

Scraps...

Reading Residuality

13-15th April 2027



Marco Blažo

Krapp: Past midnight. Never knew such silence. The earth might be uninhabited.

Pause.

Krapp: Here I end.

Krapp switches off, winds tape back, switches on again.

“Here I end” declares Krapp, the titular protagonist of Samuel Beckett’s 1958 play *Krapp’s Last Tape*. Yet an ending is impossible. Why?

The central figure of the drama is the past, which does not exist, is absent, and will never return. The tape functions as a residue of the absolute past. It refers only to absence in the fullest sense of the word (J. Momro). In the present, only the voice remains – the aforementioned remainder. Beckett’s character appears as the embodiment of what is left after life, yet these remnants cannot be assembled into a coherent whole. His tapes constitute an archive of fragments: voices detached from bodies, memories severed from experience, and meanings that continually evade stabilization.

The notion of residuality becomes particularly suggestive when considered in relation to the protagonist’s surname. As J. Campbell reminds us

In colloquial English *crap* is “nonsense, rubbish”; *crappy* is “rubbishy” or “disgusting”. *Crap* is “faeces”, with the verb “to *crap*” meaning “to defecate”. It is this far more common use of the word *crap* that the audience cannot fail to bring to mind in relation to the play. All the associations merge in this overriding definition of *crap* as excrement and waste. The tapes that Krapp has accumulated during his lifetime, are these all just waste, just *crap*? The “memorable equinox” about which the thirty-nine-year-old Krapp is so enthusiastic, is this just rubbish, meaningless, *crap*?

All of this about Krapp we know or at least recognize. But do we remember the protagonist’s planned great novel? The “shadows of the opus... magnum”? The young Krapp’s grand literary dream ultimately proves a failure. What remains of it? A shadow. This conference asks whether *s(krapp)* is indeed merely rubbish, meaningless, *crap*.

The remainder – *ichnos* in Greek – resists definition and capture. It is elusive, dispersed, devoid of sensory properties and form, unrepresentable. It is “something” that persists, although it should not properly persist at all (A. Zawadzki). As J. Derrida observes, the reversal of the value of Leftovers – “from scraps into life source” – itself relies on an excluded remainder which, while remaining outside the whole, simultaneously sustains it. At the same time, it resists conceptual and signifying structures; it cannot be absorbed, enclosed, or subjected to the mechanisms of meaning (A. Zawadzki).

Finally, what role does the archival remainder fulfil? On the one hand, the archive disrupts historical understanding by presenting itself as a “scrap” or a “raw trace of lives that asked in no way to be told in this manner.” On the other hand, it “brutally opens onto an unknown world” (G. Didi-Huberman).

We invite papers that engage with a wide range of topics, including (but not limited to):

- Dramaturgies of leftovers
- Ruins of narrative in modernist and postmodernist literature
- Repetition and the production of absence
- Counter-archives and minor archives
- Archival remains and archival silences
- Fragmentary archives
- Scraps as by-products of creative practice
- Literary scraps as an alternative history of the text
- Editing, censorship, and excision as the production of literary scraps

- Scraps as a form: literature composed of fragments and broken utterances
- Strategies of fragmentation and formal disruption in literature
- Aestheticizing scraps within literary practice
- Drafts, notebooks, and unfinished works
- The afterlife of abandoned literary project
- Residual subjectivities and fragmented selves
- Garbography
- Scrap as a quasi-archive or anti-archive

We also welcome proposals that engage with the conference theme from perspectives not explicitly represented in the topics listed above.

The conference invites contributions from scholars working in literary studies, comparative literature, cultural studies, philosophy, media studies, theatre and performance studies, manuscript and genetic criticism, as well as related disciplines. We particularly encourage papers exploring fragments, remnants, residues, textual remains, incompleteness, literary waste, and other forms of residuality in literature and culture.

Please submit an abstract of 200–300 words, accompanied by a short biographical note, by **15 January 2027**.

Submissions should be made via the conference website:

<https://sites.google.com/view/scraps-conference/home?authuser=0>

The conference fee is 250 PLN / 65 EUR / 70 USD.