Selfhood and Transcendence: The Crises of Representation in Ingmar Bergman and Samuel Beckett

by

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Certified that the Thesis entitled

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Submitted by me for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Arts at Jadavpur University is based upon my work carried out under the Supervision of **Sri SANJOY MUKHOPADHYAY** (PROFESSOR, DEPT. OF FILM STUDIES, JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY).

And that neither this thesis not any part of it has been submitted before for any degree or diploma anywhere/ elsewhere.

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Abstract

Bergman's oeuvre is replete with this archetypal image of God and the struggle of his characters for the absolute mode of being, permanence and identification. Man's confrontation with the dead mythological in Bergman engenders an aporetic network of language, history and being. The thesis argues how Bergman's filmmaking generates a form of claustrophobia and a reorientation of the codes of meaning-making processes. Combined with this confinement and absence of exteriors (landscapes and cities), the films also unravel a palpable disintegration of the paternal authorities (religious and familial). Bergman's thematic movement, post the trilogy, shifts from philosophising non-action to a more direct contact with the individual grounded in real crisis. This thesis further explores the intriguing lines of convergence between Bergman and Beckett on the subject of disappearance and subjective silence. Reading the two authors alongside each other leads to indicate a joint blind spot where the subject's concrete visibility and metaphysical diatribes recur incessantly inside circular dimensions. Bergman's characters rarely experience the explicit aftermath of physical decay (like their Beckettian counterparts); however, what is left of them in the end is always a blank stare (often the remnant of lost transcendence) at their spectral selves. Representation of this necrosis of the self in Beckett and Bergman is sought through dead language and false fictions, away from any dependency on autonomous transcendence. The thesis finally attempts to identify the perplexing antinomies in the representation of gender in Bergman. The schizoid/sexual voice of Bergman's women repeatedly locates itself beyond the masculine issues of Christian sin and redemption and the restricted zones cinematic apparatus. Women constitute a rebellion against the dyadic patterns of being/transcendence, quest/failure, fatherhood/emotional sterility. This conscious failure to resolve the impasse of representation within the cinematic and the textual is conspicuous and transparent in *Persona* and *The Unnamable*.

Chapter I

The Growth of Existentialism in European Post-War Modernity

> ...nearly all our originality comes from the stamp that time impresses on our sensibility.
>
> Fashion and modernity are temporal, instantaneous phenomena, and yet they have mysterious connections with the eternal. They are the shifting images of an immobile eternity. (Lefebvre 171)
>
> "…every old master has his own modernity," in so far as he captures the look and feeling of his own era. But this empties the idea of modernity of all its specific weight, its concrete historical event. It makes any and all times "modern times"; ironically, by spreading modernity through all history, it leads us away from the specific qualities of our own modern history. (Berman 133)

'Modernity' operates in the form of an insatiable desire to re-form whatever occurred earlier, in the hope of establishing a 'true present', a point of origin that creates a new departure. A combined paradoxical interplay of forced forgetting with a defined consciousness of time produces the idea of modernity. At various junctures of history this term might designate an attempt to self-express; analyzing the present and diagnosing values that exist independently of their modernity, these definitions and historical periodizations get formed only retrospectively. The notion of modernity in the middle of the nineteenth century is associated with the arrival of the new age of high aesthetic self-consciousness and non-representationalism in which the workings of art turn from realism and humanistic representations to the pursuit of style, technique, and an in-depth piercing into socio-psychological life. Anti-representationalism in painting, stream-of consciousness narrativization in the novel, atonalism in music, vers libre in poetry dominate the era of modernity.

> ‘What strikes me as beautiful, what I should like to do, is a book about nothing, a book without external attachments, which would hold itself together by itself through the internal force of its style.’-this Flaubertian dream of an order in art independent of or else transcending the humanistic, the material, the real, has been crucially important to a whole segment of the modern arts. (Bradbury and McFarlane 25)

The feelings of inflated subjectivity and Romantic spirit within modernity have been considered by some critics as the resurgence of Romanticism- the distinguishing criteria of the modern psyche under the pressure of history and technological modernization has always been its obsession with evolving aesthetic, historical and psychological consciousness. The uncontrollable craving of the artist to dehumanize the projected, irrationalize the rational, de-sublimate the sublime, defamiliarize the discovered, is reflected in Paul Klee’s statement about modern painting; “Formerly we used to represent things visible on earth, things we either liked to look at or would have liked to see. Today... things appear to assume a broader and more diversified meaning, often seemingly contradicting the rational experience of yesterday. There is a striving to emphasize the essential character of the accidental (Bradbury and McFarlane 48). The art of modernity with Joyce’s “luminous silent stasis of aesthetic pleasure” functioning with the instruments of relativism, skepticism, and a flaunting hope for secular change, holds a sensation of transition, balancing the suspended moments of the past and the ever-evolving concepts of the present; an image presenting the eternal and the emotional complex in a fraction of time.

> Today, two things seem to be modern: the analysis of life and the flight from life... One practises anatomy on the inner life of one’s mind, or one’s dreams. Reflection or fantasy, mirror image or dream image. Old furniture is modern, and so are recent neuroses... Paul

> Bourget is modern, and Buddha; splitting atoms and playing ball games with the cosmos. Modern is the dissection of mood, a sigh, a scruple; and modern is the instinctive, almost somnambulistic surrender to every revelation of beauty, to a harmony of colours, to a glittering metaphor, to a wondrous allegory. (Bradbury and McFarlane 71)

Re-creating the sense of reality, intersecting historical time with the instances of the modern subjective mind, emphasizing fragmentation and discontinuity, blurring distinctions between the subject and object, viewing life as multiple and reality as insubstantial generated in the modern mind a sensibility to discover the eternal, ever-lasting moment of beauty within the fleeting moments of the transitory cityscape.

> One thing distinguishes modernity from all that is past and gives it its peculiar character: knowledge of the eternal becoming and disappearance of all things in ceaseless flight and insight into the connectedness of all things, into the dependency of each thing upon every other in the unending chain of what exists. (Hermann Bahr quoted in Frisby 11)

> Externalized as the very cry of space itself, the traveller perceives the whistle's distress. "Doubtless," he convinces himself, "we are passing through a tunnel-the age itself-the last long stretch beneath the city before the all-powerful station of the virginal central space that crowns it." The underground, O impatient one! Will last as long as your meditative preparation of the tall glass tower subjected to Justice's flight.

> Suicide or abstention, doing nothing at all, why?- Uniquely in the history of the world, because of an event I will explain there is no Present, no-the present does not exist...in the absence of a collective self-affirmation, in the absence- of everything. Poorly informed he who claims to be his own contemporary, a deserter and a usurper of equal impudence, when this or that past breaks off and the future is late in coming, or the two are perplexedly

> recombined with a view towards masking the gap between them. Except for the newspapers' page one whose mission lies in confessing their belief in the daily nothingness, inexpert as they are if the scourge measures its period according to a fragment of the century, important or not. (Jameson 334)

The feelings and consciousness of 'modernity' are free-flowing, unhinged, uninhibited impressions upon the womb of time and beyond contemporaneity. They penetrate the thought-processes of humanity (art, fashion, style, technology, politics, society, religion, sexuality) at various interphases of historical 'evolution'. Modernity has always been affiliated with a definite place of origin and development; Modernization is 'commonly understood' as a process that got executed in Europe and then mimicked by the ever-expanding contours of the non-West. The experience of modernity is constructed around the conceptions of time and space. The contemporaneous analysis of modernity or of its presence is only necessary as "The modern occurs as that form of temporality that Walter Benjamin calls homogenous empty time, in which time is apprehended as the uniform, unfilled spaces marked out by the calendar, the timetable, and the clock" (Mitchell 14). Evolving this notion of Benjamin, Benedict Anderson opines that this 'time' produces a new feeling of simultaneity within which humans, living disjointed lives can feel a sense of unity by possessing the same homologous temporal moment. Anderson cites the examples from the nineteenth century novels where characters having different lives and past occurrences, and physical disconnections, share a common space within the narrative atmosphere of the novel. He also talks about the sociological entity produced within the citizens by the daily newspapers circulated and splintered within the city with empty news of 'hollow men'- the novel and the newspapers carry the punctured hope of contemporaneity which promises, at the least, a geographical identity co-existing at the same moment of the present era. The homogenous time

locates within this temporality a sense of spatial expression and is necessary for the construction of the idea of historical time (a story of civilization imagined to have shared a united space and a contemporaneous present). “The contemporaneity of time is forever haunted by the ghost of space” (Mitchell 15). Contemporaneity within modernity is created by a spatialization of time; the feelings of modernity runs parallel to the dimensions of space and time and can never be contemporized as its sensations unfold through the fossils of history.

Jürgen Habermas in *Modernity-An Incomplete Project*, traces the etymological history of the term ‘modern’ inquired by Hans Robert Jauss; the word occurred for the first time in the fifth century Latin version *modernus* to indicate the transformation of the then Rome from a paganized culture to an official Christian-politico state (a shift through political and religious turbulence). The usage of the term ‘modern’ signifies the interpretation of the present in respect to an analysis of the antiquity to establish the transition from the old to the flux of the new. The concept of ‘modernity’ has also been associated with the age of Renaissance, during the reign of Charles the Great in the 12th century and even to France in the 17th century, the influence of the classics on the French Enlightenment (aimed at social and moral amelioration), the romantic modernist’s attempt to idealize the Middle Ages- with the inception of every ‘new’ epoch the consciousness of the ‘modern’ reemerged and directed itself at the imitation of the ancients to recover the glory of lost antiquity. Finally, coming out of the romantic spirit, the radical mutation of the concept in the middle of 19th century materialized, by severing itself from all historical tidings and making a stark distinction between the essence of presentness and the traditional.

> Yet whereas the merely modish becomes outmoded once it is displaced into the past, the modern still retains a secret connection to the classical. The 'classical' has always signified that which endures through the ages. The emphatically 'modern' artistic product no longer

> derives its power from the authority of a past age, but owes it solely to the authenticity of a contemporary relevance that has now become past… As Jauss has observed, it is modernity itself that creates its own classical status- thus we can speak today of 'classical modernity'. (Habermas 39-40)

The conceptualization within Modernity can also be integrated from the standpoint of art and the artist. German literary tradition witnessed the formation and evolution of the concept of *Die Moderne* "(for instance Junge Deutschland, Naturalism). Eugen Wolff applied the term in relation to literature in "Die Moderne, zur Revolution und Reform der Literatur" (Modernity: Towards Revolution and Reform of Literature) in 1887, and Hermann Bahr in *Zur Kritik der Moderne* (On the Criticism of Modernity) from 1890" added the term to the revolutionary artistic currents such as impressionism, symbolism, and decadence, which went against naturalism (Możejko 14). Literature and art transfigured its meaning from a delineation of outer reflections to a deeper psychological enumeration of the feelings of change, an indicator of soul's predicaments, and expressions of contradictory vibrations of human nature mingled with mourning, a sense of loss, absurdity and pessimistic resignation. In a more transformed version this concept of modernity influenced the development of literature in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.

The Latin-American and Spanish *modernismo*, which originated during the close of World War I, desired at a movement against the monotony of naturalism, freeing literature from the clutches of Spanish influence opening it into broad horizon of European artistic movements specially French literature (Możejko 15). It spelled out an image of the individual capable of expressing in poetry, the social protests against the crisis in the country, with the assistance of inner freedom and subjective experience which aimed at breaking the barrier and creating a

harmony between subject and object. The third 'interpretation' of modernity as a long-lasting period in art and literature of the twentieth century generates out of the Anglo-American experience which took place between the years 1910–1940. Fourth, modernity is also traced as a decline of bourgeois culture; this enumeration of modernity is rather not culture-specific and follows from the ideological and socio-economic Marxist stance.

Henri Lefebvre in *Introduction to Modernity* displays the expansion of the term 'modern' from the Middle Ages down to Baudelairean and Marxist delineations of modernity. In the political atmosphere of France in the Middle Ages, "elected or co-opted magistrates of the towns with burgomasters (in the North) and with consulates, that is, with charters (in the South) were known as 'moderns'. The retiring magistrates were called 'ancients' as distinct from 'moderns'" (168). The meaning of modernity burdened with a polemical stance was in the Age of Renaissance (imitating the Antiquity) referred to the new genre of music in contradiction to the old-fashioned rhythms. In 1690, under the banner of modernity *querelle des Anciens et des Modernes* (quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns) shook the academic circle of France and gave birth to sentimental comedy (*comédie larmoyante*) unknown to the Ancients. The reemergence of the term modernity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, under the pressure of canonization loses its polemical status and "becomes subsumed in the self-triumphalism of 'modernism' and 'modern' tastes. By the end of the nineteenth century, with the 'modern style', 'modernism' (i.e. the cult of innovation for innovation's sake, innovation as fetish) is fully fledged" (Lefebre 171).

Around the period of 1840 Marx, from the political perspective, perceived 'modern' and 'modernity' as historical phenomenon, and designated to the dialectics of state based on commodity production the emergence of the bourgeoisie, the rise of capitalist culture

(characterized by immense duality, detachment and rupture), economic growth and manifestations, and the disappearance of the political state in true democracy. Man becomes externalized and alienated through the force and mad exaltation of materialism. Following Marx's version of modernity, the state gets elevated above the social scenario and a schism is created between the workings of private life and its connections with social and political offerings. As a consequence both the private and the political state of affairs suffer conflicting abstractions, mixing the logical and the illogical, one veiling the lack of the other. Marx highlights the transformation under the new bourgeois methods of production in his *The Communist Manifesto*;

> Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social relations, everlasting uncertainty and agitation distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relationships, with their train of venerable ideals and opinions, are swept away, all new-formed ones become obsolete before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and men at last are forced to face with sober senses the real conditions of their lives and their relations with their fellow men. (Marx 83)

The fantasy of the world of commodities turns society into one of constant flux and evanescence, where all relations are short-lived, indifferent and insignificant. Marx's idealism encapsulates itself within the revolution of the proletarian which would lessen the multiple dualities, fragmentariness and divisions of modern life, bridge the gap between the private and the public, social and the political, nature and man and elevate man to the highest discussions of art, state and philosophy; "Yet revolutionary (total) praxis will reconstruct the true unity: nature rediscovered, controlled, recognized and retrieved" (Lefebre 170). Marx's modernity was "...doomed to be transitory.... The dialectic of modernity remained hidden by vulgar political

economy and remained hidden to the participants in the 'bewitched world' of capitalist relations. The eternal and the natural and the harmonious masked the transitory, the historical and the contradictory" (Frisby 27).

Frisby talks about Walter Benjamin's exploration of the underlying vibrations of the subjective experience marked by radicalism, fortuitousness, accident and the sensation of the ever-changing. Benjamin discovered beneath the arcades of Paris, the labyrinthine existence of the sustaining antiquity (the new and the ever-same), rendering appropriate the historic illusions of primitive forces of myths and symbols to reach the origins of modernity. Frisby writes on Benjamin's city- "Beneath the city streets lay a further labyrinth of catacombs and the metro, the mythical entrance to the underworld that linked the modernity of the life at street level with an antiquity that lay below it, an antiquity that revealed itself in architectural symbols" (192). Benjamin evokes the paradoxical stance of the existence of historical forces within the apparent veil of the "new" and the fashionable. The city of Paris is analyzed from the standpoint of the "identical" masses designating the modern and the city located amidst antiquity. The contestation is at the level of lived experience and imagined life, universal and the ephemeral, the static world of commodities and the fluctuating social structures beneath them, "history as an empty continuum of time and the real movement of history" (Frisby 212). The supreme significance within the individual fragment containing the aspects of totality against societal isolation is of paramount importance to Benjamin. The redemption of the fragments of antiquity, the salvation of the spatial, social and imaginative labyrinths and the preservation of the underlying unity of history is the undertaking of the *flâneur*, who, with the help of his photographic eye captures every fleeting moment of eternity. Benjamin's *flâneur* is an onlooker and observer of the market, a man within and without the crowd, a person who negates his existence and is one with the

multitude and yet anonymous. The *flâneur* carves out from the fathoms of the visual temptations of modern life the quivering shadows of history and the aesthetics of antiquity. *Flâneur* wields

> …the gaze of the alienated person. It is the gaze of the *flâneur,* whose way of living still bestowed a conciliatory gleam over the growing destitution of human beings in the metropolis. The *flâneur* still stood at the threshold, of the metropolis as the bourgeois class. Neither of them had yet overwhelmed him. In neither of them was he at home. He sought his asylum in the crowd... The crowd was the veil from behind which the familiar city as phantasmagoria beckoned to the *flâneur*. (Frisby 228)

Nietzsche's modernity of the social, moral, political and the human is tinged with the loss of totality, obscuring facts, decadent images, disintegration of the whole into remnants, paralysis, inertia and stagnancy. Nietzsche developed his concept of the "eternal recurrence of the ever-same" where time suffers a breakdown into discontinuity and the irreversibility of time gives rise to permanent duration, "without meaning or aim, but inevitably recurring, without a finale, into nothingness: 'the eternal recurrence.' This is the most extreme form of nihilism: nothingness (meaninglessness) eternally!" (Nietzsche's *Thought of Eternal Return* (1972:17) quoted in Frisby 34). The heaviest burden is the occurrence of the self-same through *amor fati,*

> 'This life, as you live it now and have lived it, you will have to live again and again, times without number; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and all the unspeakably small and great in your life must return to you, and everything in the same series and sequence-and in the same way this spider and this moonlight among the trees, and in the same way this moment and I myself. The eternal hour-glass of existence will be turned again and again-and you with it, dust to dust!'-

> Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who thus spoke? (*Zarathustra* 19)

Nietzsche's Zarathustra emerges from the solitude as the redeemer of mankind preaching the eternal recurrence, the death of God, "self-overcoming", and the coming of God's successor, the Superman, and his antithesis the 'Ultimate Man,' one who sacrifices his future to his own present.

> The name of this gateway is inscribed above: 'Moment'.... And this slow spider which crawls in the moonlight, and this moonlight itself, and I and you in the gateway, whispering together, whispering of eternal things-must not all of us have been there before? And return and run in that other lane before us, in that long, dreadful lane-must we not eternally return? (Nietzsche's *Thought of Eternal Return* (1972:36-37) quoted in Frisby 35)

Of the Use and Misuse of History for Life (*Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben*), a polemical essay by Nietzsche, discusses the complications that issue out of the discussion on modernity and the pressures of historical consciousness or a culture based on the designs of and disciplines of history. Unlike the Greeks, Nietzsche's 'moderns', weak and infertile, avoid the bearings of the modern culture hiding behind the sheltering security of the womb that history provides-modernity and history, both come under the stark scanner of Nietzsche's cultural criticism. Modernity, for Nietzsche, is a descriptive term designating a state of mind prevalent within the German people in the middle of the nineteenth century. The restlessness of human society, in contrast to the animal herd, arises out of his inability to negate and forget the past; he watches the animal, with placid calmness and internal disquietude,

forgetting the death of each moment vanishing into the mist of the night and living unhistorically. The animal can be nothing, but truthful at all times; according to Nietzsche, man's life must be directed at experiencing life in a nonhistorical way. Moments of true humanity are moments without anteriority, where history is mutilated by the power of absolute forgetting. According to Goethe, a man, in order to truly act, must be without conscience, forgetting everything in order to create something, rendering valid, not being chained by the memory of the past. This wish of the blind denial of historical vicissitudes locates the authentic spirit of modernity. It echoes Antonin Artaud's assertion in *The Theatre and its Double*- "Written poetry is valid once and then ought to be torn up. Let the dead poets make room for the living... poetic effectiveness of a text is exhausted" (56). The development of history, in Nietzsche, cracks and delves into regression- the nausea of history overarching life-process is counterbalanced by a deep sense of pessimism and nihilism located within historical causality. The temporality of human volatility is situated in historicity as it implies the experience of presentness as a passing phenomena and makes the past immutable and unforgettable as it is connected to the present and future. Modernity tries to posit itself in the moments of the present as a point of origin, but discovers that in its attempt to sever the past, it cuts itself from the present as well. Nietzsche finds it impossible to escape from history and develops the two incompatible phenomena, history and modernity, linked by a common thread of destiny, a paradox and an aporia supplying the quandary to present modernity. History for its continual and duration depends on the functioning of modernity and modernity too is unable to assert itself without being consumed and reintegrated within the retrospective historical processes. History and modernity are inseparably linked into an ever-interpretative human destiny.

> …men and ages which serve life by judging and destroying a past are always dangerous and endangered men and ages. For since we are the outcome of earlier generations, we are also the outcome of their aberrations, passions and errors, and indeed of their crimes... If we condemn these aberrations and regard ourselves as free of them, this does not alter the fact that we originate in them..... It is an attempt to give oneself, as it were a posteriori, a past in which one would like to originate in opposition to that in which one did originate: - always a dangerous attempt because it is so hard to know the limit to denial of the past and because second natures are usually weaker than first. (*History for Life* 76)

Malcolm Bradbury delineates modernity through cultural seismology and analyzes the vibrations and displacements of sensibility and consciousness which shake the foundation of the history of art, literature, society, religion and the entire thought process of a generation. The violent upheavals and dislocations and instability of the human spirit, evolving out of the passion of modernity, annihilated the fixed notions and assumptions of 'united' society and questioned the entire socio-cultural civilization forcing it into a rapid remoulding of the ways of life. The artistic and societal revolution aiming at the upliftment of contemporary culture, under the suggestion of modernity, resulted in a breaking-up, devolution and a cataclysmic dissolution of the past and the present. The turbulence of modernity in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, in the western culture, accelerated from the thought of the end of civilization, and the world in the face of the First World War, the proletarian revolution predicted by Marx, the psycho-analysis of Freud, the theory of evolution by Darwin, rise of industry, technology and capitalism, the de-centering of God, destabilization of meaningful communication, destruction of causality, the existential crisis against absurdity and hopelessness, the movement of the avant-garde generated in favor of experimentalism delving deep into the recesses of human

consciousness. Along with the heavy industrial expansion there emerged in the 1890s and the 1900s a plethora of technological innovations, amounting to

> …the internal combustion engine, the diesel engine and the steam turbine; electricity, oil and petroleum as the new sources of power; the automobile, the motor bus—the first London motor buses appeared in 1905—the tractor and the aeroplane; the telephone, the typewriter and the tape machine, the foundation of modern office organization; the production by the chemical industry of synthetic materials-dyes, man-made fibres and plastics. (Bradbury and McFarlane 59)

Alan Bullock in *The Double Image*, while describing the cultural shock within modernity, first refers to a photograph of a crowded London street taken in the summer of 1904 and discovers in it a black and white frozen moment animated by the movement of the moving mass; next he refers to Picasso's first true twentieth century painting of *Les Demoiselles d' Avignon* in 1907- developed through Spanish and African influence depicting five naked women ''painted in a series of geometrical lozenges and triangles, with total disregard of anatomy and perspective, a famous point of distillation in Cubism" (Bradbury and McFarlane 58). Late nineteenth century saw a proliferation of literary movements beginning with Symbolism (multiple meanings, unified utterances expressed through an undeniable absence, the symbol) and ranging down to Surrealism (exalted love and eroticism in the midst of chaos through a conglomeration of disjointed fragments, a mysterious luminous experience, a shock against bourgeois conceptions of arts and aesthetics), German Expressionism (to grasp reality more passionately, to accept it in the true sense of the term, freeing it from the clutches of apparent meanings, with the help of the bursting power of jostling emotions), Impressionism (an act to make reality and language a visual medium through experimentation rather than descriptive communication), Futurism

(pictorial vibrancy, noise-music, new communicative speed through free words), etc. Aestheticism within the twentieth century modernity amounted to a vigorous proliferation, democratization (resulting in the loss of 'aura') and a technological understanding of the works of art- it had connections with

> …pretensions to totality, to unity, to coherence, to the 'total' world, to the conception and creation of the world. But it accepts fragmentation and division; it increases them, splitting the chaos of the palpable world from the aesthetic concept and values which organize it. It seizes fragmentation as the means by which disquiet, anguish and pure subjectivity can be brought to the transcendent world…. (Lefebvre 217)

On the grounds of Ontologism, modernity suffered the ontological illusion, confusing 'being' and the 'representation' of being which evoked out of the gap between the consciousness of being and the being of our consciousness. The mode of representation apparently determined the illusion of the presence of 'being', while ascertaining its absence- such a fictitious representation diluted in the face of criticisms and establishments. Philosophical alienation resulted from the heretical use of dogmatism. Nihilism appeared out of the burial of God, a situation where every act of violence and moral, ethical sacrilege became permissible. Morality and art alienated life and left humans alone in the nakedness of stark stoicism. Nietzsche offered redemption out of nihilism, visualizing a metaphysical rebirth arising from endurance, a purgation out of the cultural morbidity hit by the alone-ness of man. The revolution of the 'insignificant' 'hollow men' against the absolute loss, to establish meaning in life, resulted in the world ending with a real mental upheaval within artificial capitalism.

Habermas in *Modernity-An Incomplete Project* discusses the failure of cultural modernity and aesthetics against the project of Enlightenment and the conception of 'beauty' in the

Renaissance. The thinkers and the philosophers of the Enlightenment developed "objective science, universal morality and law, and autonomous art according to their inner logic....to release the cognitive potentials of each of these domains from their esoteric forms" (9) to restructure everyday life based on rational methodization. The 20th century compartmentalized this hope of moral progression, faith in the stable institutions, and unrestrained happiness of mankind. Art, morality and science in the modernized West emphasized on the autonomy of these spheres and their severance from exegetic daily life. Out of the sheer frustration of detachment of art from life, the surrealist revolution exploded, splintering the independent zones of art in an attempt to reconcile art and life.

> …around the middle of the 19th century an aesthetic conception of art emerged, which encouraged the artist to produce his work according to the distinct consciousness of art for art's sake. The autonomy of the aesthetic sphere could then become a deliberate project: the talented artist could lend authentic expression to those experiences he had in encountering his own de-centred subjectivity, detached from the constraints of routinized cognition and everyday action. (Habermas 10)

The cultural utterances of 20th century modernity display one of his truest manifestations in Baudelaire's acute conception of the present as a collective experience of all aesthetic elements. The 'focalization' is not only on the wonder derived out of the representation of the present (*La représentation du présent)*, but also on the 'present-ness' of the present. The sprouting of art in the temporal awareness of the present generates the 'application' of memory to the present than to the past. The epitomization of modernity, according to Baudelaire, resides in the observation of moments, ambivalence and transcendence, experiences of childhood and convalescence, a forgetting and suppression of anteriority, a mind not tarnished by the occurrence of the past.

These experiences of immediacy connected with an internal dimension of negation of the past provide the element of freedom, completeness and totality to the present, dissected from the bearings of the past and a concern for the future. This illusive moment of poetic grandeur can only be recorded like a photograph by a spectator of the moment combined with the transient, ephemeral and a larger totality of life. Baudelaire arrests such a glimpse of the city in his *Parisian Dream*.

> This morning I am still entranced
> By the image, distant and dim,
> Of that awe-inspiring landscape
> Such as no mortal ever saw....
> The delightful monotony
> Of water, marble, and metal.
> Babel of arcades and stairways,
> It was a palace infinite…
> Moreover, no star, no glimmer
> Of sun, even at the sky's rim,
> Illuminated these marvels
> That burned with a personal fire!...
> All for the eye, naught for the ear!)
> The silence of eternity. (quoted in *Les Fleurs du Mal* 382)

The final marginalization of the meaning is constantly deferred and it occurs so suddenly that it almost obliterates any kind of dependence on the previous moments and focuses only on its own heightened instantaneity. Baudelaire, with his poetry, tries to outrun time expanding into

eternity, the elasticity of the intangible moment. Baudelaire's 'chosen individual' exists in the factuality of a present (unknown and unrecognizable in 'the crowd') governed by the experiences which lie outside the generalized norms of language, art and aesthetics, and discovers an autonomous meaning; 'It is a self insatiable for non-selfhood.'(*C'est un moi insatiable de non-moi*). Baudelaire detaches

> …his artist not only from the material world of steam, electricity and gas, but even from the whole past and future history of art. Thus, he says, it is wrong to even think about an artist's forerunners or the influences on him. "Every efflorescence [in art] is spontaneous, individual.... the artist stems only from himself.... He stands security only for himself. He dies childless. He has been his own king, his own priest, his own God." (Berman 139)

Sanjoy Mukhopahyay in his *Reviewing Flanerie: Jibanananda Das and Urban Culture in the 1940s*, enumerates flanerie as "the activity of strolling and looking carried out by the *flâneur*," and the figure of the *flâneur* as an "excess: an incarnation of a unique urban form of masculine passion manifest as connoisseurship and couched in scopophilia" (117), Baudelaire's *flâneur* sets his position within the multitude of the city, whose passion and execution result from the flesh and blood of the crowd. The *flâneur* is the lover of the universal and possesses a kaleidoscopic consciousness to capture the cultural interplay of the present visible moment. "…I was crossing the boulevard, in a great hurry, in the midst of a moving chaos, with death galloping at me from every side" (Berman 155-156). The *flâneur* sees the overwhelming streets and the traffic spills over the boundaries of the surrounding city and breaking over the spatial dimension enters the mind of the Baudelaire's onlooker. The poet's supreme detection and extraction of the 'beautiful' from the negative attitudes of evil occurs in *A Passer-by.*

I drank, convulsed, out of her pensive eye,

A livid sky where hurricanes were hatching,

Sweetness that charms, and joy that makes one die...

Fleeting chance

Whose look was my rebirth – a single glance!

Through endless time shall I not meet with you? (quoted in *Les Fleurs du Mal* 352)

Walter Benjamin reveals within the allegories and references of Baudelaire's poetry, the inspiration drawn from the streets of mid-nineteenth century Paris and the complex relationship between modernity and antiquity hiding beneath it. Baudelaire develops his famous dicta about modernity in *The Painter of Modern Life*; "By 'modernity' I mean the ephemeral, the contingent, the half of art whose other half is eternal and immutable" (Berman 133). The poet celebrates in this 1859-60 essay the rise of the bourgeois culture and presents the mode of pastoral in modern life, "as a great fashion show, a system of dazzling appearances, brilliant facades, glittering triumphs of decorations and designs. The heroes of this pageant are the painter and illustrator Constantine Guys...archetypal figured of the Dandy" (Berman 136). Baudelaire accepts the bourgeois world and reality and attempts to transform these internally, "to assert, amplify and justify itself through negation and self-re-creation" (Lefebvre 172). The rejection of the abstractions of everyday finds it place in the language of Baudelaire's *Song of Autumn,* directed at levelling duality, disjunction and alienation—poetry becomes a mode of transformation.

All winter will possess my being: wrath,

Hate, horror, shivering, hard, forced labor…

My heart will be no more than a frozen red block.

All atremble I listen to each falling log…

That somewhere they're nailing a coffin, in great haste.

For whom?- Yesterday was summer; here is autumn

That mysterious noise sounds like a departure. (quoted in *Les Fleurs du Mal* 181)

Frederic Jameson, within Baudelaire's *Chant d'automne, part 1*, locates two contradictory experiences of the psychological and the auditory. The approach of the fall, the season winter represents the death of summer, and intermingled with this feeling is the sensation of physical perception presented by the hollow sounds of logs and firewood echoing from the inner dwelling of Parisian streets. The interrelationship is presented in the movement of the cyclical time and the anti-natural perspective of the city itself (a gap between natural organic death cycle and a voyage through the repressive institutions of the city). The referent in this poem is the bodily sensorium, sensationalizing the body as a storehouse of perceptions. G.M. Hyde writes in Bradbury's *Modernism*, "If multitude and solitude are equal and convertible terms, the city has no objective reality" (338). Baudelaire highlights it further with his poetic fecundity; "Looking through an open window from outside you never see as much as when you look at a shut window. Nothing exists more profound, more mysterious, more creative, more shadowy or more dazzling than a window lit up by a candle" (Baudelaire's *Le Spleen de Paris* (1970: xxxv) quoted in Bradbury and McFarlane 338).

'Existential philosophy' and 'existential phenomenology' were terms applied by philosophers like Sartre, Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty only during the late 1950s, which essentially carried (philosophical/psychological) analyses of existence. The existential surrounding unfolds with the interaction between the independent entities in themselves and the observing consciousness. Eventually there is a movement from the pre-conscious domain of spatio-temporal incomprehension of the phenomena to the wholes and behavioural determination. According to

Merleau-Ponty the perceptual world (including nature) is experienced as a structured unity, a whole, which exists with a separate style of its own, independent of our consciousness. Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty agree on the formation of subjective experiences through being-in-the-world. Indefinite and diverse, the unity of subjectivity is dependent on the openness of the unity of the world. The essence of subjectivity and subject as existential phenomenon are intertwined with the biological body and the real materiality of things in the world. Merleau-Ponty explains this philosophical reconstruction in his *The Visible and the Invisible*,

"…philosophy is not a lexicon, it is not concerned with "word-meanings," it does not seek a verbal substitute for the world we see, it does not transform it into something said, it does not install itself in the order of the said or of the written as does the logician in the proposition, the poet in the word, or the musician in the music. It is the things themselves, from the depths of their silence, that it wishes to bring to expression" (4). Nietzsche, Heidegger and Sartre focused on the aspect of 'affectivity' (the relation between the body/self and the world), which uncovers and discloses the ontological degrees of anxiety, nausea, dread. To affirm life and the will to power, Nietzsche rejects the renunciation and tranquilization of Buddhism and embraces passion against modern decadence. On the other hand, Heidegger emphasizes the *Dasein* in the world as throwness, affectedness and disclosure. The cultural inebriations of early 20th century are, in the similar strain, intensely expressed in the writings of Sartre-the nihilistic nausea of Antoine Roquentin in *Nausea* (1938) arising from the unsubstantiated structures of excruciating experiences, nullity, absence of presence, the superfluous presence of pointless plenitude and the vibrating existence in all beings of things. Roquentin says,

> It would have to be a book: I don't know how to do anything else. But not a history book: history talks about what has existed-an existent can never justify the existence of another

> existent…. Another kind of book. I don't quite know which kind- but you would have to guess, behind the printed words, behind the pages, something which didn't exist, which was above existence…. It would have to be beautiful and hard as steel and make people ashamed of their existence…. A book. A novel… a time would have to come when the book would be written, would be behind me, and I think a little of its light would fall over my past…And I might succeed- in the past, simply in the past-in accepting myself. (*Nausea* 253)

Camus' *Myth of Sisyphus* (1942) expresses the theme of man's confrontation against the absurdities of life, the accidental and suicidal existence at any given moment-the fate of the Sisyphean hero to roll the weight of his being, endlessly up and down the trajectories of the world. Dostoevsky's unbridled, unrestrained man from *Notes from Underground* (1864) blathers with the logicality of the extreme logical, one who, after acquiring the sense of the world settles beneath the surface, a prophet, not with magical powers, but the messianic statements of existential dualities and dilemma: "You know the direct, legitimate fruit of consciousness is inertia, that is, conscious sitting-sitting-with-your-hands-folded" (Dostoevsky 135).

Existentialism is an anti-idealist reading of life with its roots in the reinterpreted philosophy of existence opposed to reason, universal rationalism, singular truth, historical thought and an ethical or psychological reduction of the modern subject post the Second World War and the German occupation of France. Existentialism as a thought, in the words of Jaspers, has been a part of 'primordial philosophy'. The angst metaphorically sprouts from Nietzsche's "question mark" related to the dilemma of man's choice against the nihilism and disenchantment of the world and the traditional values that one is left with. Between the two forced compulsions of accidental birth and inevitable death, man is, according to Nietzsche, "crammed between two

nothings, a question mark" (Kauffman 197). Existentialism as a thought is as old as thought itself, which theorizes and initializes life itself during the times of modern biological, psychic and religious crisis; it hardened as a hymn on individuality opposed to the Romantic idealism and self-deception. Thomas Flynn in *Existentialism* describes the turbulent years of crisis as "the era of 'Apache' (ruffian) dancing, of jazz in smoke-filled Left-Bank clubs, of theatre of the absurd, and of freedom…flaming out in the events of May 1968" (104). Existence-philosophy is the process of continuous becoming through the individual search for meaning of being and things. The indigenous nothingness which manifests beings of things within the consciousness and separates it from the beings of others provides a transcendental character to the individual, conscious of his nauseated existence. The feeling surfacing out of the desire to change life into meaning, the void toward which the change is directed to, and the consequent failure, is perhaps most appropriately expressed by Dostoevsky's sick man in *Notes from Underground*,

> I will explain; the enjoyment was just from the too intense consciousness of one's own degradation; it was from feeling oneself that one had reached the last barrier, that it was horrible, but that it could not be otherwise; that there was no escape for you; that you never could become a different man; that even if time and faith were still left you to change into something different you would most likely not wish to change; or if you did wish to, even then you would do nothing; because perhaps in reality there was nothing for you to change into. (129)

According to Merleau Ponty, the logical-dialectical movement of human history in Hegel's *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) blurred the orthodox, linear existence of the societal individual and inserted the seeds of existentialism. Twentieth century begins with the loud searching of Nietzsche's mad man proclaiming that God is dead and the castration of Christianity

for instantiating “slave morality”. German existentialism moves from the religious leap and the non-epistemic relation of the self with the transcendental of Kierkegaard, the unconditioned groundless floating of Jaspers to the authentic being of Heidegger’s *Dasein* in the face of death. Out of the moral and psychological threats to human freedom and the meaning of existence, Sartre’s *Being and Nothingness* and Albert Camus’ *The Myth of Sisyphus* emerged as the most influential French existential texts to dominate the thought process of modern Europe. Sartre propagates the idea of no-thing-ness of consciousness (consciousness as the lack which structures the being) and the phenomenological existence of the brute in-itself, whereas for Camus, life, within the structure of meaninglessness has turned absurd and the only true value of this condition is to be sought in unending confrontation and rebellion. The “antithesis of normal man” for Dostoevsky is the being of “acute consciousness”. The bursting forth of the Enlightenment-individual in Nietzsche’s godless universe, where the quest for meaning and the libidinal repression of the Freudian unconscious fed on each other, led to the unhindered freedom of man consequently punctured by the irrationality of the atomic wars. The contingent, finite individual loosed upon like an unfettered beast in a world devoid of clarity, morality and truth of actions and populated by the all-encompassing crowd, encountered nothing except nothingness and the filth of the present around him. The only true problematic for Camus was the difference between philosophical suicide and physical suicide which moulded into a reaction against psychological nihilism. Along with the withering away of God and all forms of absolute truth, a heightened sense of individuality occupied the vacuum. The unconditional, fundamental human freedom against the cosmological groundedness of God’s act of creational freedom was cultivated by the existentialists by planting the free consciousness within the being of awareness. In the Sartrean world of “existence preceding essence” as a backlash against the

ultraconservatism of Western traditional thought (essence precedes existence), mankind is burdened by the freedom to choose, his responsibility for the actions he commits; in this condemned freedom, man is eternally alone from all others. Existentialism maintains the hard corporeal existence of the individual along with the inescapability from the mind-body dualism, absurdity, authenticity, dread, responsibility, death, anguish, nausea, and finitude.

> There was a man whose chatter certain circumstances made it necessary for me to listen to. At every opportunity he was ready with a little philosophical lecture, a very tiresome harangue. Almost in despair, I suddenly discovered that he perspired copiously when talking. I saw the pearls of sweat gather on his brow, unite to form a stream, glide down his nose, and hang at: the extreme point of his nose in a drop shaped body. From the moment of making this discovery, all was changed. I even took pleasure in inciting him to begin his philosophical instruction, merely to observe the perspiration on his brow and at the end of his nose. (*Parables of Kierkegaard* viii)

> To despair over oneself, in despair not to will to be oneself, in despair to will to be rid of oneself, in despair to will devour oneself is the formula for all despair, to which also the other form of despair, in despair to will to be oneself, can be traced back, just as above, in the despair not to will to be oneself, to will to be rid of oneself, is traced back to: in despair to will to be oneself. (*Sickness Unto Death* 148-49)

> How shall we understand the truth in terms of subjectivity? Here is a definition: The truth is an objective uncertainty held fast through personal appropriation with the most passionate inwardness. This is the highest truth there can be for an existing person. At the point where the road divides, objective knowledge is suspended, and one has only uncertainty, but this is precisely what intensifies the infinite passion of inwardness.

> Subjective truth is precisely the daring venture of choosing the objective uncertainty with the passion of the infinite. (*Provocations* 70)

Kierkegaard's existentialism derives its subjectivity from the real beyond the Hegelian rational, and in the anxiety, despair and freedom of the individual awaiting the leap. The relocation/reaffirmation of the individual subject through an inward affiliation with God is the primary argument of the post-Kantian 'irrational' philosophy of Kierkegaard; the subjective ethical is directed toward the eternal. The Christian self for Kierkegaard is insufficient in itself, such that it is incapable of achieving any sort of unity and self-authenticating truth through exclusion. The realization of this inherent sickness is what Kierkegaard calls "despair", which voids all past and sustains its presence through awareness and desire for the eternal. The self in yearning for a new creation can arrive at a fusion only through a relational homogeneity outside its boundaries, and for Kierkegaard, this external factor of coherence is God, who, in being the supreme subject extends truth to the subjectivity of the self. The self cannot perpetuate itself without synthesizing with itself and consequently with the eternal which is the cause of behind the self. The temporal self by existing and unconditionally relating to the eternal extends its subjectivity to time eternal. The path of the "Knight of Faith" toward the universal is through the unconditional surrender to the absolute and the singular possibility of being with God. Roger Scruton, in his *A Short History of Modern Philosophy*, foregrounding Kierkegaard's anti-Hegelian, anti-rationalist standpoint writes that in order to establish the existence of real beyond the limits of reasons, Kierkegaard compromises the Hegelian claim that "the real is rational and the rational the real" (191).

The dissemination and dialectics of the self in writing books under dramatic pseudonyms, Johannes de Silentio/Constantin Constantius/ Anti-Climacus/Vigilius Haufniensus, also

underline the attempts to arrive at the authentic self and writing becomes a narrative undertaking toward inwardness. Kierkegaard traces the journey of the self from the aesthetic to the ethical and then the existential leap onto transcendence and unwavering faith. George Steiner writes in the introduction to *Fear and Trembling*, that "The 'transgression' into sacrificial, uncompromising faith, the tormented acceptance of the demands of the absolute in 'imitation of Christ' is latent throughout Kierkegaard" (xii) and "The leap into the absurd, the abolitions of pragmatic causality and of logic which would characterize such an experience, remain, by Kierkegaard's own criteria of 'necessary impossibility', issues of trust..." (xxii). The introduction of *Repetition and Philosophical Crumbs* by Edward F. Fooney classifies into philosophical fragments the Christian-existential discourse of Kierkegaard and while differentiating the historical Christ from the God of faith writes, "Perhaps centuries of debate and bloody religious wars would cease, as truth replaced fiction, fact replaced myth. But Climacus never joins the parade. Faith or salvation can't be based on historical records. Just as there will always be gaps between the history of purported egalitarian societies and the egalitarian ideal, so there will always be gaps between the historical Jesus and the Christian ideal. Research won't detect a risen Christ" (*Repetition* xiv).

Consciousness generates meaningful reality out of the world, when engaged in a free play with the things of beings and the beings of things. The "intentionality" of consciousness spontaneously reciprocating with the objects outside its self, reveals self-knowledge, responsibility and authentic existence (avoiding "bad faith"). Sartre, contradicting Descartes' ontological proof for the existence of God, situates the non-existent nothing of divinity through the relation amidst beings of the world. Consciousness with its inherent facticity of referring to the transphenomenal being of phenomenon (being-in-itself) outside does not generate the

objective essence of the being concerned. The intentionality of consciousness addresses the synthetic totality of the object and in the process, realizes that the infinite manifestations of the object perceived transcend the boundaries of consciousness restricted by the limitations of its knowledge. The essence of the object occurs to consciousness as outside the productivity of consciousness, a being without the realms of the being-of-consciousness (*l'*être-pour-soi). Sartre's transphenomenal being of consciousness reveals the brute existence of the being-in-itself producing partial knowledge every time the object is perceived or introspected. The proof of the ontological existence of any existent interrogated by the awareness of consciousness is the fundamental base of meaning in the nonsubstantive reality (the being of meaning being different from the being of the being-in-itself (*l'*être-en-soi)). Consciousness as the "reflect-reflecting" simultaneously negates and reveals the phenomenon of the in-itself, thereby becoming a self-awareness through the dissociation of identity with the in-itself. The nothingness of the for-itself is itself an empty space on which the knowledge and "thereness" of the in-itself is revealed, it is its own transcendence in order to include, nihilate, and exclude. The for-itself unfolds as a realization of its failed synthesis with the apparent transcendental totality of the world and all the "thises" of the past. The becoming of consciousness recurs against the coherent unity and is-ness of the in-itself. The savage being of the in-itself beyond its related existence to and its conception moulded by consciousness, unveils the essence of things as phenomena. The self as consciousness being conscious of its own selfhood never achieves the objective totality of the existent, which exists as unity in itself. Consciousness is the awareness of the being of nothingness outside the being-of-consciousness; it is what it-is-not. The nauseated existence that Sartre presents is a product of the dizzying freedom that one becomes aware of when faced

against the vertiginous sense of freedom to lend justification and meaning to the world; man becomes the unique logic-producing argument in a surrounding devoid of awareness.

