

## Language and Music in Beckett's Two Radio Plays

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Beckett's interrogation of language in his early period is related to his strong interest in music. In a famous letter written in 1937 which can be regarded as his artistic manifesto, Beckett's critique of language and literature is shown with his aspiration toward a state of music. In the letter he expresses his contempt for "an official English" and its style and grammar, as he writes, "more and more my own language appears to me like a veil that must be torn apart in order to get at the things (or the Nothingness) behind it" (*Disjecta*, 171). Then he says that while music and painting have already found ways to represent "the Nothingness" or silence, literature is still caught in "the old lazy ways" (172). He thinks that literature which remains behind other arts should find its way out of the present situation, and that literature should move toward what he calls a "literature of the unword" (173). The "literature of the unword" means a paradoxical attempt to eliminate language through language. It is an attempt to, by using language, "bore one hole after another in it [language], until what lurks behind it — be it something or nothing — begins to seep through." And it is in Beethoven's music that Beckett finds a model for this literature:

Is there any reason why that terrible materiality of the word surface should not be capable of being dissolved, like for example the sound surface, torn by enormous pauses, of Beethoven's seventh Symphony, so that through whole pages we can perceive nothing but a path of sounds suspended in giddy heights, linking unfathomable abysses of silence? (172)

The similar aspiration towards a state of music has already been expressed by Beckett through the protagonist, Belacqua in *Dream of Fair to Middling Women* (1932). For instance, Belacqua speaks of "the incoherent continuum" expressed by Rimbaud and Beethoven: "I was speaking of something of which you have and can have no knowledge, the incoherent continuum as expressed by, say, Rimbaud and Beethoven. Their names occur to me. The terms of whose statements serve merely to delimit the reality of insane areas of silence, whose audibilities are no more than punctuation in a statement of silences. How do they get from point to point. That is what I meant by the incoherent reality and its authentic extrinsecation" (102). Later in the novel Belacqua expresses his desire to write a book that resembles Rembrandt's painting and Beethoven's music.

I shall write a book [. . .]. The experience of my reader shall be between the phrases, in the silence, communicated by the intervals, not the terms, of the statement [. . .] his experience shall be the menace, the miracle, the memory, of an unspeakable trajectory. [. . .] I think of Beethoven, his eyes are closed [. . .], I think of his earlier compositions

where into the body of the musical statement he incorporates a punctuation of dehiscence, flottements, the coherence gone to pieces, the continuity bitched to hell because the units of continuity have abdicated their unity, they have gone multiple, they fall apart, the notes fly about, a blizzard of electrons; and then vespertine compositions eaten away with terrible silences [. . .]. (137-38)

Thus, as Catherine Laws rightly suggests, in his early period Beckett regards music as an ideal other of language or an idealized model for literature that transcends the limits of language. Laws writes, “[T]he literary and philosophic conception of music as the ‘beyond’ of language persists from its nineteenth-century idealist envisioning. To an extent this is reflected in Beckett’s work, with music sometimes idealized as a model for what literature might be or do if freed from the banalities of language, and sometimes providing a refuge from the very struggle with meaning” (179).<sup>1</sup> This article will examine Beckett’s critique of language and his admiration for music in terms of his idea of “materiality” and “immateriality.”

To return to his letter written in 1937, we notice that what Beckett criticizes in language is its materiality. As we have seen, he writes, “Is there any reason why that terrible materiality of the word surface should not be capable of being dissolved, like for example the sound surface, torn by enormous pauses, of Beethoven’s seventh Symphony [. . .]?” (172) The “terrible materiality” of language here means the fact that language can never be completely free from describing material things in the phenomenal world and expressing their meanings. It also means that language in its nature conceals the (non-)existence of what cannot be represented, as shown in his view that language is “a veil that must be torn apart in order to get at the things (or the Nothingness) behind it” or “a mask.” We could say that throughout his career as an artist of language, Beckett continues to fight with the “terrible materiality” of language.

