

UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DE SANTA CATARINA
CENTRO DE COMUNICAÇÃO E EXPRESSÃO
LÍNGUA E LITERATURA ESTRANGEIRA
LÍNGUA E LITERATURA EM LÍNGUA INGLESA
TRABALHO DE CONCLUSÃO DE CURSO

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**A TRANSLATION OF *KRAPP'S LAST TAPE*
AND BECKETT'S 'ART OF DISARRAY'**

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FLORIANÓPOLIS
2010

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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank foremost Dirce Waltrick Amarante for her help and guidance in having the ideas and developing them, Alai Garcia Diniz for her occasional help and Renata Barros Calippo for the motivation needed to end this long journey.

Abstract

In this monograph I will study the ways in which Beckett's work speaks a language of anguish, through his relationship to language, and, among other, the theories of Blanchot, Camus and Sartre, substantiating the importance of Beckett's work and bringing forth a translation of the play Krapp's Last Tape into Brazilian Portuguese, making this important play available in Brazil.

Key-words: translationofkrapps'slasttape; anguish; nothingness; everyday; Beckett; absurd;

Introduction

There have been few authors that come to my knowledge, from twentieth century theater and more specifically from those brought together by the definition of the Theatre of The Absurd, that have been so widely studied as Samuel Beckett. The reason for this can be initially placed on the overwhelming success of *Waiting For Godot* which premiered in 1952, but more deeply it is because of the qualities that make Beckett such an unique author, owner of his own language, of his own speech, maker of his own theater and of his own literature, an object of study that could dignify lifetimes of delving into his secrets. I've made my work much simpler than that. The idea for this monograph came after I wrote a translation of Krapp's Last Tape into Brazilian Portuguese and staged the play, as an actor, using a different resource than that intended in the original play, a more contemporary resource: video (I speak more about this in chapter 2) Initially I meant to discuss how technologies are viewed in the light of post-modernist theory, giving some clout to the idea of using video and putting Krapp's Last Tape and Beckett under this contemporary light. This would have been interesting, save for the fact that Beckett was an author of the twentieth century whose use of technology is paled before the specific tendencies that his use of language goes through, so I wanted to touch down, go to the basics, to the mechanics of Beckettian literature and see what I found. The result is what is written in chapter 1: *Anguish in Beckett*. I took the theories of Sartre about nothingness, Blanchot about the Everyday, a little bit of Camus about the feeling of absurdity and put it all together to describe how Beckett's work never fails in the anguish it possesses, an affirmation I can make even without having read all of his work, but more specifically *Waiting For Godot* (1952); *Act Without Words* (1956); *Endgame* (1957); *Play* (1963); *Happy Days* (1960) and *The Unnamable* (1953). Obviously I've also read *Krapp's Last Tape* (1958), which I analyze in more detail in Chapter 2: *Krapp's Last Tape*. At the end of that chapter I speak briefly about my process of translating and staging the play, but do not delve much into these matters because I believe they are pretty much self-explanatory, explained in Chapter 3: *Translation* where I bring the translation in full.

Chapter 1: The anguish in Beckett

In Alain Badiou's *Handbook of Inaesthetics*, in the chapter dedicated to theater, he gives us the concept that theater happens essentially on the stage. Theater is an act that is consummated on the stage. Be it an Italian opera house or a circle in the sand, under the effect of changes over time, the stage is where the action happens, where text becomes language, where body becomes art. The 'action' is represented in what Badiou calls "theatre-ideas" the combination of a series of different languages and artistic elements and their resulting fusion as they are realized on the stage. These ideas are not found only within a piece of paper or in the body of a text. They can only be realized after many diverse elements have been constituted together, colliding into new meaning before an audience (p.75). What I mean to say here is not new, and certainly Badiou is not the only one who, in his knowledge, has seen that theater text, the texts that were used to produce the plays analyzed here, are literary works and not works of theater, or better yet, works of theater in the condition that they represent only a portion of what goes into a theater production. One of the reasons that contemporary theater fights so strongly against verbal language is because it does not rely solely on it to hone its craft. Literature on the other hand can only fight from within. And this is our fight, this is Beckett's fight in our eyes: a lost cause against the verbal language that permitted him to express his creativity, leaving any reproduction on the stage of his works to an abstract plain that does not touch us. Therefore it would only be realistic not to include in our study theorists of theater, since I will be viewing Beckett's work as literary.

In analyzing Beckett's work, I believe there is one common element that can comprise a backdrop for everything that Beckett ever wrote, that is an intrinsic part of who he was, in a literary sense, and perhaps even in an intimate sense, in his beliefs, in his time, in the literary movements in which he participated. That common element is anguish. This common element is always sitting between Beckett and his readers, mediates his relationship to language, and conditions the appeal of his works. The first form in which this element makes itself visible is in Beckett's repeated use of speechlessness, the futile attempt of his characters to speak out and yet be constantly

swallowed back into nothingness, into the void that is verbal language, into the anguish that consumes them. A clear-cut example of this is *The Unnamable*, where the speechlessness seems to be the very drive that compels the text from the beginning:

I seem to speak (it is not I) about me (it is not me).

What am I to do (what shall I do, what should I do?) in my situation? How proceed? By aporia pure and simple? Or by affirmations and negations invalidated as uttered (or sooner or later)? (Generally speaking.) There must be other shifts. Otherwise it would be quite hopeless. But it is quite hopeless

The narrator is not accountable for his words, he is a literary persona that does not exist, his words are not the direct interpretation of himself, but vehicles that do not convey his innermost meanings. Instead, he betrays himself by speaking, and recognizes his emptiness in the process, the emptiness which is inherent to language in the first place; the inability to express, by which one keeps saying too much. “affirmations and negations invalidated as uttered (or sooner or later)?” How are these affirmations invalidated? What invalidates them? Such as the navigators of ancient Europe, who thought that at the end of the world there was a gaping hole full of monsters, what is this gaping hole at the end of the utterance? What is this horrible destiny of invalidation associated with? The very speechlessness mentioned previously, the very anguish, the nothingness. What is this nothingness? According to Sartre:

“We may speak of absent friends, holes in the ground, negative and false propositions, purely imaginary states of affairs, fictional characters as *though* they existed because nothingness possesses an appearance of being, a being it borrows from being.”