Sartre locates the concept of concrete nonbeing within the being of consciousness, the for-itself. The reality of totality as conceptual unity is justified against the blurry glass of abstractions. The Heideggerian being-in-the-world propagates that synthetic unity between the phenomenon and the realm of consciousness; 'man' the 'material world' are abstract notions, existing separately on the surface, the total reality of which is interdependent. The nothingness within man through the consciousness-in-the-world transposes the experience of solid nothings within the world, which transcend and yet form a substantial totality with consciousness. Nothing as entity exists as a presupposition within the nature of reality and knowledge and as real absence or nonbeing within the oeuvre of being. The nothings as palpable existents amidst the being-in-itself continue independently as real nonbeings and its realization within the being-for-itself surfaces through its relation to the consciousness. Consciousness, prior to acquiring the knowledge of itself as consciousness, absorbs the reality of being-in-itself and along with it the nonbeings which enter the being, remain within and without, independently of man's knowledge of its existence as concrete nothing. The autonomous reality of nonbeings and beings outside the individual awareness reveals their irreducible transphenomenal characteristics. While discussing nothingness, Sartre reveals these absences and voids as concrete nonbeings, a real not-being-there which moulds the entire structure of the concerned reality or subject. Outside the Hegelian dialectical notions of being and nothingness (the abstract nonbeing, what-is-not, without the what-is of being) and their synthesis toward the becoming of a definite existent, Sartre establishes the corporeal evasive nothings living on the surface of the being, a nothingness which "haunts" the being with its (not) being-there. The Heideggerian human reality evolves out of the

encounter between the being-there or *Dasein* and the phenomenological nothingness; man's fundamental "thereness" causes these nothings to be and introduces unalloyed difference within the world. Yet, according to Sartre, Heidegger does not situate this nothingness either within being or consciousness. Sartrean nothingness is a distance or a negation of the fullness in the relation between the being-of-the-world and the being-of-consciousness, the being (the gap) within the being (the in-itself and the for-itself) and produces the 'negatites' of anguish, absence, angst, otherness, regret. According to Sartre, consciousness, in being a pure combination of "unrelated" things and beings, is concrete nothingness, since it never achieves unity with itself or the object it refers to. The endless deferral of questions and meanings related to the existential self is itself a proof of the lack of definitive identity, or inherent nothingness. Nothingness as Joseph S. Catalano describes it in his book, *A Commentary on Jean Paul Sartre's "Being and Nothingness"*, "is the constant "elsewhereness" of consciousnesses" (64). Nothingness is concretized with its not-ness, it is not fullness, neither a complete void outside the in-itself, nor a structured lack within the being-for-itself, its existence itself is a recurring question, its identity in constant flux. Nothingness, according to Catalano, is "that borrowed brought-to-be being, that elusive being of not-being in the very act of its being" (Catalano 65). Consciousness as the 'removed' and unstable human identity (the pre-absorbing self) is the no-thing-ness that questions the nature of its own awareness, an act required to break the continuous chain of causal effects, which would otherwise result in a natural fullness and undifferentiated relation between the subject and the object. This negation with which consciousness annihilates the continuum within being is what Sartre refers to (as the upsurge of consciousness) as nothingness. Nothingness as nonbeing and nothings emerges through the being-here of man in the world and disjoints the original unity within the being-in-itself. The unsettled consciousness as the original

nihilated in-itself, can nihilate the union of the beings. Sartre justifies that this concrete nothingness is the realization of freedom in man. Freedom is possible with the ability of consciousness to break from the causal series of events, and cause a distance in the being, in its temporal character and constant negating and nihilating. The act of human freedom is in detachment from the world, in questioning, interpreting, suspending, projecting and reflecting. Nothingness as freedom is the being of consciousness. In order to counter the tendency of the for-itself to be a fixed identity, Sartre projects freedom as the awareness of the consciousness of being free, freedom as existing under the scanner of doubt. Therefore, in the consciousness arises the consequent feeling of anguish as the conscious freedom of questioning the consciousness of freedom and the consciousness of the limits of freedom. Nothingness is the distance between the goal that consciousness sets for itself and the total experience of consciousness. The pre-reflective consciousness is forever aware of the anguish of the gap, the nothing which exists between the self which it has constructed through the past reflections and its own desire to become that self. Consciousness as the pre-reflective cogito is empty of substance, it is the original nothing-ness which receives objects as motives with meaning and identity, and then to dissociate these motives from becoming one with consciousness, nihilates those of their motives, which exist in consciousness as transcendent objects endowed with nothings.

The for-itself with its unsettled temporal nature attempts to reduce itself to the permanent labels of in-itself by avoiding the awareness of the freedom of questioning the nothingness and freedom of consciousness. This amounts to “bad faith” which abandons ‘becoming’ and adopts permanence and fixity as a way of life. Bad faith occurs out of the fear of facing the nothingness within one’s self; it is an act of lying to oneself, while being conscious of the truth. The real reason behind this opaque acceptance of this conscious act of lying, as Sartre recounting Freud

states, lies in societal functioning. According to Sartre, psychological determinism drowns the individual free acts within the causal series and the workings of the surrounding historical and societal environment. Man unfolds as a 'not' with all his negatives due to the nothingness which 'is' within him as the being of consciousness, not what others expect him to be. To adopt a flight from anguish one usually situates the responsibility on the distant, 'true' self hiding in the past. The ontological separation of the pre-reflective self from the ego by the concrete nothingness is avoided by consciousness during moments of anguish which imagines the pre-reflective cogito to emerge from the reflective self, and thus a product of a determined action; freedom then becomes the freedom of the other, residing elsewhere. Freedom is the ability to question the existence of all the existents as things supplied to the senses, to doubt the possibility of freedom itself. Sartre paradoxically states that man in being his own freedom as nothingness and the consciousness which divides/unites, is what-he-is-not, and in not being his physical self completely and his history in its entirely is not what-he-is; he is a union of the two with their contradictions. Frederick A. Olafson in his essay *Freedom and Responsibility* explains Merleau-Ponty's critique of Sartre's radical freedom of pure negativity,

> …freedom as pure negativity has to have an analogue in the world. Otherwise, a slave or a prisoner in irons would be just as free as anyone else. What this means is that freedom expresses itself by bringing into being a situation for itself in the world that is at least compatible with a meaningful exercise of human powers. Perhaps even more significant is Merleau-Ponty's acknowledgment of what he calls the "aura of generality" that surrounds an individual life and the actions in which it issues. "Generality" here means that the import of a situation and of an action taken in it figures in many lives, not just in mine. This is very different from the Sartrean position that precludes anything like a recognition

> of the equivalence of other lives with my own and thus of the very possibility of a "We" based on a reciprocal recognition of one another as human beings. These elements in Merleau-Ponty's position also offer at least the rudiments of a conception of responsibility. It is not expressed in terms that directly announce its moral character, but it certainly makes a place for the justification of an action to those affected by it that was missing from the Sartrean account. (270)

Bad faith emerges from the knowledge of this inherent disintegration of and lack of identity with consciousness. Bad faith (*mauvaise foi*) can also be explained as the attitude of avoiding the nothingness that consciousness is, where anguish itself is the product of the inherent nothingness in man who emerges against the will of the objective world as a *not*. Lying and consequent self-deception according to Sartre, is the primary element of bad faith and is a transcendental phenomenon as it is directed outside toward another subject and in being a construction of the subject to convince his own self it is separated from the consciousness by nothingness. The Sartrean 'existence' arising before 'essence' stresses the for-itself to abandon its constant reductions to the in-itself, and nihilate its attempts at objectifying itself, for free consciousness and freedom to reign.

Heidegger begins *An Introduction to Metaphysics* with the classical definition of Nothing taking into account the concept of nothing arising out of nothing (*ex nihilo nihil fit*)- nothing as the "unformed matter" incapable of structuring itself into being and thus failing in appearance. The being in turn creates its self and presents itself as an image. The Christian dogma, on the other hand, in a subversion of the original idea, empties Nothing as that which is the absence of all beings outside God and out of which He creates His beings (*ex nihilo fit-ens creatum*). Since the Absolute negates all void, God cannot relate to the Nothing that is. The entity (*Seiendes*) of

Nothing for Heidegger, in *The Quest for Being*, is the negation or Not (*das Nicht*) "of the totality of what-is: that which is absolutely not" (245). Within the shadowy unity of the whole and in the abyss of what-is-in-totality, the being with its various states of mind and moods finds its self entirely engulfed by it. Heidegger reveals that dread discloses Nothing. The indefinite feeling associated with dread and its search for the uncanny object which induces that act of withdrawal from the world of what-is, unveils Nothing as a remainder. When everything disappears amidst the feeling of dread, *Dasein* emerges as a pure presence and Nothing divulges its self as absence, as 'that' which was at the root of the dread. Only in the absence of the world as a concrete fullness, does *Dasein* reveal Nothing. Nothing is not experienced as object, rather it occurs as a part of what-is-in-totality; "It is in the Being (*Sein*) of what-is that the nihilation of Nothing (*das Nichten des Nichts*) occurs" (*Quest* 251). In dread, the being is relegated 'to the vanishing what-is-in-totality', such that a complete Nothing envelops the structure of being; the essence of Nothing is nihilation. According to Heidegger, nihilation is neither annihilation, nor negation; it is an event where Nothing nihilates itself and in that vanishing point what-is-in-totality reveals all its strange "Other"ness as contrasted to the Nothing, that "is" and is "not" Nothing. Nothing as an a priori anterior existent brings Dasein in direct relation with what-is. *Dasein's* encounter and immersion within the what-is is only possible through the manifestation of Nothing. In its relation to and projection into the Nothing beyond the what-is, *Dasein* is always already transcendent and in this lies the freedom and self-realization of the individual. Being, with its indefinite finiteness is discovered in Transcendence and is created out of nothing. Heidegger's metaphysics of presence delves into the fragmentation of modern existence affected by the neglect of the question regarding being, to understand the authentic concept of being inside the temporal and the historical characteristic of the subject. True to Husserl's *Lebenswelt*,

Heidegger's *Dasein* explains the position of being in the world, of 'being there', thrown within a concrete setting of a lived experience. The term *existenzial* in Heidegger's terminology refers to the ontological understanding of the ontic level (phenomena of everyday realities). *Dasein,* as a movement from metaphysical absence to presence in which the other existents disclose themselves, is further classified into three categories; as mood or a state of mind ("thrownness", disposedness or 'already-having-found-oneself-there-ness', an a-priori transcendental factor), as "understanding" (projection on possibilities for fundamental or linguistic actualization) and as "fallen-ness" (fascination with the world involving idle talk, curiosity and ambiguity). The world's "worldhood" with its scientific, abstract "present-at-handedness" and physical "ready-to-handedness" constitutes the intentionality in the sense of Husserlian phenomenology. The existential spatiality of *Dasein* is a presence-at-hand which Heidegger terms "de-severance" (a vanishing of the distance and inducing closeness). *Dasein* is an acknowledgement of the presence of others, a unitary relation through which the being of one recognizes the being of others, an encounter with a myriad of possibilities and cultural embeddedness where exchanges and meanings beyond facticity emerge. The predisposed disclosedness or given-ness of the world along with the totality of choices and involvements comprise 'ontological structural whole' of *Dasein* or what Heidegger calls "Care" or the being of *Dasein*.

Heidegger's other side of *Dasein* deals with alienation where the individual dissolves within the discourse of others, 'falling' from the fulfillment of his being into inauthentic existence (levelling or averageness). This inauthenticity of everydayness loses itself into temporality and the finitude of mortality, identifying death as the end of the being-in-the-world. The impossible nothing encountered by *Dasein* manifests itself in loss and angst in the being; *Dasein* with its impermanent nothingness and concrete emptiness is the pre-conditioned ground for self-

manifestation and presence-ness of being. The temporal dimensionality of "care" interpreted as past (thrownness), present (fallen-ness) and future (projection), with their interrelation constitute the unity of time (journeying toward destiny as a collective product of guilt, conscience, freedom, choice, and death of the finite self). *Dasein* as projection and failing is the being-ahead-of-itself and stretches toward the possibility of possibilities and failure; death ends and completes the existence of *Dasein*. Death as an end is experienced by *Dasein* as the other's death, not as an authentic loss-of-being. Death for *Dasein* would be "ownmost", a death different from all other deaths of others confronted, which would close all relations of the subject with the world. Against the backdrop of this inevitability of not-being, one realizes the being-to-be which in turn discloses the self that is authentic and belongs to the individual. According to David Couzens Hoy's article *Death*, Heidegger

> …describes this attitude of indifference toward death as the inauthentic alienation from death. This alienation is produced by two evasions. First, there is the evasion of turning anxiety about the impending death into a fear of the event itself. Fear is of an object in the world, whereas anxiety is about the world as such. Collapsing anxiety into fear makes a concern for death into a weakness. This concern about being weak leads to the second evasion whereby one then has to prove one's superiority and indifference to one's own death. However, it is important to realize that Heidegger is not advocating this attitude of superior indifference. Instead, he sees such an attitude as another instance of inauthentic "alienation" from the inevitability of one's own death. (282)

Freedom, for Heidegger is the individual choice against the backdrop of the ever-present nothingness, a being which is constantly chained by the determinism of history and the effects of society, within and without. Authentic existence (mine-self) is not a divorce and dissociation

from the being-of-others (they-self), rather it is "an existential modification of the 'they'". *Dasein's* potentiality for being-a-whole (resoluteness) and its authentic existential position depends on the ontological countering of being-to-death (anticipation) within the conscience; the existential choice of conscience's confrontation takes one from fallen-ness to authenticity. The subsistence of the *Dasein* does not depend on the substantiality of the phenomenon, rather on self-subsistence, in being, being among beings. In its temporal existence, *Dasein* anticipates the future, revives the past and constructs the state of anxiety for the self. Anticipation is an awareness of death as possibility. Death is thus the "possibility of the impossibility of any existence at all" (*Being and Time* 307).

Anxiety, in the ontological sense, produces the vision of one's own not-Being in the world. The 'they' structure obfuscates the meaning of death of the *Dasein* (essentially finite) by *de-individualizing* death and the being drowns within fallen-ness. "[The] state-of-mind [mode of disposedness] which can hold open the utter and constant threat to itself arising from *Dasein's* ownmost individualized Being, is anxiety. In this state-of-mind, *Dasein* finds itself face to face with the 'nothing' of the possible impossibility of its existence" (*Being and Time* 310). Sartre, on the other hand, understands death as the absence of all such possibilities,

> …this perpetual appearance of chance at the heart of my projects cannot be apprehended as my possibility but, on the contrary, as the nihilation of all my possibilities. A nihilation which itself is no longer a part of my possibilities. Thus death is not my possibility of no longer realizing a presence in the world but rather an always possible nihilation of my possibilities which is outside my possibilities." (*Being and Nothingness* 687)

Along similar lines, for Camus life as illusion is decoded. Life is no longer feared, death is embraced; 'creation' discovers the illusions of rational life, not irrationality, the logic of which is

irrationality itself. With the flash of unblinking eye, everything worldly, turns ephemeral; Camus illustrates the stripping away of the semblances of everydayness in his *The Myth of Sisyphus*- "…these hills, the softness of the sky, the outline of these trees at this very moment lose the illusory meaning…henceforth more remote than a lost paradise. The primitive hostility of the world rises up to face us across millennia…. The stage scenery masked by habit becomes again what it is" (13). The divorce between the creator and the 'being' from the day of creation, the subjective understanding and the objective actualizations sets the theme absurdity in a rapid motion. The gap is between the absurd 'creation' and this life that he cannot decipher- his society, language and identity. The ultimate refuge is sought within his own consciousness where he creates a secured identity for himself. The grandeur is attained by the absurd man in the creation of a different universe, separate from the mundane existence, where he destroys himself in his own conflagration and is the tsar of his own kingdom of hope and despair. Even the hope of union is obliterated through weariness and anxiety. For Camus, "At the end of the awakening comes the question; Suicide or Recovery?" (12). The answer for him is recovery through self-mutilation. The God of mind declares war on the God of body. Suicide consumes the absurd in death; the feeling of the absurd is a conjoined acceptance and rejection of death. Absurdity lies not in escape but in confrontation; the 'being' challenges the world for recognition. At this stage, everything is sacrificed, except the ''appetite for the absolute and for unity and the impossibility of reducing this world to a rational and reasonable principle…'' (Camus 30). The trope lies in the gained knowledge of impossibility to reconcile them. For Camus absurdity generates in questioning the way of existence, a challenge posed to the ways of being in the world, with others and one's own self, a philosophical attitude displayed against the backdrop of sameness; even the revolt of the flesh against the movement of time toward death is absurd. The

anthropomorphic thought moves around the desire to reduce the world to an indestructible oneness, without paradox and contradictions. The failure of this unity and clarity and the nostalgia arising out of this unquenchable zeal is behind the construction of the absurd within the being. There is a confrontation within the human character along the lines of universal rationalism, scientific through, pure reason, reality, and the opposing consciousness of death, immutable nothingness and transcendental longings and consequently he falls within the walls of the absurd. Absurdity occurs in the co-existence of man and his world, and leaves the mind devoid of hope and in continuous rejection of illusions. Conscious of this incongruity within his being, and the absence of hope, man tries to escape within the mystical, the superhuman and leap toward the undefined, incoherent and undecipherable. In the face of Kierkegaard's Christian leap, Camus denies all such elusions into the irrational and incomprehensible in order to live an authentic existence. Leap is linked with escape, existence after the realization of the absurd demands constant philosophical struggle with this disjointed time; "The absurd, which is the metaphysical state of the conscious man, does not lead to God" (25). For the existential man, negation is the only driving spiritual force, where thought transcends its negation of its self; Camus indulges man in this "philosophical suicide" (29). Camus rejects the phenomenological 'intentions' where consciousness isolates and enlightens the 'extra-temporal' essences of objects of the world and empties reality by producing it through images, not by explaining it through a holistic idea. The choice of living after the revelation of the absurd is pure contemplation and the act of permanent revolution which provides life its meaning and value. Freedom is in man's unreconciled death, in his death through constant rebellion, defiance and beyond his free will. In a world barren of any higher being and having death as the sole reality, the absurd man becomes the master of his own actions, outside the crowd and realizes his inner absurd freedom. The

absurd is generated within the awareness of death, and in that return to consciousness from uncertainty to death as concrete certainty. Camus' absurd man chooses contemplation in action and action in contemplation, for the consciousness of his overwhelming eternal life in this world. The temporality of his limited freedom, ''devoid of future and mortal consciousness,'' gives him the zeal to live out the 'adventure' in the short span of his life. The 'creation' is the God of his designed universe and like Kirilov, the hero of Dostoevsky, decides to kill himself to ''assert my insubordination, my new and dreadful liberty" (Camus 57). Camus' absurd man utters ''If God does not exist, I am God" (57). But the world remains indifferent, quivering but not stirred. It denies the absurd man, the grandeur of existence; "Thus again Kirilov's pistol rang out somewhere in Russia, but the world continued to cherish its blind hopes. Men did not understand "that"'' (59). The absurd man is the creator of imaginations in his heart, the art and the artist; "If something brings creation to an end, it is not the victorious and the illusory cry of the blinded artist: "I have said everything," but the death of the creator which closes his experience and the book of his genius" (60). Like the myth of Sisyphus, the toil and grandeur for the 'being' is in returning to the same spot of the world after discovering its ephemeral status. Camus advocates hope amidst the dismal negations of meaning; his Sisyphus, "At each of those moments when he leaves the heights and gradually sinks toward the lairs of the gods, he is superior to his fate. He is stronger than his rock" (65). At the end of the dilution of the art and the artist, creation and destruction, culture and nature, there starts the maddening dance of the 'being,' rejoicing and celebrating his own perseverance, resilience and renascence. Elaborating the psychic aura prevalent through modernism, Bradbury and McFarlane in *Modernism*, quote from Strindberg's *To Damascus*- "Thesis: affirmation. Antithesis: negation. Synthesis: comprehension! ... You begin life by accepting all things. Then you proceed on principle to deny all things. Now finish

your life by comprehending all things. Be one-sided no more. Do not say 'either…or', but instead 'both…and'!" (Bradbury and McFarlane 88). The chaotic order of the twentieth century forms a cohesive whole in its disintegration, in the falling apart of things related within and toward the centre. Language orientation itself undergoes a transformation to address the fundamental discourse of post-war experience. The essence of modernism is the awakening of self-reflexive art functioning in the awareness of its own finitude.

Ingmar Bergman moves far beyond the realms of existentialism to the ambiguous dissolution of boundaries. Bergman's claustrophobic zones range from the politico-religious to the psychosexual. The effect is produced through the absence of landscapes, suffocating interiority of the houses and repeated close-ups. Bergman tries to locate the opaque silence of the self against the vanishing transcendence. A self-referential after-effect of being silent for an indefinite period manifests in pathological illnesses in Bergman's characters. One can locate a shift in the Bergman's experimentation with transcendence post his faith trilogy (*Through a Glass Darkly Winter Light, The Silence*); a tangible aspect of transcendence in the form of death (in the form of suicide, death wishes, depression) and the material existence of the dead father hang over his 60's films. The theme of death transforms to the lack in cinematic apparatus in *Persona* as a transcendental recording device, failing to portray metaphysical layers and physical traumas. Similarly, *Cries and Whispers* depicts past (time) as transcendence- an incarceration device from which there is no freedom. Bergman and Beckett attempt to frame a self against the impossible decoding of the transcendental (God and Death). If the Christian God stands as the primary opposition in Bergman, for Beckett it is the hegemony of language itself. Beckett 'arrives' at being through writing, which is also a process of continuous self-emptying. However, language is dead for both these authors. Therefore, in Bergman, we locate the search for

restructured forms of communication and on the other hand, in Beckett, we find the celebration of non-art as art, the implosion of language as new language. Thus Agnes's dying body (and soul) in *Cries and Whispers* seeks oneness with the sisters and the dead mother, whereas Malone's decaying body in *Malone Dies* must be reconstituted through false fictional wholeness (fiction of the self and the fictional self merge in Beckett).

The methods of the research undertaken are primarily hermeneutic and phenomenological which seek to move beyond the restricted zones of appearance to extricate the essence. It follows an inductive content analyzing along with in-depth reading of the materials. The hermeneutic approach is applied to interpret the historical events and practices surrounding Bergman's life and the filmic practices that evolved as reaction. Bergman's films generate a philosophy of silence during the disappearance of the subject from the philosophical (theological) framework. His subjects are devoured by the excess of spiritual saturation. Bergman delineates depletion of subjective space and opens a hermeneutic debate regarding the subject-God relation and the overwhelming transcendental factors of existence. In an attempt to further decipher the 'other' (the filmmaker), Beckettian novels are employed and expounded. If Bergman effectuates 'philosophical cinema', Beckett, on the other side, provokes, what Pierre Macherey calls this "pluralistic constitution" in *The Object of Literature*, "literary philosophy" (5). Both the auteurs identify themselves with the "death of the subject and hierarchies" against textual logocentrism (where the artist dematerializes along with the fictional characters). Their object of research is the world of language (textual and cinematic) which constitutes the consciousness of the individual and decentres it in turn. As artists, they deconstruct not only the codes and narrative bolts of language, but the framing authority of the artist himself. Max Kozloff expounds the position of the imaginatively constructed artist through Hirsch's analysis in his essay *A*

Phenomenological Solution to "Warholism" and its Disenfranchisement of the Critic's Interpretive and Evaluative Roles, "the interpreter's main mission is that of reproducing "in himself" the author's mind-set, the "verificative principle" of which is the "imaginative reconstruction of the speaking subject."…the "speaking subject" is not the same as "the subjectivity of the author as an actual historical person" but, rather, corresponds to that circumscribed, if important, "part" of the author's subjectivity which "determines. . . verbal meaning"" (153-154). Against the metaphysical and philosophical vanishing of the subject in Bergman, Beckett discloses a physical necrosis of his semi-fictional characters. In the decaying light of Beckettian death and linguistic exhaustion, one re-locates Bergman's cinematic selves vanishing into the folds of silence.

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Chapter II

Bergman's Individual and the Quest for God

> All forms of improvisation are alien to me... Filming for me is an illusion planned in detail, the reflection of a reality which the longer I live seems to me more and more illusory. When film is not a document, it is dream. (*The Magic Lantern* 73)

The Swedish film industry prospered in the era of the silent genre in the early nineteen-twenties. However, with the arrival of sound in cinema and the consequent language problem associated with it, the Swedish directors realized the diminishing value of the films produced in the international market of export. The deficiency in interest among the directors regarding international competition amounted to a period of artistic decline in Swedish film-making, when trivial comedies and historical spectacles were produced with only the home-market in consideration. It was in such an era of artistic and aesthetic crises that Bergman, along with the encouragement and assistance from Dr. Carl Anders Dymling of the Svensk Filmindustri, emerged in the nineteen-forties in the history of the film-making world. Describing film-making, Bergman refers to the words "self-combustion and self-effusion" and enumerates it as "a tapeworm 2500 metres long that sucks the life and spirit out of me…. When I am filming, I am ill" (Steene 133). The film-artist, Bergman, representing himself through the schism between the destructiveness of the war-torn adult world and the innocence of childhood, the existential angst and religious scepticism, and the Kafkaesque fever that raged over Sweden in the forties, admits that the author of art, in the forty's and fifty's, with conceptions of aesthetics and creative zeal was repeatedly pitted against a distracted world which no longer focused on the liberating

sources of art. Film, as an artistic endeavour, attempted to survive in the face of the declining and paralyzing freedom within an economically enclosed space attached to it.

Film-makers often suffered humiliation and emotional and economic bankruptcy (film production in Sweden was halted for all of 1951) in the hands of the producers, critics and the public, and desperately desired to search their strength in artistic, rather than commercial fulfilment. Bergman describes the noise, the dirt, and the deplorable atmosphere of the film-studio, which had the choking effect on the artistic impulses of the director. Amidst the collective life of the film-studio, along with its pressurizing rules, tight shooting schedule, lack of proper funding, overused and clumsy technical apparatuses, the mike usually casting a shadow, functioned a sensitive mind on a process, which demanded concentration, silence, and self-confidence. *The Seventh Seal* (1956), which Bergman refers to as the bohemian way of film-making, had to be completed within a period of thirty-five days due to the lack of sufficient funds; the film was shot in an enormous hurry mostly in the woods right outside the studio, only three days were allocated for the shooting of the beach scenes, costumes were borrowed from theatre houses, and the actors carried the cameras, and the scene with the flagellants was shot in a single day from eight a.m. straight to seven p.m. Due to the outside disturbances embedded in the soundtrack (the noises produced by lorries taking provisions to the restaurants in Skansen), the first-night audience at the auditorium screening *Ship to India* (1947) was unable to hear a single word uttered by the characters in the film. The set for *Ship to India*, in its entirety, was built at Novilla, and a scene within a particular set had to be shot standing inside another; Bergman describes the cramped situation at the sets in Novilla in an interview with Jonas Sima in 1968, “it was an unusually scruffy sort of place. The high-tension cable taking electric current up to Skansen ran underneath, and if someone carried a mike across it, it said Brrr; which meant

that all the sets had to be built in such a way that the mike-lead didn't have to cross the main Skansen cable…there was only one spot where one could even use a dolly at all- the floor went in waves; and all the time we were on location, the No. 7 tram kept jamming on its brakes outside" (Bjorkman, Manns, and Sima 39). The film production company Sandrews, on an average, financed twenty to twenty-five films a year and thus the film negative and the electricity for each film had to be rationed; *The Devil's Wanton* (1949) was allowed 8,000 metres of Agfa, Kodak or Ferrania negative, all in short lengths, and each time the photo-flood within the set was switched on, a specially hired employee arrived and switched it off. Only the last rehearsal approved by the authorities was to function under full lighting, and extra consumption of current had to be paid back at a definite rate. The degradable sound system in Swedish films resulted from poor recording conditions and crew members who could not hold the microphones in position; in *Passion of Anna* (1969), shot in forty-five days, soundtracks were matched later by the recording engineers who took up a supporting soundtrack, to make the sound coming off the lips during the close-up scenes absolutely clear. Existing along with the technical complications and backlashes was the forced ideological supervision of the censor board of the nineteen-forty's of Sweden. The sequence in *Summer with Monika* (1953) where Harry gets drunk, engages in a fight, and the wild orgiastic love-scene where their passions reach the ultimate stage, was finally chopped off from the film by the censors; neither the director, nor the production company, SF, dared to question the censor's cut.

However, taking into consideration the technical challenges in film-making in the earlier stages, the economic obstacles, absence of an advanced camera, degradable lighting conditions, Bergman opines that these hindrances, on the other hand, forced the director and the technicians to get further acquainted with the ways and materials of the process of making films and to

discover the 'simple means' hidden within these complications. Technique, according to Bergman, is a process of affecting the viewer. Discussing Sven Nykvist, Bergman enumerates that the things with which he works include three lamps and a little greaseproof paper; a major element of dealing with the technical possibilities is simply having the ability to eliminate the volume of irrelevant technical structures, the mass of superficial apparatus. As a mode of aggression against modern photography, with its ultra-fast film and artificial idea of what light looks like, Bergman and Nykvist studied the methodical functioning of light to mimic its behaviour technically, within the artificial church built inside the big studio for *Winter Light*. Describing Bergman's construction of "the technologies of self" and his self-referential autobiographical writings, critic Maaret Koskinen says, "…when the films-that is, that which had comprised the very foundation for Ingmar Bergman's autobiographical or self-referential material-inexorably had come to an end, this self-referentiality seemed to assume an increasingly prominent role in his theater productions. To put it differently, memory as a stage in the cinema was transformed into stage as memory in the theatre" (4). Legendary French new wave filmmaker Francois Truffaut in his book *The Films in My Life*, refers to Bergman as an author of cinema with his distinct style and approach and mentions a three-fold lesson in his films, "freedom in dialogue, a radical cleaning of the image, and the absolute priority of the human face" (259).

God, in Bergman, is often Kafkaesque, inaccessible, obscure and judgemental. In one of Bergman's early interviews held in Solna on June 25, 1968, and conducted by Stig Björkman and Jonas Sima, the filmmaker deliberates on his quasi-political approach of dealing with the themes in his films and the impassioned delineation with religious paradoxes, "…the salvation-damnation issue, for me, was never political. It was religious. For me, in those days, the great

question was: Does God exist? Or doesn't God exist? Can we, by an attitude of faith, attain to a sense of community and a better world? Or, if God doesn't exist, what do we do then? What does the world look like then? In none of this was there the least political colour. My revolt against the bourgeois society was a revolt-against-the-father" (Bjorkman, Manns, and Sima 14). The religious quandary in Bergman could be traced throughout his childhood smeared by Lutheran faith of high morality, the inhibitions from his priestly father and the distance from the loving mother. The resultant fears of spiritual death and dread and loss of communion with any higher being would accompany in the first half of his career as a filmmaker. Erik Ulrichsen, in the essay *The Early Films: Ingmar Bergman and the Devil*, highlights the angst ridden Swedish literature of the forties which finds vivid expressions in the films of Bergman. The doubt in the Christian faith, the alienation from his own family, the background of the post-war historical crisis, the exposure to the demoniacal settings of Strindberg culminated in the torment in Bergman's theatre and films. Birgitta Steene in her book *Ingmar Bergman*, states the influence of Strindberg's plays (*Miss Julie* and *A Dream Play*) on Bergman and writes, "The existential and metaphysical questioning reflected in Bergman's major screen works from *The Seventh Seal* (1956) to *Tystnaden* (1962, The Silence) could be called, with a reference to Strindberg's mental upheaval in the mid-1890s, an inverted 'inferno crisis'. While Strindberg emerged from his ordeal with a newborn religious faith, Bergman liberated himself from his Lutheran background, though still recognizing the presence of spiritual realities...." (Steene 38). Ulrichsen focuses on Bergman's first sincere exploration of the "Devil" in Fängelse (Prison, 1949) (which he called "a morality play for the cinema"), after the portrayal of the villain in *Kris* (1946). Amidst the harrowing alternatives between death and devil and the absence of belief in God, *Prison* offers salvation as a possibility to its characters, through human passion, love and care. The

metanarrative, film-within-a-film structure foregrounds the central question of the film, the disaster in the Devil taking over and converting earth to Hell, the prohibition of the atom bomb for it would eradicate human race too soon taking off suffering from them, and the choice between Church and suicide; Thomas' attempt to kill his wife, the murder of the prostitute's child by the pimp and her own suicide, and the unendingness of the film halting at the judgemental question of belief and truth focus on the fundamental incarceration of man caught between the unseen and the unbearable. The dilemma of the director in *Prison* regarding the filming of the old schoolmaster's apocalyptic plot itself substantiates Bergman's own philosophical disturbances and hesitations to survey these issues in his future films. On this perspective, Ulrichsen quotes one of Bergman's statements made in 1950, "Fängelse represents a point of view that I have been forced to give up. I needed a severe and schematic conception of the world to get away from the formless, the vague and the obscure, in which I was stuck. So I turned to the dogmatic Christianity of the Middle Ages with its clear dividing lines between Good and Evil" (Ulrichsen 141). The representation of the Devil doctor in *Thirst* (1949) along with the evils prevalent in society, the Devil ballet master in *Sommarlek* (*Summerplay*, 1951), Death as Devil in *The Seventh Seal* (1957), and the variations of Devil in *Nära livet* (*Brink of Life*, 1958), in the forms of suicide, abortion, fear, loss of faith in the human other, certainly present Bergman as the masochistic artist deliberating in the complicated process of evolving and finding his authentic self amidst the doubts and mutual shame of his surroundings. In an interview conducted by the BBC in the later stage of Bergman's life, the filmmaker speaks of being haunted by the multiple demons of existence (in the presence of a singular God). He classifies them as the demon of disaster associated with destruction of all preparedness, the demon of fear linked to everything that is outside the physical and metaphysical self, the demon

of rage, demon of pedantry, punctuality and order, the demon of grudges conjured by the memory, the demon of nothingness when artistic expression falls silent and suffers emptiness. In another interview, *Man Alive*, held in 1970, Bergman focuses on the "existing question" which doesn't concern itself with the non-existence of God or the metaphysical fear as its consequence, but rather the human condition which provokes a feeling of pessimism so prevalent in his films, the sense of responsibility and freedom in the absence of an absolute. The absence of God, according to him provides a kind of "security" and wholeness which arises out of the common fears, prayers, hopes and dreams which "unite man on earth". Bergman's films primarily explicate the blurring lines joining the parallel extremes of despair/death and the moral failure/Devil. Death in Bergman is never the literal death; rather it is the consequence of despair, a death of the spiritual self where one forsakes the search for the meaning of life. In the absence of all transcendental solace, the characters, in the crisis of abandonment and judgement, fall back on themselves, groping and clutching for each others' presence. The awareness of the death of divinity and the ever-increasing sense of alienation is what induces the sense of shame and in that desperate attempt to save one's self from drowning one clings to the other, or relinquishes the other. The exploration of the existential individual on the backdrop of twentieth century philosophical upheavals, Bergman employs metaphysical reductionism where every character is narrowed down for a magnified analysis of his/her spiritual self.

Jesse Kalin in his *The Films of Ingmar Bergman*, refers to this metaphysical investigation as the "geography of the soul" where "geography combines the idea of spiritual places and spiritual journey with the more literal sense of physical places and travel between them…his films are landscapes in which the moral and the visual are fused into one representation…What we are given in this new metaphysics is an elemental set of filmic images and places that, when woven

into one comprise picture, captures the rudiments of understanding who we are" (2). The problematic of Christian faith- judgement for the believers and sinners, the moral predicament and doubt of those who know but cannot surrender to Christ, death, escape (in the lines of Sartre's "bad faith"), passion, nakedness of the self, shame, are examined and interrogated in the scope of Bergman's films. While *The Seventh Seal* probes into the day of wrath and the revelation not only of the divine outpourings, but also of the self at last facing its own other in the mirror and being prepared for consciousness and judgement, *Winter Light* too comprises the "quiet" of God and death and desertion of all external support with the prayers reverberating and returning, colliding against hollowness. Bergman's world is darker than Kierkegaard's where the leap in perpetually absent. There is an unending, dreadful gap between the subject and his familiar transcendental and all the efforts to establish a connection are absurd and thoroughly silenced into nothingness. However, what is present in this trembling absence is the possibility of associating with the human counterpart (a leap into the other), of finding salvation in the goodness that one inheres for the other and one's own self.

The fundamental argument of the philosophy of Søren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), against the dialectical, theoretical existence of man and the rationalism of Hegel, situates itself on the authentic existence of the individual beyond the feelings of futility in the realms of reconciliation. Kierkegaard, unlike the philosophers immediately preceding him who focused on the problems of humanity as a 'whole', stressed on the fears, desires, nostalgia, despair, faith, of the singular individual surrounding the dread of freedom. To choose a definite way to exist is the paradox and crisis of existence, the deviation from objective truth onto the ground of subjective truth. The philistine way of life steeped in the economic and social encompassing full of despair and the empty, repetitive life of the aesthete Johannes, are both rejected by Kierkegaard in his

Either/Or (1843). The fictional Judge Wilhelm offers the choice of despair to the aesthete to eradicate hidden disillusionment and escape and embrace questions regarding the ethical self and freedom and redefine the concept and movement of time. Existence, according to Kierkegaard, is the concretization of the free will to remain detached from the crowd and actualization of the being always present to oneself. Authentic existence is the search for the truth which is worth living and dying for; the truth is the unquestionable surrender to and faith in the divine Christ, that of becoming a true Christian through the leap of individuality. Jacob Golomb, in his *In Search of Authenticity: From Kierkegaard to Camus*, dissects the either/or dialectic of Kierkegaard's philosophical crisis,

> to become a selfless 'nothing at all', in the midst of the abstract collective 'public' and 'a deathly silence', or to become a genuine and concrete individual by committing the 'leap of enthusiasm', the 'leap into the arms of God'— either to embrace the authentic faith or to become a two-dimensional phantom. It is true that 'enthusiasm *may* end in disaster, but levelling is *eo ipso* the destruction of the individual'. (Golomb 25)

Authenticity is the subjective interpretation of God; the Absolute regains the Absolute only when the subjective existential faith establishes the relation between the subject and the eternal. Kierkegaard establishes his belief in one higher being, being present in every believer, against the natural theology of God's reason/able existence and Hegel's immanent God. That the ways and the narrative centering the existence of God cannot be rationally deciphered itself calls for the faith in God to be true and self-justified. Kierkegaard's true Christian has to be an outsider in constant attempts to unite with the belief in God, through guilt, questioning, anxiety and suffering. He asserts the religious absurdity of the contradictory claim of God's emanation on earth in the form of Christ, an act of co-existence of the finite and the infinite; the transcendental

God of Kierkegaard must be discovered through the inward journey undertaken by the individual. Faith for him is unwavering inwardness within one's subjectivity, a subjective truth and certainty which is paradoxical objectively; a 'leap of faith' with which one locates one's being in relation to faith.

For Kierkegaard, the sickness in *The Sickness unto Death* (1849) is an ailment of the spirit without the attachment to the spiritual. The work is directed toward a Christian awakening of choice out of despair and individual sin of negating Christianity as falsehood. The fear of "conscious selfhood", along with an unconsciousness of the self, is what Kierkegaard calls despair. However, one has to undergo this despair or "spiritual development" to be one with the Christian God; despair is negativity and the unawareness of that despair is "new negativity" which is the precondition to reach the subjective truth and self-consciousness beyond one's "spiritlessness". Sin is standing before God and "not wanting to be oneself, or wanting in despair to be oneself"; sin is either "intensified weakness or intensified defiance" (*Sickness* 109). The second form of despair of the self is the want

> to be itself in hatred toward existence...it wants in sheer spite to press itself on that power, importune it, hang on to it out of malice...And it is this that he wants to be; this is the reason he wants to be himself, to be himself in his agony, so as to protest with his agony against all existence...the comfort would be his undoing-as an objection to the whole of existence. (*Sickness* 105)

Kierkegaard's individual stands at the centre with defined notions of absolute selfhood procured from the oneness with God. For Anti-Climacus, the "other author", despair is the negation of completeness in God, of attempting to "consume the eternal" but failing to, of trying to become God (in the Sartrean sense of the "Bad Faith", both in-itself and conscious), as propounded by

Alastair Hannay in his introduction to the book. Self-consciousness, for Kierkegaard is the awareness of the self in despair, of itself despairing. Kierkegaard's despair doesn't allow the despairer to die; it is an eternal torment of not being able to die, of living in death, of despair's impotent eating of the self. For Kierkegaard, this unending despair of the self along with its impossibility to die is the sickness of the spirit, the sickness unto death. The "vertigo" or "imbalance" of the self in despair emerge out of the lack of synthesis with the eternal, the despair of the self in not wanting to be itself to the desire to relate to oneself and the cause which is the source of the relation. "Despair is a sickness of the spirit, of the self, and so can have three forms: being unconscious in despair of having a self (inauthentic despair), not wanting in despair to be oneself, and wanting in despair to be oneself" (*Sickness* 43). True selfhood is achieved in synthesis with God, where the self relates to the divine outside itself.

In *"That Individual": Two "Notes" Concerning My Work as an Author* (1859), Kierkegaard acts as the advocator of the true Christian and emphasizes the need for individual oneness with God, where just a single individual attains the "eternal truth", for the crowd is untruth and abstraction. He romanticizes the concept of the individual to extract a response from the readers and extrapolate from their crowd psychology the innermost being in search of authenticity; ""The individual" is the category through which, in a religious respect, this age, all history, the human race as a whole, must pass…My task is…to provoke, if possible, to invite, to stir up the many to press through this defile of "the individual," through which, however, no one can pass except by becoming a the individual-the contrary being a categorical impossibility. And yet, if I were to desire an inscription for my tombstone, I should desire none other than "That Individual"" (Kauffman 100). Kierkegaard's individual 'ethical consciousness' makes the subject aware of its existence beyond the confines of the temporal and the aesthetic

consciousness of time and is directed towards the eternal. The crisis is in the choice of abandoning time to be one with God and not being able to hold the absolute. According to Kierkegaard, individual essence is retained and secured through the 'leap of faith' towards the unseen, a leap into subjectivity, where the individual and the eternal merge in an existential unity and individual truth becomes a subjective probing within the innermost being. Through the parable of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac in the Bible, Kierkegaard examines the overwhelming faith of the old patriarch in his *Fear and Trembling* (1843). Kierkegaard states through Johannes the astonishment and absurd wonder at the depth of Abraham's faith and arrives at the trembling knowledge that the ethical sphere dissolves in the presence of the religious sphere and normal human values and thought-processes are suspended against an encounter with the will of the divine being. The true spiritual individual or the "knight of faith" exists outside the ethical and moral zone, for a Christian situates his self with his relation to God. Faith in God is the ground of being.

The Concept of Dread (1844) explores the feeling of dread which would be later adopted by the existential philosophers Sartre and Heidegger. Dread is that rooted psychological symptom which covers the soul of the individual like a mist with this unknown, indecipherable anxiety in the face of vertiginous freedom of choice, in the presence of too many freedoms. Kierkegaard posits that man is a combination of the soul and the body, both finding unity in the spirit. The 'innocent' man with his dreaming spirit is in a state of unawareness, projecting itself on nothing and producing nothing and subsequently generating the feeling of dread, a dread around nothingness, "…dread is the reality of freedom as possibility anterior to possibility" (Kauffman 101). In this reality, the spirit functions as ambiguity, being the power that synthesizes and the one inducing dread. The realization of the possibilities of freedom within man is the beginning of

dread in a concrete sense. The feeling of dread moves from the absoluter innocence of ignorance to the reality of "being able"; the dread of something unrecognized, a consequence beyond conception. Kierkegaard exerts that between the possibility of "I can" and its actuality there is the "intermediate determinant" which is dread. "Dread is not a determinant of necessity, but neither is it of freedom; it is trammeled freedom, where freedom is not free in itself but trammeled, not by necessity but in itself" (105). Kierkegaard likens dread to the impression of dizziness, when freedom stares into the abyss of its own infinite possibilities and drowns. On its emergence again, it rises with a sense of guilt. Between this disappearance and re-appearance there exists the possibility to leap. "In dread there is the egotistic infinity of possibility, which does not tempt like a definite choice, but alarms (*aengster*) and fascinates with its sweet anxiety (*Beaengstelse*)" (105).

