Intermedial Performativity and the Human Mind in Samuel Beckett's Teleplays

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Samuel Beckett's corpus centres on the characterization, examination and imaginative exploration of the human mind, encompassing the realms of consciousness, cognition and perception. In his teleplays, this focus is distinctively achieved through the performances of different media, which this article refers to as 'intermedial performativity'. This term not only designates the semiotic contents of performance in intermedial forms, but also highlights the cooperative performances of the material media themselves, along with their uncharted possibilities and effects. This article delves into the ways in which intermedial performativity in Beckett's teleplays realizes several unique configurations of the human mind, such as its split state and its transfiguration to a posthuman condition. This exploration not only sheds light on Beckett's artistic vision and cosmic ontology, but also brings attention to the reverberations and implications of intermediality for humanity and its potential transformations.

Introduction

After *Waiting for Godot* (1952), which split apart the stage of Western theatre like a thunderstorm, Samuel Beckett (1906–1989) reached a peak of creativity in the 1950s and 1960s, venturing into various mass media, including radio, film and television. Throughout all these art forms, the investigation of the human mind, or 'champ intérieur' (interior field) – to use his own words (Beckett 1984: 125)[a] – consistently takes centre stage, covering areas of consciousness, perception and cognition, with which Beckett experiments through the materiality of the involved media. This connection between media and the human mind in Beckett's works arises from

specific social conditions exemplified by an essential shift in human cognition and perception brought about by electronic media. As argued by Marshall McLuhan in 1966, 'the technological simulation of consciousness' has 'already extended our senses and our nerves by the various media' (McLuhan 1994: 3–4). Thus, it is repeatedly argued among Beckett scholars that media not only serves as the form or carrier of his artistic vision but also as its self-reflexive content (Kiryushina *et al.* 2021; Rapcsak *et al.* 2022).

Furthermore, Beckett's creative surge not only engages with different media but also blends them into a single work, making it inherently intermedial, which is tied to his concern with the human mind. Just as the central nervous system relies on the integration of different sensory modalities to connect with cognitive functions (Mesulam 1998), Beckett adeptly employs intermedial techniques to characterize human interiority. Recent Beckett scholarship has abundantly demonstrated the intermedial dimension in Beckett's works (McTighe 2020; McMullen 2022), and it is the goal of this article to highlight specifically the interconnections between intermediality and human mind in Beckett's teleplays. Television, the latest and most integrative medium during Beckett's time, combines techniques of radio broadcasting and film shooting, already being intermedial itself and highly appealing to synaesthesia (McLuhan 1994: 336). Moreover, the affinity in shape between the television box and the skull – Beckett once insisted that the stage for his theatre be a 'very closed box' (Beckett 2011: 659) – clearly emphasizes the centrality of television in Beckett's experiments on human interiority. Beckett has created a total of six teleplays, including *Was Wo* adapted from the stage play *What Where*, and this article intends to explore the ways in which they envision a unique configuration of human perception and cognition through a distinctive intermedial formation. Such exploration not only sheds light on Beckett's artistic vision and cosmic ontology, but also brings attention to the reverberations and implications of intermediality for humanity and its potential transformations.

Intermedial Performativity

One of the most significant features of intermediality in Beckett's teleplays is performativity, which can first be contextualized in the historical conditions of post-war art. In the society of spectacle dominated by mass media in post-war Europe and America, artists were not only implicitly influenced by new technologies, but also frequently concerned themselves with explicitly displaying the process of that influence. They sometimes drew attention to the transformation of traditional art forms by new media, such as neo-avant-garde concrete poetry referencing industrial typesetting and mass printing. Other times, they juxtaposed different mass media to generate defamiliarized perceptual and cognitive effects in the spectacle society, such as John Cage's performance art *Variations VI* (1966), in which dancers' movements trigger microphones to amplify inexplicable and random sounds produced by their contacts, and a TV set shows video designed by Fluxus artist Paik Nam June to

complement the rhythm and flow of the sounds and movements. The rationale for such intermedial performance is to demonstrate the cooperative performances between media and humans, putting them on equal footing in terms of performative agency. In short, in post-war intermedial art, the working mechanisms of new technological and media apparatuses are deliberately displayed in ways aiming to show how they produce new ways of thinking and feeling.

