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Notes on a Newly Discovered Draft of the Poem 'Le Petit Sot'

Dirk Van Hulle and Pim Verhulst

During our work on the transcriptions of the manuscript of *Malone meurt* for the Beckett Digital Manuscript Project, we recently discovered a draft of the poem 'Le Petit Sot' which, to the best of our knowledge, was so far unknown to Beckett scholars.¹ In this article, we try to situate the draft in its material and chronological context, and argue that it contributes to the emergence of a pattern in Beckett's work, suggesting that what he once referred to as a 'revelation' was a gradual process rather than a sudden epiphany.

The 'Petit Sot' poems were first mentioned by James Knowlson in *Damned to Fame*, where he showed that, instead of switching suddenly from English to French as a language of composition after the war, Beckett 'did rather more than dip his toe into French waters in 1938-9', by writing poems in his newly adopted language (1997, 293). While some of these were published in the postwar period, for example the twelve 'Poèmes 37-39' in *Les Temps Modernes* (no. 2, November 1946), Knowlson also mentions a specific set of shorter poems that were only known at the time to a few of Beckett's closest friends:

He refers in letters to something that he has written called 'Petit sot' ('Little Fool'). We can be sure that at least one twenty-four line poem about 'Petit sot' was written by Beckett, because the manuscripts in his hand and typescript were given by him personally to Avigdor Arikha. Twenty additional short poems exist, however, which form an independent cycle based again on the figure of 'Le Petit sot'. The first poem is actually called 'Le Petit sot', and the others follow him (always in the first person) in a variety of guises: as horserider, traveller, lion, moth, singer, searcher after the moon, and so on. They recreate the games or fantasies of a little boy. They are simpler in vocabulary, syntax and ideas than any of the other poems of Beckett at that time and look like stylistic exercises. (294)

The longer twenty-four line poem that Knowlson mentions is known as 'les joues rouges', a title based on its opening lines: 'les joues rouges les yeux rouges / et de haine plein le cœur' ['the red cheeks the red eyes / and the heart full of hatred']. The poem has been published by

Anne Atik in *How It Was: A Memoir of Samuel Beckett* (2001), which includes a facsimile of the manuscript but no transcription (Atik, 2001, 10). Ruby Cohn also includes and discusses ‘les joues rouges’ in *A Beckett Canon* (2001, 99-100). What Knowlson refers to as ‘[t]wenty additional short poems’ are in fact twenty-one poems. These remain unpublished, except for ‘Le Petit Sot’, which is reproduced in the first volume of Beckett’s letters (Beckett, 2009d, 653). No existing collection of Beckett’s poetry includes any of the ‘Petit Sot’ poems.² The main reason is that their authorship remains somewhat unclear, although a distinction can be made between ‘les joues rouges’ and the other poems in the series.

‘les joues rouges’

The manuscript of ‘les joues rouges’ was found tucked away in the eleven-volume Cassirer edition of *Immanuel Kants Werke* (1921-2), which Beckett received in two huge parcels from Munich on 5 January 1938 (Van Hulle and Nixon, 2013, 137). Some twenty years later, in late December 1956, he gifted the set to his friend, the painter Avigdor Arikha (Pilling, 2006, 151). Arikha’s wife, Anne Atik, explains that her husband did not discover the draft until by accident four years later, when Beckett inscribed it for him during a meeting at the Closerie des Lilas: ‘pour l’inventeur / Avigdor Arikha / 9 août 1960 / Closerie des Lilas / de son ami / Sam Beckett’ (qtd. in Atik, 2001, 7, 10). According to Atik, it was Arikha who made the typescript copies of the poem, one of which is preserved at the University of Reading (UoR MS 2912). Consisting of a single, syntactically convoluted sentence that runs on for twenty-four lines, it is written in the third person, whereas the shorter poems consistently use the first. Still, ‘les joues rouges’ is considered to be a part of the ‘Petit Sot’ series because this is revealed to be the name of the protagonist in line 20 of the manuscript:

en cet état Petit Sot
 se promène dans le bois
 tristement le long d’un fossé
 où les ^{de} saffrans [sic] ^{jolis jeunes} safrans
 blanches mauves jaunes striées
 sans amour et sans haine
 étaient ce qu’ils devaient être (qtd. in Atik, 2001, 10)

