bergson, Vico,

⁵⁵⁰ Caselli, *Beckett's Dantes: Intertextuality in the Fiction and Criticism* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2005).

Bruno and Schopenhauer) has no archival correlative. And yet, the correspondence and Beckett's library holdings confirm Leopardi's significance. At the time of his death, there were two editions of Leopardi in Beckett's library: *I Canti*, edited by Ettore Fabietti, published in 1936 in Milan by the Casa per Edizioni Popolari, and his undated *Prose*, edited by Pietro Giordani, also published in Milan by the Istituto Editoriale Italiano, possibly suggesting a more sustained engagement than previously thought with the *Operette morali* and the *Zibaldone*.⁵⁵¹

The search for those archival materials has turned into a different story as a significant collection of Beckett's notebooks and manuscripts, all seemingly written between the middle of the 1920s and the middle of the 1930s and even including notes on Giacomo Leopardi, was presented by Beckett's heirs to TCD in 1997 and later on published under the title "Note Diverse Holo" via the 16th issue of *SBT/A* in 2006.⁵⁵² But Caselli's non-authorial and non-material focus is made manifest in this full paragraph, even with the marginal materials related to Beckett's correspondence and library material. Though she is freer from the anchorage of the published and pre-published texts than Van Hulle is, in her primarily intertextual inquiry, Caselli takes a stance similar to that of Van Hulle when she tries to replace the inquiry into the authorial intention with a close reading of specificities. For Caselli, "[t]o move

⁵⁵¹ Caselli, "Beckett's Intertextual Modalities of Appropriation: The Case of Leopardi," *Journal of Beckett Studies*, Vol. 6, No. 1 (Autumn 1996): 1-24.

⁵⁵² This issue is featured not only by the catalogues and descriptions both for those "Notes Diverse Holo" and for the other manuscript resources acquired by the TCD from 1969-1997, but also by diverse researches by notable genetic Beckett scholars based on those materials. See Frost and Jane Maxwell, eds., *Notes Diverse Holo*.

beyond the idea of authorial intentionality and of a stable prior text entails neither a claim that every meaning can be casually configured and attributed nor a claim that we can do away with the idea of authority."⁵⁵³

Caselli quotes Judith Butler's words "[A] loss of certainty is not the same as political nihilism," and she herself thereafter aims to explore the specific, self-reflexive and paradoxical ways that Beckett assumes Dante as "an external source of literary and cultural authority" at the same time as he uses him for skeptically undermining such authority across his works.⁵⁵⁴ This is particularly why Caselli takes issue with the existing Bloomian notion of Beckett's intentional misreading of Dante, which has praised the elaborate instability of Beckett's text while stabilising Dante's text as "an authoritative predetermined meaning." Such a notion presupposes only one Beckett willfully misreading only one stable Dante in his text, a version that has so far been often reproduced in Beckett Studies.⁵⁵⁵ As such a presupposition of a simple referential relationship does not do justice to the complex way that Dante's text functions within Beckett's text, Caselli tries to "investigate this paradoxical movement rather than simply isolating discrete, identifiable fragments of Dante's texts in Beckett and then calling them 'quotations', 'sources', 'origin',"⁵⁵⁶ by way of introducing "a multiple and changeable notion of textuality which nevertheless configures itself in specific ways."⁵⁵⁷

The later pages of this chapter have spent time re-presenting the intricate arguments of two recent works of scholarship which have shown a flexible and

⁵⁵³ Caselli, *Beckett's Dantes*, 4.

⁵⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁵⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 1.

⁵⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 2.

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 4.

sensitive response to the impasse which seemed to have opened up earlier in the 2000s around Beckett criticism and its interconnections with archival resources. Whereas there had been a polarising aspect to some of those debates between empiricism and theory, or between intentionality and textuality, more recent work such as that just described has been able to move fluently between the general and the particular, between the archival source and the "finished" text, without presuming any absolute fixity, or realisable "meaning" at either side of the paradigm. To this extent, the work on the Beckettian archive from all of these scholars who emerged in the 2000s, including those who initially seemed to assert a dogmatic version of it, has been considerably important in moving the debate forward from the author-based realisation from the archive that characterised 1990s criticism.