Which is to say, ‘language will always elude us’: even though we are aware of the abyss ahead, even though we state that there are affirmations that invalidate themselves, this statement is by itself is an invalidation. We are invalidated by nothingness, we cannot fill it with its own instrument. Language is an instrument of nothingness, it is not real, it does not constitute reality. Therefore everything created by language feels pleasantly or unpleasantly empty. In this case not only is it unpleasant but there is a naturally rooted struggle against it, since we must somehow express ourselves, communicate using this empty vessel. This struggle feels natural when reading Beckett, his fight against the void of language becomes our fight, feels to us as if it could not be otherwise. The

reason for this is that Beckett's fight *is* our own. Even though language has its pitfalls, "consciousness is prior to nothingness" we can only perceive nothingness when we evoke it with our minds, when it lends itself an existence by our perception. That is why Beckett is so appealing. Because his texts point out to the existence of nothingness which would otherwise go unchecked. I believe he does this more successfully (more discreetly) in his theater plays than in his novels. Whereas in his novels the narrator relates himself to this nothingness, in his plays the actions and thoughts of the characters are dictated by this feeling, in a sense that there is an atmosphere of nothingness and anguish on the stage. Anguish comes to play in the midst of this struggle, it is not enough that there is an empty vehicle of thought into which we try to express all our volatile individuality that cannot convey meaning because meaning constantly reaches an abyss of nothingness, but mainly, we are obsessed by this, we cannot accept in our minds that this is so. There must be some form of transcending this predicament, but there isn't. And so we wallow in it, and we complain, we wait. As in the excerpt from *The Unnamable*: "it is quite hopeless". In the absence of hope there is the recognition of hope, therefore within hopelessness lies hope shattered, never to be moved, forever to be felt, just as in the absence of something there is nothingness.

The first thought about the anguish in Beckett's works came to me through a text by Bataille, in which he says (1979, P. 60):

...What *Molloy* reveals is not simply reality, but reality in its pure state: the most meager and inevitable of realities, that fundamental reality continually soliciting us but from which a certain terror always pulls us back, the reality we refuse to face and into which we must ceaselessly struggle not to sink, known to us only in the elusive form of anguish.

What appeals to me in Beckett's plays is that this anguish is expressed within the characters. They are mentally, physically fed up with their anguish that appears to come from no specific place, but lives as a looming presence in the backdrop. In *Endgame*, the character Hamm expresses this in the very beginning of the play:

Can there be misery---
(he yawns)
 ---loftier than mine? No doubt. Formerly. But now?
(Pause.)
 My father?
(Pause.)
 My mother?
(Pause.)
 My... dog?

(Pause.)

Oh I am willing to believe they suffer as much as such creatures can suffer.

But does that mean their sufferings equal mine? No doubt.

(Pause.)

No, all is a---

(he yawns)

---bsolute,

(proudly)

the bigger a man is the fuller he is.

(Pause. Gloomily.)

And the emptier.

Hamm's confession is not only a tool to introduce the plot. I would even say that it is a confession of the author (the literary persona of course) stating the existence of this ever-present struggle against nothingness.

Even in *Act Without Words* Beckett gives up on verbal language, but the struggle and the anguish are there as well. As the character is flung back and forth on the stage, as he stares dumbfounded at his own powerless hands. It appears Beckett points out to the passivity of the condition of anguish, being manipulated by an oppressive force bigger than oneself, whilst unable to overcome it. This is the very source of anguish, a force that manipulates everything and against which we are passive. In *Waiting For Godot*, Vladimir and Estragon wait uselessly for Godot, this promise of something true, perhaps a relief from their distress, which never comes. Their dialogue is mediated through their emptiness, so not only do they wait, but the wait is what (almost) validates their existence, even though even the wait itself is empty and comes to nothing. Other moments may be mentioned that corroborate this theory of anguish, such as Winnie physically sinking in *Happy Days* (an extremely ironic name at that), among others.

In further analyzing the words of Bataille: "Death itself would be that final silence that has never been attenuated by its imitations. Literature on the other hand, lines up a torrent of incongruous words next to silence." In other words, literature is an imitation of death, and language is an imitation of silence. In the incessant movement of trying to achieve its superior counterpart, language and literature cannot cease to line up words, to speak. In *The Unnamable*, the narrator knows not why he speaks, but he simply has to. This voice that speaks is an approximation of a 'neutral' speech, impersonal, that consumes itself endlessly through the text, a ranting voice surrounded by its own void, a representation of a feeble subjectivity. (2005, p.312) Or as put before, the voice of language itself, hysterically attempting to imitate silence. Expanding this concept to *Krapp's Last Tape*, the language that relates the character's past is a feeble

escape into silence – a trap, of never reaching a true picture of past, future, or present. In this logic, the act of listening to the tape recorder is the act of listening to a rant, endowed with the body of a past that was dead as soon as it was uttered.

Beckett's literature is marked by anguish and the aimlessness of language, but where does this anguish reside? What is the source of this anguish and of the loss of language? Maurice Blanchot offers us a possible answer: the Everyday (1993, p. 239):

The every day is no longer the average, statistically established existence of a given society at a given moment, it is a category a utopia and an Idea, without which one would not know how to get either at the hidden present or the discoverable future of manifest beings. Man (...) is at once engulfed within and deprived of the everyday.

The everyday is the condition of contemporary life. It is the simple state of things that cannot be explained, pinned-down, apprehended simply, but that transmits within it, without a necessary explanation, our individual invisibilities, our insignificance, rendering us obsolete, and filling us with anguish (p. 239-240):

[the every day] allows no hold. It escapes. It belongs to insignificance; the insignificant being what is without truth, without reality and without secret, but also perhaps the site of all possible signification. The everyday escapes.

