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Between “Little Latitude” and a “Discreet Liberty”

Beckett's Bilingualism and the Translation of His Work into a Third Language

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Abstract

As with any other author, the contradiction between fidelity and license is an important issue to take into account when translating Beckett. However, working with a Beckett text presents a unique characteristic, in that he himself provided versions of his novels and plays into English and French. This article examines the position of the translator as regards Beckett's bilingualism and considers the effects that this situation may have in the translator's practice. Additionally, a minimum set of principles are suggested as guidelines when translating Beckett into a third language.

Résumé

Comme pour toute autre traduction, la tension entre la fidélité au texte et la liberté de s'en éloigner est à prendre en considération dans la traduction d'une œuvre de Samuel Beckett. Mais, dans le cas de Beckett, l'œuvre à traduire présente une caractéristique unique puisqu'elle offre déjà un modèle de traduction en français ou en anglais. Cet article examine la position du traducteur face au bilinguisme beckettien et considère l'impact qu'une telle situation linguistique a sur sa pratique. En outre, l'article suggère un certain nombre de lignes directrices pour traduire les œuvres bilingues de l'auteur dans une troisième langue.

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Keywords

Samuel Beckett – bilingualism – translation – globalized Beckett – translation guide – the role of the translator

At first sight, translators of Beckett's work are in a privileged position compared to those translating other writers, since he himself translated most of his novels and plays into English or French. In the few cases where this did not happen, the process of translation by others was intensely scrutinised by the author himself. Hence, translators of Beckett's work into a third language typically have two versions at their disposal, both English and French, and it makes sense to think that Beckett's decisions in each case may provide a guide for the translation of his work into further languages. That is, perhaps some indication of the path to take, be they suggestions, hints as to how to proceed, warnings, etc., can be gained through an analysis of Beckett's bilingual corpus. The aim of the present chapter is to explore this issue in order to see if something like a "user's manual" can be evolved here for the benefit of the translators of Beckett's work, also taking into account the kind of information that can be gleaned from Beckett's numerous translations of other authors, particularly at the beginning of his career. The final objective is to ask whether we might establish a minimum set of principles, a sort of translator's safety net of recommendations to be used when translating his *oeuvre*.

An initial problem arises in the nature of the task itself: Beckett never considered himself a model to follow in any sense, nor did he provide advice to anyone in matters of writing. The only occasion on which he came grudgingly close to the role of literary advisor was in a letter of 22 April 1958 to the then fledgling author Aidan Higgins. There is no reference to translation in the letter, but one comment by Beckett may have some relevance. The young Higgins had sent Beckett one of his stories, "Killachter Meadow," asking for an opinion. Beckett wrote back to Higgins with a list of wrong terms and typos, followed by a long paragraph in which he gave a deeper assessment of the piece. What he found inadequate in Higgins's style was that the narrator of the story reached out for the inner selves of the characters, something that for Beckett was beyond the power of literature and which created an impression of falseness: "The vision is so sensitive and the writing so effective when you stop blazing away at the microcosmic moon that results are likely to be considerable when you get to feel *what is a possible prey and within the reach of words (yours) and what is not*" (Beckett 1983, 157; my emphasis).

An awareness of the limited power of language, a familiar Beckettian topos, might stand equally as a general caveat for any translator of his work. Throughout his life Beckett himself repeatedly experienced what he saw as the impossibility of translation, expressing it thus in a letter to Barbara Bray on 29 November 1958, describing his progress in rendering *Textes pour rien* into English: "I have translated about half a page of the first Texte with the usual calamitous loss of tension and precision at every turn" (2014, 184). Beckett often disparaged the practice of translation, which he found painful, laborious, even tedious, be it of his own work or those of others, as he wrote to Barney Rosset on 22 January 1954 after listing the tasks he had to do to revise his texts in other languages and in his own translations: "Sick of all this old vomit and despair more and more of ever being able to puke again" (2011, 448). When he revisited previous work of his own, he often did so only out of a sense of duty, hating going back to a text that he had long since finished, and that after an arduous process of creation. These are discouraging prospects for the translator who seeks guidance from a writer who translated his own work.