Being oneself can only be achieved through the continuous struggle with the self and the staunch belief in God in the presence of despair and a 'sickness unto death', arising out of the presence of others' death and neglect of the self. Roger Scruton, in *A Short History of Modern Philosophy*, writes that it "is in the individual, according to Kierkegaard, that the true essence of spirit-its essence as 'subjectivity'-is revealed. He was particularly hostile to the Hegelian philosophy of history, which he rightly saw as inviting both the deification of history and the loss of the sense of individual responsibility towards events. This sense he sometimes describes as 'subjectivity', sometimes as 'existential pathos', and sometimes as 'anxiety'; without it, all freedom, all ethical life, and all hope of religious salvation are cancelled" (192). The individual lost under the rubble of history was for Kierkegaard the irreconcilable fear and evil. The individual subject against the 'universal subject' of Hegel is "inaccessible to the laws of thought… Logic is timeless, empty of content, whereas the individual finds his essence in time,

and enacts in time the drama which uniquely defines him" (Scruton 192). In the *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* (1846), where Kierkegaard discusses subjectivity as truth, Christianity is perceived as the indispensable condition and fundamental base for the acquirement of a personal association with God, a way to eternal happiness through a transcendental coalition. According to Kierkegaard, Christianity itself, under the nineteenth century purview of historical crisis, materialization, division of labour, multiple social identities, demanded a re-examination and investigation (by the individual) into the scope and demands of the doctrine. Faith had undergone a significant change under the industrial and political upheaval which heralded sustenance of the "infinite passion" for the spiritual and the individual; faith is the un-proven, it does not require a scientific, logical support to withhold itself. "The objective problem consists of an inquiry into the truth of Christianity. The subjective problem concerns the relationship of the individual to Christianity" (Kauffman 112). Kierkegaard focuses on the "God-relationship" of the individual, which is a manifestation of an individual enquiry into the subjective nature of God as truth. An objective inquiry concerns itself with the objective reflection on truth as truth, for if the truth is established as concrete, the individual is "in" the truth; it does not emphasize on the relationship between the subject and the truth as subject. Truth is the contemplation of the objective uncertainty with the "passion of the infinite". "When the question of the truth is raised subjectively, reflection is directed subjectively to the nature of the individual's relationship; if only the mode of this relationship is in the truth, the individual is in the truth even if he should happen to be thus related to what is not true… God is a subject, and therefore exists only for subjectivity in inwardness" (Kauffman 114-115). The objective absurdity realized subjectively is faith, God and subjectivity. God, in the purest form, is the absurd.

Bergman's early experiences of Lutheran theology (contradiction between predestination and sin), the emergence of the realist plays of Strindberg and the exposure to fanatical materialism and scientific reductionism, shaped his artistic and aesthetic consciousness against the representatives of science and industry (the conflict between art and authority in *The Face*). Transcendence, as discarded, and the position of humans qua believers and existents are the primary subjects of Bergman. There is no justification or defense in order to establish a higher realm of transcendental entity; rather it is the individual's identity in relation to the 'higher order' which is investigated. Outside the Kierkegaardian "leap of faith", an ethical sustenance is solicited in the realization of the 'presence' and union with the others. This awareness of being-in-the-world-with-others and experiencing this togetherness as inwardness is the ideal state to which Bergman's characters aspire. It is the failure to attain that profoundly human compassion which results in the crises of his perpetual seekers thrown into a world as an alienated stranger. For Bergman, the introspective artist, understanding of the guiding principles of existentialism circulated round the absurdities of individual existences against the backdrop of religious incomprehension and their inner struggles which insinuated psychological and biological victimization. Analyzing the concepts of 'bad faith' and 'second chance' in Sartre, Kalin notes that "Sartre's concern is taking responsibility for one's life…Bergman's concern is, in its secular, "immanentized" form, salvation: a new, better life" (197). Bergman's 'becoming' of the individual materializes in the choice of authentic attachment and touch. Outside the material attainment of freedom in social acts and politics for the existentialist, the ontology of banishment is what Bergman addresses; one must turn toward the other and in turn must be acknowledged for the 'turning' and restored to the position of the healing subject. In Bergman, one realizes the political and the being of freedom through the emanation of the personal. For the full realization

of one's being, Bergman's characters are often the Heideggerian beings-toward-death; the wholeness of understanding and choice, appreciation of life and the 'care' by the other that surface under situations of mortality, remind us constantly of the finite possibilities in a regimented future (of finality and not-yet-death). Thus, in a metaphorical turn of events, Bergman eventually journeys from the brief summers of Sweden (*Smiles of a Summer Night, Summer Interlude, Summer with Monika*) to the long winters of death (*Winter Light, Autumn Sonata, A Passion*).

> For me, hell has always been a most suggestive sort of place; but I've never regarded it as being located anywhere else than on earth. Hell is created by human beings-on earth!
>
> What I believed in those days-and believed in for a long time-was the existence of a virulent evil, in no way dependent upon environment or hereditary factors…Our very nature, qua human beings, is that inside us we always carry around destructive tendencies, conscious or unconscious, aimed both at ourselves and at the outside world.
>
> As a materialization of this virulent, indestructible, and to-us-inexplicable and incomprehensible evil, I manufactured a personage possessing the diabolical traits of a medieval morality figure. In various contexts I'd made it into a sort of private game to have a diabolic figure hanging around. His evil was one of the springs in my watch-works. (Bjorkman, Manns, and Sima 40)

God in the films of Ingmar Bergman functions as an inflated question recurring in multiple shrunken forms, having a concrete shape in the form of a spider (*Through a Glass Darkly,* 1961) and other times as metaphorical silence (*Winter Light*, 1963). In Bergman's films concerning religion and spirituality, God as a separate identity and the consequent Christian faith in Him

occupy an intermediary space between the identity of an individual subject and his doubt/redemption dyad. The characters in these films undergo the feelings of Kierkegaardian dread emerging out of the fears of judgement, abandonment, alienation, segregation and the compelling attempt to arrive at subjectivity through the realization of God; however, the seekers stutter either at an awareness of separation from God (*The Seventh Seal*), or His non-existence (*The Silence*). Irving Singer claims in his *Ingmar Bergman, Cinematic Philosopher* that Bergman does not adhere to the Kierkegaardian religious notion which "presupposes the truthfulness of Judeo-Christian faith in an infinitely loving Supreme Being" (115). However, in Bergman's philosophy there is a considerable diversion from Kierkegaard where the Absolute is supplanted by the inherent and immanent goodness in humans; the presupposition in Bergman is the faith in the ability of humans to communicate with the sufferer and disseminate this knowledge of oneness. The quest and subsequent subjectivity are objectives to be reached at the end of this inward journey- a looking within oneself and the selves of others in the absence of a higher being. The entire problematic in Bergman is designed through the motif of multiple questions surrounding an Eliotesque wasteland with the central characters engaged in a perpetual quest for meaning, in order arrive at themselves. The only way out of this vacuum is to turn for mercy, forgiveness and succour toward the other. *Det sjunde inseglet* (*The Seventh Seal*), based on Bergman's play *Trämålning* (Wood Painting), opens with a shot of the bleak sky with dark clouds sheathing the light and a scavenger in its unhindered flight over the land of black plague. The beginning is followed by several intercuts of rocky land and the sea and then a close-up on the crusader Antonius Block, with the voiceover chanting St. John's version of the dawn of apocalypse in the form of "The Seven Seals" from the Book of Revelation, "And when the Lamb had opened the seventh seal there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour. And the

seven angels which had the seven trumpets prepared themselves to sound." The first four seals hurl the "four horsemen" of "hunger, war, disease and death" on earth; the fifth sings forth the wailing of the martyrs proclaiming the word of God, the sixth brings destruction on land and seas and the unfurling of the seventh blazes the human race with blood, earthquakes, and burning stars. The cataclysm or the day of wrath in the film occurs in the silence of God and the presence of Death, where one is left to face one's own sins in search of authenticity, and where Block utters in mortal helplessness, the disjunction between the flesh and the self, "My flesh is afraid but, I am not". Encountering the literal figure of Death serves as a blatant reminder of Heideggerian *Dasein* (being-in-the-world) in the dread of being-towards-death and the uncovering of angst and "call of consciousness". The coming of Death to claim lives operates as the beginning of the second self, causing the death of the former; the search is directed toward that resurrected self which has undergone spiritual death in the past and whose epiphany stands before itself in the mirror. Against the Squire, Jöns with stoic leanings (discerning God as a symbolic image representing empty life and the uncertainty of death) and a placid acceptance of death as reality and the Knight's passionate disquiet, the beginning shows the third kind, the horses, bereft of consciousness, drinking from the sea.

Through the introduction of the players in the idyllic setting strewn with dreams of the Holy Virgin and fertility and light all around them, Bergman establishes the ineffectuality of Death within the unambiguous and unassailable perspective toward life (which reminds one of the repetition of the death scenes by the actors for "The Murder of Gonzago", in Tom Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead*). Death loses its significance in the multiple rehearsals of death in life, reducing death to a silent passing from being to nothingness. Jof's version of the Holy Virgin with the infant Jesus within the idyllic setting has the "…great silence in heaven and

on earth", which stands in contradistinction from the doomsday silence of God's wrath which Block can ominously hear. The spiritual journey through inwardness and the physical journey through the wasteland of death situate a parallel cancellation of the insignificance of death with the fullness of faith in God and the silence of God with the authoritative presence of Death in the black robe. The entire deadland turns into a symbol and metaphor for the modern warfare and atomic crisis and Block transforms into an obdurate existential character demanding the manifestation and rationalization of God's acts on earth. Perhaps, the Knight utters a Kierkegaardian 'fault' of seeking an objective and logical explanation (absolute knowledge) from the absolute and not relying purely on faith, thereby inducing dread within himself. What evades Block in the unending discourse regarding the validity of God and the continuous game of chess is the realization of God's immanence around surrounding him. The game to stave off and delay Death obfuscates the direction of thinking toward the inner self, a metaphysical penetration within one's own being. Block is the forsaken neo-Christ and everyman bearing his little cross and reading the 'pathetic' image of the suffering Christ as the agony of the Son of God and not as the distress of faithless quest of man. The close-up on the sordid image of a midget-like Christ (resembling a victim of the plague himself) and the failure of Block to draw any sustenance from the crucifix are supplanted by his confession to Death disguised as a priest. The predominant philosophical problem of the knight is his spiritual emptiness and his desire and inability to accept death as an end, reverberating within and without, and manifesting in a kind of violent dread;

> Block: I want to confess as best as I can but my heart is a void. The void is a mirror. I see my face and feel loathing and horror. My indifference to men has shut me out. I live now in a world of ghosts, a prisoner in my dreams.

Death: Yet you do not want to die?

Block: Yes, I do.

Death: What are you waiting for?

Block: Knowledge… Is it so hard to conceive God with one's senses? Why must He hide in a midst of vague promises and invisible miracles? How are we to believe the believers when we don't believe ourselves? What will become of us who want to believe but cannot? And what of those who neither will nor can believe? Why can I not kill God within me? Why does He go on living in a painful, humiliating way? I want to tear him out of my heart, but He remains a mocking reality which I cannot get rid of.

Here lies the crux of Kierkegaard's religious problem, of the believer not being the believer in entirety, of him trying to define Him on his terms and logical practices and concrete knowledge, of turning Him into the Thing, not only of logical discourse, but also a substantial material being. Block is stuck in his own definitions of physical leap, finding and justifying God in things of the outside world. Devil, Death and God exist simultaneously and one lacks foundation without the other. The death of God, often mistaken to be the prevalent view in Bergman's philosophizing, is in reality, counterbalanced by the overwhelming immanence of God ascertained through acts of mercy and an inward awareness of the existence of the divine. Bergman's crisis is rather with the failure of man to reach the conclusion at the end of the question, undergoing a self-inflicting pain in dwelling over the problem forever,

Block: I want God to put out His hand, show His face, speak to me.

Death: But He is silent.

Block: I cry to Him in the dark, but there seems to be no one there.

Death: perhaps there is no one there.

Block: Then life is a senseless terror. No man can live with Death and know that everything is nothing.

Death: Most people think neither of Death nor nothingness.

Block: Until they stand at the edge of life, and see the Darkness… We must make an idol of our fear and call it God.

Block's hamartia is in the perspective he offers to Maia, "To believe is to suffer. It is like loving someone in the dark." Robin Wood praises the sense of uncanny combination of frightful death and brimming life in the depth of focus Bergman uses in the scene that follows the union of peace and content, "in which the Knight and Death resume their chess-game in the foreground while, in distant ling-shot across the meadow, the actor (Jof strumming on his lute) sit relaxed by their caravan, quite oblivious to their sinister presence" (103). Banishment is the recurrent theme in *The Seventh Seal*; the banishment from God is the subsequent effect of one's alienation from the union of the immediate other (Block's distance from the love of wife Karin who waits through the plague with hopes of his return, the monks' conversion of the young woman into a witch, Raval's lust and nihilism, and the flagellant's masochism to ward off the punishment from God). Even the helplessness of the "witch" forced to believe in the Devil as her saviour is segregated like the flesh of Christ on the cross to atone/take responsibility for their sins/death. And the burning of the young woman churns out the most fundamental questions of the film as Jöns asks Block, "Who will look after that child? The angels? God? Satan? Emptiness? ... Look at her eyes! Her poor mind is making a discovery. Nothingness. We are helpless. We see what

she sees and her terror is ours." Only Mia and Jof, bonding with the "holy" communion of togetherness, escape the hands of Death. The sharing of the Christian meal in the end is where "Block receives the gift of hospitality and rest for his weary and troubled soul; Jof, a gift of milk from strangers; and everyone, a gift from creation itself since the strawberries are wild and discovered by chance. Altogether, it is the presence of God, Bergman's version of holy communion, in which Christ's body and blood become literally present" (Kalin 63). Goodness and faith in humanity find expression in the untarnished youth and beauty of Karin and in Block's attempt to save Jof and Mia from Death. Along with the trumpet of the third angel and the falling of the burning star Wormwood, Death reappears, and what bursts forth is a unique confession of the characters, a realization and acceptance of authentic identity; "I am Karin, the Knight's wife…"/ "I am a smith by trade and not a bad one."/ "In the darkness where you say you are there is none to listen to your lament. You are reflected in your own indifference…"/ "God, you who are somewhere, who must be somewhere, have mercy upon us!"

Death in *The Seventh Seal* is pure non-existence, with "no secrets" to reveal, it enters the scene as redemption from suffering and the dance in the end is the joy of this united realization of end and acceptance of a higher reality. Perhaps, what the Knight fails to comprehend is that God is Himself the divine Logos to be uttered only in prayer inwardly and Death, his counterpart silence. Irving Singer studies the ending from a point where

> …we in the audience can also experience the validity of this poetic proclamation about aesthetic features in our existence. As if to confess that he too is unable to fathom either the metaphysical uncertainties of his efforts or even his ability to transmute them into a work of art, Bergman intimates that he himself is "the fool" who is being dragged by Death along with everyone else in the penultimate moments of the movie. (174-175)

Bergman shoots the characters in the final scene from such an overwhelming distance that it metaphorically signifies the death of the viewer along with the subject of the film. Also parallel to this, lies the thought that somewhere on that distant metaphysical plane the filmmaker and the filmgoer are united through visual detachment.

"Man is the nothingness of a speck of dust in the limitless universe-and he is a creature of a depth capable of cognizing the universe, and of encompassing it within himself. He is both, between both. His faltering being is not an extant, determinable actuality" (Jaspers 72). Religion situates man's relation to the world qua the God-man relation and through this transcendence breaks the determinants which structure the objective co-ordinates inherent in reality. The crisis of religion lies in the ideological usage of the limited symbols as an authoritative representation of man's belief in god, an objective marker against a subjective foundation. The transcendental nature of being, existing beyond the confines of religion is expressed metaphorically through the immanence of god. According to Jaspers, religion, in expressing and universalizing the objective discourse of God and confining transcendence within structured dogma, delimits human freedom and subjective knowledge. Bergman seems to engage in what Jaspers calls *"philosophieren"* or philosophizing, a constant inward action toward authenticating oneself and reaching at self-awareness and transcendence beyond the all-objective (xii). Richard F. Grabau in the preface to *Philosophy of Existence* refers to this process of knowing the limits of the objective world which Jaspers denotes as world orientation and the pure expression of being arising out of it which constitutes metaphysics. Bergman's characters seem to be on a quest for awareness in the world of Jaspers' encompassing (*das Umgreifende*), which "expresses a felt quality of all our experience and thought…in which all objects of awareness appear" (xvi), and subsequently realize that all reality cannot be expressed as an object. To "conceive something non-objective in

objective form" is for Japsers the paradox of philosophy (19). Jaspers mentions Kant's understanding of the world as an *idea* and the unavailability of it as an objective whole, and of the "thinking consciousness" which relates to the objects of being-in-itself. The "Transcendental Deduction" shifts the being from its existence to the awareness of the phenomenality of the world around him. The ever-extendable encompassing horizon is itself indeterminate and unfixed and situates *Existenz* (mode of subjectivity) and Transcendence (mode of objectivity). The theory of encompassing in the life of an individual for Jaspers is a process of deconstruction, beginning with the division of my self and that my being is from the general idea of encompassing, then the segregation of my existence and consciousness, and the end is in manifestation of Being from "immanence to transcendence" (Jaspers 21). Existence, consciousness, and spirit or "idea" which act as a synthesis between historical existence and abstract consciousness and holds men in unities (borrowed from Hegel and the German idealism), comprise the inherent modes of encompassing. Transcendence according to Jaspers can be located beyond the space of perceivable senses of human reality, in the spirits, particularly the Divine; it can also refer to the being's journey outside the confrontational boundaries and limitations toward the authentic Being. Transcendence is all that is beyond objectivity and objective determination beyond the world and relates to Existenz as being-itself in the exploration toward Being. Man in Jaspers' *Existenz* claims to reach towards the actualization of his self; he is realized as *Existenz* through his choices beyond the *Dasein* (or Heidegger's *das Man*) which does not concern itself with the question of Being. Every *Existenz* is unique in its journey toward pure subjectivity, and is analyzed by Jaspers as an unending field of possibility which operates with freedom, inventiveness and unrestrained spontaneity to reach the primordial depth of the self. Man as *Existenz* lives within the encompassing modes of the world, knowing and creating at the levels of

universal consciousness, spirit, and existence; *Existenz* has no existence outside the all-encompassing. According to Gabrau, the existential idealism of Jaspers springs from his "uniqueness of freedom" and transcendence associated with *Existenz*, the idea of Truth in *Existenz* as individual, as subjectivity. Jaspers' idealism hails from the unchangeable truth of being which is constant and unattainable, and toward which all historical, concrete *Existenz-ial* truths point and never reach, and which works as an *a priori* factor of all action and thought. Jaspers differentiates between negative freedom which is the surrendering of freedom to the universal totality of things and a 'disregard' of the possibility of the self as *Existenz*, and positive freedom which arises out of the leap toward *Existenz* to acquire the knowledge of my own being. The transcendence of being in *Existenz* and freedom of the individual are states past all objectification and requires a leap from "existence of the conscious spirit to Existenz" (Jaspers 21). Transcendence is the truth the reality of which "shatters all existence…through which I am myself: where I am truly free…. Its most decisive language is the one which speaks through my freedom." (80). Exceptional truth of Existenz is always in resistance against the authoritarian (cultural, ethical) truth and history is the product of their dialectical interplay. According to Jaspers, man as means and end is either swallowed by Nothingness which problematizes the sense and substance of the being and blocks all knowledge of encompassing, or provided fullness of the being through awareness of encompassing, where "I myself am given to myself" (28).

> When God created the world, the first thing he made were journeys; and then came doubt, and nostalgia. (Ulysses' Gaze 1995)

Analogous to Bergman's version of spiritual abyss, Angelopoulos' "trilogy of silence" charts itself out on the landscape of Greek history, where the mythical past and the insubstantial present leave the individual seeker with the death of cities, the silence of God and the nothingness of

being; The third film of the trilogy, *Landscape in the Mist* (1988) (the other two being the silence of history in *Voyage to Cythera*, 1984, and the silence of love in *The Beekeeper*, 1986), delineates the silence of God in its attempt at tracing the identity of a symbolic/mythical father. One era is ending and another is about to be born. The existential odyssey of the sibling Voula and Alexander, in search of their nonexistent, eternally silent father synonymous with the disappearance Greek culture, culminates in the duality of the surreal image of the broken hand emerging out of the sea, and the idyllic tree (of life/knowledge) in the paradisiacal land beyond the borders. Andrew Horton in the *Films of Theo Angelopoulos: A Cinema of Contemplation*, reads the film as a documentary fairy tale and relates their journey to the search undertaken by Electra and Orestes for their absent father. According to Horton, the crisis in the film is the inevitable coexistence of light and darkness, and thus, the children devolve/evolve as grim end products of an extended search;

> Voula: Dear Father: How far away you are. Alexander says that in his dream you seemed very close. If he stretched out his hand, he would have touched you. We are travelling continually. Everything goes by so fast. Cities, people. But sometimes we get so tired that we forget you and we don't even know if we're going to find you or not. Then we get lost. Alexander has grown a lot. He has become very serious… Yesterday I even thought we should give up. What is the use of carrying on? That we should never get there. Then Alexander got mad. The way grown-ups get mad and he told me I was betraying him. I was ashamed.

The shot of the dead horse on snow, the blood after the silent, hidden rape of Voula, the delusional "Seagull" puncture the innocence of the journey and foreshadows the proximity of death as a companion in the process of finding God. The end of the exploration with the long

shot of the tree after the mist clears away and the rush of the siblings to unite with their "roots" manifest in a "cinematic fantasy triumph" and transcendence (Horton 157). Gene D. Phillips, S. J. begins his essay *Ingmar Bergman and God* with the pervasive theme of the problem of evil and the contradictory relation between man and God repeating itself in the entire repertoire of Bergman's films. According to Phillips, Bergman foregrounds the paradox of this entangled situation in the very early years of his cinematic oeuvre, in the film *Fängelse* (Prison, 1949), where one contemplates, "if one can believe in God, there is no problem; if one cannot, there is no solution" (Phillips 45). Bergman's version of God-lessness is often strewn with the loss of human emotions and the neglect and alienation in the odyssey of the characters. The awareness of one's past, history and the consequent synthesis with the roles, lost and forgotten, is equated with personal harmony; either God dissolves as the central issue in the end and what emerges is a soothing calm over the soul or, the feeling of the loss of faith echoes in and over nothingness.

> My feeling that God does not exist is not a terrifying feeling. It is a feeling of security. This is the earth, we are here, and the holiness that exists-because it does exist-is inside us. It is a creation of generations and generations of hope, fear, desire, creative minds, prayers-that still exists, in me, and I am happy to have it in me…I [therefore] try to be as good as possible…to be a human being on the dirty earth and under the empty heaven. (qtd. in Singer 118)

Dr. Isaac Borg's journey, both physical and metaphysical, in the *Wild Strawberries* (1957) is reminiscent of such a tortuous self-revelation through memory and symbolic dream-space, with the argument between the theology student and the artist regarding the existence of God playing on the background. Phillips quoting Bergman's comment about the trilogy, writes, "Most of the people in these three films are dead, completely dead… they don't know how to love or to feel

any emotions. They are lost because they can't reach anyone outside of themselves" (Phillips 48). From the schizophrenia of the unloving Karin in *Through a Glass Darkly* (1961) who encounters a deformed translation of God, to the desolation and barrenness of the Pastor in *Winter Light* (1962), the motif of reconciliation with God and the distortion arising out of it dominate the plot of these films. *The Silence* (1963) in depicting the estranged relation between the two sisters Ester and Anna through the recurrent design of a journey, explores the metaphorical detachment from God, where the oppressing silence between humans is punctuated with the silence of/from God. There is a schism which falls between sight and comprehension, between coming together and drifting apart, shame and feeling of abandonment. In Bergman's view, one cannot reach the divine by avoiding the thoroughly human, as Phillips quotes the filmmaker, "I want to be one of the artists in the cathedral on the great plain. I want to make a dragon's head, an angel, a devil-or perhaps a saint-out of stone. It does not matter which; it is the sense of satisfaction that counts. Regardless of whether I believe it or not, whether I am a Christian or not, I would play my part in the collective building of the cathedral" (54).

Schelling in, *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom* (1809), relates freedom to the possibilities within the system. Within the pantheistic scope of Schelling, God represents all eternity, and all things echo from his essence; the unity of all entities derived does not signify the actuality of God, rather it asserts the presence of their presence, the Being of things and beings. Human freedom is irreconcilable with the materialist system and can only find a relational co-existence with the free presence of God outside the individual and combined unity of all entities. Beings cannot be reduced and defined as determinate entities outside God. Freedom for Schelling resides in identifying the God without, within one's self, in the merging of the interior reflection and the exterior infinite presence. God is the pantheistic spirit beyond

externality or totality and is the immanent force within human beings. However, the concept of pantheism, of God being in everything, problematizes the idea of freedom as God acts as a determinant of all future events through an *a priori* constructed causal relation. The absolute causality concomitant with God delimits the scope of freedom, blurs the effect of all future actions, and leads to fatalism. Schelling in interpreting freedom reads pantheism against fatalism and locates all beings and their actions within the life of God; freedom in its true potential is conceived in the inherent relation between being and God, in the immanence of things in being (God). The being's growth is not fixed at any present moment; it is always undergoing within God's life the "beingness" of the being. The principle of pantheism does not advocate the idea of sameness or oneness between the creator and the created; rather it highlights a relational identity between the antecedent and consequent.

Friedrich Von Schelling in *The Ages of the World* analyzes the finitude and limitation of the world against the no-groundedness of the absolute unconditioned state of existence. Judith Norman in her translation of Schelling's second draft refers to the Kantian crisis of the empirical world emerging out of the transcendental universe; the self-willed, self-evolved foundational proposition as the fundamental principle of a restrained and confined creation in the form of man. God is the ultimate ground and grounding principle for all entities and does not suffer the delimitation of things present. The ever-living and creative God of Schelling cannot be deciphered as a "presence" within the presence of things and grounds the unity of the law of identity. The process of creation through God is a way of self-manifestation, in which the grounded by the grounding does not exist outside the ground. God reveals his free self through the innate freedom that nature and humans are born with fort they too are parts of God freewill. Schelling's philosophy, according to Slavoj Žižek, in his *The Abyss of Freedom* (1997),

functions as the vanishing mediator, “designating a unique constellation in which, for a brief moment after the disintegration of Absolute Idealism, something became visible that, once so-called post-Hegelian thought settled itself, and found shape in the guise of Schopenhauer, Marx, and Nietzsche, was again lost from sight. Schelling alone persisted in the “impossible” position of the post-idealist crack that was quickly filled by the post-Hegelian “reversals” of Idealism” (Schelling and Žižek 4). For Schelling ultimate freedom in the last stage is the absence of being and presence of willing (wollen) for willing is the primal Being (Sein) which is independent of time and causal relations. Schelling attributes a non-reducible negativity to the freedom of humans which segregates him from nature and God and is specifically the ‘‘mark” which separates the being from the finite beings-in-the-world. This negative evil (Böse) is the necessary ground of difference for God (the centre of the system) to reveal himself within the scope of human freedom. Human freedom along with the choice to do individual evil (autonomous and self-contained) is the imperative condition for God to interrelate with the beings, through identity and disjunction. This separation is the cause of unity. Schelling’s research focuses on the rise of temporality from the lucid atmosphere of eternity, the particularity of the present from the constructed dimension of the past. Schelling identifies a rearrangement of the forces within eternity or divine creation which situates the temporal time-bound relationship within existence on the basis of a dialectical relationship between “an attracting, enclosing, negative force and an expansive, outgoing, positive force” (Schelling and Žižek 108). Time, according to Schelling develops as an “organism” to evolve into a free production of the present against the ground resistance of the past. Heidegger reads Schelling’s “evil” as a lack, a non-being (the absence of authentic being), a not-being-present. Schelling investigates into the essence of this absence, this “not” and nothingness in being and discusses the concept of Christian sin in which, man, through

evil, enters the zone of non-being. The subjugation of evil and nothingness (the "tremendous presence" in the core of being), according to Schelling, is the realization of the possibility of the act of willing and subjectivity. Schelling, in finding the root of evil, distinguishes between the Wesen (essence) of existence and the Wesen of ground with relation to God. Considering nothing existed prior to God and nothing exists outside Him, the ground within God is not the absolute familiar God; unconditional and total is His existence, the separate ground is His nature through which He wills his own being. God, in Schelling's view, is in the unending, perpetual state of becoming, the absolute in Him moving out to reveal its self in humans and returning to its originary position reveals God as a "becoming" God. God's being is not an outcome of the cause and effect of ground and existence; God's ground "is". It is only through God's primal Will as being that He wills ground to exist as ground and participates in the circular movement of being created, not from nothing to a thing, rather from a presence to a presence. The essence of God's ground is the deathless yearning of God to self-create His being and exists as Will. Schelling understands existence as subject, subjectivity and willing. The will of the ground within God does not surpass itself to externalize itself and return to the original ground; the desire in the ground inside God is incessantly engaged in the ground and does not "exist", it just "is". The ground of not-yet-being becomes ground through the existence of the existents. The moment of creation is an authentic temporal act by the God-hand in which all time is one time, where nothingness as the source of time and eternity are inscribed within the active discourse of God's will, and God as creator disintegrates into the whole of the created being, being the ground of this existence. "The Godhead is nothing because nothing can come toward it in a way distinct from its being [*Wesen*] and, again, it is above all nothingness because it itself is everything" (*Ages* 24). This notion of longing in the ground as the primordial "thing" in God which is and is

not, forever regenerating cosmos, structure and system, is transcendental and beyond all reason, and is the foundation of all that is incomprehensible, obscure, logical and existing. The non-subjective, self-willing characteristic of the ground within God is the root of all existence and subjectivity. The problem is, "evil" concerns itself with the concept of becoming. The "becoming" of human being is different from the "becoming" of absolute God and being eternally separate occurs outside the becoming of God. Thus, the becoming of man arises from a ground non-identical to God. However, it is not possible for a thing to exist outside God and it must be the cause of that, which in God is not God Himself, the ground of His becoming. The abstraction of evil is inherent in the "not" inside God and is manifested through the differential ground of self-will. Evil is an un-Wesen. In God, resides the unity of existence and ground and the difference between them is substantiated in human; for Schelling, in human lives the contrary forces of bondage and freedom, and the human will to create is the borrowed act from the divine will and longing of the Ground. The distinction between ground and existence, self-will and freedom of the individual outside the free relation with God, induces negativity and evil within the human world. Freedom is the being of man and God reveals himself through this primal difference of forces in humans. The creation of human is also the beginning of the existence of God in man. For Schelling, freedom is necessarily connected to Wesen which is connected to the ground of man's creation, and does not comprise choices from laid out in the surrounding. For God to manifest within an individual, he must decide his Wesen through his deed, in an act of locating his Wesen outside time which would turn him into that which he had been throughout eternity, but could never yet become in the present. Connecting with one's Wesen is what Schelling calls complete attunement (Stimmung) to God and history. This negation of subjectivity by the recognition of one's Wesen animates selfhood. Schelling refers to the echo of

this inner voice from the depths as the voice of one's own self, the hidden other in the self, of the primeval nothingness, to which one responds.

Žižek's *The Abyss of Freedom* explores Schelling's notion of evil against the Idealist binaries and dualities and emphasizes on this schism between Existence and Ground and the germ of evil located in God himself, in his own indecipherable Ground. Schelling refers to this longing in the Absolute which yearns for "something" beyond its fullness, an element in God which is God and yet outside him, a melancholy in the "not-yet-complete" God which is transposed to the beings in the form of sadness. The pre-ontological, impenetrable *Grund,* according to Žižek is itself the inconsistent consistency which prohibits the fullness in God and by which God is eternally deferred from His self. Highlighting this "perverse" need of the "perfect" full Existence for the "imperfect" lacking Ground as the cause of evil, Zizek brings in the Hegelian Absolute both as substance and subject. "…in the opposition between (imperfect) Ground and (perfect) Existence, Subject is on the side of Ground qua imperfect: subject designates the "imperfection" of Substance, the inherent gap, self-deferral, distance-from-itself, which forever prevents Substance from fully realizing itself, from becoming fully itself. The fact that there is something in God that is not God means that Substance implies Subject as its constitutive openness, gap" (Schelling and Žižek 7).

The Schellingian problem of evil can be located in Bergman's *The Virgin Spring* (*Jungfrukallan*, 1960), where he explores the dark middle ages with the existential burden of desiring revenge and seeking evil over evil, against the act of forgiveness. The binary setting of the 'pure' whiteness of the daughter against the dark, unredemptive act of the rapist goatherds is countered by the grey skies of Töre, the afflicted father. Bergman borrows the plot from the original thirteenth century ballad, "The Daughter of Töre in Vange", which alluded to the themes

of redemption, salvation, punishment, God's mercy and atonement in the form of Töre's extenuatory counter-resolution of constructing a church out of limestone. The act of rape and murder and of vengeance is balanced by the inexplicable rupture of the ground where the virgin's blood was wasted and the emergence of a healing spring instead. The spring itself is designed as a pre-ontological reply from God, a seizure of all acts, interpreted as the beginning of the obligatory performance of propagating religion. God intervenes only when the evil has been committed suggesting as if reconciliation with Him is only possible through the compulsory execution of individual freedom to sin. The irrationality of the Schellingian *Grund* where God himself, is in continuous deference and in search for himself, is discernible here in the randomness of the death of Karin, in the failure of the father to acknowledge the ways of God, the absurdity of demanding His mercy and the act of the hands against the notions of the Christian believer. The realization of Töre occurs in a Kierkegaardian sense of acceptance of absolute Authority where divine content and form always remain beyond complete comprehension and must be appropriated just as faith. The incomprehensibility of the absolute is heightened in Töre's final awareness, where Bergman takes away the camera from the actor Sydow and places it behind for the audience to partake in the guilt/contemplation drama,

> Töre: You see it God, you see it! The death of the innocent child and my vengeance. You permitted it. I don't understand you. I don't understand you. Still I ask you now for forgiveness- I know of no other way to be reconciled with my own hands. I know of no other way to live. I promise you God, here, by the dead body of my own child, I promise you that in penance for my sin I will build you a church, I shall build it here. Of lime and stone and with these two hands of mine.

The film uses the photographic whiteness of divine light through Karin's angelic dress pitted against the grey coloured fury and self-inflicted punishment of Töre. Birgitta Steene in her essay *The Virgin Spring* describes the function of the camera as,

> …a recorder rather than an interpreter and it is often quite still in a way that suggests an earlier film art. The inflexible position of the camera creates a mood of cruel spectatorship, and it is likely that the rape and murder scenes shock our sensibilities, not because of Bergman's "conscious dwelling" upon them, but because his static technique pinpoints our own position as passive observers: we are locked in a visual display of horror. (220)

Bergman incorporates in the thirteenth century setting of Scandinavia, the modernist-existential themes of angst and authentic existence. The concept of evil is delineated from the marginal survival of paganism which acts as an intruder within the enclosed world of the Christian sect. The Christian God too, is a failure against the invading outsiders in the characters of the foster-sister Ingeri, pregnant and less 'endowed', the murderers and the pagan God Odin. The shift from of Ingeri from the guilt of witnessing the rape with a stone in her hand to that of retribution at the altar of the spring is also a journey towards God along the path of evil transgression. The motif of revenge in Töre works as a representation of divine Christian judgement on earth. A contraction into the inner being, the abyss, severs all links with external reality and the image of the father serves as an appropriate example of Hegelian madness, having regressed to the 'animal soul', yet submerged within the natural surroundings. The act of madness becomes a requirement for the re-establishment of the symbolic reality, the calm after the night of the soul. The ending of the film with the ambiguous stance of perplexity regarding the ways of God and Töre's pledge to build the church heightens the philosophical obscurity of the film. Bergman selects the movement of the film from the innocence of the journey to the

Holy Virgin undertaken by Karin to her subsequent rape and murder, followed by the revenge of Töre, and the abandonment, shame and self-introspection which accompany such a blasphemous act and finally the quest for retribution. The lack that Töre perceives within God is itself ironically represented through his own violence and absence of mercy; Töre in his act of revenge resembles the Christian punishing Father of the Old Testament. Borrowing the Schellingian viewpoint, evil, as negativity, in Töre's revenge is the ground which separates him from God. The inclination to commit evil is the prevalent theme of the film, where the goatherds torture the raped Karin and the father brutally murders the young boy for the crime of his brothers. It is a world of the absence of mercy which Bergman explores in the presence/absence dialectic of the moral absolute. The self-will of Töre manifests in the individual longing to exact revenge for the murder of Karin and this individuality is a part of God's own continuous process of self-creating and becoming through his *Grund*; the promise of building the church can be interpreted as the choice of one's Wesen to reestablish the unity with God. Bergman counterbalances desolation and violence in the film with the reverberating innocence of Töre's question about the nature of God, the identity which the unseen bears and the ethical dimension that He commands. Bergman himself was of the opinion, as quoted in *Bergman on Bergman*, that "The film as medium is well-suited to destructive acts. It is one of cinema's perfectly legitimate functions: to ritualize violence" (227). Geoffrey Macnab in his book *The Life and Films of the Last Great European Director* describes the labyrinthine ending of *The Virgin Spring*, "The closing scenes, when he has just massacred the herders who killed his daughter, provide the rawest, most powerful moments in the film. Rather than catharsis, the slaughter brings him only torment. He prays, but his prayer is a rant against the God who allowed these deaths to happen and did nothing." (108). The virgin Karin's journey to the Holy Virgin to light the candles is itself the ground for the

performance of the negative and works as the symbol of the slaughtered lamb required for religious upliftment. Robin Wood discusses the relevance of the enigmatic number three (used as an inversion of the Holy Trinity) as a leitmotif,

> Ingeri blows the fire three times before it crackles into flame, and thrice invokes Odin; Odin's servant hears three dead men (the ghosts of the goatherds to be slain at the next dawn?) riding north. There are the three bearded men (father, ploughman, eldest brother) who in turn stimulate Karin sexually during the first part of the film; three brothers who are jointly guilty of her rape and death; and ensuing triple murder of the father's revenge; the three branches we see him hack from a birch tree for his ritual purification before the slaughter. (102)

Irving Singer defends the film against Bergman's own disappointment regarding "a totally unanalyzed idea of God" (25) and writes that it "is the unfolding of a medieval legend. Bergman's disdain is puzzling to me, since it contravenes his acute understanding of how artistic imagination is able to create a nonliteral order of truthfulness" (26). The paradoxical nature of violence in this film springs from the ambiguous nature of blood, in the words of Rene Girard in his *Violence and the Sacred*, blood as the "same substance can stain or cleans, contaminate and purify, drive men to fury and murder or appease their anger and restore them to life" (40). The "sacrificeable victim" must encounter that residual violence which man keeps reserved for the other. On this aspect, Girard quotes Henri Hubert and Marcel Mauss from their *Essay on the Nature and Function of Sacrifice*, "Because the victim is sacred, it is criminal to kill him- but the victim is sacred only because he is to be killed. Here is the circular line of reasoning…." (Girard 1). The violence and the evil acts committed in order to counter violence attain the same dimension. The film, to employ Girard's terms uses the distinction between 'good violence'

associated with rituals and "bad violence"; the 'bad' violence in *The Virgin Spring* propels "good" violence, nevertheless at the cost of salving it with a retributive gesture. The fact that Karin is killed on her way to perform a ritual establishes the connection between violence and the sacred and how they are interlinked. Karin functions as the "pure" virgin, sacrificial victim essential for the ritual purity, the hailed object which violence mars in the way and turns impure. The pure act of violence against Karin produces another pure vengeance where not even the culprits' young brother is spared.

> Religion in its broadest sense, then, must be another term for that obscurity that surrounds man's efforts to defend himself by curative or preventative means against his own violence. It is that enigmatic quality that pervades the judicial system when that system replaces sacrifice. The obscurity coincides with the transcendental effectiveness of a violence that is holy, legal, and legitimate successfully opposed to a violence that is unjust, illegal, and illegitimate. (Girard 25)

Bergman intertwines the quest for evil with the sexual overtones inherent beneath the symbols used in the film. The tendency to enact evil is intrinsically linked to the transgressions beyond the grounds of permissible sexual limitations. The 'evil' pregnant sister Ingeri embraces a pole (a phallic manifestation in the Freudian discourse) in the half-lit room and beckons the pagan God Odin which in turn is countered with a close-up on the image of the suffering Christ and followed by Karin's mother Märeta engaged in a masochistic act of burning the hand. The aspect of evil and the following punishment, in retrospect, can also be associated with Töre's unconscious incestuous leanings, evoked through his conversations with the daughter while the mother stands with a somber look, blurred in the background;

> Töre: I'll ride into the mountains with this naughty girl, and I'll say, I won't have such a daughter. Imprison her in the mountains for seven years until she's been tamed. Then I'll come and take her home again…maybe.

Karin herself carries within, the will to recognize her essence though a kind of sexual revelation. Her innocent and gullible reply ("I always say prayers, mother") to her mother's warnings, "…you'll give the devil such joy that the saints will punish you with boils and toothaches", "…the devil seduces the innocent and seeks to destroy goodness before it can blossom", foreshadows the destruction which befalls her. The rape, the absurd killing and the desire to possess Karin's physical perfection, work as the context for the abstraction that God is in this film, a reference to the Schellingian God, who has the not-God within his self, the transcendental part which generates the obscure longings with the human heart and the cause of evil. Töre's act of uprooting the tree against the placid landscape denotes the segregation from the established principles of Christian notion of forgiveness and the inflicting pain upon the naked body with the birches refers to some primordial Nordic punishment for killing. The spring contains within itself the duality of being the symbolic substitute and unhindered flow of libidinal force of Karin untimely murdered and compensation in the form of God's forgiveness.

Though Bergman disinherits the film as an imitation of Kurosawa's *Rashômon* (1950), Peter Cowie, in his book *Ingmar Berman,* highlights the universal antagonism between love and law in Swedish Calvinistic religion. If Töre upholds the Christianity of Middle Ages, Ingeri emanates evil from her grotesque desires for the 'father'. Cowie writes, "Bergman's low camera angle gives Töre the look of a fascist leader. He is bereft of humanity, a medieval Abraham who believes that by cleansing his body he can shed the blood of strangers without compunction" (187). The God-complex and guilt-ridden sexual fantasies in early Bergman eventually construct

a more powerful world of silence and lessening existence in the following trilogy. Thereafter, God is non-existence in Bergman, a voice that speaks ‘nothing’ when it words its existence. This evanescence of transcendence is both a burden buried in memory and a longing metamorphosed in human touch.

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Chapter III

Search for the Self and the Death of Transcendence in Bergman's Trilogy

> Cinema and philosophy start with impurity: the opinions, images, practices, and events of human existence. And they both choose to believe that an idea can be created out of this contemporary material, that an idea doesn't always come from an idea, that it can come from its opposite, from ruptures in existence, and that an image is made from the imagery of the world, from its infinite impurity. In both cases, the work is a cross between a struggle and a sharing. The work of philosophy involves creating conceptual syntheses where there is rupture; the work of cinema involves creating purity out of the most trivial conflicts in the world….We should not despair. That is what cinema tells us, I think, and that is why we should love it. It can keep us from despair if we know how to look at it, to look at it as a struggle against the impure world, to look at it as a collection of precious victories. (Badiou 231-232)

In a conversation with Youssef Ishaghpour regarding cinema and Christianity as image and resurrection, Godard claims that "I recall Christianity as the first film, it's there in all painters, it's something literature hasn't done" (98.) Godard reads Bergman in his *Godard on Godard* as the instantaneous, meditative auteur probing expansively within the existential positioning of the characters in the world; "The cinema is not a craft. It is an art. It does not mean team-work. One is always alone; on the set as before the blank page. And for Bergman, to be alone means to ask questions. And to make films means to answer them. Nothing could be more classically romantic" (76).

