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Samuel Beckett's 'The North'

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Samuel Beckett's *The North*

In 2012, the Beckett International Foundation at the University of Reading acquired a small but rather interesting manuscript cluster entitled 'The North', a short passage extracted and translated from *Le Dépeupleur* and published by the Enitharmon Press in 1973. The documents were a part of the collection of the Enitharmon Press' publisher, Alan Clodd, which also included an early draft of *Words and Music*, three pages of Beckett's first attempt at translating *Watt* into French (the fourth page went missing during the Beckett Exhibition in Reading in 1971), and other items.[1] Consisting of two manuscript pages, a typescript with manuscript corrections, the galley proofs as well as the proof of the title page, this small collection gives a fascinating insight into Beckett's writing and translation processes, his attitude toward *livres d'artiste* as well as his increasing tendency to collaborate with people he trusted.

At the centre of this story is Alan Clodd, a Dublin-born publisher who founded the Enitharmon Press in London in 1967 and ran it until his retirement from publishing in 1987. Eschewing commercialism and prevailing fashions, Clodd established Enitharmon as an independent press focusing on artists' books, literary editions and artworks. As a true bibliophile, Clodd

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demanded high standards in every aspect of book production. At the heart of the press' list is an eclectic and wide-ranging list of poetical works, with a catalogue that includes writers such as Kathleen Raine, U. A. Fanthorpe, Geoffrey Hill, Simon Armitage and Paul Muldoon, as well as contemporary avant-garde poets such as Keston Sutherland. However, Enitharmon has also published a wide range of prose works and has since its inception specialised in limited-edition *livres d'artiste* (in more recent times collaborating, for example, with artists such as Peter Blake, Jim Dine and Duane Michals).

Alongside his work as a publisher, Clodd was also a book collector and dealer, and his personal library was, in the words of his successor at the Enitharmon Press, Stephen Stuart-Smith, 'breathtaking' (Stuart-Smith, 2002). Clodd concentrated in his collecting not only on first editions but also on unusual association copies, manuscripts and ephemera. The collection contained publications by canonical writers of the Victorian and Edwardian periods and twentieth-century authors, yet also bibliographic curiosities and anomalies. Particular favourites were the First World War poets, Joyce, Heaney, and Beckett. Indeed, Clodd's collection – numbering roughly 800 items, assembled over a period of nearly four decades, and now at the National Library of Ireland – contains virtually all of Beckett's works in first edition form, along with proof copies, galley proofs and a few manuscripts. Moreover, many of them are signed; Clodd would bring the works to Paris and leave them at the Editions de Minuit for Beckett to inscribe. It is not clear how Clodd met Beckett in the first place, but the first surviving letter from Beckett is dated 21 November 1961.

The idea of publishing a fragment of *Le Dépeupleur* in English seems to have originated between 1969 and 1970, by which time four other extracts from this long-unfinished French text had been or were about to be published independently, mostly as artists' books.[2] In a letter of 11 February 1969, presumably in reply to Clodd's query, Beckett explained that one of them, *L'Issue*, had come out in George Visat's limited edition illustrated with engravings by Avigdor Arikha (UoR JEK A/2/56).[3] While Beckett did not propose a specific passage for Clodd's own limited edition until 22 April 1971, he had discussed the matter with John Calder towards the end of 1970, receiving the publisher's

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preliminary permission (Beckett to Clodd, 9 November 1970; see also Clodd to Calder, 28 April 1971). Due to his failing eyesight and imminent cataract operations, however, the translation of what would become *The North* had to be postponed until mid-1971. Setting aside a little more than a month to deliver the English text (Beckett to Clodd, 22 April 1971), Beckett only succeeded in getting a first draft done towards the end of June (Beckett to Clodd, 25 June 1971). He continued working on it for another month, eventually producing a typescript from a heavily revised manuscript, copies of which were sent to both Clodd and Calder & Boyars in late July (Beckett to Clodd, 20 July 1971).[4] Rather remarkably, this short fragment, centred around a striking image of a vanquished woman, was the very first part of *Le Dépeupleur* to be translated into English by Beckett.