But, paradoxically, however much he loathed translation, Beckett never stopped doing it, devoting much of his time to it, sometimes working to the point of exhaustion.¹ One of the most thankless tasks he ever undertook was a translation of the anthology of Mexican poems compiled by Octavio Paz and commissioned by UNESCO. What is perhaps surprising is the enormous effort he made to do a professional job, given that he hated every minute of it and that the task "was undertaken to take the chill of [sic] the pot in the lean winter of 1949–50" (qtd. in Cohn 2005, 184). The notes that survive from his translations of the poems from Spanish into English reveal exhaustive lists of words, consultations with native speakers, encyclopaedic entries, and long definitions of words in French and English. Beckett even made "hypotheses on the grammatical nature and meaning of certain words" (Carrera, 165). The original typescript, housed at the Harry Ransom Center, contains handwritten corrections of some of the poems, which indicates that Beckett's work continued until the end. Translators in search of clues to Beckett's translation practice, will find themselves between two poles: the daunting task ahead (the difficulty, the absence of points of reference, even the tedium) and the need to persevere with little help from Beckett.

A brief review of what other translators have said about their work with Beckett is a potentially fruitful point of departure in our search for a way for-

1 Again, this was part of his activity as a writer. "Work, work, writing for nothing and yourself," he urged Aidan Higgins in the aforementioned letter (Beckett 1983, 157).

ward. Richard Seaver was not the first to work with Beckett on a translation of one of his texts, but in his memoirs he helpfully expounds on the experience of translating with Beckett shortly after “the siege in the room.” Early in 1953, prompted by the young man’s insistence, Beckett had asked Seaver to translate “La Fin” into English for its publication in the English-language magazine *Merlin*, as he himself felt disinclined to reconsider the text. After much painstaking labour and polishing, Seaver finally considered his translation adequate to send to its author. When Beckett and Seaver sat down together to revise the translation, the process was meticulous, a “line by line scrutiny [...] an inching progress” (Seaver, 209). Beckett scrupulously checked each paragraph, until the last line of the story was revised. But even then he insisted on seeing the proofs before they went to print (which in this case did not happen: the editor, Alexander Trocchi, never sent the galleys to the author. The story was published in English in 1954, with many mistakes).

Of course both Seaver (who also translated “The Expelled” into English) and, later, Patrick Bowles (who translated *Molloy*) felt themselves under the severe pressure of having to show their work in progress to the author. Beckett insisted that the difficulty resided in the strangeness of his text, not in the translator’s lack of expertise. In any case, “to try to translate with the Man looking over your shoulder, even an ocean away, was the way to madness” (Seaver, 253). Patrick Bowles, for his part, described a similar process to Seaver’s when working with Beckett on *Molloy*: he first met the author on a daily basis to revise work he had done the previous day; then they would work together on the translation; and finally they would work separately again, with Beckett revising longer excerpts written by Bowles: “When the MS was finally completed both Beckett and I, separately and together, went over it several times, adding further corrections, so that when the MS was finally sent to the printers it had undergone 8 versions” (qtd. in Cohn 1961, 618). Their method of working was “extremely taxing, to put it mildly” (Bowles, 110).

A highly skilled translator, Elmar Tophoven, also wrote about his experience of working with Beckett on the translation of his work. The procedure was similar to that of Seaver and Bowles, although for Tophoven the translation was from the original, French or English, into German. Tophoven would translate the text on his own, and then he and Beckett would carefully go through it together. Tophoven would read his translation and Beckett, original in hand, would interrupt the translator if anything was amiss, with a discussion then ensuing. In terms of translating Beckett’s writings into other languages, Tophoven’s experience is of interest in that the bulk of his work focused on syntax and rhythm, rather than semantics: “In our work we discuss the linguistic details of the text almost exclusively. He never gives interpretations,

explains the characters or anything like that with me" (Elmar Tophoven, 318). So once a translator attains a minimum understanding of the work,² the focus must fall on the text as a primarily linguistic artefact. Interestingly, Tophoven made use of Beckett's own translations into French or English not only to get at "the authorised interpretation," but also to "get a proper proportion of repeated sounds in each phrase" (Elmar Tophoven, 319). Tophoven also insisted on the meticulous nature of working with a Beckett text: some words must be repeated even if they are separated by many pages. Thus, lexical precision is paramount.