The distinction between philosophizing in film and film as philosophy blurs in the context of the cinematic Bergman. The imagistic problem centres on the pronouncement of

philosophy as concept and philosophical discourse as subjective, alienated truth. Cinema as philosophy holds an independent claim over the understanding of the viewer/reader for it translates the visual into a systematic unfolding of philosophical conversation. The renowned French director Bertrand Tavernier asserts that "Bergman was the first to bring metaphysics-religion, death, existentialism-to the screen" (186). Religious and historical works of Bunuel, Fellini, Antonioni, Malle, Tarkovsky add a separate dimension to the concept of philosophical investigations in films and raise questions about the possibilities of the philosophical paradigm explored in the cinematic medium. The discourse can be located materially through the dialogues and movement of the narrative, or alternately spread over the *mise-en-scène*, montage, close-up amidst other techniques. Maaret Koskinen in her article *"Everything Represents, Nothing Is": Some Relations Between Ingmar Bergman's Films and Theatre Productions*, discusses Bergman's theatrical history and his conscious inclusion of the audience within the frames of the film- the heightened presence of the viewers to the images and of the images to the audience, through increased proximity and camera placements,

> ...in the dream-like and strangely halting beginning of *The Silence* (1963), a small boy functions as a kind of guide into the diegesis, and indeed is instrumental in finally setting off the narrative, which at times seems to be gripped by the same drowsiness as the boy himself. Also, given his role in the remainder of the story, as a kind of a phenomenological explorer of a mysterious and unknown world, the boy double-performs as a kind of visible counterpart to the spectator. For, just like him, we are continually forced to interpret the strange world of the film, from the fragments we have at our disposal, in the very moment it enfolds before our eyes. (84-85)

Koskinen further claims that Bergman's filmic images interact with the characters, on a subjective and objective level, simultaneously engulfing and distancing the observer.

Bergman asserts, “The real theatre always reminds...the audience that it is watching a performance... From being completely involved at one instant, [the spectator] is in the very next instant aware of being in the theatre... And that is a part-and a very, very important part-of his being participant in the ritual. Because that word *Verfremdung*... is a complete misunderstanding. The spectator is always involved and he is always outside at one and the same time” (88). Paisley Livingston, elaborating on the metaphysical aspirations and intentionalist approaches of philosophical films in his *Cinema, Philosophy, Bergman: On Film as Philosophy*, illustrates the philosophical parallels between Bergman and the Finnish philosopher Eino Kaila (1890-1958). According to Livingston, Bergman’s philosophical views on inauthenticity, morality and self-understanding were partly influenced by Kaila’s psychological discourse in *Persoonallisuus* 1934[1]. Livingston, while discussing the aspect of moral judgements prevalent in the works of Bergman, cites the afterword of the 1975 film draft titled *Draft of a TV film about the death and resurrection of Jesus and about some people who took part in these events*, where the filmmaker writes about his views on Christ and faith,

> First, and most importantly, I am not a believer. Every form of otherworldly salvation seems blasphemous to me. To put it simply: my life has no meaning. I cherish no hopes, foster no secret longing...
>
> Against all that I set the abundance, cruelty and beauty of life, reality, and existence, as well as man’s inconceivable potential for good and evil...
>
> Holiness and its opposite, which I call non-existence or emptiness, are within and between human beings.
>
> For me Jesus Christ is forever the incontestable advocate of life, of everything living, and of spiritual life. He steps forth in a world of law, logicality, emptiness, fear, hate

> and mortal desperation. A world which from a superficial perspective conquers and kills him and, practically speaking, destroys his message...
>
> For me the holiness of Jesus is conceivable. I understand it, but perhaps without my reason. It shines in my eyes but does not dazzle and blind me because its luminosity is human. For me Jesus is a human being who speaks to human beings and who lives and dies in a human world...
>
> My film is thus about a human world that is admittedly remote in time but is unchangingly close and the same. In this world Jesus dies and life is violated. But the resurrection's earthly miracle, humanity's holiness, life's indestructibility manifest themselves just as well. (Livingston 184)

The literary influences of the Dostoevskian religious, ethical and existential conflicts (against the backdrop of modernizing Russia) find perceptible manifestation in Bresson, Dreyer and Bergman. Ivan Karamazov's rebellion against the established dictums of religion and his defence on grounds of a historical recourse on the violent deaths of children in *The Brothers Karamazov* (1880) foregrounds the angst and search for authentic existence, propelled later by Kierkegaard, Sartre and Camus. The image of the inexorable and intolerant Grand Inquisitor of Ivan's poem, proclaims his fortification of the interests and principles of the Roman Catholic Church with the alleviation of the 'image' of Christ; Dostoevsky's inclusion of the 'real' Christ performing miracles amidst inquisitory burnings and symbolizing a life-force in the presence of death, itself becomes an alternate critique against the orthodoxy of the Church condemning heresy. The Grand Inquisitor's arguments centred on "miracles, mystery and authority" to the silent Christ in the prison iterates the necessity of deliverance from the freedom of choice envisioned by Christ, the free reign of conscience must be abandoned for higher dependence and security.

> We have taken the sword of Caesar, and... have rejected Thee and followed him. Oh, ages are yet to come of the confusion of free thought, of their science and cannibalism. For having begun to build their tower of Babel without us, they will end, of course, with cannibalism. But then the beast will crawl to us and lick our feet and spatter them with tears of blood. And we shall sit upon the beast and raise the cup, and on it will be written, "Mystery"" (Dostoevsky 238).

Bergman's repetition of philosophizing in cinema is synonymous to Deleuze's birth of concepts in art, a resistance against death. The act of resistance being imaginary, addresses the people in suspension for they still exist within a mode of theoretical rebellion. In an interview on resistance with Antonio Negri, Deleuze, quoting the holocaust survivor Primo Levi, speaks about the "shame of being a man", the shame in being part of a species capable of propagating genocide, and the shame in being the victim and surviving, and the purpose of art in "liberating" life out of human bondage. The absence of this shame is the absence of art. The constitution of characters and events within a work of art, which is itself an action of compressing inflated actions of life in the text, is pure resistance; the life which the artist exonerates is outside the visible, tangible form, it is a vulgarly personalized version of the creator's own lucidity. Deleuze, in his *Cinema 1: The Movement-Image*, distinguishes between the movement-image of the classical, pre-World War II films, and the time-image of the post-war films. The movement-image pertaining primarily to the spatialized Hollywood genre films focuses on action and movement within a narratorial linear situation where the movement is from perception to action. Real movement occurs in an indivisible time-frame which is tangible and material and is disengaged from the space traversed. Deleuze classifies movement in the narrative films into "instantaneous images" (closed system of sets including the setting and characters), "movement-images" (marks the duration of time in a shot), "time-images" (deciphered as a whole continuous movement). The movement-image is further

restricted into perception-image (the perception), action-image (the narrative movement), and affection–image (the expression); "And each one of us, the special image or the contingent centre, is nothing but an assemblage *[agencement]* of three images, a consolidate *[consolide]* of perception-images, action-images and affection-images" (Deleuze 66). The increasing awareness of the post-war existence in a world devoid of meaning and smeared with economic crisis (existentialism), the fading away of the American dream ("the psycho-social film, *the film noir*, the Western, the American comedy") (Deleuze 211), and the introduction of the Italian neo-realism (highlighted by Bazin), contributed to the slow dampening of the movement image. "In the city which is being demolished or rebuilt, neo-realism makes any-space-whatevers proliferate- urban cancer, undifferentiated fabrics, pieces of waste-ground- which are opposed to the determined spaces of the old realism. And what rises to the horizon, what is outlined on this world, what will be imposed in a third moment, is not even raw reality, but its understudy, the reign of clichés, both internally and externally, in people's heads and hearts as much as in the whole of space" (212). Unlike the movement-image where time is experienced through movement, in the time-image "the sensory-motor links tend to disappear, a whole sensory-motor continuity which forms the essential nature of the action-image vanishes" (213). The time-image of the cinema of neo-realism and French Nouvelle Vague integrated new techniques of cinematographic reality and a critique of contemporary society. In the time-image, time undergoes a breakdown and is disjointed, having multiple fragmented durations and the direct relation of the characters to the immediate happenings is severed; instead, this disjunction is the philosophy of the film, where counter-action is suspended and the character is unable to resume action, due to the overwhelming situation.

> It is here that the voyage-form is freed from the spatio-temporal co-ordinates which were left over from the old Social Realism and begins to have value for itself or as the expression of a new society, of a new pure present: the return journey from Paris to the

> provinces and from the provinces to Paris in Chabrol (*L e beau Serge* and *Les Cousins*); wanderings which have become analytic instruments of an analysis of the soul, in Rohmer (the series of *Moral Tales)* and in Truffaut (the trilogy of *L 'Amour a vingt ans, Baisers voles* and *Domicile conjugal)*-, Rivette's investigation-outing [*promenade-enquete) (Paris nous appartient)*-, the flight-outing f*promenade-fuite]* of Truffaut (*Tirez sur le pianiste)* and particularly of Godard *(A bout de souffle, Pierrot le fou).* (Deleuze 213)

Deleuze explicates the three subparts of the movement-image with the philosophical-angular dissection of Beckett's *Film* (1965). Deleuze traces the three dominant movements of the camera synchronous to the gradual revelation of the character's crisis; the film beginning with the panning camera OE following O averting the gaze against a wall, concentrates on the camera's forty-five degree restriction on the character's acts (action-image) capturing the movements in detail and the outline of the terrorized face. The subjective perception of the O within and around the room and the subsequent discarding of all the eyes (perceivers) and other objects (subjects) of reflection is taken by the camera at ninety degrees highlighting "perception of perception" or perception-image. The irony of the climax with O rocking on the chair, in the absence of all gazes, (even his own subjective interpretation with a patch over one eye and the other shut) and countered only with the deathly, immobile stare of the Other's eye (self's double), is surveyed by OE with a 360^{o} movement locating the object of interrogation at the centre. The camera then partakes with two close-ups; according to Deleuze, "O has an anguished expression and OE has an attentive expression: the impotent motor effort of the one, the sensitive surface of the other. We are in the domain of the perception of affection, the most terrifying, that which still survives when all the others have been destroyed: it is the perception of self by self, the *affection-image*." (Deleuze 67-68). Deleuze further extends the concept of the affection-image ("*The affection-image is the close-*

up, and the close-up is the face….") (87) through the reflection of the face in Griffith and the intensification of the visage in Eisenstein. Deleuze elucidates that, "The face is this organ-carrying plate of nerves which has sacrificed most of its global mobility and which gathers or expresses in a free way all kinds of tiny local movements which the rest of the body usually keeps hidden. Each time we discover these two poles in something - reflecting surface and intensive micro-movements – we can say that this thing has been treated as a face *[visage]:* it has been 'envisaged' or rather "faceified" [*visageifiee*], and in turn it stares at us *[devisage],* it looks at us . . . even if it does not resemble a face" (Deleuze 88). The reflexive close-up of the face in Griffith engages the viewer in a subjective, qualitative encounter with the moods, wonderings, fears, longings, innocence within the character (Deleuze refers to *Enoch Arden*, *Broken Blossoms*, and *Orphans of the Storm*). The dialectical, objective, intensive close-up of Eisenstein varying from the individual to the collective, according to Deleuze, evolved to the "compact and continuous intensive series, which go beyond all binary structures and exceed the duality of the collective and the individual" (92); Deleuze called the series "Dividual", for in uniting the collective-public and the individual-private, it merged the power of intensified and the quality of reflected.

Deleuze rejects the idea of close-up as a "partial object" severed from the other zones, synecdochal from the linguistic perspective, and castrated from the psychoanalytic. For Deleuze, the effect of close-up segregates the face "from all spatio-temporal co-ordinates, that is to say it raises it to the state of Entity" (Deleuze 96), and adds the dimension of pure expression to the solitary face; during this visual concentration on the face, there is a temporal suspension of other physical elements and the viewer is confronted with the monstrous reality of a secluded territory. The affect of the close-up is,

> ...impersonal and is distinct from every individuated state of things: it is none the less *singular,* and can enter into singular combinations or conjunctions with other affects.

> The affect is indivisible and without parts; but the singular combinations that it forms with other affects form in turn an indivisible quality, which will only be divided by changing qualitatively (the 'dividual'). The affect is independent of all determinate space-time; but it is none the less created in a history which produces it as the expressed and the expression of a space or a time, of an epoch or a milieu.... (Deleuze 99)

According to Deleuze, the uniqueness of Bergman was in maintaining the unity between visual representation of face and close-up in cinema. A cinematic close-up dissolves all the three roles of the 'face'- 'individuating', 'socializing', 'communicating'; instead, there is a convergence of anxieties, fears and memories. Bergman, in his *Images: My Life in Film*, reveals the intention of lighting one half of the faces of Liv Ullmann and Bibi Andersson, disclosing the interdependency and parasitic nature of individual truths, "to combine the two illuminated halves of their faces, to let them float together to become one face" (48). Identifying the merger of the two faces Bergman's *Persona* (1966), Deleuze remarks that an authentic close-up suspends the individual face and represents the gap, unexplored in the past, outside which the individual previously remained 'silent'.

> The facial close-up is both the face and its effacement. Bergman has pushed the nihilism of the face the furthest, that is its relationship in fear to the void or the absence, the fear of the face confronted with its nothingness. In a whole section of his work Bergman reaches the extreme limit of the affection-image, he burns the icon, he consumes and extinguishes the face as certainly as Beckett. (Deleuze 100)

On the other hand, Maaret Koskinen retorts in her book *The Silence* that these hard close-ups lead to a dehumanization of the characters where they are reduced to immediate aesthetic features. She adds Brigitte Peucker's remark regarding Bergman's iconic close-ups, "It is in its manifestation as an embodiment of painting that the tableau vivant as visual spectacle is

most suggestive for an analysis of intermediality, since it is a meeting point of several modes of representation,…simultaneously evocative of painting, drama, and sculpture" (Koskinen 156). Bergman too emphasizes, in an interview with Annika Holm, his inclination towards seizing the face and its movements when "…in a given moment, the blood may rush to an actor's face, or his gaze suddenly change-how he takes on an irrational, secretive tone of voice, whose source is completely mysterious" (Holm, 51).

Birgitta Steene quotes Bergman's response regarding the trilogy in her *Ingmar Bergman: A Reference Guide*, "These three films deal with a reduction. THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY – conquered certainty. WINTER LIGHT– disclosed certainty. THE SILENCE – God's Silence – the negative imprint" (39). According to Steene, Bergman, during this period, moves from the dread of God and death to the overwhelming agnosticism and rejection of religious unconsciousness. However, Bergman's purpose in delineating God's silence, as recorded in the diary of Vilgot Sjoman and highlighted by Frank Gado in *The Passion of Ingmar Bergman*, was "to create human beings, write human beings..., in a manner of speaking, to move away from the mechanical drawing and to try to draw a human hand.... In this era of strange non-art, it is important that the human not fall from the centre; that we constantly strive to express a human image-a personal form of human image" (260). There are parallel echoes of Antonioni's trilogy, *L'Avventura* (1960), *La Notte* (1961), and *L'Eclisse*, (1962), where the Italian director explores the boredom, faithlessness, distrust and loss of transcendence of modern bourgeois context. The coda of *L'Eclisse* along with the abstract shots of the buildings and streets in alternating light and darkness and random people moving through them, highlights the eclipse of passionate love and meaning by the alienation and absence characterized by the stock exchange and the nuclear arms of newspapers; one finds a solution in the fantasy blast of the bourgeois mansion in *Zabriskie Point* (1970).

Bergman's possibility of deliverance is often derived from the Pascalian sense of love which overwhelms the Cartesian rationalism and reaches the other. This radiant form of love beyond the conditions of the knowing subject (standing in opposition to Leibniz and Kant), is later phenomenologically interrogated by Jean-Luc Marion in his *The Idol and Distance* (1977) and *God without Being* (1982), where he talks about the independence and dimension-less nature of the infinite objects- God, icons, face, love. Marion's "phenomenology of givenness"[2] proceeds from recognition of the givennness of phenomena to the freedom of the thing-in-itself from all external constraints (Mackinlay 7). Thus, Marion's critique of Husserl and Heidegger's subject- dependent phenomena establishes God as love, beyond all metaphysical reductions. In his *Interpreting Excess,* Mackinlay writes,

> Marion foreshadows this debate by his provocative subtitle to *God without Being: Hors-Texte,* a work that sets out to defend the possibility of the impossible being given despite its being outside the text (*hors-texte*), beyond the reach of the symbolic and conceptual order. As such, *God without Being* constitutes an implicit rejoinder to Derrida's assertion that ''there is nothing outside the text [*hors-texte*].'' In *God without Being,* Marion speaks of God in terms of distance rather than presence, exploring how God might be given in the gift of love without being reduced to concepts that belong to objectivity, or even to being—God really given, but with such overwhelming excess, distance and otherness that he can be named only under erasure: Goxd…. (9)

Bergman's God is often the saturated phenomenon which works as an excess on the characters. The individual by constructing the image of God, in a theological paradox, forms a gazed-upon 'me' rather than the intentioning, transcendental 'I'; the subject turns into an accused (under the gaze of some Old Testament God). Within the saturated phenomenon, the subject receives itself when God asserts it-self on the constituting subject, thereby constituting the subject. In the interview with Cynthia Grenier in 1964, Bergman elaborates

on the theme of love prevalent in the trilogy, "Each film, you see, has its moment of contact, of human communication: the line "Father spoke to me," at the end of *Through a Glass Darkly*; the pastor conducting the service in the empty church for Marta at the end of *Winter Light*; the little boy reading Ester's letter on the train at the end of *The Silence*....if you can take that first step toward communication, toward understanding, toward love, then no matter how difficult the future maybe-and have no illusions, even with all the love in the world, living can be hellishly difficult- then you are saved" (Grenier 45-46). In *Såsom i en spegel* (Through a Glass Darkly, 1961), Bergman narrates the metaphysical decentering of God and phenomenological disintegration of being. The rupture between the memories of a ubiquitous divinity and the trauma of all-pervasive spiritual void culminates in the psychological breakdown of Karin. For Karin, the effects of cognized, incomprehensible reality propel the realm of fantasy and the escape is sought to negate the loss of the 'security God'. Post-war alienation and clinical alteration of the surrounding lead to the deformed and grotesque image of God. Bergman's God, in the film, is a manifestation of the faith in the existence of the other's love, in human sharing and understanding of the collective and historical tragedy. Karin and her imaginary gathering awaiting the descent of God reiterate the incessant non-arrivals of the Beckettian God(ot) and signify the multiple (abstract and rational) connotations of time, motion, language and even sexual normalcy for Karin. The spiritual nothing in Karin is linked to the sexual deprivation that she suffers and the rejection by the body of all other 'alien' bodies except that of the formless to penetrate her is itself an attempt at emptying one's self for divine intervention. Karin's failure rests on the fundamental misperception of the strength of interdependent love; her distorted God is a projection of her own parochial emotions. Bergman compartmentalizes the characters in the film on grounds of their individual faith or lack of it- David, the father, with periodic stomach pains, feels restricted by the responsibility to love his children, rather than passively observe and his

detachment stands for the perpetual silence of God, one who refuses to speak for he fears none would discern his language; Minus, through his plays on death and resurrection and the constant search for the ultimate linguistic expression, is the submissive seeker of the 'real' father, the only one to whom David 'speaks'; Martin, believing in the ways of unrestrained love and uninhibited trust, is the sole unblemished subject in the film and exists outside the questions of theological doubts and reasoning. David is the artist in the process of self-realization and an authentic awareness of art as mirroring and expression; the element that his novel lacks is the recognition and appropriation of love. Through the writer in David, Bergman problematizes the role of the artist and in the desire to observe the disintegration of the subject Karin (David: I'm horrified by my curiosity, by my urge to record its course, to make an accurate description of her gradual disintegration to use her"/ Martin: "...your faith and your doubt are very unconvincing....Have you written one word of truth in your life as an author?...And you're trying to fill your void with Karin's extinction."), the artist's neutrality/oneness toward the object of his art. Against the literal sea (of faith) and the desolate island where the family lives, abandoning civilization and groping each other in darkness, Karin's degeneration depicts the futility of mutual disjointedness. Bergman writes in his handbook in 1960 on the formation of the subject and dramatis personae,

> A god speaks to her. She is humble and submissive toward this god whom she worships. God is both dark and light. Sometimes he gives her incomprehensible instructions, to drink saltwater, kill animals, and so on. But sometimes he is full of love and gives her vital experiences, even on the sexual plane. He descends and disguises himself as Minus, her younger brother. At the same time the god forces her to swear off marriage. She is the bride awaiting her groom; she must not let herself be defiled. She pulls Minus into her world. He follows her willingly and eagerly since he exists on the border of puberty. The god throws suspicion on Martin and David and creates the

> wrong impression of them in order to warn her. On the other hand he endows Minus with the strangest qualities.... (*Images* 173)
>
> A god descends into a human being and settles in her. First he is just an inner voice, a certain knowledge, or a commandment. Threatening or pleading. Repulsive yet stimulating. Then he lets himself be more and more known to her, and the human being gets to test the strength of the god, learns to love him, sacrifices for him, and finds herself forced into the utmost devotion and then into complete emptiness. When this emptiness has been accomplished, the god takes possession of this human being and accomplishes his work through her hands. Then he leaves her empty and burned out, without any possibility of continuing to live in this world. That is what happens to Karin. And the borderline that she crosses is the bizarre pattern on the wallpaper. (175-176)

Bergman borrows Karin's contaminated faith looking through the tainted glass, from the *First Epistle to the Corinthians* by Apostle Paul, "For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." The opening shot of the film with the stillness of the water and the reflection of clouds on the surface, stretches as a contrast to the long-shot revelry of the family of the family in the sea, approaching the shore in a linear movement. Bergman uses the symbols of nets (spiritual entrapment), the pain from David's ulcer (the internal disturbances and the realization of the father's failure) and the unfinished novel (the lack of closure in mutual cognition), the window with the shadow of the bars on the characters resembling the cross and the wrecked ship (shattered faith) to foreground the metaphorical nature of the film. Sven Nykvist's dark and foreboding cinematography, situating the characters repeatedly against the backdrop of ominous nature in the island of Fårö, underlines the gravity of the subject of existence and the quest for God (mental and physical sanity) and identity. Stig Björkman, in an interview with

Bergman (1969) in *Bergman on Bergman*, talks about the conscious change in the natural settings to "show their oneness, or lack of oneness, with the environment", in the two parallel intercuts between rowing scene including David and Martin and the overcast sky and lighthouse which dissolves the siblings in Minus' aversion toward the overt physicality of Karin and his distance from the father (160). Karin's in/significance in Minus' play, The Artistic Haunting or, The Tomb of Illusions, as the princess of Castile who died at childbirth and awaiting love in the permanence of death, locates Karin as the dead soul, irretrievable from and irreconcilable with all others waiting for (spiritual) rebirth. Minus's objective gaze, and indifference at the pornographic magazines and his helplessness against his incestuous leanings toward Karin's concrete nearness are juxtaposed with Martin's condemnation of David's isolation from Karin and the confession of the suicidal act. The future incest disintegrates and cancels out the ideal trinity of the family (the father, Minus, the child and Karin, inheriting the mother's illness, as the other mother), disclosed by David's sudden revelation in the past, of the love for his children at the moment of his death. On the use of music and aesthetic silence in Bergman's trilogy, Irving Singer writes in his book *Ingmar Bergman, Cinematic Philosopher*, that "The holiness in human beings, in sheer humanity as a peculiar product of nature at large, survives and becomes a saving remnant even in the nightmare that is life permanently devoid of hope that any divinity will ever make an encouraging sound-unless this sound is in the music of Bach or some other great composer. And there too silence resides, but one that remains reverential to what is good and beautiful in our experience" (134). In an interview with Hollis Alpert in *Style is the Director*, Bergman explains the implementation of non-music in his films;

> I find it easier to compare film not to the theatre, or the novel, but to music. In fact, I think of film and music as equals of a sort. In pure film and pure music there is feeling that goes directly to some deeper level of the listener or viewer, and only afterward is it

> possible to analyze the experience. Not that music and film are the same. Film has its own rhythms, its own manner of pulsation. Yet, I find myself adding less and less music to my films, perhaps because it seems a little to me like adding music to music. (41)

The god Karin is subservient to, is vindictive and resentful, instructing physical injunctions and incestuous invading, a violent personalized god avenging the death of individual faith. Bergman's perverted god here is an expression of Karin's consciousness intending on a dead world, an empty scission out of the void of reality. Compared to the voice of the others, god's voice is silent in the film, operating as a senseless, menacing echo, a thing-in-itself, living and beyond symbolization. This spectral 'presence' of god parallels the impossible Lacanian Real[3], the "horrifying primordial image that cancels the imagery itself....the abyss of the primordial Life-Thing and the meaningless letter/formula... Real of a pure semblance, of a spectral dimension which shines through our common reality", as Žižek explicates in his *On Belief* (82). The desire to represent the Real moves around the void, the central thing which is lost in the post-war symbolic dimension- the consequence is the deformed image itself and the manifestation of the impossible other. God, in the film, as the fantasmatic past and an 'undead ghost', returns to haunt the space from where he is excluded. The voice of the other represents both the death and the unconscious remainder of God, which resuscitates as the punishable law of the father. As the undead voice encircling the impossibility of 'real' presence (a lack), it acts as a signifier of authority, and a trace/memory of the Christian guilt. There is no dissociation between religion and sexuality in *Through a Glass Darkly*, god is imagined and felt as a sexual being, a prohibition on autonomous sexuality and a sexual predator and monster. The close-up on Karin's face against the bizarre patterns of the wallpaper signifies the schizophrenic conversions of reality and the metamorphosis of the Christian God into a terrorized enforcement. Karin places the burden

of her consciousness outside her in the consciousness of God as an actual entity; the waiting for the material form of a divine being causes the fundamental crisis for Karin. The spider-god is not the contorted impression of god materialized, it is rather the coming into being of absence itself, an actualization of and confrontation with nothingness. It is a monstrous version of a God devised by human beings, a two-sexed perverse, violent force that transgresses gender boundaries, destroys youth and is the cause of incest. Karin's god, as an absent form, as undifferentiated and indefinite wholeness, resists symbolization. Karin inscribes the disjunction between external reality and the inner being onto an external object (the spider-god) to sustain herself in her failed expression. Dislocated sexuality of Karin undertakes a distinct characterization in the film and travels from the overt display of (sexual) affection for Minus followed by his physical detestation against all women, down to the incestuous act of Karin with Minus and the attempt at forced penetration by the spider-god. The regression of Karin down to incest is an act of rebellion against David, the surrogate father/God. The act of transgression occurs within the womb of the abandoned ship, with the threatening wailing of a distant siren, and in the rains slowly submerging the desecrated base; the damaged woods, carrying the primal associations with cross and Christ, float with insubstantial burden and lightness of weight. The following close-up of Karin and Minus' faces and the consequent mid-shot of the insides of the ship along with the embraced children, situate them in their shared tragedy, hiding from the world, and is the sole instance in the film where two separate beings find a unification. The hallucinatory god of Karin is the being of non-being, a traumatic reminder of one's alienation and separation.

The final coming of God merges with the descent and droning of the helicopter, replicating a disfigured insect. Parallel to the fantasy opening of the door and the emergence of the invisible god, stands the 'real' father, David holding the half-opened door. God's desire to penetrate in the form of a hedonistic spider and Karin's disappointment and

resignation out of this vision, remain the most blasphemous representation of God in Bergman.

> Karin: The door opened. But the God that came out was a spider. He came toward me and I saw his face. It was a terrible, stony face. He crawled up and tried to force himself into me, but I defended myself. The whole time I saw his eyes. They were cold and calm. When he couldn't penetrate me, he continued up my chest, up onto my face and on up the wall. I have seen God.

Karin's nothingness itself acquires a metaphysical presence and emerging out of the hole in the wallpaper articulates structured silence with prohibitions and resurfacing of forbidden desires; the masturbatory transformation in the presence of the eyes of continual surveillance shows the debauched nature of Karin's god. This mid-twentieth century God is that of Cold War consternation, mental illness, Holocaust, Spanish Civil War. The body itself transforms into hysteria of language, praying in pantomime and an orgasm sans touch. Frank Gado, while delineating the scene, says that "Just before Karin masturbates, the light reflected onto the wallpaper from the sea creates an erotic image of "small flames...in the heavy petals"; simultaneously, "a convulsive puff of wind comes from the sea [causing] the house [to] sigh like an old ship" (277). The mystery of Karin's faith in the revelatory God and the trust in the 'reality' of her schizoid situation is explained only to Minus in the room of anticipation. Minus' passive and perplexed observance in the first encounter of Karin's schizophrenia marks the beginning of his empathy toward his sister and apathy toward God.

> Karin: I walk through the wall, you see. Early in the morning I'm woken by someone calling me in a firm voice. I rise and come to this room. One day someone called me from behind the wallpaper. I looked in the closet, but there was no one there. But the voice kept calling me, so I pressed myself against the wall, and it gave way, like foliage and I was inside....I enter a large room. It's bright and peaceful. People are moving

back and forth. Some of them talk to me and I understand them. It's so nice and I feel safe. In some of their faces there's a shining light. Everyone is waiting for *him* to come, but no one is anxious. They say that I can be there when it happens....I long for that moment when the door will open and all the faces will turn to him.

Minus: Who is coming?

Karin: No one has said for certain. But I think it's God who will reveal himself to us....A God steps down from the mountain. He walks through the dark forest. There are wild beasts everywhere in the silent darkness. It must be real. Now I'm in one world, now in the other.

The nothingness that Karin generates comprises both the nihilation of the self and the negation of sexuality. Sexuality is dis-placed elsewhere, within the vaginal slit on the wall, which serves as an incorporeal, oral thing-in-itself, a brute force of misdirected faith. Karin's 'selfness' is continuously supplanted by the search for the transcendental ego which reduces the subject into an object of consciousness. The fear of absolute freedom to determine one's place in the world and the fullness of the emptiness of consciousness endlessly trying to elude the responsibility, conjures up the 'rapist-god' of Karin. Karin's lack of inwardness diffuses the chances of the leap of faith. The dread of the alternating reality and hallucination is replaced by the fear of the spider-god. The hole in the wall, from the Sartrean perspective in *Existentialism and Human Emotions,* symbolizes pure nothingness that Karin encounters and the voices from the 'other' side and her own body fills up the void.

Every human reality is a passion in that it projects losing itself so as to found being and by the same stroke to constitute the In-itself which escapes contingency by being its own foundation, the *Ens causa sui,* which religions call God. Thus the passion of man is the reverse of that of Christ, for man loses himself as man in order that God may be

born. But the idea of God is contradictory and we lose ourselves in vain. Man is a useless passion. (Sartre 90)

Karin's desire to unite with god on a physical level, unveils the motive of the for-itself to lose itself in the in-itself to evade the multiplicities of consciousness. The spider-god is the materialization of Karin's "bad faith".

Minus: I'm scared, Papa. When I sat holding Karin down in the wreck, reality burst open. Do you understand what I mean?

David: Yes, I understand.

Minus: Reality burst open and I tumbled out. It's like in a dream. Anything can happen. Anything.

David: I know.

Minus: I can't live in this new world.

David: Yes, you can, but you must have something to hold on to.

Minus: What would that be? A God? Give me some proof of God? You can't.

David: Yes I can....I can only give you a hint of my hope. It's knowing that love exists for real in the human world.

Minus: A special kind of love I suppose?

David: All kinds, Minus. The highest and the lowest, the most absurd and the most sublime. All kinds of love.

Minus: The longing for love?

David: Longing and denial. Trust and distrust.

Minus: So love is the proof?

David: I don't know if love is the proof of God's existence, or if God is love himself.

Minus: For you, love and God are the same.

David: That thought helps me in my loneliness and my dirty despair...Suddenly the emptiness turns into abundance and despair into life. It's like a reprieve, Minus, from a death sentence.

Minus: Papa, if it is as you say, then Karin is surrounded by God, since we love her.

David: Yes.

Minus: Can that help her?

David: I believe so....

Minus: Papa spoke to me.

Robin Wood holds the ending of the film as 'ironic' and as Bergman's refuge in the invulnerable zone of all-pervasive love against the overwhelming problematic of spiritual quandary,

> ...Bergman is clearly half-afraid of her, though she is an essential part of himself that had been struggling for recognition....So he pretends that 'God is Love, in all its forms', and that Karin can be dismisses as mad....Nothing in the film contradicts or even modifies Karin's visions, yet Bergman hasn't yet the courage to accept in unequivocally....one can only say, in Bergman's defence, that the consistent undermining of the father, throughout the film suggests Bergman's lack of confidence in his last words. They are indeed mere words. In anyone's memory of the film, it is Karin and her Spider-God that remain; David and Martin evaporate. Minus remains, as yet, a mere shadowy presence. (Wood 137-139)

The lack of an "emotional bridge in me between the somewhat hopeful message of the end and the pessimism of the rest of the film" (Bjorkman, Manns, and Sima 168), according to Bergman, partly justifies the criticism of the film as having a "dramaturgical error". David, following the acknowledgement of his guilt of desertion to Karin and of the ever-expanding 'magic circles', has now evolved to embrace and embody the higher feeling of love. Bergman

supplants the horrifying Christian God with the religion of love to approach an apparent wholeness, to provide a closure to the lacerated vision of the spider-god. The parallel perspective of universal, humanistic love runs counter to the negative, symptomatic theocentrism throughout and both exist as a problematic dialectic.

Dreyer's setting of interiority and closed spaces in *Day of Wrath* (1943) and *Ordet* (1955), akin to Bergman's faith trilogy, probes into the internal workings of the individual's ethical and theological claustrophobia. The internal private zones and familial margins are pitted against the expanse of broader communal understanding and interpretation. David Bordwell, in his *The Films of Carl-Theodor Dreyer*, discusses the intimate, innermost rooms of the priest Absalon's household, the undeclared, non-communicative secret space of Anne and Martin, the history of immoral seduction of Absalon and the law of the orthodox mother Merete, against the emerging illicit love of Anne and Martin (the crosscutting between the landscape and natural light and the semi-darkness of Absalon's 'confessional' chamber) and the wider historical context of seventeenth century Inquisition in Denmark (Bordwell 121). The ethical predicament is heightened in the dialectics of Absalon's saviour/seduction act, Anne's uncertainty of the *revenge* motive and her autonomous sexuality, and the oedipal quandary of the father-loving Martin, the social Christendom and the supernatural witchcraft, violent interrogation and burning by the Church and concealing of Anne's heretic past and oedipal present. The beginning of Bergman's *The Seventh Seal* is analogous to the opening scroll sequence from the Gothic Vredens Dag in *Day of Wrath* which focuses on the blowing of trumpets and the fury of Christ on the day of judgement, thus setting the ecclesiastical motif of the film. The stoic resignation of Anne in the ending mid-shot reveals the artistic existential dimension of the film; beginning and ending with the authority of the written word proclaiming the apocalypse, Dreyer locates the angst-ridden individual in the centre of the theological framework and the journey is one of unfolding consciousness.

The unambiguous and self-evident faith in the Christian doctrine, and the dread and inauthenticity emerging out of the doubts in God, is the prevailing theme in Dreyer's *Ordet*. The exaggerated and theatrical confrontation between two opposing Christian ideologies (Borgen's *Grundtvigism, or Danish Lutheranism* and Peter's suffering *Inner Mission*), the agnosticism of Mikkel and the self-erasure of the delusional Johannes, culminate into an all-embracing realization of faith and inwardness. The narrative of the film metaphorically centres on the Gospel's version of God's word becoming flesh; the Logos of faith manifested in Christ pervades all the characters through an act of miracle and resurrection. (akin to Lazarus, return from the dead). The film is starkly different from Bergman's *Through a Glass Darkly* on the grounds of visioning hypnagogic images and schizophrenia; if unquestionable faith redeems Dreyer's world, in Bergman, the synthesis with God is inconceivable, faith is paradoxical and irretrievable, and doubt irreparable. The opening panning shot of the Danish farm, with the camera halting before the Borgen household, followed by a glimpse of the conjugal interior, and then a wide shot of Johannes against the expanding horizon, locates the fundamental argument of the film-the exterior exhibition of faith against its inward manifestation. Johannes, as the focal point of the narrative, functions as the misdirected redeemer on his journey toward authentic realization of God within. Johannes' shift of belief from that of a devout to one of doubt (through the readings of Kierkegaard) and impersonation of Christ is an escape into the transcendent to avert the 'real', individual existent. The dread and angst in Johannes perceptible through his camouflaged proclamations as Christ, is an ideal appropriation of Sartre's "bad faith". The imaginary games of Johannes to breakout from the spiritual impasse are acts of self-deception and inauthentic existence.

> Johannes: Woe unto you for your faithlessness...because you do not believe in me the risen Christ who has come to you at the bidding of Him...God has called me to be His prophet before His face...for only they who have faith shall enter into the Kingdom of

> Heaven. My name is Jesus of Nazareth...I am the light of the world, but darkness knoweth it not. I came unto my own, but my own received me not.

The problematic of the film is in the disjunction between, what Sartre calls in his book *The Imaginary*, the perception image and the mental image. The "matter involved in mental imagery is constructed out of purely subjective feelings. In some cases...by affective feelings that you have towards the object or person to be imagined. Knowledge (or beliefs or opinions about) this object or person then animates these feelings, giving them the sense of the presence of the object or person felt about" (xxii). The imitation of Christ, as a present perceptual image, is rejected by others, since Christ can conventionally exist only as a mental image, formed directly through the 'irreal' work of art the Bible); (Johannes: People believe in the dead Christ but not in the living. They believe in miracles of two thousand years ago but they do not believe in me now). Johannes' subsequent loss and doubt in faith leads to the abstraction of reality and the sudden rise of hypnagogic images (of Christ with a scythe, of impending death). The phenomenological consciousness in imaging an object, posits the object to reflect upon it, and affixes to it its "not-being" and a "consciousness of nothingness", through assertion of the image as present to the consciousness, it, by default, situates its nothingness/absence. Johannes' imaginary act of 'becoming' Christ not only paradoxically depicts the nothingness of the 'real' Christ, who is presently absent because of the lack of faith and present due to the impersonation, but also raises questions about the actual physical existence of the object of mental image. The feeling of faith is analogous to the Sartrean definition of beauty as "a being that cannot be given to perception and that, in its very nature, is isolated from the universe" (*Imaginary* 189). Johannes, the kindred to Kierkegaard's Johannes de Silentio from *Fear and Trembling*, journeys from "bad faith" to the authentic existence of the leap of the Knight of Faith. The return of Johannes in the end as

a man of simple faith and acceptance in Christ's power to perform miracles salves the entire film and purges it of all religious misapprehensions that the others partake in.

The certainty in *Winter Light* (1963) is of the meta/physical presence of the concrete silence of God. Living amidst this conspicuous silence and struck by the inability to love, the pastor, Tomas, suffers from the eternal recurrence of religious performance. The irreconcilable rupture between the ritualistic observances and the sacraments and the lack of faith in God's existence, the exterior shell of religion and inward consciousness, serves as the central crisis of the film, one that exists as the (spiritual) vacuum within and without all the non/believers. Inside the images and crucified figures of this theological labyrinth, Pastor Ericsson is as adrift as the Christ on the cross, waiting for justification and direction from God. Bergman's Tomas is in a perpetual void and the split self which wanders around, executing funeral rites and preaching the Bible, despairs and dreads the trembling stillness inside. The fading light of winter, the cold alone-ness, the barren landscape, resemble the slow evanesce of God and the Tomas' own emotional nothingness.

Bergman comments on the end of the film in his *Images*, "If one has religious faith, one would say that God has spoken to him. If one does not believe in God, one might prefer to say that Märta Lundberg and Algot Frövik are two people who help raise a fellow human being who has fallen and is digging his own grave. At that point it doesn't matter if God is silent or if he is speaking" (188). The film begins with a thematic circular structure-the camera captures Tomas in a mid-shot with the arch of the church behind him, in the retelling of the biblical narrative of salvation and the last supper, followed by a long shot of the prayer-hall comprising the visually 'insignificant' pastor, and his insubstantial number of followers, the prayer then reverberates through the interspersed static frames of the village in winter (in contradistinction to "Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven"), and the voice reaches its final consummation in the return of the mid-shot of the

priest. The motif of spiritual deprivation and dread of silence is represented in the fixation of the voice with the discourse of the gospel; the 'real' voice re-places the absence of the transcendental voice. All of Tomas' spiritual fears and angst are revealed within the (inner) room of the church, a confessional territory where time burdens with unceasing movements and radical finitude, and where the pastor is both the succour, and the parasite preying on the suicidal victim.

> Tomas: I put my faith in an improbable and private image of a fatherly god, one who loved mankind of course, but me most of all. Do you see, Jonas, what a monstrous mistake I made? ... Picture my prayers to an echo-god, who gave benign answers and reassuring blessings. Every time I confronted God with the realities I witnessed, he turned into something ugly and revolting. A spider God, a monster. So I sought to shield Him from life, clutching my image of Him to myself in the dark... If there is no God, would it really make a difference? Life would become understandable. What a relief. And thus death would be a snuffing out of life, the dissolution of body and soul. Cruelty, loneliness and fear, all these things would be straightforward and transparent. Suffering is incomprehensible, so it needs no explanation. There is no creator. No sustainer of life. No design.

The context of the post-war absurdity (replicated here in the fear of Jonas' atom bombs of China, and Tomas' blindness toward the Spanish Civil War) acts as the traumatic component which afflicts all faith and beliefs, a deadener that alienates and banishes one from the other. The agonizing image of the pathetic Christ hanging perpetually behind Tomas acts as the constant reminder of the presence of absence, of the visible trace of the invisible God, turned away from the lost souls. Tomas is eternally entwined in the despair over the death of God, and the mechanical display of faith propagated by religion. The disappearance of God from the modern world (Algot: I believe electric lights disturb our spirit of reverence) is

experienced by Tomas not only as a tragic loss, but as the ridiculousness of despair, a paradoxical state of comedy without laughter. Tomas' indifference toward Christ (mentioned by Märta), is an apathy toward God as flesh materialized amidst man; Tomas perceives himself as the Christ with the burden of disseminating God's word. The torment of both Märta and Tomas emerge from the death of human love, the loss of purpose and meaning associated with the being of the other. For Märta, the closure of the sexual relation with Tomas, through marriage, disintegrates with her eczema, and the death of Tomas' wife immerses him in the pit of spiritual nothingness. Märta discloses her doubt and desperation in her disorienting subjective confession to Tomas and the audience.

> Märta: God, why have you created me so eternally dissatisfied? So frightened, so bitter? Why must I realize how wretched I am? Why must I suffer so hellishly for my insignificance? If there is a purpose to my suffering, then tell me, so I can bear my pain without complaint. I am strong. You made me so very strong in both body and soul, but you never give me a task worthy of my strength. Give my life meaning and I'll be your obedient slave.

Märta is partially saved since she realizes her purpose in being with Tomas (Märta: "The task is you"); her redemption is in the unconditional surrender to all that is human, in her absolute rejection of God. The agnosticism of Tomas rests in his failure to become entirely atheistic; what Tomas experiences is the disjunction between the collapse of religion and the faith in the secular. Adam Kotsko, in his *Žižek and Theology*, while discussing the scope of "religionless Christianity" and reinterpreting the Bible in a radical, demythologizing way as proposed by the Lutheran theologian and pastor, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, quotes Bonhoeffer from his *Letters and Paper from Prison*,

> Before God and with God we live without God. God lets himself be pushed out of the world on the cross. He is weak and powerless in the world, and that is precisely the

> way, the only way, in which he is with us and helps us... Man's religiosity makes him look in distress to the power of God in the world: God is the *deux ex machine.* The Bible directs man to God's powerlessness and suffering: only the suffering God can help. (151)

This death of God in Christ, required in order to appropriate the journey from Spirit to flesh, is for Tomas, symbolically, the obscene truth of Christianity; the anomaly for Tomas is between the death of the eternal in flesh which is the raison d'être for infinitude, and death (in the Heideggerian sense) which exists alongside life as nothingness and temporality. In *Unlikely Shadows: Transcendence in Image and Immanence,* Thomas A. Carlson arguing over the unknowability of God in the modern age of openness of space and stripping of the cogito, considers Altizer's discussion from *Total Presence: The Language of Jesus and the Language of Today,* and differentiates between "an overwhelming and un-crossable distance between an unknowability which is a mark or sign of the transcendence of God and an unknowability which is simply and only unknowability" (113). The emptiness of language and comprehension that Tomas encounters is the inherent lack present in the modern semantics, the lack which Carlson highlights through Jean-Luc Nancy,

> …on the subject of God, what is most decisive today is undoubtedly this: he is not unnameable in the metaphysical sense of the Being that is inaccessible to all names, of the Being that transcends all names, and thus the name of Being itself, according to a steady tradition that is the very tradition of ontotheology. . . . God is not unnameable in this sense, for in this sense unnameability results from an excess over names and language, whereas the unnameability of the god to whom I address myself (if I can do so) results from a lack of name. God is unnameable, today, in that his name, or his names, are lacking" (Carlson 113).

