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The Genesis of the Self in Samuel Beckett's *Krapp's Last Tape* (1958)

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he turns from fact of anti-mind alien to mind to thought of anti-mind constituent of mind
- Samuel Beckett, *The Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett. III: Krapp's Last Tape*.

In any case, once the hegemony of skin and skull is usurped, we may be able to see ourselves more truly as creatures of the world
- Andy Clark and David J. Chalmers, 'The Extended Mind'.

For Alex.

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Abbreviations

Abbreviations of manuscripts relating to *Krapp's Last Tape*.

EM	'Été 56' notebook, UoR MS 1227-7-7-1, Beckett International Foundation, University of Reading.
ET1	English Typescript 1, HRC MS SB 4-2-1.
ET2	English Typescript 2, HRC MS SB 4-2-2.
ET3	English Typescript 3, HRC MS SB 4-2-3.
ET4	English Typescript 4, HRC MS SB 4-2-4.
ET5	English Typescript 5, UoR MS 1659.
PPF	Page proofs for <i>Faber and Faber</i> (KLT 1959).

Introduction

On 7 March 1958, Samuel Beckett wrote to Donald McWhinnie: 'I have written a short stage monologue for Magee (definitely non-radio). It involves a tape-recorder with the mechanics of which I am unfamiliar'.¹ The monologue in question was *Krapp's Last Tape*, in which Beckett sought to stage a relation of the human and technology. The phrase 'definitely non-radio' demonstrates the importance Beckett placed on staging the materiality of the body and tape-recorder, in a post-Cartesian exploration of the entanglement of cognition and materiality. This dissertation provides a critical analysis informed by post-structural theories of the self of the genesis of *Krapp*, to explore the writing of cognition into the tape-recorder. This couples the mind and technology in a dialectical relation to engender the self. I therefore argue that Beckett conceived the self as a biomechanical entity, an idea that has ramifications for conceptions of selfhood. This is demonstrated through an analysis of the Été 56 notebook, which contains the earliest version of the play. I further contend that the Été 56 notebook manifests Beckett's subversion of the Manichean duality of mind and body through the human-machine relation, a framework he brought into play in his 1969 Schiller-Theater Werkstatt performance in Berlin. This idea is explicated through an analysis of biological metaphor and of the looping of the technology with Krapp's neurology. Ultimately, my argument extends beyond critical frameworks of the post-structural self to conceptualise Krapp's self as extended into the world, through drawing on cognitive integrationist and extended mind theory.

¹ Samuel Beckett, *The Letters of Samuel Beckett*, eds. George Craig and others, IV vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), III: 1957-1965, p. 115.

Section One Critical Frameworks

Genetic Criticism

Genetic criticism is a European approach to text that took form in the early 1970s. Jed Deppman situates its emergence alongside post-structural philosophy that seeks to theoretically decentre the presence of meaning. He argues that genetic criticism 'grows out of a structuralist and poststructuralist notion of "text" as an infinite play of signs'.² Its development was therefore coextensive with the intellectual shift in critical conceptions of text that arose out of structural linguistics. This shift generated conceptual questions concerning the boundaries of the textual product, and destabilised the notion of a singular, self-contained text. The historical notion of text as the presence of an author's intentional semiotic system in a fixed object thus came under theoretical scrutiny.

Roland Barthes' essays of 1977 questioned the closure of text, augmenting the nexus of theoretical and critical approaches that allowed genetic criticism to emerge in the late twentieth century. He defined text as a 'tissue of quotations' that inter-textually relate the text outside of itself.³ Genetic criticism accordingly focuses on notebooks and manuscripts to analyse the temporal dimension of textual production, complicating the idea of a 'definitive text' through a focus on inter-textual and derivative aspects of textuality. In this post-structural conception, the boundaries between the textual product and the trace of the textual process disintegrate into an inter-textual play of signifiers. In examining 'text' we therefore come to unfamiliar conclusions regarding the ontology of text; our language subsequently becomes twisted and warped. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak notes that Derrida's practice of writing under erasure is the 'mark of this contortion'.⁴ I shall therefore follow Derrida's practice of writing *sous rature*, and place 'text' implicitly under erasure in this dissertation.⁵

The genetics scholar Jean Bellemin-Noël criticises the efforts of critics who worked with manuscripts in the 1950s and 1960s. He argues that they were too preoccupied with the conscious intentions of the author, and that poststructuralist theories of the subject, the sign, and the text undermine their work.⁶ He therefore coined the term 'avant-texte' in 1974 to denote the documents that provide a record of the textual process. Under Bellemin-Noël's theory, these documents form an inter-textual network apart from any consciousness of intention. He further opposes the idea of 'variants' of a text, arguing that such an idea implies a singular text with alternative formulations. Genetic critics generally accept Bellemin-Noël's term 'avant-texte' with different nuances, and the term is used throughout the essays in *Genetic Criticism: Texts and Avant-Textes* that introduced this critical approach to an Anglophone academic audience.⁷ In recent genetic criticism, however, the critic will often select a 'base text' to compare different 'textual variants'.⁸ This allows for a critical diachronic analysis of the text that can be non-teleological.

