

Black Holes Boxing:

Sartre on Love

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Legend

A Thousand Plateaus – ATP.

Being and Nothingness – BN.

“Description of Woman” – DW.

Deleuze and Guattari – DG.

Abstract

Sartre's phenomenology of love reads as calloused, narcissistic, and antiquated. He contends that the ideal of love is the ontological unification of the lover and the beloved and because this ideal can never be fulfilled, both theoretically and in practice, love is always destined to devolve into hate. Love is conflict. For this project, I will be looking to critique Sartre, to explore the possibility that love does not necessarily lead to hate, and that a positive love is possible. I will begin, in the first chapter, by doing a brief autopsy on some key components of Sartre's philosophy. First, his inheritance of Cartesian ontology of consciousness, his rejection of the *cogito* as the foundation of this ontology, and his use of Husserlian intentionality. The monad of consciousness will come into vision through analysis of the expressions 'in-itself' and 'for-itself'. Sartre owes a debt here to Hegel, both in terminology and in the meaning of the designations of master and slave. However, I will rebuild the idea that Sartre is to be read as some sort of neo-Hegelian in his treatment of the Other and conflict. Consciousness is not mediated at the level of being by the Other, but at the level of identity. The lover – beloved relationship is founded in *the look*; this is foundational to the perceived conflict of romantic relationships. I will give a full exegesis of Sartre's chapter in BN on love, where he affirms that love will always devolve into hate.

Comparing Deleuze and Guattari's faciality with Sartre's *look* is the focus of my second chapter; these are not two opposite modes of subjectivity, but rather two different speeds of subjectivity. I open a door to a Sartrean-Deleuzeian mode of lover-beloved relationships. The goal now becomes combining Sartre and Deleuze to create a positive romantic interface. This is done through a phenomenological reading of Deleuze's "Description of Woman", where he contends that desire fundamentally changes the phenomenological experience of the Other, and the Other does not present an external world, but an internal one. This leads us to conclude that through bringing Sartre and Deleuze together, love is not defined by its failure of unification, but rather through its ability to draw a self and an Other together in experiencing the internal world of each other as a 'we,' rather than as two rival 'I's'.

Introduction

When one attempts any serious discussion on love, one always runs the risk of descending into caricature and cliché. When asked ‘what are you doing your thesis on?’, by friends or colleagues, the answer inevitably causes a smirk, or an eyebrow raise from the interlocutor. Amusement begets dismissal, as if any discussion of the passions should be reserved for teenagers and Disney. Max Scheler cautions his readers who relegate love to something flippant and transient, that “entire generations see the whole of emotional life as a dumb, *subjectively* human matter of fact ... One consequence of such an attitude is that the investigation of the entire realm of emotional life is surrendered to *psychology*”.¹ We of course acknowledge both the existence and intertwining of psychological and biological facts with our emotional life; however, to reduce the experience of love to such factors would be to deny human existence as we experience it. The experience of love should not be reduced to the oxytocin which is produced by my brain when I hug my beloved; this is why we turn to phenomenology. The phenomenological movement in continental Europe, existing in its vibrancy in the first half of the 20th century, produces an entirely serious and engaged philosophy of love. Jean-Paul Sartre, who dedicates a little over 100 pages in *BN* to a rigorous examination of love, is of course one of these phenomenologists who considers love with a grave seriousness.

BN is a monstrous tome which largely focuses on the distinction between consciousness in-itself and consciousness for-itself. I am mostly convinced of Sartre’s general ontology of being, and his distinctions of what consciousness actually *is*. That is why I am motivated to investigate his phenomenology of love, for I find it lacking in coherence and persuasion. In short,

¹ Max Scheler, “Ordo Amoris,” in *Selected Philosophical Essays*, trans. David Lachterman (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1980), pp. 98-135, 118-120.

for Sartre, love is conflict. Even more so, love is never ending conflict, which will inevitably devolve into hate. Writing *BN* immediately after being a prisoner of war in France, Sartre's pessimism pulses arduously between each sentence, and this pessimism is never more fulfilled than in his chapter "Concrete Relations with Others".

In terms of methodology, we will be engaged in a two-pronged, double articulated approach. When attacking any large force, the best tactic is almost always a 'pincer maneuver', the 'hammer and anvil'. In such a tactic, we split our resources into two groups, the steady and fortified anvil, and the fluid and effective hammer. Firstly, to develop our fortifications, we intend to do a straightforward exegesis of Sartre, because prior to any sort of meaningful discussion of Sartre's philosophy of love, we must first understand his philosophy in general, and his distinctions of being. We will first look to Descartes, then to Hegel to place Sartre in context with his influencers. Hegel will be of extreme importance as Sartre claims that "what the Hegelian Master is for the Slave, the lover wants to be for the beloved".² To determine what Sartre is saying about the nature of love, we must first determine what Hegel is saying about self-consciousness and the dialectic of master and slave. However, it is crucial to keep in mind that as we investigate Hegel, we do so with the intent of unearthing Hegel's relationship to Sartre, and not attempting a standalone exegesis of Hegel in itself.

Our second movement, fluid and maneuverable, will be an attempted convergence of Sartre's negative philosophy of love, and Deleuze's positive philosophy of love. This convergence will be strange and exciting and will hopefully lead to new possibilities of what love can accomplish. We mean not to completely destroy or negate Sartre's general ontology, but

² Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel Barnes (New York, NY: Washington Square Press, 1992), 482.

simply to improve upon and correct it. Deleuze, along with older phenomenologists such as Scheler and Stein, will offer alternatives to Sartre's closed system of lover and beloved, and if we are successful, this closed system will open up to new possibilities where the lover – beloved relationship is not one of conflict and destruction, but of hope and happiness.

Noticeably, there is a lack of exploration into the phenomenology of the sexual act as it pertains to love. One could argue that for any meaningful study of the philosophy of love, one must have a concrete philosophy of sex. I would argue that the opposite is true, that first we must determine *what* love is, before we examine the sexual act as it relates to lover – beloved relationships. Also, Sartre's focus on the sexual experience is largely peripheral, the sexual act appears as both auxiliary and secondary to the force of love. Sex essentially becomes the tool in which we attempt to express the motivation of love. And so, we turn our attention to Sartre's ontology of consciousness, beginning with Rene Descartes.

Chapter I.

§1. Sartre and the Cogito

Beginning to draw out the nectar, the essential, from such a daunting behemoth as *BN* is no small feat. Because of this, prior to any study of Sartre's phenomenology of love, we must first understand his phenomenology in general. And thus, we will begin with setting the tone and the frequency for our examination. Like many 20th century phenomenologists Sartre grounds his work in the Husserlian and Cartesian traditions. Specifically, we will examine how Sartre differs from Descartes and how the problem of identity in Cartesian thought is the exact issue of being-with-others that Sartre addresses. Sartre relies heavily on Husserlian intentionality to critique Descartes. From this critique of Descartes, we arrive at an altogether different form of consciousness. Consciousness remains a monad, not a dyad, at the level of being, yet consciousness has two distinct modes of that being. Sartre distinguishes consciousness in-itself and consciousness for-itself as the two eternal modes of consciousness.

Self-consciousness for Sartre is deeply indebted to the Husserlian notion of intentionality. Husserl writes in his second meditation "conscious processes are also called *intentional*; but then the word intentionality signifies nothing else than this universal fundamental property of consciousness: to be consciousness *of* something; as a *cogito*, to bear within itself as *cogitatum*".¹ Intentionality is the most fundamental aspect of consciousness; that consciousness is always a consciousness *of* something. This consciousness of something is a direction, a movement, an intentionality. I intend towards the lamp, I intend towards the tree, I intend

¹ Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. Dorion Cairns (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1999), 33.

towards the Other. Consciousness in general is not as simple as *cogito ergo sum* – I think therefore I am, but rather *cogito ergo cogitatum*² – I think thoughts. This is the breakthrough that Husserl makes and that Sartre latches onto, that we are not our thoughts. We are instead a self which intends towards our thoughts. The I experiencing what the I itself produces. Our psychic life then becomes distinct from who we are at the level of being; we may make a claim that our thoughts share an identity with the I which thinks them, yet the two remain ensconced in schism. The I which perceives the thoughts, remains distinct from the thoughts themselves.

This is the juncture where Sartre makes his move towards his own ontology of consciousness. He writes, “all consciousness, as Husserl has shown, is consciousness *of* something. This means that there is no consciousness which is not a positing of a transcendent object, or if you prefer, that consciousness has no ‘content’”.³ This passage is crucial to understanding Sartre’s phenomenology for a few reasons: firstly, we have seen his indebtedness to Husserl regarding the fundamental intentionality of consciousness. Secondly, that consciousness is always a positing of a transcendent object; that in the perception of objects we posit them as existing in the transcendent sense, not in a transcendental sense. Lastly, we see here the position of consciousness having no content. Consciousness being at once both entirely empty, entirely nothing, whilst at the same time being entirely full, entirely an in-itself. This paradox of opaque being, and translucent nothingness is in a sense the entirety of the Sartrean project. Consciousness can only be consciousness because it is empty, because it lacks substance. Yet, we must not make the mistake of doubting its existence.

² We could also translate this as *thinking, therefore thoughts*. The question then becomes if the cogito is smuggling in a subject where none is warranted. Is the *cogito* a trojan horse where the ‘I’ is assumed? These questions will not be answered here, but they lend credence to our critique of Husserlian-Cartesian apodicticity.

³ Jean-Paul Sartre, *BN*, trans. Hazel Barnes (New York, NY: Washington Square Press, 1992), 11.

It is also important to note that in our intentionality our consciousness does not *become* what we are intending towards. “A table is not in consciousness - not even in the capacity of representation”.⁴ Consciousness is not an empty box filled with things, it is always empty, always negating. But we are not at all dealing with the unconscious, the unconscious for Sartre is totally “absurd”.⁵ Consciousness is always consciousness of consciousness, there is nothing that exists as being in which consciousness is not consciousness of that thing.⁶ This ontological emptiness is vital to our understanding of relations with Others. In perceiving the Other, the Other does not ‘enter’ into my consciousness. The perception of the Other is not a trojan horse in which to smuggle their being into myself. Rather, in perceiving the Other we have done the opposite, we have negated their being.⁷

If we know that consciousness is always consciousness of something, the question then remains, what is self-consciousness? To be conscious of consciousness is to intend towards the consciousness which itself is conscious in the first place. Here we encounter Sartre’s treatment of Descartes. In attempting to understand the being of consciousness, Sartre turns to the *cogito*. *Cogito ergo sum* – I think therefore I am. Husserl takes the *cogito* as gospel, the beginning point of all philosophy. The Cartesian *cogito* is for Husserl and Descartes the apodictic nexus point of all knowledge. This is where Sartre differs: the *cogito* is apodictic in that it cannot be doubted, but it is not the fundamental being of consciousness. Sartre charges the Cartesian *cogito* with the crime of introducing a dualism that is both unwelcomed and unwarranted. The dualism is

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ This is why Sartre rejects Freud’s psychoanalysis. For Sartre, the unconscious is a farce, an illusion of bad faith that allows the subject to defer responsibility to something outside of one’s consciousness.

⁷ Sartre’s *The Imaginary* serves as a phenomenological undertaking of perception and imagination. It is here that we may say that the image of a chair in my psyche is in fact the negation of the chair in front of me: “When I perceive a chair, it would be absurd to say that the chair is in my perception [...]. An image of a chair is not and cannot be a chair”. Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Imaginary*, trans. Jonathan Webber (London: Routledge, 2010), 6-7.

ontological as well as grammatical (if the two can even be separated). The *I* think, therefore *I* am, has introduced two I's whilst Descartes has only really accounted for one.

If consciousness is always consciousness of something, then Descartes has only described one aspect of consciousness – the consciousness which is perceived, and lying-in ontological limbo is the I which does the perceiving. The reflected and the reflecting. Sartre wants to avoid a dyad of consciousness at all costs. If consciousness becomes a dyad a myriad of problems emerges – namely that of an infinite regress; secondly, that of the decay of the self. The problem of the infinite regress goes like this: if consciousness is consciousness of that consciousness, we are always positing consciousness outside of itself at the level of being. Sartre refers to this lack of progress as the “known, the knower known, the knower known by the knower. Etc”.⁸ Sartre says that we either make ourselves comfortable with consciousness being an infinite spiral into regression, or that we attempt to stop at one of the terms in the sequence. Both reactions to the Cartesian *cogito* are absurd, and provide neither a clear picture of consciousness, nor an insight into being. This dyadic consciousness also turns the self into two selves. The two selves of the *cogito*, like two ontologically separate consciousness, also seems absurd. The problem of unity arises if the self is no longer a monad. We can of course present ourselves in different ways, take up the identity of a different ‘self’ but all these identities are totalized into the self; unity of the self at the ontological level of being is of fundamental importance.

Since we cannot have a self which is a dyad, the Cartesian *cogito* cannot be the being of consciousness. Sartre now introduces us to a “pre-reflective cogito which is the condition of the Cartesian *cogito*”.⁹ There must be a non-thetic, that is to say, non-positional consciousness which

⁸ *Ibid*, 12. Sartre acknowledges Spinoza's infinite regress of *idea, idea of idea, idea of idea of idea, etc.*

⁹ *Ibid*, 13.

is the condition of mythetic activity. Sartre uses the example of counting to explain the pre-reflective *cogito*. If I am counting the number of cigarettes that remain in my pack, 1,2,3,4... I must be in some sense conscious of the counting activity which I am engaged in. However, the awareness of the counting is distinct from my awareness of the cigarettes. Sartre refers to Heidegger when he says, “thus in order to count, it is necessary to be conscious of counting”.¹⁰ This consciousness is non-positional exactly because it is itself of which it is aware. The pre-reflective *cogito* saturates all conscious activity, consciousness need not be reflective to be conscious of itself, as per Sartre’s example. Consciousness then is the nexus point of zero, the absolute origin by which all points on the graph are made possible.

One may argue that Sartre is sneaking a dyad into consciousness when that is the exact problem he is trying to solve; this, however, would be a misinterpretation of the above point. Non-thetic consciousness is not another consciousness residing in the self, but rather “the only mode of existence which is possible for a consciousness of something”.¹¹ Consciousness then has two modes, its existence in-itself and its existence for-itself. Not two selves, but two aspects of the same self, for “consciousness of self is not dual”.¹² We have averted the crisis of the dyad. The self which reflects the self is not at all a vicious circle, or rather as Sartre says, “if you like, it is the very nature of consciousness to exist in a circle”.¹³ The in-itself of consciousness then exists as “indivisible, indissoluble being- definitely not a substance supporting its qualities like particles of being, but a being which is existence through and through”.¹⁴ The in-itself is not the shadow behind being, the unconscious or the un-real, it is rather the constitutive *isness* of being.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid*, 14.