Naturally, the phonological structure of different languages work in different ways, and looking for exact equivalence may lead to awkward results in the target language. Although he acknowledged the existence of limits here, Tophoven nevertheless favoured the establishment of a parallel relationship "when the two languages can be made to overlap so to speak" (319). What is clear from the authoritative position of someone who worked side by side with Beckett is that the sounds in both languages, including rhythms and accents, should be connected in the two versions. In his own translation work, Beckett was of the same opinion. In 1959 he translated a radio play by his friend Robert Pinget from French (*La manivelle*) into English (*The Old Tune*), taking great pains to reproduce the effect of the original in the text for English listeners, using whatever means he had at his disposal: "I tried to keep down Irishism but it kept breaking through. Couldn't get his rhythms and loose syntax any other way" (Beckett 2014, 255). Of Elmar Tophoven's demanding task in rendering Beckett's work in German, his wife, Erika, herself an accomplished translator of the Irish author's texts,³ stated that "From the beginning, Top [Elmar] was aware that Beckett's texts left a translator little latitude, owing to the precise meaning and placement of each word" (Erika Tophoven, 12).

Translators who did not have their work supervised by Beckett had to develop their own strategy. Barbara Wright's translation of *Eleutheria* (1996), written by Beckett in French in 1947, is anomalous in the Beckett canon in that it is one of the few plays that does not have a parallel English version made by the author. The translator, who was on her own, approached the task in

2 The translator's basic understanding or affinity with Beckett's work is taken for granted. As Beckett said to the Egyptian scholar Nadia Kamel, "En effet, la traduction est très importante, surtout quand elle est faite par des personnes qui comprennent l'oeuvre qu'elles traduisent" (qtd. in Kamel, 143).

3 Erika Tophoven's role was instrumental in the translation of Beckett's texts from English into German: "Many later texts, particularly those translated from an English original, are credited to both Elmar and Erika" (Ackerley and Gontarski 2004: 584).

the spirit of Beckett's text, resolving on two principles: "I studied all Beckett's self-translations, and decided that I must never use a word that he would not have used. On the other hand it was out of the question to try to imitate him" (Wright, vi). The second condition that she imposed upon herself, not to imitate the author, seems a remote danger when translating Beckett. Only in an expressly parodic manner could Beckett sound *falsely* Beckettian, as Martin Amis condescendingly wrote: "All you need is maximum ugliness and a lot of negatives. 'Nor it the nothing never is.' 'Neither nowhere the nothing is not.' 'Non-nothing the never -'" (82). The first condition, however, expresses a more profound point, requiring not only a thorough knowledge of Beckett's work, but also of his translations and self-translations, implying a huge task from the very outset. But one should not take this requirement to the extreme; even an expert translator such as Wright would have been flexible about such a self-imposed principle. After comparing Michael Brodsky's and Barbara Wright's translations of *Eleutheria*, Gerry Dukes concludes that the great achievement of her version is that she transforms the matter of "what would Beckett have done" into an inconsequential aspect: "Wright's rendering of *Ton canotier avait un couteau* as 'Your boater had an osprey in it' is greatly preferable to Brodsky's nonsense but whether it sorts well with Wright's avowed intention of not using a word that Beckett would not have used is a moot point" (79).⁴ A reasonable acquaintance with Beckett's creative universe is a *sine qua non* for an adequate translation of his work. In his seminal book, *Galería de moribundos* (1976), Francisco Pérez Navarro, an early and perceptive critic of Beckett's work for Spanish readers, lamented that in the translations of *Watt*, by Andrés Bosch, and *Molloy*, by Pere Gimferrer, both of these respected scholars had translated *râle* as "murmullo del trigal" (wheat field murmur) and "aves zancudas" (long-legged birds), ignoring the emblematic presence of the corncrake ("rascón" in Spanish) in Beckettian ornithology (Pérez Navarro, 36).

Wright is widely acclaimed for her inventiveness (for example, in translating puns from Beckett's text), while staying faithful to his spirit. In a thought-provoking article on Wright's version of *Eleutheria*, Régis Salado praises "the discreet liberty" taken by the translator in this particular case,

because it relies on choices left 'to the discretion' of the translator, that strange double agent of literature whose ancillary character, 'at the service' of another, is compensated for by the freedom offered to him or her

4 Michael Brodsky's translation of that same sentence reads "Your oarsman had a knife" (qtd. in Dukes 1998, 78).

by the language itself, which is always prodigal in alternative solutions when it is a question of transferring an act of writing from one language to another.