There is a texture and multiplicity that emerges through engagement with the heterogeneous space of textual processes. This texture is absent from engagement with a 'singular' text in codex form. Louis Hay argues that empirical studies of the traces retained in writer's manuscripts 'texture the discourse, increase the significations and multiply the

² Jed Deppman and others, *Genetic Criticism: Texts and Avant-Textes* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), p. 2.

³ Roland Barthes, 'Death of the Author', in *Image, Music, Text: Essays*, sel. and trans. by Stephen Heath (London: Fontana, 1977), p. 146.

⁴ Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 2016), p. xxxii.

⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 19-28.

⁶ Deppman and others, *Genetic Criticism*, p. 8.

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ See *BDMP*, 'Editorial Principles and Practice', in *Krapp's Last Tape: a digital genetic edition* (The Beckett Digital Manuscript Project, module 3), ed. by Dirk Van Hulle and Vincent Neyt (Brussels: University Press Antwerp, 2015), <<http://www.beckettarchive.org>> [accessed 7 April 2018].

possible readings'.⁹ The text is related through identity and difference in genetic criticism; consequently, multiple readings emerge from this space, proliferating the significations of the text. In his work on the textual genesis of modernist selves, Finn Fordham argues that 'drafts, in their variant and unfinished states, indicate an author in a split condition of undecidability and incompleteness'.¹⁰ The vacillations of paradigmatic and syntagmatic linguistic units that evidence this indecisiveness are retained in the material traces of the *avant-texte*: crossings out, re-drafts and insertions. I would argue that critical attentiveness to these material traces indicates the potentiality of text in process. This potentiality occurs as the text unfolds in a spatiotemporal process of *différance*.

The philosopher Jacques Derrida coined the term *différance* to articulate the condition of linguistic semiotics. He writes that *différance* is the 'becoming-space of time or the becoming time of space'.¹¹ Therefore, the unfolding of language in time becomes the space of writing, and the space of writing becomes time in the unfolding of language. Derrida incorporates the notions of difference and deferral in this neologism. It signifies the concept that meaning emerges from a field of linguistic difference, and is simultaneously deferred through the temporal process of writing. I would argue that the text in process as *différance* therefore gives form to the writer's thought: thought is not anterior to language, but emerges in the space and time of linguistic production. This is a dialectic process, whereby the phenomenology of the unfolding text affects the writer's conceptualisation of the work in progress. Their drafts retain the material trace of this condition and manifest the 'split condition' of the author.

Beckett contributed to the archiving of materials that relate to the Beckett *œuvre*. The Beckett archive at the University of Reading forms a complex inter-textual network that retains the trace of the textual process and the social context of textual production. The plenitude of this archive accordingly affects the perception of Beckett's published works, through providing supplementary material in the form of the *avant-texte*. The Beckett scholar S.E. Gontarski has coined the term 'the grey canon' to denote these writings that the published works implicitly refer to through their inter-textual relations. The 'grey canon' consists of the notes, letters, diaries, criticism, self-translations, drafts, and abandoned works that encroach on the ostensibly complete, enclosed work.¹² Beckett's contribution indicates that he recognised the importance of these documents in scholarly research and interpretation; they allow scholars to trace the diachronic production of text through an analysis of the trace of textual processes.

Further, Beckett's contribution to the research on his *œuvre* demonstrates his engagement with the epistemic shift of the late twentieth century in European philosophy and literary criticism. This shift, as stated above, was toward the theories of French poststructuralist philosophers and the practice of genetic criticism. However, the political implication of this archiving process is that materials are placed in the confines of an institution, rather than being widely accessible to the public. Derrida's argument of the drives in *Archive Fever* (1995), in addition, provides a psychoanalytic framework for interpreting this archiving impulse. Derrida argues that archive fever - a cathexis of the archiving impulse - is associated with Freud's death drive in its repetitive structure:

[I]f there is no archive without consignment in an *external place* which assures the possibility of memorization, of repetition, of reproduction, or of reimpression, then we

⁹ Louis Hay, 'Does "Text" Exist?', *Studies in Bibliography*, 41 (1988), 64-76 (p. 69).

¹⁰ Finn Fordham, *I do I undo I redo: The Textual Genesis of Modernist Selves in Hopkins, Yeats, Conrad, Forster, Joyce, and Woolf* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), p. 25.

¹¹ Jacques Derrida, 'Différance', in *Margins of Philosophy*, trans. by Alan Bass (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1982), pp. 1-27 (p. 13).