7. Conclusion

The 2010s opened with another major Beckett conference, one dedicated not only to reflections on his archival material, but this time highlighting the word “archive” in its title: *Samuel Beckett: Out of the Archive*. The event took place as an international conference and festival at the University of York from 23 to 26 June 2011. The title of the conference is really a timely one in that it features two mutually contradictory meanings, namely dependence on at the same time as escaping from the archive. The anxiety in that ambivalence reflects the fact that Beckett Studies had become dominated by archive studies in the previous decade. Archival scholarship was now in full swing, as the vast ranges of material either side of the North Atlantic have been fully collated and catalogued: the BDMP had started vigorously laboring for its quasi-electronic-*James-Joyce-Archive*-goal, enormous in scope, detail, electronic “research tools”, importance and impact; the biographical account through which to “understand” this enormous wealth had been established; and publication of the selected correspondence had already begun in the 2000s. The major conferences and publications taking place throughout the 2010s are mostly based on the findings of or reflections on Beckett’s archival material. This is truly a fulfillment of the aspiration expressed in Knowlson’s and Pilling’s pronouncement at the end of the 1970s of the arrival of the “‘second-generation’ Beckett criticism” which builds upon the first-generation’s “desire to use, where relevant, unpublished material or rejected drafts that illustrate the genesis of the work in question.”⁵⁵⁸ Now those findings are not just used for

⁵⁵⁸ Knowlson and Pilling, *Frescoes of the Skull*, xii.

partial or illustrative purposes, but even tended positively to anchor and generate new interpretations.

However, the dissenting voices continue to ring from the other side of the discussion, that dissenting voice first having been fully embodied by Connor at the end of the 1970s and which met with its most dramatic incidents in the dispute between Feldman and Dowd held over the later part of the 2000s. That voice worries over the all-empowering of authorial intention, criticises the limitations it implies for the hermeneutic scope of the actual completed text, and stays cynical toward archival studies' undue and indiscriminate stress on petty details. It is symptomatic to witness such a continual divide in Peter Fifield's Introduction to the collection of essays presented at the abovementioned conference.⁵⁵⁹ It is particularly acute that Fifield cites a recollection by Siegfried Unseld from Suhrkamp Verlag of Beckett's expression of some apparent anti-falsificationist stance against Theodor Adorno's interpretive insistence, at a dinner party for his authors: "'This is the progress of science that professors can proceed with their errors!'"⁵⁶⁰ The authors included in the essay collection vary in their attitude toward archival scholarship and falsification. Chris Ackerley upholds the Popperian principle of falsification for his main task of creating and publishing annotations,⁵⁶¹ yet Dilks seems, in his review of the very recently published collection of essays *Publishing*

⁵⁵⁹ Peter Fifield, "Samuel Beckett: Out of the Archive: An Introduction," *Modernism/modernity*, vol. 18, no. 4 (November 2011): 673-9.

⁵⁶⁰ Knowlson, *Damned to Fame*, 479, cited in Fifield, "Samuel Beckett: Out of the Archive: An Introduction," 676.

⁵⁶¹ Ackerley, "'Primeval mud impenetrable dark': Towards an Annotation of Comment c'est/How It Is," *Modernism/modernity*, vol. 18, no. 4 (November 2011): 789-800.

Samuel Beckett,⁵⁶² to appreciate the demystifying effect those essays have regarding the overlap between Beckett's professional and aesthetic attitudes, by offering pragmatic instances of Beckett's struggles with the publishing world.⁵⁶³ Lois Overbeck assumes a reconciliatory role with the following words, based on the actual experience of working on the edition of Beckett's correspondence. In the end, these words suggest a stance very close to that of Van Hulle, as outlined in previous chapters:

With all this positivistic effort, comes the humbling counterpoint: the need to change our minds, to bend to re-examination when new information challenges what we thought we knew, to re-order sequence, to reassess context. Discovery and insight are counterbalanced by the responsibility to get it as close to right as we can, while knowing that even this is ephemeral. ... As literary scholars, we draw on voluntary memory as we consider artifacts of the past (documents, memoirs, oral histories, retold stories). At best, our remembering from these materials is selective, verifying our collective and individual imaginations, reassembling the pieces, if not into a whole, then at least into a semblance of what might have been. No matter how many drafts we see, or how well we authenticate information or explore nuance, retracing patterns from the artifacts may merely impose our preconceptions.⁵⁶⁴

⁵⁶² Nixon, ed., *Publishing Samuel Beckett* (London: The British Library, 2011).