This article designates such an intermedial display of media agency as intermedial performativity. 'Performativity' as a keyword in contemporary western critical theory describes how language and art, always considered 'fictional', are in effect 'real', for they can perform substantial effects on reality (Aurelius *et al.* 2016: 12–21). Moreover, performance studies in the 1960s further legitimize the performative power of media. Richard Schechner (2020: 28) argues that performance is 'showing doing: pointing to, underlining, and displaying doing', which opens performative subjects not only to humans with mimetic and representational skills but also to nonhuman beings, such as animals, things, technology, media, and so on. As long as they are capable of displaying their acts to arouse attention and, in turn, effect change, they are capable of performance.[b] Intermedia thus serves as a platform on which different media perform together with agency, producing conceptual and perceptual possibilities for the audience. As Chengzhou He writes, 'intermedial performativity refers to what happens to the performative power of text when it travels from one medium to another, and what effects the mixing or interactions of different media bring about to texts involved' (He 2020: 433). Intermedial performativity thus designates not only the semiotic contents of performance in intermedial forms but also the cooperative performances of the material media themselves and their potentials and effects.

In Beckett's teleplays, such intermedial performativity plays a significant role, mainly directed at a singular presentation of the human mind. Bernard Stiegler dissects the inherent connection between mind and media and proposes the concept of 'originary technicity', arguing that human interiority is, at its origin, the effects of technologies external to it. He believes:

> when we still deludedly speak of human 'interiority' – whether it be a soul, free will, consciousness or some other property that is deemed to pre-exist all exteriority – we are putting the human cart before the technological horse: any interiority has actually been constituted retroactively by the process of technological extériorisation. (Bradley 2011: 123)

In other words, human interiority emerges from an environment that is always already mediated by technicities. This is precisely how intermedial performativity connects with human interiority in Beckett's teleplays: by displaying the performative effects of different media that focus on different sensory modalities, Beckett on one hand alludes to the operation of the human mind through separate sensory organs and different cognitive functions, and on the other demonstrates how the multimodal human interiority is, in fact, the result of intermedial performativity.

Furthermore, the different media apparatuses in Beckett's teleplays not only perform in cooperation but also in conflict. In contemporary intermedial studies, emphasis is placed on both the distinctiveness and interweaving of media forms. As Lars Elleström argues, 'Media, however, are both different and similar, and intermediality must be understood as a bridge between medial differences that is founded on medial similarities' (Elleström 2010: 12). However, compared with the interconnection, the conflicts between media are addressed with less vigour. Chiel Kattenbelt highlights medial conflicts in theatre, stating that 'intermediality is an operative aspect of different media, which is more closely connected to the idea of diversity, discrepancy and hypermediacy than to the idea of unity, harmony and transparency' (Kattenbelt 2008: 25–26). Kattenbelt provides examples of interruption techniques aimed at breaking down the naturalist and psychological illusions of reality in theatre, such as Brecht's radical separation of medial elements, Robert Wilson's montage and fragmentation strategies, and the utilization of new media technologies by contemporary theatre artists. In Beckett's teleplays, intermedial performativity encompasses both conflicts and cooperation. The discrete performances of media in conflicts, which embody the desynchronization of different cognitive and perceptual functions, lead to the splitting of the human mind, as seen in the disjointed interiority in *Eh Joe* and the split selves in *Ghost Trio* and *... but the clouds ...*. However, they also eventually cooperate on the shared platform of television, allowing for an evolved transfiguration of human interiority and subjectivity to overcome its disintegration crisis, as manifested in *Quad*, *Nacht und Träume* and *Was Wo*, the latter three teleplays by Beckett. The following sections will delve into the details of these constructive effects of intermedial performativity on the human mind in Beckett's teleplays.

Disjointed Interiority in *Eh Joe*

In his first teleplay, *Eh Joe* (1966), Beckett utilizes different mass media to portray the separate sensory organs and cognitive functions of the human mind, constructing human interiority in a more comprehensive manner than before. With the exception of a brief opening scene featuring Joe's walk around the room, the entire teleplay consists of the camera zooming gradually in on Joe's face, while a woman's voice, with no physical source, addresses Joe, with every detail of his facial response shown. As Jonathan Bignell demonstrates, this minimalist mise-en-scene, which signifies human interiority, effectively incorporates many of Beckett's previous techniques and motifs from other art forms, including theatre, prose, film and radio (Bignell 2020: 41–54). Based on Bignell's observation, I want to emphasize that the performances of these different medial elements also present a human subjectivity undergoing an imminent crisis.