[in this state Little Fool / wanders in the wood / sadly along the ditch / where pretty young saffron flowers / white purple yellow striped / without love and without hatred / were what they had to be]

According to Cohn, the reference to love and hatred manifested by the Little Fool ‘is not dissimilar to the “love” of some of the French published poems’ of the late 1930s, and she also notes that the penultimate line (‘sans amour et sans haine’) literally quotes the second to last line of Paul Verlaine’s ‘Il pleure dans mon cœur’, which opens with the question ‘Il pleure dans mon cœur / Comme il pleut sur la ville ; / Quelle est cette langueur / Qui pénètre mon cœur ?’ (Verlaine, 1968, 192) [It rains in my heart / As it rains on the town, / What is this languor / That penetrates my heart]. The closing stanza indicates the circularity of this melancholy, the worst pain being the fact that one does not know why one feels such pain in a heart ‘without love and without hatred’: ‘C’est bien la pire peine / De ne savoir pourquoi / Sans amour et sans haine / Mon cœur a tant de peine !’ (192).³ Atik also detects a reference to the fifth poem in Guillaume Apollinaire’s cycle ‘À la Santé’, which Beckett ‘loved and recited often’ (2001, 7). The poems were written in 1911 when Apollinaire was detained for a week in the Santé prison – which Beckett’s apartment in the Boulevard Saint-Jacques overlooked – and they were published in *Alcools* (1913): ‘Que lentement passent les heures / Comme passe un enterrement’ (Apollinaire, 1920, 154).⁴ In ‘les joues rouges’, the long hours will serve to relieve the protagonist from his hatred:

de haine que les longues heures
vont ~~finir par~~^{lentement} lui enlever
~~finir par~~^{lentement} les blanches heures
les heures ~~jaunes~~^{d’or} et les heures grises
et que la nuit achèvera (qtd. in Atik, 2001, 10)

[of hatred which the long hours / will slowly take away from him / the white hours slowly / the golden hours the grey hours / and which the night will conclude]

These intertextual links, together with the manuscript draft in Beckett’s hand, settles the authorship question for John Pilling: ‘How anyone could seriously doubt that “les joues rouges” was by anyone other than Beckett “passes my persimmon” (as he was wont to say)’

(2015, 201). The status of the other ‘Petit sot’ poems, not included by Cohn in *A Beckett Canon*, is less certain.

The ‘Petit Sot’ Series

Knowlson’s caution about the poems’ authorship is due to the fact that the two typewritten sets in which they survive reveal different versions and bear conflicting inscriptions.

1) *The Putman collection*: One set, a five-page typescript, was found among the papers of the painter Bram van Velde left with Jacques Putman: ‘Written on them in Bram’s hand are the words, “Poèmes à [not de] Beckett”. So there has to be at least a small measure of doubt as to the authorship, in spite of the common subject’, Knowlson is careful to conclude (1997, 761n163). According to Pilling, the inscription reads ‘Poèmes à Bram [van Velde]’ (2015, 205), which means that the poems may not have been dedicated *to* Beckett but *by* Beckett, to his painter-friend. Pilling and Lawlor mention additional annotations on the typescript, also in Bram’s hand: “Beckett (first page)”; “Beckett?” (recto fifth page) and “Poèmes à Sam” (verso fifth page)’ (UoR MS 5479-2, 256). Each of the twenty-one poems has a title, usually a single word preceded by a definite article, except for the last: Le Petit Sot, Le Coursier, Le Voyageur, Le Lion, Le Chanson, La Lune, La Toupie, La Sorcière, Le Diable, Le Papillon de Nuit, La Nuit, Le Rêve, Les Pleurs, L’Ami, Le Grenier, La Pensée, Les Flammes, Le Soleil, Le Coquillage, Le Roi, Qu’ils disent.