¹² *Ibid*, 12

¹³ *Ibid*, 13.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 15.

It is fully opaque, full of mass, undulating with instance and immanence with being. It is the non-reflective *cogito*, the being of consciousness which supports the *cogito*. It is in this sense that consciousness can exist as pure existence, pure appearance, pure being in-itself.

What then are we to make of the *cogito*? The *cogito* then becomes a performance by the reflective consciousness – consciousness for-itself. I think, therefore I am, is consciousness existing as an object for-itself. To say, ‘I think’ is to posit an I which thinks, that is to say, to negate the I which itself is thinking the ‘I think’. As we said above, the in-itself is non-substantive existence. The for-itself moves in the reverse direction of the in-itself. As it makes consciousness in-itself an object before it, it substantivizes the I, it passes judgment and looks at the self as a phenomenon which is also itself. Consciousness then becomes an object for-itself, one which exists in a specific time, in a specific milieu. It is in this way that self-consciousness acts as negation of consciousness, as a negation of the in-itself. Sartre spends the entirety of the chapter “On the Origin of Negation” to explain that self-consciousness is the origin of negation. It is the origin of dialectic. A passage which somewhat summarizes this thought:

The being by which Nothingness arrives in the world must nihilate Nothingness in its Being, and even so it still runs the risk of establishing Nothingness as a transcendent in the very heart of immanence unless it nihilates Nothingness in its being in connection with its own being. *The being by which Nothingness comes to the world must be its own Nothingness.*¹⁵

Self-consciousness is then a being which is not its own being. Being which is its own nothingness. Dialectic, which is dependent on nothingness for its negations, begins with human existence.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 57-58.

The question now becomes, what does it mean for the self to exist in a state of transcendence to the self? As we have said, the in-itself and for-itself are not two separate beings, but rather two modes of the same being. Sartre comments on the nature of self-to-self transcendence, “this is no longer the subject in Kant’s meaning of the term, but it is subjectivity itself, the immanence of self to self”, and then later, “absolute subjectivity can be established only in the face of something revealed; immanence can be defined only within the apprehension of the transcendent”.¹⁶ We may say that consciousness transcends itself when apprehending the appearance of a table, for the table is wholly outside the boundary of consciousness. However, is it still a relationship of transcendence when the thing apprehended is itself? The question then remains if the inherent being of consciousness is one of immanence or one of transcendence. We mean only to gesture to this problem now as to set the groundwork for a more detailed discussion of Sartre and Deleuze in chapter two.

Again, it is important to state that these two modes of consciousness do not exist as separate entities which communicate with each other, or rather as Sartre says, “being is not a connection with itself. It is itself”.¹⁷ Consciousness in-itself and consciousness for-itself are contained in the same self. In fact, they exist so closely together that all that separates them is a nothingness. A nothingness that is at both instances infinitely small and infinitely large. We conclude then that by utilizing Husserlian intentionality we realize that the Cartesian *cogito* is not the being of consciousness. There exists a pre-reflective *cogito* which is the condition of the reflective *cogito*. This pre-reflective consciousness is non-thetic, non-substantive, yet fully being. This of course leads us to an examination of the reflective *cogito*, consciousness for-itself

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 17, 23.

¹⁷ *Ibid*, 27.

§1.2 Consciousness for-itself

It is common to read Sartre as apologetically Hegelian in his treatment of self-consciousness. This standard, as contended by someone like Timothy O'Hagan, reads that "Sartre follows the movement of Hegel's dialectic through its three moments (i) presentation of self, but not yet of pure self-consciousness; (ii) emergence of pure self-consciousness in the life and death struggle, and (iii) the result of that struggle as a relatively permanent relation of domination and subordination".¹ I am skeptical of this sort of reading as Sartre presents a more complicated narrative in *BN*. Sartre, in the section "The Dialectic Concept of Nothingness" is openly critical of Hegel's ontology of self-consciousness. Sartre suggests that Hegel has all together missed the mark when he quotes him, "Being presupposes Essence".² Essence as being the foundation of being is completely antithetical to Sartre's project; this is not Plato. Hegel's idealism is a step in the wrong direction for developing an ontology of consciousness. One of the founding differences between the two is that Hegel has mis-represented being and the origin of nothingness. Sartre comments,

When Hegel writes, "(Being and Nothingness) are abstractions, and the one is as empty as the other," he forgets that emptiness is emptiness of something. Being is empty of all other determinations than identity with itself, but non-being is empty of being. In a word, we must recall here against Hegel that being *is* and nothingness *is not*.³

There must be being before there is nothingness. There must be self-consciousness before there is negation. 'Pure self consciousness,' as O'Hagan says, is not the second step for Sartre, but the condition of all steps.

¹ Timothy O'Hagan, "Reading Hegel Through Sartre," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* 12, no. 1 (1981): pp. 81-86, 81.

² Sartre. *BN*, 45.

³ *Ibid*, 48.

The overt Hegelian reading of Sartre is not completely unfounded, for both Sartre's method, his reliance on dialectical turns, and his content are all Hegelian. However, our focus for this study is the relationship of the lover and the beloved, which Sartre describes as follows: "what the Hegelian Master is for the Slave, the lover wants to be for the beloved".⁴ What is Sartre's relationship to Hegelian self-consciousness and dialectic? In the previous section we briefly went over how self-consciousness is the origin of negation; this would be well kept in the back of our minds. The main point that I would like to elicit here is that Sartrean self-consciousness is not mediated by the Other at the level of being in the way that Hegel's self-consciousness is mediated by the Other. It is an error to conflate the two and leads to a misunderstanding regarding being-for-others and the phenomenology of love. Sartre is in fact far more Cartesian than Hegelian in terms of the self-eminence of consciousness. In this section it is my intention to elucidate both the difference between Hegel and Sartre, and also expand on the nature of consciousness for-itself.

Let us first ground ourselves with a brief explanation of Hegelian self-consciousness to give ourselves a reference point, keeping in mind that our discussion of Hegel is a discussion of Sartre's Hegel. Although I find myself sympathetic to Sartre's reading of Hegel, our project is not concerned with defining Hegel. Our focus is Sartre, and how he reads Hegel, for this is what informs his philosophy of love. Sartre is attempting a synthetic framework in which Descartes and Hegel mingle, and in doing so, he takes Hegel's Master Slave dialectic to be the self-contradictory paradox which haunts all interpersonal relationships. Or in other words, Hegel lurks like a specter in the bed of the lovers. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which essentially acts as a history of consciousness, Hegel's position is that self-consciousness exists only by

⁴ *Ibid*, 482.

being recognized as a self by the Other. Self-consciousness exists firmly in a dialectic with the Other. It is a step in the process of the self-towards absolute consciousness that the self recognizes the self. It is the existence of an outside world that results in the self. It is a distinction. A transcendence of the self looking outside the self at something that is not self. This ‘not-self’ is the Other. And by recognizing this ‘not self’ as actually a being which is another self, do we find the origination of self-consciousness. Because “self-consciousness exists in and for itself when, and by the fact that, it so exists for another; that is, it exists only in being acknowledged”.⁵ The Other becomes the condition of all self-consciousness. This transcendence has a two-fold meaning, according to Hegel: consciousness has at once “lost itself” and then “finds itself as another being”.⁶ This point is crucial to Sartre. Consciousness encountering another consciousness is to see the self *through the other’s eyes*. For your consciousness to be thrown outside of yourself and pasted back onto you. Therefore, Hegel determines that “being-in-itself and being-for-itself are one and the same”, in the other’s constitution of you they refer to you as an object which you can now refer to yourself as.⁷ Your existence for-itself is also your existence in-itself according to Hegel.

Because self-consciousness is always mediated by the Other, the dialectic becomes strained, self-consciousness then becomes a battle to the death between a master and a slave. An explanation: to be a self is to stake your self-consciousness as essential. Or in other words, to claim self-hood is to claim self-hood exclusively. However, because self-consciousness is mediated by the Other, it in fact becomes contingent upon the other’s existence, contingent upon the other’s acknowledgment. This moment Hegel defines as the moment where two self-

⁵ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 111.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*, 104.

consciousnesses “recognize themselves as mutually recognizing one another”.⁸ However, to acknowledge the Other as a subject is to acknowledge their power to view me as an object – thus to admit that I am a contingency of the Other. Because of this a conflict emerges where each of the parties stake their self-hood upon threat of objectifying the Other, upon threat of death. Thus, whoever fears death the least, whoever fears becoming an object the least, becomes the Master and the other the slave. As we said in the previous paragraph, self-consciousness is transcendent of the Other. So, what the Master does is reduce the slave to a being by which they themselves may be a self. The Other’s value is to provide the master with selfhood.

This is where Hegel’s concept of desire also makes its appearance. Because self-consciousness exists in a state of transcendence from the self with an Other, there must be something which drives and motivates this transcendence. This driving force is desire. Consciousness is striving to be realized, to be distinguished as a self among everything else: “desire is consciousness since it can *be* only as a non-positional consciousness of itself”.⁹ Self-consciousness is desire itself. The longing for unity of the self – the self to be realized. The longing for the self that is lost in the meeting with the Other is desire.

We now have a clearer picture of Hegelian self-consciousness. By the realization of the Other as self, and the acknowledgment from that Other that I am a self, my consciousness is unified with the self that first made that realization. Thus, self-consciousness is wholly mediated, wholly reliant on the Other for its essential *existence*. Fueled by this desire for unity, the self transcends the Other to return as self-consciousness. We will see in the next section how the master-slave dialectic influences Sartre’s phenomenology of love and loving.

⁸*Ibid*, 112.

⁹ Sartre, *BN*, 502.

In examining Sartre, we must again refer back to the pre-reflective consciousness and the relationship between the in-itself and the for-itself to see why he is not a true Hegelian, why the above description does not fit him. Self-consciousness for Sartre is not a moment in the dialectic as it is for Hegel; rather, it is the *origin* of all dialectic. We must acknowledge here that Sartre is more attuned to the posture of Descartes than he is to Hegel; there is always a return to the *cogito* when dealing with self-consciousness.

The main difference between Sartre and Hegel is that where Hegel's consciousness transcends the Other back to the self, Sartre's self-consciousness transcends the self to the self. As we have said in the previous section there is a pre-reflective *cogito* which is the condition of the Cartesian *cogito*. Thus, there is no need for self-consciousness to rely on the Other, for the *cogito* is fully apodictic. Or in other words, it is an internal negation, not an external one. Consciousness negates itself in self-consciousness. I=I is then not a process by which the I is mediated by an external negation of the Other. Rather, I=I is an internal negation of consciousness destroying itself. By the performance of the *cogito* we have already established self-consciousness with the transcendence of the in-itself to the for-itself. The *cogito* is then not a moment-to-moment phenomenon where I am only self-conscious if I quote Descartes, rather "I have never ceased to practice the *cogito*".¹⁰ By the very nature of human consciousness we practice the *cogito*, thus we insinuate the *pre-reflective cogito* as transcending itself to reflect itself. It is not the case then that the Other founds our existence, in fact, "the *cogito* alone establishes us on the ground of that factual necessity which is the necessity of the Other's existence".¹¹ Sartre refers to this as a pre-ontological understanding of the Other. The Other's

¹⁰ *Ibid*, 338.

¹¹ *Ibid*.

existence is never in question, as my existence is never in question. It is in this way that Sartre elevates the position of the Other. Others are so wholly real, so wholly existent that in fact our very *cogito* implies all *cogitos*. Sartre says as much when he writes that the “*cogito* of the Other’s existence is merged with my own *cogito*”.¹² Whereas Hegel poses the Other’s existence in question, Sartre never does. The Other is so part of my reality that to question their existence is to question my own. Thus, we fall back into the loving embrace of the *cogito*.

As we said previously, Desire for Hegel is fundamentally self-consciousness. In self-consciousness reaching towards the Other, desire reaches for something that is not the self. Sartre’s classification is not so different. I think Hegel would agree with Sartre when he writes “desire is a lack of being”, the question remains what being is lacked, what direction desire takes?¹³ Desire must be towards something that is not the thing doing the desiring. As we have said before, Sartre’s discovery that consciousness contains an internal negation, is to suggest that desire in fact does not need to transcend the Other, for it has already transcended itself. The in-itself transcends itself to reach something that it is not, the for-itself. I=I is the first negation, not ‘I encounter Other’. Sartre is closer to Schelling than to Hegel in the role that desire plays in self-consciousness. Schelling’s concept of Desire is the self’s desire for self revelation, he calls it the “primal longing”.¹⁴ However, for the self to realize the self it must split from itself. Sartre, later in *BN*, says that “consciousness chooses itself as desire”, a line which could be ripped from a page of Schelling and few would know the difference.¹⁵ Schelling writes of God’s self-realization, “God sees himself in his own image, since his imagination can have no other object

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, 137.

¹⁴ F.W.J Schelling, *Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Human Freedom*, trans. James Gutmann (Le Salle, IL: Open Court Classics, 1992), 34.

¹⁵ Sartre, *BN*, 508.

than himself [...] God-begotten God himself'.¹⁶ Schelling's primal desire of the self to realize the self is closer to Sartre, than Sartre is to Hegelian dialectic. Man-begotten Man himself would be an appropriate phrase for self-consciousness (although unfairly gendered). The relation of Sartre to Schelling is more of a gesture than a marriage.

For Sartre the self is still mediated by the Other, but it is not at the level of being that it is for Hegel; rather, it is at the level of *identity*. Sartre realized that in fact the I can never be the I which asserts itself. There is always a gap between the reflecting and the reflected. $I \neq I$. Because of this the for-itself and the in-itself are desperately trying to unify, to identify with the other. That we may be both fully objective and fully subjective at once. For the self to be fully in-itself. However, because of the nature of consciousness there will always exist a gap in our being: "nothingness lies coiled in the heart of being like a worm".¹⁷ The self is always alienated from the self because it can never truly *be* itself. The for-itself attempts to be constituted as an in-itself, but the for-itself is destined to always remain a negation, always remain a sort of nothingness of being. By the very existence of self-consciousness, we are plunged into self-alienation – a self which can never truly identify with itself at the level of being. And thus, not our being ontologically, but our *identity* as a for-itself becomes mediated by the Other. As we have said previously self-consciousness is wholly self-sufficient in its emergence – its existence is guaranteed. As Sartre says, and as is often quoted, "existence precedes essence".¹⁸ It is not the *existence* of self-consciousness, which is mediated by the Other, but the *essence* of self-consciousness which is mediated by the Other. Thus, the Other becomes a way in which our identity is mediated back to us, or in other words, the meaning of our existence is fully in the

¹⁶ Schelling, *Philosophical Inquiries*...,35.

¹⁷ Sartre, *BN*, 56.