The unison between Beckett's writing and the everyday is truly symmetrical. In a given sentence such as the following, in reflecting about the power of language in Beckett, one concept can be replaced by the other within it (p. 242):

Thus the everyday [or Beckett's writing] always sends us back to that unapparent and yet unconcealed part of existence, that is insignificant because it remains always to the hither side of what signifies it; silent, but with a silence that has dissipated as soon as we keep still in order to hear it and that we hear better in idle chatter, in the unspeaking speech that is the soft human murmuring in us and around us.

That very force of imitating silence, that very pull of anguish found in the Everyday and the strength of Beckett's writing. Finally, Blanchot states that "the everyday is without event". In describing the importance of plot in Beckett's work, Martin Esslin, founder of the concept of *Theatre of the Absurd*, states (1961, p. 69) :

Hamm e Clov, Pozzo e Lucky, Vladimir e Estragon, Nagg e Nell, não são personagens, mas corporificações de atitudes humanas básicas, um pouco como as virtudes e vícios personificados nos mistérios medievais ou nos *autos sacramentales* espanhóis. Nem tampouco o que se passa nessas peças são *acontecimentos* com princípio e fim definidos, mas tipos de *situações* que se repetirão eternamente.

Situations that will repeat themselves endlessly. What is the situation that repeats itself endlessly and cannot be pinned down? Blanchot's Everyday.

In viewing Beckett's use of clichés, one can observe very easily that, in Beckett, "language is excessive" and "one inevitably says more than one intends" whilst "language is [never] adequate to the feelings and sensations it aims to express".(2006, p. 09) This is a simplistic way of saying that Beckett has a deep knowledge of how language works, and is not fooled by its promise of expression. In fact, he lives on the verge of where the possibility of expression is almost not worth the effort, but somehow comes out. Language in Beckett always makes the movement of falling completely into silence, before being rescued from it once more for dialogue to continue.

Chapter 2: *Krapp's Last Tape*

Let us analyze *Krapp's Last Tape*. Beckett returns to the English Language to provide us with one of his great works, though often not seen as such. In it, Krapp views his past and thinks of his future whilst listening to the recordings made by himself in a tape recorder. He remembers in these recordings how he gave up a love in his youth to give himself to some ultimate truth.

Perhaps more evident than in Beckett's other plays, there is a "love of language" in Krapp. Beckett's characters are constantly divided between this "love of language and the more usually championed despair" (2006 p. 28). In *Krapp's Last Tape* there is a measuring of words in young Krapp, a concern with sounding accurate, and lyrical. This ability is both mocked in the older Krapp looking up a word in the dictionary, as it is cherished in the lyrical beauty of young Krapp's descriptions, a very ingenious way for Beckett to celebrate this 'love of language' whilst maintaining the cold anguish present in the backdrop. It is through Beckett's love of language that he tries to defeat its nothingness. Without this love, the natural movement would be to escape from it. Beckett uses language to display anguish, even though language is part of the source of it – words are the source of anguish at the moment they are uttered, whilst they utter his anguish back to him.

Krapp's Last Tape (1958) is the main object of my study because it singularly demystifies this struggle in the collective literary personas we abstractly refer to as Beckett. The struggle at first is that of the character Krapp, but is a struggle that lives in the lives of anyone so obsessed with the possible transcendence in everyday language such as Beckett. This transcendence is found in the current predicament of the character. In sum, Krapp, sixty nine years old is filled with silent regret as he listens to the tape recorded in the past where, filled with nostalgia, he remembers the girl that he left behind by a jetty (1958 pg.9). The apparent reason that he committed this injustice against himself is to pursue his "Magnum Opus" (pg. 6). This would be some form of master work, a novel that he gave his blood and sweat to write, even going through what appears to be a near supernatural episode, an epiphany of sorts:

Suddenly I saw the whole thing.

The vision, at last. This I fancy is what I have chiefly to record this evening, against the day when my work will be done and perhaps no place left in my memory, warm or cold, for the miracle that . . . (*hesitates*) . . . for the fire that set it alight. What I suddenly saw then was this, that the belief I had been going on all my life, namely—(*Krapp switches off impatiently, winds tape forward, switches on again*)—great granite rocks the foam flying up in the light of the lighthouse and the wind-gauge spinning like a propellor, clear to me at last that the dark I have always struggled to keep under is in reality my most—(*Krapp curses, switches off, winds tape forward, switches on again*)—unshatterable association until my dissolution of storm and night with the light of the understanding and the fire—

Filled with remorse, Krapp winds forward the tape, uninterested in the feats of his struggle to transcend, only interested in the terrenal pleasures of love. What I call transcendence is simply the desire to excel, as good philosophers have had, in an impulse that drove them mad and forced them to live an existence of deprivations and depression. This appears to me to be evident in any text involving Nietzsche. In a sense, the struggle for the defeat of language and the improvement of personal vision, the existentialist struggle in a nutshell, against the wall of anguish and nothingness, is the struggle in Krapp, and is the struggle in Beckett's works.

Krapp desired to have stayed with his love. This is both ironic and sweet, since the character's choices have been made and now – surrounded by his decadence carrying the weight of his old age – Krapp cannot be helped. It almost feels as if he deserves this predicament. Poetic justice.

Originally Beckett meant to write the play in three parts: Krapp with his wife, Krapp with his wife and child and Krapp on his own. (1961, P. 71). However, it is more just and more cruel to the character for him to have a single destiny. And for this destiny to explain the predicament of those who fight against the advancement of anguish rather than sink into absurdity and accept it: to live in decadence, loneliness and regret. Thus, the concept of anguish applies well to the concept of the Absurd by Camus, which helped lend its name to the Theater of the Absurd (1961, p. 19):

A world that can be explained even with bad reasons is a familiar world. But, on the other hand, in a universe suddenly divested of illusions and lights, man feels an alien, a stranger. His exile is without remedy since he is deprived of the memory of a lost home or the hope of a promised land. This divorce between man and this life, the actor and his setting, is properly the feeling of absurdity.