For Beckett, music is an ideal other of language which can move beyond the materiality of language. In the coda to *Proust*, he states that music is the “most immaterial art of all the arts” (92). This suggests that when Beckett regards music as an idealized model for literature, what he recognizes in music is its immateriality, and that on the model of music, he pursues the possibility of an immaterial art. It is well known that in his youth Beckett greatly admired Schopenhauer, recognizing in his thought “an intellectual justification of unhappiness” (*The Letters of Samuel Beckett*, 32-33). Beckett’s early work, including *Proust*, was written under the influence of Schopenhauer’s work, especially *The World as Will and Representation*. In the coda to *Proust*, Beckett tries to explain Schopenhauer’s view on music and writes, “music is the Idea itself, unaware of the world of phenomena, existing ideally outside the universe, apprehended not in Space but in Time only [. . .].” (92). Then Beckett recognizes the similar understanding of music in Proust’s work: “In one passage he [Proust] describes the recurrent mystical experience as ‘a purely musical impression, non-extensive, entirely original, irreducible to any other order of impression [. . .] sine materia’” (93). We could see how this immaterial quality of music is very important to Beckett, when he condemns the distortion of the immaterial

quality of music by the listener. He says, "This essential quality of music is distorted by the listener who, being an impure subject, insists on giving a figure to that which is ideal and invisible, on incarnating the Idea in what he conceives to be an appropriate paradigm. Thus, by definition, opera is a hideous corruption of this most immaterial of all the arts" (92). He thus severely criticizes the materialization of music.

It is true that in the coda to *Proust* we find distortion in Beckett's presentation of Schopenhauer's idea of music as Pilling argues.<sup>2</sup> However, the immateriality of music which Beckett emphasizes in the coda to *Proust* undoubtedly comes from Schopenhauer's philosophy of music presented in *The World as Will and Representation*. It is found in chapter 52 of Volume I and chapter 39 ("On the Metaphysics of Music") of Volume II of *The World as Will and Representation*.

Schopenhauer argues that music differs from and is superior to all the other arts, for it is independent of the materiality of the phenomenal world and directly expresses the inner nature of the will itself.<sup>3</sup> He writes, "music [. . .] is [. . .] independent of the phenomenal world, positively ignores it, and, to a certain extent, could still exist even if there were no world at all, which cannot be said of the other arts" (vol. I, 257). What music expresses is not a particular phenomenon but "the innermost soul of the events and occurrences."

[. . .] it [music] never expresses the phenomenon, but only the inner nature, the in-itself, of every phenomenon, the will itself. Therefore music does not express this or that particular and definite pleasure, this or that affliction, pain, sorrow, horror, gaiety, merriment, or peace of mind, but joy, pain, sorrow, horror, gaiety, merriment, peace of mind *themselves*, to a certain extent in the abstract, their essential nature, without any accessories [. . .]. Nevertheless, we understand them perfectly in this extracted quintessence. Hence it arises that our imagination [. . .] tries to shape that invisible, yet vividly aroused, spirit-world that speaks to us directly, to clothe it with flesh and bone, and thus to embody it in an analogous example. This is the origin of the song with words, and finally of the opera. (vol. I, 261)

We can see how Schopenhauer's idea about the origin of the opera turns into a severe critique of the opera in Beckett. In his philosophy of music Schopenhauer repeats the view that music is "not a copy of the phenomenon, or, more exactly, of the will's adequate objectivity, but is directly a copy of the will itself, and therefore expresses the metaphysical to everything physical in the world, the thing-in-itself to every phenomenon" (vol. I, 262). For him, music is characterized by "its complete indifference to everything material in the incidents" and "never assimilates the material" (vol. II, 449). He presents an example of Beethoven's symphony: "[. . .] all the human passions and emotions speak from this symphony; joy, grief, love, hatred, terror, hope, and so on in innumerable shades, yet all, as it were, only in the abstract and without any particularization; it is their mere form without the material, like a mere spirit world without matter" (vol. II, 450). Schopenhauer considers music as our most direct method of knowledge

of the world or the movement of the will itself. This is the reason why “music makes every picture, indeed every scene from real life and from the world, at once appear in enhanced significance [. . .]” (vol. I, 263). We could clearly recognize the influence of Schopenhauer’s view on music in Beckett’s aspiration toward the state of music and pursuit of the possibility of an immaterial art.