¹⁸ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Existentialism Is a Humanism*, trans. Carol Macomber (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007), 20.

other's control. The for-itself and in-itself are always attempting to identify with the other, there is a crisis of meaning between the two. The Other then casts their gaze upon me, they see me as an object. They identify me as an in-itself which is appearing for them. Thus, our identity and our meaning is solidified by the Other. This moment for Sartre, now enters a Hegelian dialectic. It is not our existence which is at stake, but the identity, the meaning, the essence of that existence.

Because of the ontological self-sufficiency of the *cogito* we discover that we have always been self-conscious, that we have never ceased practicing the *cogito*. We find Sartre far more Cartesian than Hegelian in his treatment of self-consciousness. Self-consciousness does not exist as a moment of a dialectic; it is rather dialectic which is the product of self-consciousness. The Other is then not the condition of our existence, rather it is my existence which is the condition of the Other as they appear before me. It is not my existence which is outside of me, but rather the *meaning* of that existence, its essence, its value. In the following section we will develop this idea with more colour, as it is the power of our meaning which is the source of conflict with the Other and fundamentally with the lover as well.

§1.3 *The Look*

We have mined the ore, we have removed the topsoil, and we have unearthed a bedrock on which to stabilize and erect. By distinguishing consciousness in-itself and consciousness for-itself we have specified Sartre's relationship to Descartes and Hegel. We now turn our attention to how Sartre's being-with-others acts a fleshing out of Hegel's master-slave dialectic. Sartre presents being-with-others as fundamentally contextualized in *the look*. *The look* then becomes a phenomenological process in which we discover ourselves as existing in the world with Others.

We have connected Sartre and Hegel at the level of consciousness for-itself, but now must develop this as consciousness for-others. As we have said, we exist as a tension between the for-itself and the in-itself, and this relationship is mediated by the Other not at the level of being, but at the level of identity. Because of this mediation, we find that “conflict is the original meaning of being-for-others”.¹ We recognize that for Sartre the Other is another ‘myself’. They are a rival consciousness. A rival black-hole. The Other is another origin point, another ‘drain hole’ which threatens the orientation of my world.² The world which has presented a specific posture towards me now seemingly runs away from me, towards the black hole sitting across from me. The world, I-myself, appear now alien to me. This confrontation, this rival black hole is the one who *looks* at me. It is this *look* that we are now concerned with.

In the literature, traditionally, there are 3 main facets of *the look* that are developed. By examining Luna Dolezal’s examination of *the look* we have a skeletal structure that we can build upon. I am going to modify her three points by adding a fourth of my own. The ubiquity of *the look*.

1. The other is present. Actually being looked at and seen by another person (epistemological case).
2. The other is imagined or absent (the Other). Seeing oneself as though through the eyes of another (self-evaluative case).
3. The Look is symbolic for an awakening of reflective self-consciousness. Self-awareness and self-reflection are made possible by the 'appearance' of the Other and maintained by the continued 'presence' of the Other (ontological case).³
4. The ubiquity of *the look*. *

¹ Sartre, *BN*, 475.

² *Ibid*, 343.

³ Luna Dolezal, “Reconsidering the Look in Sartre’s ‘Being and Nothingness,’” *Sartre Studies International* 18, no. 1 (2012): pp. 9-28, 16.

These three points offered by Dolezal, plus one of my own, give us a road map by which to guide our study of *the look*. I disagree slightly with Dolezal's third point. Self-awareness is in fact not mediated by the Other as we have said in the previous section on Sartre and Hegel. The in-itself and for-itself exist as internal negation. Because of this, my undertaking will only have three points, Dolezal's first two and my added one. I add the ubiquity of *the look* because Dolezal's three points do not honour the pre-ontological status of the Other. By speaking of the ubiquity of *the look*, I mean to address the inherent quality that *the look* has in its presence to us.

(i) Sartre begins the section on *the look* by suggesting that the Other is first encountered as an object for me, this is the first structure of the Other – the epistemological structure. Sartre writes, “this woman whom I see coming toward me, this man who is passing by in the street, the beggar whom I hear calling before my window, all for me are objects”.⁴ Sartre then brings up the point that although this is how the Other comes into my perception, this is certainly not the foundation of the Other's existence. If the Other were purely a sense-object for me, then “their existence [would] remain purely conjectural”.⁵ This means that if the Other is *only* a sense object, we are thrust into a sort of Kantian solipsism. This is the source of Sartre's critique of Husserl, of whom he writes that “Husserl can not escape solipsism any more than Kant could”.⁶ We are not at all dealing with the possibility of the Other's existence as only an object for us. As we said in the previous section the Other's existence is guaranteed with our own, we are ontologically tied to the Other in a meaningful way. Because of this Sartre claims that there is a “fundamental connection in which the Other is manifested in some way other than through the

⁴ Sartre, *BN*, 340.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, 318. – Sartre often allies Husserl with Kant, who acts both as an ally and enemy of the Sartrean project. Sartre offers that Husserl “at every moment borders on Kantian Idealism” (119).

knowledge which I have of him”.⁷ We must accept that on some fundamental level there is an understanding of the Other as subject which is being-with ourselves at the level of being. Or to put it another way – we are inherently beings that are being-with-others. There is no way to *think* our way into perceiving the Other as a self, we find that we already take the Other to be a self, prior to any cognitive developments. The phenomenal appearance of the Other is in fact a reference to their subjectivity in connection with our own. We must be clear that this reference is not to a Kantian *noumenal* consciousness which is behind the other’s appearance. Rather, the face signifies the signified subject *in which it itself is*. For Sartre, appearance and being are one and the same. Subjectivity is only subjectivity insofar as it appears. To say that the face signifies the subject in which itself is, is to say that the face is both the signified and signifier in the relationship. The most fascinating aspect of this relationship is exactly what is being referenced by the appearance of the Other as object. In Sartre’s words, “Its essence must be to refer to a primary relation between my consciousness and the Other’s. This relation in which the Other must be given to me directly as a subject although in connection with me, is the fundamental relation. The very type of my being-for-others”.⁸ What is referred to me then, by the face, is the very connection between my self and the Other. Or in the other words, the appearance of the Other refers the Other to me as inextricably in commune with me at the deepest of levels. This *togetherness* we define as being-with. Because of *the cogito*’s pre-ontological understanding of the Other, our status as beings is always a fundamental being of relation. To dismiss, ignore, hate, is still to acknowledge that the Other is Other, that they exist in connection with you. As we have said, identity is mediated by the Other and this is the exact way in which that identity is mediated. By the appearance of the Other, we are referred to a fundamental *relation* of this

⁷ *Ibid*, 340.

⁸ *Ibid*, 341.

‘thing’ that appears before me – to me. We are referred back to ourselves. We are referred to subjectivity itself. Sartre is clear that the face is not a reference to the Other’s consciousness as it is. The face is a reference to the Other’s consciousness in concert with our own. It is a reference to a connection, not a singularity. This is a crucial albeit complicated point. The Other’s appearance is not a signifier to their own consciousness – but a signifier to a connection of consciousnesses. He writes, “the face which I see does not refer to it; it is not this consciousness which is the truth of the probable object which I perceive. In actual fact the reference to a twin upsurge in which the Other is presence for me to a ‘being-in-a-pair-with-the-other,’ and this is given outside of knowledge”.⁹ In the French, Sartre uses the phrase “un surgissement gémellé”, which Hazel Barnes has translated to ‘twin upsurge’.¹⁰ This translation does not convey the proper meaning that Sartre was attempting to get across by using gémellé. The word ‘twin’ in French directly translates to Jumeau.¹¹ Sartre, on the other hand, uses the word ‘gémellé’, which better translates to *Gemini*.¹² Gemini as the Zodiac sign. The image of a twin upsurge, and upsurging Gemini are a completely different picture. The Gemini are opposites, yet they still face each other. In their opposition they are still connected and together. The Gemini are at once two separate entities, and one entity. This paradox is exactly what Sartre is getting at. By addressing the being-with-others not as ‘twin upsurging’ but as upsurging Gemini we have a far more nuanced understanding of what exactly Sartre is getting at. Sartre also feminizes the word and changes it into a verb. In terms of the significance of these two modifiers, I am unsure. Yet now *the look* is the Gemini facing each other. The self is both self, and Other.

⁹*Ibid*, 340.

¹⁰ Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'être Et Le Néant* (Paris: Gallimard, 1976), 292.

¹¹ Alain Rey, ed., *Le Robert Micro Poche: Dictionnaire D'apprentissage Du française* (Paris: DISCOROBERT INC, 1988), 713.

¹² Alain, ed., *Le Robert Micro Poche: Dictionnaire D'apprentissage Du française*, 584.

(ii) Because the Other's appearance references our own subjectivity, we can say that we are mediated by the Other in our identity. However, if we are mediated by the Other as Sartre says, what does this do for our status as beings? Let us answer this question as Sartre does, with a parable. Let us imagine that for some reason or another I am looking through a keyhole at a scene playing out before me. I suspect my partner of being un-faithful. I have resorted to obscene voyeurism in order to satisfy my curiosity. In this moment my concentration, my consciousness is intending towards the scene in front of me. Sartre says here that in this instance "I am my acts".¹³ My consciousness takes a non-thetic position as it is focused solely on my sense-perception. Is my partner inside the room? With whom? What is that on the desk? My consciousness is solely outside of myself, it travels with the eyes, onto the scene. My consciousness escapes me.¹⁴ Sartre suggests that in this moment, we are totally ambivalent and ambiguous as to our status as beings. We are acting this jealously, we are the jealousy, but I do not *know* that I am jealous.¹⁵ In this moment I am wholly unable to know myself, I am cast out Mount Parnassus. But then I hear footsteps. I turn my gaze, lock eyes with the perpetrator. Someone sees me. My heart palpitates, I jerk my head away from the keyhole. I now know myself to be jealous. The jealousy which was escaping my self through my actions has now returned to me, via the Other. My meaning, my essence as jealousy, has been mediated by *the look*, by the existence of this Other person who gazes at me. And in their gaze, I see myself, "I

¹³ Sartre, *BN*, 347.

¹⁴ Sartre makes a reference here to *The Imaginary*: the point is that consciousness cannot at both instances perceive and imagine at the same instance. Perception, conception, and the image are three distinct modes of consciousness, and although they remain connected, they seem to be separate faculties. So, in the example above, when one is looking through, they keyhole their consciousness is directed at the perception, thus is cannot at the same time hold that perception as an image. The question then remains if one can imagine one's self whilst perceiving? In these writings at least the answer for Sartre seems to be no, we need the space created by the Other in order to remove ourselves from perception and to conceptualize the self. (*The Imaginary*, Routledge Publishing 4-16).

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 348.

see myself because somebody sees me”.¹⁶ Because the Other is given to us a relation, our consciousness flies back to us as objectified. My identity, which is the for-itself casting judgment on the in-itself, has been proceeded by the prosecuting attorney’s gaze. A critical note here is that *the look* is a double reciprocal relationship. While I am kneeling down, adjacent to the keyhole, feeling the gaze of the Other, the Other is also feeling my gaze. As Hegel says, “each is for the other the middle term ... they recognize themselves as mutually recognizing one another”.¹⁷ We share a mutual recognizing of the self: double reciprocal.

Reflection via the Other is the rationality behind Sartre’s famous phrase, “nobody can be vulgar all alone!”.¹⁸ It is by the very nature of *the look* that we are made an object to ourselves. Shame is always “shame before somebody”.¹⁹ The Other acts as a sort of connection channel between the in-itself and for-itself. Whereas the for-itself can judge consciousness in the past tense (the *cogito*), the Other seems to have the ability to constitute me as a certain being *now*: “shame reveals to me that I am this being, not in the mode of ‘was’ or of ‘having to be’ but *in-itself* ... in order for me to be what I am, it suffices merely that the Other look at me”.²⁰ Beauty is not in the eye of the beholder, it is fixed rather snugly in the eye of the Other. In *No Exit*, Sartre provides *the look* an ever-grander narrative moment. Inez and Estelle, the two women in the room who are fated to torture each other for eternity, are looking at each other and speaking of what it means to see the other,

Estelle [opens her eyes and smiles]: I feel so queer. [she pats herself.] Don’t you ever get taken that way? when I can’t see myself, I begin to wonder if I really and truly exist. I pat myself just to make sure, but it doesn’t help much.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 349.

¹⁷ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, 112.

¹⁸ Sartre, *BN*, 302.

¹⁹ *Ibid*.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 351.

Inez: you're lucky. I'm always conscious of myself- in my mind. Painfully conscious.

Estelle: ah yes, in your mind. But everything that goes on in one's head is so vague isn't it? It makes one want to sleep. [she is silent for a while.] I've six big mirrors in my bedroom. There they are. I can see them. But they don't see me. They're reflecting the carpet, the settee, the window. But how empty it is, a glass in which I'm absent! When I talked to people, I always made sure there was one near by in which I could see myself. I watched myself talking. And somehow it kept me alert, seeing myself as the others saw me... Oh dear! My lipstick! I'm sure I've put it on all crooked. No, I can't do it without a looking glass for ever and ever. I simply can't.

...

Inez: Look into my eyes. What do you see?

Estelle: Oh, I'm there! But so tiny I can't see myself properly.²¹

When we cannot see ourselves, we, like Estelle, no longer have any thought of our own existence. And so, like Estelle, we surround ourselves with mirrors, with people. With Black holes. These Others, these mirrors, are ways in which our identity is mediated back to us. The conflict, the source of the master-slave dialectic, is then rooted in *how* the Other sees us. Because, like Estelle also says, the image of herself in Inez's eye is not necessarily the one in which she *wishes* to see. She is blurred, she is tiny, she is not the Estelle, Estelle thinks she is. We will direct more of our attention to this obscured image of the self in the Other in our next section on love. Shame, jealousy, virtue, all of these identities are then formed in the context of the Other. We feel shame as the Other looks at us in shame – we are cast in bronze by the gaze of the Other. By the existence of the Other we are halted in the fact that our essence, our identity does not belong to us. Our identity is being held hostage by the Other. Our essence burrows itself in the eye of the Other.

²¹ Jean-Paul Sartre, *No Exit: and Other Plays*, trans. S. Gilbert (New York, NY: Vintage International, 1989), 19-20.

The final point I would like to make regarding *the look* is the ubiquity of the matter. In the literature on *the look*, commentators focus heavily on what I have treated so far, the instance of *the look*. There is less of a focus on what I call the ubiquity of *the look*, that *the look* exists outside of this moment of its occurrence. Sartre writes of this experience,

“being-for-others is a constant fact of human reality, and I grasp it with its factual necessity in every thought ... The Other is present to me everywhere as the one through whom I become an object. ... My certainty of the Other’s existence is independent of these experiences and is, on the contrary, that which makes them possible”.²²

Here we see Sartre refer back again to a ‘pre-ontological’ understanding of the Other. It is this pre-ontological status of the existence of the Other which makes it possible for *the look* to exist in the first place. I would argue that we find Sartre here at his most Kantian. The existence of the Other seems to be at both times transcendent and transcendental. Transcendent because it is still something outside of ourselves which gives us back to ourselves. And transcendental in the way that the existence of the Other seems to be a category of our own existence. If my *cogito* guarantees the existence of the Other, the Other is linked to my own existence in a way that cannot be called transcendent. More work needs to be done on this particular issue. For now, we may say that *the look* is then a focused moment of all Otherness, that the existence of the Other is the ubiquitous way in which I may reflect on myself. That the Other is at all times a mirror in my mind.²³

²² Sartre, *BN*, 373.