2) *The Minuit collection*: The second set is part of the Beckett materials at Les Éditions de Minuit and contains two series of twelve poems each – so nine less than the Putman set – which are placed in parallel columns. The ones on the left-hand side, headed ‘Poèmes de Suzanne Beckett recueil “Le Sot”’, are untitled, but the ones on the right-hand side, headed ‘Poèmes – attribués à Beckett’, do have titles and these match the Putman collection (Nixon, 2014, 285). However, the poems in the two columns are not identical, as Pilling explains: ‘the left-hand one [is] apparently the product of the original impulse towards composition, the right-hand one recognizably an attempt to refine its opposite number by revision, re-jigging and a general tightening-up of what has to remain relatively loose-limbed’ (2015, 205). The left-hand column is judged to be of ‘extreme simplicity’ by Pilling and Lawlor, and ‘might almost have been written by an intelligent and precocious child’. Whereas the right-hand

poems ‘maintain a simple and straightforward manner’, they also appear to show ‘a greater flair and degree of literary sophistication’ (UoR MS 5479-2, 256). Pilling therefore advances the following hypothesis about their genesis:

There were, in any event, at least two stages of composition, with the later stage in the hands of an experienced writer, even if the former stage was not. In 1938 Beckett of course had a great deal of writing experience, but relatively little experience in writing creatively directly into French. What could be more natural, we might ask, than that he might choose to adapt someone else’s work, alongside the work he was either planning to undertake or actually undertaking in translating himself? (2015, 205)

Pilling regards ‘les joues rouges’ as the origin of the ‘Petit Sot’ cycle, ‘the poem which seems to give a kind of birth to the little rascal’ from which the remaining twenty-one developed, four of them (‘Le Petit Sot’, ‘La Lune’, ‘Le Grenier’, ‘Qu’ils disent’) actually using the name explicitly (205, 208n11; 2006, 151). That Beckett wrote ‘les joues rouges’ seems beyond all doubt, but, due to conflicting paratexts, it remains a matter of debate whether he also (co-) authored the others, or merely revised them. While Pilling admits that ‘[w]e are dealing necessarily with a balance of probabilities, not cast iron certainties’ (2015, 205), he is ‘certain as circumstances permit him to be that *all* the “final” versions of these poems are Beckett’s, and that very probably most if not all of the “dry runs” are also’ (206). Even if the typewriter that was used for the two sets preserved in the Putman and Minuit collections may have been his, ‘its typeface accidentals matching up with typescripts which were certainly from the mind as well as the hand of Samuel Beckett’ (205), ‘[m]atters are not helped’, Pilling admits, ‘by the fact that only “les joues rouges” has, by the skin of its teeth (as it were), left any extant manuscript trace’ (202).

The Draft of ‘Le Petit Sot’ and Its Material Context

Recently, however, a new draft of a ‘Petit Sot’ poem has come to light during our genetic analysis of *Malone meurt* for the Beckett Digital Manuscript Project. On the back inside cover of the second notebook containing the original French manuscript, Beckett scribbled the following twelve lines:

je suis le petit sot
il faut être grand pour être malin
ils me disent de me tenir bien

~~xxx~~⁵

de faire comme eux
si je veux
vivre heureux et puis
~~aller~~ aller au paradis

~~de faire comme eux~~
~~si je veux~~
vivre heureux et puis
aller au paradis

faut⁶

[I am the little fool / one must be grown up to be clever / they tell me to behave well /
to do as they do / if I want / to live happily and then / go to paradise]

This undated draft is a slightly longer version, with variants and repeated lines, of the first poem in the complete and typewritten Putman set, where it carries the title 'Le Petit Sot':

je suis le petit sot
il faut
être grand pour être malin
et se tenir bien
et faire comme eux
et devenir heureux (qtd. in Beckett, 2009d, 653).