¹² Quoted in Dirk Van Hulle, 'Introduction: A Beckett Continuum', in *The New Cambridge Companion to Samuel Beckett*, ed. by Dirk Van Hulle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. xvii-xxvi (p.xvii).

must remember that repetition itself, the logic of repetition, indeed the repetition compulsion, remains, according to Freud, indissociable from the death drive.¹³

This relates to Hannah Arendt's notion of *homo faber*: the compulsion to create material things 'whose stability will endure and outlast the ever-changing movement of [human] lives and actions'.¹⁴ Therefore, Beckett's contribution to the archive is not only to provide resources for the 'loutishness of learning', but a symptom of the psychological structure of the death drive.¹⁵ The criticism that has emerged from engagement with these archived materials, moreover, has been made accessible in different forms. Beckett's works have been revised and republished by *Faber and Faber* (2009-) through reference to archival resources, and the editors of each work provide an introduction that discusses the *avant-texte*.¹⁶

James Knowlson started the Beckett archive at the University of Reading in 1971. In his editor's note to the facsimile editions of the theatrical notebooks, he writes: 'it is a misconception to think that [Beckett] believed he or anyone else could 'fix' his plays'.¹⁷ This argument implies that Beckett did not see texts as stable, unified objects that an author or director could semantically fix. However, scholars are here presented with a critical paradox. Beckett revised the contract that licenses the performance of his plays in the 1980s to include a clause that blocks deviation from the script or stage directions. This decision ostensibly contradicts Knowlson's argument. Nonetheless, I interpret this paradox through defining the published dramatic work as a blueprint for performance. I would argue that Beckett considered this the space within which the proliferation of meaning and interpretation arises. In this conceptualisation, the work is an extensive play of signifiers: it is reinterpretable and always in the process of re-signification through its semiotic multiplicity and inter-textuality.

The publication of Beckett's letters (2009-) and the *Beckett Digital Manuscript Project* (*BDMP*) (2011-) further invigorates this play of the Beckett *œuvre*. The *BDMP* is an internet resource that provides access to a digital facsimile of Beckett's text, and an extensive analysis of the composition process to facilitate interpretation.¹⁸ Through providing a searchable, digital facsimile of the *avant-texte*, the *BDMP* expands on the codex facsimile and transcript of T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* (1971), and the internet concordances of James Joyce's work of a decade ago. The publication of the 'grey canon' in different forms provides a plethora of information with which to re-interpret the published works, and this undergraduate dissertation makes extensive use of multiple resources. My research would thus have been difficult to carry out a decade ago, due to funding and time restrictions. This reveals a shift in the work that scholars can produce with digital resources. The digitalising of Beckett's manuscripts of *Krapp* (2015) allows this dissertation to provide a genetic analysis of the play informed by critical approaches to the self and technology.

The Self and Technology

In *Difference and Repetition* (1968), Gilles Deleuze offers the following poststructuralist critique of identity: 'we must always contemplate something else in order to be filled with an

¹³ Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. by Eric Prenowitz (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 11-12

¹⁴ Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (London: University of Chicago Press, 1998), p. 173.

¹⁵ Samuel Beckett, *The Collected Poems of Samuel Beckett*, ed. by Seán Lawlor and John Pilling (London: Faber and Faber, 2012), p. 55.

¹⁶ See, for example, Samuel Beckett, *The Unnameable* (London: Faber and Faber, 2010).

¹⁷ James Knowlson, 'General Editor's Note', in *The Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett*, ed. by James Knowlson, IV vols. (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), III: *Krapp's Last Tape* pp. ix-x (p. ix).

¹⁸ See *BDMP*, 'Editorial Principles and Practice', <<http://www.beckettarchive.org>> [accessed 7 April 2018].

image of ourselves'.¹⁹ This critique of self-presence accords with the intellectual shift that is discussed above. European post-structural theories deconstruct the idea of an essential self; this deconstruction results in a concept of the self as an other that emerges in interaction. This proposition argues that the self takes its form through the things of the world. The self thus manifests in the form of something other than its own being, in opposition to the notion of a formed, stable ontological entity prior to its emergence in the form of things. In line with this theory, I argue that the ontological structure of the self emerges from within the other-than-self.

In this post-structural thought, objects in the world provide a form to the self I take myself to be. This occurs through a psychical introjection of the other-than-self. The self is thus ideated as a fluctuating entity that emerges structurally from within something other than itself, in the spatiotemporal field of self-articulation. Michel Foucault's definition of discourse as 'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak' agrees with this approach to the self.²⁰ He argues that selfhood is formed through the semiotic structures that govern its articulation in discourse. In writing the self, the writer is therefore in the process of forming an unstable self through the re-introjection of writing in process. In the writing process, the self is conceived as a spatiotemporal fluctuation, its form affected by the phenomenology and reworking of the object through which it manifests as a self.

Fordham adopts this post-structural critical approach to study the textuality of modernist selves. He argues that attention to the writing process nuances critical understandings of the self in literary texts. He proposes the following thesis:

[B]ecause of the variety of its formations, the reach of its referentiality, the simplicity of its iterability, the sophistication of its manipulability – writing is the primary technology in the formation of an identity.²¹

Fordham's argument is that a critical approach to the textual process is integral to understanding the modernist self from a postmodernist perspective. He argues that writing brings the form of a self into the world. The introjection of this other-than-self of writing gives the self a form through which to contemplate itself. Critically, Fordham uses Roland Barthes' idea of 'ergography'. This allows Fordham to articulate the importance of genetic criticism in conceptualising the writer's process of thinking through writing to formulate the self. Barthes states that 'what needs to be done is to trace not the biography of a writer, but rather what might be called the writing of his work, a sort of ergography'.²² This is an appeal for a critical approach that studies the *avant-texte* to articulate the shifting self of a writer or protagonist. Further, this task demands a critical approach to analyse the *différance* of the linguistic semiotics that govern a particular self in text.