Tomas' Christ-like proclamation of God's act of abandonment in "God, why have you forsaken me?" reflects the affection-image of Deleuze, in combining the individual and the universal alienation. The face with its blank obscurity resembles the absurdity and farce of the situation, where the moment of freedom becomes synchronous with that of disavowal. Tomas' countenance bathed in (winter) light from the window at the instant of personal revelation is, as illustrated by Robin Wood in *Ingmar Bergman*, an ironic and ambiguous event (147), where the light radiates on the doubt of desolation and emptiness, and is immediately followed by Jonas' individual responsibility of ending his life with a gunshot. The long-shot and the detached camera on Tomas placidly observing Jonas' dead body, and accompanied by the gust of wind, is an ironic commentary on Tomas' own deadness and new found atheism; Märta's intrusion midst the stasis disrupts the shared zone. Wood identifies the image of Christ in Algot's physical disability and suffering, Tomas' doubt and sense of isolation, and in Märta's eczema and passion and Tomas' rejection of her devotion.

The disclosure of Tomas' revulsion toward Märta ("Tomas: I'm tired of your...clumsy hands, anxiousness...poor digestion. Your rashes. Your periods. Your frostbitten cheeks.") organized to counterbalance Märta's confessional letter, is a contradictory exposure where absolute nakedness in characterization gives way to mutual interdependency and conjoined resignation ("Märta: Every time I've hated you, I've made an effort to turn it into compassion. You can't make it on your own. You won't survive, Tomas dear. Nothing can save you. You'll hate yourself to death."). The fuming train crosscutting the journey to the church and carrying loads of the shape of coffins attains a metaphorical significance, it transforms into a carrier that weighs the death of faith of the entire community. Karin's negation of the Bible after the death of Jonas, the disinterested organist who resurfaces drunk in the ending, the inertia in nature covered in snow and wind, the lack of answers from Märta's present/absent aunt, all point to the symbolic destruction of the concept of God, and

the death of transcendence. Algot, with his recognition of the 'real' suffering of Christ, not in the physical agony, but in the desertion of his friends and disciples, the incomprehensibility of his message, and the denial from God, unites Tomas and the subject of his envy, Christ. The film transposes from the desire of communal faith to the need for shared despair and anguish, from the shattering of the "security God" to that of complete negation. *Winter Light*, arising from Bergman's experience of Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*, is a journey from the absurdity and irrationality of incessant rituals, to the irreparable realization of one's rootlessness in a God-less world, down to the timeless dwelling in the performance of religion and the endless waiting for the Word and light. In the 1961 interview conducted by Vilgot Sjoman, Bergman explained the last sequence as the ground for a reconstructed version of God, "The mirror is clean. There stands a newly scoured vessel that can be filled by mercy. By a new image of God" (238). The ending of the film, with Tomas rendering the glory of God resolves the circular pattern, and marks a closure to the first prayer beginning "on the night He was betrayed". In the shadow of this unknowable and unnameable silence, Tomas decides to hold the service and continue the prayer, to go on with his inability to go on. Tomas has inverted echoes of the dying alcoholic priest of Bresson's *Diary of a Country Priest* (1951), for whom suffering itself is prayer and oneness with God, for, as he ends his confessional diary saying, "What does it matter? All is grace." Tomas' recitation of "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts. The whole earth is full of His glory" in the absence of all the 'believers' and the only presence of Märta despairing over the lack of truth, is in itself the phenomenal instant of everlasting doubt, possibility of faith in hope, and utter non-acceptance in all things divine.

The Dostoevskian issues of crime and punishment and the existential rebel (like Ivan Karamazov and Kirilov) against these mysterious, mystical forces of organized religion are further borrowed and established by Bresson's documentation of historical reality in *The*

Trial of Joan of Arc (1962). The presence of Bresson's God, like Bergman, is in the representation of his absence; the constant search and consequent deferral of the encounter substantiate the existence of God (as a belief, or as non-corporeal form). Tony Pipolo, arguing about the presence/absence of God in *Au Hasard Balthazar* (1966) quotes Bresson in his *Robert Bresson: A Passion for Film*, "Pronouncing the name of God isn't what makes him present. If he [Marie's father in that film] rejects God, then God exists, and therefore God is present" (6). Bresson comments in his *Notes on Cinematography* on the historical credibility of the film; "Reject historical films whose effect would be "theater" or "masquerade". (In my *Trial of Joan of Arc* I have tried to avoid "theater" and "masquerade", but to arrive at a non-historical truth by using historical words.)" (66). The objective and detached nature of the film and the disengaged nature of interrogation with intercutting mid-shots (the lack of close-up prohibits personal involvement) focus on the correspondence between the viewer and the biographical reality (Trial of Rehabilitation, Trial of Condemnation). The entire (physical and psychological) movement of the film is designed through the division of spaces, the internal and the external, and the metaphysical interior of Joan in the prison cell, visited by St. Catherine, St. Michael. The trial involving the vehement subjective belief and the political objective, self-knowledge and heresy, nationalist militancy and the imperialist Church, transposes the individual outside the historical/mythical context on to a contemporary post-war framework. Joan's saintly virginity contrasted to the spy-hole and the (sexual) gaze of the pastors, the obstinacy regarding the male clothes, the minimalism in her emotions amidst roaring resentment and antipathy culminate in the burning and the symbolic disappearance of her body, confirming her sanctification. The transcendental and literary quality that Bresson adds to *Diary of a Country Priest* and *A Man Escaped* (1956) enhances the process of revealing the trembling soul of the being-in-the-world. The Bressonian technique of depicting the void face of the modern individual, explored repeatedly in *A Man Escaped, Mouchette*

(1967), *Pickpocket* (1959), reflects the alienation of the psychological and the philosophical self against the burgeoning socio-political crises of the material world. Identifying God' silences in Bresson, Pipolo further writes that "The only "evidence" of God's existence in *Diary* is the intense look on the face of Claude Laydu as he stares into a powerfully charged off screen space. The idea takes a different form in *Balthazar*, for what could be more indicative of the remoteness of God and redemption from contemporary life than making an animal a Christ figure, a fictional construct that, presumably, could no longer be convincingly embodied by a human being? In his incommunicability, no less than his saintliness, Balthazar embodies this remote, invisible, unknowable God" (Pipolo 7).

Bergman's *Tystnaden* (*The Silence,* 1963) unfolds a post-war, partial-apocalyptic world of absolute nothingness and philosophical absence of being. The film internally focuses on the disjunction in the individual being as existent and the negation by the other on grounds of validating the existence through mercy and compassion. Search for the transcendent is lost in the futile quest for the self, waiting endlessly to extend shape and form to the abstract and the non-existent. Silences extend to the external political war-torn roads, to the imminence of death, and ritualistic constrictions of performance. The zones of *The Silence* are marred by fissures in communication, claustrophobia, and impending death, and the journey undertaken by the sisters, acts as an extended metaphor for irresolvable isolation and the movement from spiritual silence to human silence. Enclosed spaces echo throughout the film and reflect the unsettled mindscape of the characters; the locations shift from the cylindrical, horizontal area of the train to the long, narrow expanse of the hotel alleyways and vacant rooms, the shots of the concentrated, crowded roads, and finally to the circular return of the train compartment. Territorialized reactions to emotional deadness dominate the entire narrative of the film- Ester, a translator, lives behind the barren possibilities of others' languages, Anna's immersion in irrational, masochistic sexual encounters operates under the motif of revenge

against the authoritative morality of Ester, and Johan's placid suffering and split between the two separated-unresponsive beings culminates in aporetic perplexity. Rendition of linguistic violence out of the collapse of interpretable language and Ester's physical violence as a consequence of the breakdown leaves no possibilities for tolerance and spiritual redemption. The singular expression of empathy and tolerance emerges from the waiter who, incomprehensible on the grounds of bizarre speech pattern (located in a foreign city, Timoka, meaning "belonging to the executioner"), attempts to heal the ailing Ester; ironically, in a form of inverted retaliation for the acts of mercy, Johan hides the photographs of the waiter's family (the only source of meaning available to him) under the carpet. The attendant's function in the film is that of a pantomimic overseer, one who palliates, supports, assists, and ameliorates; as a timekeeper and the only relevant father figure, the waiter punishes Johan for his sexual/oedipal strivings by symbolically devouring the sausage, and subsequently indoctrinates the realities of death and separation through the photographs.

The film begins with a low-angle shot of Johan's face and the slow rumbling of the train. The following images of Johan looking out onto a flat white painted surface through the frame of the train parodies his own condition inside multiple frames designed by Anna, Ester, the unknown land and the film itself. Amidst disengaged corporal silence, the camera establishes the sweltering Anna, and frail/enduring Ester. Consequently, Johan stands rubbing his eyes before the camera and discloses the attempts of the virtual cinematic medium to express the dread of modern subjectivity, the image-text trying to move beyond the failure of communicative language. Bergman, opening the film with visual translation of Béla Bartók's *Concerto for Orchestra,* conveys the variations between the plaintive and random folk upsurges, and a sense of emotional drenching attached with outbursts of urgency; Laura Hubner observes in *The Films of Ingmar Bergman*: *Illusions of Light and Darkness*, the

> …'dull, continuous note' presumably refers to the long take and whirring train sounds of the opening, as the camera pans from left to right and pauses on the three characters individually. The tanks become a series of abstract patterns, black blobs on a white background. The silence heightens the abstraction and draws out the rhythm. The 'sudden explosion' comes with the cut to an extreme high angle, overlooking the town, with its heavy traffic, deafeningly loud; Johan looks out of the window at the people rushing by. (66)

The music then shifts to the use of jazz on the radio providing the only instance where Ester displays animated gestures of vitality against her physical malaise, and finally the implementation of Bach's *The Goldberg Variations*, conjoins mutual incoherence, to form a higher language of human kindness. From the very inception Johan is the suspended subject, intruding into the privacy of the officers and peering in doubt and amazement at the catastrophic town of unending tanks, constantly blotting his face with the interplay of light and darkness. The perverse city, with its mechanical population, drilling sounds, spectral droning of night tanks, debauched theatre-houses, and unbearable heat (recounting Bergman's personal experience of post-war Hamburg) depicts an atmosphere of traumatic partition and the terrifying aspects of confronting the memories. The street serves as a symbol of political and social degradation; the top angular shots of the street show the incessantly rushing crowd averted from each other, the horse as the beast of burden with the continuous dislocation of the furniture (signifying the death of belongingness) and the war-tank stuttering through the alleys foregrounding the graphic presence of death. The three pivotal characters are allocated their varying zones; Anna, losing herself in the ways of the flesh and sexual dynamism is assigned the street where she feels oneness with strangers, Johan seeks liberation in the labyrinthine passages and closed rooms of the hotel, and Ester is limited with her breathlessness to her room. The adaption/adoption of 'real' historical discourse blends

with the personal narrative of the estranged family and effectuates the problems of individual history and the historical individual. The inclusion of the dwarves' performance symbolically represents an obscure, unapproachable realm, far away from the emotional frigidity, and their carnivalesque room serves as an absolute contrast to the vulnerable silence in the single-disjointed room of the sisters; they represent an absurd anomaly of nature/God, a symbol of decadence and short-sightedness, nevertheless, individualized in their identifiable costumes. Anna's gaze blatantly divided between the 'vulgar' performance of the dwarfs and the aesthetic sexual intercourse in the audience focuses on the incongruity and aberration in society. Robin Wood reads the dwarfs in "the squalid misery of their stage appearance, leaping each other's back like performing dogs, marching off bent double and interlinked like some nightmarish semi-human obscene centipede: their means of subsistence in a world that can use them only as a spectacle for its debased amusement. The dwarfs, in their robust and uncomplaining acceptance of their lot, are, in a sense, the heroes of *The Silence*" (176). Hamish Ford writes about the catastrophic setting of the film, and complex interdependence between the two sisters in *Senses of Cinema*, "The complex combination of an uneasy realism with stark formalism makes for clean and complex deep-focus shots matched with an immaculate hyper-diegetic soundscape.... Thulin plays *The Silence*'s only real 'believer' – in truth, reason, knowledge, meaning – and is here a decaying figure associated with death. The sheer sensuality of Lindblom's performance might comparatively offer corporeal affirmation, but the very empowerment of this very 'alive' woman can seem reactionary in its binarism (the revenge of the body, against Thulin's hegemonic, rancid Cartesianism)."

If Anna stands for the excessive body, Ester reveals the passion of the archetypal Christ figure. The body/soul binary dissolves with the physical act of Ester and the constant guilt of Anna. Anna is defined by her culpability alongside her sexual nonconformity and her derision toward Ester; (Anna: I didn't know where to go, so we went to the church. We had

intercourse in a dark corner behind some pillars. It was cooler there.). Her bare breast, the unrelenting heat she feels, the nudity that she exhibits, presents her as a savage, uncontrolled force that exists as a thing-in-itself amidst the unfeeling members of the city, a thing which demolishes Anna rather than redeeming. The uninhabited position of the father is void and ineffectual for Anna and thus all authorial entities, including Ester's supervision and continual eyeing of her naked body, are denied and incapacitated. Ester's intrusion toward the end within the libidinal space of Anna directly brings the moral, voyeuristic overture into the forefront and sets forth the final wrath of Anna.

> Anna: It's just that you always harp on your principles and drone on about how important everything is. But it's just all hot air. You know why? I'll tell you. Everything centres around your ego. You can't live without feeling superior. That's the truth. Everything has to be desperately important and meaningful.... I tried to be like you because I admired you. I didn't realize you disliked me.... And in some way you're afraid of me.... You hate me just like you hate yourself. Me, and everything that's mine.... When father died, you said, "I don't want to go on living." So why are you still around?

Wood interprets the final love-making scene after Ester's departure from the room as an empty consolation to the yearning Anna, "...the scene is no more anti-sodomy than it is pro-sodomy: the treatment of the sexual act here is absolutely consistent with the treatment of sex elsewhere in the film. It gives a partial, temporary comfort while remaining quite inadequate to satisfy Anna's lasting needs; we are aware, from the moment of her breakdown that a whole side of her being is crying out for expression and for human response" (175). Bergman equates the two sisters through their individual agony of severance from each other, the indecipherability of words conveying emotions acts as the eccentric deviation in the text. Set against Anna's despairing sexual revenges directed toward her afflicted sister, Ester indulges

in an act of masturbation, which in turn reinforces her sense of withdrawal and solitude. Ester's momentary pleasure is immediately followed by the whirring of war-planes and Johan's simulated-bravery to save Anna with a gun. Johan is perpetually lost in the oedipal mires of the hotel corridor, with unoccupied rooms symbolizing sexual innocence. Johan's experience of Ruben's painting *Deianeira Abducted by Nessus* belonging to the Graeco-Roman mythology and illustrating the seduction of the naked woman and consensual expression to the brute advances of the centaur, resurfaces his unconscious fears and desires. Entwined in the other's desire for the 'guiltless' m/other, Johan's physical involvement around Anna always ends up in masculinised ventures of 'protection'. The two explorations of the painting and the subsequent sexual empowerment are obstructed, first by the fatherly concierge (superego injunction) and then by the mock-castration through the dwarf's supplying of the girl's dress to Johan. The active rebellions of Johan find expression in the dumb gun fights, the drawing of the demonic father for Ester, and the urination.

On the other hand, Ester's preservation and defence of Anna border on tangible processes of redemption. The crisis of Ester is an effect of her debilitating self-knowledge formed through the consciousness of the paralyzed state of existence, as Sartre comments in *The Transcendence of the Ego*, "Consciousness must be a perpetual synthesis of past consciousness with the present consciousness" (6). The awareness reduces her to the role of a malevolent voyeur, spying on Anna's hedonism, and on the other hand, elevates her to the position of a redeemer in the end. Ester's position and rejection as the saviour are literally the cause of her physical bouts of pain and intensifies the agony of a 'god' who has lost her 'touch'. Ester, in her spiritual journey echoes Isak Borg's quest for self-knowledge in *Wild Strawberries* (1957). Borg's undertakes the inward voyage through the metaphorical dream of death to the somnambulist recurrences of past events and fantasies and Marianne acts as the spiritual 'other' penetrating the stillness of Borg's soul and isolation. The torments of

Ester signify the trauma of abandonment, the silence that emphasizes the there-ness of God and his not-being-there. From the Heideggerian sense of death associating meaning and an ethical closure to *Dasein* through *care*, the mercy, forgiveness and love in Ester's nature might be attributed to the physical pain and breathlessness she undergoes. The being-toward-death awakening the call of conscience through which the being-in-the-world finds its ethico-moral expression. However, a Derridean rereading of Heidegger's authentic existence in his *Aporias*, dislodges the concept of death as an individual possibility experienced by the self; for Derrida, death is always the experience of the other's death, which induces a possible consideration of ethical responsibilities (*arrivant*). Derrida reads death as *aporia*, as the impossible, non-surpassable barrier, "...the aporia is said to be impossibility, impracticability, or nonpassage: here dying would be the aporia, the impossibility of being dead, impossibility of living or rather "existing" one's death, as well as impossibility of existing once one is dead...." (73). Against Heidegger's mineness of death, Derrida situates the death of the other and the waiting for *arrivant* as the modes of authentic existence;

> One thus can: (I) Await oneself, await oneself in oneself. (2) As long as the waiting can only be directed toward some other and toward some *arrivant,* one can and must wait for something else, hence expect some other-as when one is said to expect *that* something will happen or that some other will arrive.... (3) But there is a third and maybe first possibility in this grammatical structure: we can wait for each other....when the waiting for *each other* is related to death, to the borders of death, where we wait for each other knowing *a* priori, and absolutely undeniably, that, life always being too short, the one is waiting for the other there, for the one and the other never arrive there together, at this rendezvous death is ultimately the name of impossible simultaneity and of an impossibility that we know simultaneously, at which we await each other.... (65)

For Derrida, the aporetic impossibility of death, this dissociation of the self from the experiential possibility of death, and the waiting for the *arrivant* dismantle all possibilities of the subjective whole and opens the self to the multiple fragments at the expense of the other. The waiting at the limits of *aporia* for the undisclosed other creates the authentic self according to Derrida. *The Silence* bears the aporia in a war situation as mentioned by Derrida; "...the non passage resembles an impermeability; it would stem from the opaque existence of an uncrossable border... (exemplarily during war)" (Derrida 20). Added to the aporia of war, the film displays the aporia in language and aporia in sexuality (Ester) and spirituality (Ester and Anna). In Ester's movement from the impression of death as suffering and authenticating existence of the *Dasein* to that of resistance toward death and mutual sharing of agony through a foreign language, one reads the realization of death as *aporia* and 'contamination' or 'impureness' of the self, since one's death is not one's own, [my death experienced in the death of the other], the awareness of not being there when one's *Dasein* is-not-there. Ester, in the end, resorts to a relation of reciprocity and interdependency with the other, Johan, and the last frame on Ester with her fixed gaze toward the camera shows the waiting for the *arrivant*.

The aphasiatic body itself, speaks its hysteric language to compensate for the loss of real words, and bears the effects of failure of translation from angst-ridden experience to shared communication, (Ester: This is humiliating. I won't stand for it. I must keep my head. I'm known as a level-headed person. Dear God, please let me die at home!); one confronts existential thought metamorphosed into tortured flesh, the mouth, hair, and hands shrunk to insignificance (Ester: It's all a matter of erections and secretions. A confession before extreme unction. Semen smells nasty to me. I have a very keen sense of smell, and I stank like rotten fish when I was fertilized.).

> The crux of the matter is that Ester-even though she's ill and inwardly decaying-is struggling against the decay within her. She feels a sort of disgust for Anna's corporeality. Tries to stave it off. She feels humiliated by her own attacks. And all the time she's trying to keep herself clean and nice. But Anna is uninhibitedly physical. She holds her little boy within the magic circle of her animality, controls him. He is completely in thrall to it.... The physical disgust of Ester's disgust at her body having taken charge of her and exposing her to humiliating situations. (Bjorkman, Manns, and Sima 186)

In the absence of Johan's father and the impossible weight of Ester and Anna's father, there exist the burden of the memory of the rift between subjective finitude and empiricism and the eternal, transcendental existence of dead divinity. The post-Enlightenment, post-Hegelian God effaces all associations with things human and beings corroborating reality and cannot present itself to the realm of faith and experience beyond the functions of reason. The unknowability of God by virtue of its unknowingness results in the death of God, and this death in turn materializes the faithlessness in the dead God. Jeffrey L. Kosky in his seminal essay *The Birth of the Modern Philosophy of Religion and the Death of Transcendence*, discerns the Christological death of God from Hegel to Feurbach and Nietzsche. Against the moral and virtuous, and historical prioritizing of Kant's God for man, Hegel upholds the death of heavens for immanence to settle on earth. According to Hegel, God's death is essential in actualizing the existence of infinite amidst humanity, and not in a distant 'otherwhere'. Christianity as revelatory of the death of Christ on the cross is exemplary for the finite subject to grasp the meaning of God's spirit related to a being's consciousness. Hegel writes in *Faith and Knowledge* (1802), that "the pure concept of infinity as the abyss of nothingness in which all being is engulfed, must signify the infinite grief [of the finite] purely as a moment of the supreme idea. Formerly, the infinite grief existed historically in the

formative process of culture. It existed in the feeling that "God Himself is dead," upon which the religion of more recent times rests..." (190). Kosky quotes Jüngel's argument on Hegel's death of God Himself from *God as the Mystery of the World*, "By designating the feeling that "God Himself is dead" as a moment of the supreme idea, talk about the death of God gains a twofold meaning. First of all, in talk about the death of God, the situation of absolutized finitude expresses itself, which corresponds to abstract infinitude as empty negativity. Once that feeling is grasped as a moment of the supreme Idea, then the death of God is understood as an event of the *self-negation* of God, who does not desire to be "in and for himself " and does not desire to forsake the world in its finitude" (23). Feurbach, on the other hand, refutes Hegel with the notions of the anthropology of the modern alienated man who creates God in his own image, and the death of Christ and incarnation begin the post-Christian reign of man;

> The Incarnation is nothing else than the practical, material manifestation of the human nature of God. . . . God became man out of mercy: thus he was in himself already a human God before he became an actual man... the incarnate God is only the apparent manifestation of deified man; for the descent of God to man is necessarily preceded by the exaltation of man to God. Man was already in God, was already God himself, before God became man. (Kosky 26)

The project is completed by Nietzsche's Zarathustra proclaiming the disappearance of the eternal and preaching the will to power as the new God.

> Ester: He was so kind. Though he was such a big, heavy man. He weighed nearly 440 pounds. I wish I'd seen the men who lifted his coffin.

The death of the sisters' father in *The Silence* is as intolerable as the decay of the God of Nietzsche's mad man, "Do we not hear anything yet of the noise of the gravediggers who are burying God? Do we not smell anything yet of God's decomposition? Gods too decompose. God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him" (Nietzsche 14). After the death of

the father, Ester, as the surrogate-father is vain and futile, and the realization of the absolute death gathers eventually in Ester's beckoning of the mother (Ester: Mother, I'm ill. Mother, come and help me. I'm so frightened.). The Bergmanian motifs of self-preservation, search of the lost homeland and identity, death of applicable language for communication, ethical and moral predicament, are explored by Tarkovsky's in *Nostalghia* (1983). The film delves into the soul of the Russian author Andrei Gorchakov researching on the life history of the feudal-serf composer Pavel Sosnovsky, and the inherent nostalgia and distance he suffers due to the absence of empirical God and faithlessness. Journeying through the untranslatable poems of Anseni Tarkovsky, to the metaphysical separation from Eugenia, the monochromatic, half-surrealist dreamscapes of the past, and the rationalization of Domenico's mad faith, Tarkovsky climaxes the film in the prolonged uncut crossing of the pool of St. Catherine. Andrei fencing the candle from the wind on the empty pool of miracles provides a closure to the fragments of faith and the ceaseless longing for spiritual clarity and unification with the self.

The film ends with the distant hopes of Anna's salvation/realization through the rains and Johan's movement toward understanding and loving Ester. To Bergman, as recorded from the interview with Torsten Manns (Råsunda, 1969), the ending was the most humanistic where Johan sustains the traces of infinite consciousness; "Ester in all her misery represents a distillation of something indestructibly human, which the boy inherits from her" (Bjorkman, Manns, and Sima 183). Ester's translated words in foreign language are an offering to Johan, an act of deliverance where all disjunctions between the hand and the face would vanish and the renewed hand (*kasi*) shall touch the face (*naijo*) and co-exist in harmony.

The language of Bergman's films is 'acratic' (according to Roland Barthes' *The Rustle of Language*, "acratic" language is severed from the *doxa* (hence, it is paradoxical); its schismatic strength derives from the fact that it is systematic, it is constructed around thought,

not around ideology) which is elaborate and questions Power structures, against societal "encratic" language which is subjected to the norms of Power. The movement of his central figures is from encratic to acratic. Through *The Silence* we permeate a zone of wordlessness, dominated by the aesthetic of the visual and the auditory; against a world of false (language-burdened) consciousness, it expresses a motion toward authentic conscious art. Letters and platitudinous language are abandoned and supplanted by, what Maaret Koskinen phrases in her *The Silence*, "lettrification of the image" (Koskinen 129). The sense organs are enmeshed and entranced by sight and sound; the spectator identifies visually with the concealed motions of an alternate city and "distorted human sounds-murmurs, sighs, snivels, loud chewing, shouts, even hard swallowing…non- human sounds: running water, typewriting, sentimental music from a crackling transistor radio, the wispy sigh of clothing against skin" (Koskinen 130-131). Referring to a sort of awakening unto consciousness, dream/non-reality and Birgitta Steene's coinage of ""quizzical look" of Bergman's "sleepwalkers"" (133), Koskinen establishes the ascendency of spectatorship (primarily through Johan). Citing Vivian Sobchack, Koskinen perceives Johan as a phenomenologist, one who forms his consciousness though the acts of performing and signifying in relation to the viewed object (144). Through Johan's eyes, one sees cinema itself being seen from inside, in the process of unfolding. After the loss of the semi-fictional object, God, there is no redeeming sound/voice present in Bergman's shared existence, the world is binarized and metaphysical wholeness is absent. Silence in Bergman's films has always been the prop behind the human drama of loss and alienation; Bergman reads it as a space of unfolding, of meditative solitude and musical experience of the soul. Singer illustrates this silent spectre in Bergman;

> After he had worked his way through the puzzlement about God's silence, Bergman seems to have acquired the ability to cherish the silence that surrounds us in the natural environment. He perceived it as a type of reality that modern conditions

> have readily destroyed in the name of progress, which mainly generates greed and the hazards of overpopulation. Bergman retreated to the remoteness of Fårö with the intention of finding a cleansing silence in everyday life at its best…The Stockholm Archipelago often served as his idyllic location, but Fårö itself also became a meaningful setting for narrative productions as well as three documentaries about it. (Singer 135)

In Bergman's trilogy, William C. Pamerleau reads a kind of Sartrean forlornness which is felt as a burden due to the loss of the *a priori* God; "Forlornness is all about a feeling of abandonment by a personal God, the 'perfect and infinite consciousness' that can effectively intervene in the world if He so chooses" (127). The centre of these religious concerns and circumstances locates itself in mutual care and re-established dimensions of life and depth, in understanding of the meanings surrounding life. The Bergmanian experience of not-speaking and being-silent, of losing/realising oneself in the presence of divine/human silence stand in direct contrast to the Beckettian exposition of silence through unending (faltering) speech, physical decay and the location of the language of language and silence. Susan Sontag writes on the aesthetics of silence in her *Styles of a Radical Will*,

> Language is experienced not merely as something shared but something corrupted, weighed down by historical accumulation. Thus, for each conscious artist, the creation of a work means dealing with two potentially antagonistic domains of meaning and their relationships. One is his own meaning (or lack of it); the other is the set of second-order meanings which both extend his own language and also encumber, compromise, and adulterate it…Compensating for this ignominious enslavement to history, the artist exalts himself with the dream of a wholly ahistorical, and therefore unalienated, art. (16-17)

Against the full void of divine ‘interventions’ Bergman’s silence is oriented toward a dialectical interplay of consciousness. In Bergman’s films, one listens to the silence of emptiness, populated with the words of the Christian God, an echo of hollow spiritual voices. Bergman’s solicitation of (cinematic) silence is therefore a movement toward silent, opaque art, which demands contemplation (consequently a self-annihilation of the vertiginous spectator) and formation of a new speech for interpretation.

Notes

1. For detailed information on the philosophy of Eino Kaila, see Livingston's essay *Bergman, Kaila, and the Faces of Irrationality* in *Cinema, Philosophy, Bergman: On Film as Philosophy* (125-160).
2. For an elaborate understanding of Marion's "phenomenology of givenness", read Mackinlay's introduction in *Interpreting Excess* (1-14).
3. See, for example, Zizek's explanation of the Lacanian Real in *How to Read Lacan* (61-78).

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Chapter IV

The Being-lessness of Being in Beckett's Trilogy

Silence in Beckett is directed toward the anti-art, a lack, a negative beyond the beyond of knowledge. For Bergman, it is concentrated within the enervation and apathy of nature and transcendence, the unconcealed close-up of objects. Beckettian silence is a form of continuous dialogue surrounded by a vacuity and immateriality of language, identities and forms. As punishment against this search for non-conformist negation, the storyteller in Beckett functions under insanity and self-destruction. Existence and usage of the impure, abstract language always function as a burden for the self-conscious Beckettian teller. Beckett's art is often a medium of shock and counter-violence experienced on the continuous utterance of reality. The authorial identity of Beckett remains suspended henceforth Molloy where the narrator himself narrates his own history through half-memories and reminiscences. The reconstruction of the narrated subject occurs alongside the simultaneous restructuring of the writing subject. Writing in Beckett resembles a phenomenological act, where the subject is under the surveillance of continuous interrogation of the intending consciousness. The narration from the subjective ground remains unstoppable since the self is the object of the investigating subject; consciousness becomes conscious of itself by objectifying the 'I'. The disjointed, dissociated events of observing the distant figures against the landscape, of killing the dog, of physical dereliction, reflect the uncertainty and fluidity of the self in an incessant attempt to frame itself by decoding the unrepresentable (death). An entire progression toward death from the position of dying marks the movement of the novel- a return/arrival to the zero-position, where the author ideates the text and the text realizes its end. The disjunction is between the desire to die and the compulsion to write (about death/life

parodying death), writing to stave off death and death as inevitability, to reach at writing as death (emptying of the self). Molloy's self descends, dragging with the burden of language and his language, carrying the impossibility of the ambivalent, mythical self. Molloy is designed as a porous circle, where one seeks the other, following the pattern of the other, finds, half-recognizes, abandons/kills, vanishes and returns; the disintegrated self explores its identifiable others in a circular framework and ends up further alienated. Writing for one's self and talking to oneself within the room, resembling a suspended limbo between the tomb and the outside airlessness turns into an anthropomorphic provocation where words must reach the ear to situate existence. Molloy witnessing the brief encounter between A and C signifies the circular pattern of the narrative; A moving "toward the town" (*Molloy Malone Unnamable* 9) and C skulking with uncertain steps toward a un-fixed destination can predate the positions of Molloy and Moran respectively. It presents itself almost as a misapprehended vision of the seer of an undetermined future where Moran supplants Molloy's position as A, journeying to 'Molloy country' and Molloy, with his vacillating geographical coordinates, occupies the visitor C. Molloy obligation to write, fidelity toward the letter (Youdi) and his quest for nothing manifest in the parallel desire to tell stories ("What I need now is stories" (13)) and consequently to take recourse to silence/death, "…that you would do better…to obliterate texts than to blacken margins, to fill in the holes of words till all is blank and flat and the whole ghastly business looks like what is it, senseless, speechless, issueless misery" (13). The decaying body lying in the empty room must be reconstituted with the construction of fictional wholeness.

In a Meursault-esque method of indefiniteness over the time of the dying/dead mother ("…my mother's death. Was she already dead when I came? Or did she die later?...Perhaps they haven't buried her yet…I sleep in her bed. I piss and shit in her pot. I have taken her place. I must resemble her more and more" (*Molloy Malone Unnamable* 7-8)), Molloy's

journey to the mother's room befits a spiritual exploration of the primal self which has to exorcise the past through murder and the abandonment of desires to arrive at itself. Death becomes a nonpareil and Molloy's mother the internal space of in-existence, a lacking object of desire around which Molloy must circle eternally. The quest for the mother, a return to the womb, mirrors a journey to the Deleuzian deserted island, in search of oneness, re-birth and second be-coming. This re-origination on the metaphorical island surrounded by deserted waters and desolate lands is the necessary condition for arriving at inwardness. Deleuze, in his imaginative *Desert Islands,* associates mythology to the deserted islands which exist alone, in a state of interdependency, waiting for humans to populate its desertedness with their ostracization and sense of un-belonging. Molloy must abandon the physicality of the mother to reach the consciousness of/as the mother; the succeeding monologue digressing through the 'real' geographical locations of "Turdybaba" and "Ballybaba" journeys toward the mythological unity of Moran with the deserted Molloy. Moran's Molloy can only be acquired through a realization of absence, a coalition of beings in absolute nothingness. Molloy's multiplicities, diffused identity and the mythic nature contrasted to the locational search for the physical Molloy are the source of the collapsing energy within the Sisyphean Moran and the fissure in his being. Moran, under the shadow of the elusive figure, decodes the presence of five Molloys surrounding him; "He that inhabited me, my caricature of the same, Gaber's and the man of flesh and blood somewhere awaiting me" (*Molloy Malone Unnamable* 115) and Youdi's Molloy, a shadow of the 'real' shadowy Molloy. An authentic being-there at the deserted island would be a harmonious correspondence between the individual consciousness of the island as "deserted and unpeopled" and the human as "inwardness".

> …uncommon humans, they are absolutely separate, absolute creators, in short, an Idea of humanity, a prototype, a man who would almost be a god, a woman who would be a

> goddess, a great Amnesiac, a pure Artist, a consciousness of Earth and Ocean, an enormous hurricane, a beautiful witch, a statue from the Easter Islands. There you have a human being who precedes itself. Such a creature on a deserted island would be the deserted island itself… A consciousness of the earth and ocean, such is the deserted island, ready to begin the world anew. (Deleuze 11)

The text itself, with its arid, dying characters, resembles a 'deserted island' trying continually to seize the consciousness of silence in language, where the mouth and the words, the seeker and the sought, are one. Language of deficiency, of holes, (mis)represents Molloy the transient, the nebulous. Deleuze, in his essay *He Stuttered*, mentions the Beckettian use of disequilibrium in language which makes language vibrate and metamorphose. Deleuze calls this process a "minorization" of major languages where language, internally disintegrated outside the fixed narrative conventions, generates meaning independently (109). "Creative stuttering is what makes language row from the middle, like grass; it is what makes language a rhizome instead of a tree, what puts language in perpetual disequilibrium: *Ill Seen, Ill Said* (content and expression)" (*Stuttered* 111). From the absence of being and multiplicities to the desire for lasting nothing, Molloy wanders in search of calm, inexpressible expressions, profound perplexity and colossal stasis. Molloy's silence is outside the expanse of the linguistic collision of words which digress from the silence of dead language. Molloy's language of death is directed toward that silence of being (dis)located between lifeless life and deathless death- the literature of nothing and horror. Georges Bataille, arguing about the use of dead language in *Molloy* in the *Critique* (1951), writes,

> Death itself would be that final silence that has never been attenuated by its imitations. Literature, on the other hand, lines up a torrent of incongruous words next to silence. Though it allegedly conveys the same meaning as death, this silence is only a parody of the latter…Likewise this Molloy, who is its incarnation, is not precisely a dead man.

> The profound apathy of death, its indifference to every possible thing, is apparent in him, but this apathy would encounter in death itself its own limit. The interminable meandering in the forest of this death's equivalent on crutches is, nevertheless, different from death in one respect: that out of habit, or for the sake of persevering more diligently in death and in the amorphous negation of life—in the same way that literature is in the end silence in its negation of meaningful language, but remains what it is, literature—the *death* of Molloy is in this death obsessed life, in which not even the desire to forsake it is permitted. (63)

Molloy, on his crutch, crawling through the forest toward the grave of oblivion, is an image of the impending death that remains interrupted, delayed and the vast indifference of the world reciprocated. The catatonic Molloy, in the quest for nothing, for the life-in-death, writes nothing, with the sweat of a pig, humour of a dog and the nonsense of a derelict. The continuous slippage of the words, the refusal of the text to adhere to motion, the perpetual self-parodying and introspection by the characters and authorial intrusion turns *Molloy* into a self-reflexive black comedy and meta-narrative. From being to the erosion of being, the ill-knowledge ill-recollected on paper opens the gap between the fundamental desire for writing and the 'immaterial' contents of the form. The epistemological breakdown in the dying words from the decaying body rises from the narration which repeatedly re-tells stories and 'real' incidents based on loose memory and an ambiguous need to produce art (against time). Molloy's journey from Molloy in the bed to Molloy in the ditch and Moran's, from the bourgeois construct to a crippled deadness provide the novel a vague narrative circularity without linearity; the endless timelines, of territorial justifications, decrepit human relations, violence and frail interdependencies, mars the 'real' beginning of the quest. The regional limits of Molloy are set in the middle of the narrative where all places perish into sameness under the uninterrupted search for non-being- "Molloy your region is vast, you have never

left it and you never shall. And wheresoever you wander, with its distant limits, things will always be the same, precisely" (*Molloy Malone Unnamable* 65-66). Molloy's constant reiteration of "Here's my beginning" to the prelude of his narrative signifies the lack of narrative security, faith and chronology. Who speaks in Molloy? Is it the writing subject attempting to find coherence through the wandering, speaking body; is it the quester in his unending search for stories to propel the narrative a bit further, where the fictionality of (narrative) truth dissolves; if one perceives Moran as an/other unreality of Molloy to realize narrative wholeness, where can one locate the reality of Moran as fiction? The lucidity and flux in the narrative to arrive at the decentred centre of the text (mother and Molloy) signify the authorial un-reliability and continuous slippage of information. The collision in the head, of the dead fictions, of "…a gallery of moribunds. Murphy, Watt, Yerk, Mercier and all the others…Stories, stories, I have not been able to tell them all. I shall not be able to tell this one" (*Molloy Malone Unnamable* 138), imbibe deadness within the whole narrative and Moran and Molloy move from one deadness to the other, through deadness. The aversion to the sergeant with half-remembered historical accounts destroys the structure of the narrational subject. The fiction of the self and fictive self merge in the momentary retaliation against the fixity of fictional imagination, "For what really happened was quite different…In reality I said nothing at all, but I hear a murmur, something gone wrong with the silence…And then sometimes there arose within me, confusedly, a kind of consciousness, which I express by saying, I said, etc, or, Don't do it Molloy, or, Is that your mother's name?" (88). The narrative subject, arranged, disfigured and reconstituted problematizes the truth of the entire narrative; "It is midnight. The rain is beating on the windows. It was not midnight. It was not raining" (176). Lack of biographical and regional information acts as an inverted retaliation to authority and law and highlights Molloy's antipathy toward any (central) governance.

> And suddenly I remembered my name, Molloy. My name is Molloy. I cried, all of a sudden, now I remember…Is it your mother's name? said the sergeant…Molloy, I cried, my name is Molloy. Is that your mother's name?...What? I said. Your name is Molloy…Yes, I said, now I remember. And your mother?...I didn't follow. Is your mother's name Molloy too?...Was mother's name Molloy? Very likely. Her name must be Molloy too…. (*Molloy Malone Unnamable* 23)

Molloy as the subject pursuing the mother as the object itself is a problematic discourse, for the object assumes the role of the primary source/subject around which the Molloy revolves, wrecked in the second monologue by the new subject, Moran in pursuit of the new object Molloy. Instead of the object, the subject assumes the position of the other, defined, rationalised, located, identified by the object. The endless endings, the non-beginning of beginning indicates the impossibility emerging out of the narrative flux, the suspended story-teller.

Molloy's metaphorical, schizoid journey within the regression/progression framework occurs with a parallel expedition to and rejection of the maternal figure. The inverted Oedipal urge is in discovering the mother for a philosophical synthesis with the being; the sexual parallel of the son being the father to the mother, "…but Dan, I don't know why, my name is not Dan. Dan was my father's name perhaps" (*Molloy Malone Unnamable* 17), is immediately invalidated by the confusion of the half-remembered past. Propelled by the undying, undead voice, Molloy is perennially projected toward the position of the mother, such that all endings would unconditionally convert into a renewed beginning of the same quest; "…all my life, I think I had been going to my mother…And when I was no longer with her I was again on my way to her…And when I appeared to give up…in reality I was hatching my plans and seeking the way to her house" (87). Antithetical to the mother-son dyad stand the forgotten and abandoned fathers of the text. The autocratic, punishing figure

of Youdi is the insistence of the letter, Gaber, as a synecdochal part for the whole Youdi and a messenger of indecipherable messages symbolises the deformed father and Moran's bourgeois religiosity and visual composition of the garden and household decompose due to the desertion of his son Jacques. Against the defunct fathers, the hope for Molly, as the saviour father, self-destructs itself in assigning a centre to the decentred mover, to the lost one. The romantic and sexual associations to Lousse and Ruth are consumed by the overwhelming, primordial image of the mother. Repeated assertions of the vaginal hole forsaking Molloy onto the ditch of existence (the birth trauma) and the maternal (un-loved) nurturing focus on the in-human presence in Molloy, on death's reduction of the self prior to its self-organizing process.

> …And I forgive her for having jostled me a little in the first months and spoiled the only endurable, just endurable, period of my enormous history…And if even I'm reduced to looking for a meaning to my life, you never can tell, it's in that old mess I'll stick my nose to begin with, the mess of that poor old uniparous whore and myself the last of my foul brood, neither man nor beast (*Molloy Malone Unnamable* 19).

The act of ravaging the emotional attachment to the word 'Ma' with the inclusion of the hard consonant 'g', the trash in the names of Bally and Turdy, Moran's confusion with the names Molloy/Moll-ose/Moll-one/Moll-och, place a loathing toward identifying things in the text. All experiments at naming result in a neutralization of selfhood and encaging within specified constitutions.

> …my sense of identity was wrapped in a namelessness often hard to penetrate…when already all was fading, waves and particles, there could be no things but nameless things, no names but thingless names. I say that now, but after all what do I know now about then, now when the icy words hail down upon me, the icy meanings and the world dies too, foully named. (*Molloy Malone Unnamable* 31)

Benjamin Keatinge in his essay, *Philosophical Vagrancy in Molloy: A Deleuzean Reading*, considers the Deleuzean anti-Oedipus framework within the thematic structure of Molloy. According to Keatinge, Molloy, as the schizoid, functions outside the neurotic construct of the family and heteronormative hermeneutics. *Molloy* is the "nomadic" text of Deleuze written in the Beckettian symptomatic world by the symptomatologist, outside the "codifications" in a space of spacelessness and namelessness (Keatinge 26-27). Molloy represents the 'schizophrenic breakthrough' of Deleuze in the 'desubjectivised realm' of lucidity and unhinged subjectivity (33).

> …to use Deleuzean terminology, we might say that *Molloy* posits the opposition of molar and molecular identities where the molar "concerns institutions, society writ large … political parties, religious, ethnic or ideological groupings" and the molecular "multiplicities, unstable entities constantly undergoing processes of formation and transformation ... rhizomatic in structure, non-hierarchical, revolutionary." (Keatinge 28)

Beckett presents Molloy's refusal to be anything, to conform to the objective denotations, to adhere to the fluidity of onwardness in an anarchical method in madness, in a de-structured language uttered by concrete volatility and anomaly. Neither the hunger for I-ness, nor the longing for an authentic belonging, Molloy's tour de force (in a mock Murphy-esque way) is a movement away from the egoic interdependency to autonomous transcendence. *Murphy* (1938) is a parable on inertia- the movement in the novel, from the dualist's physical stasis of the body and the metaphysical deliberations of the mind to the mind-lessness in the asylum, traces the impossibilities of desire and the inverted liberation of the philosophical self. Murphy locates oneness and authentic existence in the 'disordered' universe of the deranged, in the indecipherable non-language of the inmates. The characters outside the normative framework of fiction exist on the periphery, on the edges of blurred anthropomorphic notions,

as ghosts of a semi-remembered past. Neither alive, nor dead, they are perpetually on the verge of subject-formation and disintegration. Murphy's departures and disquiet nomadic life are a quest for the zone of death; outside the determinist determinates Murphy's will to assert himself collides with the multiple endless forages. Murphy's mind itself resembles the vast nothingness of the universal vacuum which imbibes all things. The mind-body dualism and incongruence in Murphy evolves into an individualistic third dimension trace "outside space and time, a non-mental non-physical Kick from all eternity, dimly revealed to Murphy in its correlated modes of consciousness and extension" (70). Chaos for the naked Murphy on his rocking chair is the animal energy of the cosmic lava out of which 'order' emerged; Murphy's immeasurable movements pacify this cosmic energy within his being. The gravity of such a force can only end in the stasis of the body. The realization of this freedom manifests in the dark territory of his anarchic mind and in his surrender to Mr. Endon's game of chess where, according to Gregory Byala, he "obtains…"the rare postnatal treat" of the unperceived" (275-276). Murphy's crematory dust indistinguishable from the dust of the saloon and the "spit" and "vomit" of commotion and his return to the inanimate unformed, is where Murphy "enters chaos fully, which is a state in which the mind, body and soul are released from the temptation of habit and the eternal recurrence of the created universe" (Byala 276). Murphy's invisibility in the eyes of the (socially) invisible Mr. Endon denotes a double negative on the being of Murphy, a nothingness mirrored on the lessness of Mr. Endon. The spectral absence and the loss of visual identification for Murphy is the pure being-there by not-being-there.