²³ I would argue that Sartre is in fact more similar to Levinas and Buber in his treatment of the Other. Although their conclusions are different, in that Buber and Levinas both envision the Other as the source of gentleness and compassion and Sartre in *BN* has yet to shed his Hegelian shroud of conflict. However, the fundamentals of the Other in commune with myself remain present in both. Seán Hand comments in his introduction to Levinas’s “Martin Buber and the Theory of Knowledge” that “he agrees with Buber that the self is not a substance but a relation, existing only as an ‘I’ addressing itself to a ‘Thou’” (Hand, 60). We see this exact sentiment in Sartre. That

To conclude, we have seen the objectivity of the Other and limit of this objectivity. We have understood the moment of *the look* as the moment of our identity being given back to ourselves. And lastly, we have seen that *the look* exists as permeable in all of my existence, that the pre-ontological understanding of the Other is what makes *the look* possible. This is what we mean by saying that Sartre is Hegelian in this being-with-others. Like Estelle seeing herself as totally affected by the Other, we find that our meaning escapes us at every turn. In being objectified, in being cast in bronze, we discover the Other as being the limit of our freedom, that we are defined by something outside of ourselves. Our freedom is splintered. It is here where we enter the crux of our project. It is Love as the climax of this conflict that we must reconcile.

§1.4 Love

What we have attempted to describe in our section on Sartre's *look* is the inherent relation of the "for-itself with the in-itself *in the presence of the Other*".¹ What we find is that the for-itself cannot identify as the in-itself in any meaningful way without the ubiquitous witnessing of an Other which is both transcendent and transcendental. Transcendent in the way that the Other is still *not us*, but transcendental in the way that the Other's and my being are guaranteed *together*. Each is the condition of the other's existence as being-for-others. Because of this relation, because the Other sees me as object, sees me as I am, they hold the secret of my essence. I feel shame only as the Other sees me as shameful, and thus "the profound meaning of my being is outside of me, imprisoned in an absence".² The reality of who I am no longer

consciousness is not substance, that it exists wholly in relation to Others. "Martin Buber and the Theory of Knowledge," in *The Levinas Reader* (Hoboken, NJ: Blackwell Publishing, 1989), pp. 59-60, 59.

¹ Sartre, *BN*, 472.

² *Ibid*, 473.

belongs to me. I am faced with a double identity which is being absconded from me, how the Other sees me, and how I imagine myself as seen through the Other's eyes. Both meanings escape me, both threaten to steal my essence away from me. The Other is always in a position of authority and because the Other holds my essence hostage, I take a very specific posture towards them. I *love* the Other and I *hate* the Other. In my attempt to wrestle my essence away from the Other I may take up the position of the lover, one who caresses, who may make love, who may speak softly, one who is attempting to retrieve essence by way of this love. The recovery of my being is in fact the *ideal* of love, its motivation. Love is a striving for a being that is lost in the eye of the Other. Sartre lays out the foundation of the stances we take towards the Other.

In so far as the Other as freedom is the foundation of my being-in-itself, I can seek to recover that freedom and to possess it without removing from it its character as freedom. In fact, if I could identify myself with that freedom which is the foundation of my being-in-itself, I should be to myself my own foundation. To transcend the Other's transcendence, or, on the contrary, to incorporate that transcendence within me without removing from it its character as transcendence.³

We are now left with two postures towards the Other, transcending their transcendence and incorporating their transcendence. To transcend the Other's transcendence is to hate, and to incorporate the Other's transcendence is to love. Sartre argues that hate and love are not to be seen as a dialectic, but rather a circle.⁴ Whereas a dialectic progresses towards something, hate and love exist as the root of the other. Each contains the core of the other and each enriches the other's adoption. Hate and love are two expressions of the same thing. Different expressions of our status of being-for-others. Hate and love are opposite attempts to refound our existence. For

³ *Ibid*, 474.

⁴ *Ibid*.

our purposes we will be focusing on love. For if there is any hope of resolving Sartre's conflict it is surely in the project of the lovers and lies not in the abounding melancholy of hate.

We can structure our discussion on Sartrean love around three main points. The possession of the Other, the assimilation of this possession, and the failure of the assimilation. Love is the progression of these three movements. We will weave these three ideas together, revisit each, and re-explain the three points multiple times. By approaching the problem multiple times from different angles, we can produce a better picture of Sartre's philosophy. We will see throughout our study that Sartre is translating the language of lovers into a language of philosophical ownership. Because the motivating ideal of love is the recovery of my being, expressions of love are then expressions of this attempt at recovery. Sartre uses this prism to translate and unearth the meaning of stereotypical patterns of love and relationships.⁵ This all leads us to say that for Sartre the ideal of love is unity at the level of consciousness.⁶ In identifying with the Other's consciousness we wish to absorb the Other. To unify with them at the level of being, "it is in this sense that love is a conflict".⁷ Love is the besieging of an enemy state.

We must again reiterate that all being-for-others is founded in *the look*. It is the Other which constitutes us as a thing with meaning. By the word 'meaning' I mean to say that it is our objective meaning which is found outside of ourselves, "thus the profound meaning of my being is outside of me, imprisoned in an absence".⁸ Objective meaning here means how "something"

⁵ *Ibid*, 483. Sartre says that "we must translate all of this" when referring to stereotypical descriptions of love. For example, 'soul mate' simply refers to the fact that we want the beloved to love us as an "absolute choice" (483). Sartre will repeatedly use this technique of normative descriptions of love, only to reveal what he considers the dark phenomenological underbelly of them.

⁶ *Ibid* 477.

⁷ *Ibid*.

⁸ *Ibid*, 473.

appears as an object in the world. This status of my being is always determined outside of me, my meaning as a person in the world is always negotiated by parties and forces outside of me. The beloved apprehends me as I am. As a thing with meaning. As a thing which I can never identify with, even though I myself am this thing. Sartre comments on this *possession* of being,

we must recognize that we experience our inapprehensible being-for-others in the form of a *possession*. I am possessed by the Other; the Other's look fashions my body in its naked-ness, causes it to be born, sculpts it, produces it as it is, sees it as I shall never see it. He makes me be and thereby he possesses me, and this possession is nothing other than the consciousness of possessing me.⁹

We think here again of the Gemini. The facing twins. Each produces the other, each opposite but the same. Each dependent on the Other for being. Each twin constituting the Other. For Sartre, one cannot dismiss how the Other views them. We cannot deny that what we produce in the world is wholly our own, "I am responsible for my being-with-others, but I am not the foundation of it".¹⁰

Another anecdote, a woman is with her partner on a date. They have been together for some time and know each other well. After the waiter takes the initial order and walks away the woman makes a sarcastic remark about the waiter's appearance. Her partner hears the joke and immediately feels disgust for the woman. The partner objectifies the woman as contemptuous and cannot hide the displeasure on their face. The woman now, noticing the displeasure on her partner's face is confused. She was trying to make the partner smile with a joke. There is an anxiety in the air which sits like dark fog. In a very real way, the woman has become shamed, contemptuous, cruel. And even worse, these objectifications are coming from the person she

⁹ *Ibid*, 475.

¹⁰ *Ibid*.

loves. This is what Sartre means when he says, “the more I am loved, the more I lose my being”.¹¹ By the woman loving her partner, she has given them the ultimate power to objectify herself. And so, to love is to be outstripped by chaos, for identity to always be in question. We must also recognize that this objectifying gaze is a product of a free person. There is nothing determining that the partner views the woman in a positive or a negative light. They either do or do not take the joke as an insult. Because of this, the Other’s freedom is a *threat* to her. In possessing her she is locked away. She is made a slave to the Other. To even express one’s thoughts is to give oneself to the Other, “the very fact of expression is a stealing of thought since thought needs the cooperation of an alienating freedom in order to be constituted as an object”.¹² Or in other words, to say anything with meaning we must reconcile the fact that we are speaking to an Other who is alienated from me. My very being is given away by the nature of being-for-others. Even more so, as Sartre put it, the Other is *stealing* my being from me.

Because of our natural possessing objective gaze, possession itself takes on another meaning by the lover. The lover wants to possess the beloved, *as they possess them*. Or as the Henry Miller line goes, “it was the soul of him that women were trying to possess”.¹³ We see here the appropriation of the Hegelian Master Slave dialectic. Except now, the romantic relationship is the apex of this conflict, its highest expression; not simply a step in a dialectic destined for absolution. What makes an Other, Other, is the capability to objectify you. Sartre is suggesting then that love is a strategy to take control of this antithetical possession. That to possess the one who possesses you, is to love them. I would argue that for Sartre, love becomes a positive possession. The word ‘possession’ has the subtext of imprisonment, torture, servitude.

¹¹ *Ibid*, 491.

¹² *Ibid*, 487.

¹³ Henry Miller, *Tropic of Cancer* (London: Penguin Classics, 2015), 105.

But the motivation behind this possession in Sartre is far different. Sartre never mentions why we choose to love whom we do. And this omission gives us the space to ‘fill in the gap’. If we take Sartre’s conclusion a step farther, we see that we love whom we do because we love how the Other *sees us*. To put it another way. We do not love the beloved; we love the way the beloved *identifies* us. For example, if I have longed to be a good person but for some reason or another, I do not know I am a good person, I may fall in love with someone who sees me as a ‘good person’. Because I am not able to found my own existence as a ‘good person’, I have fallen in love with the Other who is able to constitute me as I *wished I was*. It is not the beloved that I love, it is my own meaning that is referred back to me that I love. This is true for the opposite expression as well. Just as our good behaviour is reflected back to us in meaningful ways, so too are our faults. Plato makes this point salient in *Symposium* through Socrates addressing of the gathered interlocutress, “a lover who is detected in doing any dishonorable act, or submitting through cowardice when any dishonor is done to him by another, will be more pained at being detected by his beloved than at being seen by his father, or his companions, or anyone else”.¹⁴ In love we give power to the Other to constitute ourselves whenever they wish, we live and die by their hand. The Other’s freedom is a threat to our own, but by loving how the Other sees us, we are able to relate better to this threat, we befriend the threat to our being. By keeping this fact in the back of our minds as we continue our investigation of Sartrean love, we will find a more meaningful cynicism behind Sartre’s words.¹⁵

¹⁴ Plato, “The Symposium,” in *Plato: Six Great Dialogues*, ed. Mary Waldrep and Tom Crawford, trans. Benjamin Jowett (New York, NY: Dover Publications Inc, 2007), pp. 141-183, 147.

¹⁵ I want to mention here the obvious ethical implications of this. I do not see how we can ethically love someone in the Sartrean way. If the driving force of love is possession, the Other then becomes a means to an end, rather than the end themselves. We may take various ethical stances, but this surely violates the Kantian system of ethical life.

Take, for example, Anton Chekov's short story, *The Crooked Mirror*. The story is told from the perspective of a man, who, with his wife, explores his family's abandoned ancestral home. His wife spots an old grand mirror in the corner of the house. The man, seeing the mirror, recalls how his Grandmother paid a large sum of money for the mirror and was obsessed with it. She refused to live apart from the mirror, eating sleeping and living in front of it. Even in moments where she was not conscious, "as she went to sleep, she laid the mirror by her in the bed".¹⁶ She loved this mirror and wished to die with it, at all times having the mirror adjacent to her. The wife approaches the mirror, gazes upon it, and collapses. When she awakes, she refuses to eat, drink or live without the mirror's presence. Desperate, the man goes to the old house and presents the mirror to the woman. She says to her husband after looking at the mirror, "is it really me? Yes, it is! All things tell lies to me except this mirror. People lie, my husband lies. Oh, if only I had seen myself earlier, I would have known what I truly am and would never have married that man!".¹⁷ We learn, after the man gazes at the mirror behind his wife, that the mirror is showing the woman as she wants to be, beautiful. She is no longer homely, the mirror gives her the image of a great beauty. This is what love is for Sartre. The beloved is like Chekov's mirror who gives us the person we want to be; beautiful, brave, good, lovely. And so, we let the Other into our bed. We spend time with the Other. We love them so we, like the woman in the story, may be closer to how we wish ourselves to be.

To 'incorporate the Other's transcendence' is to absorb the Other, to unify with them, for the for-itself to identify with the Other's gaze. To identify with the image in the mirror. I would argue that when Sartre talks about unification and possession, he is essentially meaning the same

¹⁶ Anton Chekhov, "The Crooked Mirror," in *Anton Chekhov: "The Crooked Mirror" and Other Stories* (New York, NY: Zebra Books, 1992), pp. 1-4, 2.

¹⁷ Chekhov, "the Crooked Mirror", 3

thing. Possession is the means of unification, the way in which we attempt to unify with the Other. This possession of transcendence is not to be confused with simply physically or emotionally possessing the Other. This is, according to Sartre, a misguided attempt at ontologically unifying with the Other. Sartre uses the example of Marcel and Albertine to highlight this point. Marcel establishes Albertine in his home. He physically possesses her. She is at all times existing-for-him. However, Marcel is still racked with anxiety. Although he physically and emotionally possesses her, he does not ontologically possess her. Unity of consciousness remains out of reach, and because of this, Marcel is still unsatisfied. Sartre makes note that “through her consciousness Albertine escapes Marcel even when he is at her side”.¹⁸ We bring up this point to highlight the fact that it is not the simple possession of the Other, it is rather the unification of the Other qua Other. This unification of Otherness remains impossible. For unlike Marcel, there is no house strong enough to contain the Other’s essence as Other. Sartre points out the impossibility of the project of Love like this,

Unity with the Other is therefore *in fact* unrealizable. It is also unrealizable in theory, for the assimilation of the for-itself and the Other in a single transcendence would necessarily involve the disappearance of the characteristic of the otherness in the Other. ... This unrealizable ideal which haunts my project of myself in the presence of the Other is not to be identified with Love in so far as love is an enterprise, i.e., an organic ensemble of projects towards my own possibilities. But it is the ideal of love, its motivation and its end, its unique value.¹⁹

To absorb the Other, would destroy the thing in the Other which makes them valuable, their Otherness. This is Sartre’s grand joke. That the alienation of the Other is actually what makes them valuable to me. The unification, which is the driving force of my projects with the beloved, is impossible. But even more than that, it is in some underlying sense unwanted. Love is only the

¹⁸ Sartre, *BN*, 478.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 477.

love of something other than the self. It is a reaching out. It is a desire. It is a transcendence because it is a longing for something which it itself is not. To absorb the Other is to kill the thing which is not me. The end of love would then destroy love itself. If I and my lover were to merge into one being, if by some miracle our two consciousness became one, love would cease to exist.