⁵⁶³ Dilks, review of *Publishing Samuel Beckett*, edited by Nixon, *Modernism/modernity*, vol. 18, no. 4 (November 2011): 917-9.

⁵⁶⁴ Overbeck, "Audience of Self/Audience of Reader," *Modernism/modernity*, vol. 18, no. 4

Like all the major conferences held around the time, however, this York conference also reflects many new findings that contribute to the advance of genetic and archival scholarship dedicated to Beckett and his works. Nixon's account of how Beckett's manuscripts originated, traveled and arrived in different places and hands, forms one such example of how archival evidence might be deployed to expand proven knowledge, as well as in its turn forming a crystallisation of many related contextual, correspondence and biographical accounts acquired from Beckett's and others' archives.⁵⁶⁵

Such a narrative effort has a particular strength and importance at this juncture of the development of archival scholarship on Beckett, where now the most useful wide and encompassing explorations have been made, and specialisation around specific aspects is about to begin. If all the scholarly and philological efforts of source-clarification and documental investigation are not accompanied by those of strong narrative and reporting, aimed at making the wealth and importance of the archival material accessible and familiar to the academic and general public, genetic Beckett criticism would be a league of elite specialists. It would be devoid of much real impact on making Beckett matter in the present world of the post-archival era. Nixon finished his PhD thesis at Reading under the supervision of Pilling in 2005,⁵⁶⁶ based on which he published the survey *Samuel Beckett's German Diaries 1936-1937* in 2011, the first scholarly scrutiny of

(November 2011): 725-6.

⁵⁶⁵ Nixon, "Beckett's Manuscripts in the Marketplace," 823-831.

⁵⁶⁶ Nixon, "'what a tourist I must have been': Samuel Beckett's German Diaries" (PhD diss., University of Reading, 2005).

Beckett diary's material.⁵⁶⁷ In many ways, Nixon's scholarship is a fulfillment of Pilling's previous requirements of "patience, excellent German and a postgraduate qualification in philosophy,"⁵⁶⁸ as well as presenting a promise of further knowledgeableness about "Beckett's interest in English literature and German philosophy", which were the key future directions for study of the field invoked by Pilling.⁵⁶⁹ Nixon's 2011 publication substantially contributes to filling the gap in the account of Beckett's main intellectual and artistic development before *Godot*, the drama on which all the principal genetic Beckett scholars are currently working. Together with Van Hulle, Nixon is also contributing to eliciting a rejuvenated focus on German influences on Beckett.

Nixon's publication of his celebrated monograph was not the only exciting event for both genetic Beckett criticism and Beckett Studies in 2011. Pilling now published, with his inimitable scholarly scope and rigor, "the first full-length study of Beckett's first work of published fiction," that difficult, painful and long-unduly-neglected *More Pricks Than Kicks*.⁵⁷⁰ Gontarski vented his frustration over the still corrupt textual condition of the Grove Centenary Edition, and the not very reasonable textual conservatism instigated by Faber and the Beckett Estate, via his article "A Centenary of Missed Opportunities: A Guide to Assembling an Accurate Volume of Samuel Beckett's Dramatic 'Shorts.'"⁵⁷¹ And, most momentous of all, the BDMP launches during the abovementioned York conference. Genetic Beckett

⁵⁶⁷ Nixon, *Samuel Beckett's German Diaries 1936-1937* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011).

⁵⁶⁸ Pilling, "From a (W)horoscope to *Murphy*," 6.

⁵⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 7.

⁵⁷⁰ Pilling, *Samuel Beckett's 'More Pricks Than Kicks': In a Strait of Two Wills* (London: Bloomsbury, 2011).

⁵⁷¹ Gontarski, "A Centenary of Missed Opportunities," 357-82.

criticism has so far been constrained by poor accessibility to manuscript materials strewn all across the northern hemisphere in cruelly diverse densities and combinations and, all the more, by the limitations of book editions in terms of their space for the presentation of the, at times fantastic, textual intricacy surrounding Beckett's published work. The era of the book had been discouraging to textual criticism's long-awaited dream of editing and publishing genetic and critical scholarly editions of Beckett's works.