Although Beckett attacked language and admired music, he continued to create his work with language. In a sense, his attempt was a paradoxical attempt to immaterialize language that can never be free from its own materiality. Beckett’s use of radio can be discussed in terms of this attempt. Bryden points out that “throughout Beckett’s long writing career, one can trace an extended preoccupation with compositional boundaries: between light and dark, audible and inaudible, perceptible and imperceptible—and, above all, between sound and silence” (39). To these words, we can add ‘between materiality and immateriality.’ We could say that Beckett tried to compose his work on the boundaries between materiality and immateriality by making the best use of the qualities of radio as an artistic medium.

Beckett’s experimentation with the radio medium in his radio plays was a way out of a logjam that he had experienced after writing the trilogy and *Texts for Nothing*. His use of radio introduced an important innovation into his creation. Starting from *All That Fall* which was first broadcast on the BBC Third Programme in January 1957, Beckett’s radio plays were broadcast in English, French and German. *Embers* was broadcast in June 1959. *Words and Music* was broadcast in November 1962. *Cascando*, written in French, was broadcast by RTF in Paris in October 1963 (its English version was broadcast in October 1964). Two other radio plays were written in French in the early 1960s: *Rough for Radio I (Esquisse radiophonique)* and *Rough for Radio II (Pochade radiophonique)*. The latter was broadcast as *Rough for Radio* on BBC Radio 3 in April 1976.

In these radio plays Beckett explored new possibilities of the radio medium. The radio medium is characterized by the absence of physical space. McDonald writes, “Just as he had taken stagecraft back to its elementals, broadening and reinvigorating the possibilities of live theatre, so with the radio Beckett stretches and tests the form, exploiting the absence of a visual dimension and deploying the ethereality of the medium to create a tension between aural presence and physical absence” (52). He also states that “the essence of radio is insubstantiality: the *airwaves* are by definition ephemeral” (53). In radio the substantial or phenomenal world that we can actually see is absent. In that sense, the radio medium is ethereal and ephemeral. Here we recall that the immateriality that he discusses in the coda to *Proust* involves the absence of physical space or spatial extension. In *Proust* Beckett argues that music is the “most immaterial of all the arts” by saying that it is “unaware of the world of phenomena, existing ideally outside the universe, apprehended not in Space but in Time only” (92). If we apply Beckett’s idea of immateriality to the radio medium, we could say that the essence of radio is immateriality. Although radio works evoke the imagined space in the mind of the listener,

they do not exist in an actual space. Indeed in radio plays the listener does not see actors' bodies that he or she sees on the stage in theatrical plays. Instead the listener hears voices. In this sense, the radio medium is characterized by the absence of the material bodies and spatial extension.

The absence of the physical space in the radio medium is related to its power to bring the drama in the darkness of the interiority of the self (or in the head, in the skull) revealing the internal processes directly to the listener. This evokes the function of the eyelids to close the world that we see in front of our eyes. Derrida speaks of Aristotle's distinction between blinking and unblinking animals.

In his *De anima* (421b) [Aristotle] distinguishes between man and those animals that have hard dry eyes [*ton sklerophtalmon*], the animals lacking eyelids, that sort of sheath or tegumental membrane [*phragma*] which serves to protect the eye and permits it, at regular intervals, to close itself off in the darkness of inward thought or sleep. What is terrifying about an animal with hard dry eyes and a dry glance is that it always sees. Man can lower the sheath, adjust the diaphragm, narrow his sight, the better to listen, remember, and learn. (Derrida, qtd. in Connor, 96)

Here the eyelids are considered as that which serve to "protect the eye and permits it, at regular intervals, to close itself off in the darkness of inward thought or sleep" and help man's act of listening, remembering, and learning. We could say that the radio medium has a similar function, and that Beckett exploited in his radio plays this nature of closing the visible world and letting us enter the inner darkness.

Now we shall see how his two radio plays, *Words and Music* (1962) and *Cascando* (1963), present the relation between language and music on the boundaries between materiality and immateriality. Especially, we will examine how Beckett depicts the materiality of language in its relation to music. Both plays present words and music as characters in their own right: they are called Joe and Bob in *Words and Music*, and Voice and Music in *Cascando*. They also present a third voice which invokes words and music: it is called Croak in *Words and Music*, and Opener in *Cascando*.