This feeling of absurdity is perfectly congruous with the social context of the authors of the theater of the Absurd: post-war Europe. Destitution, abandonment, an unfamiliar world where man is ‘deprived of (...) the hope of a promised land’. Is this not the drama of so many people after the war: homeless, abandoned, seeking their promise land without much hope to achieve it? The feeling of absurdity lines up with the Everyday in explaining the cause of the struggle in Beckett. Whilst man can live happily within both concepts, Beckett does not possess the gift of such ignorance. Rather, his awareness of the condition of this Everyday, of this absurdity that surrounds him leads him to his anguish, and leads him to struggle through language to criticize, to fight against it. This fight is the choice between a ‘Magnum Opus’ and a love affair, of a failed attempt at individual transcendence or collective blindness.

The theater which Esslin named the “theater of the absurd” was the theatre that represented on stage this struggle, which sometimes in the form of humor also made a very serious statement about the emptiness of everyday life. It was in Paris that *En Attendant Godot* made its great success. *Krapp’s Last Tape*, on the other hand, was not the ‘hit’ that *Godot* was. Whilst his other plays might be analyzed in various languages, I find it significant that he wrote *Krapp* in English, and the issue of his bilingualism does not have to be tampered with. Also, in *Krapp’s Last Tape*, as in *Play* and *Happy Days*, the essential structure is the monologue. But this monologue is almost a dialogue, or a double monologue, in the case of *Krapp* with his tape recorder. Which leads to the fragmentation of individual identity rather than its centralization (1994 p. 114) The issue in the decentralization of the monologue in Beckett confirms that the identity which would be elucidating in order to disperse the anguish is actually loosely fitted: cannot be reaffirmed, is choked before the nothingness.

In *Krapp’s Last Tape* not only is there anguish and failure, but also regret. The tone of regret is clear, and makes evident that perhaps there was a human path to be followed, a different, and better alternative, a chance of salvation. Beckett could have separated the play into three parts, and according to the text it was his intention to show that whatever path *Krapp* chose, he would wind up wronged, hopeless. Nostalgia, the dream of a better past, in Beckett’s earlier characters is marked by a blind need to evoke the past, hold it and let it go. Such is *Nagg* and *Nells*’ memories, or *Hamm*’s regrets in *Endgame*. There is an inescapable humanity but never a visible alternate path. In

Krapp's Last Tape this is different. In the contrast between confident, younger Krapp and older decrepit Krapp, younger Krapp makes utterances with a certain lyrical beauty. In the telling of a particular moment (farewell to love) this beauty becomes encapsulated, undeniable. According to Ronan McDonald, when discussing Krapp (p. 59): "What interests him is not the road he followed in life, which has led him to his present moribund condition, but the road from which he turned." the act of using the tape recorder to remember the past proves more painful than simple nostalgia, in its unsure existence of a real presence (p. 59): The tape "protects the memory of the years gone by, but in so doing it exacerbates the feeling of irreparable loss in the present. The preservation of time intensifies the consciousness of its passage." Krapp is surrounded by his boxes upon boxes of tapes, in a small den, with only one light over the table meant to view the tape recorder, a sense arises that Krapp is buried – such as Winnie buried in the sand, Vladimir and Estragon buried in the wait, among so many other Beckettian characters – in his memories, and has no way of escape. Beauty lies in the past, in a possible path that was lost to him. However, this path of clarity is not so clear. There are suggestions that point out to the inevitability of Krapp's destiny, such as the path that appears to be drawn in derision (p.60):

Although the Krapps are different enough to create conflict, there are nonetheless deft and disconcerting continuities. Each likes to lambast the over-optimism and naivety of the younger self to whom he has just been listening. Even the young whelp in his late twenties, for all his optimism, 'Sneers at what he calls his youth and thanks to God that it's over' (58). It is a technique of rich and multiple irony, in which the middle-aged man derides his youthful ambitions and then, years later, derides the derider.

This repeated derision appears to suggest a pattern, and a pattern points towards inevitability. The derision marks Krapp's hardening of himself, getting farther and farther from the innocence of youth, more and more marked by the years. Krapp is thus consumed in time, the vision of a choice that marked his past and a moment crystallized by his words as a youth. The feeling that time ravages the soul is present in Beckett from early on (p. 59):

Beckett argued as long ago as *Proust* the radical effect that time has on the self. It is not just that we spend time; rather it spends us, rendering the individual fundamentally different to what it was: 'We are not merely more weary because of

yesterday, we are other, no longer what we were before the calamity of yesterday' (P 13). Dramatic conflict is achieved by setting an individual against his past self, revealing in the process the distance and otherness that time and experience have generated

Krapp must be ravaged by the vision that he had, of the 'Memorable Equinox', by the jetty, where he felt the meaning of life pulsed with him, arriving him closer to his *Magnum Opus*. Old Krapp refutes this passage vehemently, for it represents the loss of youth and love towards the pursuit of a higher meaning (p. 61):

His vision prompted him to turn his back on his romantic attachment, rejecting love and companionship to pursue the solitary life of the artist, a vocation which for him would require immersion in the self, in the dark he had strived to keep under.

In this moment it begins to become clear the choice that Krapp has made between love and his art. This regret found here marks the struggle between a simple hedonistic life and a higher purpose of struggling with the soul to create a profound art of anguish. This for me closes up my theory of the anguish in Beckett, for it is the very anguish in Krapp: the anguish of acquiring inner depth and losing the simpler pleasures in life. If ever it be made an object that I mention Beckett as having this struggle almost personally, I refute by stating that Beckett has this struggle in a literary sense, and it is in this literary sense that it is displayed here, and although it is not entirely far fetched that a person capable of his literary genius could possess these characteristics it is not my place to make such a statement. I take very seriously the theory that the author is dead in the moment his hand places the last final period on the text. But, what I can state is that Beckett's work is a literature of anguish, built from the struggle of choosing to achieve a higher truth within language rather than give up the fight and live in harmony - rather Beckett's literature is a 'art of disarray', since it comes from refuting harmony and living in the anguish of a struggle against the fallacy of language.