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The question, then, is just how much leeway does a Beckett text allow when it is being translated? Should "little latitude" be the norm, as Erika Tophoven claimed, or should the translator's creativity be encouraged, as Régis Salado seems to imply? An obvious preliminary answer is that it depends on the work being translated. Wright might have felt empowered to give free rein to her imagination (within the limits imposed by the original text) since *Eleutheria* bears the marks of a Beckett still in the making, not yet the master of austerity that his later plays demonstrate.⁵ The contrary argument might be used for Beckett the mature author, a writer in absolute control of his material whose verbal precision demands an equally precise translation.⁶ In this case, the responsible translator should minimize personal elaboration.

Beckett's own practice as a translator, however, raises another issue for the person rendering his texts into a third language. Beckett never simply translated his own work: rather, he added, modified, and changed what he did not like. As he wrote to Matti Megged on 3 December 1962, "How difficult the transfer is, even into a kindred tongue, I know only too well. And I, when I can't translate, have the right to try and reinvent" (2014, 518). This attitude opens up the possibility of tangible, if limited, room for manoeuvre on the part of the translator: not *carte blanche*, but rather an assumption of the precise nature of the responsibility that comes with accepting the task of translating Beckett. To quote Patrick Bowles on his translation of *Molloy* jointly with the author:

One reason for the translation taking so much time was that it was not a translation as that term is usually understood. It was not a mere matter of swapping counters, of substituting one word for another. It was as far apart from machine translation as one could imagine. Time and again

5 Similarly, in translating into Spanish *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* (2011), the first novel Beckett wrote, Miguel Martínez-Lage and I agreed that the text demanded a level of intense creativity, one that we happily embraced, as a reckless sense of disorder resounds powerfully through the book. For a full description of the process of translation of *Sueño con mujeres que ni fu ni fa*, see Fernández (2013).

6 This, in fact, is one of the classic principles of translation: "The more important the language of a text, the more closely it should be translated" (Newmark, 1).

Beckett said that what we were trying to do was to write the book again in another language—that is to say, write a new book.

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As the author of the text, Beckett was entitled to change and modify the original, whereas a translator—by definition, an anonymous, invisible vehicle for the transmission of a work into another language—must not, and cannot, do this. But it would be equally wrong, I think, for a translator to remain impervious to the implication of Beckett's act of writing a different book when he translated one of his works into English or French. If his own writing practice involved taking literature to its verbal limit, translators should equally keep in mind the ideal of searching for the "unword," and hence be prepared to take risks. Helen Astbury has looked at Beckett's practice of self-translation from French, showing how he initially proceeded with caution, particularly regarding colloquial turns of expression (e.g., the binary-turned phrase, or the repetition of a word in the same sentence), which he invariably rendered in correct English. He sought to compensate for the spontaneity of the French idiom by choosing a colloquial equivalent in his mother tongue, or by representing his hesitancy in the sentence by writing the two available terms. As Astbury notes, however, by the late 1950s, Beckett had broken with this self-imposed rule and began to export into English the binary-turned sentences that were inimical to English ears: "From the late 1950s onwards, his translations into and original compositions in both of his languages begin to do, literally, what they please with syntax [...] pushing both French and English to their limits, to achieve what we now know as 'Beckettian' language, whichever language he may have been writing in" (452). By dismantling the opposition between original and translation, Beckett created a malleable area around his texts that should perhaps encourage the translator to explore the flexibility of language.

People who consulted Beckett on translating his texts, attest that he maintained the same anti-dogmatic, flexible attitude that he had shown with his own versions. Antoni Libera, the Polish playwright and translator of Beckett's dramatic works, frequently spoke with the author about translation: "His [Beckett's] suggestion was always to use the original version in which the work was written, but also sometimes the second version. If you prefer an expression from the second version, use it" (qtd. in Van der Weel and Hisgen, 346). When Antonia Rodríguez Gago, the doyenne of Beckett Studies in Spain, sent Beckett her translation of "Neither," whose title in Spanish reads as "ni uno ni otro" (four words in Spanish for one in English), Beckett suggested "NiNi", which is meaningless in Spanish, as a possible solution for the sake of concision (Van