Steven Connor argues that technological machines are a *tehknē* through which the self can be imagined. In *Dream Machines* (2017), he contends that the writing of technology (technography) is always a writing of the self (*psychotechnography*). Therefore, he puts forward the idea that humans perceive the self through the mediation of machines in a catachrestic process, in which self-relation is constituted through a series of substitutions of the self. He articulates his central thesis thus: 'the psyche comes between machines and writing; machines come between the psyche and its writing'.²³ This triadic relation of psyche, machines, and writing indicates that in Connor's thought the shaping of the self occurs through

¹⁹ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. by Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp. 74-75.

²⁰ Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. by A. M. Sheridan Smith (London: Routledge, 1972), p. 49.

²¹ Fordham, *I do I undo I redo*, p. 16.

²² Quoted in Fordham, *I do I undo I redo*, p. 24.

²³ Steven Connor, 'Psychotechnographies', in *Dream Machines* (London: Open Humanities Press, 2017), pp. 7-24 (p. 21).

the creative process of imagining machines and their workings. Therefore, through writing about machines the writer conceptualises the psyche, and through writing about the psyche the writer conceptualises machines. This theory further suggests that the use of metaphors of machines to linguistically formulate the workings of cognition operate to give a form to our self and cognition. These metaphors thus work to mediate self-relation. As Connor states: 'there are cogs in cogitation'.²⁴ Following this logic, there is no *tekhne* that can allow for the *literal* mediation of the self to the self.

This dissertation extends these arguments through integrating them with those of extended mind theory. In my reading, Fordham's argument of the self suggests the coupling of the cognitive resources of the biological organism with the material traces of writing. Furthermore, Connor's triadic relation of psyche, machines and writing problematises the Cartesian stable boundary between inside and outside of the self. This reading situates Fordham and Connor in relation to cognitive integrationist theory, which argues that the mind is hybrid and integrated. The philosopher Richard Menary explains:

[T]he integration of neural and external processes leads us to understand cognition and the mind as: *hybrid* - involving both neural and external processes - and *integrated* - neural and external processes coordinate with one another in the completion of cognitive tasks.²⁵

I therefore argue that the act of inscribing or reading is a process that involves neurological processes and graphic materiality in an integrated system of the self in process: the emergence of the self through the other-than-self.

The argument that a malleable external environment gives form to the self is expanded by the notion of the extended mind. The philosophers Andy Clark and David Chalmers argue that the mind is neither inside nor outside of the skin and skull, but instead a 'coupled system' of 'biological organism and external resources'.²⁶ They describe a process whereby cognition is the making present of information to consciousness. In this process, 'the relevant parts of the world' that manifest the information are 'in the loop' that constitutes an individual mind.²⁷ Andy Clark extends this argument through the contention that bodily actions implement representational and computational operations in addition to neurological processes. He explains that 'the difference is just that the operations are realised not in the neural system alone but in the whole embodied system located in the world'.²⁸ Cognitive processes are therefore conceptualised as making use of materiality beyond the boundaries of consciousness. This extends the mind into the world to materially realise certain operations.

The etymology of 'cognition' makes clear the relevance of this theory to my argument. The word 'cognition' is from the Latin *cognōscere*, which denotes a getting to know.²⁹ Cognition of the self can consequently be expressed as a getting to know the self, or the process of acquiring knowledge of the self. I extend the post-structural theory of the self as an introjected form that is other-than-self through extended mind theory. My contention is that the self is a coupling of the biological organism and the external world, in a dialectic of neural processes and material forms. This engenders the presence to consciousness of a conceived self. The self is not bound within the confines of corporality, but spreads into the world and is

²⁴ Ibid., p. 11.

²⁵ Richard Menary, 'Writing as thinking', *Language Sciences*, 29:1 (2007), 621-632 (p. 627).

²⁶ Andy Clark and David J. Chalmers, 'The Extended Mind', in *The Extended Mind*, ed. by Richard Menary (Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2010), pp. 27-42 (p. 39).

²⁷ Ibid., p. 29.

²⁸ Andy Clark, *Supersizing the Mind: Embodiment, Action, and Cognitive Extension* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 14.

²⁹ *Oxford English Dictionary*, (Oxford University Press, 2010) <<http://www.oed.com>> [accessed 7 January 2018].

the things of the world. I therefore argue that Krapp's self extends into the world. He manipulates material objects to acquire knowledge of the other-than-self he himself is. Beckett phrases it thus in his director's notebook: '[Krapp] turns from fact of anti-mind alien to mind to thought of anti-mind constituent of mind'.³⁰

³⁰ Samuel Beckett, *The Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett*, ed. James Knowlson, IV vols. (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), III: *Krapp's Last Tape*, p. 141.