Because of this inherent flaw in the ideal of love, the lover attacks the beloved. The lover attacks the freedom of the beloved. They attack with roses and thistles. They, like Marcel, enslave the Other's physical and psychological being. Because they cannot regain their essence at the level of being, the lover is left attempting to *control* how the beloved sees them. We manipulate and control the Other in the hope of somehow controlling how the Other sees us. We gaslight and convince the Other that they are wrong. That the rude joke the woman said was in fact not rude at all, that in fact, it is the partner who is wrong. We assail the Other's freedom because we cannot unify. Because we cannot unify, we imprison. This is what Sartre means when he writes that "what the Hegelian Master is to the Slave, the lover wants to be to the beloved".²⁰ The master enslaves the Other because they deny them subjectivity, and in their denial of subjectivity they use the Other as an object. They use the Other as a means of attaining self-consciousness. Sartre's love takes this one step further. The master already recognizes that the Other has the constitutive power over them, in fact, they honour this fact by choosing whom to enslave by enslaving someone who constitutes them as they wish to be. They pick the slave because that particular Other sees them in the specific way they wish to be seen. They see them as handsome, charming, sexual, morally good; all of the things the master wishes to be. And so, they attempt to control and appropriate the Other's freedom.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 482.

But, the more we control, the more alienated we are from the freedom of the Other. As Sartre explains, “total enslavement of the beloved kills the love of the lover. The end is surpassed; if the beloved is transformed into an automation, the lover finds himself alone....[H]e wants to possess a freedom as freedom”.²¹ Sartre is critical of Marcel not because he thinks Marcel is abusive, but because Marcel’s abuse will only further alienate Marcel from Albertine’s freedom! If my lover only sees me as a good person because I have manipulated them into thinking so, the identification of ‘good person’ loses all meaning. Now we find ourselves in a situation where our ideal has failed by its nature, and our response to this failure has failed as well. Our attempt at love faces a double articulation of despair.

Love is not a project of being-with-others; at its core, for Sartre, “the real goal of the lover in so far as his love is an enterprise - i.e., a project of himself. This project is going to provoke a conflict”.²² We refer back again to our point that we do not love the Other, we love how the Other sees us. Love is a project of the self, a project of recovering the self. The Other is simply *present* for this expenditure. Their feelings, humanity, dignity, are all contingent for Sartre. The project of the lovers is simply the project of two people attempting to overpower the other in hopes of regaining some semblance of their own identity. Love is the attempt at the alleviation of the anxiety of identity. And because this love is an “ideal out of reach” we find ourselves thrown into conflict according to Sartre. Like petulant children throwing a tantrum, we find at the heart of love a hatred of the beloved, “the failure of one motivates the adoption of the other”.²³ For Sartre, love is nothing more than what comes before hate. And hate is nothing more than what comes before love.

²¹ *Ibid*, 478.

²² *Ibid*, 484.

²³ *Ibid*, 474.

Scheler makes a similar observation (although coming to a more optimistic conclusion) in his “Ordo Amoris”, “every act of hate is founded on an act of love”.²⁴ Hate is the failure of love, it is its unlawful descendent. Scheler would stress the importance of love’s supremacy, that we always love first and then hate. Sartre see’s love and hate as conjoined twins, neither first, neither second. If love is the attempt at possessing the Other’s transcendence, then hate is the attempt at transcending their transcendence, that is it say, to deny them transcendence. And so, love is destined only for sadness, conflict, and anger.

²⁴ Max Scheler, “Ordo Amoris,” in *Selected Philosophical Essays*, trans. David Lachterman (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1980), pp. 98-135, 125.

Chapter II

§2.1 *Faciality and new Modes of Being-for-others.*

I wanted to present Sartre with as little critique as possible in chapter one, that we may have sort of playground in which to critically look at Sartre here in chapter two. We have before us a cadaver that is this cycle of love and hate. I say cadaver because Sartre's love is certainly not alive; as Sartre says himself, we are not dealing with dialectic but with a circle.¹ If the circle never progresses, never moves into new territory, what is it, if not death itself? It is our duty to examine the blood vessels, inspect the grey matter, plumb the caverns, to determine the cause of death; to see what went wrong and what is to be done. By using Gilles Deleuze as a foil to Sartre, we hope to wire some electricity into the brain of our lifeless apparatus. To animate Sartre and bring forward a new Frankenstein's Monster, that like the Monster himself, may be able to love. That is why much of what we will be doing in chapter two is going to be experimental. We are experimenting with new kinds of being-for-others and new forms of love. The call for critique lies in Deleuze's work itself. In *ATP* and *DW* Deleuze is readily engaging with Sartre, poking and prodding and suggesting new ways of loving. Sartre intentionally leaves this door open as well. In his section on hate, Sartre writes that "obviously we do not claim that all attitudes towards the Other are reducible to those sexual attitudes which we have just described".² It is my argument that, although projects of love may devolve into hate, they are certainly not predestined to do so. Sartrean love, the narcissistic and self-involved form of love, is one choice

¹ Sartre, *BN*, 474.

² Jean Paul Sartre *BN*, 527. By sexual attitudes, I am interpreting him to mean the sexual attitudes of love and hate, which include sado-masochism, but not reducible to them. Reducing all being-for-others to either love or hate seems circumspect, especially Sartrean love and hate.

among many. Sartre gives us a closed system. There is no space for commitment, intimacy, happiness and there certainly is no space for freedom. In fact, I would argue that Sartrean love is antithetical to Sartre's freedom philosophy as a whole. That to surrender to this cycle of love and hate is to surrender to bad faith.³ I want to explore an alternative mode of love, a mode of being-for-others which is an open system, with space to evolve and progress. An alternative structure which, while maintaining Sartre's general ontology, arrives at the opposite conclusion.

We first look to DG's *ATP* for two reasons. First, they provide us with a foundational critique of Sartrean-Hegelian being-for-others. Then, by applying this critique to our project of love we achieve some interesting results: namely, that the prospect of love need not be defined by the limit of unification, and that unification itself is not a black and white issue. The failure of unity does not necessarily lead to hate, but rather it is the open door to new possibilities. There exists a mode of being-for-others which honours both the lover's agency as a subject, and the beloved's existence as an equally valued person. We are not interested in master-slave dialectic, or any sort of system of being-for-others which elevates the position of one subject over the other. We must come to recognize that the terms, 'lover' and 'beloved', are arbitrary signifiers, that all parties in a loving relationship are both lover and beloved. DG's chapter on faciality is where we encounter the roadmap to escaping Sartre and the blueprint for our Frankenstein's Monster.

What is subjectivity, and how is it gained? This is the core question at the heart of DG's chapter on faciality. In chapter one we went through Hegelian master-slave dialectic where self-

³ By bad faith we mean identifying with a rule, or some sort of identity, which allows us to escape responsibility from freedom. If we think Sartre is correct on the closed cycle of love and hate, we are giving up our freedom to this cycle. And all alienations of our freedom are an act in bad faith. We can treat our loved ones in any hateful way we please and avoid responsibility that the nature of being loved only leads to these hateful actions anyways.

consciousness is gained through the negation of the Other. And we modified this structure with Sartre's self-sufficient self-consciousness. Sartre's consciousness has an *identity* (not an existence) which is achieved by the negation of the Other. Both systems operate on the core principle that in order to be a subject, there must be a negation of some kind. Hegel's subject achieves status by an external negation of the Other, and Sartre's subject achieves status by an internal negation of the self, which extends to the Other (see my section on the extension of the pre-reflective *cogito* in chapter I); this is where DG assert themselves: subjectivity is achieved not through either of these negations, but by being thrust onto you by history itself.

This Deleuzeian process of subjectification culminates in the face. By examining the face, we examine subjectivity itself. Because the face becomes subjectivity, to understand our status as subjects, we must understand the conditions of the face and the abstract machines which create it. We contrast the face with Sartre's *look*. In contrasting, it is important to note that the face and *the look* are not two polarized principals of subjectivity, but rather they are two different *speeds* of subjectivity.⁴ *The look* is the instantaneous recognition of the Other, it is subjectivity at light-speed. The face is the opposite, it is molasses, it is a variation of vectors and sloping intersections. The face is the achievement of generations and history, it is the ultimate context. Faciality is a process of becoming subject.

DG call the face the "white wall/black hole system".⁵ By 'white wall' they refer to the plane of signification, the semiotic substructure in which meanings and references may exist.

⁴"The question of the body is not one of part-objects but one of speeds". The use of 'speed' is meant to denote the intensity of ontological density. That is to say, *the look* and the face are not separate principals, but rather different intensities of being, intensity of meaning. We are not doubting *the look's* existence, rather we are suggesting an alternative intensity which exists prior to the face. That in order to have *a look* one must first have *a face* in which to look with." DG, *ATP*, 172.

⁵*Ibid*, 167.

The white wall is the canvas, the liminal space. The plane where signified and signifier may relate to each other. The ‘black hole’ on the other hand, is consciousness itself. This is where we arrive at the title of our study. Consciousness is a black hole; the eyes are a black hole.

Consciousness, like a black hole, is a singularity, a center point, a zero nexus. A black hole, like consciousness only consumes, data is sucked in and destroyed. Theoretical Physicist Leonard Susskind, in an interview with Robert Kuhn, refers to black holes as “drainpipes”.⁶ We see here the obvious connection to Sartre referring to consciousness as a “drain hole”.⁷ If we think of consciousness as a consuming singularity, we get closer to the Sartrean-Hegelian subjectivity of conflict. Hegel and Sartre suggest that the human is not unlike a floating black hole in space; that trying to connect with another human, is to connect with another black hole. *The look* is two black holes facing each other, two drainpipes, the two Gemini.

DG present subjectivity as consciousness in context, as an abstract semiotic machine. Sartre on the other hand, presents consciousness as completely de-contextualizable, akin to idealism. Deleuze charges Sartre with presenting being-for-others and subjectivity as “the pure work of souls”.⁸ Deleuze is essentially accusing Sartre of a return to idealism, an idealism Sartre is always distancing himself from by his critiques of Hegel and Kant. DG are taking consciousness, the black hole, and placing it on the white wall of signification. This machine of consciousness and semiotic signification is the face. The machine, this assemblage which is subjectivity, is then produced rather than the thing that is producing. Or in other words, it is not

⁶ Closer to Truth, “Leonard Susskind – Why Black Holes are Astonishing”, June 13,2021, YouTube Video, 5:30, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d_XuFkVdAYU&ab_channel=CloserToTruth

⁷ Sartre, *BN*, 343.

⁸ Deleuze, “DW”, 17.

subjectivity which produces the world, it is the world which produces subjectivity. DG introduce us to this machine,

Concrete faces cannot be assumed to come ready-made. They are engendered by an *abstract machine of faciality*, which produces them at the same time as it gives the signifier its white wall and subjectivity its black hole. Thus, the black hole/white wall system is, to begin with, not a face but the abstract machine that produces faces according to the changeable combinations of its cogwheels. Do not expect the abstract machine to resemble what itself will produce.⁹

It is in this way then that the face is a politics. The face is not the transcendental principal of awareness; rather, “the face is a horror story”.¹⁰ The face is the monstrosity that culture, society, history glue to your being. It is the pasted-on mask. Subjectivity is totally contingent on the world which produces is. It is an amalgamation, not a singularity.

The advent of subjectivity in DG is not totally divorced from the Sartrean perspective. Subjectivity is still produced by something; the difference is the actual thing which produces it. What we mean to say here is that our identity as subjects is determined for us by something that is not us, in both DG and Sartre. Faciality is a top-down syphon of power, “this is the signifying despotic face and the multiplication proper to it, its proliferation, its redundancy of frequency”.¹¹ The face, subjectivity, is produced by the abstract machine above it. It is generated, defined, and controlled by that machine. This is what opens the face to the power of the despot, to the political, “the political power operating through the face of the leader”.¹² The face of the leader constitutes what it means to be a face, what it means to be a subject. If a certain face does not look like the face of the leader, then is it a face at all, is it a human at all? We see this when the

⁹ DG, *ATP*, 168.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 183.

¹² *Ibid.*, 175.

stranded boys kill Simon in *Lord of the Flies*.¹³ The boys are in a frenzy, lead by the sociopathic Jack. They have become ingratiated to a new form of political power – blood lust. Simon wanders into the camp and the boys do not see a boy, they see a beast. His face has become shrouded. The abstract machine of faciality has cast Simon out, he is no longer a subject to be recognized, he is a monster. Simon throws his arms over his face, for he knows that his face is no longer recognized as a human face, but the face of something which is other.¹⁴ “At every moment, the machine rejects faces that do not conform, or seem suspicious”.¹⁵ Simon does not get killed because Jack looks at him and decides he is no longer a subject; he is killed because the abstract machine has rejected his face. The difference is that Sartre does not include this plane of signification, he focuses only on consciousness, only on the black holes. The face is the political *with* the phenomenological. Sartre’s subject is still defined by the Other, we add now the political as having the same role as the constitutive Other. It is both the immediate Other and the larger machine of faciality which constitute as subject as such.

As we said, *the look* and the face are essentially two speeds of subjectivity. Sartrean subjectivity is produced by an Other looking at you. DG’s subjectivity is produced by the broader forces at work which create the face for you. The face is *the look*, but it is not the Other looking at me, but rather all human history baring down, squeezing my temples between its palms. Thus, the state of my subjectivity is subject to change with the changeable combinations of cogwheels which are working around me. My status as subject is not guaranteed. In the Hegelian dialectic the Other is bearing down on my consciousness. For DG it is history generating a world in which I may be fit to be a subject, and another in which I may not be.

¹³ William Golding, *Lord of the Flies* (London: Faber and Faber, 1954), 168-170.

¹⁴ William Golding, *Lord of the Flies*, 168.

¹⁵ DG, *ATP*, 177.

DG critique Sartre as limiting subjectivity to what can be phenomenologically engaged with in sense data, “Sartre’s text on the look and Lacan’s on the mirror make the error of appealing to a form of subjectivity or humanity reflected in the phenomenological field”.¹⁶ DG see Sartre as making the mistake of assuming that the Other is a subject in only the way that they appear to me. Rather, the subject is a subject in a myriad of ways, not the least of which is how I perceive them to be. We recognize this as a general critique of phenomenology; DG are suggesting that the phenomenon of the Other is independent of my individual perception of them. We will take up this seemingly incompatible view of the Other in a moment. First, let us address the way DG’s subject is constituted as such prior the phenomenological experience.