der Weel and Hisgen, 347). What these examples suggest is that a search for the right word should not exclude recourse to one's own imagination and hence to escaping the confines of absolute correctness. In his translation into Spanish of *Stirrings Still*, Miguel Martínez-Lage kept the "extrañeza sintáctica" (syntactic awkwardness) of the English title (Martínez-Lage, 40) and produced the beautifully rendered *A vueltas quietas*, which is equally forced, oxymoronic and powerfully evocative. He could have chosen the more literal *Agitaciones todavía*, the redundant *Quietud aún inquieta*, or other partially successful, half-baked but tolerable options: *Todavía un soplo*, *Palpitar aún*, or *Un último estremecimiento*, which lack emotional resonance. *A vueltas quietas* is the kind of translation that Beckett's texts demand: brilliant, dazzling, and equally faithful to the original. An example from the title of a Beckett play in Hungarian is equally illustrative of the boldness required of a translator. In his 1998 version of *Krapp's Last Tape*, Péter Zilahy arrived at an almost identical title as the English version, *Krepp utolsó szalagja*, but he changed the vowel in the protagonist's name because *krepp* in Hungarian is the name of the material used for toilet paper, thus creating associations analogous to Beckett's intentions: "The toilet paper can be associated with the nihilistic worldview of the character Krapp, an analogy that can be confirmed by the English sound of the name. It brings to mind the pun comprised in Godot's name: 'Krapp' is like 'crap'—yet not quite the same" (Minier, 104).

Early in his career, Beckett had evolved a concept of translation that included versatility and a degree of daring. His practice of translation involved the kind of text that could not be effectively translated in a conservative way. Perhaps it was his translating of surreal poems from French into English in the early 1930s (mainly for Nancy Cunard's *Negro* anthology and the 1932 Surrealist issue of *This Quarter*) and the "Anna Livia Plurabelle" section of the highly experimental *Finnegans Wake* from English into French (together with Alfred Péron) that enabled him to develop the skills necessary to resolve problems of translation by means of imagination. In translating poems by the Surrealists, Beckett made whatever alterations he considered necessary or which took his fancy in order to produce a vividly rendered piece. The iconoclastic attitudes of the Surrealists and their disregard for the established norms of respectable society struck a chord with the young Beckett, which was perhaps crucial for his taking certain liberties with the translations of their poems: "In a way, Beckett's rendering discloses a form of faithfulness to the spirit rather than to the letter of the text" (Sardin and Germoni, 743). According to Pascale Sardin and Karine Germoni, Beckett might have introduced elements into his translations that could indicate his distance from some of the Surrealists' tenets (e.g., his sarcasm regarding the romantic union with the female lover that Breton and

Eluard advocated), but he always considered non-negotiable the adequate rendering of the musicality and dynamism of the poems.

The clearest example of this approach is perhaps found in Beckett's version of Arthur Rimbaud's "Le Bateau Ivre", which he translated in 1932 but which was not published until 1976. Beckett knew Rimbaud well, and was acquainted with his letters (Lawlor and Pilling, 360). In his "Drunken Boat" he combined a faithful translation of the poem with an audacious rendering into English. He scrupulously respected the lines which could be translated with full effect, yet gave free rein to his creative impulse when literal translation proved inadequate, rearranging word order, changing terms from the original, and making use of his knowledge of old and archaic words. Such a procedure allowed Beckett to produce "a poem/translation that never lapses into the literal and the predictable for any length of time, being as turbulent and effervescent as the famous text with which it engages" (Macklin, 3).

Another problem concerns the negotiations that the translator must conduct between the English and French versions of Beckett's work. Producing a hybrid translation based on two originals would present serious methodological problems: when the two originals do not coincide, something that in Beckett happens quite often, the translator would be forced to choose only one of the texts, which could lead to whimsical decisions. Authenticity would also be an issue: Brazilian poet Paulo Leminski, for instance, translated *Malone Dies* (*Malone Morre*, published by Brasiliense, 1986; reprinted by Conex, 2004) into Brazilian Portuguese while using both the English and French originals as his source. For Ana Helena Souza, who translated Beckett's trilogy and *How it is* into Brazilian Portuguese, Leminski's version bears heavily the imprint of the translator himself as he moves between the two texts: "It then seems that the translation is left without an original, you really have no way to compare it to only one text; in that sense, it is very different" (Homem de Mello 2016; my translation).