Yet those problems can now be remedied by the BDMP's exhaustive and flexible electronic database. It will eventually include all of Beckett's published work, together with significant contextual materials such as recent files relating to the works held in Beckett's library at his death. Each "module" relates to one Beckett work, covers all the related manuscript resources, and offers multiple options in transcription type, multi-function windowing tools for textual comparison, the facilitation of dynamic visualisation of different genetic stages, instant transcriptions and translations of hard-to-read drafts, and an online interactive contribution system. Shorter in history, and smaller in number, than such initiatives as the publication of the full Joyce archives, less refined in the demarcation of methodologies and less enlightened in textual awareness, genetic Beckett criticism suddenly came to be presented with a cutting-edge technological solution for textual representation. The BDMP project is touched both by the philological conscientiousness of textual criticism and by perceptive accounts of genetic criticism, under the guidance of scholars who are conversant with all those areas.

It needs to be pointed out, however, that the BDMP means another momentous phase in the development of genetic Beckett criticism. Yet even this, in

its comprehensiveness, cannot be taken as the ultimate fulfillment of all genetic potentials in Beckett's literature. An inevitable weakness in the BDMP, through its inefficiency in having different scholars work separately on each different genetic dossier, is the lack of an open and regular forum where various perspectives, methodologies, experiences and interpretations can be shared and invested in looking into the future potential of each of those work-cases. Compared to many collaborative efforts and their definitive outcomes achieved within genetic Joyce and Proust criticisms, genetic Beckett criticism does not display a competitive equivalent other than the stalled *Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett* series of the 1990s. The situation may be understandable in that, while genetic Joyce scholars only need to work on two huge sets of genetic material and a few lighter others and, in terms of Proust, it is one single massive bundle of *A la Recherche*, genetic Beckett scholars need to exhaust their effort among scores of different manuscript piles. These drafts and notebook materials are of varied length, obscurity, and complexity and this dispersion of focus keeps working as a setback to any collaboration. It is the case that one or two experts are created around each Beckett output, but the potential for shared knowledge and new interpretation founded upon the digital archive is almost buried under the weight of detail which needs to be built into even the most basic picture of textual "development".

Nonetheless, genetic Beckett criticism will need to manage both the required technological and scholarly efficiency and the consequent dissemination and publicity for each element created at the same time anyway. The importance of Beckett's art for this post-archival era depends now on both. Whereas genetic Joyce scholars did not achieve their definitive edition of *Ulysses* due to the

insurmountable discrepancy in their perspectives, and thence came to take more caution and be more collaborative for their upcoming critical edition and electronic hypertext of *Finnegans Wake*, genetic Proust scholars managed to pull off the new Pléiade edition of *A la Recherche* despite troubles. That completed edition crucially contributes to extending Proust's influence across the recent Parisian tide of critique génétique, certainly at a level beyond the intricate focus on the several textual choices which suggest that it might. In this sense, leading genetic Beckett scholars now need to show more leadership by jointly publicising their findings in accessible form in the name of Beckett Studies, in a similar style to that of the electronic *Genetic Joyce Studies* journal. It will be ideal if Beckett scholars can somehow work together in order that, through compromise, they might publish a genetically informed critical edition of Beckett's oeuvre in the near future, something like the new Pléiade edition of Proust's novel. Such an enterprise will surely substantially increase public interest in new dimensions of Beckett's art in this era of world literature. Certainly much more, again, than the merely tokenist Grove Centenary Edition and the latest Faber editions which only scratch the genetic.⁵⁷²

As Claire Lozier illustrates based on Derrida's Freudian *Archive Fever*,⁵⁷³ when the archive drive which seeks to "unify, identify, classify and consign things and signs"⁵⁷⁴ is pushed to its limits, it comes to "follow the same process as the Freudian repetition compulsion that Derrida associates with anarchiving

⁵⁷² Bailey and Fifield, "'Looking through my essuie-cul de réserve': The New Faber and Faber Beckett," *Modernism/modernity*, vol. 18, no. 4 (November 2011): 907-11.

⁵⁷³ Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans., Eric Prenowitz (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press).