Using our anecdote of the woman and her partner on a date, we can see how subjectivity and being-for-others exist as a surpassing of *the look*. Before the woman meets her date, she is at home putting on makeup, thinking herself as either one way or the other. Thinking about what to talk to about on the date. She is engaged with the face and the abstract machine long before she encounters the Other. The world already has her in its grasp and declared her a subject prior to any contact with this particular Other.

We can explain this scenario using Sartre and DG in much the same way. The abstract machine which constitutes the face, serves the same function as the ubiquitous look in Sartre. DG and Sartre are describing a similar way in which subjectivity is constructed; however, they approach their description from two distinct methodologies. DG are describing the way that subjectivity is political, and Sartre is describing subjectivity in phenomenological terms. Like Sartre’s later work, what we are attempting to do is merge the two.¹⁷ The difference between

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 171.

¹⁷ We reference here Sartre’s *Critique of Dialectical Reason: Volume 1. And Search for a Method*. Sartre concisely sums himself up in *the Critique* by saying that we must “approach social problems by situating oneself in relation to

Sartre and DG is the onus placed on the individual subject. Subjectivity in Sartre exists as a state of my “permanent possibility of being seen”.¹⁸ As we have said previously, *the look* is a permanent condition of our being, regardless of our phenomenological experience of *being looked at*: “the concept of the Other can in fact be fixed as an empty form and employed constantly as a reinforcement of objectivity for the world which is mine”.¹⁹ We compare this to the abstract machine and find a similar concept, “concrete faces cannot be assumed to come ready made. They are engendered by an *abstract machine of faciality*”.²⁰ This is not to say that consciousness itself is not ‘ready made’, for “the epistemological starting point must always be consciousness as apodictic certainty of itself”.²¹ What we are developing in both Sartre and DG is that our subjectivity, or our being-for-others is not guaranteed as we would have it. Our identity as a subject is determined both by *the look* and by the political abstract machine. For example, this world has already branded the woman as a particular subject, with particular characteristics. The face then exists as subjacent to the person, “what chooses the faces is not the subject, as in the Szondi test; it is the faces that choose their subject”.²² The woman looks in the mirror and sees either a beautiful or grotesque face, and this determination is not entirely in her hands, but is set for her by the faciality machine. She considers herself before the date, considers the shape of the face. This face has determined her subjectivity for her, not the other way around. The face has conditioned her, and the abstract machine has conditioned the face. Yet, when she is directly encountered by *the look*, she experiences the same sensation. She is alienated, she is

the ensembles under consideration” (51). This is essentially what I am arguing is the face. The face is Sartrean consciousness combined with the political. The result is much the same, we arrive at a still alienated subject. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, trans. Alan Sheridan-Smith, vol. 1 (London: Verso, 2004), 51.

¹⁸ Sartre, *BN*, 344.

¹⁹ I would add that this objective world is also my status as subject in this objective world. The ubiquitous *look* not only constitutes the world around me, but my place in that world. *Ibid*, 363.

²⁰ DG, *ATP*, 168.

²¹ Jean-Paul, Sartre *Critique of Dialectical Reason: Vol 1*. 53.

²² *Ibid*, 180.

existing as a certain person, as a certain thing that can be looked at. The vertigo expressed by this is in simulacrum between *the look* and faciality.

We are not suggesting that the face is the solution to Sartrean subjectivity. The opposite; face is a parallel structure of subjectivity. It is an addition to Sartre: the face has the same problem as *the look*, both result in alienation. To escape the face is to escape Sartre. We are not looking to escape the face by means of the face, like a Hegelian dialectic which is defined by its own negation. Rather we are looking at new modes of being-for-others, “let the old guns rot. Get new ones and shoot straight”.²³ Black holes are Sartrean consciousness placed in DG’s larger system of semiotic meanings. The black holes of the face still only operate in binary, “the empty eye or black hole absorbs or rejects”.²⁴ You either become the master or the slave, you win or lose. We think here of standard Church-Turing computers, where information is stored as either a 1 or 0.²⁵ The goal here is rather to exist as a quantum bit, neither a 1 or a 0, but at once both and neither.²⁶ Like a spinning coin or a like the electron which cannot be pinned down: imperceptible. Both *the look* and the face have us by the throats. To escape the face, we must learn what it means to become like a quantum bit. We must learn what it means to have our edges blur.

This is why we have the call of action to transcend the face: “if human beings have a destiny, it is rather to escape the face, to dismantle the face and facilitations, to become imperceptible, to become clandestine.”²⁷ The goal is to dismantle Sartre, to dismantle Hegel, and

²³ DG referencing a DH Lawrence line, *Ibid*, 189.

²⁴ *Ibid*, 177.

²⁵ We see the precedent of viewing consciousness as computational when DG write, “under the first aspect, the black hole acts as a central computer”. *Ibid*.

²⁶ Yongshan Ding and Frederic T. Chong, *Quantum Computer Systems: Research for Noisy Intermediate-Scale Quantum Computers*, ed. Natalie Jerger and Margaret Martonosi (San Rafael, CA: Morgan et Claypool Publishers, 2020), 5-6.

²⁷ DG, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 171.

to create something new. To create a form of subjectivity that does not rely on violence, of negation. Now we see the relevance that DG have to romantic relationships. By having a subjectivity free of negation, we are open to different possibilities of love, different possibilities of being-for-others. Quantum possibilities where the lover and beloved are not master and the other slave, but rather each person is both master and slave, and not master and slave.

DG cite a passage from Henry Miller's *Tropic of Capricorn* to express some of these possibilities,

I no longer look into the eyes of the woman I hold in my arms, but I swim through, heads and arms and legs, and I see that behind the sockets of eyes there is a region unexplored, the world of futurity, and here there is no logic whatsoever.... I have broken the wall... my eyes are useless, for they render back only the image of the known. My whole body must become a constant beam of light, moving with an ever-greater rapidity, never arrested, never looking back, never dwindling.... Therefore, I close my ears, my eyes, my mouth.²⁸

What Miller is describing is not a unification but transient bifurcation. DG's call for the dismantling of the face is not a call for unification of people, but for the *exploration of people*. To swim through the eyes, to discover new worlds. In concert with Miller's erotic breaking of walls, we see Deleuze reference the grand quest of transcending the face in *Moby Dick*.²⁹ We see the similar expression of 'breaking through the wall' in Miller as in Melville,

in the living act, the undoubted deed – there, some unknown but still reasoning thing puts forth the mouldings of its features from behind the unreasoning mask. If man will strike, strike through the mask! How can the prisoner reach outside except by thrusting through the wall?³⁰

²⁸ Henry Miller, *Tropic of Capricorn* (New York: Grove Press, 1961), 121-123.

²⁹ DG, *ATP*, 186. The references to Miller and Melville are part of a broader gesture towards American literature by Deleuze. The French novel (Proust as the centerfold) examines standard living and is confused by it; ultimately there is a return to some sort of normal. The American novel on the other hand, is the call of breaking the standard, of discovery and adventure. I felt it important to include the Miller and the Melville quotations in full as the similar calls for breaking of the wall or the face is fascinating.

³⁰ Herman Melville, *Moby Dick*, (Penguin English Library: London, 2012) 191.

The whiteness of the whale, the whiteness of the mask, the white wall of signification, these are things to be transcended. Our attitude must be to break through the mask, the face, and free consciousness from its prison. We free consciousness from *the look*, from the face. That our consciousness need not be defined by the way in which we are made subject. In freeing consciousness by breaking through its prison, we allow for our being-for-others to be defined by whatever we wish. Sartre has imprisoned his own ‘free’ consciousness in the cells of conflict.

I would also take a moment to acknowledge the hyper-masculine imagery of Melville and Miller (Miller as a notorious misogynist). The use of the words ‘breaking through’ and ‘thrusting’ can generate a violent male phallic image in the mind. I am not arguing for a male centered thrust nor would I like to suggest that the goal is for the male to penetrate the obstinately *female* Other as critiqued in *The Second Sex* (De Beauvoir, 1949). When we speak of breaking through, I would rather think of an ideological break. Our goal is to become more fluid, less transgressive – less male centered and less violent. We are exploring new modes of being-for-others exactly because the Sartrean-Hegelian perspective lends itself to such narcissistic misogyny of abuse and manipulation.

These new worlds do not lie in the death of the Other, but in the honouring of the Other. In accepting the Other as Other, we will never be able to unify completely. We find by taking this posture we are freer to explore new possibilities and new understandings of being-for-others. We understand unity is the destroyer of love, for love is defined as the love of something. We need this something that is not us. DG tempt us with the possibility of connecting to the lover not through *the look* but through a reterritorialization of the face, a reterritorialization of the subject. A breaking through of Hegelian dialectics. The goal is to make the black hole of consciousness

something quantum, something that does not only negate, but also gives. It is the difference between a cosmological black hole, and a hole in the wall. It is the difference between a singularity which destroys, and a gate which allows movement in and through it.

The Sartrean conception of consciousness is steel like. It may have the inner-motion of the in-itself and the for-itself but it is still guarded at its boundaries. DG describe consciousness as always being bordered, “the black hole is necessarily surrounded by the border ... the black hole is never in the eyes (pupil); it is always inside the border, and the eyes are always inside the hole: dead eyes”.³¹ We see a similar sentiment in Sartre, “the Other’s look hides his eyes; he seems to go *in front of them*. This illusion stems from the fact that eyes as objects of my perception remain”.³² Eyes are dead precisely because they are objects, consciousness remains always bordered by objectivity, always bordered by itself. Consciousness is infinitely dense, full to the brim with being.³³ It is the holy of holy’s, an impregnable fortress of being. We find more hope of positively relating to the Other in a different Deleuzian conception of consciousness, “consciousness is a softness”.³⁴ Consciousness is porous, there are gaps. Stuff gets in and stuff gets out. Even in steel, we find if we look close enough, there exists space between the molecules. We find hints of this in Sartre, a subtext that consciousness may not be as dense we have thought.³⁵ We are not looking to break down Sartre’s ontology of consciousness, but to soften its edges.

³¹ DG, *ATP*, 184.

³² Sartre, *BN*, 347.

³³ *Ibid*, 28.

³⁴ Deleuze, “DW”, 19.

³⁵ We think of how our consciousness flees from us in our actions prior to *the look* (Sartre, 1943), our consciousness is always escaping us, always moving in and outside of us. Is there then not space for our consciousness and an Other’s to mingle, for the edges to get soft? We are not speaking of a unity, but a closeness.

Speaking of this *softness* of consciousness I would like to use another literary example. A passage from the 1966 experimental novel *Beautiful Losers* by Leonard Cohen,

The yellow table starts to look like me, ugh, the kitchen looks like me, me has sneaked outside the furniture, inside smells are outside, bad to be so big, I have occupied the stove, isn't there somewhere fresh where I can tuck my eyes and dream new bodies, oh I've got to get to a movie and take my eyes out for a pee, a movie will put me back in my skin because I've leaked all over the kitchen from all my holes.³⁶

Consciousness travels through the eyes, through the black hole. Consciousness sticks to our acts, it moves with the eyes.³⁷ Cohen gives us the phenomenological experience of the deterritorialization of the face. He is leaking through his holes, he is as Sartre would say, *de Trop*.³⁸ We see here a similar thought in DG's chapter on faciality,

sometimes the abstract machine, as the faciality machine, forces flows into significances and subjectifications, into knots of arborescence and holes of abolition; sometimes, to the extent that it performs a veritable 'defacialization', it frees something like *probe heads* that dismantle the strata in their wake, break through the walls of significance, pour out of the holes of subjectivity.³⁹

Our consciousness leaks out of us in something like probe-heads. We search, we explore, we overflow with ourselves everywhere all the time. Because our consciousness sticks to our acts, we experience life as consciousness escaping the holy of holies. We must remember, for the elect, priests were permitted to enter the holy of holies. Who is the elect if not those whom we love? We allow others access to our consciousness, through communication, conversation, intimacy, friendship. Probe heads of our consciousness mingle with the Other, flirt, bounce around. A blurring of the lines, an experience of the Other which lets us swim through the eyes,

³⁶ Leonard Cohen, *Beautiful Losers* (Toronto: Penguin Random House, 2003), 66.

³⁷ Sartre, *BN*, 348.

³⁸ Sartre uses this phrase throughout *BN*. *De Trop* translates roughly to, *too much*. Consciousness is too much for the body, it leaks out of us at every moment.

³⁹DG, *ATP*, 190.

climb mountains and travel deserts of the Other. Consciousnesses edges are soft. The experience of the softness of consciousness is immediately experienced phenomenologically. We will expand more on this in the next section, that our sense date with the Other is not as binary as we may think.

Lastly, I reject Sartre's contention that the ideal of love is *necessarily* unification. I resist this description on two fronts. First, the absorption of one's lover is certainly an attitude one may take towards their beloved, but this description leaves out far too much of what we see in loving relationships. Kindness, selflessness, gentleness; enslavement of freedom explains none of these things. A staunch Sartrean could argue that one is only kind and passionate to their lover in an attempt to manipulate them into being controlled, but I find this argument callous and insufficient. Why write poetry, visit mothers-in-law, or buy flowers for our beloved if our love is simply the seed of our hatred of them? The thought that all acts of love are simply avenues which lead to hatred and destruction is both far too cynical for my taste, and unfounded in experience. Secondly, Sartre himself admits that unification is the death of love.⁴⁰ Just as the result of desire is the death of desire, the result of love would then be the death of love.⁴¹ However, if we agree with Sartre that the ideal of love is unification, the failure of this unification does not lead to hate, *it leads to more love*. Because unification is impossible, it means that the project of love, the ideal of love is never complete. This failure at the end of love is what allows love to keep moving, evolving, growing. The failure of unification is love itself. Love, like desire, is defined as a movement towards something outside of us. Because we can never unify, there will always

⁴⁰ Sartre, *BN*, 477.

⁴¹ Sartre, *BN*, 516. "Desire stands at the origin of its own failure ... [P]leasure is the death and the failure of desire" (515). Desire here is considered as the 'thing which gets you there'. Once you reach what is desired, you kill the desire. One cannot desire what one already has.

exist an Other to love. To be unified with the Other is to be alone.⁴² And so because we are alienated from the Other, we can choose to love the Other. The failure of love allows there to exist love in the first place: “let me look into a human eye; it is better than to gaze into the sea or sky; better than to gaze upon God”, there can only be a human eye to look at if unification fails.⁴³ Sartre makes the mistake of assuming this failure leads to hate, rather than this failure being the very thing, which makes love possible. Sartre inserts this almost divine entropy where love must lead to hate. Why can this not be a choice? Why can our free consciousness not play a role in how we deal with the ‘failure’ of love? Like desire is never satiated, neither is love. You cannot exhaust or complete it. Just as “it is the desire itself which becomes desirable”, the Other becomes loved as they exist as love.⁴⁴ That is to say, because unification can never be achieved, the Other exists as love itself, both our condition and experience of it. And like desire, it is love itself that we are in love with. But this love is identified and experience in the Other.