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The manuscript of *The North* is contained on a single A4-sized leaf, inscribed on both sides in black ink, and features numerous deletions and corrections. Further emendations within the text and in the margins are made with blue ink, presumably at a later stage of the manuscript's revision following Beckett's return to Paris from Santa Margherita in July 1971 (see Beckett to Clodd, 25 June 1971). This 750-word extract forms the penultimate paragraph of *Le Dépeupleur*, and comprises the most detailed description of a single figure within a cylinder populated by 'two hundred bodies in all round numbers' (Beckett, 2010b, 103). Unlike the remainder of Beckett's text detailing the crippling living conditions of the 'little people of searchers' (120) and documenting their strange ways, *The North* brings the bodily to the focus of the narrator, the reader and the searchers alike. Similar to the earlier depictions of an austere 'place, then someone in it, that again' (73) in *All Strange Away* and *Imagination Dead Imagine* (written 1964–65), and in a more abstract form in *Bing* (1966), it presents a passive bare body as an object for close observation. The woman, like the rest of Beckett's vanquished, is devoid of all agency and is therefore at the disposal of the searchers who can manipulate her body freely in the name of the quest: 'The hair of the woman vanquished has thus many a time been gathered up and drawn back and the

head raised and the face laid bare and all the front of the body down to the crutch' (119). Unlike in the preceding texts, where the nude bodies are rearranged at the mere call of the narrator's imagination and thus read as a series of images, the inspection here is carried out by the 'third party', still forming a part of the narrative. If, in Beckett's words, '"Bing" may be regarded as the result or miniaturization of *Le Dépeupleur* abandoned because of its intractable complexities' (qtd in Nixon, 2010, xvi)[5], it is the accent on the image that supersedes the complexities of narrative situation in Beckett's minimalist late works, including *The North*.

As is often the case with Beckett's self-translations, he proceeded to refine the text of the fragment beyond the scope of simple rendering. Most of the manuscript revisions – whether immediate ones in black ink or later-stage in blue – are aimed at shaping and de-Gallicising the English draft. As Beckett reported to Barbara Bray, this was something that continued to pose a challenge throughout the translation of the whole text, and he even 'Toy[ed] with thought of acquiring OED microscopic edition, have a look at it some time if occasion offers' (18 October 1971; Beckett, 2016, 269).[6] While most of these emendations are purely syntactical, a few lexical changes can also be unearthed in *The North* that point to how quickly the very first draft was produced. For instance, at a later stage of his revisions, Beckett crossed out the literal translation of 'en effet' ('in effect') in the sentence 'Face ou dos au mur ceux-ci *en effet ne présentent* normalement qu'un seul aspect et par conséquent s'exposent à être retournés' (Beckett, 1970, 51–2; emphasis added), settling on a simple 'offer': 'Face or back to the wall these normally *offer* but a single aspect and so may have to be turned the other way' (Beckett, 2010b, 119; emphasis added). The word 'suivi' in 'Ce précepte est assez suivi dans le cylindre dans la mesure où la quête n'en pâtit pas' (1970, 51), translated at first as 'followed', is later corrected to 'observed', which more closely conveys the excerpt's focus on observation and close inspection.

Other alterations made by Beckett also enrich the visuality of the fragment. For example, 'faire le tour de l'objet' (52) of the French original is translated in the first quick draft as 'circling about', with 'encompassing' already considered by Beckett at this stage as the word's appearance (circled) in the left margin indicates.

It was accepted at revision stage and the phrase indeed became a stronger 'encompassing the object' (Beckett, 2010b, 119), which prompts a mental connection between the vanquished woman's position within the circular area of the cylinder and the main point of the compass.[7] Compared to the manuscript and the later typescript of *The North*, the syntax of the original appears as more fragmented, and the shorter French sentences are often restructured and combined into longer ones in the English version. Many instances are also indicative of Beckett's tendency to 'strip down' the superfluous. For instance, 'écarter *les mains* des chairs qu'elles cachent' (1970, 51) is translated verbatim and only later reduced to singular 'remove *the hand* from the flesh it hides' (2010b, 119; emphasis added). Similarly, the 'hand' in 'porter *la main* sur le moindre d'entre eux' (1970, 52) is revised further to synecdochic 'lay *a finger* on the least among them' (2010b, 119; emphasis added).