'the last at last seen of him
himself unseen by him
and of himself'…

> The last Mr. Murphy saw of Mr. Endon was Mr. Murphy unseen by Mr. Endon. This was also the last Murphy saw of Murphy…Mr. Murphy is a speck in Mr. Endon's unseen. (*Murphy* 156)

Murphy, as the mediator between the un-real reality of the schizoids and the 'colossal fiasco' of the 'real' desires, realizes untrammelled freedom in the mad men and their ordered chaos; the love that Murphy holds for Endon (Greek for 'within') is itself an affinity toward inwardness and consequent emptiness of non-being. The non-appearance of Murphy in Mr. Endon's eyes, of gazing into Mr. Endon's eyes and locating his own absence, of unseeing the remnant of being Murphy, concomitant with the burning of physical, serves as a purgatory mark to the desire for a negative selfhood through absolute oneness with nothingness.

James Carney's *The Buzzing of B: The Subject as Insect in Beckett's Molloy* looks at *Molloy* from the insectile point of view- a phylogenetic reading of the bee-imagery (*Apis Mellifica*) present throughout the text within which Molloy inheres. Borrowing from the modernist tropes of insect in Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, Eliot's 'ragged claws' in *Prufrock* and *Frankenstein*'s animalistic grave-man, Carney interprets the animal consciousness of Molloy outside anthropomorphic culture and his inability to adapt to and comply with the "bee-language". The text highlights the influence of Karl von Frisch's 1946 essay *The Dances of Bees* on Beckett and his reference to the entomologist study of Moran's bees and Molloy's continuous buzzing. Carney's insect-list in *Molloy* includes the queen bee (woman) centric voyage to the Turdy Madonna and the mother, "I cannot, I cannot…I have sworn to make a bee-line to her!" (*Molloy Malone Unnamable* 174), the homophonic conjunction of Molloy as the middle term B between A and C, Youdi as the law enforcer assigning Moran to re-integrate Molloy into the code of ethics within the bourgeois hive (Carney 227-228). Through Adorno's posthumous work *Metaphysics: Concepts and Problems*, Carney focuses on the 'matter' of human suffering which remains hidden in the Western literary tradition of form

and solitary concept; the matter is the crude material which must resurface or operate as a 'voice' to merge the animalistic and the human in the post-human human. *Molloy* disintegrates the cultural structures to activate the underbelly of loose biological coordinates operating and desires. Carney explicates his analysis through Derrida's remark on the animal proximity in *Critical Enquiry*; "The gaze called animal offers to my sight the abyssal limit of the human: the inhuman or the a-human, the ends of man, that is to say the border crossing from which vantage man dares to announce himself to himself, thereby calling himself by the name that he believes he gives himself" (235). The naturalistic and the animalistic in Molloy find an ecological balance (the sucking of stones- "A little pebble in your mouth…makes you forget your hunger, forget your thirst" (*Molloy Malone Unnamable* 26)) with the social (Moran); Molloy echoes the unsettling and coming together of both worlds. Adorno's 'irrational thought' to express the 'other' of culture, the non-human (to arrive at the material reality of human suffering) manifests itself in *Molloy's* zone of the excremental/animal (Carney 234). The violence and indifference toward the other resembles a brutality toward the self and a primitive reminder of the pursuit of being. Molloy and Moran reflect their savagery in the murder of the charcoal burner (Molloy's other lost in the forest of dead consciousness) and the dim man (Moran's other who "vaguely resembled my own" appearance (*Molloy Malone Unnamable* 151) demanding definite answers from the adrift Moran) in the process of losing I-ness. The blissful freedom in death of the self and its negation is repeatedly reiterated by Moran, "It is in the tranquillity of decomposition that I remember the long confused emotion which was my life…To decompose is to live too, I know, I know, don't torment me" (25). Molloy's disengagement from the conceptual 'clarity' of anthropology and confusion regarding the "relentless definition of man" stands in opposition to the congruence he attaches to the dead mongrel Teddy, "old, blind, deaf, crippled with rheumatism" (*Molloy Malone Unnamable* 33). The barbarian invasion is further

sustained by the presence of Lousse's 'vulgar' parrot emitting "Putain de merde!" (38). Moreover, the repeated presence of the grazing lamb, the area 'behind the slaughter house' around Moran's dwelling, the roaming shepherd and the sniffing dogs elevate the spectre of the animalistic other against the banished cultural surrounding of the outside. The image of Christ hidden in the overlooking shepherd is expunged by the visual importance allotted to the animals accompanying him. The edification of the base substructure to philosophical heights in *Molloy* problematizes the locus of centre itself; meaning is dislocated from the fundamental man-oriented structures to the silent/erupting zones of the organs. The sense of being-ness shifts to the limbs and the genitals and any mode of non-function or loss are related to the obstacles *en route* to the original quest.

> …with my finger up my arse-hole for example, Jesus Christ, it's much worse than yesterday…Perhaps it is less to be thought of as the eyesore here called by its name than the symbol of those passed over in silence, a distinction due perhaps to its centrality and its air of being a link between me and the other excrement. We underestimate the little hole…But is it not rather the true portal of our being and the celebrated mouth…nothing goes in, or o little, that is not rejected on the spot, or very nearly. Almost everything revolts it that comes from without and what comes from within does not seem to receive a very warm welcome either. (*Molloy Malone Unnamable* 79, 80)

The centrality of the hole as the nucleus of the whole is conjoined with the being to be excreted to reach an/other being (of nothing). The hollow orifice where everything is rejected is that space of indigenous being where other beings are forbidden and the 'other excrement' differentiated from the others' waste establishes an authentic connect between the self and the self's other. Molloy surfacing out of his mother's arse with the primordial taste of shit, and Turdy as 'Molloy country' presents Molloy as the lump of excreta and the text as the journey

toward the wholesomeness of shit as the rejected nothing, gathering all shits from places where Molloy once shat multiple nothings leading to an absolute, consummate nothing up to the mother's room, the place of his first excretory experience. Molloy's bladder discharging urine which "smells of kidneys", sweat of a "queer smell" (81), and Moran's vexations for his testicles "which swung a little low" (158) ground *Molloy* within the 'mud and scum' of cultural negations from where Molloy pursues pure vanishing. Shane Weller in his *Beckett, Literature, and the Ethics of Alterity*, discussing the body as abject and its distance from transcendence, writes "In *Molloy*…the fart is not just one among other forms of the body's return. It is the sign of the abject body as something essentially excremental, in which spirit (as *pneuma*) has become another kind of gas" (116).

Moran's authorial, objective description of Molloy, "He had very little room. His time was too limited. He hastened incessantly on, as if in despair, toward extremely close objectives. Now, a prisoner, he hurled himself at I know not what narrow confines, and now hunted, he sought refuge near the centre" (*Molloy Malone Unnamable* 113), is immediately contradicted by Molloy's monstrosity that overwhelms the entire being of Moran; "He swayed to and fro like a bear. He rolled his head, uttering incomprehensible words. He was massive and hulking, to the point of misshapenness. And, without being black, of a dark colour. He was forever on the move…This was how he came to me, at long intervals. Then I was nothing but uproar, bulk, rage, suffocation, effort unceasing, frenzied and vain" (114). Molloy, for Moran, embodies the disembodied nothingness and exists as the incomplete self, such that finding Molloy would be discovering one half of the breathing self and knowing the dead other. Moran's search for his Molloy parallels Beckett's own pilgrimage within the interior locales of the subconscious where the semi-fictional parts of the past re-enact the drama of being and nothingness, their findings and losing(s), and the artist's desire to unite with all the selves; "Would we all meet again in heaven one day, I, my mother, my son, his mother,

Youdi, Gaber, Molloy, his mother, Yerk, Murphy, Watt, Camier and the rest?" (168). In the end, Moran does find (the absent) Molloy in the deadness of his house, in his encountering the negation of all he had known, the nothingness in mis-identification and intimate light- "I had come home…My hens were dead…My bees, my hens, I had deserted them. I went towards the house. It was in darkness…No light…There is nothing more to tell. The house was empty" (175). The restored recognition in the birds, in Hanna and the new consciousness of the unknown voice's language implant within a new sense of being, with the awareness of half-locating nothing and the inevitable contradiction of all such quests.

Malone's physical inertia in *Malone Dies* is neutralized by his indecipherability as a writer, a Beckettian representative by proxy, who claims to have conceptualized the beings of Molloy and Moran and Mercier and ordained deaths upon in/significant characters and realizes the failure to narrate the event of his own demise, of the final whole through death. Chained to a singular setting of motionlessness and immovable due to the dead legs, Malone, already in the zone of death, is suspended in timelessness, both inside and outside time. As a being-toward-death, Malone's stories explore the impossible spaces of literature, with words filling out the vacuum of death and locating the self vis-à-vis this emptiness of death. Malone's metanarrative, involving the stories about Sapo and Macmann itself evolves into an act of deflection from the stasis, and a movement away from the selves to arrive at a united (dead) being. Malone, now reduced to a segregated trace of all the beings he had been, journeys through the lucidity of Sapo's gaping wanderings and impressionistic attachments and the transformed Macmann's asylum and mad love, and awaits in quiescence the convergence of fictional reality and real fiction. Observed from a distance, the stillness in Malone's prolonged death turns into an artistic depiction of slowness. The text becomes an arrangement for death- the narrative deaths of Sapo and the Lamberts to the death of the un-real author. The movement is from dying (under the exhaustion of all possibilities) to deaths

(through meta-narrative intrusion and will) down to an absolute death. Writing death and writing till the moment of death are the two limits joining the several points of the narrative. What Malone desires to frame are the multiple deaths and lives-in-death of the dying man; thus, Malone *dies* shifts to other generic acts of simple present tense such as Malone *writes*, Malone *thinks, eats, shits* and *travels, observes, kills* (italics for emphasis). The deaths in the text, for Malone, are metaphorical acts of ceasing the 'I' altogether, of killing the self before the physical death, through exhibition of other selves. Malone's self can partly achieve the desired death only in the inertia of Lemuel, in consciously writing the 'end' and granting Lemuel an invariable centre in his actlessness. Representation of the zero moment of death, of nihilation of the being, is the 'perverse' act for Malone. The death of the Lambert mule, of Moll, of the servants of Lady Pedal, point at the death of the writing subject himself, where writing and being end together in a fictive suicide, writing arrives at its own limit (through the death of other representatives). Writing for Malone resembles the lucid centre through which the 'I' locates its selfhood and the reality from which it unfurls and toward which it journeys. Eugene F. Kaelin propounds a Heideggerian analysis of *Malone Dies* in his *The Unhappy Consciousness*, where he discusses Malone's being-unto-death and his projected future as non-being. The consciousness of Malone is directed toward pure evaporation, a future event of absolute vanishing and his stories attempt to delineate that authentic death of the self (within and without), death as individual possibility. Malone's (repeated) dying and future death as a solipsistic event is encountered with narrative acknowledgement of deaths of the living characters, of expunging Sapo and Macmann.

> His anguish banishes his fear, as his awareness turns from the world to himself; and if his death is to be authentic, he must actually die in the act of telling his last story…Malone's spatiality, his physical presence to the world, is reduced to its absolute center, as if in fulfillment of every solipsist's dream, just as his temporality, the

> consciousness he has of himself in that state, is approaching the point of no return. And the anxiety of that consciousness is reflected in the style of its expression: hurried, tedious, interrupted by thoughts of self, of the felicity or infelicity of the moment's image. (102-103)

The anguish of the being-toward-death/silence ceases with the stasis of Lemuel, of the murderer's ejection of killing, a Beckettian intrusion where he paralyses everything.

Authenticity is sought in the being in writing and the writing of being. Body and the graphite regress together in a mutual accordance with negation of being. Malone's historico-fictional half-cataloguing of events strives to resituate the forgotten self through past memories and acts of violence and contemplation. The crisis, however, occurs in the repeated relapsing of the fictive self on the 'real' self; the insufficiency of stories, of other selves, neutralizing the pains of the narrator, is reiterated at intrusive intervals ("Live and invent. I have tried. I must have tried. Invent. It is not the word. Neither is live." (*Malone* 25)). Yet the paradox is in continuously reinstating the fictional, in going on writing, creating incessantly in order to stave off the fear of erasure, to reach the desired erasure (of self). If writing in the text is seen as an act of relocating the eroding self, it can also be interpreted as anti-fiction, for the narrating self continually refers back to the dying autobiographical 'reality' of the being in death, thereby cancelling prospects of the effacement of the self by the fictive others.

> All I ask is to know, before I abandon him whose life has so well begun, that my death and mine alone prevents him from living on, from winning, losing, joying, suffering, rotting, and dying, and that even had I lived he would have waited, before he died, for his body to be dead. (29)

The self and the other invade each other in the confused narrative space of the fiction and the self sustains itself as the primary speaker of the events. Thus, Molloy, Malone qua Beckett write and are written, find and are found in the interstices of the existential void;

"…on the threshold of being no more I succeed in being another" (*Malone* 24). Malone is steeped in indecisiveness regarding the acceptance of death and ambivalence in leaving the sub-narratives behind. If, on the one hand, there is a stoic resignation toward death, then the following instant shows the insignificance of death and futile continuance in the world. The aesthetic attempt is perpetually directed toward finding a window in the self opening outside to the world and incessantly creating and dying/remaining before the final death; "Because in order not to die you must come and go, come and go" (72)/ "And when one dies the others go on, as if nothing had happened" (74)/ "But before I go I should like to find a hole in the wall behind which so much goes on, such extraordinary things, and often coloured. One last glimpse and I feel I could slip away as happy as if I were embarking for…" (79)/ "My story ended I'll be living yet… That is the end of me. I shall say I no more" (138); Malone, barely existing in an indefinite space, an indeterminate time and under the supervision and 'care' of unidentified hands and bodies, is segregated from his own thoughts and emotions and welded in the futile representations of the 'I'.

> All my senses are trained full on me, me. Dark and silent and stale, I am no prey for them. I am far from the sounds of blood and breath, immured. I shall not speak of my sufferings. Cowering deep down among them I feel nothing. It is there I die, unbeknown to my stupid flesh. That which is seen, that which cries and writes, my witless remains. Somewhere in this turmoil thought struggles on, it too wide of the mark. It too seeks me, as it always has, where I am not to be found. It too cannot be quiet. On others let it wreak its dying rage, and leave me in peace. (*Malone* 14)

The dissociation between the thoughts of the seeking self, the thoughts of the dying self with its sense of futility and misrepresentation (which interrupt the thought-process), and the thoughts of the decaying body, disrupt the text from the inside. Therefore, the desire of the thoughts to go on saying 'I' is repeatedly obfuscated by impact of other I(s). The biological

body as if attains a philosophy of its own being in desiderating a survival of a self after its physical death; “My body does not yet make up its mind” (29). Malone’s stories are designed to move him away from mind’s self-representation and situate him in a suspended zone of un-representation, of impossibility of finding oneself in the multitude of the lives of others. Malone’s trope of implementing the third person storyteller ejects the narrator (if only occasionally) from the main frame of the text only to reassign the self (often unawares) in the schema of the return of the traumatic repressed. The language games must enable the self to forget the self in rehearsed acts of self-ignorance, to reiterate its own removal from needs of representation.

> I wonder if I am not talking yet again about myself. Shall I be incapable, to the end, of lying on any other subject…I must simply be on my guard, reflecting on what I have said before I go on and stopping, each time disaster threatens, to look at myself as I am. That is just what I wanted to avoid . . . After that mud-bath I shall be better able to endure a world unsullied by my presence. (*Malone* 17-18)

James H. Reid, in his *Proust, Beckett, and Narration*, discloses the complexity between the ironical self desiring an indifference to self-representation and the ‘deferral’ in stories which produces the allegorical setting of the text.

> …the very attempt to become an ironical storytelling self who negates any allegorical search for self in time reproduces allegory as the temporal search to become an ironical self. This return to allegory does not constitute the return to a naive belief in self; rather, it marks a discovery that first-person discourse can only disclose a void within the subject between, on the one hand, the allegorical search for, and deconstruction of, an ever-deferred future self or an always lost past self and, on the other hand, the ironical negation of the very notion of a past or future self. (123)

The narrating self as a product of the writing self, remembers, forgets, intrudes and abandons (both the characters and the creator). Reid highlights the presence of the rhetorical device of parabasis in the text, where the intrusion of the writing voice repeatedly destroys the illusory base of the narrating self (125). The bifurcation between the voice of the writer and the voice of the narrator (who narrates along with the words of the writer) invalidates the claims of allegory and irony, where the allegorical approach brings the narrator back to the writer and the ironical narrator's search for ignorance is self-denigrated; "Wrong again. That is not what I said, I could swear to it, that is what I wrote" (*Malone* 43).

> Malone thus splits his voice between a narrating voice that is not yet writing and a writing voice that is no longer narrating, where the act of narrating is too early to be written and the act of writing is too late to narrate...Writing gives birth to a narrating "I" that "is no longer I," that is too late to be the writing "I," which is dead…Malone calls this awareness of being spoken by language "conation"…the consciousness of a drive (to speak and think) that appears volitional, but whose origin is unknown. (Reid 125-126)

The internal fracturing of language is metaphorically presented by the dislocation of the body parts in Malone-the ailing physical constantly suffers an alienation from the thinking metaphysical; "Strange, I don't feel my feet any more, my feet feel nothing anymore…My arse for example, which can hardly be accused of being the end of anything, if my arse suddenly started to shit at the present moment, which God forbid, I firmly believe the lumps would fall out in Australia" (*Malone* 75-76). The interspersed rejection of the third person accounts to fall back on the first person irony, Malone commits the sadomasochistic acts of killing of his own selves in the fictive selves. Otherness must vanish for the writing voice to emerge amidst the babel of other noises. The killing of other voices is Malone's attempt to negate his narrating voice as well, to achieve a negation of memory games outside the

'asylum of language'. The novel is structured within the cages and confines of language by Malone, the writer, and it divulges a circuitous path of attempting to free oneself from this third person neutrality of language which consumes the 'I'. Lemuel emerges as the symbolic saviour with his contingent murders and Malone's cessation of writing through the "never…never…any more" (144). "Lemuel frees the prisoners, including Macmann, from the asylum of language, kills off representatives of the asylum, and takes off with them in a boat. His murder and self flagellation become an ethical sacrifice that is also a gift of freedom to the voices in language's asylum" (Reid 136).

Malone's game of death, "Now it a game, I am going to play. I never knew how to play, till now…Then I shall play with myself" (*Malone* 6-7), faintly echoes the Schopenhauerian renunciation of will to live, movement toward death and aversion toward reproduction (through the lifeless sexual experiences of Moll and Macmann). Malone's death drive and pleasure in the megrims of death, as an object of hunt, are positioned as quarry at the centre of the text. Malone undergoes repeated textual suicides before the real death of the body, through the exertion of the authorial will upon the characters; it operates as an anomaly in itself, where death to others also signifies death of the creator. The text focalizes the incongruity between the desire "To be dead, before her, on her, with her, and turn, dead on dead, about poor mankind, and never have to die any more, from among the living" (113) and that of being there when it occurs, to philosophically interpret the condition of not-being-there after the disappearance of being. In *Playing with Death in Malone Dies*, Julie Campbell reads Beckett's fluid boundaries (textual and psychological) through D. W. Winnicott's "transitional objects" and "potential spaces". The intermediary objects between the child and the mother, the self and the other, structure the concept of symbolization within the child which upholds the cultural structure in the later stages, a realization which transfers the child from the impossible zone self-identification with the mother to that of separation; the

"potential space" refers to the area of creative unity and cultural differences, where the child "plays" with the object (of the m/other and the outside world and of separateness from the mother) (432). *Malone Dies*, according to Campbell, falls along Gabrielle Shwab's "transitional texts" which tend to dissolve the boundaries to "reshape experience" (much like the child's object of disruption) and the narrative unfolds within the Winnicott's "play space" (Campbell 434). Borrowing further from Winnicott's Lacanian idea of mirroring between the mother and the child and Wolfgang Iser's aesthetic theories of literary texts acting as "mirrors" and links of consciousness between the inner world of the reader and the outer realities and generating an "extratextual space" between the reader and the text, Campbell illustrates that reader-identification with this Beckettian text materializes on the memory of experienced death (436-437). The original loss of childhood, of memories, of the ideal connection with the maternal dependency, accumulates the collective reality of death as experience. To be wholly present at our own death is impossible, but play does make the impossible possible. In a sense our identification with Malone allows this experience to happen. We witness Malone dying, face our own fears of death, and experience death within the safety of our potential space. What Beckett could be said to have achieved here is something that is simultaneously frightening and magical: he has brought us face to face with death; he has recalled the memory of it from our unconscious– and we have survived (Campbell 437, 439). Malone's predisposition toward the elements of death, restricted within a "plain private room" (*Malone* 10), with a child's inventory (pencil and exercise book) and a stick to "rummage in them, draw them to me, send them back" (11), toothless, defecating, foetus-like, naked in the bed and dependent on a woman (cleaning pot and serving food dishes), presents the archetypal image of the child and the reader encounters the 'omnipotent' power of the child commanding the birth of 'imaginary' characters and willing the random violent death of men and animals alike.

Beckett embeds within Malone the consciousness of a being and the suffering body of an animal, an adverse physical torment and affliction which dissolves the beast and the human. Malone observes from the perspective of the Nietzschean horse, weighing the burden of existence. Malone's horse stands perplexed, 'dejected', until the flogging of the cabman awakens it to the memories of motion, of 'running and pulling' and the habitual contentment of receiving new passengers; the horse then, like Malone, moves towards the unknown steered by the whip of the master (*Malone* 71). In the images of the shrieking pig and the wailing dog, Malone represents the dying animal with the consciousness of dying. The mute torment of the mule, the horror of the dying rabbit, post-death convulsions of the hens and the pre-death quavering of the pigeon, present a vivifying picture of the varied experiences of human/animal suffering- death homogenizes all. The severity in the merging of these seemingly antithetical terms reduces the anthropomorphic reading of Malone's motions to an ethological survey of a 'chained' animal; "If I had the use of my body I would throw it out of the window. But perhaps it is the knowledge of my impotence that emboldens me to that thought. All hangs together, I am in chains" (56).

> To old dogs the hour comes when, whistled by their master setting forth with his stick at dawn, they cannot spring after him…a feeble barking makes him say, It is time I had him destroyed. (21)
>
> For all pigs are alike, when you get to know their little ways, struggle, squeal, bleed, squeal, struggle, bleed, squeal, and faint away…and could never be imitated by a lamb, for example, or a kid. (33)
>
> The mule's black corpse…The yawning jaws, the wreathed lips, the enormous teeth, and bulging eyes, composed a striking death's head…The forelegs, pointing towards heaven, projected above the level of the ground. Old Lambert banged them down with his spade. (47)

> There are rabbits that die before they are killed, from sheer fright. And often you strike a corpse, without knowing it…And you congratulate yourself on having succeeded with the first blow, and not caused unnecessary suffering…Hens on the other hand are more stubborn livers, and some have been observed, with the head already off, to cut a few last capers before collapsing. Pigeons too are less impressionable and sometimes even struggle, before choking to death. (50-51)

Shane Weller, in his *Not Rightly Human: Beckett and Animality*, argues in favour of Beckett's voice against symbolization and anthopomorphization of the animal. According to Weller, Beckett registers into the animalistic opposed to the Cartesian animal as "machine or pure body (*corps, corpus*)" (211), and parades the human as the cruel, organized force. Beckett's ethical response towards animals and the recognition of their absolute otherness raise Malone's philosophical suffering to the agony of the animal's body and flat gaze (opposed to the definitions of animal as lack). "…Beckett disintegrates the Cartesian human/animal distinction, producing neither a rational animal nor Aristotle's political animal, but rather a human-becoming-animal that counterpoints Kafka's animal-becoming-human" (215). The failure of Jackson's parrot to utter the whole of the Peripatetic axiom, *Nihil est in intellectu quod non prius in sensu* ("Nothing is in the intellect that was not first in the senses"), and the master's repeated badgering resulted in Polly's rebellion; "Polly flew into a rage and retreated to a corner of its cage" (*Malone* 55). Through the successful utterance of the first three words, the parrot complements Beckett's reference to Democritus' '*Nothing is more real than nothing*' (22); Beckett associates the nothingness of Malone's life (on bed) to the nothing of the parrot shut within a cage. Beckett's animals, therefore, are never the binary non-human, and his characters never entirely human; they are saturated with the desire of finding the 'unknown knowing' animal voice planted deep within (*Not Rightly Human* 218-219).

> Beckett's disintegration of the human/animal distinction is not the denial, negation, annihilation, or sublation of that distinction. Rather, in Beckett, animals – or at least some animals – become, on occasion, those pseudocoupled beings in which the cognitive and the inorganic, mind and stone, or what Heidegger terms the "world-forming" (*weltbildend*) and the "worldless" (*weltlos*), are brought into a highly paradoxical relation without relation. (*Not Rightly Human* 218)

Beckett's universe of the perverse, dragging act of love-making in "Macmann trying to bundle his sex into his partner's like a pillow into a pillow-slip, folding it in two and stuffing it in with his fingers" (*Malone* 108), according to Jennifer M. Jeffers' *Beckett's Masculinity*, is a burlesque of the Western tradition's representation of sex and pornography and Moll's well-crafted love letters face a romantic distortion from Macmann's unusual sexual and salacious composition. Moll's letter alternating between "And above all *not fret*, these are trifles…and sink together, in an unhappiness that has no shame" and "…oyster kisses just where you think from your own Sucky Moll" (*Malone* 110-111), incorporates the pathos/bathos dyad by rupturing the romantic tone of the words with the reference to genital fluid and fellatio in the oysters (Jeffers 86); art and aesthetics in Beckett fail to provide succour to the ailing selves of the rejected(s). The carnal body long dead and the libidinous altercations forgotten Moll and Macmann enact the habitual histories of traditional love affair. Macmann's rhyming lines for Moll, "Hair Mac and Sucky Molly/In the ending days and nights/Of unending melancholy/Love it is at last unites', stands in non-compliance to the premonition of helpless mortality in 'To the lifelong promise land/Of the nearest cemetery/With his Sucky hand in hand/Love it is at last leads Hairy" (*Malone* 111). Beckett follows the prurient aspects of the Moll/Macmann affair with the yellow canine Christ in Moll's mouth acting as a "third party" (113) fetish for Macmann and "…stinking, yellow, bald, and vomiting" Moll as a consequence of the authorial "Moll. I'm going to kill her"

(114). The graphic absence of religion is heightened by the name of the *Murphy*-like madhouse, "House of Saint John of God" and the consequent defecation in the form of Christ following the mouth of Moll. Sexual birth and reproduction in Beckett in as non-functional as the births from the author's mind (to tell stories, to pass the time of death), existing only the circle of death and nothingness; Macmann's 'semen had never done any harm to anyone' (83)/ "And if I ever stop talking it will be because there is nothing more to be said, even though all has not been said, even though nothing has been said…Then it will be all over with the Murphys, Merciers, Molloys, Morans, and Malones, unless it goes on beyond the grave" (76).

> …an old foetus, that's what I am now, hoar and impotent, mother is done for, I've rotted her, she'll drop me with the help of gangrene…I'll land head-foremost mewling in the charnel-house, not that I'll mewl…All the stories I've told myself, clinging to the putrid mucus, and swelling, swelling, saying, Got it at last, my legend…I shall never be born and therefore never get dead…I shall go on doing as I have always done, not knowing what it is I do, nor who I am, nor where I am, nor if I am…But before I am done I shall find traces of what I was. (65)

In *Sex and Aesthetics in Samuel Beckett's Work*, Paul Stewart reads Malone's self-play as a masturbatory act linked to the (futile) aesthetic creations to substitute the horror of procreation and reproductive sexuality; "subtle puns suggest that safe nonreproductive sexuality, in the form of masturbation, once again offers the metaphoric means to indulge in a sterile form of conception as fictional creation" (149). Subjective art would then oppose the Schopenhauerian will-to-live and console the dying body with its dual objective nature. Author and his characters must be in a joint separateness for Malone to exist without the spasms of death. The only possibility to achieve the suspension of will is in Malone's artistic distance from Saposcat, Macmann and Lemuel (153). The resemblances between the

contemplation of Sapo, the confabulation and insanity of Macmann, and the violence of Lemuel, with the authorial insanities and cogitations fail to make his art 'autonomous' and "access the sublime" (155). Sexual organ associated with the surplus flow of sperm does not signify overwhelming reproductive abilities, rather it exhausts the prospects of future generations; the same organ blessed with the sprouting of sperm and execrated with the occasional droplets of urine functions as a metaphor for the mind of the artist which originates and destroys in an ever-contracting balance. "This aesthetic ideal is incompatible with sexual reproduction, or, as the case here, with aesthetic modes *infected* by sexual reproduction" (Stewart 157).

> Now, my sex, I mean the tube itself, and in particular the nozzle, from which when I was yet a virgin clouts and gouts of sperm came streaming and splashing up into my face, a continuous flow, while it lasted, and which must still drip a little piss from time to time, otherwise I would be dead of uraemia, I do not expect to see my sex again, with my naked eye, not that I wish to, we've stared at each other long enough, in the eye… (*Malone* 76).

Writing partially concords the affirmation of existence and being amidst Malone's incarceration and physical decay. Malone, therefore, engages in the 'I'/'Not I' interplay with his others Lemuel, Macmann and Sapo, in the microcosm of his being, to go on living (to stop living) through the presence/death of his multiplicities. Malone's final assertion of "never" and "any more" echoes the futility and finality of Lear's "Never, never, never, never, never!" (Shakespeare 121). Lemuel's killings in the end, his tutelage of the young man, the Saxon, the small thin man, the giant and Macmann (all humanity/macrocosm of Malone's artistic microcosm) and the final resistance and movement towards negation of action indicates a suggestive obscure death of Malone and a distorted equilibrium.

> Lemuel is in charge, he raises his hatchet on which the blood will never dry, but not to hit anyone, he will not hit anyone, he will not hit anyone any more, he will not touch any more, either with it or with it or with it or with or
> or with it or with his hammer or with his stick or with his fist or in thought in dream I mean he will never
> or with his pencil or with his stick or
> or light light I mean
> never there he will never
> never anything
> there
> any more. (*Malone* 144)

Beckett's *The Unnamable* unfolds beyond the pirouetting quest of the picaresque Molloy and the mortal tedium of Malone, within the zone of the suspended voice which rattles towards its being through stages of non-being and concentrated silence. The voice evokes a silence of a separate dimension against the silence of its masters, a counter-silencing of the other silence to arrive at a final silence. The esoteric narrator of the novel speaks from outside the frame of the text, to his own multiple selves, to the foregone/re-membered 'I's till his self arrives at the essence of its self, in the final summation of all silences. The unnamable in his journey towards the trace, the remainder of his remains, exuviates the intermingling shadows of his former parts:

> I shall not be alone, in the beginning…A few puppets…Malone is there. Of his mortal liveliness little trace remains. He passes before me at doubtless regular intervals, unless it is I who pass before him. No, once and for all, I do not move…Perhaps it is Molloy, wearing Malone's hat…To tell the truth I believe they are all here, at least from Murphy on…. (*Molloy Malone Unnamable* 294-295).

> Two shapes then, oblong like man, entered into collision before me. I naturally thought of the pseudocouple Mercier-Camier. (299)
>
> All these Murphys, Molloys and Malones do not fool me. They have made me waste my time, suffer for nothing, speak of them when, in order to stop speaking, I should have spoken of me and me alone…they never suffered my pains, their pains are nothing, compared to mine… (305)

All fictions dis-integrate in this non-fiction, not-yet-fiction, with its stories and counter-stories, non-beings and non-things. The speaker employing "aporia pure and simple" (293) uses the rhetoric of perplexity and befuddlement to unlock the solipsistic impasse. Even the parody of mythology is taken into its fold through which he locates the self as the primal existent, the sole wanderer; "I am Matthew and I am the angel, I who came before the cross, before the sinning, came into the world, came here" (303). The de-centred narrator occupies the centre of the room where "one finishes vanishing", where tears gush out of his "unblinking eyes" (295) that "can no longer close as they once could…but must remain forever fixed and staring on the narrow space before them where there is nothing to be seen" (303) and the endless discourse auto-ejects off his "liquefied brain" (295). Deprived of his sex organ and his nose and constructed in the image of the masters, the narrator is caught in spiralling self-denigrating master-slave dialectic and a meta-narrative enunciation of other selves.

> They also gave me a low-down on God. They told me I depended on him, in the last analysis. They had it on the reliable authority of his agents at Bally…where the inestimable gift of life had been rammed down my gullet…They also taught me to count…I use it still, to scratch my arse with. Low types they must have been, their pockets full of poison and anecdote' (300).

Anti-birth, anti-sex and anti-family, the unnamable as Mahood (with one arm and one leg) uncoils as a vagabond within the trajectory of the dead family "carried off by sausage-poisoning" including the "the two cunts into the bargain, the one for ever accursed that ejected me into this world and the other, infundibuliform, in which, pumping my likes, I tried to take my revenge" (325). Mahood's rejects all associations with his homeland through the ramming of the dead remains with his crutch, resulting in a violent bathos located in "mother's entrails…Isolde's breast…papa's private parts, or the heart of one of the little bastards" (326). The degenerated Mahood devolves into a singular head hauled by the limbless trunk, flapping a penis without testicles and slowly sinking inside a jar and "Stuck like a sheaf of flowers" (329). Covered with a water-tight tarpaulin during the days of snow (to his utter displeasure) by his chop-house benefactress Madeline, and raised periodically by placing sawdust under the belly, the head is a pure talking machine, a body without organs, which shrinks in direct proportion with the words uttered; it is absolute corrosion of the self left with nothing except the bare minimum. The head in the jar is a reduction, a dismantling of the organism to a paranoid body of the not-yet-stratified-subject reaching the non-organized multiplicity through language. Being fixed within the jar, dimensionless, reminiscent of the dustbins of Nag and Nell, and yet depended on other hands for transportations and communication is the fundamental paradox of the text-being alone with the consciousness of the self and being-in-the-world-with-others.

> …and leave me at peace at last, and give me quittance, and the right to rest, and silence…It's a lot to expect of one creature, it's a lot to ask, that he should first behave as if he were not, then as if he were, before being admitted to that peace where he neither is, nor is not, and where language dies that permits of such expressions. Two falsehoods, two trappings, to be borne to the end, before I can be let loose, alone, in the

> unthinkable unspeakable, where I have not ceased to be, where they will not let me be. (337)

The Unnamable, as Patrick Hayes explains from Coetzee's point of view in his *J. M. Coetzee and the Novel: Writing and Politics After Beckett*, comprises a stylized autodestruction of logocentrism and the impasse in the otherness of others' discourse in which the self is inextricably entwined. Hayes cites the 1970 article *The Comedy of Point of View in Beckett's Murphy*, where Coetzee holds that the text attempts "'to arrive at a division between consciousness and the objects of consciousness'… the possibility of self-knowledge: in the increasingly paranoid realm occupied by the Unnamable, 'consciousness of self can be only consciousness of consciousness. Fiction is the only subject of fiction. Therefore, fictions are closed systems, prisons'" (39). Coetzee in *Eight Ways of Looking at Samuel Beckett*, explicating the confused mind-body dualism in Beckett against the tenets of monism, and the proliferating white world within which the individual is encaged since birth, uses the metaphor of waiting and hunger of a laboratory rat;

> God believes I am a body and a mind, miraculously conjoined. With my body I eat the nut. Something happens, and the nut, either the idea of the nut or the fact of the nut in the stomach, triggers a thought: *Nut good. More nut. Understand one-two-three, get more nut*. It amuses God to think that is what happens, to think that the miracle (that is to say the trick) of conjunction allows him to use a nut get the mind to work. God reflects in passing that conjoining a body with a mind was one of his more inspired ideas, his more inspired and funniest. But God is the only one who finds it funny. The creature, It, I, the laboratory animal, does not find it funny, except in a grim Beckettian way, because the creature, It, I, does not know it is a body and a mind conjoined.
>
> *I think, therefore I am*: that is not what It thinks. On the contrary, it thinks, *I am! I am! I am!* Go on. (Coetzee 28)

Patrick emphasizing on the non-sense of the text and the defamiliarization and opaque transparency of the Worm against the ever-structuring 'they' says that the novel engages in a "disruptive dialogue with otherness… The freedom it generates in this repeated contact with the nothing is never a 'perfective' freedom—never, as Coetzee put it, 'freedom *an sich*' (in itself)—but instead an ongoing process: continually slipping the chains, a continued action of turning the face to the light" (Hayes 52). The text speaks from a voice moving continuously in the immovable would-be-evaporating body, only the undying self is alive to reach a consciousness of its self. The 'nothing' that the text seeks to explicate is not only the failure of expression bent on the disability of language; it is also the nothing-ness of the self endlessly appropriated through texts of nothing. The catatonic response of the unnamable bursts forth from its incomprehensibility of the nothingness that his consciousness intends at, it is ironically a meditation on the void from the void (of the self). The undulated, unbreakable, unadulterated defecation of words from the mouth-shaped hole, pours out words on to the nothing from the nothing toward the self which is nothing, the unfamiliar subjective point from where the words originate. The novel beginning with the questions "Where now? Who now? When now? Unquestioning. I, say I. Unbelieving" (*Molloy Malone Unnamable* 293) situates the text in an atemporal zone, in the limbo of non-corporeal placelessness. Only the voice has survived the onslaught of the self's corrosion against the world, existing in the dimming body against the silence which knows no respite, which can only be withheld with the unstoppable flow of words. "It is not the fault of one that I cannot be the other?" (341); "Where I am there is no one but me, who am not" (358).

Michael Robinson in his 1969 book *The Long Sonata of the Dead* offers a Sartrean failure to *The Unnamable*. Robinson explains the problematic of the consciousness as *pour-soi* and its intending *en-soi* and the negative structure of consciousness being what it is not; consciousness immediately turns to *en-soi,* an object of the Other, the moment it tries to look

at itself as an object of analysis, producing "bad faith" (199). According to Robinson, the Beckettian self therefore creates "a vice-exister who is at the same time as he is not", in the image of the Worm, the Other, the *pour-soi* unknowable to itself and *en-soi* in the perception of the Other. In order for the Worm to perceive Mahood, the unnamable bestows the consciousness of hearing ("Worm hears, that's all that can be said for certain" (*Molly Malone Unnamable* 363)) which in turn converts the Worm from nothing to not-nothing/something which is appropriated by the returning gaze of Mahood as the temporal Other (Robinson 200). Simon Critchley's *Very Little...Almost Nothing: Death, Philosophy and Literature* refers to the aversion of the Beckettian writings to all philosophical hermeneutics and meaning-making, on grounds of metalanguage and the inherent flux in the metaself; the loss of philosophical readings centred on Beckett is underlined by the redundancy of "the sub-Cartesian interpretation where Beckett is allegedly concerned with 'the inexpressible nature of the self whose figurings people the landscape of post-Cartesian modernity', or the sub-Heideggerian interpretation where Beckett strives to attain 'the existential authenticity of being prior to language or of being *as* language', or the sub-Pascalian absurdist interpretation where Beckett expresses 'the quintessential and pessimistic tragic fate of modern man'" (166). Critchley highlights through the metaphor of "dredging machine" in Derrida's *Glas,* the remnant of the Beckettian work- a Derridean letting go of these texts which resist reduction to categorical generalizations and sustain itself as a 'remainder'. Aporia, immersed in deliberate suspension of discernment, aphasia, logorrhoea, partial catatonia and apraxia surround the entire text of *The Unnamable*. What Critchley designates as the "weakness of syntax" in Beckett is "the weakness of our relation to finitude, the articulation of a physical feebleness, a dwindling, stiffening corporeality, which is a recipe not for despair but for a kind of *rapture*...." (Critchley 199). The movement of the text is in a paradoxical lucidity, where motion is relegated to a linguistic fixation which dissolves all physicality and

proximity. *The Unnamable* is absolute rupture of the self-under the indefinite, deadening compulsion the voice goes on speaking in perpetual silence, to negate silence and to arrive at silence. The underlying contradiction is in the desire to reach silence through the unrestrained flow of words-the endless discourse of existence itself to realize the cessation of words; "the words are everywhere, inside me, outside me. . . . I'm in words, made of words, others words. . . . I'm all these words, all these strangers, this dust of words, with no ground for their settling, no sky for their dispersing, coining together to say, fleeing one another to say, that I am they, all of them" (*Molly Malone Unnamable* 390). It is assembled in the form of a schizophrenic (mis)appropriation and (non)signification**;** Simon Critchley talks about the use of language, "The language of *The Unnameable* is an endlessly elaborating series of antitheses, of imploding oxymorons, paradoxes and contradictions, a 'frenzy of utterance'...where a coherent and perhaps even formalizable technique of repetition is employed to give the appearance of randomness and chaos" (196). The unceasing flow of consciousness of the spiritual sloth generates the gradual reduction of the body, from the one-legged Mahood to the displayed head in the jar, down to the insubstantial, undying worm and the birth of the unremitting 'I'. The worm with its incomprehensibility of all things rational is the Beckettian instrument of brute existent- that immortal part of the silent subject which speaks in this void and of the speaking subject which observes silence in all this commotion. Critchley 'decodes' the impossibilities of the undying/perverse worm,

> Worm is unborn, unperceiving, unspeaking, uncreated, 'nothing but a shapeless heap'....a 'tiny blur in the depths of the pit'....And in this heap, a wild and equine eye cries without ceasing. He makes no noise apart from a whining, the noise of life 'trying to get in'.... With this last in the series of 'bran-dips', the stakes have been raised once again: for if Mahood, like Malone, craved for that which he could not give himself, i.e. death, then Worm is not even born, 'Come into the world unborn, abiding there

> unliving, with no hope of death'. Worm is that which somehow *remains*, he is a remainder, what Blanchot calls 'une survivance' outside of life and the possibility of death. (Critchley 198)

Maurice Blanchot in the 1953 edition of *Nouvelle Revue Française* interrogates the gyrating voice in *The Unnamable* which rotates around its own circumference, nailed to the decentred centre; the voice speaks in (and as) absence, in absence (as) fullness. Language itself is seized by the desire of language to enunciate the desire of the dislocated self. For Blanchot, the "terrible discovery" occurs "when the talking stops, there is still talking; when the language pauses, it perseveres; there is no silence, for within that voice the silence eternally speaks" (128). From the decapitated Mahood to the inexistent Worm, the oppressed/oppressive 'I' utters from the chaotic depths of language, journeying from the time of death to the moment of pure (physical) vanishing. The repeated reassertion of 'I' against the affirmed deprivation of 'I'-ness in the non-narrativized world is the 'removed' meaning of this text in the void. Blanchot, while interrogating the identity of the speaker, (Who speaks? Samuel Beckett, and yet the non-author, non-Beckett), talks about the element which induces the disquiet, "the necessity which has displaced him, dispossessed and disseized him, which has surrendered him to whatever is outside himself, which has made him a nameless being, *The Unnamable,* a being without being, who can neither live nor die, neither begin nor leave off, the empty site in which an empty voice is raised without effect, masked for better or worse by a porous and agonizing I" (Blanchot 131).