We have somewhat veered from our original discussion of faciality. This is intentional. DG’s chapter on the face is to organize subjectivity around an open system. We are now in this new territory, we are transcending the face, transcending Sartre, and to do this we must leave the face behind. As we continue, we do not mean to suggest that Sartre’s love/hate cycle does not exist, but rather that we are free to choose other modes of being-for-others.

⁴²We see this sentiment play out in Hideaki Anno’s *Neon Genesis Evangelion*. Shinji Ikari is presented with a choice at the end of the story. Either unite everyone’s consciousness or keep everyone separate and isolated. Shinji is lonely, confused, he describes everyone as having “a piece of their heart missing”, and this piece could be filled by the unification of consciousness. But Shinji chooses to keep humanity as isolated from each other, because he realizes that this isolation is also connectedness. You cannot be connected, you cannot love, if there is only one thing. One thing is the same as nothing, this is also communicated in Schelling (Schelling, 1809). In order for there to be anything, there must be more than one, and thus isolation is root of love.

⁴³ Melville, *Moby Dick*, 627.

⁴⁴ Sartre, *BN*, 500.

§2.2 Deleuze's Description of Woman (and other phenomenological considerations).

We now look to new becomings and new lines of flight. If DG's chapter on faciality was the blueprint for a new being-with-others, then Deleuze's "Description of Woman" from 1945 is the material with which we build. Deleuze's essay reads as a response to Sartre's text on love in *BN*. It is my contention that Deleuze is not rebuking Sartre's phenomenological ontology, but rather making modifications to it. Because of this, we are attempting an assemblage which does not destroy Sartre's ontology of consciousness, but rather makes additions and subtractions where necessary. Deleuze argues that Sartre does not take the sexual content of the Other seriously and misunderstands the role that desire has in our relationships. The Other who is desired is not a rival "myself", but is rather a different category of being all together.¹ Desire is the key modifier that Deleuze presents in his essay, and as such, modifies how the beloved is not simply an other myself, but a truer form of Other.

Before analyzing Deleuze's essay it is important to note the questionable material about the status of women which Deleuze offers us. This is a Deleuze who has not fully formed a principal of *becoming woman* and much of the text reads as antiquated.² However, if we change the way in which we read the text, the vital aspects of the essay come to the forefront. Deleuze is essentially performing a phenomenology of women to rival Sartre's. The most crucial aspect to this text is how sexuality changes one's relationship to the Other in a fundamental way. Deleuze introduces the essay critiquing Sartre, "the world proposed to us by the Other is an asexual world ... It is as if the lover alone were sexed, as if it were the lover who conferred the opposite sex on

¹ Sartre, *BN*, 362.

² For example, Deleuze's analysis of makeup (21-22), leaves a sour taste in the mouth. It lacks the nuance and depth found in the later Deleuze.

the beloved ... Phenomenology must be a phenomenology of the beloved".³ A phenomenology of the beloved is exactly what Deleuze lays out in this essay. Deleuze's argument hinges on the idea that the sex of the Other is in fact their sex, not a sex I project.⁴ This point, to be salient, need not be reduced to *just* the feminine. It is rather the introduction of sexuality into the *look* as not something I endow the Other with, but with something that I experience. We take then, in the soon to be cited passages, that Deleuze is using the feminine as an example of sex for *him*, not for all. I would argue that it is not just the *feminine* which changes the role of the Other, for Deleuze's point would not track to non-hetero-sexual relationship. Desire itself is sufficient to alter the perception of the Other, so in fact, they appear not as a rival myself, but as beloved Other. The mode of being-with-others is irrevocably changed by the introduction of a sex to the beloved.

The goal here is to suggest an alternative phenomenology where the beloved is not someone I possess, but someone whom I explore. We are attempting to transcend *the look* and faciality, to do away with being-with-others as a closed system, to open the system to greater possibilities which better utilize our freedom. Deleuze frames his critique on the idea that "things do not have to wait for me in order to have their signification".⁵ We touched on this idea in the previous section on faciality, that the Other exists as a thing endowed with meaning prior to my perception of them. I do not take this to be as anti-phenomenological as it seems. It is simply the acknowledgement that the person who *looks* at me, has existed, has been *looked* at, long before my sense discovery of them. To acknowledge the Other as subject, is to acknowledge that they

³ Deleuze, "DW", 17.

⁴ This is evident of Deleuze's theory of desire. Desire is not a lack of something but something which already exists, that I am drawn towards. "It is not me who desires her, it is she who appears to me as desirable". Deleuze, "DW", 20.

⁵ Deleuze, "DW", 17.

exist as subject even when I turn my back to them. We may take the ubiquity of *the look* to lend itself to this statement. Deleuze offers this idea in Sartrean terms, “I do not invent anything, I do not project anything, I make nothing come into the world; I am nothing, not even nothingness; above all, I am not ‘nothing but an expression’. I do not attach my little significations to things. The object does not have signification, it *is* signification”.⁶ Deleuze is expressing here the carrying on of the Sartrean tradition of consciousness as nothingness. Deleuze is taking the claim that nothingness truly lies at the heart of all being seriously. And in doing so, is opening up the phenomenological world in recognizing that things have a signification even when I myself am not endowing them with signification. The Other feeling tired exists internally beyond my judgment of them, the feeling of *being tired*, is already a signification. There is no need for me to project an essence of tiredness, it already exists as a thing in the world with meaning.

This is all to say that the Other has a sexuality independent of my phenomenological perception of them. The phenomenological perception of the Other as sexed is a discovery of something already there, not the ontological foundation of it. Sartre proposes a world where the Other is another I, another myself. If this is true, how would we be able to desire the Other, or love them for that matter? As we have said, love and desire must always be towards something that is not me, something that is ontologically separate from myself. If the Other is perceived as another myself, the origin and production of desire becomes shrouded. If the Other’s structure is simply a reflection of my own, my desiring of them reads as flat, hollow, not a true desire. Suggesting that all we desire in the Other is this reflection of myself is to both underplay the power of desire, and the sturdiness of the Other’s being. This is Sartre’s critical error, that to think of the Other as another myself is to “dissolve the problem of the Other. It is as if the Lover

⁶ *Ibid.*

alone were sexed, as if it were the love who conferred the opposite sex on the beloved ... such a vision is contrary to any sincere description, in which it is the Other as such – and not another ‘I’”.⁷ To consider the Other seriously we must understand that the Other is not another just myself, but that the Other is wholly and completely Other. This is not entirely antithetical to Sartre’s phenomenology of love and desire. Consider,

The first apprehension of the Other’s sexuality insofar as it is lived and suffered can be only *desire*; it is by desiring the Other (or by discovering myself as incapable of discovering) or by apprehending his desire for me that I discover his being-sexed. Desire reveals to me simultaneously *my* being sexed, and *his* being sexed, *my* body as sex and his body.⁸

Based on this text, Sartre and Deleuze agree on the fact that desire exists as an essential mode of being-with-others that leads to the apprehension of sexuality of both myself and the Other. The difference between the two is that Deleuze is furthering the point by suggesting that through desire the Other is not perceived as another myself, but rather the *opposite* of myself, as Other. Desire fundamentally alters the phenomenological perception of the other. All presumptions of the Other being another ‘myself’ are simply that, presumptions. To think of the Other in this way is to become Narcissus, gazing into the pool, drowning to be closer to the self: “what would she then be, in effect, other than water, a reflection”.⁹ That when Narcissus falls in, he destroys both his reflection and himself. We must recognize that the Other is not simply a mannequin onto which I project things like sexuality, but that the Other has feelings, thoughts, desires, internally independent from myself. We may ‘apprehend’ their sexuality, but we are not its foundation. “It is not me who desires her, it is she who appears to me as desirable”, desire is driven by

⁷ *Ibid.*

⁸ Sartre, *BN*, 500.

⁹ Deleuze, “DW”, 23.

Otherness, the fact that the Other is entirely Other.¹⁰ Sartre's phenomenology is not a phenomenology of love, it is a phenomenology of the *lover*. Not enough respect is given to the beloved – “the beloved is a look ...the beloved cannot will to love”.¹¹ The beloved is only the beloved insofar as the lover *looks* at them. We see the return to the binaries of the black hole. The lover vs. the beloved. These distinctions are just as arbitrary as master-slave. We are dealing with a double reciprocation where all parties are both lover and beloved. To call the beloved simply a *look* is to rob the beloved of all agency, from all Otherness. The Other does not have signification, it *is* signification.

If the Other is just another myself, then Sartre's point remains poignant. If the Other is another me, then attempting to possess/destroy them for the sake of the repossession of myself would be sufficient as to explain why we love. The Other would be “an expression of a possible world”.¹² The Other in this context is a possible exteriority, “the expression of an absent world”.¹³ In considering the Other as another myself, we posit the other as experiencing the world from a rival phenomenological point. The Other sees me, sees the table, sees the room, “it is to register an organization *without distance* of the things in my universe around that privileged object”.¹⁴ It is the Other as black hole, drainpipe, all consuming. The Other is consuming the same data as I, but from a different vantage point, and from that vantage point comes the existence of what Deleuze called the expression of an absent world. There is a shadow world, which rivals my own. I cannot experience the Other experiencing this world, I can only imagine it, it is faded, blurry, uncanny. Sartre would say that from this blur of a rival world we venture to

¹⁰ Deleuze, “DW”, 20.

¹¹ Sartre, *BN*, 384.

¹² Deleuze quotes this line from an unpublished Michel Tournier novel. Deleuze, “Description of Woman”, 18.

¹³ Deleuze, “DW”, 18.

¹⁴ Sartre, *BN*, 341.

regain our essence, like on a treasure hunt to an alternate universe. But “is the Other simply the enemy, the hateable? Is the Other nothing but the expression of a possible external world?”¹⁵

We must conclude that the Other is not ‘nothing but’ a rival external world. If the Other is simply the expression of an external world we recognize that we do not in fact love the Other as themselves, we love the external world that the Other represents. For example, I look at my beloved, and I do not see them, all I see is them looking at me – creating an absent external world. This external world is determined by me, by my imagined perception of this world. The Other then becomes whatever I want them to be. The world that they represent is in service to myself. I look at the Other and I see the misogyny face, the beautiful face, the mother face, the father face: “in vain we would seek the expression of an absent external world on the face of this woman”.¹⁶ Sartre’s consciousness lends itself to the Oedipus complex, to fantasy. The desired Other is nothing but a world that we like, the mother world, the Madonna world, the whore world. We presume to place these worlds on the Other’s face, to imprison the beloved because of the world they represent. We bootstrap a world that we want onto the Other. If I need a mother, or a father, I imagine the Other as representing this external world of mother or father. In short, I do not love the Other, I love the external world that the Other represents for me. Not to love the Other as Other, but to love the world of the Other where they see me as ‘good person’, where the beloved is nothing more than the expression of a world that I deem acceptable. We are concerned here with the opposite, of dealing with the Other not as a possible world we can possess, but as a world in-themselves. Deleuze expresses this point,

In her everything is presence. Woman does not express a possible world; or rather, the possibility she expresses is not an external world, *it is she herself*. Woman expresses only herself: self-expression, innocence, serenity. One could say she lies at the intermediary

¹⁵ Deleuze, “DW”, 18.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

position between the pure object, which expresses nothing, and the male-Other, which expresses something other than itself, an external world.¹⁷

There are certainly times that when I look at the Other, and all I see is myself. On a first date I may become self-conscious of my hair, my bad breath, my clothes. But this is surely not a defining feature of the lover-beloved dichotomy, this is not the foundation of a relationship. I look at my partner, I see the tired look in their eyes after a long day. I see the gentle laugh at something funny on their phone. Even in an argument, I look into their eyes and attempt to figure out if they mean what they say? Are they trying to be hurtful? Are they upset at me, or something else? They may express an external world at some instances, but this is the absent world that I project onto them, this world does not exist. The internal world of the Other, is founded in the Other themselves, it is totally divorced from me, and this is what gives it meaning. ‘Does she love me?’, ‘does he resent me?’, ‘will she marry me?’, ‘what is on his mind?’. The desired Other is not given as a black hole, but as a something that is both black hole and planet, a quantum bit that is expression and expressed. Deleuze introduces us to this strange being,

Woman is given in an un-decomposable block, she simply appears, and in her the internal is the external, the external the internal. The coincidence of the expressing and the expressed is *consciousness*. Her consciousness is defined objectively from the outside, but as such it is very particular. It is not situated, it is a pure consciousness that expresses itself, a consciousness of self and not a consciousness of something. The whole of a woman’s flesh is consciousness, and all her consciousness is flesh. *Woman is her own possibility, she ‘possibilizes herself’.*¹⁸

Whereas Sartre’s lover attempts to draw the consciousness to the level of the flesh, the Deleuzeian lover acknowledges that this is redundant. That the beloved is always themselves as consciousness. That at all moments their consciousness sticks to the body, to the actions, to the

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 18-19.

Other. “Woman is not like the [male] Other, she does not reveal a new world. She simply looks at me, she thinks something about me, and her thoughts make her laugh”.¹⁹

“Woman is cosmic”, the desired Other is “a concrete universal, she is a world... to possess the woman is to possess the world”.²⁰ We see of course the same ‘possession’ in Deleuze and Sartre. Deleuze has missed his own point here. The goal is not to possess the world of the Other, but to take part in it, to explore the internal world, not through violence, but intimacy. If I am right, that from Sartre’s perspective we fall in love with the Other’s external world (the way they perceive us), we must reconcile with the inherent violence of this action. Deleuze writes on sadism, “the man who experiences pleasure in seeing woman express an external world is what I call a sadist [...], the sadist said to the woman: sit down here and furrow your brow”.²¹ If love is loving the external world of the Other, than all love for Sartre must be a form of sadism. This is the inherent violence of Sartrean love, that to possess the Other, is to disregard the Other, to become the sadist interested in appealing only to ‘*what this person can give me*’.²² To possess the Other is to deny the internal world of the Other as something valuable. To attack, besiege, penetrate the Other’s consciousness, “sadism is a violent seduction, it is a matter of destroying in the woman the secrets *that she has*, and thereby destroying the secret *that she is*”.²³

If the desired Other is an internal world unto themselves, we can, with more seriousness, take Henry Miller’s line ‘to swim through the eyes of the other’. To explore the Other is the opposite of possessing the Other. If the desired Other is world unto themselves, the project of

¹⁹ *Ibid*, 22.

²⁰ *Ibid*, 19.

²¹ *Ibid*, 20.

