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Love and Depth in Beckett and Escher

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Abstract

It is a popular belief that love is a profound, "deep", transcendental experience. On the contrary, it is also often said that "love is only skin deep", meaning that it is merely physical and temporary. I try to argue that both opposing arguments are only partially correct. One cannot deny the "depth" of an experience, its difference from the ordinary and the superficial. But one can also not deny the appearances and the surface on which such "depth" appears. One cannot imagine a transcendental experience without acknowledging the appearance of that transcendence from an immanent position, while immanence itself is ruptured, or incomplete, creating a gap from which arises the experience that is popularly termed "transcendental" or "deep". Samuel Beckett depicts this rupture of immanence and appearance in his literary works, while M. C. Escher does the same through visual art.

The idea of love is notorious for the contradictory attributes ascribed to it. It is said that the wound of love is eternal, but then we also hear that time heals it. It is said that love is a special connection between two souls. Some say it is a state of hyper-awareness, while others consider it to be a loss of awareness. It is associated with freedom, but often it is seen as a desire for enslavement. Its paradoxical status is well known. But what if there was another way of looking at love, or more precisely, what if reality is seen from the perspective of love, rather than the other way round? What if the different attributes of love are perceived as contradictory only from the point of view of a reality which appears to be primarily non-contradictory?

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Most of Western philosophy has generally functioned under the metaphysical logic explicated by Aristotle, particularly influenced by Aristotle's famous "law of non-contradiction". Logical investigation can only begin, claims Aristotle in "Gamma 4" of *Metaphysics*, if we hold the law of non-contradiction as an indubitable truth and the origin of logic. This law states that, "the same thing cannot at the same time both be and not be"[1]. For instance, one cannot assert logically the statement that "Socrates is both mortal and immortal" at the same time. In a similar way one cannot validly state that "the essence of being both exists and does not exist", or that "the universe functions under the laws of nature and does not function under them" simultaneously. Thus, the epistemological implication of Aristotelian logic is that, since everything either is or is not itself, the only possibility of knowledge of something is to know it as itself, since what is not itself is non-being and does not exist. In other words, to know something in its true essence is to know it as self-identical and, consequently, what is not itself is either an illusion, and does not have essential being, or it is due to incomplete knowledge that it appears self-contradictory. The concept of love has remained an enigma and a paradox precisely because it has been understood from the point of view of Aristotelian logic. But what if we view the law of non-contradiction from the point of view of love as an ontological principle?

The arrival of Hegel in the history of philosophy marks the decisive point where this logic was truly challenged. Hegel in his works makes the opposite claim, i.e. everything both is and is not itself. Or to use Hegel's own terminology in the *Science of Logic* everything is both immediate (fully itself) and mediated (by virtue of its concept) at the same time. Hegel states in the introduction that "there is nothing, nothing in heaven or in nature or mind or anywhere else which does not equally contain both immediacy and mediation, so that these two determinations reveal themselves to be *unseparated* and inseparable and the opposition between them to be a nullity."[2] Let us take the well known example from the first chapter of his *Phenomenology of Spirit* titled, "Sense-certainty: or the 'This' and 'Meaning'". Here we have the most basic form of naïve, empirical sense perception, "a knowledge of the immediate or of what simply *is*"[3].

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[1] Aristotle. *Metaphysics*. Trans. Hugh Lawson-Tancred. (Penguin: London, 1998), 89.

[2] Hegel, G.W.F. *Science of Logic*. Trans. A.V. Miller. (Humanity Books: New York, 1969), 68.

[3] Hegel, G.W.F. *Phenomenology of Spirit*. Trans. A.V. Miller. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), 58.