There is imagery in the words of *Krapp's Last Tape* to fill books. The Manichaeian black and white found in giving the black ball to the white dog, or Bianca from Kedar street; or the repeated reference to eyes – the chrysolite, the incomparable eyes of Bianca; the eyes of his lover in Farewell to Love, first closed and then open; the window to his mother's room closing like an eye to show that she is gone. All this imagery shows the complexity with which Beckett relays Krapp's memory. At the end,

Krapp makes a last recording of himself that he knows he will not hear again, and that no one else will. The act of recording is empty here and he recognizes he no longer has anything to say. The play ends with the passage of the girl in the punt once again, as Krapp languidly remembers, hugging his tape recorder.

2.1 – Translating and Staging

There are numerous challenges in translating a play by Samuel Beckett, but it also appears that after conventions are established, the text flows more easily. This was the case with the translation that I made, where I had to keep synchronies between certain sentences that would repeat themselves: the sequence of the banana and the fumbling in his pockets for keys, unlocking the drawers, etc. There was also an important sense of adequacy: Beckett's language is not too bookish, but his words are carefully selected. This to me comes across in reading his texts but becomes especially evident in translating one of them. The translation was made in 2008, and at the time there were no translations of the play into Brazilian Portuguese.

The staging of the play was succinct. I was directed by Dirce Waltrick Amarante and co-directed myself in a sense, making the bulk of the performance a video of Krapp's past text, a series of actions on stage that are derived from the original text, and a much shorter version of Krapp's monologue at the end, to draw most of the attention to the video. During the videos I interacted with the tape in three occasions, also marked in the original text, where I fast forward, pause or simply demonstrate being bothered by something on the screen. *Krapp's Last Tape* Appears to me to be richly anachronistic. For this reason I wanted to bring the reality of Krapp into something closer to ourselves: video. More and more are contemporary people filming their lives rather than living it and this was a way of showing something we can relate to more than a tape recorder and reels of tape. The play was also staged in 2008, thus documenting my translation at the time.

I took the liberty of making my own translation in the hopes that, following Badiou's reasoning in the beginning of chapter 1, the text that will be played on the stage will be in conformity with the reality of the Portuguese language in Brazil whilst making an academic contribution to the body of works by Beckett in Brazil. The translation came about as a means of staging the play with a language that could be

accessible here, and in this staging of the play I was an actor as well. Seeing through the perspective of an actor/translator I could visualize how the text needed to flow, keeping in accordance to the original text but obeying the natural flow of Brazilian Portuguese.

Chapter 3: Translation

Samuel Beckett

A ÚLTIMA GRAVAÇÃO

(Krapp's Last Tape)

Tradução de João Pedro Garcia D. Spinelli

Tarde da noite no futuro.

Retiro de KRAPP.

No centro à frente, uma escrivaninha da qual duas gavetas abrem em direção à platéia.

Sentado ante a mesa, de frente, ou seja, do lado oposto às gavetas, um velho fraco: KRAPP.

Calças pretas e surradas justas demais para ele. Uma jaqueta sem mangas com quatro bolsos grandes. Relógio e corrente de prata pesados. Camisa branca e suja aberta no pescoço, sem gola. Par surpreendente de botas brancas sujas, de tamanho 42 no mínimo, muito estreitas e pontudas.

Rosto branco. Nariz roxo. Cabelo cinza desarrumado. Barba por fazer. Muito míope (mas sem óculos). Duro de ouvido. Voz quebrada. Entonação distinta. Andar laborioso. Na escrivaninha um gravador de fitas com microfone e algumas caixas de papelão contendo rolos de fitas gravadas.

Escrivaninha e área adjacente iluminada por uma forte luz branca. Resto do palco escuro.

KRAPP mantém-se imóvel por um momento, solta um grande suspiro, olha para o relógio, vasculha os bolsos, tira de um deles um envelope, põe de volta, vasculha, tira um molho de chaves pequeno, leva aos olhos, escolhe uma chave, levanta e vai até a frente da mesa. Ele se inclina para frente, destranca a primeira gaveta, olha para dentro, vasculha com uma mão seu interior, retira uma banana grande, analisa-a, tranca a gaveta, devolve as chaves ao bolso. Vira-se, avança até a beirada do palco, pára, massageia a banana, descasca-a, solta a casca próxima aos seus pés, insere a ponta da banana na boca e permanece imóvel, olhar vazio para frente. Finalmente ele morde a ponta, vira para o lado e começa a andar de um lado para o outro na beirada do palco, na luz, ou seja: não mais do que quatro ou cinco passos para cada lado, pensativamente comendo a banana. Ele pisa na casca, escorrega, quase cai, se recobra, inclina-se e olha a casca e finalmente a empurra com o pé para o vão do palco, ainda com o corpo inclinado. Continua seu caminhar, termina a banana, retorna para a escrivaninha, senta-se, permanece um momento imóvel, solta um grande suspiro, tira as chaves do bolso, examina-as, escolhe uma chave, se levanta e vai até a

frente da escrivaninha, abre a segunda gaveta, retira uma segunda banana, analisa-a, tranca a gaveta, devolve as chaves ao bolso. Vira-se, avança até a beirada do palco, pára, massageia a banana, descasca-a, arremessa a casca no vão do palco, insere a ponta da banana na boca e permanece imóvel, olhar vazio para frente. Finalmente ele tem uma idéia, coloca a banana no bolso do colete com a ponta pra fora, e corre o mais rápido possível para a escuridão do fundo do palco. Dez segundos. Som alto de rolha estourando. Quinze segundos. Ele volta para a luz carregando um registro velho e senta-se na escrivaninha, coloca o registro em cima da escrivaninha, limpa a boca, limpa as mãos na frente do colete, junta-as sagazmente e as esfrega uma na outra.