The Unnamable, to employ the examination of Blanchot's neutral by Suzie Gibson in her *The Work, The Neutral and The Unnamable*, is the neutral "as an over-arching force outside of language… as a disembodied voice, are united in their otherness… as a narrative voice and as voice outside of voice and narrative, is an entity that resides behind all voices, representations and narratives" (300). Blanchot relates the novel to the spectral, irreducible

presence of 'neutral', which 'is' with its impossible presence. *The Unnamable* in dissociating and distancing the self from the language deconstructs language in a way that it stops its meaning-making process and turns indifferent to itself. In its endless exploration of speech and suffering, resembles the unceasing spiral of the neutral, which resists neutralization and survives as an 'infinite vanishing point'. Blanchot defines:

> The neutral cannot be represented, cannot be symbolized, or even signified; moreover it is everywhere, inasmuch as it is borne by the infinite indifference of an entire narrative [...] It is as though it were the infinite vanishing point from which the speech of the narrative, and within it all narratives and all speech about every narrative, would receive and lose their perspective: [it is] the infinite distance of their relations, their perpetual overturning and annulment. (Gibson 297)

The 'impossibility of dying' that Blanchot conceives in literature, is related to the emptiness of language where words fail to represent nothingness of thinking which is the primordial origin. Words, detached from context and meaning, execute a deathless/powerless power, an undying emptiness of the other of language. The speaker of *The Unnamable,* subject to and objectifying language, becomes language itself, in its undying narrative, it is; subsequently the reader countering the repeated assertions of the schizoid 'I' encounters his own split. The moment there is a cinematic representation along with an audio setup, the voice of the virtual other would separate the reader/viewer from the text; the fragmentation on screen would be an experience elsewhere, 'otherwhere'. The affliction of the unnamable is the alien, impossible suffering where past and future are suspended in an inert present.

The author and the 'I' in *The Unnamable* move through a sustained denial of past identities; what Beckett has been through his characters and what Beckett's 'heroes' have experienced in relation to the tormented self of the writing subject are both rejected in order to return to that ending from where the subject articulates (through speech or variables of

silence); “I am neither, I needn’t say, Murphy, nor Watt, nor Mercier, nor - no, I can t even bring myself to name them, nor any of the others whose very names I forget, who told me I was they, who I must have tried to be, under duress, or through fear, or to avoid acknowledging me, not the slightest connection” (*Molloy Malone Unnamable* 328). Blanchot perceives the inception of *The Unnamable* from the anarchic space of literature which belongs to the non-book, not-yet-book. The eternal recurrence of the self which continually dies and perpetually re-enacts its death emerges from the zone (paradoxically a book) “from which all books derive, that point of origin where, doubtless, the work is lost, the point which always ruins the work, the point of perpetual unworkableness with which the work must maintain an increasingly *initial* relation or risk becoming nothing at all” (Blanchot 132). The loss of all selves and the eventual vanishing of the author restore the impossibility of work to the text, the centreless centre. Dialectics, inversion, diffusion and indefinite positions of meaning, characterize the linguistic usage of Beckett’s *The Unnamable*, an aporia of the incongruous mind. The crisis emerges from the endless deferral of meaning and failure to express infinite intersubjectivity. Writing is what the mind remembers, disposes, inverts, subtracts, and repeats, to reveal the extent and restricted infinitude of language. A labyrinthine impasse emanates from the torment of Cartesian cogito, involving a continuous slippage of frame and structure. In the being’s black beyond, language acts as a deconstructive machine, “unwording” (Carla Locatelli), re-wording, centralizing and de-territorializing, against the blind incertitude of the invisible authority. Paul Davies in his *Beckett and Eros: Death of Humanism* relates the location of decentred speaker to a “pre-Cartesian Unthinkable” (48) placelessness, a loose wandering of the self without coordinates. The blank from where the unnamable chides, chastises and castigates, can be linked to Davies’ notion of unbornness in which “unbornness is the condition of not having been cast into limits and perimeter, not bordered by subjectivism and self” (Davies 81). The biological

body undergoes a perpetual scission and reduction and synchronously exists as, and outside a living entity. The heteronymy of the meta-dialogic narrator dilutes all identities and constantly shifts the burden of speech and of being an 'I' to the fictional other. David Houston Jones recounts the experience of shame and degeneration of the self in the novel in his *From Contumacy to Shame: Reading Beckett's Testimonies with Agamben,* through Agamben's notion of the subject in *Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, "the subject of testimony is the one who bears witness to a desubjectification" (59). The voice that speaks in-itself and the one that speaks to the distraught mind as the different/undifferentiated thing is always the voice of the other, the silent other referring back to its being, seeking a futile return to its core and in turn erasing the subject itself. The refusal to be the localized, singular subject is affirmed (in the face of multiplicities and infinitude of being), and instead one confronts the radical abrogation of all acceptances of designation, rules, names, love, solidarity. The relentless implementation of antithesis and negation within the linguistic pattern of communication situates the self in a locus of apathy and accidie, where one can't go on and is unable to not go on. *The Unnamable* traces the journey of the 'Not I' of the voice of literature down to the abysmal whirlpool of words, where one encounters silence in the echo of void; "If I could only find a voice of my own, in all this babble, it would be the end of their troubles, and of mine" (*Molloy Malone Unnamable* 351). Voice, as the language of thought, evolves as the Kantian *das ding* (thing-in-itself) in the trilogy, a loose anthropomorphic entity, surviving outside the body. All words must be emptied out of the voice to reach the ending of voice and the beginning of silence; the spiralling loop comprises the falling into the nothingness of the voice and resumption of the torture. "…that's all words, they're all I have…the words fail, the voice fails…it will be silence, full of murmurs, distant cries, the usual silence, spent listening, spent waiting, waiting for the voice…the voice begins again, it begins trying again…" (417). The unnamable's voice extends within and without the body,

unburdening the weight of words, reinstating its physicality with repeated monologues to the self and the other. Voice in the novel is, what Mladen Dolar borrowing from Lacan terms in his *Kafka's Voices*, "'the anastomosis', the interconnection between the 'animal' organism and the symbolic" (317). Belonging neither to the body-proper, nor to language, the voice is untethered, indefinite. Unnamable's voice reflects the signifier reduced to "pure intensity", a denaturalized, deterritorialized animalistic squeak (Dolar 320). The voice is anti-domestication, against the master's efforts to amortize the being to a truncated buzzing insect, full of norms and sermons. Beckett, in the novel, desires to return to the "pure intensity of voice", where language's uprooting of the mouth from its primordial function of eating is not a precondition. Dolar, citing Deleuze's polarity between eating and speaking, speech and starvation in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, writes,

> By speech the mouth is denaturalized…seized by the signifier…The speech, in this denaturalizing function, is then subjected to the secondary territorialization…it acquires a second nature with its anchorage in meaning. Meaning is reterritorialization of language…a naturalized substance…But this operation can never be successful, and the bit that eludes it can be pinned down as the element of the voice, the pure alterity of what is said.' (332)

This disjunction between the representational obligation of speech and that which is the other of the signifier, the desire's voice, is the voice of the unnamable; it tries to attain the pre-speech, pre-signified mouth, with the voice of a new language, "I'll go silent, for want of air, then the voice will come back and I'll begin again. My voice. The voice" (*Molloy Malone Unnamable* 397). The dissemination of torment of the tortuous voice acts as a self-imposed violation and nihilation of its own physicality and a final recognition that there is no subjectivity where the void is inseparable from the core of being. To access the volatility and plurality of Being, the event or rupture must occur. *The Unnamable*, Godot-like, becomes a

novel on waiting, for awakening out of this inertia, for the possible birth of the subject out of the dead subject. Silence in the novel functions as an end in itself, within and beyond the space of language and being. The dialogue forms a three way structure, unfolding between the self and the other, self and the audience and the voice and the consciousness; a fourth dimension is added to the discourse, that of a communicating language and its other, speaking and speaking nothing, "If I could speak and yet say nothing, really nothing?" (305). Under the constant excision of language and self, language and self are negated through language and self. The language of aporia and binaries self-propels the other land of silence and self-destructs the destination through excess employment of words. Anomalous structure of paradoxes and the usage of 'not' within the conceptual framework continuously displace the readers and the 'masters' from their arrived interpretation. Amir Ali Nojoumian, in his article *SAMUEL BECKETT'S THE UNNAMABLE: The Story of that Impossible Place Named Silence*, observes the logic of reversal and contradiction in the text as a rupture of the Cartesian duality, for placing the self in the middle of subject and object, at the threshold of language and being, being neither the body, not the beyond (390);

> …perhaps that's what I feel, an outside and an inside and me in the middle, perhaps that's what I am, the thing that divides the world in two, on the one side the outside, on the other the inside, that can be as thin as foil, I'm neither one side nor the other, I'm in the middle, I'm the partition, I've two surfaces and no thickness, perhaps that's what I feel, myself vibrating, I'm the tympanum, on the one hand the mind, on the other the world, I don't belong to either…. (*Molloy Malone Unnamable* 386)

Nojoumian divides his thesis into segments and points out the impossibility of knowing either pure language or self since the subject is immersed in both (392); of losing in the world of pronouns and desiring a name for the true self and then shifting to the attainment of nameless, speechless silence (393); the death of self and language as a condition to the emergence of the

silence of self-recognition, of a new language of immanence (398); the locus of silence is unknowable to the self and inheres the subject of non-knowledge (399). This double bind of locating silence and being one with it and the impossibility of finding silence and death within language is the Real in unnamable's language. The unnamable's realization of the impossibility of linguistic silence impels the thrust of more words and paradoxically surplus words generate the promise of silence. The syntax of perplexity and endless multiplication girdles around a beyond, beyond language. The barely living body of the unnamable tormented by the masters, surrounded by them, where they imprint their desires, uses the nonlanguage from the lacuna of being; the sadistic testimony of the unnamable, ineffectually recalling the unspeakable birth of being itself entails a failed language where what is seen evades that which is said. The inward disruption of meaning and progress, 'non-referential' pronouns and repeated negation of identities place an absolute nothingness within the language of the oppressive reader who forces authorial meaning; the unnamable is neither Murphy, nor Mercier, or Mahood, or Worm, he remains as an unnamed, unidentifiable nothing.

> ...let us go on as if I were the only one in the world, whereas I'm the only one absent from it…Someone speaks, someone hears…it is not he, it's I, or another, or others, what does it matter, the case is clear, it is not he, he who I know I am, that's all I know, who cannot say I am, I can't say anything…he knows nothing, knows of nothing, neither what it is to speak, nor what it is to hear, to know nothing, to be capable of nothing…if only I could forget him…without having to say…it's not I, I am he…. (*Molloy Malone Unnamable* 406)

Alain Badiou's *On Beckett* discusses the Beckettian subject in/of language who thinks and is thought in speech. The 'subject' of *The Unnamable* writes the voice and voices the speech to return to the primal 'point of enunciation', the silence where speech beings. For Badiou, the

voice, in order to negate and dissolve itself must exhaust the possibilities of being a voice/voice's being and generate its own silence (52).

> …this voice is exacerbated: it proliferates, invents a thousand fables, whimpers and takes flight. But this mobility is insufficient for the intended aim: to destroy language by excess and saturation, to obtain silence through the violence inflicted on words.
>
> …the voice exhausts itself: it stammers, repeats itself, inventing nothing. But this sterility is still not enough if, from a tired and worn out language, an original silence is to suddenly emerge.
>
> The oscillation between, on the one hand, an excess so violent that it destroys not language but the subject and, on the other, a lack which in vain exposes the subject to the throes of 'dying' places the subject of the Beckettian cogito in a state of genuine terror. (Badiou 52-53)

Kathryn White in her book *Beckett and Decay*, quotes Beckett's conversation with Tom F. Driver regarding a 'new' form of art that can accommodate the chaos of subjective experience,

> What I am saying does not mean that there will henceforth be no form in art. It only means that there will be new form, and that this form will be of such a type that it admits the chaos and does not try to say that the chaos is really something else. The form and the chaos remain separate. The latter is not reduced to the former. That is why the form itself becomes a preoccupation, because it exists as a problem separate from the material it accommodates. To find a form that accommodates the mess, that is the task of the artist now. (Driver (1961) quoted here from Graver and Federman (1979: 219)) (2)

John Fletcher discussing the typographical and semantic upheavals in *The Unnamable* in his *The novels of Samuel Beckett*, writes,

> Early on, for instance, the division into paragraphs is dropped, and the prose is unbroken from that point onward. Thereafter full-stops become less and less frequent, and the last of all is found three pages from the end, mating one long sentence of the final fifteen hundred words of the novel. Where full-stops decline in number, however, commas correspondingly increase, and give a hectic, almost frenzied air to the closing sections of the book; at one point one is even reminded of Lucky's desperate speech. (192)

Meaning eludes the text in this novel for the purpose of the unnamable and his images, is to paralyse meaning altogether. Since the self of the unnamable is assigned to the negative, consequently all his others (Murphy, Watt, Malone, Molloy) fail in situating their identity. Speaking from a non-position along with a non-validation assigned to definiteness of identity, blurs the distinction between speaking and writing. The unnamable nihilates his own voice to affirm and ground his being as opposed to the lacking big Other or master signifier which perpetually represents it by proxy, speaks it and induces alienation; "As I never spoke, I seem to speak, that is because he says I as if he were I, I nearly believed him, do you hear him, as if he were I, I who am far, who can t move, can't be found . . . there is no name for me, no pronoun for me, all the trouble comes from that" (*Molloy Malone Unnamable* 407). The unnamable's 'he' who "thinks he's caught me, he feels me in him, then he says I, as if I were he…then he says Murphy, or Molloy, I forget, as if I were Malone…he thinks that, they taught him thinking" (407), speaks with the language of the master, the 'known' language existing outside the unidentifiable realm of silence; thus, Beckett has always spoken in all his novels, not non-Beckett. The only perceived thing-in-itself is the Worm which exists as an excremental surplus of the droning crowd; "His senses tell him nothing, nothing about himself, nothing about the rest, and this distinction is beyond him. Feeling nothing, knowing nothing, he exists nevertheless, but not for himself, for others, others conceive him and say,

Worm is, since we conceive him" (349)**.** Worm, being the reflection of the immovable unnamable, without movement and without consciousness of the self, is and is not the unnamable; it is partial likeness where nothing resembles nothing. Implementing a method of anti-language with its problematic syntactical structure and repetitions, the worm reinvigorates the non-character, the 'all-impotent, all-nescient' nothing, a Berkleyan eye as ontological proof of existence. Andrew Kennedy reads the worm in his book *Samuel Beckett*, as

> …an inversion, and a parody, of the traditional attributes of God. But the language also has echoes of the 'negative way' of the mystics *(via negativa),* who tried to reach God through non-definition, not naming, and even through denial. So here, around the very name of the shadowy Worm, a litany of 'nothings' is recited, including an analogy between this would-be character and 'us'… (149).

Slavoj Žižek expounding the notion of the subject in his *The Sublime Object of Ideology* writes,

> …the Lacanian subject is divided, crossed out, identical to a lack in a signifying chain. However, the most radical dimension of Lacanian theory lies not in recognizing this fact but in realizing that the big Other, the symbolic order itself, is also barré, crossed out, by a fundamental impossibility, structured around an impossible/ traumatic kernel, around a central lack. Without this lack in the Other, the Other would be a closed structure and the only possibility open to the subject would be his radical alienation in the Other. So it is precisely this lack in the Other which enables the subject to achieve a kind of 'dealienation' called by Lacan separation: not in the sense that the subject experiences that now he is separated for ever from the object by the barrier of language, but that *the object is separated from the Other itself*…. (137).

Gaber, Youdi, Basil signify the 'empty signifier' of the Big Other, the 'meaningless' enigma, which Beckett counters with the indecipherability of impossible discourse. The unnamable is guided by an animalistic apathy toward the Other's linguistic intercourse and yearns to subvert it through 'language destroys language' interplay. This lack in the other is heterogeneously controverted by the unnamable's surplus enjoyment around the 'unattainable' Thing, the hole in the Symbolic Other; the unnamable confronts 'them' with their language in the mode of subversion to reach "silence and the end of madness, the madness of having to speak and not being able to" and "fix their gibberish for them' with his 'inability to absorb…genius for forgetting", for he "never understood a word of it in any case, not a word of the stories it spews, like gobbets in a vomit" (*Molloy Malone Unnamable* 327). The inert body lying on the bed is itself a reminder of the castrated, dismembered, decomposing body after the entry of the signifier; the self, however, desires to deploy the shrinkage, this vanishing into nothingness and silence to arrive at a non-being outside the threats of language. He is not alive, not in the orthodox sense of the word, neither entirely dead; born into death and dying at birth, he self-evacuates, self-empties himself of the 'meaningless' stories and transgresses the symbolic universe.

> …they want to catch me alive, so as to be able to kill me, thus I shall have lived, they think I'm alive, what a business, were there but a cadaver it would smack of a body-snatching, not in a womb either, the slut has yet to menstruate capable of whelping me, that should singularly narrow the field of research, a sperm dying, of cold, in the sheets, feebly wagging its little tail, perhaps I'm a dying sperm, in the sheets of an innocent boy…some people are lucky, born of a wet dream and dead before morning…I'll let down my trousers and shit stories on them, stories, photographs, records, sights, lights, gods and fellow creatures…Be born, dear friends, be born, enter my arse, you'll just love my colic pains, it won't take long, I've the bloody flux. (384)

The unnamable's denial and dissent against the voice of the others are coordinated towards the refusal to be one with the injunctions and diktat of 'the master', 'your Lordship' (315), 'a whole college of tyrants' (312), 'the messenger' (373), 'the beleaguers' (396), 'the devils who beset me' (350), 'my purveyor' (354), 'these maniacs' (329), 'the third party' (379), 'Basil and the gang' (306).

The worm is itself the Beckettian counter-presentation of the lack in the Symbolic order, the Real in itself and therefore, the post-authorial 'fault' of making sense of the real by bestowing it with consciousness automatically fails. The Real bursts open with the attempts of locating subjectivity and the primordial trauma of separation from one's inner life. Segregating the normativity of meanings and differences from the structure of language, Beckett (paradoxically) materializes the Real of language, with "the chaotic multitude of homonymies, word-plays, "irregular" metaphoric links and resonances" (*Beckett with Lacan*). To counter the Real of the divine and the unsymbolizable Big Other (Moran's Organization), Beckett implements the Real of the body and subjective language. The subject attempts to return to the primordial site of the undifferentiated, and the voice, independently narrates its indefinite histories and transcendences from spaces beyond symbolization. The barred subject, at the end of *The Unnamable* speaks from the lacuna of Being, where the flotation amidst subjectivities has ceased, and the 'I' (encountering the pre-word Real of fullness) 'ex-sists' as a pure, undead drive, a Lacanian Thing.

The problematic notion of the Lacanian Real exists itself on the borders of language, before language penetrates the pre-symbolized, a-social body. Bruce Fink, in *The Lacanian Subject,* mentions the symbolization of the body, demarcations of the erogenous zones and neutralization of the 'other' desires after the advent of the word (24). The Real ex-sists outside the reality of language in the zone of the un-word and the indecipherable, beyond any valid linguistic articulation. After the word, it is the residual chunk fallen off the symbolic

order, which Lacan proposes as the "second order" Real, a Deleuzean oscillating schizophrenic field. The truth of the subject is forever elusive in the construction of historical grand narrative-a part of the framed Symbolic (either through the Oedipal familial setup or class struggle) which itself hides an abstract text of the unassimilated signifiers of the trans-historical Real. The subject as a formation of the pre-subjective desires and the perpetual to-be-re-constructedness history is condensed to subjectivization. In Lacan, the subject beneath these processes of subjectivization and the fulfilling roles of subject-positions is a lack, a void in the signifying symbolic structure. There is no extra-reality of the 'real' subject behind the linguistic wall of things and beings of the Symbolic Big Other. The objects of inscription, Molloy's mother, Malone's death and the unnamable's being-lessness, act as the traumatic spectral presence which eludes representation within the symbolic of the narrative. These absent, non-existents perpetually haunt the progress of the novels, through repeated wording, detailing of their repressed presence. Thus, Malone's excremental room of spittle, vomit, the maternal woman, his stories of death and the desire "to be there a little before the plunge" (*Malone* 23) register the traumatic Real inside the narrative. This excluded, non-assimilated Real acts as the impetus of the symbolic and must remain as the Other of the narrative history, constantly re-returning and re-written. The disembodied, timeless image of Molloy's mother existing parallel to the 'indestructible chaos' of Molloy's world "collapsing endlessly, a frozen world" where "nothing stirs" (*Molloy Malone Unnamable* 40), gathers to operate as the impenetrable zone of the Real, which Molloy can never materialize. The entire journey of the unnamable is toward a silent nothing which embodies the pursuit of the Real in the disembodied, indefinable nature of the 'he', "I don't feel a head on me…there I am the absentee again, it's his turn again now, he who neither speaks nor listens, who has neither body nor soul…he is made of silence…he's in the silence, he's the one to be sought, the one to be…the one to speak , but he can't speak, then I could stop, I'd be he, I'd be the

silence…we'd be reunited..." (417). The Worm in *The Unnamable* is the remainder, the life escaped, the libido which generates the *objet a*, the Lacanian 'lamella'. Žižek's *How to Read Lacan* explains it as "an entity of pure surface, without density of a substance…that is first heard as shrill sound, and then pops up as a monstrously distorted body. A lamella is indivisible, indestructible, and immortal…undead…As Lacan puts it, the lamella does not exist, it *in-sists*: it is unreal…a multiplicity of appearances that seem to unfold a central void-its status is purely phantasmatic" (62). The Worm, with its horrifying visual dimension exists at the intersection of the Imaginary and the Real, and is the ineradicable partial remainder when 'word' enters the world of the unnamable. The shit-like Worm, earless, headless, memoryless is the 'primordial flesh', 'de-substantialized', the Thing itself outside the symbolic universe; whereas Mahood, as the head in the jar is the 'death drive', life opposing the ego-consciousness. A quintessential example of the pre-symbolic and the post-symbolic Real can be located in the image of the monstrous metaphorical dogs of the Big Other that hunt the Worm, where 'they see nothing, they see grey, like still smoke, unbroken, where he might be, if he must be somewhere…into which they launch their voices, one after another, in the hope of dislodging him…." (*Molloy Malone Unnamable* 362).

The unnamable's silence, Molloy's mother (nothing), Moran's Molloy, Malone's 'death' are all examples of *objet petit a,* the object of desire (which contains the surplus object) around which the subject moves in a state of confusion and distortion; "getting me to give a voice to Worm…perhaps I'll succeed in making it mine, in a moment of confusion" (351). Fink elaborates the *object a*

> …as the residue of symbolization—the real (R2) that remains, insists, and ex-sists after or despite symbolization—as the traumatic cause, and as that which interrupts the smooth functioning of law and the automatic unfolding of the signifying chain…a last reminder or remainder of the hypothetical mother-child unity to which the subject

> clings in fantasy to achieve a sense of wholeness, as the Other's desire, as the jouissance object, as that "part" of the mOther the child takes with it in separation, and as the foreign, fateful cause of the subject's existence that he or she must become or subjectify in analysis…Freud's lost object, as the subject's being, and as a product of the dialectization of a master signifier. (83)

The desire for the elusive *objet* shows the paradoxical void of desire which must attach the cause to a full object to sustain itself. Thus, Beckett exemplifies the impossible *objet a* in Molloy's primal separation from the mother and the attempt of a physical qua narrative unity with the lost one, Malone's absolute nothing-ness in death and the unnamable's voice-less silence in the absence of language and wholeness of being.

Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen's *How to Do Nothing with Words,* in delineating the "representational illusion" of "empty speech" and the absolute nothingness of "full speech", discusses the Lacanian subject's desire for truth, for the true recognition of the subject as nothing, as a absence, as a hole, as death, as silence; "If desire is desire of death, how can we speak the silence of that death (-instinct)? To speak it is inevitably not to speak it, and so only by not speaking it can we speak it: if yes, then no; and if no, then yes" (134-135). Speech is perpetually empty as it overwhelms the void of being with the surplus babbling of words addressed to the Other-than-himself; full speech speaks the subject in its "abyssal vacuity" and communicates nothing, except what Lacan calls the "existence of communication" (138). The full speech drained off the contamination and the wall of language, enunciates the "hole in the real", the subject itself, the metalanguage, "truth about truth", "meaning of meaning" (139). According to Lacan, for the speech to say nothing, the subject must address himself to his linguistic other, a self-referential intersubjectivity where the other locates the identity of the speaking 'I'. Thus, the second person singular 'you' in the promises and swearing transforms in Beckett to the 'you'/ 'I' dialectic of Mahood and Worm; as if the unnamable

speaks, 'You, who are Mahood, am I' in a desperate attempt to locate himself with the other's gaze. However, the Beckettian unceasing flux of words is itself a confusion between the purpose of full speech and empty speech as "Full speech does not perform the nothing any better than empty speech does, for the latter does it just as well: everywhere, it is all one and the same *clamor* of nothing" (Borch-Jacobsen 148). If the Lacanian orders are shifted to the language as subject, then the infant's gibberish with mis-perceptions and illusions can act as the imaginary, the master's language as symbolic, and the unnamable's drivel as Real. There is a paradox itself in 'naming' the text *The Unnamable*. Is it a conscious trope by the author or an artistic limit? By naming him who can't be named, whose very identity is oriented toward searching for a name before vanishing, Beckett highlights the problematic of non-being from its very inception. The slow evaporation of the outer layers of language hangs over the narrative of Beckett's *Lessness*. What get effaced in the form are the footprints of language and in a mode of opposition the silences and the un/non-words control the content. Beckett's language of minimalism, of reductionism and 'lessness', the term Kathryn White underlines in her *Beckett and Decay*, must seek at reaching the nothing-ness (or meaning/non-meaning) behind the veil of language and work. The poetry of deadness (of language) and in deadness of being integrates Beckett's later prose works. The 'nothing' behind the anatomy of language and manifestation of the evasive silence beneath the constitution provides 'meaning' to the text. Indeterminate being, amorphous memory, unformed landscape, contracting room, irrepressible a-historical experience, surround the bleakness of Beckettian atmosphere. Imagining the dead imagination in *All Strange Away*, the half-dead man hiding from the war without and stuck within the constant shrinkage of the room, the fading light, the increasing darkness, the suspended beings in the rotunda "murmuring…kissing, caressing, licking, sucking, fucking and buggering" (14), the artist takes refuge in fancy. The imagined death of imagination and its ineffectual attempts to

construct a narrative to represent the nothingness of existence is itself a paradox; the artistic loop is both in this failure of imagination due incapacitated language and in his perpetual expression of his art. It represents the endlessness of ending, the unceasing flow of imagination, dead or otherwise. The "faint memory of a lying side by side" is paralysed by the sterile bodily stillness in the rotunda and the "lashes gone", the "puckered breasts", the "black bottomless eye" (*Strange Away* 42). Beckett's reduction of the text down to skeletal remains evokes a sense of diffusion of senses- a resettling of the entire format which produces experimentation with feelings and hermeneutics. The body's shelter in the ruins in *Lessness* is a tragicomic tale of spatial absence. Spacelessness or the abundance of it, the incoherence of ruins (since it reigns everywhere), the mis-recognition of the sky and the ground, the collapse of light and darkness, flounder the eyes in the text. The horizon remains as bottomless as the earth below, the white-ness as indecipherable as the inherent dark-ness, the four walls as constricted as the liberated outside. The formlessness of conventional narrative expression is reflected in the incoherence of the landscape within the 'metalinguistic text'. The term 'lessness' connotes the subtraction of the existent amidst an endless shrivelling desert, the ever expanding sky (limited in its limitlessness), and the apocalyptic ruins of the body; "He will stir in the sand there will be stir in the sky the air the sand. One step in the ruins in the sand on his back in the endlessness he will make it" (*Lessness* 17).

Madness, Shoshana Felman writes in her *Writing and Madness*, "turns the essence of thought…into a question" (36). The being of philosophy is founded on the grounds of doubt and post-Cartesian rejection of madness and that which is mad is non-thinking, non-being. Beckett's masters and the Other's subordinates in the trilogy (Youdi, Gaber, Basil, 'they') represent history's continuous search for the repressive language of reason against the baffled rumbling of 'insane', countering the vibrating silence of the madman with the silence of reason. Felman cites Foucault's enunciation of the language of madness which cancels

duality, opposition between the subject and the object, within and without, relative truth and absolute (author and creation) (42). However, the counter-Derridean argument situates the inscription of language itself as the movement away from madness; the fundamental problematic is in the 'structure' of language located at a distance from madness, and the deduction of madness in "the language of fiction or in the fiction of language" is itself a form of security against madness (Felman 44). Felman highlighting the Foucauldian defence of the fiction of madness and the search for the 'appropriate' metaphor for madness, writes, "As opposed to the subject of logos, the subject of pathos is a subject whose position with respect to fiction…is not one of mastery, of control, of sovereign affirmation of meaning, but of *vertige*, of *loss of meaning*. It could then be said that madness (as well as pathos and, perhaps, literature itself) is the non-mastery of its own fiction, it is a blindness to meaning" (49) and the "question underlying madness *writes*, and writes itself…we are unable to locate it…because it questions *somewhere else*: somewhere at the point of silence where it is no longer we who speak, but where, in our absence, we are spoken" (Felman 55). The unnamable's quest undertakes this silence where wordlessness represents the presence of non-being. Mahood's physical dissolution and Worm's insignificant visual advent introduce the madness within the text; the unnamable's aporia, the Real within the language. Worm's slow conversion into one of their beings is a movement away from indigenous madness to fictional sanity. Worm is the closest to absence the unnamable can come, where being is on the verge of disappearance, almost unseen.

The Unnamable, as a dilution of language and selfhood, problematizes the cinematic depiction of its text. The movement from conceptualization to a screenplay would result in impossibility, since all attempts at displaying an id-entity (Basil/Mahood), a worm, or a thing, would culminate in associating a visual dimension against the imperceptible narrator. Cinematic space, time and sound, exist in opposition to the overflowing nature of the text as

the authentic source and past of the decentred speaker are themselves loose indicators and dissolve the generating source. Any representation through the camera falls within the definite boundaries of space and shot-framing, and here it stands in contradistinction to the non-position of the unnamable. The moment one attempts to frame the void from which the speaker articulates and to that which it returns, or locate the subject sans subjectivity, the multiplicity and effluence of unnamable being is destroyed. The unnamable resists all forms of appearance and is ontologically structured toward multiplicity and infinitude, "…finding me, losing me, vanishing and beginning again" (*Molloy Malone Unnamable* 304). Appearance for the unnamable is a localization and appropriation of profusion and infinity of Being. To appear is to be marked by inexistence. Cinema, with its own set of text patterns and meaning-making apparatus, in order to be an auxiliary to the nothingness of *The Unnamable* must generate nothing itself; the cinematic text would constantly intrude within the blank space that the novel enunciates where language cancels and contradicts language. In a book, the reader encounters the text as language, in cinema images are decoded as texts. A graphic novel can be identified as a shared space where cinematic images meet the text; however, Beckett of *The Unnamable* is anti-boundary, anti-margin and cannot be framed within the panels. Adaptation of the textual model in cinema adheres to an a priori signified-a representation of a recognized work on a different sign system. The three division of adaptation that Dudley Andrew mentions in his *Concepts in Film Theory* are, "borrowing" (which maintains extensive extractions from the original work, (98)), "intersecting" (where there is a deflection from the text, displaying an "otherness and distinctiveness of the original text, initiating a dialectical interplay between the aesthetic forms", and "fidelity and transformation" (denoting a reproduction of the original in a "mechanical fashion") (100). Though a suspended and liberated signified can be imagined to travel from the text to cinema, and an abstract sign system belonging to both, the novel here, generates a signified of/in

absence and is a movement against the universal codifications. The essence of invisibility and timelessness inherent in the novel contradict the two primary properties of cinema-image (the thinking-process of cinema) and time (montage for the contraction of time, or long shots for time's expansion), as there is no simulation of the 'real' image possible (no image of the image); a text itself is a simulation of language to arrive at the real thing. It eludes all associations with location and space since the figures breathe in nonlocalizable blankness. The paradox of simulating the archaic space (of literature, of self) by the camera, toward which this literary work proceeds, would devolve as a voice emanating from a dark screen (representing the void); the cinematic space would then destroy the visual possibilities of Basil, Mahood and Worm. However, if the others achieve representation, the physiognomy of the characters would divert the interpretation of the reader and cancel out the heterogeneous nature of the self; it would divert the consciousness of the viewer from the vanishing self to the obscene shrinking body. Visual representation associates a memory which is hard to disentangle; on the other hand, imagination is more lucid and akin to transformation. Visual memory bars the attempts at pure disappearance of the unnamable. At the end of the film he would not remain as a void becoming silent, but as Mahood silent, as Worm extinguished. The montage to provide a composite whole would unconditionally blend the multiple selves into one structured self against which the text rebels. Editing and the effacement of real sounds and surplus images shall constitute the most complicated apparatus. It is not necessary for the voice of the unnamable to be audible; it often turns into inwardness and internal philosophical rambling in the midst of other indiscernible voices of others. The non-depth, unstoppable voice of the unnamable is impossible to perceive and apprehend even with technological distortions.

On aspects of unrepresentability it is always the visual dimension which strives to attain an imaginable version of the incomprehensible-an experiment which focuses on the passion

for images, the pantomimic reminder of the silent films. The tangible aural is permanently negated as a direct source of representation. A valid example would be the absence of the real sound of tormenting howls of Auschwitz concentration camps in the violent documentary shots in Alain Resnais' *Night and Fog*; the film keeps the voice out to prohibit the intrusion of the uncanny. *The Unnamable*, the anti-image text, resembling the ventriloquist's bizarre voice sans the puppeteered dummy, and writing elements which refuse to be objectified and be subservient to any categorization and symbolisation, remain unrepresentable like the visually obstructing Lacanian Real. One cannot extrapolate the yearning for deadness in language and its synchronous usage as an instrument to locate the self and superimpose it on the cinematic text. The apparatus of projection and artificial light on sets will seek to illumine the subject whose very essence is vanishing. All imagistic representations of this perpetual delving into the self, non-self, wording, unwording, ironically end up negating the medium of cinema. Representation on a (suddenly) cut black screen outside the main narrative, contains the dialectics between presence and absence of images and unwinds the interstices of the void. The voice of the unnamable from the blank screen can be the acousmêtre (a faceless voice) and the word-flow in the mode of acousmatic sound (emanating from an invisible sound source), engaging the viewer in a visualized listening. The all-seeing, all-engulfing voice then floats out of nowhere and returns nowhere, falling between the gaps of the listeners. Endowing the voice with the images of Mahood, or the immovable body of the unnamable, causes, what Michel Chion terms in his *Extracts from The Voice in Cinema*, "de-acousmatization", which ends the power of the voice with the visibility of the mouth and the face (109). Chion refers to the I-voice ("French term for the word "voiceover" is "voix-off" (as if any voice could be "off")" (119)), of the narrator which speaks as a bodiless presence, and highlights that in films "When it is not the voice of the dead, the narrative voiceover is often that of the almost-dead, of the person who has completed his or her life and is only

waiting to die" (119). The unnamable voice must operate as this I-voice outside the codified "criteria of tone color, auditory space, and timbre", the "pivot of identification" and could be formed with the technical "close miking" (for proximity with the audience) and "dryness" (cancellation of the reverb, to provide the voice a separate space of its own) (120-121). The unnamable's voice bursts into occasional internal monologues, dead voices which evade the auditory setup; the words within, while enforcing a tangible silence on the physical universe, corrodes the inner silence of the unnamable. Sound supplanting the aural silence of the monologue cancels out the continuous internal silence towards the final silence. Intertitles and subtitles can replace the silence during the internal oration and the uninterrupted void, by periodic visuals of Mahood and Worm suspended in nowhere-ness. Perhaps a cinematic representation of *The Unnamable* requires an absolute destruction of the cinematic apparatus and methods of film-viewing. A projector can reflect the film on a deformed screen placed in open air where the void on screen would merge with the blackness outside. The novel stands against the ethics of representation; if it is represented cinematically, the object receives a name, or a gender and is by default a thing or a being. It introduces language in a way that it is in search of its own words, own silence. Cinematic text is insufficient in creating that silence of the reader in the viewer. The projector, the distraction in the presence of others, the intermittent reminders of being inside an auditorium act as conscious locators of the inside and outside. The failure of dying, disappearing, of silence being entrapped within words, within the bindery of books, of page boundaries, size, design, layout, is effaced by the dislodging trait of language. A film would have to be constrained within a frame even if there is a depiction of void on screen; it would break the novel's inherent logic of effulgence and over-pouring. In Beckett, the primary intricacy lies in representing the vanishing/vanished subject within the framework of narration, where the codes and associations of language have undergone vivisection and decay. Whereas in Bergman, the subjects are ravelled in a limbo;

they are suspended between an undying passion for the other (human), and a maternal attachment to lost transcendence. They are yet to learn the violence required for pure disappearance.

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Chapter V

Sexuality, Silence and Schizophrenia in the Films of Ingmar Bergman

Bergman's definition of woman within and without the cinematic world of images, ranges from the instinctual, passive, submissive entities, trapped around the odours and blood of her genitals, to the symbols of suffering, alienated, somnambulistic, self-destructive beings, contaminated by the hysterical demands of the flesh and propagating philosophy of physiology against the ethical existential traumas of the abandoned man in the absence and silence of God. Bergman employs the women characters as spokeswomen to express the agony over the ultimate inability of the psyche to derive logicality from the multiple 'situations' of life, except in dominated moments of sensual ecstasy which are violently tarnished by the sudden rejection and disgust toward bodily gestures where all experience is rooted and located. Sexuality evolves as an acceptance and a mode of resistance out of the Northern Protestant passive, narcissistic, masochistic construct of woman, pitted against the religious investigations that the male characters frequently indulge in. The shift from the definitive one dimensional philosophical quest for authenticity by the male protagonists, to the torments residing in the woman in the obligations to submit to, or repulsed by the movements of the sexual act, design a parallel road toward redemption of the woman. They arrive at a final tragedy of realization, death, or an imagistic conjecture against the masculinist background of the unquestionable failure of cold abstractions of ethical opacity. A spontaneous rebellion by the women characters erupts and bursts forth on screen due the absence of variation in characterization; Bergman deliberately encloses the female characters in the minimal stretch of the cold and frigid Karin, mindless and promiscuous Maria, inescapably non-heterosexual and insatiable Agnes, servile and bovine Anna

in *Cries and Whispers*, hysterically frigid and negating Ester in *The Silence*, amoral and disoriented Anna in *The Passion*, the raped virgin girl in *The Virgin Spring*, sterile and adrift Eva in *Shame*, displaced, delusional, and hallucinating Alma in *Persona*, pregnant, resolute, unyielding Marianne in *Wild Strawberries*, distorted and dislocated Karin in *Through a Glass Darkly*. In his *The Films in My Life*, Truffaut writes, "I think he's more involved in the feminine principle than in feminism. Women are not seen through a masculine prism in his films, but are observed in a spirit of total complicity. His female characters are infinitely subtle, while his male characters are conventions" (255).

Bergman's male characters 'function' in a godless society and consequently this space of dead gods births a fatherless society where the father is obsolete, depleting or immersed in denial. The disembodiment of the quintessential Christian father and the subsequent political father (theologico-political father) as guardian and structure produces the horde of 'daughters' in Bergman. The 'sons' in his films are under the tragedy of this death, in constant rejection of the role of the father (biological and symbolic). In the abstract absence of the primal, paternal image of god around the Nietzschean debacle, the 'spermal' father is obfuscated in the role of the symbolic father. Behind this metaphorical and the metonymic image of father hangs the imploding persona of the father. As Silke-Maria Weineck points out in her *The Tragedy of Fatherhood*, the figure of the father is "…is the *Gschnas,* a comical hodgepodge, an imitation object of great repute that on closer inspection consists of worthless trifles. As the image of power, fatherhood is not just a simulacrum, but a hysterical (!) joke" (169). Bergman's cinematic world is predominantly devoid of the fathers and populated by the futile sons of barren fathers; the 'lessness' of the son in the image of the lessening father is continually removed and self-enclosed. His fathers are either loving and ineffectual or potent and unredeemable. Under similar

context Weineck elaborates on the reasons for the 'fear of the feminine' with references from Zola, Sedgewick and Huysman, and writes that it "is a fear of procreation, a fear of engendering the child. The great anxiety besetting the fin-de-siècle man, it is revealed, is not fear *of* the castrating father, but the fear of *becoming* the father; paternity, in turn, emerges as nothing but a different form of castration" (Weineck 170). A befitting example of this strenuous rift between the withering father and the abandoned son could be located in the relationship between Isak Borg and his son Evald in *Wild Strawberries*. Borg's real rejection of the son and Evald's symbolic negation of fatherhood establishes this fear in Bergman's films-the crisis of becoming a father and remaining the father. Bergman's male characters as caricature of 'sons', are fatherless, and in their rejection of filiality and the stigmata around the murderous father, childless. Alma's pregnancy never materializes into a birth in *Hour of the Wolf* (1968) and is metaphorically wrecked by the bourgeois 'cannibals' of Johan. Johan's burden of the past regarding the correction methods of the father, his brutality against the over-inquisitive child and the subsequent murder, the guilt and Alma's 'participation' in the unconscious interplay of Johan's ghosts ruin all possibilities of future filiation and emergence. The trauma later materializes in Johan's homosexual fantasies, in donning the silk gown of Veronica which transforms him into a perplexed androgynous being. Furthermore, the barbaric physicality between the little demon and Johan at the cliff contains graphic phallic symbolism; Bergman's reading of this scene in the *Images* supports the argument, "There is only one error: the demon should have been naked...Johan should have been naked as well…When the demon clings to Johan's back, trying to bite him, he is crushed against the mountainside with orgasmic force" (29-30). Parallel to the homosexual injunctions, there emerges Veronica Vogler's naked corpse-like body with her destructive sexuality, threatening to devour the autonomy of Johan. Johan's

sanity is shattered midst the ambiguous and erotic force of Veronica and the nurturing wholeness of Alma.

In David Thompson's documentary on Bergman for the BBC in 2007, French filmmaker Oliver Assayas and Swedish television producer Marie Nyreröd comment on the director's intimacy with his actresses and the dominant presence of women during his childhood.

> Oliver Assayas: You can't dissociate them (the actresses) from his own life, his own relationship with the actresses he has filmed. There's this huge autobiographical element in his films that makes it deeper and even more disturbing in many ways.
>
> Marie Nyreröd: …Ingmar Bergman has always been very interested in women and that started as a child. The big lovers of his childhood were the mother and the housekeeper and the grandmother…all the strong and important persons in his life were women. He is sincerely very interested in the way women think, react and feel.

Michiko Kakutani in her documented interview of Bergman, *Ingmar Bergman: Summing Up a Life in Film* in 1983, engages in conversations concerning the agnostic double-self of the director, his desire to touch human beings, the ever-dissolving differences between the sexes, the repeated withdrawal into the sanctum of childhood memories, his association and harmony with women; "The female characters are usually endowed with strength, patience and an enduring innate wisdom, while the men tend to be selfish, stupid or somehow incomplete- either self-indulgent artists, eager to sacrifice their loved ones on the altar of their art, or stony intellectuals, intolerant of others' frailties and fears" (165). Eva Dahlbeck, the actress in Bergman's *Smiles on a Summer Night*, *Brink of Life*, *All These Women*, illustrates Bergman as a jester, a god-seeker and an eroticist, in her article *Some Thoughts about an Old Colleague on his Way to Canonization*. Dahlbeck's discovery of the jester in Bergman, one who is "a revealer a scourger,

and an incurable lover of people" (65), is followed by the spiritual oddities of the antithetical truth-quester; "In the middle of his critique of society's often monstrous mechanisms, in the middle of his desperation, his skepticism, indeed in the middle of his cynicism, he seemed to be driven by love. Love of his very work, his colleagues. Love of the very life that had been violated'' (Dahlbeck 65-66). The eroticism Dahlbeck associates with Bergman is that of a pantheistic love for union of all things (a way of realizing the non-religious God, along with the constant search for such love) - a political, philosophical and sexual eroticism.

Bergman's unflinching indifference towards his punishing (religious) father was emotionally countervailed by his overt devotion for the mother. Mother's ironic detachment, her words of false separations from her son, family values, compliance to the father, his acquiescence and games of sickness to remain close to his mother form a substantial part of Bergman's childhood. He recounts his complicated relationship with his mother in his autobiographical *The Magic Lantern* (1989);

> My devotion disturbed and irritated her. My expressions of tenderness and my violent outbursts worried her. She often sent me away with cool ironic words and I wept with rage and disappointment… Illness immediately attracted her sympathy. As I was a sickly child with endless ailments, this did indeed become a painful but successful route to her tenderness… Another way to gain her attention proved more harmful. I learnt that Mother could not bear indifference and preoccupation. She used them as *her* weapons. I also learnt to subdue my passions, and started on a peculiar game, the primary ingredients of which were arrogance and a cool friendliness. (Bergman 3)

This absorption in and obsession with the life of the mother transfigures into a lifelong quest for the 'lost' woman and the woman lost inside historical alienation.