Eh Joe makes references to radio plays, as the association between human interiority and a voice that comes from nowhere is a signature of Beckett's radio plays. For instance, the soundscape of Beckett's first radio play,

All That Fall (1957), is intentionally designed to be anti-realistic and anti-naturalistic. As Martin Esslin writes:

> Briscoe (and his gramophone operator, Norman Baines) had to invent ways and means to remove these sounds from the purely realistic sphere. They did so by treating them electronically: slowing down, speeding up, adding echo, fragmenting them by cutting them into segments, and putting them together in new ways. (Esslin 2014: 276)

This material performance of sound media, embodying Pierre Schaeffer's technique of musique concrète, results not only in a stylized formalism but also in an alienation effect, where the soundscape appears hallucinatory and dreamlike, producing the impression that it emanates from the interiority of Maddy Rooney, the heroine of the radio play. In *Eh Joe*, the woman's voice is similarly stylized and defamiliarized. 'The vocal colourlessness at which Beckett was aiming was achieved by placing a microphone right up against her lips and, as her voice was being recorded, both high and low frequencies were filtered out' (Knowlson 2004: 478). This use of the microphone demonstrates what Ian Bogost refers to as alien aesthetics, which maps out the unique perceptual world of nonhuman machines and technologies. Bogost gives the example of Garry Winogrand's photography, arguing that Winogrand's random snapshots, rather than capturing the world as seen by human eyes, actually present the perceptual world of the camera eye (Bogost 2011). In the same vein, Maddy Rooney's highly mechanical and colourless voice also results from the perceptual world of the microphone, and it is so mechanical and unnatural to the human ear that spectators could not help but perceive it as a hallucination in Joe's mind.

Meanwhile, the camera regularly zooms in on Joe's face during nine intervals in the woman's speech. This 'gradual shrinkage of the frame from wide to extreme close-up shots' (Bignell 2020: 45) was previously employed in Beckett's film, *Film* (1965), but whereas in *Film* the shrinkage is edited from several disconnected cuts at the very end of the film, in *Eh Joe*, the camera moves in an uninterrupted flow with Joe's face occupying the screen for most of the play. This reflects Beckett's conscious efforts to adapt to the medium of television. As Herbert Zettl argues, '[b]ecause of the need to show every event detail on a small screen, television has made the close-up part of its ordinary visual language from the very beginning' (Zettl 2002: 32). It appears as if the camera were performing an interrogation on Joe, relentlessly pressing him for whatever is hidden behind the facial facade. The implications of this performance of the camera could be illuminated by the object-oriented ontology (OOO) of Graham Harman applied to film and television. Harman maintains that underneath the sensual qualities of a film and television image, namely the appearance of the image that the audience sees with their eyes, always lies the real object of the image that constantly withdraws (Harman 2015: 407). Citing the still close-up shot of HAL, the seemingly helpful and docile computer that eventually betrays and kills mankind in Stanley Kubrick's film *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968), Harman contends that behind the facade of the calm and emotionless image of HAL

lies an appalling depth beyond the audience's grasp. Joe's face, like HAL's, is impassive, still, and object-like, and the camera's gaze similarly suggests the vast scope of Joe's inner mind, where the torturing voice is engendered and hovers. Ultimately, the camera zooms in on Joe's face so close that it is cut by the television frame, pointing to the uncontainable enigmatic inner scope of the subject.