⁵⁷⁴ Claire Lozier, "Watt's Archive Fever," *Journal of Beckett Studies*, 22.1 (2013): 38.

destruction."⁵⁷⁵ In turn such drives are redeemed by the pleasure principle, which means the realisation of "art forms which disguise, make up, paint, print and represent thanks to the help of tekhné."⁵⁷⁶ As Marlene Manoff similarly adds, what is always at work in the building up of the archive is "a negotiation between the death drive and the pleasure principle, between Thanatos and Eros."⁵⁷⁷ In a similar way, genetic Beckett criticism would be well advised to negotiate between scholarly efficiency and general publicity, and to take caution against too compulsive and autonomous an archive drive. Apart from these concerns and advice from other archival examples and theorisations, nevertheless, the BDMP promises the fulfillment of the long-awaited dream of reconstructing Beckett's creative process from "Assumption" until "Stirrings Still" through the different 26 research modules. The BDMP is obviously the most ambitious task to which genetic Beckett Studies so far has collectively put itself. It is an indispensable requisite for clarifying Beckett's complicated poetics, which have ever been frustrating analytic efforts for finding patterns, and hitherto only allowing for general descriptions or selective illustrations when seeking to bring textual origins to the surface.

Furthermore, Beckett's manuscript records will be paradigmatic not just for the scholarship relating to his canon, but also for elucidating the nature of the handling of literary manuscript during the post-Modernist era. Beckett's liberal dispensation of his literary manuscripts, together with his interesting and notorious habit of poorly-keeping them, together with his bad memory with regard to them,

⁵⁷⁵ Ibid., 42.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid., 45.

⁵⁷⁷ Derrida, *Archive Fever*, 12, cited in Marlene Manoff, "Theories of the Archive from Across the Disciplines," *Libraries and the Academy*, vol. 4, no. 1 (2004): 11.

testifies to a writerly consciousness quite different from that of his classic Modernist predecessors. Beckett's manuscript material will prove to be an invaluable resource for cultural and contextual studies for the postwar literary era when serious European writers now have to grapple both with their modernist legacies and with the influence of impending commercialism, without recourse to aristocratic patronage or romanticist self-isolation. Just like his status within the history of Western literature, the study of Beckett's genetic material as completely transcribed, reconstructed and commented upon by the BDMP, will provide an important linkage between the modern and postmodern literary contexts. The goal of achieving the definitive scholarly edition of Beckett's oeuvre, long desired by Gontarski and many others, may be able to properly be envisioned after the completion of this BDMP as well.

To recap the comparative historical analysis of genetic Joyce, Proust and Beckett criticisms undertaken in this study, the pattern by the time of the 1990s finds that, while genetic Joyce criticism tended to prioritise textual matters over the claims of authorial process, and genetic Proust criticism equalised both claims of textuality and authorship, genetic Beckett criticism has clearly been upholding the matters of authorial presence within archival resources over the tasks of textuality. Notoriously messy and painful textual corruptions and conundrums do not allow direct access to the questions of authorial intention in the case of genetic Joyce criticism, whereas the Parisian theoretical, textual and anti-philological tone has been shaping the critical landscape from the first around Proust. That landscape is ever in a relatively mild competition with the authorial focus of the existing influence of Lansonian literary historicism and the positivist side in genetic criticism

in the case of genetic Proust criticism, according to the latter's characteristic "ease in erudition."⁵⁷⁸ By the time of the 1990s, Lernout seemed more to be a lonely voice in the wilderness pitched against the powerful theoretical legacies of the 1975 Symposium in Paris, and those of Lacan and Derrida in genetic Joyce criticism. Compagnon was, in contrast, flexible and eclectic enough to acknowledge both realms of authorial and readerly intentions, even while invoking the demarcating falsification principle.