Even prior to mentioning the object of perception (its name, its properties etc.), the perceiver can confidently state about the object that it is "this": "the thing *is*, and it *is*, merely because it *is*"[4]. But, asks Hegel, if we analyse "this *pure being*" further we find that the only way of being certain about its being, about its plain "this-is-ness" is through the mediation of concepts, namely the concept "This" itself. When we take "This" as the object of our thought we find that it is not simply the subject, "I", which is mediating the sense-experience of the object through its subjective concepts (as Kant would have it), but more radically, it is the sense-experience itself which is mediated by concepts *in its very immediacy*[5]. Without the knowledge of what "This" means (or "Here" and "Now") there would be no "immediate" sense-experience. The whole of the *Phenomenology* is a collection of such examples attempting to show how every form of self-consciousness contradicts itself, and how its object appears to both be and not be itself simultaneously. The essentially Hegelian point of this procedure is to include in this lists of examples, the self-consciousness which makes the Kantian distinction between phenomenal consciousness and the noumenal thing-in-itself. To put it differently, everything appears to be its own contradiction including the consciousness which places its object beyond its appearance, i.e. the Thing-in-itself appears to be immediate (fully itself) only to a consciousness which perceives it beyond its limit of knowledge. How am I aware that there is something I cannot be aware of? The only logical answer, Hegel concludes, to this problem is that the very thing-in-itself is itself not fully itself, which is why it creates the appearance of itself being beyond consciousness. One of the ways of further explaining this ontological statement is by analyzing the concept of "depth".

"Depth", as the Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines it, means (1) "a part that is far from the outside or surface", (2) "a profound or intense state", (3) "the quality or state of being complete or thorough", (4) "the complexity or obscurity, as of a subject", and even (4) "the worst part"[6]. As we see, the definitions vary, making the concept itself ambiguous. But the obscurity of the concept is not simply due to its linguistic and conceptual ambiguity, rather it is proof that "depth", the very thing, is itself not itself. When we say something has "depth" we usually mean that there is some aspect to it which remains unseen, beyond vision or comprehension. The

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[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid, 66.

[6] Dictionary by Merriam-Webster, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/depth

depth of something increases the more obscure and unfathomable it appears. This concept of depth remains caught within Aristotlean logic, since the comprehension of something, fully knowing what it is, will prevent it from appearing "deep". Shakespeare is deep because we are yet to comprehend the full extent of the meaning of his works, and the ocean is deep because we are yet to "get to the bottom of it" per say. But what if we look at it from a Hegelian lens? The skin of my arm is the surface, the appearance of superficiality, and if I cut through the skin, flesh and blood appear, which show that there is more beneath the surface, i.e. the depth. But what if this very conceptual distinction between the surface (skin) and depth (flesh and blood) is false, since what comes after the cut, the depth (flesh and blood) is also an appearance? If the flesh and blood never appear on the surface will I ever know of the depth of my arm? Or what if the cut I make on my skin doesn't appear either? Will I consider my arm to be anything more than my skin? Isn't depth precisely what appears on the surface which is not like the surface (an un-surface)?

In the field of optics the concept of visual depth is itself a problematic idea. Depth is strictly a perception in the mind created from the reception of light rays on the *surface* of the retina. It has no other sense except "sight" to further empirically verify its objective existence. Even within the physical eye, biologists are yet to find an area which perceives depth: "no specific 'depth apperception' cortical region has been identified"[7]. Visual depth illusions are successful precisely because they play on the very status of depth as an appearance. Consider, for instance, the introduction of "perspective" in painting at the time of the Renaissance. Art became three-dimensional by appearing to add a third dimension on the two-dimensional canvas. This brings us to the radicality of the question famously asked by Zhuangzi, prior to Descartes: I had a dream that I was a butterfly, but what if I am a butterfly dreaming that I am a man? To paraphrase it in our context: perspective is the appearance of a third dimension on a two-dimensional plane, but what if three-dimensional reality is already a two-dimensional perspective appearing to contain depth? In other words, how can we be certain of the difference between a visual depth illusion, a mere trick, and the depth we experience in our "true" reality?

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[7] Forrester, John V. et al. *The Eye: Basic Sciences in Practice*. (China: Elsevier, 2016), 273.