Thus, radiophonic and cinematic techniques in *Eh Joe* together perform a world of human interiority, but the two also have their internal conflicts. Deleuze describes Beckett's teleplays as follows: 'It is like playing a radio play and a silent film simultaneously' (Deleuze 1995: 16), but the two are not only separate but also in competition. Beckett's radio plays are, in his own words, 'for voices, not bodies … whatever quality it may have … depends on the whole thing's coming out of the dark' (quoted in Frost 1994: 191). The listeners conjure up mental images to match the sound performance, as 'Irish households would turn off the light in order to experience the full impact of a radio broadcast in the dark' (O'Leary 2008: 9). However, in *Eh Joe*, Joe's huge, dominant face on the screen is bound to interfere with the audience's mental visualization. *Eh Joe* is not a radio play; the moving images are the other significant half, just like Beckett firmly rejected the notion of adapting *That Time* (1976) into a radio play, saying: 'In my opinion *Damals* [the German title of *That Time*] as a radio play is out of the question, because of the loss of the picture, i.e. half of the whole thing! The listening face is an inextricable part' (Beckett 2016: 443). This explanation equally applies to *Eh Joe*, in which only when the voice stops does the camera start its probing. Joe's mind is therefore like a machine, split into visual and audio channels that run independently.

The significance of this intermedial performativity of conflicts in *Eh Joe* could be elucidated by Friedrich Kittler's analysis of the transition from 'discourse network 1800' to 'discourse network 1900'. In 'discourse network 1800', the written language is a direct translation of the voice of Mother/Nature, and the subject, having to conjure up sounds and images himself, is unified and primary. However, in 'discourse network 1900', with the advent of new media such as the gramophone, film and typewriter, the written language is separated into distinct media channels, and the unified subject is disjointed into discrete functions (Kittler 1990). In *Gramophone, Film, Typewriter*, Kittler maps Jacque Lacan's demarcations of the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real respectively onto the status of the typewriter, the film and the gramophone, further establishing the decomposition of unified human subjectivity by the performative influences of media discourses and apparatuses (Kittler 1999). The 'discourse network 1900' is most faithfully realized by the intermedial performativity of conflict in *Eh Joe.* In the script, the woman's speech is written in broken sentences connected by intermittent ellipsis, suggesting a mechanical rhythm devoid of traces of natural human voice, just as the typewriter turns orality into signs and marks on paper. The camera lens probes into Joe's hallucinatory mind, just as film represents the dreams and illusions of the human mind. The radiophonic sounds permeate every corner of Joe's mind, representing the imaginary, but equally real, pain and fear that forever haunt his psyche, just as the gramophone brings to people the sensation of immediacy, reality and presence, even

though it is unapproachable to the human eye. As a result, different media perform for the same purpose in *Eh Joe*, which is to represent Joe's interiority, but they perform in specific and disparate ways to showcase different dimensions of the human psyche. Through the mechanism of intermedial performativity, Beckett in *Eh Joe* accomplishes the display of a disjointed human interiority.

Split Self in *Ghost Trio* and ... *but the clouds* ...

For almost ten years after *Eh Joe*, Beckett did not return to the medium of television until he created *Ghost Trio* (1976) and ... *but the clouds* ... (1977) in consecutive years. In these two teleplays, radio and camera are endowed with much more agency, becoming intruders that restructure the human mind. While *Eh Joe* merely presents disjointed interiority through intermedial performativity, *Ghost Trio* and ... *but the clouds* ... demonstrate that intermedial performativity is not only an expressive tool but also the underlying cause of the split mind.

Ghost Trio and ... *but the clouds* ... inherit the association between a disembodied voice and the human mind from *Eh Joe*. However, this time, the voice gives orders in the first person regarding the movement of the camera, the cut between shots, and the framing composition, suggesting that the voice represents a head conjuring up imaginative contents. However, when asked about *Ghost Trio*, Beckett writes:

> Between the woman who is speaking and F. No relation that I know of. She is observing and presenting from a distance, rather than manipulating. Her 'imperatives' hardly warrant the name, as if she knew what was going to happen and was merely announcing it. A sort of astral presenter. (Beckett 2016: 464)

Indeed, F would sometimes diverge from the voice's imperatives, and this noncompliance to the master often happens in Beckett's radio plays as well. For example, in *Words and Music*, although Words and Music refer to Croak as 'My Lord' and respond to his summons to create artistic contents pending evaluation, they often create programmes on their own before Croak appears and after Croak leaves. These details point to the imagery of a self-split mind, a human subject no longer in control of the contents in his head, and the enigmatic source of sound performance raises questions about whether it is inner speech or schizophrenic hallucination.

