

Mood. These editions, whether with or without Beckett's consent I cannot determine, agree with the French in correcting the number of Mr. Graves's visits from three (comically accurate) to four (numerically accurate). At the very least, this correction establishes an editorial crux in Beckett's continually expanding body of work; in the edition apparently used by Mood, one misses both the comedy of the misenumeration and the preparation that it gives for Mr. Graves's subsequent remarks.

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### Notes

<sup>1</sup> John J. Mood, "The Personal System"—Samuel Beckett's *Watt*," *PMLA*, 86 (1971), 255–65.

<sup>2</sup> Reference is to the fifth printing of Grove Press's first American edition (1959). For reasons shortly to become apparent, the particular American edition used is of crucial importance.

<sup>3</sup> *Watt*, trans. Ludovic and Agnès Janvier, in collaboration with Beckett (Paris: Les Editions de Minuit, 1968), p. 148.

### Mr. Mood replies:

Park's comment occasioned an odd experience for me. I was quite certain, not unlike Watt, that I had covered myself by acknowledging somewhere in my article that my examination of the flaws in *Watt* probably itself had some omissions. I was aware that I had no doubt overlooked some mistakes in *Watt* and thought I had said so.

But I cannot find such an acknowledgement. And a friend of mine, who likewise thought she remembered it, couldn't find it either. So much for the verification principle. And so firmly are we all imbedded in Watt's world. Even when we think we've worked out at least an innerly consistent little system (e.g., a *PMLA* article), and even acknowledged the theoretical possibility of error—even then, flaws creep in. Or, more embarrassing, as in this case, the final cover is blown. Or at least missing. And the world being what it is, someone will call attention to the fact.

Which is to say you scored, Mr. Park. I did indeed miss the contradiction between the stated number of visits and the actual number described. May I now, for the record, say that I am sure there are others in *Watt* I have missed? And I was likewise not aware of changes in editions of *Watt*. The world is indeed in a queer shape if deliberate flaws are going to be removed. What will they think of next?

I do have one small comfort, which I have appropriately saved for my exit so that it will be at least a relatively graceful one. I originally wrote the article before the French translation of *Watt* appeared. When reading *PMLA* galley proofs for the article, I noted that fact but apparently cost factors prevented revision. Another edifying experience for me. I might add that there are, in the printed version of my article, four typographical errors as well. Still another instructive experience.

Not really liking to be edified, perhaps I can draw some small solace from Beckett's own brilliant rendering of the last line of *Watt*: in English—"no symbols where none intended"; in his French translation—"honni soit qui symboles y voit." Garters indeed!

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### Sterne's "Dearly Beloved Roger"

To the Editor:

In his Rabelaisian fragment, Sterne wrote, then eliminated, these words: "'Dearly Beloved Roger, the Scripture moveth thee & me in sundry Places' 'tis so recent a Story, & will bear so villainous an Application I shall never hear an End on't." This is one of the passages Melvyn New's text (*PMLA*, 87, 1972, 1083–92) makes available for the first time. He observes that "Dearly Beloved Roger" is a bawdy parody of the *Book of Common Prayer*. Sterne is, however, more immediately parodying a recently published and popular anecdote about Swift. John Boyle, Earl of Orrery, gives this account in his *Remarks on the Life and Writings of Dr. Jonathan Swift* (Dublin: Faulkner [1751]): "As soon as he [Swift] had taken possession of his two livings [Laracor and Rathbeggan], he went to reside at Laracor, and gave public notice to his parishioners, that he would read prayers on every Wednesday and Friday. Upon the subsequent Wednesday the bell was rung, and the Rector attended in his desk, when after having sat some time, and finding the congregation to consist only of himself, and his clerk ROGER, he began with great composure and gravity, but with a turn peculiar to himself, 'Dearly beloved ROGER, the scripture moveth you and me in sundry places.' And then proceeded regularly through the whole service" (p. 32). Other biographers of Swift in the 1750's—his cousin Deane Swift (1755) and John Hawkesworth (1755)—repeated the story. Wherever Sterne found it, it was thus clearly, as the fragment states, a "recent . . . Story." In the context of Sterne's Rabelaisian wit, his question bore "so villainous an Application" not only

because it parodied the service of Morning Prayer, but also because it seemed to trifle with the personal reputation of a famous man of recent memory: amidst wordplay upon “roger,” it travestied an incident which, at least for Deane Swift, revealed Swift as “a man of high religion,” a priest unusually devoted to the care of his parishioners’ souls.<sup>1</sup> Sterne concluded he would “never hear an End on’t,” and omitted the passage altogether. But New, by preserving it for us,

has made available yet another piece of evidence for Sterne’s extensive knowledge of Swift.

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Note

<sup>1</sup> *An Essay upon the Life, Writings, and Character, of Dr. Jonathan Swifi* (London: Bathurst, 1755), p. 116.