Section Two *Krapp's Last Tape* (1958)

In January 1958, Samuel Beckett went to the BBC studios in Paris to hear the recordings of Patrick Magee reading extracts of *Molloy* (1951).³¹ There he listened to the disembodied voice reading his words, while watching the tape-recorder process the material inscription of the acoustic signal. Beckett would have seen spools of archived tape in the studio, which contained materially inscribed speech with the potential to be made acoustically present through audio technology. Knowlson and others have considered this moment as formative in the conception of *Krapp*.³² However, the role of the tape-recorder in relation to post-structural theories of the self that complicate the boundaries between subject and object has been largely neglected. Typical considerations of the play have read the tape-recorder as a metaphor for memory and cognition: Knowlson describes it as a 'taped memory-bank', and Ruby Cohn reads it as a 'stage metaphor for time past'.³³ This section seeks to reassess the importance Beckett placed on staging the materiality of the body and tape-recorder in this post-Cartesian exploration of the entanglement of the self, cognition, and materiality.

Psychotechnography

Beckett's visit to the BBC studios in Paris catalysed in his imagination the conception of *Krapp*. His correspondence indicates that this visit was the first time he saw a tape-recorder in operation, a sophisticated technology of the time that forms the central device of his play. Writing to Con Leventhal on the 20 January 1958, Beckett states: 'I heard the tapes in the BBC studio in Paris [...] I have been trying to write another radio text for the [BBC's Third Programme], but with no success'.³⁴ Beckett had found it difficult to write another radio play after *All That Fall* (1957); in early 1958, he was struggling with the composition of *Embers* (1959). He was, however, able to conceive of a re-conceptualization of the self through his contact with the technological apparatus in operation. The ostensibly disembodied voice of Magee was inscribed in the materiality of the tape and tape-recorder, which suggests imaginative modalities in which to explore the philosophical hypothesis of Cartesian duality. Dirk Van Hulle argues that Beckett's approach to cognition was post-Cartesian.³⁵ I argue further that Beckett's approach to the self is post-structural. In *Krapp*, the self is engendered through an entanglement of materiality and mind, as opposed to a self-reflecting, essential entity. This extends Descartes' hypothesis, to reflect upon the notion of an embodied and material form of the self.

The Été 56 notebook held at the University of Reading contains manuscript notes that represent the earliest versions of *Krapp*.³⁶ Gontarski has observed that although Beckett referred to this notebook as a 'first draft', the manuscript notes represent a number of stages

³¹ James Knowlson, *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett* (London: Bloomsbury, 1997), p. 444.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ James Knowlson, 'Krapp's Last Tape: the evolution of a play, 1958-75', *Journal of Beckett Studies*, 1 (1976), also available at <<http://tinyurl.com/5rf3ar3>> [accessed 20 October 2016]; Ruby Cohn, *Back to Beckett* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976), p. 165.

³⁴ Quoted in Dirk Van Hulle, *The Making of Samuel Beckett's Krapp's Last Tape/ La Dernière Bande* (Brussels: University Antwerp Press, 2015), p. 145.

³⁵ Dirk Van Hulle, *The Making of Samuel Beckett's Krapp's Last Tape*, p. 141.

³⁶ 'Été 56' notebook, UoR MS 1227-7-7-1, Beckett International Foundation, University of Reading. For the digital facsimile, see MS 1227-7-7-1 (EM) in *Krapp's Last Tape: a digital genetic edition*, <<http://www.beckettarchive.org>> [accessed 7 April 2018].

in the play's development.³⁷ The editors of the genetic edition of *Krapp* agree with this interpretation, also identifying different versions of the play in the notebook.³⁸ They determine four *versions* of the work in this textual document, a *version* defined with reference to Peter Shillingsburg as 'one specific form of the work - the one the author intended at some particular moment in time'.³⁹ The notebook therefore retains the trace of Beckett's unfolding thoughts as they shift and are revised as material inscriptions on the page.

To identify a revision to the lexical item 'switch', that is the subject of this subsection, a syntactic alignment of the different versions proves useful:

starts up machine (EM, 12r)
switches it on (EM, 11v)
switches it on (ET1, 1)

This moment is taken from the start of the play, when Krapp first switches on the tape-recorder after identifying 'Box ... three ... spool ... five' (EM, 11r). The use of the term 'starts up' in the first version, before its revision in the second, reflects Beckett's unfamiliarity with the operational terminology of a tape-recorder. The phrase 'starts up' denotes a setting in motion, as opposed to the dichotomous on/off of tape recording technology. Furthermore, the phrase 'starts up' has its technological signification temporally situated in the nineteenth century. The tenor of this phrase in collocation with 'machine' is 'to set in operation' or 'to cause to begin to function or operate', usually in reference to mechanical technologies that originated in the early Victorian period.⁴⁰ Moreover, the idea of setting in motion is associated with early technological sound reproduction through the use of gramophones and record players. The proliferation of the term 'switch' in the early twentieth century, in contrast, testifies to a condition of modernity, in which transitions between states were made more thinkable due to an epistemic shift in conceptualisations of technology; Steven Connor notes that the idea of switching on and off made 'absolute transitions easy and familiar'.⁴¹ Significantly, this terminology was used in the use of radios, televisions, and tape-recorders, with computer systems representing the postmodern condition of switching through the flexibility of binary code. This epistemological change, in which transitions between states became more thinkable, affects our understanding of what a self is, in Connor's idea of psychotechnography. Beckett's revision to 'switch' is accordingly coextensive with revisions to the play that have ramifications for conceptualisations of the self.