Perhaps the most interesting lexical choice concerns the title of the fragment itself – *The North* – which appears to have been decided upon at a later stage, as was indeed the case with other excerpts, such as *L'Issue*,[8] and with the text of *The Lost Ones* as a whole. At first, as the correspondence between Clodd and Arikha indicates, the extract was tentatively referred to as 'LA VAINCUE', emphasising the centrality of the woman for both the text and the illustrations to accompany it (Clodd to Arikha, 17 May 1971). Indeed, in his letter of 20 January 1972 with photos of his three etchings enclosed, Arikha informed Clodd that 'S.B. likes them and thinks that they are the "Vanquished one"'. However, due to the grammatically marked gender of the word 'vaincue' and the related pronouns in the French version, it could not be satisfactorily translated into English without a degree of textual alteration. For the text's original 'Ceci dit il existe un nord sous forme *d'un vaincu* ou mieux *d'une vaincue* ou mieux encore *de la vaincue*' (Beckett, 1970, 49; emphasis added), Beckett initially considered using the feminine pronoun "she-" as a prefix (for both French affixes) to express the gender of the vanquished, eventually deciding simply on 'woman vanquished': 'There does none the less exist a north in the guise *of one of the vanquished* or better *one of the women vanquished* or better still *the woman vanquished*' (Beckett, 2010b, 118; emphasis added). The more elegant equivalent of the possible

designations ('north') was eventually selected for the title, which Beckett inscribed with black felt-tip marker in the upper left-hand corner, the tool matching that used for the heading of the typescript and a few alterations made in it.

A rather unexpected parallel to the image of the vanquished woman offers itself in relation to the English title of the complete text. The first draft of its translation was finished on 20 November 1971, which is the date inscribed on the last page of the second manuscript notebook together with the English title, 'The LOST ONES'. Beckett had in fact already mooted this as a possible title for his text in his letter to Clodd of 25 June 1971. In a further (unpublished) letter to James Knowlson of 19 July 1971, Beckett explained that the difficulty in translating the French title was due to the fact that there was no way to replace the allusion to a line in Lamartine's poem 'L'Isolement' (JEK B/1/15). In various letters over the next few months, Beckett kept returning to the title *The Lost Ones*, and by 30 January 1972 had decided to keep it (Beckett to Clodd). The idea seems to derive from Dante's *Divina Commedia* or, more precisely, the 'perduta gente' or 'the lost ones' mentioned above the gates of hell in *Inferno* III (see Caselli, 2005, 183–4).

The Italian poet's explicit presence is indeed attested at the beginning of *Le Dépeupleur*, and Beckett proceeded to adjust the reference in his English translation changing, as he reported to Bray on 14 February 1972, the original's 'rares pâles sourires' (Beckett, 1970, 13) to 'rare wan smiles' (2010b, 103) he ascribed to Dante (TCD MS10948/1/509). In *The North*, Dante's influence can be sensed in Beckett's correction of the woman's posture from 'assise' ('sitting') of the French version (1970, 50) to a Belacquian 'squats', which is retained in *The Lost Ones* (2010b, 118; see also Caselli, 190). Subtly altered, this textual image offers yet another connection to Dante's *Inferno*. Namely, Rodin's sculpture *La femme accroupie* (*Crouching Woman* or *Squatting Woman*; Figure 1), which was originally conceived as part of his monumental, Dante–inspired *Porte de l'enfer* (*The Gates of Hell*; Figure 2) in the early 1880s and later reproduced, like others of its nearly 200 figures, as an independent work.

While, naturally, Beckett would have been familiar with both works from Musée Rodin in Paris, the 'crouching languishing woman' explicitly caught his attention in the Neue Pinakothek

Figure 1. Auguste Rodin: *Kauernde* (Neue Pinakothek, Munich; WikiCommons)

in Munich, as a note from 16 March 1937 in his 'German Diaries' indicates.[9] As for Beckett's original demarcation of the vanquished woman – 'la vaincue' – it echoes uncannily another one of Rodin's famous statues known as *The Age of Bronze* (1880) and its original title, *Le Vaincu* (*The Vanquished One*). Like Rodin's *Crouching Woman*, extracted from the 'jumble of mingled flesh' (Beckett, 2010b, 119) of the figures in *The Gates*' lintel, Beckett's damned woman acquired a life of her own with the publication of *The North*.