In *Words and Music* an old man named Croak comes to his two servants, Words and Music named Joe and Bob.<sup>4</sup> Words and Music are called "My comforts!" or "my balms!" by Croak, which suggests that their role is to mitigate the old man's pain and suffering. At the beginning of the play Words and Music are presented to be on bad terms. Especially Words exhibits hatred toward Music. In the play Croak shouts at Words and Music, commanding them to portray themes like 'love' and 'age.' They perform, first separately, and later together. At the end of the play their collaborative performance evokes the memory of a woman whom Croak loved in the past and cannot forget. And Croak is overwhelmed by the explicitness of that memory and shuffles off.

This is what happens in the play, but we should note that this does not take place in the

outside phenomenal world. In a sense, it is an allegorical play of what takes place in the darkness of the interiority of the mind. We could say that Words and Music symbolize the linguistic faculty and the non-linguistic or musical faculty respectively. Albright holds that Beckett uses technology to “chop apart human faculties,” for example, “with memory demoted to tape recording in *Krapp’s Last Tape*, with imagination demoted to microphonic voice in *Eh Joe*” (26). In this play, we find the technique of not only chopping apart human faculties but personifying them as characters in the play. We could also say that this play is essentially a self-reflexive work, as Ruby Cohn argues that it is “a composition about composition” (268).

The play begins with Music and Words, Joe and Bob, tuning up while waiting for Croak’s arrival. From the very beginning, Words shows his loathing for Music. Irritated by the tuning sound of Music, Words says, “Please! [*Tuning. Louder.*] Please! [*Tuning dies away.*] How much longer cooped up here in the dark? [*With loathing.*] With you!” (127). Words can no longer bear the situation in which he is locked up with Music in the dark space. Croak arrives with the sound of shuffling slippers. He is late, because he saw the face on the stairs of the tower. He announces that tonight’s theme is ‘love.’ With the thump of a club, Croak orders Words to speak. Words starts, “Love is of all the passions the most powerful passion and indeed no passion is more powerful than the passion of love. [*Clears throat.*] This is the mode in which the mind is most strongly affected and indeed in no mode is the mind more strongly affected than in this. [*Pause.*]” (128). Here he uses abstract and general words similar to philosophical language. These words indicate the connection between language and reason. Yet they are presented as nonsensical words that Kenner calls “scholastic garbage” (170). Then with violent thump of the club Croak commands Bob to perform. While Music is playing soft music melodically, Words groans and protests. Music grows louder and drowns Words’ protestations. Words fails to interrupt Music.

Next, Croak announces the second theme, ‘age,’ and tells them to play together. He shouts with a violent thump, “Together, dogs!” (129). This time Music leads Words by playing musical phrases and giving a suggestion for Joe’s words that follow him. Then Words follows Music’s lead and tries to sing to Bob’s music. Here we recognize a harmony between language and music as well as the mutual transformation in which music is becoming language and language is becoming music. Music also plays air alone and invites Words to sing and finally accompanies Words’ singing. Words sings softly:

Age is when to a man  
Huddled o’er the ingle  
[. . .]  
She comes in the ashes  
Who loved could not be won  
Or won not loved  
Or some other trouble.

Comes in the ashes  
 Like in that old light  
 The face in the ashes  
 That old starlight  
 On the earth again. (131)

Unlike the abstract language that he uses in trying to define 'love,' Joe's words here describe a particular situation which shows what it is like to have aged. After a long pause, Croak murmurs, "The Face" repetitively. It is not clear whether Croak announces the third theme, "The face" or not, but Words and Music take Croak's words as the announcement. Again Music gives a suggestion for Words, but this time, Words disregards it. In a cold and composed manner Words depicts an image of a man's eyes observing the face of a post-coital woman. Words gives a detailed description of the face. This description makes Croak relive the lost moment with his lover and brings him pain. He utters in an anguished voice, "Lily!" By this point Croak becomes passive to their performance, and he no longer gives orders to Words and Music. When Music plays, Words tries to interrupt his music with protestations—"Peace!" "No!" "Please" etc." But again Words fails to stop Music. Music reaches "*Triumph and conclusion.*" After this victory of Music, Words resumes the portrait of the woman in post-coital recuperation; Words describes the facial features of the woman who is awakening, including the opening of her eyes. His description grows concrete. Then Words starts depicting the movement of eyes exploring her eyes in a poetic tone. Zilliacus recognizes here the motif of "intensely probing eyes," or "the motif of eyes trying, in eyes, to perceive something more than eyes" as in *Murphy* and *Krapp's Last Tape* (110). Words again starts to follow the suggestions and invitations given by Music. They play separately, but later, with their efforts put in harmony, they perform a song about the "wellhead."