At first sight, the fact that the draft occurs in a manuscript notebook of a text that was written between November 1947 and May 1948 seems to be at odds with the late 1930s origin of the 'Petit Sot' poems, implying that the draft of 'Le Petit Sot' predates the other material in the

notebook by roughly ten years. This is not impossible, as the type of notebook is similar to the six notebooks in which Beckett drafted the manuscript of *Watt* in the early 1940s, and the first part of *Malone meurt* is also contained in the fifth notebook of *Watt*, so Beckett may have acquired them as a set before the war. Still, it is remarkable that this poem would have been written on the inside of the back cover of a notebook which, at that moment (late 1930s), was still brand new or at least consisted entirely of unwritten pages.

This is the second of the two notebooks containing the first draft of *Malone meurt*. Beckett started writing on the first page of this second notebook on 18 January 1948, and finished his draft of *Malone meurt* on 30 May 1948 (MS HRC SB 7-4; BDMP5, FN2, 110r). Pages 111r and 112r contain a prose fragment that bears some resemblance to *L'Innommable* and in which the first-person narrator expresses the wish to define himself totally: ‘Si je pouvais me définir à un ^{n'importe quel} moment donné je pouvais me définir totalement, en tant que corps décomposé se décomposant [...], je connaîtrais[s] l'étendue de mon exil’ (FN2, 111r). [If, at any given moment, I could define myself completely, as a decomposing body [...], I would know the extent of my exile].⁷ The next thirty-nine blank pages (112v-151r) are followed on page 151v by a draft of Beckett’s English translations of the poems ‘je suis ce cours de sable qui glisse’, ‘que ferais-je’ and ‘je voudrais que mon amour meure’, which first appeared as ‘Trois poèmes’ in *Transition* 48.2 (June 1948, 96-7), together with the English versions. On the last two pages of the notebook (152r-152v) Beckett made jottings while he was writing *Malone meurt*. These are followed by the inside of the back cover, featuring the draft of ‘Le Petit Sot’. It is written in Beckett’s hand with a writing tool (grey pencil) that differs from the red and black ink used elsewhere in the notebook.

Dating the Draft

The sequence of poems can be dated with a little more precision on the basis of Beckett’s correspondence. He mentions having written a first ‘P.S.’ poem in an unpublished letter to George Reavey of 7 July 1938 (Pilling, 2015, 207n4). According to Pilling and Lawlor, this is ‘almost certainly the poem beginning “les joues rouges”’ (UoR MS 5479-2, 255), but it may also have been one of the shorter ones, such as ‘Le Petit Sot’. Certain is that Beckett did not send Reavey a copy of either poem before 28 February 1939, when he was already at work on a follow-up: ‘I am doing a second Petit Sot & shall send them, when it is finished’

(Beckett, 2009d, 653). Two months later, the couple had even evolved into a ‘series’, judging from Beckett’s letter to Thomas MacGreevy of 18 April 1939:

I have no work to show beyond a few poems in French, of which I think you have already seen some. There are two very long ones that do not belong at all to the series, being quite straightforward descriptive poems (in French) of episodes in the life of a child. I do not know what they are worth. The few people I have shown them to liked them, but they are friends. (657)

Beckett’s statement about the two ‘very long’ poems is somewhat confusing. According to Pilling and Lawlor, one of them must be ‘les joues rouges’ (UoR MS 5479-2, 255), but then it is strange that Beckett would describe it as unrelated to the ‘Petit Sot’ series.