KRAPP

(energicamente) Ah! (inclina-se sobre o registro, folheia, encontra a entrada que queria, lê) Caixa... três... rolo... cinco. (Levanta sua cabeça e olha para frente. Com entusiasmo.) Rolo! (pausa.) Roolo! (sorriso alegre. Pausa. Krapp inclina-se sobre a mesa, começa a olhar e cutucar as caixas.) Caixa... três... três... quatro... dois... (surpreso) Nove! Meu Deus! ...sete... ah! A safadinha! (Ele pega a caixa, olha para ela.) Caixa três. (Coloca ela na mesa, abre e olha para os rolos dentro dela.) Rolo... (confere no livro) ...cinco... (olha para rolos)... cinco... cinco... ah! O safadinho! (retira um rolo da caixa, olha para ele.) Rolo cinco. (Deita o rolo sobre a mesa, fecha a caixa três e coloca-a de volta com as outras, pega o rolo.) Caixa três, rolo cinco. (Krapp inclina-se sobre a máquina, olha para cima. Com entusiasmo.) Roolo! (sorriso alegre. Inclina-se, carrega o rolo na máquina, esfrega as mãos uma na outra.) Ah! (Olha para o registro, lê entrada ao pé da página.) Mãe descansando enfim... Hm... A bola preta... (Levanta a cabeça, olhar vazio para frente. Confuso.) A enfermeira negra... (Olha novamente para o registro, lê.) Leve melhora na condição intestinal... Hm... Memorável... o que? (Krapp olha mais de perto.) Equinócio, memorável equinócio. (Levanta a cabeça, olha com olhar vazio para frente. Confuso.) Memorável equinócio?... (Pausa. Encolhe os ombros, olha novamente para o registro, lê.) Adeus ao —(vira a página)—amor.

Krapp levanta a cabeça, reflete, inclina-se sobre a máquina, liga o botão e assume posição de espectador, ou seja, inclinando-se para frente, cotovelos na mesa, mão criando concha com ouvido em direção à máquina, olhando para frente.

FITA

(voz forte, meio pomposa, claramente de Krapp em um período anterior) Trinta e nove anos hoje, sólido como uma... (ajeitando-se em uma posição mais confortável Krapp derruba uma das caixas no chão, pragueja, desliga a fita, arremessa caixas e registro violentamente no chão, volta a fita ao início, liga, volta à postura habitual). Trinta e nove anos hoje, sólido como uma rocha apesar do meu velho ponto fraco, e quanto à intelectualidade, tenho razões pra suspeitar que estou na... (hesita)... na crista da onda — ou por ali. Celebrei a solene ocasião, como em anos recentes, silenciosamente na Casa de Vinhos. Nem viva! Separando o joio do trigo diante do fogo com os olhos fechados. Rabisquei algumas anotações no verso de um envelope. Bom estar de volta ao apê, aos meus trapos velhos. Acabei de comer, lamentavelmente, três bananas e me contive de comer uma quarta com dificuldade. Coisinhas fatais para um homem na minha condição. (veementemente) Elimine-as! (pausa.) A nova luz sobre minha mesa é um grande melhoramento. Com a escuridão a minha volta sinto-me menos só. (pausa.)

De certa forma. *(pausa.)* Adoro andar por ela, depois voltar aqui para... *(hesita)* ...mim. *(pausa.)* Krapp.

Pausa.

O trigo, vejamos, pergunto-me o que quis dizer com isso, quer dizer... *(hesita)* ...suponho que me refiro às coisas que vale a pena ter quando toda a poeira – quando toda a *minha* poeira assentar. Fecho os olhos e tento imaginá-las.

Pausa. Krapp fecha os olhos brevemente.

Silêncio extraordinário esta noite, eu esforço meus ouvidos e não ouço som algum. A velha senhorita McGlome sempre canta nesse horário. Mas não nessa noite. Músicas de sua época de menina, ela diz. Difícil pensar nela como uma menina. Mulher maravilhosa, no entanto. Connaught, tenho a impressão. *(pausa.)* será que cantarei quando estiver na idade dela, se algum dia chegar lá? Não. *(pausa.)* Será que cantei quando era menino? Não. *(pausa.)* Alguma vez cantei na minha vida? Não.

Pausa.

Estava escutando agora um ano antigo, passagens aleatórias. Não conferi no livro, mas deve ser coisa de pelo menos uns dez ou doze anos atrás. Naquela época acho que ainda morava com Bianca na Rua Kedar, que bom que me safei daquela, sim senhor! Um caso perdido. *(pausa.)* Pouco a dizer sobre ela, talvez uma homenagem aos seus olhos. Olhos calorosos. De repente os vi de novo. *(pausa)* incomparáveis! *(pausa)* enfim... *(pausa)* Essas velhas entradas são absurdas, mas muitas vezes as acho – *(Krapp desliga a fita, reflete, liga novamente)* uma ajuda antes de embarcar em um novo... *(hesita)* ...retrospecto. Difícil acreditar que algum dia fui aquele moleque. Que voz! Céus! E que aspirações! *(breve risada, Krapp ri junto)* e que resoluções! *(breve risada, Krapp ri junto)* Beber menos, particularmente. *(breve risada de Krapp sozinho)* Estatísticas. Mil e setecentas horas das precedentes oito mil consumidas em premissas licenciadas. Mais do que vinte por cento, digamos quarenta por cento de sua vida acordada. *(pausa.)* planos para uma vida sexual menos... *(hesita)* ...alienante. Última doença de seu pai. Busca frouxa por felicidade. Fiasco dos laxativos. Xinga o que chama de sua juventude e dá graças a Deus que ela acabou. *(pausa.)* Falso tom aí. *(pausa.)* Sombras do Opus...Magnum. Fechando com um berro para a providência. *(risada prolongada na qual Krapp participa)* O que permanece de todo aquele mistério? Uma garota num casaco verde amarrotado, na plataforma de uma estação de trem? Não?

Pausa.

quando eu olho—

Krapp desliga, reflete, olha para o relógio de pulso, levanta, vai até a escuridão do fundo do palco. Dez segundos. Rolha estourando. Dez segundos. Segunda rolha. Dez segundos. Terceira rolha. Dez segundos. Breve erupção de música tremulante.