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As stated, *The North* was the very first part of *Le Dépeupleur* that Beckett translated into English. In fact, he only started to translate the rest of the text into English on 29 September 1971, as is documented by the first of two manuscript notebooks now held

Figure 2. Auguste Rodin: *La Porte de l'Enfer* (Musée Rodin, Paris; WikiCommons)

at the New York Public Library.[10] A few days later, he told John Calder: 'We leave for Malta in a few days. I have begun Le D. and shall take it with me. Very difficult and may not be able to do much in Malta. So hope but can't promise by end of year' (Beckett, 2016, 268–9). However, Beckett did manage to make considerable progress with the translation while in Malta (8 October to 14 November), as his regular and detailed letters to Barbara Bray (helpfully) illustrate.[11] On 10 October he was on page 14 (of 55) of the Minuit edition, but struggling with the sentence 'Mais il en restera toujours assez' (Beckett, 1970, 14). By 29 October he had arrived at page 27, and seemed to be genuinely pleased with his renderings, citing 'They may stray unseeing through the throng … These recognize them and make way … They may crawl blindly through the tunnels in search of nothing', while adding however that he was still having trouble with the French word 'abandon' (TCD MS10948/1/500). A subsequent letter dated 2 November

1971 implies that Bray has also been more actively helping Beckett, as he notes that 'I think [. . .] I translated that sentence pretty much as you' (Beckett, 2016, 272). On 6 November Beckett had arrived at page 33 (TCD MS10948/1/503), and five days later he started (in Ghajn Tuffieħa) the second manuscript notebook, titled '*Le Dépeupleur II*' on the front cover (New York Public Library).[12] The fact that Beckett had already translated the penultimate paragraph of the text is evident on page 6r of the manuscript, where he notes 'Seen from below etc. . (cf. TS THE NORTH)'.

Having finished a first draft of the translation toward the end of November 1971, Beckett proceeded to work on the text in two typescripts (held at the New York Public Library) until the end of the year. If he had decided to leave the passage of *The North* untouched during the initial translation, he did make some changes at typescript stage. Indeed, it appears as if he had kept a carbon copy of the typescript sent to Clodd in October 1971, on which he had replicated the MS corrections made to the original. He proceeded to cross out, with a brown felt pen, the handwritten title (in thick black pen). Numbering the two pages '17' and '18' in order to integrate them in the run of the new typescript, Beckett then made further, but relatively minor changes to the extract in order to align the two pages with the translation of the entire text, such as changing the imperial units within *The North* back to metrical measurements.

On 2 January 1972 Beckett told Clodd that he had sent the translation of *Le Dépeupleur* to Calder & Boyars, who would be publishing the text in the spring, and that he had made some changes to the text of *The North*. Clodd, understandably, was rather alarmed by this letter, as he had hoped to publish an 'unpublished' extract, separate from the entire text. Clodd's letter to Beckett (sent on 25 January) on this matter does not survive, but the gist of it can be gleaned from a letter that Clodd wrote to Arikha on 27 January 1972:[13]

> Mr Beckett had told me that Calder would be publishing the translation of LE DEPEUPLEUR this spring. I have written to ask him if he will sign the edition of THE NORTH and if he will allow me to print the text he sent me, which differs slightly, I understand, from the Calder one. If he agrees to these two

> points, it should be possible to proceed with my edition of THE NORTH.

Beckett's letter of 30 January 1972 will have come as a relief to Clodd, as he did indeed agree to those two points. He confirmed that he had no objections to Clodd using the version he had sent in October, and that any corrections he would make in the proofs of *The North* would not align the text with Calder's edition of *The Lost Ones*. When Clodd sent Beckett the proofs of the first part of the text on 5 May 1972, he added a reminder that 'you will recall you agreed not to incorporate in this text the alterations you made for the Calder text'. In the end, Beckett did not have any author's corrections to make when he received the proofs of the *The North* (Beckett to Clodd, [?] May 1972).

Beckett's acquiescence to textual difference between *The North* and *The Lost Ones* eschews any striving toward a 'best text'. Indeed, transposed into terms used in textual scholarship, it complicates any recourse to 'final authorial intention'. Before the original French version, and the English translation of *Le Dépeupleur* that was finally published in 1972, it was indeed a lost text, existing only in fragmented form through the publication of extracts. Beckett insisted that these were, in effect, similar to the 'Faux Départs' of 1964, 'false' or 'failed' texts. As he told John Fletcher on 4 December 1969: 'Dans le Cylindre & L'issue shd. be regarded as rejected texts though released for limited publication'. He went on to suggest that some of these 'rejected texts' might be included in a second edition of *Têtes-mortes*:

> There is question of including also all or the least objectionable of the rejected texts (Dans le C., etc) but I doubt it. I have not translated any of these rejected texts and if I ever do it won't be for a long time. (Beckett, 2016, 205)

In the event, Beckett simply decided to release *Le Dépeupleur* in its entirety, an idea that seemed to crystallise in his mind in early 1970.