This enigma is comparable to the way gramophone, radio, telephone, earphones and other sound technologies perform. They conceal the source of the sound and negate their distance from it. Kittler once analysed Pink Floyd's song 'Brain Damage', which includes the line: 'there is someone in my head but it's not me'. He associates this line with the development of techno-acoustic technology advanced by Pink Floyd, stating, 'in plain English, a couple of extra speakers set up around the room – the overall effect was an invasion of vertiginous ears that could no longer tell where the sounds and voices were coming from and whether they were outside or inside the listener's head' (Young-Winthrop 2011: 87). For Kittler, the brain damage

sung about by Pink Floyd is not simply a product of LSD enchantment but the performative effect of modern sound technology. As Young-Winthrop writes, 'Lunatics appear to be more informed than their doctors. They spell out that madness, rather than babbling metaphorically of radio transmitters in one's brain, is, quite on the contrary, a metaphor of technologies' (Young-Winthrop 2011: 92). Technology is not a metaphor for madness but its cause. Therefore, the complexity of the self-splitting mind in Beckett's art emerges particularly within the context of the media age. The voices in *Ghost Trio* and *. . . but the clouds . . .* should thus be regarded as technological voices that intrude into human interiority, disabling its stable boundaries and subverting its self-mastery. This further elucidates and legitimizes Beckett's aesthetic choice to affiliate the inner mind with the sound medium of radio, in the sense that the complication of the split mind is not only best presented by sound media but is, in fact, partly determined by its performativity.

Camera is another prosthetic medium that performatively determines the split mind in *Ghost Trio* and *. . . but the clouds . . . .* Similar to *Film*, which is divided into two camera perspectives performing double consciousness O and E, *Ghost Trio* also utilizes two camera perspectives. One captures F's movements and the details of the room under V's orders, providing a reserved and remote watch, while the other presents F's subjective point of view as he looks into the mirror, showcasing his face. The relationship between these two camera perspectives most likely represents the double consciousness of F, who imagines moving images of himself sitting in a room waiting for a woman. If that is the case, *Ghost Trio* represents an inner third-person perspective – an introspection that allows one to see oneself from an external viewpoint – and this inner third-person perspective is closely related to the camera. Colin Gardner argues that the camera in Beckett's teleplays functions as Free Indirect discourse, as it 'suggests the possibility of expressing a first-person focalization (inside), while continuing to present the character in the third person (outside)' (Gardner 2012: 50). Indeed, without the help of the camera, a human being cannot surpass their natural perceiving range for self-observation. For example, in *. . . but the clouds . . .* where self-inspection is founded on memory, M imagines or remembers M1, who represents his younger self, walking across the room and performing daily rituals. The teleplay faithfully presents M's mental images, recording M1's movements in full figure. However, M simply could not know what he looks like from behind or from a side view with such precise details if it were not for the assistance of prosthetic technologies such as the camera, which gather the sensory data that make the memory of inner third-person perspective possible in the first place.

This self-perception mediated by the performance of the camera holds psychological depth. Beckett's former therapist, Wilfred Bion, argues that a traumatized person projects his superego onto external objects when the surveillance from that superego becomes threatening. Based on this, Angela Moorjani suggests that in *Film*, E represents the fragment of the protagonist's surveilling superego projected unto the camera as the external object (Moorjani 2009: 44–46). However, it is perhaps due to the performativity of visual technology that humans are now more

prone to splitting their superego from themselves, as they are accustomed to perceiving themselves from external perspectives and in previously inconceivable details. Beckett's characters, as well as people in contemporary societies of spectacle, seem to always perceive themselves in ways readily mediated by camera, as if they had grown a pair of camera eyes to ensure that their self-perception paradoxically comes from both within and without.

Meanwhile, as the audio sounds describe the camera's movements and the contents of the moving images; there are no longer conflicts between audio and visual signifiers in *Ghost Trio* and … *but the clouds* …. This demonstrates Beckett's growing sensitivity to television as a unified multimedia platform. As he once wrote in the letter to Barbara Bray: 'The recorded tape of the voice and the video tape of the image had to be synchronized and edited' (Beckett 2016: 465). Television, unlike film, is

> no longer of two separate analogue tracks on one strip of celluloid, but of two discontinuous types of electromagnetic transmission: the television image and the radio signal used to broadcast TV sound. On analogue television, face and voice are fused into imaginary synchronization by the set's powers of processing those distinct signals instantaneously into the illusion of a single talking picture. (Murphet 2009: 67)

If, in *Eh Joe*, the audience still struggles to delve into Joe's inscrutable head and calls to mind what lies behind the facade of his face, in *Ghost Trio* and … *but the clouds* …, the audience find themselves both inside and outside the character's head, experiencing the split mind alongside the characters. This demonstrates how the intermedial performativity of television can function in various ways, either in cooperation or in conflict, to serve Beckett's artistic vision of human interiority.