KRAPP

(cantando)

Agora o dia acabou
A noite se aproxima-ima
Sombras—

Crise de tosse. Krapp volta à luz, se senta, limpa a boca, liga o toca-fita, continua em sua postura habitual.

FITA

--Para trás no ano que se foi, com o que espero ser projeção dos olhos velhos por vir, há com certeza a velha casa no canal onde mamãe morria, no tardio outono, após longa viuvez (*Krapp estremece*) e o- (*Krapp desliga, volta um pouco a fita, inclina o ouvido próximo à máquina, liga novamente.*) –morria, no tardio outono, após longa viuvez e o —

Krapp desliga, levanta a cabeça, olha com olhar vazio para frente. Seus lábios formam as sílabas de “viuvez.”. Nenhum som. Ele se levanta, vai até a escuridão do fundo do palco, retorna com um enorme dicionário, coloca-o na mesa, senta-se e consulta a palavra.

KRAPP

(lendo do dicionário) Estado—ou condição de estar—ou permanecer—um viúvo ou uma viúva. *(levanta a cabeça. Confuso)* Estar, ou permanecer? . . . *(Pausa. Ele olha novamente para o dicionário. Lendo)* “Profundas ervas da viuvez” . . . também de um animal, especialmente um pássaro. . . o pássaro viúva . . . Plumagem negra do macho . . . *(Ele levanta a cabeça. Entusiasmado)* O pássaro viúva!

Pausa. Krapp fecha o dicionário, liga a fita, continua em sua posição de espectador.

FITA

...banco próximo ao açude de onde eu podia ver a janela dela. Ali eu me sentava, no vento cortante, desejando que ela acabasse. *(pausa)* Quase ninguém, só alguns regulares, sopeiras, garotos, velhos, cães. Cheguei a conhecê-los bem – quero dizer de vista é claro! Lembro de uma tenra beldade particularmente, toda branca de pó de arroz, peitos incomparáveis, que empurrava um carrinho de capota preta, uma coisa bem funerária. Toda vez que olhava em sua direção, tinha os olhos em mim. No entanto quando fui ousado suficiente para falar com ela – não tendo sido apresentado – ela ameaçou chamar a polícia. Como se eu tivesse intenções com a virtude dela! *(risada, pausa)* O rosto que ela tinha! Os olhos! Como...*(hesita)* crisólitos! *(pausa)* enfim... *(Pausa)* eu estava lá quando-*(Krapp desliga, reflete, liga novamente)*--a cortina se fechou, uma daquelas porcarias castanho-sujo que se enrolam , jogando uma bola para um pequeno cachorro branco como ditava o acaso. Levantei a cabeça e lá estava. Tudo acabado e finalizado, finalmente. Fiquei sentado por um tempo com a bola na minha mão e o cachorro chorando e me cutucando. *(pausa)* Momentos. Meus momentos, momentos dela. *(pausa)* Os momentos do cachorro. *(pausa)* No final eu estendi até ele e ele a pegou na boca, delicadamente, delicadamente. Uma pequena, velha, preta, dura, sólida bola de borracha. *(pausa)* A sentirei, em minha mão, até o dia da minha morte. *(pausa)* eu poderia tê-la guardado. *(pausa)* mas a dei para o cachorro.

Pausa

enfim...

Pausa

Espiritualmente um ano de escuridão e indignância até aquela memorável noite em Março, na extremidade do pier, no vento gritante, que nunca será esquecido, quando subitamente vi a coisa toda. A visão finalmente. Isso, acho eu, é o que eu primariamente tenho que registrar essa noite, contra o dia que meu trabalho aqui estiver terminado e talvez não haverá mais lugar em minha memória, cálido ou frio, para o milagre que... (*hesita*)...para o fogo que acendeu aquilo. O que eu subitamente vi então foi o seguinte, que a crença que eu tinha por toda a minha vida, especificamente – (*Krapp desliga impacientemente, avança a fita, liga novamente*) – grande rochas de granito, a espuma alçando vôo sob a luz do farol e o anemômetro girando como uma hélice, claro para mim finalmente que a obscuridade que eu sempre me esforcei para manter subjugada é na verdade minha mais- (*Krapp pragueja, desliga, avança a fita, liga novamente*)- associação inquebrantável até minha dissolução de tempestade com a luz da compreensão e a chama- (*Krapp pragueja mais alto, desliga, passa para frente a fita, liga novamente*)- minha cabeça em seus seios e minha mão em cima dela. Nos deitávamos ali imóveis. Mas abaixo de nós tudo se movia, e nos movia, suavemente, para cima e para baixo, para um lado e para o outro.

Pausa

Passa da meia-noite. Nunca conheci tanto silêncio. A terra podia ser desabitada.

Pausa

Aqui termino-

Krapp desliga, volta a fita, liga novamente

-no alto do lago, com o barco, nadei até a margem, depois levei até a correnteza e deixei-o se desgovernar. Ela estava deitada nas tábuas com uma mão embaixo da cabeça e os olhos fechados. Sol queimando acima, uma pequena brisa, água bela e reluzente. Percebi um arranhão em sua coxa e perguntei o que tinha acontecido. Colhendo groselhas verdes, ela disse. Eu disse novamente que era inútil e sem motivo continuar e ela concordou, sem abrir os olhos. (*pausa*) pedi para ela olhar para mim e depois de alguns instantes –(*pausa*)-- depois de alguns instantes ela olhou, mas os olhos apenas fendas, por causa do brilho. Eu me inclinei sobre ela para que entrassem na minha sombra e eles se abriram (*pausa. Baixo*) deixaram-me entrar. (*pausa*) derivávamos por entre os caniços e o barco encalhou. Como eles se dobravam, suspirando diante da proa! (*pausa*) eu me deitei sobre ela com minha cabeça em seus seios e minha mão em cima dela. Ficamos ali imóveis. Mas abaixo de nós tudo se movia, e nos movia, suavemente, para cima e para baixo, para um lado e para o outro.