The same is the case with what we call physical matter. Slavoj Zizek makes a similar claim regarding Einstein's theoretical move from the specific to the general theory of relativity:

"As is well known, Einstein's revolution in the conception of the relationship between space and matter occurred in two steps. First, he refuted the Newtonian idea of a homogeneous, "uniform" space by demonstrating that matter "curves" space. It is because of matter that the shortest way between two points in space is not necessarily a straight line - if the space is "bent" by matter, the shortest way is a curve. This, however, is only the first of Einstein's steps; it still implies the notion of matter as a substantial entity, as an agent independent of space which acts upon it: bends it. The crucial breakthrough is brought about by Einstein's next step, his thesis according to which *matter itself is nothing but curved space.*"[8]

In the Einsteinian paradigm of general relativity matter is simply a curvature of space, which is why for Einstein, "'the world-sphere' is a 'surface of constant curvature.'"[9] It is not an entity in itself independent of space-time, but rather an effect of what disrupts it, i.e. its curvature, much like a cut on, or a twist of, the skin. Depth, in the same fashion, is an appearance on a surface, which distinguishes itself from the surface by appearing to be a cut on the surface (an unsurface), a curvature of appearances, hence appearing to be, like matter, an entity independent of, and beyond, the surface. We remain caught in the idea of "depth" as obscure and paradoxical if we stick to Aristotlean logic. By taking the next rational step we can conclude with Hegel that every epistemological paradox or antinomy is the ontological truth of the thing-in-itself, which is to say that depth does not appear mysterious because it signals something beyond knowledge, but rather it appears mysterious because we misrecognize the very incompleteness, the cut, within the thing itself. The object of knowledge is already the way knowledge makes it appear and there is nothing that one can know beyond it, i.e. no depth, since depth is the appearance of a cut on the surface.

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[8] Zizek, Slavoj. *For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor*. (Verso: London, 2008), 58.

[9] Einstein, Albert. *Relativity: The Special and General Theory*. Trans. Robert W. Lawson. (Pi Press: New York, 2005), 140.

The author who has perhaps taken this Hegelian dialectic of surface and depth farthest is Samuel Beckett. I will begin my assertion of Beckett as a Hegelian author of the dialectic of surface and depth by restating Pascale Casanova's view of Beckett that "the jargon of 'authenticity' was alien to him", and that:

"In order to break with signification and the referent, inherent in language, Beckett does not work on the sonorous materiality of the word. Instead, he is led to question, one after the other, all the ordinary conditions of possibility of literature - the subject, memory, imagination, narration, character, psychology, space and time, and so forth - on which, without our being aware of it, the whole historical edifice of literature rests, so as to achieve the gradual erasure of its images in 'the dim and void'."[10]

Casanova calls this "literary abstraction". The best of canonical writers are admired for the "authenticity" or "depth" in their work. Beckett attempts to create a literature whose aim is to minimize its trace of depth. He does this by bringing words to the surface as words, i.e. signifiers, without reference to their signifieds. In other words, Beckett's mission was to negate the status of the word as a sign. For instance, in *Molloy*, the narrator, after having fallen down in grass and unable to move, says:

"That night I set out for home. I did not get far. But it was a start. It is the first step that counts. The second counts less. Each day saw me advance a little further. That last sentence is not clear, it does not say what I hoped it would. I counted at first by tens of steps. I stopped when I could go no further and I said, Bravo, that makes so many tens, so many more than yesterday. Then I counted by fifteens, by twenties and finally by fifties. Yes, in the end I could go fifty steps before having to stop, for rest, leaning on my faithful umbrella. In the beginning I must have strayed a little in Ballyba, if I really was in Ballyba. Then I followed more or less the same paths we had taken on the way out. But paths look different, when you go back along them. I ate, in obedience to the voice of reason, all that nature, the woods, the fields, the waters had to offer me in the way of edibles. I finished the morphine."[11]

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[10] Casanova, Pascale. *Samuel Beckett Anatomy of a Literary Revolution*. Trans. Gregory Elliott. (Verso: New York, 2006), 12.
[11] Beckett, Samuel. *Three Novels: Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable*. (Grove Press: New York, 1955), 92.