Throughout the second version of the play, Krapp 'broods' on particular moments, as when he 'stops the machine, broods' (EM, 15r) on the memory of the 'girl in a shabby green coat, on a railway-station platform' (EM, 15r). Beckett further revises the play so that Krapp 'remains motionless' (PPF, 4r) or 'remains a moment motionless' (PPF, 4r) at particular moments, 'drowned in dreams' (PPF, 8r). These moments of silent, melancholic reflection on the failure of his artistic career and relationships counterpoise certain moments of frustration that Beckett coextensively introduces. For example, Krapp becomes impatient with the vision that his 39-year-old self relates, and therefore 'switches xxx off machine, winds tape forward, switches on again' (EM, 17r) and 'curses' (EM, 17r) at the continuation of the vision, and then 'curses louder' (EM, 17r). In revising the play in typescript form, Beckett adds the adverb 'impatiently' (ET1, 2r) and considers the adverb 'violently' (ET2, 4r) to describe the winding. Therefore, the manuscript revisions and drafts written after the incorporation of the notion of

³⁷ S. E. Gontarski, 'Crapp's First Tapes: Beckett's Manuscript Revisions of Krapp's Last Tape', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 6:1 (1977), 61-68 (p. 62).

³⁸ See *BDMP*, 'Editorial Principles and Practice', <<http://www.beckettarchive.org>> [accessed 7 April 2018].

³⁹ Quoted in *BDMP*, 'Editorial Principles and Practice', <<http://www.beckettarchive.org>> [accessed 7 April 2018].

⁴⁰ *OED*.

⁴¹ Steven Connor, *Beckett, Modernism and the Material Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 72.

switching evince the idea of a biomechanical self that switches between states. Krapp's response to the recordings is processed neurologically, and the automatic bodily reaction is entangled with the emotional response, with Krapp either motionless or responding with an impatient gesture and curse. This has led N. Katherine Hayles to argue that it is 'as if he too were a machine with a binary on-off switch'.⁴² Beckett thus re-imagines the self as switching between the states of automatic irritability and motionless reflection, through adapting himself to use the tape-recorder. This accords with Connor's notion of psychotechnography, in which *tehnē* indicates ways of imagining the form of the self through the other-than-self of machines.

Dualities

Scholars often note Beckett's identification of the symbolic critique of Manichean ethics within *Krapp* in his director's notebook of 1969.⁴³ This is a notebook he kept while directing the Schiller-Theater Werkstatt performance in Berlin. In this document, he lists numerous allusions to the interrelations of light and dark in the play under the title 'Mani'. This is a reference to the Persian founder of the gnostic religion Manichaeism.⁴⁴ One of Beckett's sources for the Manichean system was an article in the eleventh edition of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, which he had in his personal library.⁴⁵ It contains reading traces on the article 'Manichaeism' in the form of underlining, indicating this as a source text.⁴⁶ This article emphasises the dualistic theology of Manichaeism in late antiquity: 'the Manichean system is one of consistent, uncompromising dualism, in the form of a fantastic philosophy of nature'.⁴⁷ Knowlson notes that Beckett wrote into the play a consistent attempt 'to mingle the light and the dark, expressing Krapp's desire to reconcile and promote a union between sense and spirit'.⁴⁸ This notion of the interrelationship of light and dark that Beckett emphasised in his 1969 production is further explored by Dougald McMillan and Martha Fehsenfeld. They note that 'the basic elements of the Manichean ethics' were already present in the Été 56 notebook.⁴⁹ An overlooked and critical point, however, is that Krapp is also preoccupied with human embodiment in a manner related to Manichaeism and Cartesian duality, to which the genesis of the play testifies.

In the Été 56 notebook, Beckett wrote, 'empty the bottle now and get to bed. Finish this vomit tomorrow. Or leave it at that' (EM, 19r). This occurs when Krapp becomes frustrated with himself, berating his effort to go on with the recording. The lexical unit 'vomit' goes through several alterations that can be traced through a syntactic alignment of the different versions:

Finish this vomit tomorrow (EM, 19r)
 Finish this vomit^{puke} tomorrow?. (ET1, 3r)

⁴² N. Katherine Hayles, 'Voices Out of Body: Audiotape and the Production of Subjectivity', in *Sound States: Innovative Poetics and Acoustical Technologies*, ed. by Adalaide Morris (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), pp. 74-96 (p. 81).

⁴³ See Sue Wilson, 'Krapp's Last Tape and the Mania in Manichaeism', *Samuel Beckett today/aujourd'hui*, 12:1 2002, 131-144.

⁴⁴ Beckett, *The Theatrical Notebooks of Samuel Beckett*, III: *Krapp's Last Tape*, p. 133.

⁴⁵ See 'Beckett Digital Library', <<http://www.beckettarchive.org>>.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Adolf Harnack and Frederic Cornwallis Conybeare, 'Manichaeism', in *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., vol. 17 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910), pp. 572-78 (p. 573). Another of Beckett's source texts was St. Augustine of Hippo's *Confessions*, in which St. Augustine confesses his sins as a Manichaeist. Beckett made extensive notes on this text in the '*Dream*' Notebook. See Samuel Beckett, *Beckett's 'Dream' Notebook*, ed. by John Pilling (Reading: Beckett International Foundation, 1999).