(*pausa*)

Passa da meia-noite. Nunca conheci-

Krapp desliga, reflete. Finalmente ele vasculha os bolsos, encontra a banana, tira do bolso, olha para ela, coloca de volta, vasculha, retira o envelope, vasculha, coloca de

volta o envelope, olha para o relógio, levanta-se e vai até a escuridão do fundo do palco. Dez segundos. Som de garrafa batendo em copo depois um breve sifão. Dez segundos. Garrafa batendo em copo apenas. Dez segundos. Volta um pouco vacilante para a luz, vai até a frente da mesa, retira as chaves do bolso, aproxima dos olhos, escolhe a chave, abre a primeira gaveta, olha para ela, tateia seu interior, remove um rolo, analisa-o, tranca a gaveta, coloca as chaves de volta no bolso, senta-se, remove o rolo da máquina, coloca-o em cima do dicionário, coloca o rolo virgem na máquina, retira o envelope do bolso, consulta o verso, deixa-o na mesa, liga a máquina, limpa o catarro da garganta e começa a gravar.

KRAPP

Acabei de escutar aquele desgraçado idiota que eu me considerava a trinta anos atrás, difícil acreditar que estive tão mal assim algum dia. Graças a Deus que tudo isso já se acabou. *(Pausa)* Os olhos que ela tinha! *(reflete, percebe que está gravando silêncio, desliga, reflete. Finalmente.)* Tudo ali, tudo ali, todos os—*(percebe que isto não está sendo gravado, liga a máquina)* Tudo ali, tudo nessa velha bola de muco, toda a luz e escuridão e fome e banquete das...*(hesita)*...das eras *(gritando)* Sim! *(Pausa)* Solte isso! Jesus! Tira a mente dele da lição de casa! Jesus *(Pausa. Meditativo.)* Ah, enfim, talvez ele estivesse certo. *(Reflete. Percebe. Desliga. Consulta envelope.)* Pah! *(Amassa e joga fora. Reflete. Liga a máquina.)* Nada a dizer, nem um pio. O que é um ano agora? A razão azeda e o banco de ferro. *(Pausa)* Alegrado pela palavra rolo. *(com entusiasmo)* Roooolo! Momento mais feliz dos últimos meio milhão. *(pausa)* Dezesete cópias vendidas, das quais onze por preço de mercado para bibliotecas livres circulando além dos mares. Ficando conhecido. *(pausa)* Uma libra seis e alguma coisa, oito tenho pouca dúvida. *(pausa)* Rastejei para fora uma ou duas vezes, antes do verão ficar frio. Sentado tremendo na praça, afogado em sonhos e ardendo para me findar. Nem viva! *(pausa)* Últimos caprichos. *(Veementemente)* Mantenha os abaixo! *(pausa)* Queime os meus olhos lendo *Effie* de novo, uma página por dia, com lágrimas novamente. *Effie*. . . *(pausa)* Será que eu teria sido feliz com ela, lá no Báltico, e os pinheiros, e as dunas. *(pausa)* Será? *(Pausa)* E ela? *(pausa)* Pah! *(pausa)* A Fanny apareceu algumas vezes. Fantasma magricela de vadia. Não fazia muita coisa, mas acho que era melhor que um chute na mula. A última vez não foi tão ruim. Como que você consegue, ela disse, com sua idade? Eu disse que tava economizando para ela a vida toda. *(Pausa)* Fui para *Vespers* uma vez, como quando estava com calças curtas. *(pausa. Canta)*

Agora o dia acabou

A noite se aproxima-ima

Sombras—*(tossindo, depois quase inaudível)*—da noite

Invadem o céu.

(Ofegando) Fui dormir e caí do banco da igreja. *(Pausa)* As vezes eu pensava a noite se um último esforço não teria—*(pausa)* Ah termine sua biritá agora e vá para a sua cama.

Continue com essa besteira de manhã. Ou deixe como está. *(pausa)* Deixe como está.

(pausa) Fique deitado no escuro—e divague. Esteja de novo no desfiladeiro numa véspera de natal, colhendo azevinho, o de fruta vermelha. *(pausa)* Esteja de novo no Croghan numa manhã de Domingo, na neblina, com a vadia, pare e ouça os sinos.

(pausa) E assim por diante. *(pausa)* Esteja de novo, esteja de novo *(Pausa)* Toda aquela antiga tristeza. *(pausa)* uma vez não foi o suficiente para você *(pausa)* deite-se em cima dela.

Longa Pausa. Ele repentinamente se curva em direção à máquina, desliga, arranca a fita, joga ela fora, coloca a outra, avança até a passagem que ele quer, liga, escuta olhando para frente.

FITA

--groselhas verdes, ela disse. Eu disse novamente que era inútil e sem motivo continuar e ela concordou, sem abrir os olhos. *(pausa)* pedi para ela olhas para mim e depois de alguns instantes —*(pausa)*p- depois de alguns instantes ela olhou, mas os olhos apenas fendas, por causa do brilho. Eu me inclinei sobre ela para que entrassem na minha sombra e eles se abriram *(pausa. Baixo)* deixaram-me entrar. *(pausa)* derivávamos por entre os caniços e o barco encalhou. Como eles se dobravam, suspirando diante da proa! *(pausa)* eu me deitei sobre ela com minha cabeça em seus seios e minha mão em cima dela. Ficamos ali imóveis. Mas abaixo de nós tudo se movia, e nos movia, suavemente, para cima e para baixo, para um lado e para o outro.

Pausa. Os lábios de Krapp se mexem. Som algum.

Passa da meia-noite. Nunca conheci tanto silêncio. A terra podia ser desabitada.

Pausa.

Aqui eu acabo esse rolo. Caixa—*(pausa)*—três, rolo—*(pausa)*—cinco. *(pausa.)* Talvez os meus melhores anos já passaram. Quando houve uma chance de felicidade. Mas eu não iria querê-los de volta. Não com o fogo em mim agora. Não, eu não iria querê-los de volta.

Krapp imóvel olha para frente. A fita continua em silêncio.

CORTINA

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