From the very beginning, the setting in motion, the movement, is bound to fail. Like Zeno's Achilles, the narrator finds himself in the same place, i.e. the first step. And because he can't move beyond the first step (the only step that "counts"), he names that first step differently every day. The first step on the first day is "one". The next day it is "ten". Then "twenty", and so on. Thus, in the end he could go "fifty steps before having to stop". In a Wittgensteinian fashion, the narrator shows us the operation of a language game, where the unquestioned presumption (counting steps by tens, then by fifteens, then by twenties etc.) becomes the rule on which the rest of the interplay of meaning is executed. Or, to use Kuhn's term, counting the steps by tens, twenties etc. is the paradigm within which one "advances a little further" each day. From the point of view of the audience (who are able to understand the situation outside the narrator's paradigm, or who count steps in "ones") the narrator does not really move at all, or maybe moves only one step at a time. But, Beckett makes us question, what if the very ridiculousness of changing the rules of the language game and getting desired results is precisely what we, the audience, do in our everyday reality when we "advance a little further" each day? By what standards or rules, in what paradigm, can one make the claim of having acquired the signified of the signifier "to advance"? Or even, to push the idea further, of the signifier "to live"? In *Malone Dies*, the narrator ponders:

"I was born grave as others syphilitic. And gravely I struggled to be grave no more, to live, to invent, I know what I mean. But at each fresh attempt I lost my head, fled to my shadows as to sanctuary, to his lap who can neither live nor suffer the sight of others living. I, say living without knowing what it is. I tried to live without knowing what I was trying. Perhaps I have lived after all, without knowing. I wonder why I speak of all this. Ah yes, to relieve the tedium. Live and cause to live. There is no use indicting words, they are no shoddier than what they peddle. After the fiasco, the solace, the repose, I began again, to try and live, cause to live, be another, in myself, in another. How false all this is. No time now to explain. I began again. But little by little with a different aim, no longer in order to succeed, but in order to fail."[12]

The perennial question of philosophy, "What is the good life?" becomes subverted. Instead of focusing on the problem of the Good, as has always

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[12] Ibid., 110.

been done in philosophy, Beckett shifts the focus on the question: "What is living?" It is not so much a question of getting rid of ethics, but rather of a new ethics which is concerned with what it means to be alive, to "live", as opposed to what is the "good" life. This, in Lacanian terms, is also the question of subjectivity, because only when her subject appears can a person be said to be alive, or more precisely, something in a person can be said to be living[13]. And the appearance of the subject corresponds with the disappearance of the ego. It is not "I" that lives, but something in the "I" that is missing from the "I"; that within the ego which perpetually renders the ego incomplete. This "I" is not the depth of personality, nor a subterranean "id", as the misreading of Freud claims, but rather a hole, or crack within the surface. Beckett in his attempt to "abandon style, to abandon the notorious 'finding one's voice'"[14] made the subject emerge by making depth of the personality of the speaker disappear, by reducing the person to the impossible attempt to say words which would be his own; by reducing the character or narrator to a failure to speak for himself. If nothing I say is my own, and if nothing I speak represents me, then where am I other than in this repetition of trying to appear to myself in my words. Thus, the subject is not the depth of feeling, complexity or history of a person, but on the contrary, the one who appears in the repetition of failed attempts to appear. The "narrator" of "Texts for Nothing 13" says:

"Whose voice, no one's, there is no one, there's a voice without a mouth, and somewhere a kind of hearing, something compelled to hear, and somewhere a hand, it calls that a hand, it wants to make a hand, or if not a hand something somewhere that can leave a trace, of what *is* made, of what *is* said, you can't do with less, no, that's romancing, more romancing, there is nothing but a voice murmuring a trace. A trace, it wants to leave a trace, yes, like air leaves among the leaves, among the grass, among the sand, it's with that it would make a life, but soon it will be the end, it won't be long now, there won't be any life, there won't have been any life, there will be silence, the air quite still that trembled once an instant, the tiny flurry of dust quite settled…. It's not true, yes, it's true, it's true and it's not

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[13] "…the truth of the subject, even when he is in the position of master, does not reside in himself; but, as analysis shows, in an object that is, of its nature, concealed…." Lacan, Jacques. *Seminar XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis.* Trans. Alan Sheridan. (W.W. Norton & Co.: New York, 1998), 5.