Calder & Boyars, however, were less than enthusiastic about the publication of *The North*, for reasons shrewdly countered by Clodd in a letter to Marion Boyars on 3 September 1971: 'I know

of course that you issue Mr Beckett's books in de luxe signed editions as well as the regular trade one; as the section of LE DEPEUPLEUR would be issued in a quite different format it does not seem to me that it would conflict with yours'. In his letters to Clodd, Beckett himself had insisted, repeatedly, that Calder's approval was necessary, while also actively making sure that this approval was forthcoming. Acknowledging the fact that Calder was, unsurprisingly, unhelpful (Beckett to Clodd, 25 June 1971), he urged both publishers to support Clodd's project (see, for example, Beckett's letter to Calder, 26 September 1971). Calder & Boyars did agree to Clodd's book, but there was some mysterious wrangling over the question of royalties. After meeting both Beckett and Arikha in April or May 1971, Clodd wrote the following to the latter:

> Regarding the terms we discussed I am quite agreeable to the suggestion you made that any profits should be divided equally between the author, yourself and myself as publisher. However, in his usual generous way, Mr Beckett immediately waived any suggestion of payment to himself and I have therefore promised to let him have as many copies of the book as he wants. Though it is not certain yet, I think it probable that Calder and Boyars will ask for a fee. (Clodd to Arikha, 17 May 1971)

In a letter to Marion Boyars dated 3 September 1971, Clodd again noted that Beckett did not want any royalty from the publication of *The North*. However, it appears as if the publishing house insisted on payment on Beckett's behalf, as Clodd acknowledged in his subsequent letter: 'I will be very willing to pay Mr Beckett a royalty of $7\frac{1}{2}$ on the published price of my special edition of a section of the English translation of LE DEPEUPLEUR' (Clodd to Boyars, 29 October 1971). This is a rather curious development, especially as the contract (dated 5 November 1971) itself stipulates that Enitharmon Press will pay Calder & Boyars a royalty of $7\frac{1}{2}\%$ with an advance of £100 on publication.[14]

Although Clodd had received the text of *The North* already in July, and the book was contracted in November 1971, Calder's

edition went into production far quicker. As Beckett told Barbara Bray in an unpublished letter of 14 February 1972, he had received the proofs from Calder and had made a few minor corrections (TCD MS10948/1/509). The book was published at some point before July 1972.[15] With regard to *The North*, however, Beckett only received the first part of the proofs at the beginning of May 1972 (Clodd to Beckett, 5 May 1972), with the second part arriving in September while Beckett was in Malta.[16] The reason for the delay was the fact that the printer did not have enough type of 18-point Palatino used to set the text. Beckett then signed the sheets in Paris on 18 October 1972 (Beckett to Clodd, 19 October 1972). However, the printing of the sheets with the engravings encountered various difficulties, and Arikha only completed the signing of them in late January or early February 1973.[17] It was thus only on 13 March 1973 that Clodd could declare to Arikha that 'I have now received the first delivery of copies of THE NORTH from the binder and would like to send you yours' (Clodd to Arikha, 13 March 1973). Both Arikha (1 April 1973) and Beckett (11 May 1973) subsequently acknowledged receipt of their 'ad personam' copies. Although the book was only published in March 1973, the date on the edition is 1972; having printed the text sheets Clodd most probably did not envisage the subsequent delay to the sheets with the etchings.

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This was not the first time that the Israeli painter Arikha illustrated Beckett's work. Having met Beckett in 1956, Arikha contributed six pen and ink drawings to *Nouvelles et textes pour rien* soon after (Editions de Miuit, 1958). He later also illustrated an edition of *Malone meurt* and *Oh les beaux jours* for the 'Collection des Prix Nobel de littérature (Editions Rombaldi, 1971) and made five etchings for the livre d'artiste of 'Au loin un oiseau' (Double Elephant Press, 1973). Arikha was also familiar with *Le Dépeupleur* fragments, having previously done etchings for Georges Visat's edition of the extract *'L'Issue'* in 1968, which inspired Clodd to approach Beckett for an English equivalent in his Enitharmon Press.