⁴⁸ James Knowlson, *Light and Darkness in the Theatre of Samuel Beckett* (London: Turret Books, 1972), p. 22.

⁴⁹ Dougald McMillan and Martha Fehsenfeld, *Beckett in the Theatre* (London: John Calder, 1988), p. 243.

Finish this pukx^{0½} tomorrow. (ET2, 5r)
 Finish this puke^{drivel} in the morning. (ET4, 6r)

This vacillation shows a hesitancy in Beckett's thought process of the form of the metaphor for Krapp's speech. The decisive ejection of 'vomit', I would argue, is too forceful for the subjectivity of Krapp, closer to the *logorrhoea* of *Not I* (1972), in which mouth's relation to words is one of alienation.⁵⁰ Beckett decides, therefore, on the noun 'drivel', drawing on its signification of nonsense, and the more infrequent meaning of 'spittle flowing from the mouth'.⁵¹ Beckett's source article for Manichean theology states: 'of course men's bodies as well as the souls of the unsaved [...] fall under the sway of the powers of darkness'.⁵² The body in Manichean epistemology is accordingly an abject entity that must be subdued and transcended by the self, a self which is related to language as a semiotic system that ostensibly transcends materiality. Beckett, however, entangles the symbolic medium of language with the biological aspect of embodiment, intimating the notion that the abject bodily incarnation is constituent of the self in *Krapp*. The association of words with bodily ejections undermines the Manichean injunction to separate knowledge and the self from embodiment, as knowledge and the self are inseparable from language. Beckett inscribes words in a metaphor of biological tenor that couples the semiotics of the self and materiality in an inseparable ontology. The 'vomit', 'puke', or 'drivel' that are Krapp's words are constitutive of his identity, as they form the semiotic structure through which Krapp emerges as a self. The abject darkness of Krapp's embodiment and the materiality of language therefore manifest his self through the other-than-self.

Krapp is an exile from the Manichean system, unable to transcend materiality which clings in all its abjectness. He mingles light and dark, body and mind: 'I love to get up and move about in [the darkness], then back here to ... [*hesitates*] ... me. [*pause.*] Krapp' (PPF, 5r). Julia Kristeva writes of the exile:

[N]ecessarily dichotomous, somewhat Manichean, he divides, excludes, and without, properly speaking, wishing to know his abjections is not at all unaware of them. Often, moreover, he includes himself among them, thus casting within himself the scalpel that carries out his separations.⁵³

Krapp's 'vision', his realisation that 'the dark I have always struggled to keep under' (PPF, 7r) manifests the self, implies the notion of the exile always attempting to divide and exclude, but actually 'includ[ing] himself among' the thing he attempts to reject. He therefore comes to the realisation that body and mind, self and other are entangled. Beckett utilises the device of the tape-recorder to couple the biological Krapp with the mechanical device, casting the tape-recorder within the realm of Krapp's selfhood as a biomechanical self. The writing of the play therefore allowed Beckett to formulate an embodied, material notion of the self, despite Western philosophical hypotheses attempting to conceive of the self as anterior to material semiotic structures. This captures an epistemological shift identified by Ulrika Maude. She argues that Darwinian thought, neurology and psychoanalysis 'pointed to a biomechanical rather than a conceptual understanding of the self'.⁵⁴ The self was thus understood to be materially realised, as opposed to an internal Cartesian cogito. Historicising my reading thus articulates the wider intellectual shift that Beckett wrote within.

⁵⁰ Samuel Beckett, 'Not I', in *Complete Dramatic Works* (London: Faber and Faber, 2006), pp. 373-383.

⁵¹ *OED*.

⁵² Harnack and Conybeare, 'Manichaeism', p. 574.

⁵³ Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), p. 8.

⁵⁴ Ulrika Maude, 'Beckett, Body and Mind', in *The New Cambridge Companion to Samuel Beckett*, ed. by Dirk Van Hulle (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), pp. 170-184 (p. 183).

Krapp's Extended Self

Joseph Anderton, in his monograph on the creaturely life of the Beckettian protagonist, states that 'Beckett's depiction of the mind often involves equalising the levels between the cerebral and the terrestrial'.⁵⁵ The argument throughout this dissertation has been that the equalising of these levels leads to an entanglement of the self and other that cannot be separated without a loss of the self. This argument is present in many recent critical studies and papers on Beckett's work. Julie Bates argues that the Beckettian protagonist's 'possessions remain irreducibly their material selves', and David Pattie observes that 'the system in which [Krapp] is trapped is a system that the protagonist himself creates'.⁵⁶ Krapp constitutes his selfhood within a system that ensnares him in an ineluctable material ontology, and the possession of the tapes and recorder constitute his self through giving form to that self.