[14] Dolar, Mladen. "Nothing Has Changed". (*Filozofski vestnik Vol. XXVI, Number 2* 2005), 151.

true, there is silence and there is not silence, there is no one and there is someone, nothing prevents anything. And were the voice to cease quite at last, the old ceasing voice, it would not be true, as it is not true that it speaks, it can't speak, it can't cease. And were there one day to be here, where there are no days, which is no place, born of the impossible voice the unmakable being, and a gleam of light, still all would be silent and empty and dark, as now, as soon now, when all will be ended, all said, it says, it murmurs."[15]

The investigation of subjectivity brings Beckett's speaker, not to a depth of personality, to a finite subject bound to history, environment or socio-political circumstances, but to a "trace" like the one the "air leaves among leaves", a simultaneous "no one" and "someone". Most importantly, the trace is not of something, the voice is not of someone; the trace *is* the subject, the unceasing silent voice *is* subjectivity par excellence. There is a cut in the sounds that the speaking person makes which gives the impression of there being someone behind what is spoken, while Beckett repetitively concludes throughout his works that the cut *is* the maximum depth, on the surface, that is the subject. The subject never appears as a signifier or appearance like other appearances, but always appears as a disturbance, a stain among appearances. Hegel's point is the same: there are two kinds of appearances: appearances which appear to reveal something, and appearances which appear to hide something (creating the illusion of depth). The truth is that both types of appearances are formally the same, i.e. both are on the surface, only the latter appears to contain something beneath itself. The rabbit hole goes only as deep as one's imagination and desire.

Another modern artist who mastered the portrayal of depicting undepth within surface, the superficiality of depth, was M.C. Escher. Escher, greatly influenced by mathematical problems, was inspired to portray the impossibility of distinguishing between the second and third dimensions in space. His works do not simply play with appearances but make an ontological claim: the appearance of depth is not an indication of the reality of something behind appearance, but rather depth is this very appearance which hides its very status as appearance.

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[15] Beckett, Samuel. "Texts for Nothing 13". *The Complete Short Prose, 1929-1989*. (Grove Press: New York), 94.

Escher's work, titled "Ascending and Descending" (Figure 1) depicts such a twist, or glitch, inherent in three dimensional space where a group of guards patrolling the stairs around the top of the building seem to want to go down or up the stairs, but the stairs are built in a way as to form a square staircase rising and falling on the sides, causing the guards to march eternally without entering the depth of the house below.
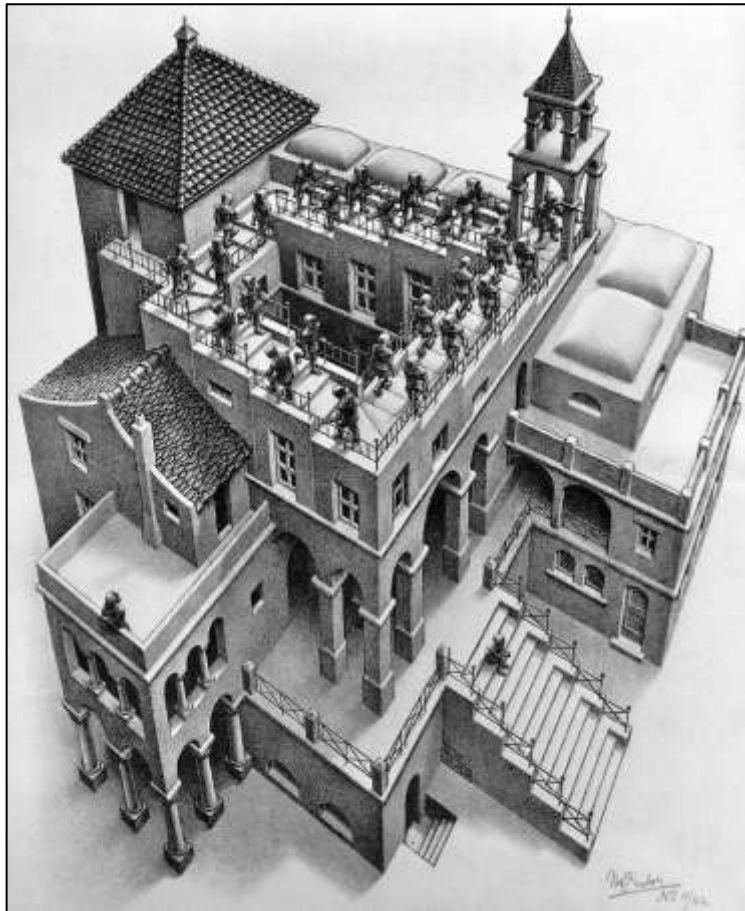