²² For more on the connection between Sartre’s and Deleuze’s philosophy of sado-masochism see “Coldness and Cruelty” (Deleuze, 1967). Deleuze borrows many of his definitions of sadism and masochism from Sartre, and the influence is apparent.

²³ *Ibid*, 22.

love is not to colonize this world, to extract the precious material from them by any means necessary. Rather, we may relate to this world however we choose to. We can explore, cultivate, nurture; to feel the wind on one's face is to experience the world of the Other. And at the same time to recognize that I am a world to my beloved, that we exist as worlds coming together, that our atmospheres may blur, not with the intention of merging, for that will surely be destruction, but with the possibility of closeness. As we have said previously, unification, merging, any ontological state of fully identifying with the Other leads to the destruction of Love. To be cheeky, it is playing into Sartre's hand. However, we are not suggesting some sort of isolationist relationship where the lover and beloved communicate as solely independent, isolated, agents where there is no risk of hurt and no passion. What we are now describing is a *closeness*, the feeling of togetherness, where the edges of the person blur and mix and change and develop. The end result cannot be a unification, but an experience of the Other that is totally transformed by love. That experiencing the desired Other in our sense perception is to acknowledge the softness of consciousness.

Seeing my beloved cry, feel happy, smile, may be experienced by me as well. This is explained better by the wonderfully fascinating Jewish philosopher, catholic saint, and martyr, Edith Stein. Stein's phenomenology aligns more with our Deleuzian image of the Other as a world in themselves. Sartre's phenomenology drastically fails to explain the phenomenon of empathy, the subject of Stein's dissertation *On the Problem of Empathy*. Stein's discovery is that "there is a phenomenon of 'foreign experience' and correlatively the 'perception of foreign experience'".²⁴ Simply put, empathy is the phenomenological experience not of the Other being

²⁴ Edith Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, trans. Waltraut Stein, 3rd ed. (Washington, DC: ICS Publication, 1989), 21.

happy in my perception, but of me experiencing the emotion of the Other alongside them. The data of emotion originate in the Other, and I experience this *suis generis*. The empathetic act is not reducible to Husserlian intentions; it is a way of being-with-others, primordial awareness of the Other. Or in other words, I experience the happiness that the Other is experiencing with them. Again, consciousness is a softness; the lines of *self* and *Other*, are not as firm as we often think them to be. This is not to be confused as a Sartrean fusion of being, for “empathy is not a feeling of oneness”.²⁵ The I retains its identity, of this there is no ontological confusion. Empathy is an expression of the we, “I intuitively have before me what they feel. It comes to life in my feeling, and from the ‘I’ and ‘You’ arises the ‘we’ as a subject of a higher level”.²⁶ This is how the lover and beloved experience each other. The ‘I’ and the ‘you’ still have meaning for as we have said, there needs to be an Other for there to be love, but now the ‘I’ and ‘you’ acknowledge their elevated position of a ‘we’. Stein’s phenomenology of empathy fits nicely with our exploration of Deleuze’s concept of Otherness and desire. For the desired Other is one with whom we share an empathy. We are happy when they are happy, sad when they are sad, not through any form of possession, but by the free expression of empathy towards one another. The desired Other is a world that ‘we’ can experience together, an exploration of the Other *with* the Other. To be in love is to hold hands with the Other as we swim through each other’s depths. To examine one’s heart in and through the availability of another person.

For Max Scheler experiencing the Other is not done in the straightforward sense of cognition. There are things I perceive in the Other that are not given through my senses. Scheler, as a phenomenologist, is pushing back against phenomenology for not properly acknowledging

²⁵ Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 17.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

the power of the senses. Scheler will say that it is a mistake to relegate the emotions to something which occurs after our cognition of an external object. We do not reflect upon a work of art in our minds, prior to feeling something about that work of art. There is an internal sense of affect which colours our cognition. That is why, when looking at a painting, we feel something, and then in our cognitive reflection, attempt to unearth this feeling.

It is, however, an act of unequal arbitrariness to carry out this investigation only in the case of thinking and to hand over to psychology the remaining part of the spirit. In doing so, one presupposes that any immediate relation to objects belongs to the act of *thought* alone and that any other relation to objects through *intuition* and its modes or through *striving, feeling, loving and hating*, comes about only indirectly, by means of an act of thinking which relates a content given in inner perception (e.g., a feeling state in the emotional sphere) to objects. In fact, we live with the *entire* fullness of our spirit chiefly among *things*; we live in the world. In all our acts, even the non-logical one's we have experiences which have nothing at all to do with experiencing what is being carried out in us during the performance of the act.²⁷

Scheler is introducing intuition into the phenomenological experience. When looking at my beloved, my cognitive perception is already coloured by my emotional perception of them, my internal perception. This internal perception then shapes and effects my cognitive external perception. When my beloved walks into a café, my field of vision is processing the table, the chair, the ceiling fan. Every speck of dust is being directed to the central computer. But, I do not see any of these things, all I see is my beloved, and it is my love for them, my internal sense which mixes with my external sense. I do not see the speck of dust because I do not love the speck of dust, there is no care or emotion behind my cognition. Stein explains Scheler's emotional perception: "inner perception is distinguished from outer perception by being directed towards acts".²⁸ Empathy is not alienated from my external perception, it goes out with it, my

²⁷ Scheler, "Ordo Amoris", 123.

²⁸ Stein, *On The Problem of Empathy*, 28.

thoughts and cognitions are shaped and motivated by the empathetic act. Scheler critiques Husserlian intentionality as passionless, abstract, computational; the world is, for Husserl, simply data for the central processing unit to compute into 1's and 0's. Binary, the black hole consciousness. Scheler brings us closer to Deleuze, whilst retaining our phenomenological structure. Scheler is acknowledging the role of the emotions in the phenomenological experience. The empathetic experience of the Other as their own world is not something immediately done through the eyes or the mouth or the hands. That to swim through the eyes is to transcend eyes, mouths, and hands. That in empathy we experience the beloved as world unto themselves, with their own laws of physics, their own rules, their own gravitation. To reduce love, empathy, friendship to the *luring* of another self to ourselves we are bracketing off everything positive that the Other has to offer. For is the Other “not also the offer of friendship” as Deleuze says?²⁹

Lastly, I would like to briefly make a brief gesture to Sartre's and Deleuze's seemingly opposite ontology of transcendence vs. immanence. Sartre is often thought of as a staunch proponent of transcendent ontology, I would argue that this is not a full picture of Sartre's ontology.³⁰ And, in our attempted combination of Deleuze and Sartre we must also take a sojourn to discuss if Sartre is more of an immanence thinker than first conceived. Christian Gilliam's paper “Sartre as a Thinker of (Deleuzian) Immanence” attempts to make this argument. Gilliam argues that Sartre is not as opposed to an immanent ontology as some commentators would think. In fact, Sartre's consciousness seems to begin with a sort of immanence. He writes, “the in-itself and the for-itself as simulacra or topological variations of a more primordial

²⁹ Deleuze, “DW”, 18.

³⁰ Literature on Sartre's philosophy of transcendence is as varied as Sartre's own opinion on transcendence. Typically, Sartre is at his most transcendent in his reading of Husserl and Descartes. However, as I am arguing, to read Sartre as *just* a philosopher of transcendence is to over-simplify Sartre. For a history of Sartre as a philosopher of both transcendence and immanence see Daigle and Landry (2013) and Faulkner (2002).

intertwining or fabric of univocal being”.³¹ The two modes of consciousness, the in-itself, and the for-itself, are expressions not of individual subjectivity, but rather of being itself. The key to immanence in Sartre lies in the in-itself as the non-personal field of pure consciousness. Within consciousness lies both everything and nothing simultaneously.

Gilliam argues that “Sartre not only instigates, but also prefigures and complements an ontology of ‘pure’ immanence in the spirit of Deleuze”.³² Gilliam references this point with what he argues is a definition of Deleuzian immanence – “immanence refers to a state of being internal or remaining within, in which the condition does not transcend, but rather is the conditioned”.³³ To isolate either mode of consciousness is a “radical abstraction”.³⁴ To think of the in-itself and for-itself as ontological beings external to each other is to make an empty abstraction of consciousness itself. But that is not what Sartre does. The in-itself and the for-itself are rather inherently connected, impossible to pull apart. Rather than two isolated principals, the in-itself and for-itself are connected in a way that can only be called immanent. The one does not transcend the other by this reason, rather they are married in a way such that neither can truly be abstracted.

The ego then becomes practical, not theoretical. What Gilliam is doing is attempting to take the negativity out of Sartre, which seems blasphemous yet holds the key to our unity. The in-itself, or the pre-reflective consciousness, is pure positivity, so positive that it cannot be anything for itself. It is the non-personal, non-temporal origination of consciousness. Gilliam holds that in propping up the in-itself “Sartre restores the rights of immanence’, inasmuch as

³¹ Christian Gilliam, “Sartre as a Thinker of (Deleuzian) Immanence: Prefiguring and Complementing the Micropolitical,” *Contemporary Political Theory* 15, no. 4 (2016): pp. 358-377, 358.

³² Gilliam, “Sartre as...”, 360.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ *Ibid.*

Sartre bypasses representational machinery in favour of an impersonal transcendental field without an ego, wherein consciousness is no longer related to a transcendental subject”.³⁵

Gilliam is drawing out the concrete relation of inside to outside, not in a relationship of transcendence, but in a relation of immanence. By viewing the in-itself and for-itself as tied together as expressions of univocal being, life becomes “consciousness immanent outside”.³⁶ If we agree with Gilliam that Sartre’s phenomenology has a place for immanence, then we can make room for DG’s facial ontology. Immanence’s defining feature is a concentration of being, an ontology of non-separateness, we must be able to admit then that Sartre’s ontology of consciousness is a consciousness of immanence. Immanent ontology is a univocality of substance. However, as we have said, consciousness is not a substance. This fact actually lends itself to the immanence of consciousness, for consciousness is univocally non-substantive, because it is not a substance, it cannot be divisible into two substances. The in-itself and for-itself are expressions of the same thing, not two distinct things in themselves. The fact that they are two expressions of a single *thing* (non-substantive), we are permitted to call consciousness an immanence. How can consciousness transcend consciousness whilst remaining consciousness? It cannot, of course. Consciousness is immanent to itself; the for-itself and in-itself cannot exist in a relationship of simple transcendence. Daigle and Landry comment that “immanence and transcendence [are] as intertwined and not in opposition”.³⁷ Consciousness must be at once both immanent and transcendent to itself. If we can accept Sartre as being a thinker of immanence vis a vis consciousness in-itself, positing such of consciousness may be compatible with DG’s ontology of subjectivity, an ontology that instead of repressing the subject, sets them free.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 365.

³⁶ *Ibid*, 368.

³⁷ Christine Daigle and Christina Landry, “An Analysis of Sartre's and Beauvoir's Views on Transcendence: Exploring Intersubjective Relations.,” *PhaenEX* 1 (2013): pp. 91-121, 94.

Lying in the shadows of Sartre's thought is a subject capable of love. We must shine a light on them. If we can modify the desired Other to be not another myself, but truly Other, we need not devolve into hate. We must acknowledge that if love is defined by the surpassing of itself into unification, we witness the death of love itself. The Other being totally Other is what allows love to grow. If the desired Other is an internal world, rather than an external one, there is no 'essence of myself' that needs rescuing. We have before us an open system, one in which being-with-others becomes a playground; we explore, make sandcastles, and gaze into the eyes of the beloved. We are not 'penetrating' the being of the Other, nor are we possessing them. Rather, like Stein's concept of empathy, in love we are coming alongside the Other. Sharing ourselves, our emotion, and discovering new worlds.

Conclusion

The title of this paper, “Black Holes Boxing”, hopefully has more meaning now. By placing Sartre in context with his predecessors, Descartes and Hegel, we see that consciousness for Sartre is a black hole in various ways. It is cosmologically destructive, aesthetically mute, and completely puzzling. In love, we are left with the image of two black holes, attempting to annihilate the Other with a shrug of the shoulders pronouncing ‘it is our nature’. I reject this determination of my being, that I love my beloved simply for the sake of destroying them. I accept my alienation from them, for in separateness there is the opportunity for closeness, for love, for passion. We now find ourselves left with a Sartrean-Deleuzian mode of love, where the failure of unification does not lead to despair, but to more love. We find that Desire changes the mode of Otherness in the Other, that they are not reducible to an external world, but the Other will always be Other, an internal world. We of course do not deny the heartbreak, disaster, pain, that often accompanies love, but to suggest that all love ends with such a sentiment *necessarily*, is superfluous and callous. Sartre’s failed unification does not lead to hate, it leads to more love. After all, “love does not tire”, there is an “unlimitedness of love” precisely because we may never merge with the Other.³⁸ If love were ever completely satisfied in the Sartrean mode, then love would be a process defined by its end, it would be a straight line which would have a beginning, middle, and end. The lover – beloved relationship can never be a straight line, it will and must always be a work of art. This work of art is always changing, always evolving, complete because it is never complete. It is a line of flight.

³⁸ Scheler, “Ordo Amoris”, 113, 114.

I would like to acknowledge some of the limitations of this study. Firstly, as mentioned in the introduction, we did not have the time nor resources for a proper study of sex as it pertains to Sartre and Deleuze. Specifically, I would have liked to have made a broader investigation into De Beauvoir's *Second Sex* as she is in constant dialogue with Sartre's phenomenology of love. Sartre's *Sketch for a Theory of the Emotions* holds some interesting material which would lead us down a less *gaze-centered* avenue. Also, Kierkegaard's *The Seducer's Diary* would have also made for an interesting detour as the Dane develops a strange epistolary tale of how one is to exactly love a person. Sartre is not alone with his pessimism of love, specifically as his pessimism lends itself to misogyny. We see this gesture sprinkled all through philosophy, specifically in *Nietzsche*, who of course says that if a man is truly a deep and spiritual 'man', "he must conceive of woman as a possession, as property with lock and key, as something predestined for service and attaining fulfillment in service".³⁹ When viewing the Other as an object for me, we give ourselves over to misogyny and oppression, it is no wonder why the western canon is littered with similar sentiments as Nietzsche's.

We have then completed our 'hammer and anvil' experiment of *repairing* Sartre's phenomenology of love. By congressing Sartre with Deleuze, we have before us a new experience of being-with-others which is trans-facial, which goes beyond the boxing black holes. We have now black holes that *dance*. The dancing couple is never *just* one thing, it is always a connection of two things. So too is the experience of love, limbs and exterminates may become intertwined, intermingled, sometimes confused, just like in a dance, we may feel at one with the Other, but we never are. The atmosphere of the orbs may blur, but we retain being. This

³⁹ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. R.J Hollingdale (London: Penguin Books, 1990), 237.

experience is the experience of unity and non-unity simultaneously. We are always distinct from the Other, always a black hole, but we may choose another black hole with which to dance.

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