The convenience of sticking to the translation of just one original, either in English or French, should therefore be stressed. At the same time it is highly advisable to have the other original available for consultation. As Brian T. Fitch has noted, English and French were both present when Beckett wrote: "In whichever of the two languages Beckett happens to be writing at a given moment, there is always the presence of the other language with its wholly different expressive potential hovering at his shoulder, always at arm's reach and within earshot" (156). Why shouldn't the process of translating Beckett into a third language accommodate this same practice? There is nothing to prevent the translator from trying to unearth the "textual birthmarks" present in the version he or she is working with, just as Beckett did with his self-translations,

"advertising the presence of another language beneath the translated text in their undomesticated syntax" (Mooney, 67). This is not a new approach: Félix de Azúa belongs to the first generation of Spanish intellectuals who translated Beckett's work in the 1960s and wrote about their experience, himself being responsible for the Spanish version of *Mercier et Camier*, "Premier amour", plus an assortment of short texts. For his edition of *Residua*, comprising the translation of *From an Abandoned Work*, *Assez*, *Imagination Morte* *Imagenez* and *Bing*, he followed the original texts whether in English or French, but he also confronted them with Beckett's translation because "it is particularly instructive to consider the minimal variations that he [Beckett] introduces in his texts and, above all, the kind of words from one or the other language that he chooses to substitute for the original ones" (Azúa, 15; my translation). Thus, translating Beckett entails not simply the transmission of content from one language to another, but also a conscious approximation to his creative process, which necessarily implies an exercise of the imagination, because Beckett "demands readers abandon their arrogance as *readers* (of other books) and let them get carried away by their nose. By nose I mean ear, eye and intuition" (Azúa, 16).

Such an open approach to the translation of Beckett today probably corresponds to what might be termed a "globalized" Beckett, the result of the extension of his work into non-Anglophone cultures where hitherto his canon had had little impact. Fábio de Souza Andrade, a Brazilian lecturer at the University of Sao Paulo, who recently published his versions of *Fim de partida*, *Esperando Godot*, *Dias felizes* and *Murphy* in Brazilian Portuguese, defends the contribution of non-Western cultures in the understanding of Beckett in the 21st century. Instead of considering Beckett's work as a closed, hermetically sealed container, he advocates a reading of his novels and plays as an opportunity to re-enact Modernism in different contexts. In his translation of *Murphy* (2013), Andrade seeks to forge connections with the society into which it is transplanted, and finds a point of affinity in the Brazilian appetite for Modernist works, and in the willingness in Brazilian culture to recreate them "in a free combination with local traditions" (Andrade, 7). In a process which is itself not devoid of danger, Andrade sees the need for an annotated edition, with an appendix providing the necessary context, but without interfering with the reading. Refusing to explain the text to Brazilian readers, he tries instead to recreate the complexity of the novel via a judicious understanding of the powers of imagination:

The range of possibilities between the 'nothing to be done' attitude, traditional, respectful and reserved, and the infinite allegorical over-interpret-

tations must be crossed with a responsible freedom, regardful of Beckett self-translator example—reinventing details without sacrificing the spirit. In that way, the singularity of young Beckett may find its way into Brazilian literary debate, little by little disclosing the resonances and harmonics between his series of stories and plays.

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In his article on his translation of *Murphy*, which contains this passage, Andrade mentions the “considerable loss and frustration” (8) that dealing with Beckett’s text entails, which brings us back to the initial point of the present discussion and reinforces the idea that something is always unattainable in the process of translation. Each version attempts to hold words within the net of the printed page, but only certain portions of the author’s intentions can be fully captured.

Following from the above analysis, the following contradictory, ambiguous, inexact and provisional notions are tentative guidelines for the translation of Beckett’s work into a third language:

1. Precision is the key word. One should look for the right expression in each case and be satisfied with nothing less. Many revisions may be necessary before a final version can be achieved.
2. A translation into a third language should make use of Beckett’s two versions, in English and French. Work must depend primarily on only one of these, but the other should be consulted. Differences between the two versions can help to inspire the third.
3. Translating Beckett is also a matter of “fundamental sounds,” in Beckett’s phrase. Proper attention to rhythm and sound, as if the text were meant to be read aloud, is required to produce a satisfactory result.
4. “Know your Beckett”. Translating even a single piece requires knowing as much of his literary production as possible. Beckett’s words and ideas seep through from early to later writings. One should try to evoke his universe with concepts and terms which have a resonance in his work.
5. One should be bold, take risks, and infuse one’s translation with imagination and inventiveness. A boring Beckett is not Beckett.

A translator should disregard any or all of these points if the results are unacceptable in any way.

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