Figure 1. "Ascending and Descending"

It is this undepth of the staircase which remains on the level of the surface (the top of the house) without having any connection to the bottom (the inside of the house), and which gives a sense of the ascension and descent of the stairs without actually providing height or depth. One side of the staircase that has stairs leading upwards meets the side which has stairs

leading downwards, which connect to the side leading upwards again. What is missing, thus, in "Ascending and Descending" is precisely this third dimension of depth which would make it possible to ascend or descend in the first place. It is at the corners of the square staircase, the point where ascension and descent meet that depicts the impossibility of the three-dimensionality, or wholeness, of space. It is precisely this third dimension, the Thing-that-would-make-whole, which language causes to be ontologically impossible. The same is the case with "Waterfall" (figure 2), where the pathway which leads the water to its exit, creating a waterfall, only begins at the point where the waterfall falls.

Figure 2. "Waterfall"

It is a waterfall falling upon itself. How does it fall when it is at the same level (depth) as itself? In this way Escher makes us think about how language is able to create the appearance of the Thing that lies beyond language, when the Thing is really nothing but the falling of language upon itself; an internal glitch within the signifier. In Escher, one always gets the appearance of surface and depth, but only as appearance.

Figure 3. "Reptiles"

In "Reptiles" (Figure 3), we get the same effect but in the opposite way. Here, we get a queue of lizard-like creatures moving in a circle, crawling over three-dimensional objects only to end up being assimilated within two-dimensional versions of themselves drawn on a paper below. From the other end of the drawing the creatures emerge again as three-dimensional only to climb up the objects and continue moving along the queue. Here instead of having an absence of depth, what we get is the appearance of the two-dimensional surface. The stand-out object, among the three-dimensional objects, is the two-dimensional drawing on the paper. The glitch in this case is the appearance of surface *as surface* in a three-dimensional space. Escher, much like Beckett, makes explicit the Mobian nature, as depicted in "Mobius Strip II" (Figure 4) of language and space: surface gives the appearance of moving towards depth, while depth only leads to the surface, which in turn seems to lead to depth, and so on. It is

the twist in the strip which, like the crack or hole on the surface, causes the appearance of depth.

Figure 4

This paradoxicality which is a necessary part of reality is also experienced in love. The debate about the essential origin of love has always persisted raising the question of whether love stems from the body or from somewhere deeper (the heart? the soul?). For Plato, true love was platonic, a meeting of souls. The modern age has predominantly held the opposite view, i.e. love is a socio-biological stimulus to satisfy evolutionary needs. Thus, in the modern world it is often said that love is only skin deep. From the point of view of Aristotlean logic love is either a miraculous, spiritual anomaly, or it is a deterministic natural phenomenon, but *never both*. And yet it is precisely this paradoxicality of love that persists: one finds that the Aristotlean logic of "either/or" does not explain the very ambiguity which defines it – love seems to work on the logic of "both/and", appearing to be both materially determined, as well as being spiritual. One never finds the determining material cause of love (which is different from instinctual

stimulus) which is why one posits its cause to be transcendent or spiritual. In every such situation, Hegel suggests, the rational solution is to assert the absence of the knowledge of the cause as the absence of the thing-in-itself. Since reality is the same as our consciousness of reality, what we cannot be conscious of does not constitute reality; what I cannot be aware of (in any form whatsoever) cannot exist. Thus, if the substance-thing called "love" escapes consciousness it is precisely because it does not exist. What does exist is my experience of the gap within consciousness, which is a gap within reality, to which I become passionately attached. This passionate attachment to the gap, or hole, in the world is called love.