Exactly how many poems there were at this point and which ones were passed on to MacGreevy or Reavey is unknown, but they had certainly been sent to the latter by 14 June 1939, when Beckett implored him to ‘please send me back my Petit Sot’ (Beckett, 2009d, 663), repeating his request on 16 June 1939: ‘Let me have P.S. back when you can’ (666). He also stated his reasons for wanting it or them back: ‘Il me tarde de le mettre en morceaux’ (666). Knowlson takes Beckett’s comment to mean that he ‘intended to break up the longer poem [‘les joues rouges’] into much shorter units with separate titles’ (1997, 295), and so does Pilling (2006, 84). But we cannot exclude the possibility that Beckett may also be referring to one or more of the shorter poems in the sequence, so the expression could mean ‘I can’t wait to tear it [or “him”] to pieces’, as the editors of Beckett’s letters suggest (2009d, 667n1) – thus registering uncertainty about their quality on his part. Reavey eventually returned the poem(s), by 7 July 1939, (667n1). The rest of the series was probably written in the interval or followed soon thereafter, which broadly situates them between early 1938 and late 1939. If the chronology of the twenty-one poems in the Putman collection reflects the order in which they were written, then ‘Le Petit Sot’, the first in the series, must be situated towards the front of the timescale, but Beckett may of course have rearranged the sequence.

While these occasional references in letters suggest that the shorter ‘Petit Sot’ poems were indeed authored by Beckett, in addition to ‘les joues rouges’, the discovery of the new draft in the second manuscript notebook of *Malone meurt* does not quite settle the matter, though it offers new information. When compared to the typescript version of ‘Le Petit Sot’, it certainly shows the same patterns of ‘re-jigging’ and ‘general tightening-up’ that Pilling

previously identified as shaping the differences between the left- and right-hand columns of the twelve ‘Petit Sot’ poems in the Minuit files. The opening line of the poem – ‘je suis le petit sot’ – remains unchanged, and the fifth is only altered slightly from ‘de faire comme eux’ to ‘et faire comme eux’. But the second line is broken up with an enjambment – ‘il faut / être grand pour être malin’ – and the third line is shortened from ‘ils me disent de me tenir bien’ to ‘et se tenir bien’. This notion of others telling him what to do is partially resumed in ‘Qu’ils disent’, the last poem in the series. It refers back to the first one in that the protagonist now thinks he is too grown-up to be such a big fool, but it is unclear if Beckett removed the phrase ‘ils me disent’ from the draft of ‘Le Petit Sot’ in order to develop it into a separate poem that would conclude the collection. The closing line underwent the most substantial revision, as it was reduced from ‘si je veux / vivre heureux et puis / ~~aller~~ aller au paradis’ to ‘et devenir heureux’ – the prospect of paradise being withheld in typical Beckettian fashion – and it is followed by five lines that repeat earlier words and phrases, some of them crossed out.

The draft does not confirm beyond all reasonable doubt that Beckett was the author of this particular poem, let alone of the entire ‘Petit Sot’ sequence apart from ‘les joues rouges’, but it does provide further proof that he was at least closely involved in the revision of the collection.⁸ Although Knowlson admits that ‘the discovery of these new poems does not drastically change our view of Beckett as a poet’ (1997, 295), as a token of his craftsmanship they do perhaps deserve a less peripheral place in his work than the ‘slumbering limbo’ they reside in at present (Pilling, 2015, 206). Especially considering the fact that his translations or even appropriations of other poets, such as the *mirlitonades* or *Long after Chamfort*, figure prominently among his own work in the various editions of his poems.

An Early Sapo Presaging the *mirlitonades* and ‘Comment dire’