Then down a little way  
 Through the trash  
 Towards where  
 All dark no begging  
 No giving no words  
 No sense no need  
 Through the scum  
 Down a little way  
 To whence one glimpse  
 Of that wellhead. (133-34)

Zilliacus sees in this poem "a penetration through worldly paraphernalia toward a point of absolute rest" (111). In this context, we could say that this poem suggests the possibility of a penetration through material things toward the realm of absolute immateriality where there is no word, no sense, or no need and where complete darkness prevails. Being shocked and

dropping the club, Croak shuffles off. After Croak leaves, Words begs Music to play again, this time calling him Music, not Bob. The deep sigh made by Words at the very end of the play indicates that Words admits his own defeat and acknowledges the victory of Music. We could guess that from the beginning Words already knows that he is in the subordinate position. This is why he feels irritated by Music's existence and reacts to Music in childish ways. But Words' attitude toward Music gradually changes, and after much meandering he eventually accepts Music's superiority and his own limitations.

Thus *Word and Music* thematizes the relation between language and music. In the play both Words and Music are told to portray abstract themes like 'love' and 'age' which are not particular things that we see in the phenomenal world. In carrying out that task Words cannot surpass Music. It is because while music is independent of the phenomenal world, language cannot be completely free from its own tendency of particularization in describing things, that is, free from the phenomenal world. In a sense, the superiority of music to language that Schopenhauer argues is realized in this play. In this play we recognize Beckett's attempt to reveal the limits of language, to be more precise, the materiality of language, by placing it in a relation with the immateriality of music. The play indicates the importance of returning to the finitude of language instead of disregarding it.

In *Cascando*, language and music are called Voice and Music. A third voice called Opener opens and closes Voice and Music separately or together. Voice has "two strands—self and story."<sup>5</sup> The strand of the self is made of Voice's self-reflexive words which show his desperate desire to tell the right story and reach the end of his story-telling. For example, Voice says at the beginning of the play, "—story . . . if you could finish it . . . you could rest . . . sleep . . . not before . . . oh I know . . . the ones I've finished . . . thousands and one . . . all I ever did . . . in my life . . . with my life . . . say to myself . . . finish this one . . . it's the right one . . . then rest . . . sleep . . . no more stories . . . no more words . . . and finished it . . ." (137) Besides uttering self-reflexive words, Voice also narrates the story of Woburn (called Maunu in the French original) who takes journeys. For example, Voice narrates, "—down . . . gentle slopes . . . boreen . . . giant aspens . . . wind in the boughs . . . faint sea . . . Woburn . . . same old coat . . . he goes on . . . stops . . . not a soul . . . not yet . . . night too bright . . . say what you like . . . he goes on . . . hugging the bank . . . same old stick . . . he goes down . . . falls . . . on purpose or not . . . can't see . . . he's down . . . that's what counts . . . face in the mud . . . arms spread . . ." (138) In Voice's words we hear the alteration of the self and the story. As the play moves on, the proportion of the self gradually increases and that of the story decreases. While with the strand of the story language narrates particular characteristics of Woburn's movements, particular places or things, with the strand of the self, language does not have any referential content and depicts Voice's own desire which exists in the inner realm severed from the phenomenal world. Language in the self becomes immaterial. Zilliacus observes, "[. . .] the words of Voix in *Cascando* gradually approach the fundamental quality of Musique: they rid themselves of their

anecdotal content, of *histoire*. Voix, in conjunction with Musique, moves away from the figurative and is actualized as *soi*" (136).

Indeed only when Voice is with the thread of the self, Music accompanies Voice. Speaking of the situation in which Voice and Music are put through simultaneously by Opener, Zilliacus argues that it is "operatic in a very superficial sense only. Voix does not particularize Musique: in conjunction with Musique, Voix is de-particularized. The less Voix particularizes, the more Voix and Musique agree" (136). For our purpose, we could say that in conjunction with Music, Voice becomes immaterial. Here we see Beckett's paradoxical attempt to immaterialize language that cannot be free from its materiality. Music in *Cascando* is presented not as what is triumphant in its superior relation to language as found in *Words and Music*, but as what accompanies Voice and helps Voice's de-particularization or immaterialization.