Thus, Hegelian logic helps us revise the modern formula of love: instead of claiming "love is only skin deep", we can now state "love is the desire of the appearance of depth on the skin". There is only the surface, but on the surface there are two kinds of appearance, 1) the appearance that appears, and 2) the appearance that an appearance has not appeared. In the play of showing and hiding, reality neither shows nor hides a substantial Thing. Rather it merely gives the semblance of showing or hiding something behind it. It is not what is hidden, but the semblance of hiding, that causes love. This semblance is what Lacan, following Socrates, in Plato's *Symposium*, calls "agalma". The agalma is what the subject believes the beloved has – the answer to her most burning question, the quenching of her deepest dissatisfaction – which, although invisible, might be obtained if the beloved loves her in return. Love is therefore, as Lacan says in *Seminar XX*, a demand: "love demands love. It never stops demanding it. It demands it… *encore*. '*Encore*' is the proper name of the gap in the Other from which the demand for love stems."[16] Love is a proof, not of some precious Thing hiding behind appearances, but the very gap within appearances, an appearance of nothing which signals the very incompleteness of reality itself.

From a Hegelian standpoint, Aristotle's law of non-contradiction fails to acknowledge this gap within being. It fails to see that a thing can both be and not be because being is constitutively incomplete: it both is (appears to be) and is not (appears to be missing an appearance). Love, therefore, does not point to what is missing in the appearance, but to the very missingness within the realm of appearances – love enjoys neither the skin, nor what

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[16] Lacan, Jacques. *Seminar XX: Encore*. Trans. Bruce Fink. (W.W. Norton & Co.: New York), 4.

lies beneath, but the very cut on the skin. Beckett and Escher are two modern artists who are able to represent this invisible missingness, which deems being incomplete, Escher by recreating space, and Beckett by recreating speech, from the point of view of this point of missingness. In *The Unnamable*, the narrator speaks from the point of silence:

"I am it. I am it. (I've said so, it says so: from time to time it says so, then it says not - I've no objection.) I want it to go silent, it wants to go silent, it can't. It does for a second, then it starts again: that's not the real silence. What can be said of the real silence? I don't know. That I don't know what it is? That there is no such thing? That perhaps there is such a thing? Yes, that perhaps there is somewhere. I'll never know. But when it falters? And when it stops? But it falters every instant, it stops every instant! Yes, but when it stops for a good few moments, a good few moments (what are a good few moments?) - what then? Murmurs, then it must be murmurs. And listening, someone listening. No need of an ear, no need of a mouth: the voice listens, as when it speaks, listens to its silence - that makes a murmur, that makes a voice (a small voice - the same voice only small). It sticks in the throat…".[17]

Speech is a voice listening to its own silence, just as depth is a cut on its own surface. And as Hegel shows, being is the appearance of its own non-being. So, love is a desire of the absence of its object. Aristotle claims that a thing can either be or not be. One can either be dead or alive. But the existence of paradoxical phenomena refutes the law of non-contradiction. For instance, the undead (creatures that are living dead) are both dead and alive simultaneously. Similarly, a thing can either be at the surface or underneath (in depth), deep or superficial, does not hold true if we acknowledge the paradoxical existence of undepth, a cut on the surface which gives the semblance of depth, a play of appearances which pretend to hide something behind themselves. Love, too, is one such paradox: neither a desire of something, nor an absence of desire, but a desire of nothing, of missingness as an object. It is the name of an undesire, which is the subject herself, as Mouth in Beckett's play, *Not I*, says:

"… always winter some strange reason… the long hours of darkness… now this… this… quicker and quicker… the words… the brain… flickering away

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[17] Beckett, Samuel. *Three Novels: Molloy, Malone Dies, The Unnamable*. (Grove Press: New York, 1955), 240.

like mad… quick grab and on… nothing there… on somewhere else… try somewhere else… all the time something begging… something in her begging… begging it all to stop… unanswered… prayers unanswered… or unheard… too faint… so on… keep on… trying… not knowing what… what she was trying… what to try… whole body like gone… just the mouth… like maddened… so on… keep- …. What?.. the buzzing?.. yes… all the time the buzzing… dull roar like falls… in the skull… and the beam… poking around… painless… so far… ha!.. so far… all that… keep on… not knowing what… what she was- … what?.. who?.. no!.. she!.. SHE!.. [*Pause.*]… what she was trying… what to try… no matter… keep on… [C*urtain starts down.*]… hit on it in the end… then back….”[18]

[18] Beckett, Samuel. “Not I”. *Samuel Beckett The Complete Dramatic Works*. (Faber and Faber: London, 1986), 273.