Krapp manipulates the external environment to preserve memories in the form of recorded tapes. This allows for tapes to be played, so that particular memories are made available to consciousness. Menary argues: 'human memory is no longer restricted to the boundaries of the body, but is now extended by external memory systems'.⁵⁷ The repeatability of these 'external memory systems' constitute a material aspect of the mind that works in a dialectical relation with the neurological capacities of the biological brain. The tapes and writing of thoughts in the play are 'external memory systems' for Krapp. Beckett's writing of the play evidences a moment at which a shift occurs in his thinking through the workings of the mind:

Sat by the fire ^{looking into the fire with closed eyes} turning over in my mind winnowing , out as it went separating the grain from the chaff. Jotted down a few notes, on the back of an envelope. (EM, 14r)

These two syntactic units are taken from the section when Krapp first plays the tape, and his 39-year-old self is relating how he has spent his birthday. In the Été 56 notebook, there is a deletion of 'turning over in my mind'. Instead, the suggestion of considering the important things in life is given in the metaphor 'separating the grain from the chaff'. The deletion of the prepositional phrase 'in my mind' indicates the undermining of the inside/outside dichotomy of Cartesian philosophy. Moreover, the use of the metaphor 'separating the grain from the chaff' gives material form to thought. This indicates that Krapp thinks through material things to determine the meaning of his life. Beckett thus extends Krapp's thinking into the world, allowing material objects to acquire semiotic potential. This allows them to be looped with neurology to operate cognition. In this play, I contend, there is no cognition without the material things of the world in the loop. Therefore there is no self without the material things of the world, as cognition is a getting to know the other-than-self a self is.

Furthermore, Krapp jots down some notes on a piece of paper, in order to retain a material form of a particular thought. This is similar to the recording of voice to retain a graphic inscription of a particular thought. At the moment when the 39-year-old Krapp determines what he has 'chiefly to record', Beckett writes in the Été 56 notebook:

This, is what I have I realized in the Winehouse, is what I have chiefly to record this evening against the day when all my work is ^{will be} done and perhaps no place in my ^{place}

⁵⁵ Joseph Anderton, *Beckett's Creatures: Art of Failure after the Holocaust* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2016), p. 136.

⁵⁶ Julie Bates, *Beckett's Art of Salvage: Writing and the Material Imagination, 1932-1987* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), p. 194; David Pattie, "'At me too someone is looking...': Power Structures and Coercion in Beckett's Theatre', Jouer Beckett / Performing Beckett Symposium, University of London, London, 12 October 2017. Transcribed from an audio recording.

⁵⁷ Menary, 'Writing as thinking', p. 625.

left in my memory for^{of} the wonder that made it possible place left in my memory, and
no thankfulness for the wonder that made it possible. (EM, 16r)

The verb 'record' refers to the recording function of the tape-recorder to create the record that retains the trace of a sensory impression as a memory. It therefore captures the notion of the record of a trace that is able to become conscious through its iterability as a graphic or neurological inscription. Moreover, the crossings out of 'no place in my memory' indicate an indecisiveness over its inclusion in the play. Its inclusion corroborates the notion that external resources are utilised to retain information. The deterioration of the body and its neurological resources is inevitable, and so Krapp demands a material form in which to preserve a trace of the self. Krapp has an archival compulsion that is of the form of Arendt's *homo faber* or Derrida's *archive fever*: an attempt to mitigate against the destruction of information and the fluctuation of human life. The tape-recorder is thus an aspect of his cognition. It retains memories for him to recall and make present through the repeatability of audio technology. This allows extended cognition to make Krapp known to himself: the material selves give form to the self Krapp is, through the reintroduction of graphically inscribed acoustic signals.

Conclusion

There has been particular critical oversight of Beckett's technological imagination, despite recent studies of Beckett's 'material imagination'. This dissertation has argued that a framework of psychotechnography supplemented by extended mind theory allows for a genetic analysis of *Krapp's Last Tape* that elicits interpretations of the self informed by the workings of technology. I have paid particular attention to the materiality of the tape-recorder: graphic inscriptions, switches, and the material form. This provides productive directions for the future of Beckett studies, particularly through a focus on the implications that material objects have on Beckett's *œuvre*.⁵⁸

The research that informs this dissertation generated many questions regarding this area of scholarship. My future research, therefore, will explore the significance of the tape-recorder manual sent to Beckett by McWhinnie on Beckett's technological imagination.⁵⁹ I shall also attend to a page of the Été 56 notebook that indicates the model of the tape-recorder, the E.M.I L2B, which was used in the first performance at the Royal Court Theatre in 1958. Further research on this model will explore the significance of this recorder and others on Beckett's technological imagination. The historicisation of these material objects is situated within a shift in Beckett studies towards analysing Beckett's material imagination.⁶⁰ This dissertation and the future research it has generated thus provides a significant critical intervention into Beckett scholarship.

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⁵⁸ I shall share insights from this dissertation with the global community of Beckett scholars in my paper 'The psychotechnographic genesis of *Krapp's Last Tape*' at two international conferences: Historicizing Modernism / Modernist Archives, University of York, and Samuel Beckett and Technology, Charles University, Prague.

⁵⁹ McWhinnie to Beckett, 14 March 1958, in 'Samuel Beckett, Scriptwriter: 1953-1962', BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham.

⁶⁰ My MPhil dissertation at the University of Cambridge (2018-2019) will explore the directorial approach of Samuel Beckett, to examine the strategies he used to complicate the phenomenology of theatrical objects.

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