Unlike Croak, Opener does not command Voice and Music to speak or play. He switches the continua of Voice and Music on and off. Zilliacus holds that Voice and Music "run incessantly" and "emit continua which Ouvreur, at the receiving end only, renders discontinuous"; "Ouvreur disconnects them, puts them through, and then disconnects again, at will. Voix does not emit lines, nor Musique movements" (128). This movement of opening and closing Voice and Music recalls the image of an eye which repeats opening and closing in Beckett's later prose works including *Ill Seen Ill Said*. In "Between Theatre and Theory: *Long Observation of the Ray*," Connor discusses the structure of blinking and introduces Derrida's assertion that reason "must [. . .] learn how to wink at itself, to close itself off from the hard, dry continuousness of sight, and catch at the possibility of observing its own observation." He quotes from Derrida:

The time for reflection is [. . .] the chance for turning back on the very conditions of reflection, in all the senses of that word, as if with the help of a new optical device one could finally see sight [. . .]. The chance for this event is the chance of an instant, an *Augenblick*, a 'wink' or a 'blink', it takes place 'in the twinkling of an eye'. (19-20)

Connor then writes, "Beckett's long observation in his work of the processes of looking, thinking and imagining may aptly be thought of as belonging to this attempt to capture this interstitial sight within vision" (97). This observation leads us to think that Opener's movement of opening and closing which repetitively severs the continua of Voice and Music in *Cascando* catches at the possibility of turning back on the very conditions of creation. The Opener's movement of rendering the continuum discontinuous reminds us of Beckett's idea of the "literature of the unword" (the idea that one must "bore one hole after another" on the surface of language) in his 1937 letter, or his interest in "the incoherent continuum" and the literary experience "communicated by the intervals, not the terms, of the statement" expressed in *Dream*. Opener says that this movement of opening and closing is indispensable to his life, which, what he calls "they," do not see at all.

They say, That is not his life, he does not live on that. They don't see me, they don't see what my life is, they don't see what I live on, and they say, That is not his life, he

does not live on that.

[*Pause.*]

I have lived on it . . . till I'm old.

Old enough. (140)

Opener's self-reflexive movement is essentially interstitial. It takes place only in an interstice of the continua of the time and space in the world. This is why "they," those who are immersed in that continua, don't see what Opener does. Further, we could say that this play, *Cascando*, itself is "the time for reflection," the chance for turning back on the very conditions of creation. Indeed Beckett wrote about this work: "It is an unimportant work, but the best I have to offer. It does I suppose show in a way what passes for my mind and what passes for its work" (qtd. in Zilliacus, 118).

While *Words and Music* foregrounds the tension between language and music, *Cascando* emphasizes Voice's desperate desire to tell the right story which would enable him to reach an end and his repetitive failure to do so. The same motif is also found in *The Unnamable*. As we have seen, in *Cascando* the words of Voice gradually move away from the material world and become self-reflexive in conjunction with Music. At the end of the play, Opener says, with Voice and Music, "As though they had linked their arms" (143), and we hear the sounds of Voice and Music together. Together with Music, Voice's words run, "—this time . . . it's the right one . . . finish . . . no more stories . . . sleep . . . we're there . . . nearly . . . just a few more . . . don't let go . . . Woburn . . . he clings . . . on . . . come on . . . come on— . . . [*Silence.*]" (144). Although throughout the play Opener speaks in a calm and composed voice, here his voice turns to a fervent one. Opener says "Good!" in an excited voice, responding to the sounds of Voice and Music. It is as if both Music and Opener joined in Voice's frantic attempt to catch Woburn "this time." Yet, Voice can never catch Woburn and reach the end. The repetition of "this time" in Voice's words throughout the play emphasizes the never-ending nature of this attempt and the interminably repeated failure. Thus *Cascando* reveals the finitude of language.

Both *Words and Music* and *Cascando* turn back on the very conditions of creation. In that self-reflexive movement they return to the limit of language or the finitude of language on the boundaries between materiality and immateriality. By juxtaposing language with music, *Words and Music* discloses the limit of language. The limit of language here implies the materiality of language. The play suggests that whereas music exists as the representation of "that which of its essence can never be representation" or as "the copy of an original that can itself never be directly represented" (Schopenhauer, vol. I, 257) and can express the ineffable, language fails to do so. Language cannot completely separate itself from the phenomenal world and in its essence conceals the ineffable, "that which of its essence can never be representation." This is seen especially at the end of the play where Words admits its defeat in its relation to Music.