Indeed, even before the translation of the fragment was finished, it was agreed between Clodd and Arikha that the presentation of the book should resemble that of Visat's *'L'Issue'* (17 May 1971), 'the text and etchings [printed] on loose sheets which would be laid into a box in the French manner' (Clodd to Boyars, 3 September 1971). From the original maximum of 200 copies contracted (Contract between Clodd and Calder & Boyars of 5 November 1971), the number was later reduced to '150 to 130' (Clodd to Arikha, 27 January 1972). A total of 137 copies was eventually printed (of which twelve are ad personam), accompanied by a special limited edition of fifteen copies intended primarily for Clodd's use. Both were handset in 18-point Palatino typeface and printed by Will and Sebastian Carter at the Rampant Lions Press in Cambridge on heavyweight paper handmade by J. Barcham Green of Maidstone. Arikha's three etchings were printed by Studio Prints London in 'French Charbonnel ink' (Clodd to Arikha, 30 May 1972). Folios of 38×28cm, as proposed by Arikha (31 January 1972), are loosely housed in a paper folder, cloth chemise and slipcase.

For *The North*, Arikha supplied three illustrations of five originally proposed, following Beckett's 'rather decisive' advice on reduction due to the brevity of the text (Clodd to Arikha, 17 May 1971). Interestingly enough, Visat's even shorter *L'Issue*, which comprised the third and fourth paragraphs of *Le Dépeupleur* and counted roughly 570 words, featured six original engravings by Arikha. Contrary to Clodd's fragment, however, *L'Issue* is a more abstract, figureless piece of narrative focused on strange fluctuations of light and temperature and, as the French title suggests, on the belief for a rumoured 'way out' of the cylinder. In Lois Oppenheim's phrase, in *L'Issue* 'Arikha [...] fashioned his view of Beckett's claustrophobic dominion in pure abstraction', preferring to 'subvert cognition of Issue [the way out] in an instance of art's visual reflection on its own intrinsic process' (170). *The North*, on the other hand, 'reveals a rededication to realism' (170) as the eponymic female figure is pictured in the first and last of Arikha's three illustrations, with the middle one filled entirely by strands of her long hair. That the vanquished woman is in both instances depicted by Arikha as sitting rather than squatting reveals that the artist worked from the French version of the fragment before the English translation was finished (see Clodd

to Arikha, 17 May 1971). An artistic rendering, Arikha's more 'realistic' portrayal of the woman is slightly at odds with the published text that imagines her pose as more intricate not only in detail, but also in its revelation of her unseen anatomy:

> She squats against the wall with her head between her knees and her legs in her arms. The left hand clasps the right shinbone and the right the left forearm. The red hair tarnished by the light hangs to the ground. It hides the face and whole front of the body down to the crutch. The left foot is crossed on the right. (Beckett, 2010b, 118)

The torturous position is indeed reminiscent of Rodin's unnaturally twisted, visually exposed female, whereas Arikha's translation of her demeanour emphasises her resigned detachment from the external world. As Oppenheim observes, 'Beckett's verbal iconography is [...] captured in all its potency: juxtaposed to our mental configuration of the huddled group [of searchers] that seems "a mere jumble of mingled flesh" is the etched lone female; the spatial "privation" is all the more powerful for her being rendered alone' (170). The anchoring focus is on the woman vanquished – 'She is the north' (Beckett, 2010b, 118) – and the two etchings that frame the text spatialise the narrative around her in a distant echo of Beckett's spot-the-difference stage designs in the two-act plays *Waiting for Godot* and *Happy Days*. Indeed, the 'variation on the theme' in these two almost photographically identical prints is achieved with a slight relocation of a spotlight from the woman's hand to her shoulder, and befits perfectly the repetitively elaborative style of Beckett's late compositions.

As Enoch Brater has argued, in *The Lost Ones* 'words are animated to create images more visual than verbal', so that the text 'exists in that place where literary art and visual art come together' (1983, 93). This is attested by the fact that the text, and extracts from the text, have been the subject of more *livres d'artiste* than any other piece by Beckett. Like Dante's *Divine Comedy*, which has been rendered by a range of visual artists from Botticelli and Blake to Doré and Dalí, as well as sculptors such as Rodin, Beckett's visual imagination in *The Lost Ones* and other late prose texts has inspired equally striking visualisations.