Cosmic Matrix in *Quad*, *Nacht und Träume* and *Was Wo*

The motif of the split self is central in both *Ghost Trio* and … *but the clouds* …, but its implications extend far beyond. In these teleplays, as well as in later ones including *Quad* (1982), *Nacht und Träume* (1983) and *Was Wo* (1985) adapted from the stage play *What Where* (1983), the crisis of human subjectivity could also be recognized as a radical alternative form of ghostly existence that transcends boundaries of within or without, drifting in the cosmic flow where time and space, life and death lose their meaning. These otherworldly beings, not inherently 'human', are exemplified by Belacqua, Beckett's beloved character from Dante's *The Devine Comedy* and the protagonist of his first published novel *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* (1932). Belacqua is described as one who 'moved with the shades of the dead and the dead-born and the unborn and the never-to-be-born, in a Limbo purged of desire' (Beckett 1993: 44). In … *but the clouds* … M sits 'on an invisible stool bowed over invisible table' (Beckett 2006: 417), a sitting profile strikingly similar to Belacqua's, suggesting the possibility that M is looking back at his younger self from beyond the grave.

Indeed, there are numerous accounts of the association between mass media and otherworldly realms: radio, due to its amorphousness, has often been regarded as mystical and connected to other dimensions or worlds (Danius 1997: 272; Hartel 2010: 221), and film and television are frequently associated with ghosts in popular belief (Sconce 1995: 208).

Marco Bernini argues that the Beckettian characters seem unnatural and liminal because Beckett 'seems to have modeled fictional minds by impairing key cognitive processes in human cognition to explore their functioning, as well as to see what kind of humanity their hampering leaves intact or discloses' (Bernini 2021: 123). However, this obstinate insistence on humanity seems inapt considering Beckett's fascination with otherworldliness, the embryo and the afterlife. As I have argued elsewhere, Beckett's characters that are neither dead nor alive exemplify Rosi Braidotti's reinterpretation of Deleuze and Guattari's concept 'becoming-imperceptible'. This concept conveys that 'death serves merely as a porous threshold to the cosmic flow which delivers humans from their finitude', and Beckett's theatre reflects precisely such a vision of disintegrated human subjectivity merging into a cosmic flow beyond life and death (Chen 2021: 331–333). In this article, I aim to emphasize how Beckett's teleplays ingeniously fulfil this cosmic vision through the performances of different media.

Five years after *. . . but the clouds . . .*, Beckett conceives *Quad*, a teleplay that is markedly different from his previous teleplays, as it does not employ radiophonic techniques. The camera is fixed at a central overhead position looking onto a square, resembling a theatre stage, where four dehumanized players walk in strict geometric lines, adorned in different-coloured gowns and accompanied by different percussion sounds. However, Beckett said that '*Quad* can't work on stage' (Harmon 1998: 422), and one important reason for this is that the fixed perspective of the camera is unattainable in a live theatre setting, where different spectators have varying viewpoints that would disrupt the symmetrical geometric shape and lines. Interestingly, the geometric movements of the four players evoke the impression of both an abstract painting and a chess board in the minds of the spectators. Coincidentally, Beckett's chess mate and famous avant-garde painter Marcel Duchamp once remarked in an interview that chess could be the ideal work of art because 'in chess there are some extremely beautiful things in the domain of movement, but not in the visual domain. It's the imagining of the movement or of the gesture that makes the beauty, in this case. It's completely in one's gray matter' (Cabanne 2009: 18–19). In other words, the beauty of chess lies in the multitude of possible movements that could be calculated within one's mind, and the number of potential chess moves (the Shannon number) surpasses the number of atoms in the observable universe. The square and the three-dimensional space fixed by the camera perspective then appear to be a model of the cosmos – as Albright suggests: 'Perhaps Beckett's rotundas and cylinders are in effect funnels for the universe to drain from' (Albright 2003: 22) – and the mathematical language of combination and permutation of the players' movements represents Beckett's endeavour, in his own words, to 'find a form that accommodates the mess' (quoted in Driver 1961: 23).