With regard to the manuscript of ‘les joues rouges’, found in one of the volumes of *Kants Werke*, Atik notes that ‘Kant might have appreciated the irony of Pure Reason protecting a Little Fool’ (2001, 7). It is no small irony either that a draft in a sequence of poems about a ‘little fool’ was hidden in the folds of a manuscript about another young boy, perhaps slightly older, who is described as a ‘simpleton’ (Beckett, 2010, 15). Sapó is also called a ‘dolt’ (13). ‘In the midst of tumult, at school and at home’ he is said to have ‘remained motionless in his place, often standing, and gazed straight before him with eyes as pale and unwavering as a

gull's' (17) – not unlike his predecessor, the 'petit sot', whom John Pilling fittingly describes as 'a boy without an agenda, placid or resigned in the face of whatever he sees or whatever happens to him, not expecting to make any kind of impact, and content to disappear in the background' (Pilling, 2015, 203). Even more striking than the resemblance between the characterization of the 'petit sot' and 'Sapo' (who later becomes 'Macmann', 'son of man', a Beckettian Everyman) is the stylistic resemblance between Beckett's early, pre-war French poem and his late poems in French, the *mirlitonnades*.

Stylistically, the simplicity of verses such as 'vivre heureux et puis / aller au paradis' (from 'Le Petit Sot') is very similar to the pared-down form of such *mirlitonnades* as 'comme au / berceau / toute parole bue / comme au / berceau / folie à nouveau mue' (Beckett, 2012, 219) or as Beckett's shortest poem 'lid eye bid / bye bye' (221), which was drafted in the so-called 'Sottisier' Notebook, a label that also encapsulates the idea of the 'sot'. There is even a link with Beckett's very last poem, 'Comment dire', which opens with the word 'folie'. The theme is not dissimilar either. In 'Le Petit Sot' the poem's structure is such that it ends in paradise: 'il faut être grand pour être malin / ils me disent de me tenir bien / de faire comme eux / si je veux / vivre heureux et puis / aller au paradis' ['one must be grown up to be clever / they tell me to behave well / to do as they do / if I want / to live happily and then / go to paradise']. The theme of what comes after this life, be it paradise or something else, and the wish to know what one will find 'over there', recurs in the late texts such as *Stirrings Still* (the wish to know what it would be like 'to end where never till then'; Beckett, 2009a, 114) and 'Comment dire' / 'what is the word' (the 'folly for to need to seem to glimpse' something 'afaint afar away over there'; 134).

The overarching idea spanning the period between the 'little fool' and the 'folly' of the last work is Beckett's poetics of ignorance, questioning and undermining erudition, not just the 'loutishness of learning' but also our general agnosticism (in the etymological sense of 'not knowing') vis-à-vis the 'au-delà'. If Beckett is not only the reviser but the author of 'Le Petit Sot' and possibly its companion poems, they would confirm an interesting pattern that emerges from the grey canon: the gradual rather than sudden nature of Beckett's so-called post-war 'revelation' (Knowlson, 1997, 351-3). In this respect, there is an interesting parallel between Beckett's developing poetics of ignorance and his decision to write in French. The decision to start writing in French was not taken after the Second World War but was prepared by several attempts to write poetry in French in 1937-38, as mentioned before (293); similarly, Beckett's so-called revelation in 1945 – later thematized in *Krapp's Last*

Tape as relating to ‘the dark I have always struggled to keep under’ (Beckett, 2009b, 9) – was only the crystallization of a process that was already underway since the second half of the 1930s. To the extent that ‘the dark’ relates to a criticism of the Enlightenment project,⁹ the latent scepticism in the newly discovered ‘petit sot’ draft (‘ils me disent de [...] faire comme eux’) might be read as part of the build-up to Beckett’s post-war revelation, which seems to have been more gradual than the epiphanic word ‘revelation’ suggests.