But Beckett Studies as germinated primarily in America was eclipsed by such intensive theoretical investments, which had been mainly made in regard to Beckett's modernist predecessors during the 1960s. At the back end of Parisian theoretical influence, and in the staunch tradition of New Criticism, Beckett's art had usually been written about in scholarship based on his published texts by some of the established Joycean scholars alongside other early career ones with a fresh focus, such as Cohn. Beckett's manuscript material had already been looked into in America as it already traveled over and arrived in some of the holding libraries there by the end of the 1950s. But it was mostly at the instigation of Knowlson and Pilling, two British early career scholars fascinated with Beckett at the moment that the study of Beckett's unpublished material was becoming possible, who made archival study of this author the "official" methodology which was to be foregrounded from the 1980s onward. They seem to have been quite critical of the existing New Critical readings of Beckett's works, whose simplicity and liberality they thought did not render justice to the fine aesthetic judgments and learned complexities to be found in Beckett's literature. They tried to originate a good

⁵⁷⁸ Ellison, "Proust and Posterity," 208.

scholarly reading of an author who was both very influential and reticent at the same time, and so an author always attracting over-interpretations and misunderstandings. They worked as kinds of ferrymen between Beckett's serendipitous later life of celebrity and the needs of his audience. Hence this strong authorial focus formed in genetic Beckett criticism. Textual focus was introduced by Gontarski during the 1980s and was enhanced by some Francophone scholars' interest in Beckett's self-translation during the 1990s, but these trends towards interpretation and hermeneutics did not fully enjoy the attention they deserve when the author was alive and very much active, and when establishing the nature of the author's presence in the text had become the crucial priority.

Now that the author has been deceased for some time, that author-centric approach need not be the only thoroughgoing way genetic Beckett criticism develops. As this study has tried to show, this authorial focus is not unique to genetic Beckett criticism, but is shared with other major forums of genetic criticism in different degrees of accentuation. The message that an innovative new generation of genetic Beckett scholars from the 2000s, such as Van Hulle and Caselli, effectively delivers at this juncture of the development of genetic Beckett criticism, is very much a realistic one. It is the still reverberating message which argues that there is no direct access to authorial intention, and even scholars' most "clinically detached" readings of genetic information will all have been tainted by their own preoccupations, interpretations and imagination. As much as anchorage in unpublished material would increase the probability of matching authorial intention with a given interpretation of the published text, those unavoidable preoccupations would offer means which are not necessarily "true" either to the

nature of the archival material, or to thinking about the published final text. It will be of much benefit to genetic Beckett criticism in increasing, developing and publicising the scholarly knowledge about Beckett's works and artistry, that it acknowledges both dimensions of authorial and readerly intentions and manages them together in non-dogmatic, mutually constructive and methodologically flexible ways.

Finally, it is really an encouraging sign for genetic Beckett criticism that, beyond, and partly thanks to, the more general findings by their predecessors, a new generation of genetic Beckett scholars such as Feldman, Van Hulle, Caselli and Nixon is penetrating into the most specifically unique character of Beckett's writing, and establishing its distinctiveness from the writing of all the other now classically-modernist predecessors of his. Van Hulle's introduction to the cognitive poetics of fugue-like decomposition as something to be found more definitely within Beckett's last works is one such achievement which only could have been possible on the basis of previous scholarly spadework and sensible critical guesswork. It marks the fulfillment of Pilling's early aspiration against "the pervasive and misleading tendency in early Beckett criticism that attempted to derive Beckett from Joyce."⁵⁷⁹ On the strength of genetic scholarship, Beckett Studies is currently entering its own unique uncharted territory as Joyce and Proust Studies had previously done. Whereas these other schools have long been flourishing in the realms of narratology and hermeneutics, Van Hulle is already expanding his interests onto genetic narrative poetics and cognitive science,⁵⁸⁰ and he and other scholars such

⁵⁷⁹ Pilling, "Beckett's 'Proust.'"

⁵⁸⁰ Van Hulle, "The Extended Mind and Multiple Drafts: Beckett's Models of the Mind and

as Elizabeth Barry, Laura Salisbury, Ulrika Maude and Jonathan Heron now have just started to delve into the field of psychiatry and neuroscience. This younger generation are seeking to clarify the way Beckett's art uniquely challenges the traditional narratives employed in art and medicine for understanding mental and neurological disorders. From such new extensions of enquiry, we can see that the existing paradigmatic forums of genetic criticism may soon start to wane if they fail to bring up new trends and focuses from within themselves. Beckett Studies is beginning to chart its own unique field, thanks to the genetic scholarship of a generation who are perhaps in some senses less experienced than those working in other areas, but who are more innovative and original.

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