When all the players are on stage, four types of percussion also mix in a frenzy, their rhythms not necessarily in sync, thus sonically performing the delicate balance between chaos and order. Therefore, the performances of percussion, stage, colours, chess, camera collectively enact a cosmos within the confines of the small TV set. However, eventually, this frenzy subsides, as in *Quad II*, the movements and sounds all slow down to indicate the players' exhaustion. Upon seeing the black-and-white monitor used by technicians to check image quality, Beckett decided that *Quad II* should be rendered in black and white, creating an atmosphere so desolate and exhausted that it feels as if 'it's a hundred thousand years later' (Connor 2000: 165). Thus, it is through the performativity of the monitor and the television set that the ultimate disintegration of the colourful and energetic mankind into a colourless and empty universe is realized.

In *Nacht und Träume*, 'the empty room with its rectangle of light and the black-coated figure hunched over the table' resembles seventeenth-century Dutch paintings (Ackerley 2009: 155). The chiaroscuro effects prevalent in Beckett's works are also significant in this teleplay. However, when integrated with the materiality of television, this effect acquires an otherworldly tone. The smooth zoom and panning of the camera dissolve any distinction between the dreamer's reality world and the dream world. As 'Ricoeur admits the possibility that sleep may be a form of oblivion, in its ghostly intimations of death and nothingness' (Sheehan 2009: 164), the teleplay about dreams seems to present another world beyond life and death. Moreover, the boundaries of both the dreamer and the dreamed hands on the TV screen become so blurred that, with the increase and decrease of lighting that result in a fade-in and fade-out effect, it feels as if they emerge from and then disintegrate into the cosmic flow of dark nothingness. The camera and the televisual image thus perform a vast cosmic ontology in which ghostly beings fleetingly come and go. This performativity also extends to Beckett's last teleplay *Was Wo*. The radiophonic technique in its original stage play, *What Where*, is replaced by a floating face surrounded by darkness, speaking with his eyes closed. As cameraman Jim Lewis explains, this 'gave you the feeling this is coming out of him. He's remembering' (quoted in Fehsenfeld 1986: 237). However, the face itself lacks a clear boundary, and the three smaller faces that represent images in this head fade in and out of darkness, suggesting that all are once again ghostly beings after death, but that they have transcended their human finitude to drift in the cosmic flow, where its dark nothingness signifies ground zero, both end and beginning.

Conclusion

Whether it is imagination, hallucination, dream or memory, the contents of the human mind in Beckett's teleplays are evoked not by humans, but by ghostly beings straddling life and death. They are not strictly interior either, for they paradoxically exist both inside and outside, merging their tenuous boundary with the vast cosmos. This alternative form of cognition and perception is realized through the cooperative

and conflicting forms of different artistic media, including painting, theatre, radio, and film, many of which are associated with ghosts and otherworldly concepts in the popular imagination. This renders the Beckettian interiority more posthuman than human, on the one hand because its ghostly nature is always post-human in the sense of after-life, and on the other because it is an assemblage distributed in a network of human and nonhuman media, capable of both perceptual functions and cognitive processes. The former is defined by Ian Bogost as alien aesthetics, and the latter by Katherine Hayles as cognitive nonconscious – the capacity for cognition below the level of consciousness attributed not only to humans but also to animals, plants, and digital technologies (Hayles 2017). Beckett's contemplation on the human mind thus leads to a transformation of humanity from a post-anthropocentric perspective. His deployment of intermedial performativity shows us the possibilities of transcending our cognitive and perceptual finitude to reach a broader and more meaningful cosmic vision.

Notes

a. Beckett does not approach 'champ intérieur' from a strictly scientific perspective; instead, he sees it as a comprehensive concept that encompasses various topics such as cognition, perception and consciousness, which are separate and different from the external world.
b. Existing research includes the performance of animals (Knowles 2013; Parker-Starbuck and Orozco 2015), the performance of things (Schwritzer and Zerdy 2014) and the performance of media and technology (Dixon 2007).

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