In *Cascando*, language is gradually immaterialized by the help of music and becomes more and more self-reflexive. In this movement language reveals its own finitude. Voice tries to catch Woburn (i.e. the ineffable, "that which of its essence can never be representation") and tell his story, but repetitively fails. The phrase "this time" is repeated throughout the play. This repetition indicates the infinite deferral of the final point.

In both radio plays Beckett reveals the limit of language in its relation to music. But this does not mean that he merely criticizes language. He does not try to transcend its limits. He repetitively returns to the finitude of language. Both *Words and Music* and *Cascando* show the possibility that only by returning to and showing the finitude of language, the materiality of language, or the failure of language in catching the ineffable, language can get access to the ineffable. In "'On Such and Such a Day ... In Such a World': Beckett's Radical Finitude," Connor writes, "To say that Beckett's work constitutes a radical finitude is to say that it strives to permit itself the very least remission it can manage from this awareness of always having to live, move and have its being 'in such a world' 'on such and such a day' [...], never in the world in general, or 'as such'" (47). In relation to this remark, we could say that as *Words and Music* and *Cascando* show, language in Beckett's work always stays with the "awareness of always having to live, move, and have its being" in its materiality, however "terrible" it is.

The recurrent image of Woburn's movement of falling down in *Cascando* might be evocative of the ceaseless movement of Beckett's language falling down to its materiality.

... he goes down ... falls ... on purpose or not ... can't see ... he's down ... that's what counts ... face in the mud ... arms spread ... that's the idea ... already ... there already ... no not yet ... he gets up ... knees first ... hands flat ... in the mud ... head sunk ... then up ... on his feet ... huge bulk ... come on ... he goes on ... he goes down ... (138)

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<sup>1</sup> Laws adds to these sentences: "However, this is not straightforward: music is by no means a singular entity in Beckett. It is manifested in different ways," and presents different ways in which music is thematized in Beckett. See pp. 179-80.

<sup>2</sup> Pilling writes, "Much of *Proust* borrows from Schopenhauer, whether tacitly or by acknowledgement, and expresses the philosophy of *The World as Will* with little or no distortion. But this is not the case in the coda, and it remains a moot point whether Beckett was simply working from a fallible memory, or whether his own developing creative vision [. . .] was beginning to generate its own refractory music" (177-78).

<sup>3</sup> By "will" Schopenhauer means "the innermost essence, the kernel, of every particular thing and also of the whole." It shows itself in "every blindly acting force of nature, and also in the deliberate conduct of man." It is recognized not only in the phenomena in the realm of men and animals. It is

also found in "the force that shoots and vegetates in the plant, indeed the force by which the crystal is formed, the force that turns the magnet to the North Pole." "even gravitation, which acts so powerfully in all matter, pulling the stone to the earth and the earth to the sun," and so on (vol. I, 110). Schopenhauer conceives "will" as "every force in nature" or "the innermost essence of everything in nature" (vol. I, 111). He also stresses that "will" is "entirely free from all the forms of the phenomenon into which it first passes when it appears" (vol. I, 112). "All representation, be it of whatever kind it may, all *object*, is *phenomenon*. But only the *will* is *thing-in-itself*: as such it is not representation at all, but *toto genere* different therefrom. It is that of which all representation, all object, is the phenomenon, the visibility, the *objectivity*" (vol. I, 110).

<sup>4</sup> This play was written in English for collaboration with John Beckett, for the BBC. It was completed towards the end of 1961. In a letter dated February 12, 1961, Beckett writes about this play: "Next job will be with John Beckett [a cousin] —a text-music tandem for the BBC. Beginning to have a few ideas" (qtd. in Zilliacus, 99).

<sup>5</sup> According to Cohn, Beckett "indicated in his letter [. . .] [that] Voice has two strands—self and story" (272, 402). Zilliacus also holds that "Voix is not regarded by its author as one indivisible story but as a compound of two, made up of an *élément soi* and an *élément histoire*" (129).