NOTES

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1. Now at Princeton University.

2. These are, in order of publication: 'Dans le Cylindre' (*Livres de France: Revue littéraire mensuelle*, 18:1; January 1967), *L'Issue* (Paris: Georges Visat, 1968), *Séjour* (Paris: Georges Richar, 1970), 'La notion' (Paris: L'Éphémère, 1970). After five years of composition, the complete text was published by Les Éditions de Minuit in September 1971. In a letter dated 21 March 1970, Beckett had told Calder that he was considering releasing the entire text of *Le Dépeupleur* for publication (UoR MS2073/1). It is unclear whether this letter dates from before or after Beckett penned the final paragraph. The manuscript, entitled 'CODA: LE DEPEUPLEUR', is dated 'March 1970' and is in private hands.

3. Unless indicated otherwise, all citations from correspondence between Arikha, Beckett and Clodd are from this collection (UoR JEK A/2/56), which contains copies of material held at the National Library of Ireland and in the 'Enitharmon Press Collection', Brotherton Library, University of Leeds.

4. See also a letter to James Knowlson, dated 19 July 1971, in which Beckett announces that he had completed a rough translation of an extract from *Le Dépeupleur*. The date of Beckett's inscription of the manuscript is July 1971 (UoR MS5478/1), but the typescript is dated October 1971 (MS 5478/2). Since the writing tool – light blue ink pen – and the inscriptions on both are nearly identical, it is probable that Beckett signed both at the same (later) date.

5. Beckett's note on the manuscript of *Bing* now held at Washington University in St. Louis. See also Beckett to Ruby Cohn, 11 June 1969 (UoR MS5100/048).

6. In his letter to Bray, Beckett gives the following example: 'For "grimpeur <u>indélicat</u>" e.g. not sure indelicate not a gallicism so fell back on "unprincipled" or "inconsiderate"' (Beckett, 2016, 269).

7. This is also reflected by the final book's cover and title page, which feature three crossed lines symbolising a simplified compass, with the central line forming an upward pointing arrow.

8. See Beckett's unpublished letter to Ruby Cohn of 11 June 1969, in which he states that 'Issue' was indeed selected as the fragment's title only later, for the purposes of its publication with Visat (UoR MS5100/048).

9. Beckett refers to the Paris museum in *More Pricks Than Kicks*: 'The curate swore he had never seen anything like it outside the Musée Rodin, it reminded the clerk of a Dürer cartoon and the priest of his incumbency, and it indicted Belacqua, tempest of stifled groans at having to produce anti-clockwise eyes and gestures for so long at a stretch, with Maupassant's scorching phrase: *phylloxera of the spirit*' (Beckett, 2010a, 131).

10. The two manuscript notebooks and the two typescripts containing Beckett's translation of *Le Dépeupleur* into English were given by Beckett to John and Evelyn Kobler in April 1972, and are now in the New York Public Library.

11. Page 4v of the first MS notebook is dated 'Selmun 9.10.71'.

12. Beckett returned to Paris on 14 November, and the next date in the second notebook is 'Paris 18.11.71' on page 2v.

13. In response to a letter from Arikha to Clodd, in which the painter wondered whether the project will go ahead: 'S.B. told me that Calder is going to publish the entire text of the Dépeupleur in April, so that "The North" will not be an unpublished text anymore – will this not endanger your entire project?' (20 January 1972).

14. Arikha received one pound for each print, altogether £450 (as requested in Arikha's letter to Clodd, 20 January 1972).

15. A hardback copy of the Calder & Boyars edition of *The Lost Ones* held at the Harry Ransom Center is inscribed to John and Evelyn Kobler and dated July 1972. We are grateful to Breon Mitchell for this information.

16. As previously arranged, Clodd sent the proofs, together with a copy of the typescript, to the Editions de Minuit on 31 August 1972, and the publishing house forwarded them to Beckett in Malta (see Beckett's letter to Bray, 14 September 1972; TCD MS10948/1/521).

17. See Clodd's letter to Arikha, 24 January 1973: 'Studio Prints hope to start today on the engravings; they say it will be several days' work'.

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