Notes

1. The research leading to these results has received funding from the European Research Council under the European Union’s Seventh Framework Programme (FP7/2007-2013) / ERC grant agreement n° 313609.
2. The editors of *The Collected Poems of Samuel Beckett* (2012), John Pilling and Seán Lawlor, originally presented all the ‘Petit Sot’ poems, including ‘les joues rouges’, together with a full discussion of the authorship issue, as a second appendix, separated from the rest of the collection, but they were asked to remove the material by the Estate of Samuel Beckett, ‘on the grounds that there was no evidence, internal or external, that the poems actually were Beckett’s’ (Pilling, 2015, 199). In addition to Pilling’s article in *JOBS* 24:2 (2015), which reproduces the gist of the argument, the typeset sheets of the first page proofs are available at the University of Reading (UoR MS 5479-2).
3. Verlaine was a constant in Beckett’s works throughout his career. For example, in the second notebook of *Molloy*, Beckett openly alludes to Verlaine when the voice in Molloy’s head becomes a whisper: ‘Et j’écouterais encore ~~ce~~ ~~cher~~ ~~voix~~ ce cher souffle lointaine, depuis longtemps tue (on dirait du Verlaine) et que j’entends enfin’ (BDMP4, MS-HRC-SB-4-6, FN2, 24v-25r; qtd. in O’Reilly, Van Hulle and Verhulst, 2017, 194). The reference is to the last lines of the sonnet ‘Mon rêve familial’, from the first section (‘Melancholia’) of his *Poèmes saturniens*: ‘Et pour sa voix lointaine, et calme, et grave, elle a / L’inflexion des voix chères qui se sont tues’ (Verlaine, 1968, 63-4). In the published version, the reference to Verlaine was suppressed: ‘Et j’écouterais encore ce souffle lointain, depuis longtemps tu’ (Beckett, 1951, 59) [‘And if I went on listening to that far whisper, silent long since’ (Beckett, 2009c, 38)]. Much later, in 1982, when Beckett was translating the play *A Piece of Monologue* into French (*Solo*) and needed an

equivalent for the line ‘All gone so long’, he made the note ‘(V). une âme en allée vers d’autres cieux’ in the top margin of the first typescript, referring to Verlaine’s poem ‘Art poétique’ (Van Hulle and Nixon, 2013, 61). The extant library in Beckett’s apartment in Paris contains a 1968 Pléiade edition of Verlaine’s *Œuvres poétiques complètes*, with an insert listing five titles of poems; ‘Il pleure dans mon cœur’ is not among them (see the BDL, www.beckettarchive.org/library/VER-OEU.html).

4. In addition to *Le Poète Assassiné* (Paris: Au Sans Pareil, 1927) and *Le flâneur des deux rives, suivi de contemporains pittoresques* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975), there is a copy of Apollinaire’s *Œuvres Poétiques* (Paris: Gallimard, 1967) in Beckett’s personal library, though it does not show any reading traces (see the BDL, <http://www.beckettarchive.org/library/APO-OEU.html>).
5. This line is entirely crossed out beyond legibility.
6. BDMP5, MS-HRC-SB-7-4, FN2, inside back cover; qtd. in Van Hulle and Verhulst, 2017 (forthcoming), which also includes an image of the page (Fig. 8). The cancelled word ‘faut’ appears as a loose jotting underneath the previous two stanzas.
7. A transcription of this aborted prose fragment, together with an English translation, is provided in the ‘Appendix’ at the back of Van Hulle and Verhulst 2017.
8. Suzanne did occasionally write in Beckett’s notebooks, see for example the crossword puzzle in the second notebook of *Molloy* (BDMP4, MS-HRC-SB-4-6, FN2, 144r; O’Reilly, Van Hulle and Verhulst 2017, 46, 240), but her handwriting is markedly different from his.
9. In the context of the Enlightenment, it is telling that Beckett read Kant in conjunction with much simpler fare during the period when the ‘Petit Sot’ poems were written, as he told George Reavey on 27 September 1938: ‘No work. I read an average of an hour a day, after an hour the illusion of comprehension ceases, Kant, Descartes, Johnson, Renard and a kindergarten manual of science: “L’air est partout” [“air is everywhere”], “Le plomb est un métal lourd et tendre” [“lead is a soft heavy metal”]’ (2009d, 643-4). As Pilling and Lawlor note, his eclectic reading suggests that ‘Beckett was testing out the expressive potential of a reduced palate’ (UoR MS 5479-2, 256).

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