For Bergman, the sexuality that the camera generated co-existed with the passion of the actress; he located an uncanny homogeneity in the way the actors integrated with the camera eye. There is a sense of aestheticization and purification through violence and sexuality in his films- not the process of Brechtian defamiliarization, rather the audience is drawn into the fold of the visual narrative. Ethical and moral responses of the viewers undergo transformation and the politico-artistic emerge. Ester's masturbation in *The Silence*, the killing of the boy in *The Virgin Spring*, the slaughtering of the animals in *A Passion* produce images of deep-rooted involvement. The mutual convergence of the hypochondriac body and the eye creates interplay of philosophical sexuality/sexual philosophy. In the book *Ingmar Bergman*, Robin Wood underlines the presence of the emancipated/unemancipated women in Bergman's films and the ineffectual men against their character;

> Emancipation is not presented as absolute… But the unemancipated are just as unhappy as the emancipated… At times one feels that the men's weakness is being presented as the direct corollary and consequence of the women's strength… the attitude toward women's strength in these films seems compacted simultaneously of admiration and fear. The women, too, are often presented as split or incomplete… The crux, whether explicitly or not, seems always to be sexuality, with the shadow of male impotence hanging over the films as constant threat. The key Bergman word, cropping up repeatedly in his films and his interviews, is clearly "humiliation." (286)

Eulogizing the camera and his actress-lover Harriet Andersson in one continuous flow, Bergman writes in his *The Magic Lantern*,

> A young actress playing in a Scala Theatre revue in fishnet stockings and an eloquent decolletage was chosen as Monika. Her name was Harriet Andersson…

> Film work is a powerfully erotic business; the proximity of actors is without reservations, the mutual exposure is total. The intimacy, devotion, dependency, love, confidence and credibility in front of the camera's magical eye become a warm, possibly illusory security. The strain, the easing of tension, the mutual drawing of breath, the moment of triumph, followed by anticlimax: the atmosphere is irresistibly charged with sexuality. It took me many years before I at last learnt that one day the camera would stop and the lights go out…
>
> Harriet Andersson…is an unusually strong but vulnerable person, with a streak of brilliance in her gifts. Her relationship to the camera is straight and sensual. (169-170)

Extending from the autonomous reign of Monika's sexuality in *Summer with Monika* (1953) to the 1981 stage production of Strindberg's *Miss Julie* in Germany, Bergman explores the burden of the body and self of the woman. The convergence of 'incorrupt' sexuality, the summertime (transient) seascape and Monika's nakedness serves as the idyllic construct from where there is no return; it is the shared tragedy of Harry and Monika which is manifested in the loss of a blameless youth. The anthropomorphic nature, the anti-bourgeois rebelliousness, the imagistic 'violence' in uninhibited nudity and meat-gorging, attain a resolution in the counter-gaze at the audience; the prolonged voyeurism attains a catharsis of understanding and recognition through Monika's elongated look. Robin Wood describes the shot as the "only deviation from strict naturalism in the film. The shot is held, the eyes, at once ashamed and defiant, lost and determined, stare into ours. Gradually we find it difficult to face this terrible steadiness… The shot is the perfect cinematic equivalent of 'Let him who is without sin among you cast the first stone'" (42-43). Echoing Wood, Jacques Mandelbaum, in *Cahiers du Cinema: Ingmar Bergman*, talks about the "untamed eroticism incarnated by Harriet Andersson (underwear-revealing naked

thighs, ultra-tight jumper, aggressive breasts and carnal spontaneity), the director's abandonment of control over the story for a pure, loving celebration of the body, the Nordic revival of Neo-realism, the rocky barrenness of the island as a new filming challenge" (28). Bergman restricts the internal shots of household drudgery and alienation to single extended shots, while the outside locales around the archipelago are infused with close-ups and long shots, exhibiting a range of freedom(s). Contrary to the overwhelming sexuality of Monika, Bergman perceives Strindberg's Julie as a wounded (yet authentic) being on her way toward loss and death. Egil Tornqvist quotes Bergman's reading of Julie in his *Between Stage and Screen Ingmar Bergman Directs*, "a big helpless animal who is done to death by smoothly functioning beasts of prey.... Defeated by her own kind, destroyed by the others" (46). Julie in Bergman's German and the Swedish stage productions is a synthesis of a philosophical search for ideal existence and overshadowing sexual (animalistic) urges. The expression, "Battleship of Femininity" (Dahlbeck 68), that Bergman devised for Eva Dahlbeck works as an ironic reminder of Monika's failure in exploring the multiplicities within her. Monika's ambivalent defiance against the moralistic ethics and codes and her refusal to return to working-class claustrophobia and Julie's rejection of life to embrace a higher consciousness through renunciation, exhibit the dual aspects of Bergman's women. However, Liv Ullman overshadows others at the other end of Bergman's spectrum. A lucid coalition exists between the script of Bergman and the self-diagnosis of the subject by Ullman. In the short documentary *The Search for Sanity*, Ullman reveals her uninhibited and utterly personal association with the camera;

> I am using myself…what I know of this emotion and sometimes I may not even know the emotion. But reading the script…my fantasies start going. I start to feel the emotion or something like the emotion and I allow it to come through my face and through my

> body...it is always through me…I must know the feeling. I cannot invent the feeling… I have such a lot of fantasies…so in whatever situation I am, if I want to, I can allow it to come through me and it can be shown. And I am not scared of the camera…The camera just makes me calm...because I know if I am truthful enough that camera will also observe the truth in me.

Bergman's films situate the women as the 'crack' in the patriarchal power construct, the leap over which becomes absolutely necessary for the unhindered operation of the system, but the 'thing', if exposed, disrupts the panoply of Order. This moment of exposure occurs as the women in most of his films become the 'vanishing mediator'[1] disappearing and uniting man and God in an uncanny blend of imposed blame and enjoyment. Yet it is through this process that the dominant orders of religion, war, society, culture and morality receive manifestation and act themselves out through the vibrations of the female body. The 'physical' generates a parallel, unique iconography of religion, out of the magnified, silent God; the body becomes a structure of resistance and divinity, a perfect agent- tangible and a subject beyond interpretation. Sexuality, silence and schizophrenia become vehicles of locating meaning through psychosis, 'deterritorialized' flows of desire and the body without history, in the reconstructed new found reality.

Bergman's *Skammen* (1968) evokes an extended dreamscape during the torments of war. There is simultaneous void in the presence of war and the parallel absence of sexual relation. The regression and violence prevalent in war continually excoriate the skin covering the emotional separation underneath; Eva and Jan are reduced to neutral objects confronting each other in crisis, guilt and impending reminders of mortality. The degeneration of Jan from evasion, indifference and fleshly fears (seeking maternal protection) down to theft, apathy and murder

elicits the shame in the film, along with Eva's infidelity, physical dependency and realization of perpetual alienation. Bergman expresses the nakedness underneath the veneer of humanity, or the overarching concepts of mercy and love. The shame is in this undressing, in this holocaust of the outer layers, in what Derrida, in his *The Animal That Therefore I Am*, calls "reflected shame, the mirror of a shame ashamed of itself, a shame that is at the same time specular, unjustifiable, and unavowable" (4). In this dynamics of confrontation there are no zones of escape for the audience; one must encounter this ethological emergency and the burden of masochistic shame. In *Failed Tragedy and Traumatic Love in Ingmar Bergman's Shame*, Tarja Laine locates Thomas Elsaesser's "failed tragedy" within *Shame* which generates "traumatic mode of spectatorship" (60) against the tragic world of segregated possibilities. Laine highlights Elsaesser's understanding of melodrama as "temporality of regret, as a genre of "if-only" that always contains the seeds of a painful and shameful inner torment" (Laine 62). The traumatic love of Jan and Eva surfaces from the emergence of war as 'other'; the shameful love is in childlessness, in being banished from the other. Love in *Shame* exists only as loss, anxiety, as deception and pre-conditioned mourning, as traumatic repression of the inherent inhumanity that one is left to participate in. Shame resonates from the Sartrean compulsion to act in all this inertia, in assuming moral stance amidst absurd killings. Laine observes "The ethical dimension of SHAME is the individual responsibility for the self and for the other, which rests upon a principle other than that of citizenship, the state, or the nation; namely, it depends on 'an ontology of being-with-one-another…an ontology for the world"' (Laine 67). Shame constitutes itself in the intersubjective relationship between the self and the other's look; the objectivity of the gaze weighed upon Jan's fears stimulates an antithetical, incompatible and masochistic brutality. The perennially burning houses and the refuge in the expanse of the sea leave the

homeland as multiple spacelessness and shared feelings of shame- the shame of knowing (it) and being (there). Eva is the sole evolution in this colossal nothingness, one who upholds the consciousness of shame, the awareness of the forgotten word.

> Eva: I had a dream. I was walking down a very beautiful street and on one side there were white houses with high arches and pillars. On the other side, there was a shady park. Under the trees which were growing near the street, there was a stream of dark green water. And then I came to a high wall, and it was overgrown with roses. And then came an airplane and set the roses on fire. But it wasn't too awful since it was so beautiful. I watched the reflections in the water, and saw how the roses burned. And I had a little child in my arms. It was our daughter. She clung to me and I felt her lips touching my cheek. And the whole time I knew that I should remember something, something someone had said, but I had forgotten what it was.

Post-*Shame*, Bergman shifts his emphasis from the religiocentric/'un-loving' subject to the household individuals; all his major works since 1968 focus on this sense of co-existence and horror in entrapment within the confines of brick and mortar. The unrestrained sexuality of Monika is supplanted by the body of illness, the sick individual (either beyond sexual performance or with an aversion toward the sexual self/other). *A Passion* (1969) details a Christ-like passion of Anna, opening with marital and physical dislocation and moving towards psychological breakdown. The diseased mind and the impaired body seem to be a direct import from the war-torn leftovers of Bergman's *Skemmen* (1968). Bergman engages the ailing body as a metaphor for alienated relationships and communications; individual attachments in the film are immediately followed by claustrophobia and detachment. Andreas is incarcerated within the prison of the past (his societal crime and marital punishment), such that all attempts at preserving

a non-identity end in re-affirming the (emotional) imprisonment; in one of the meta-filmic shots Max von Sydow explains how as Andreas he must “express a lack of expression”. Peter Harcourt, in his analysis of the film, mentions the documentary shots and the internal mis-recognition of the characters by the actors;

> They not only distance us from the action slightly, in a Brechtian/Godardian way, reminding us that we are after all only watching a film, but they also give us the sense that even the actors cannot fully comprehend the character they are portraying. This seems especially true of Bibi Andersson, who talks about her role in the same slightly over-sweet, over-sympathetic way that she, as Alma in Persona, talked about her life. (Harcourt 288)

Eva’s crippling affliction and sexual lack evolves from the distant Elis, and Elis, with his documentation of photographed faces, violent behaviour, irrational acts and the desire to arrive at the ‘human soul’ and a definite knowledge of the other, is as obscure and removed from the others as his neutral photographs. Anna’s midnight yelling, her morbid nightmare and the hard close-up on her face evoke her spiritual passion in the film. The colourless dream places Anna amidst the elements and connects her to the natural (rather than human nature, which eludes her); the burning land, the encounter between the mothers and forgiveness for the son’s execution, provide a diverse perspective of Anna’s insanity and imbalance. Anna’s desire to deliver a closure (by killing everyone/also an act of self-destruction) to Andreas’ incessant returning(s) and departures, at the moment of intense happiness reflects her death instinct (Thanatos). The facial resignation during the close-up narration includes a guiltless conviction in the dual acts of murder, in the phrase, ‘physical and psychological acts of violence’, which through repetition is embedded on the film text. The only resolution Anna extends to her overwhelming love is a

union through death. Her palimpsestic love for an-other Andreas fails in attaining the objective through the ineffectual accident in the end. The end incorporates a mutual dissolution of Andreas and the camera; the slow zooming of the camera continues along with Andreas' unceasing walks and his collapse till there is a shared suspension and diffusion-Andreas ends as another disabled Anna and the camera too fails in framing these characters any longer (Andreas disappears in the grains of screen and landscape, much reminiscent of Sergio's grainy shot in Tomás Gutiérrez Alea's 1968 film *Memories of Underdevelopment*). Animal savagery (the barbaric acts of hanging the dog, killing the lambs and burning the horse) unfolds parallel to the main plot and encloses the film within margins of a sadistic beast-fable, where the distinctions between animals and humans have disappeared.

In *Face to Face* (1976) and *From the Life of the Marionettes* (1980), Bergman explores the politics of psychoanalysis and psychosomatic disintegration. Here Bergman deploys syndromes surrounding sexual orientation, traumatic past, childhood memories of oppression, zones of erogenous fantasies, polymorphous sexuality and suicidal intentionality. *Face to Face* often turns extremely forbidding and demanding for the audience; the shifts between the reality and dream sequences, the fluctuations within Jenny, the repressed traumatic core frame the vertiginous atmosphere, devoid of breathing spaces. The film surfaces out of Bergman's own suicidal failures, bouts of depression in the late '70s, desire for manifestation of unknown sorrows and empathy. Here, the biographical grandmother's often supplants the fictional grandmother and it is the 'other' face (the real face) that intrudes and disrupts the fabric of Jenny's reality. Jenny's trauma concerning grandmother's closet-punishment echoes Johan's hidden fear of the father in the insomniac and disturbing *Hour of the Wolf*;

> Johan: It was a sort of punishment. They threw me into a closet…I was horribly scared. I kicked and pounded because they had told me that a little person lived in that closet who gnawed the toe off naughty children! When I stopped pounding, I heard something rattling, and I knew my hour had come.

It is this (dreamlike/unreal) confrontation that transports Jenny from the role of a psychiatrist to that of a patient, from prescribing treatment to that of outrage and screams. Inside the coded dream of encountering the 'demons' of childhood (the other grandmother and the silent parents) and that of the unmethodical treatment of the madwomen, the audience observes two significant instances- Jenny's beating and rejection of her parents and physical skinning of a patient's face, revealing of the flesh within. Bergman, throughout the film, almost never allows the camera to concede a breathing space to its characters; Jenny's confession sequence in the hospital is not only spatially prohibited to the corner of the room, but the camera too tracks her along the limited space, leading to her final scream and fall. Jenny's mental collapse in Tomas' bed transpires from accumulated repression; the attempted rape in the previous scene and the paradoxical duality between rigidity/disavowal and sexual desire/emotional sterility collate to form the final disintegration.

> Jenny: He had his face pushed against my breast…and tried to enter me. And suddenly, I wanted him so badly to make it…What was strange was that even though I wanted, he couldn't get inside me. Everything was shut and dry.

Every item in the room of the grandmother's house connotes a tangible quality; the bed, the telephone ring, the rim of the chair, the blinds of the window, the emptiness and the photographs of the past populating the vacuum, the wallpaper, the movement of the clock achieve a

heightened effect in Jenny's disorder. This material aspect of touch and human palpability can be discerned in Tomas' invocation against Jenny's vision of a world of 'emotional cripples' and futile words- "I wish that someone or something will strike me, so I can become real…To hear a human voice and trust that it comes from a human who is made like me, to touch a pair of lips and at the same time know that it is a pair of lips." Bergman 'survival through love', that Jenny unearths in the ending relation of her grandparents is ironically grounded in the ruins and certainty of death. The film rests on the sense that the realization of what explicates humanity and being itself is the cause of the 'accelerating necrosis' that Jenny's dead body is subjected to in her metaphorical dream.

Bergman, in the underrated *From the Life of the Marionettes*, shifts from religious Sturm und Drang to problematic of homosexual cinema; borrowing from the Freudian theories of repression of inherent bisexuality as the cause of latent homosexuality and active 'perversions', Bergman constructs Peter as a representative of unbalanced gender roles and the ironically self-oppressed homosexual (under the burden of societal non-expressivity). *Marionettes* unfolds within the space of post-1960s Lacanian psychoanalysis and falls under the old aporia of psychoanalysis as re-adjustment remedy, or treatment leading up to individual rebellion. The patient qua 'social' being as a puppeteered manikin in the supervision of the psychiatrist and in a broader sense beneath the surveillance of a repressive society constitutes the schizophrenia and anguish of the modern individual. Through the violent anal rape of the prostitute (culminating in the asylum scene) Peter symbolically manifests the dual identity of the prepotent masculine and the 'perverse' homosexual; Peter's revolution rests in performing 'that' which denotes the sexuality of the homosexual. However, the heterosexual-homosexual dyad is controversial here, since the explanation provided by the psychiatrist Mogens Jensen appears to be stimulated by intimate

relations with Peter and attempted seductions of Katarina. The lack of a credible solution to the murder in the end is foregrounded by the idiosyncratic details from the mother's interview (mid close-up shot/dreadful intimacy with the interviewer/spectator) and the couple's sadomasochistic fixation.

> Mrs. Egermann: He had a wonderful childhood. Maybe it was too sheltered, I don't know. He was a fearful child. He was afraid of the dark… He was afraid of all sorts of things: dogs, horses, large birds...He was more like me. I remember he used to bite his fingernails. It looked awful. He was very close to his sister who was three years younger. They'd play with dolls and put up puppet shows.
>
> Katarina: Peter's a part of me…I carry him inside of me, no matter where I go. He is inside me. I never felt like that with anyone else. If we had kids, it would be different. He's my child, I'm his. No that's not true. We both don't want to be clever or mature. That's why we fight and hit each other and cry. We don't want to grow up. But we share the same blood circulation. Our nerves have grown together in some strange, uncanny way… I want to hold him fast until he finds me. Why the hell don't we see each other, although we live together and know each other well?

Bergman wanted to experiment with this mutual fear of confined fixation. The somatic interdependency in the relation is underlined by Peter's desire to slit Katarina's throat- a parodic reminder of Bunuel's *Un Chien Andalou* (1929). Though Peter's doubts regarding homosexuality form the central argument of the film, Katarina's physical excess and psychological strength are a constant threat to the 'masculinity' and potency of Peter. Peter loses voice and language ("I couldn't speak") in his unsettling dream (within a dream) of encountering Katarina's brute sexuality ("sweat…saliva…fresh scent of thick hair…spacious surface"); whole of Peter's body

is overtaken by this crude force and the limbs acquire (fantasy) eyes in a mock sexual consumption of Katarina. The dream proceeds towards Peter's failure to penetrate Katarina, his mounting agony and vexation, Katarina's brutal rejection and maternal embrace of Peter and her final murder by Peter. Following the dream sequence is Peter's attempted suicide and Katarina's disclosure of Peter's impotency ("Over the past ten years I've probably had 832 orgasms with you. I faked it 513 times and later went into the bathroom to masturbate."), and his failure to penetrate her anally, which foreshadows the forced anal intercourse with the prostitute. Peter's proclivity to turn into "Mincemeat of sorts. Of blood and nerves", like the "reality that encases me", reflects the desire to be nothing against the structure of society and resistance of Katarina. Peter resembles the archetypal Bergman male with all his inherited weaknesses, refusal to act and emerge and continually lost in inertia. Tim's existentialist homosexual readings of his socio-historical conditions and Katarina's disquiet regarding Peter's (sexual and emotional) lack, serve as the two extreme polemics in the film, amidst which Peter is ceaselessly adrift. The film turns into a triangular plot between Peter and the three mothers- Tim, as the 'impossible' motherer craves for Peter; Mrs. Egermann, as the real mother, loses her son to Katarina, the other mother; finally, Peter is dissected between the surrogate mother (Katarina) and Katarina as the over-sexual other. Perhaps, the most apposite defence in favour of Bergman's fascination with and empathy for women (and homosexuals) comes from Tim ("Most gay men like women. Not because we're particularly feminine ourselves. No. But because we're more in touch with our feelings").

Persona (1966) and *Hour of the Wolf* assimilate the techniques of deconstruction within the film, representing the film as film; sounds of hammer and nails constructing the set, the crew and the director's voice and resounding buzzer initiate and foreground *Hour of the Wolf* as a work of

fiction. The film in a self-conscious, satirical exposition of the horror genre begins and ends with Alma's confession to the audience. The nauseating gothic setting, the ghosts of the subconscious hour of the night, murder, decortication, dark (perverted) sexuality echo the Modern artist's crisis in *Persona*. Art's function and its questionable validity against the void of life is perpetually a matter of concern for the artists in both the films-one resorts to permanent silence and the other to violence and self-destruction. In its apathy toward the wholeness and its negation and deconstruction of the self of the film itself, *Persona* bears heavy resemblances with Beckett's non-art. Amidst the labyrinthine landscape and rooms of Johan's neurosis, Alma's interaction (beyond the frame, as a means of sustaining her sanity) and her dissemination of the contents of the neurotic diary become modes of diffusing of the private and the public (the cinematic and the 'real'). *Persona* is a journey deep within the recesses and inner sanctum of faces; the camera, through surgical modes of tight close-up and dialectic between concentrated claustrophobic spaces and panned landscapes, exposes these anatomical spaces. By flaying off the mask or persona from the face, Bergman seeks nothingness beyond it all, located inside the primal mask (lessness). Bergman borrows heavily from the Jungian concept of the external mark which supplies a 'desired' impression to others and an internal, concealing one which is hidden from the world. Following the idea of the mask, Elisabet then is lost in the roles and the segregation from the stage is an attempt to retrieve the authentic self. It manifests within the film's own unconscious where characters lose their speech, humans devour others and the screen itself resembles an extended dream sequence of a horror film.

The film begins and ends with ignition and dousing of carbon arc lamp projectors, representing images as edited and illusory. Everything that unrolls on screen is a work of the director's imagination, a fiction strung together in random coherence. Following shots comprise

a film reel countdown, an erect penis, an inverted animated figure, hand gestures, a slapstick silent, a crawling spider (spider-God of *Through a Glass Darkly*?), blood from a severed lamb head, a nail being hammered into a hand, a snow covered forest, a church and bodies in a morgue. A telephone ring wakes the dead woman/ the boy/ audience out of this delirium, this image-induced trance and we all assemble before the screen where the faces of Alma and Elizabet disappear and reappear. The (impossible) longing in the boy can be read as a metaphorical representation of the spectator's fantasy to unite with the imaginary. For a brief span of time, the camera itself becomes the screen when the boy's hand tries to feel the presence of the lens and the succeeding image is converted into a large display of Alma's face. The presence of death (in the morgue) as precondition to emergence of consciousness symbolically resonates the physical darkness from where film originates in the film (and outside reality) and Elizabet's violent language of silence leading to her recognition of 'nothing' in the end, before the film dissolves into nothingness. Sontag reads the ending of the film in *Sight and Sound*, in a similar fashion, "And then Bergman cuts to the shot of the incandescent arc lamp; the carbon and tungsten rods fade; the light slowly goes out. The film dies, as it were, before our eyes. It dies as an object or a thing does, declaring itself to tee 'used up' and thus virtually outside the volition of the maker" (7). The explanations related to the film move beyond form and content to the zones of the artist and his creation ex nihilo. In *Persona*, cinema grows into its most disturbing dimension, as pure surface, indestructible and unrepresentable, like the Lacanian Real; as sublime, primordial abyss and pure imagistic surface it consumes all other images and identities. Resembling the elements of a film, Alma and Elisabet seem to represent the narrative and material level respectively- Alma is too full of stories and Elisabet, an observer like the camera. Ernest Ženko, in his *Ingmar Bergman's Persona as a Modernist Example of Media Determinism*,

holds the film as one of the finest examples of Modernism; "Persona is modernist, because its director takes upon himself the role of the transcendental ego that synthesizes and unifies fragments in order to make a work of (modernist) art" (237). The sequence where Alma assumes the torturous persona of Elisabet, Bergman distorts and burns the screen and follows it up with the scenes of *Persona's* filmic history (repetition of Bergman's *The Devil's Wanton*, the bloody hand); materiality, as stylistic device, intrudes to balance out the violence of the situation, to remind the audience of natural and artistic/aesthetic violence. It is a film where the violence of the spirit (intra-textual) is counterbalanced by the violence of primal and contemporary history (the crucifixion, self-immolation of the Vietnamese monk, photograph of the Warsaw ghetto child). On the purpose of using historical material Bergman write in *Images*, "My art cannot melt, transform, or forget: the boy in the photo with his hands in the air or the man who set himself on fire to bear witness to his faith" (46). Offering a phenomenological reading of the film, David L. Vierling, in his *Bergman's Persona: The Metaphysics of Meta-Cinema*, remarks that the fragmented bloating-up of the Warsaw photograph akin to Antonioni's *Blow-Up* (1966) runs parallel to the disjointed images of the film itself and produces it as "a film of a film" (48); the failure to see the split parts of the film (photograph) as belonging to the whole of the film, as a totality, remains a problem for the viewers. Commenting on its meta-filmic nature, Vierling says,

> …film itself is fusion, the bringing together of static separate images and, by imparting temporality to them, causing them to synthesize into a motion picture. The black and white medium is itself a fusion of opposites which blend to create the gradations which make up the unity of the film image-all the various tones between black and white. The white frame

> cut by black, which becomes the film's opening scene, thus stands as Bergman's final visual statement on both his medium and the theme of doubling. (Vierling 49-50)

By overturning the very edifice of film-viewing and film-making in the prologue, Bergman dismantles the authority of the director. In a Beckettian Malone-like ambivalence the exposure of the machine in the lighting of the screen, unsettles the sovereignty and credence of the narrator. The film ontologically begins before the beginning and ends in a problematic continuation of the beginning. In *Ingmar Bergman and Dream after Freud*, Bornstein reasserts *Persona* as a dream dreaming itself. The film behind the mask of the film utters its own narration, its own dreamlike non-reality as reality. Discussing the dreaming mind of the film and its self-conscious stylization, Bornstein quotes from Kawin's *Mindscreen*; in the film "an impression of the mindscreen's being generalized, so that the film's self-consciousness appears to originate from within. Without being identified with a specific character, or with the filmmaker, the "potential linguistic focus" takes on the characteristics of a mindscreen. "The film becomes first-person, it speaks itself"" (40).

One must attempt to understand *Persona* in the hallucinatory, extra-textual space beyond the script, where narrative as a form disintegrates; the 'story' transforms into a multidimensional work of meta-fiction. Association of concrete meaning and knowledge escape the multiplicities connected with the transparency of the film. Determinants of conventional, narrative cinema evaporate in *Persona* and the screen becomes a dis-placed space of understanding of lost meanings. Cinema and acting as means of communication break into detached parts. Perhaps, what the audience sees is the director's own perplexity, his experiments to assemble the raw subject-matter, without meaning-making processes; the film just 'is', an in-itself constantly communicating with an outside recipient. The theme of Persona, according to Susan Sontag, "is that of doubling, and the variations are those that follow from its leading possibilities -

duplication, inversion, reciprocal exchange, repetition" (Sontag 6). Elisabet's unprotected facial crevices and the expressions of expressionlessness work as signifiers of the overarching abysmal meaningless that has encroached all round her. The film moves from sinking into void of speech to the realization of nothingness in action and language. Perhaps, it is a crisis in the process of seeking the truth and its origin- in language, in silence, beyond silence. In contrast to Alma's revelations, Elisabet's predatory gaze and artistic cannibalism consume Alma's persona. The artefact and Elisabet's repeated theatrical face in the end underlines the twentieth century chaos and nothingness in the artist and the art itself. Elizabet's surveillance and observation, as unmoving as the camera-eye (the camera shows Elizabet taking a still photograph of the audience with her camera), reproduce a parallel film within the film where the audience participate unawares.

Elisabet moves from a zone of performance to non-performativity; contrary to that Alma's endless discourse transports her to a space of theatricality, where Elisabet (silently) performs as the audience. Considering the gender and performativity theory of Lacanian phenomenologist Judith Butler, the stage, with its repeated acts of a scripted narrative, turns into a metaphorical representation of society and its hegemonic gender constructions through performance. Reality is formed through the construction and transference of the symbolic signs by means of language and gestures and the interpellation of genders within the structure of the social fabric. Re-enacting the sanctioned linguistic roles is the birth of gender. Butler holds that subjectivity is 'retroactive construction' and asserts in her essay *Performative Act and Gender Constitution* that "gender cannot be understood as a *role* which either expresses or disguises an interior 'self,' whether that 'self' is conceived as sexed or not. As performance which is performative, gender is an 'act,' broadly construed, which constructs the social fiction of its own psychological

interiority" (Butler 279). Elisabet disengages and withdraws from stage through the destruction of language and enters silence as speech. The realization of the incapacity of language to express the incomprehensibility of subjectivity results in Elisabet's recourse to silence of the non-body, or the language of the non-mouth. This non-involvement and passionate muteness are replicated in Marleen Gorris's feminist classic *A Question of Silence* (1982) where housewife Christine M. adopts silence as the only response to the murder she commits. The psychiatrist's diagnosis of Elisabet's condition highlights her psychological ambivalence;

> Commit suicide?...You can shut yourself in, shut out the world. Then you don't have to play any roles, show any faces, makes false gestures. Your hiding place isn't watertight. Life trickles in everywhere. You're forced to react. Nobody asks if it's real or not, if you're honest or a liar. That's only important at the theatre, perhaps, not even there. Elisabet, I understand why you're silent, why you don't move. Your lifelessness has become a fantastic part.

Her attempts are oriented towards destroying the drama of linguistic-cultural inscription and returning to the primal absence(s) and historical voids. The expulsion of speech turns her into an object of psychological investigation and clinical interrogations. Taboos, transgressions and significations written on the body by hegemonic histories are negated by a kind of self-imposed aphasia. Elisabet removes herself from the legitimization and ritualization of gender roles through her repeated public acts and seeks relocation within (accompanied) isolation. As Butler states in her polemical *Gender Trouble*,

> The abiding gendered self will then be shown to be structured by repeated acts that seek to approximate the ideal of a substantial ground of identity, but which, in their occasional *dis*continuity, reveal the temporal and contingent groundlessness of this "ground." The

> possibilities of gender transformation are to be found precisely in the arbitrary relation between such acts, in the possibility of a failure to repeat, a deformity, or a parodic repetition that exposes the phantasmatic effect of abiding identity as a politically tenuous construction. (192)

Gwendolyn Audrey Foster in her seminal work, *Feminist Theory and the Performance of Lesbian Desire in Person*, reopens the sexual space for a queer subversion of the heterotopic readings of *Persona*. Forster asserts that her 'queertopia' is not only an inversion of the Oedipal phallus and castration, but in being a co-producer of meaning, is "a performance itself" (Foster 132). Butler's concept of 'lesbian phallus', which Foster invokes, can be defined as the parallel (queer) imaginary against the hegemonic imaginary (132). For Alma, Elisabet is both the Lacanian mirror ('they challenge heterosexist norms') (136), and the outside Other for coherence and wholeness. Her abandoning of speech remains an effort to function outside the Symbolic order. Elisabet is the Other mother for Alma (outside conventional Oedipalization) - the mother with whom a renewed identification has to be established, new sexual cognition to be realized. According to Foster, the erotic narrative of Alma's riotous sexual encounter at the beach iterates the 'lesbian phallus' between Alma and her friend Katarina (through an indirect association with the two boys). Alma's narrative does not only provide a voyeuristic gaping look of sexual act in the open, but it shatters myths in celebrating orgy, pubescent sexuality, lesbianism, polygamy and unashamed openness. What enthrals Alma is the unrestrained, autonomous sexuality of Katarina and her own unhindered participation in the orgy. Alma's cognition of Katarina's (sexual) performance and her discovery of her own (sexual) potential establish the existence of the lesbian experience; "I had Katarina beside me with her breasts and thick thighs…When he came she embraced him and made herself come with his hand. And when she came she screamed

really loud…When he came she took him in her mouth…She turned around, took his head in both hands and gave him her breast." Elisabet derives an immediate auditory pleasure out of this remembered lovemaking and functions as the third participant in Alma's lesbian economy. Borrowing from Patricia White, Foster addresses the fear of dissolution of identities that Elisabet and Alma suffer from and the libidinal fantasies of lesbian desires (Foster 138). Elisabet and Alma's spectatorial invitation in the seduction scene subverts the mirror into the audience; the screen becomes the mirror, the viewer's eye the camera (the 'vanishing mediator') and in a peculiar Brechtian re-orientation, the audience is re-placed within the screen-space. In one of the most blatant declarations of lesbian togetherness, their gaze, stroking of each other's hair, and caressing, unfold as counter-look spanning across and encompassing the onlooker. The gaze of the two women re-structures the mirror for "queer, heterosexual, bisexual, or transgendered spectatorial pleasure and identification" (Foster 140). Subsequently, spectators abandon passivity and metamorphose into co-producers of meaning and (lesbian) pleasure. The identification with the lesbian couple or the lack of it remains a self-reflexive exercise (which Foster calls "participatory performance") induced by the look into the camera. Foster questions rightly then, "Are we to be the mirror of a text that seems both to celebrate and deny the lesbian phallus and the performance of lesbian desire, group sex, and the psychoanalytic practice itself?" (Foster 140). Elisabet and Alma's overgrowing physical attachment (as the patient listener, the mother, the lover) perhaps registers a sadomasochistic lesbian love from which both emerge as victims and victors; Elisabet's vampirical sucking of Alma's blood and Alma's repeated slapping establish their love as voluntarily violent and punishable. Torturing of one another, placing of the broken glass to injure Elisabet, threatening to throw boiling water, Elisabet's betrayal of Alma in the letter, suggest the violence and madness of a queer relation against the heterosexual mirror.

Wood re-imagines the entire text of *Persona* as an aversion toward organized patriarchal hegemonic discourse. Elisabet's horror and nauseating coiling at the Buddhist monk's self-immolation arise from multiple levels of empathetic identification. It is an ironic commentary on her individual burning protest against the language of power and structured sexuality. The room lit by the television set is the only instance of outside politics directly invading the narrative of the text and violating the inner space of the character. Nevertheless, rooms and isolated zones in the film henceforth, out on new meanings of lesbianism, dream-like reality, cinematic illusion, discontinuity. The presence of politics, then, is converted into historical trauma and Elisabet's renunciation of speech into a rebellion against masculinism. Elisabet's bonding with Alma resounds primarily on the cultural level as a mode of sustenance beyond patriarchal ethics. However, the pasts of both the women act as echoes of guilt and bad conscience. Alma's vengeful re-reminder of Elisabet's desire to abort her son and continue her theatre resuscitates the traumatic necessity of and despair in role-playing. The accusation of role-playing as a mnemonic devise backfires on Alma herself and induces the fear of losing identity (No! I'm not like you. I don't feel like you. I'm Sister Alma…I'm not Elisabet Vogler. You are Elisabet Vogler.) Consequently Alma's speech turns 'nonsensical' as her self converges with Elisabet's (Saying doesn't help. Cut a candle. A kind of otherness. Not now, no. No, no.). The overlapping of the two faces in the end signifies the presence of Alma within Elisabet and Elisabet as a part of Alma- the division and union between the ideology and its revolutionary other, binaries and its destruction, speech and silence, nonsense and meaning and recognition as misrecognition, duality as oneness. This denaturalism of binarism entails a dilution of self/other, representer/represented dualism and ideological boundaries. Mergence and then deconstruction provide the viewer with the narrative and narration as collapse. The textual spectator and the

spectatorial text permeate each other in a cinema modelled on transgression and generate a space for feminist politics. Kaplan, elaborating on the use of silence in women in her *Women and Film: Both Sides of the Camera*, cites Kristeva and Duras; "like the male avant-garde writers before them, are developing an extra sensitivity to language and creating a kind of underground, a sort of rupture through negativity" (93); "The silence in women is such that anything that falls into it has an enormous reverberation. Whereas in men, this silence no longer exists" (Kaplan 94). This negativity, aversion toward organized language, the overwhelming nature of (not) being and not-yet transcends the fixed forms of dominant heteronormativity. *Persona's* avant-garde extradiegetic allusion to the pure reality of cinema serves as a visual shock on the audience. In her book *Gender and Representation in the Films of Ingmar Bergman*, Marilyn Johns Blackwell focuses on Bergman's use of white and black screens in *Persona*, mentioned in his *Images*- "white, innocent, transparent. Pictureless" (142) screen in the beginning, middle and end alternating with the black screen post the orgy narration, the fantasy and blood-sucking sequence. Blackwell writes that "Bergman tacitly challenges sexual ideology of dominant film practice, which positions female experience as either pure surface, on which male culture inscribes itself and its desires, or pure depth, the "dark continent," the mystery to be penetrated and mastered" (Blackwell 143). The unification of identities that the film cultivates against the patriarchal dissolution of (gendered) identity is further deconstructed by the disawoval of the spectator/spectacle mergence. Arguing about the mergence that threatens the male spectator's subjectivity, Blackwell states that the "image of grotesque fusion is followed by a visual instance of fission: a cut from Alma's left-facing profile to Elisabet's right-facing one, both outlined against a white background. These conjoined profiles figure dualism, rigidity, and differentiation at the same time they are an image of abstract, false mergence" (Blackwell 156). Spectators

oscillate between identifying with Alma in decrypting and translating Elisabet's silence and with Elisabet in her voyeurism and vampirism.

The nebulous and inscrutable silence of *Persona* is reconstructed within the restricted spaces of *Cries and Whispers* (1972). Inside the maternal mansion (Taxinge Castle in Mariefred) and the sprawling garden, the tangible existence of memory unites and separates the sisters. It was conceived during a period of personal crisis marked by the death of Bergman's first wife, Gun Hagberg, and his father, his faltering relation with Liv Ullman and allegations by the 60s intellectuals of being a bourgeois filmmaker. Images of constriction, symbols of inhibition, magnified movements of time, harpsichord, sconces, ornamented mirrors and chairs depict a restricted world of Victorian bourgeoisie, gender and class divisions and Protestant ethics. Focus on multiple clocks creates consciousness of time's existence and awareness of death. Agnes reinstituting time on the stopped clock directly brings her in contact with prolonged agony and endurance. All the women in the film bear the stigma of the repressive patriarchal order and enact the trauma through various physical 'distortions'. The inhumane husbands, the spiritually impotent priest, the sadist doctor and the dead absent father of the household are the invisible dominant causes which drive the psychological drama. Moments of togetherness and empathy are tangential to the pandemic atmosphere of disease and trauma. Bergman addresses the ever-present wholeness in beings which restores itself through acceptance of others; this unifying experience is related to the dissolving of ego (also linked to the inherent fear of mortification). The unknown malady that torments Agnes is symptomatic of the dispassionate involvement of Karin and Maria. Only the remnants of what is lost survive midst the ruins of their relation. Sexual claustrophobia, emotional disquiet, imminent death and diffused time inhabit the (closed) doors of the house. Death, as a separate entity, has an individual existence in the family. Agnes is

dying, Karin contemplates suicide ("It's true. I think about suicide"), Maria hides from the acceptance of this realization and the progression of time. Agnes too, according to Frank Gado, "personifies both the womb and death as a merciful release from the pain of being" (419).

The internal decay of Agnes reveals a metaphorical representation of the manor under slow destruction. This void emerging out of the absence of all possibilities of attachment and salvation is the cause of Agnes's death. Elements of touch and authentic feelings of love and dependence are constantly supplanted by the rigidities of separation, derision and banishment. Resistant to all individual hostilities of her masters, only Anna's faith and love serve as the redemptive value in the film. Anna's fullness (physical and spiritual) and her maternal/sexual tranquility for Agnes' overbearing pains are instances of respite for the audience facing the apathies of the other sisters. Tornqvist discusses the heavy parallels between Adèle of Strindberg's *The Ghost Sonata*, suffering from uterine cancer and Agnes' rotting body from cancer in the womb. Furthermore, the Milkmaid in Strindberg's play, bear resemblance to Anna's function of nurturing and protecting (147). Anna, sensitive to the cries of Agnes, sewing, lighting the fire, praying and communicating with God, bound by an immense potential to love, mothers Agnes and is the unique, singular companion in her disintegration. Death of Anna's daughter not only emancipates her from the realms of mortality and sickness, it also shifts the maternal on Agnes as an attempt to save an-other from dying. As a parallel to the dead daughter, the empty crib and the consequent close-up on Agnes' with a white rose reminiscing about childhood presage the collective death of childhood. Julian C. Rice claims in his *Cries and Whispers: The Complete Bergman*, that the "child in the psyche, represented, in Anna's dream, by Agnes, refuses to die and repeatedly cries for its mother (the breast, the womb, undifferentiated being), because of its abject fear of the isolation which ego-consciousness strives to impose" (155). Considering the

Kristevan chora[2] or the maternal space, Anna's relationship with Agnes can be read as a desire to situate a symbiotic relation between the mother and the child. She transforms into that sole character who wields her autonomous sexual preference in her silent lesbian love for Agnes. Anna's lack of forgiveness toward the other sisters emerges during Karin's disrobing sequence; Anna's observation of Karin's (spiritual vis-à-vis physical) nakedness unveils emotional and sexual jealousy toward impotent contenders of Agnes' love and attention. As a counterpart, to Karin, the sight of her naked body is an exposure of her vulnerability, her momentarily 'deviated' sexual preference and class hierarchy.

The title of the film which borrows from Yngve Flyckt's illustration of Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 14 in E flat major (K449) evokes cries from the very interiors of the self and whispers of history and yearning in the ever extending vacuum of the rooms. Whispers bear the lightness of love, faith, trust and secrecy. Anna whispers words of love and comfort to Agnes, Maria and her mother whispered, Karin and Maria whisper inaudibly in their momentary coexistence after Agnes' death. *Cries and Whispers* expands like a dream in red and white, the colours of the flesh and soul and the fear of losing words and lost words is the spectre which haunts every single frame. Bergman perceives the meaning of these colours differently in his *Images*; "I have thought of the color red as the interior of the soul. When I was a child, I saw the soul as a shadowy dragon, blue as smoke, hovering like an enormous winged creature, half bird, half fish. But inside the dragon everything was red" (Bergman 65-66). Thus, beginning form the curtains and the carpets to the blood of Joakim and vaginal mutilation of Karin, everything is draped in painted redness. In Tornqvist's view, the red signifies the insides of the body; therefore, we are perpetually within the redness of the maternal womb. The colour red and the continuous whispers, according to Tornqvist, are ''equivalent of fetal membranes and fetal

sounds and/or sounds heard by a fetus - suggest both a prenatal existence and, in the context of the film, the alienation from life felt by someone dying'' (149). Bergman assigns colours to the sisters according to their individual emotional depth and touch with instincts; Karin, draped in black, reflects frigidity and barrenness, Maria's red attire mirrors her eroticism and glibness, Anna's grey her state of mourning and servitude and Agnes' white her divinity and warmth. Agnes' cancer of the uterus is representative of the infertility and loss of motherhood in the characters. Memory of affecting the mother, Anna mothering Agnes and her belief in the departed soul of her daughter, Karin's mortification of the flesh, Maria's unfulfilled sexual cravings and Agnes' aches for the maternal hold, define the overarching theme of the film. Touch, physical proximity and isolation on the other hand establish the primary dialectic. Tornqvist draws the obvious parallels between Agnes and the biblical Christ in her 'passionate' suffering, death and resurrection. Agnes' 'resurrection' establishes relation of the three characters with death and the dead body; all are perpetually being(s)-toward-death and being(s)-with-death with a Heideggerian sense of time sliding away. ''One is reminded of the medieval idea of the dead as a s*peculum,* a mirror, of the living: "What you are, I have been. What I am, you will be"" (Tornqvist 158). Bergman himself perceives dead Agnes ''stuck halfway through and pleads for tenderness, mercy, deliverance, something''[58] (Bergman 71). Her sacrificial nature is portrayed through her repeated attempts to palliate the 'sins' of her sisters, her benign smile, recollections of paradisiac togetherness and paintings of nature. Close-up of Agnes' harrowing face in pain, her twisted hands while dying, her tears after death, allusion to Pieta and the Chaplain's sudden shift from the ritualistic prayer to words of guilt and Christ-like faith in Agnes ("Pray for us who are left here on the dark, dirty earth under an empty and cruel Heaven… ask Him to pardon us. Ask Him to free us at last from our anxiety, our weariness, and

our deep doubt. Ask Him for a meaning to our lives. Agnes, you who have suffered so unimaginably and so long, you must he worthy to plead our cause"), form her identification with Christ (sacrificial lamb/ *agnus dei*) (Tornqvist 153). Maaret Koskinen, probing into the authentic Bergman in her essay *The Typically Swedish in Ingmar Bergman*, quotes Jörn Donner's review of the leftover Christianity in Sweden which haunts his films; ''The Christian element in Bergman's films becomes not a direct expression of "Swedish" religiousness but a paradoxical sign of the lack of religiousness. It expresses less a presence than an absence: the void that "has remained" after material welfare has been taken care of" (Koskinen 128). God, as a prototype of unified consciousness and being, remains in the film and the moments of completeness that Agnes and Anna relive are symbolic of the elusive Romantic ideal. This ever-vanishing nothingness of Christianity surrounds *Cries and Whispers*, like the resuscitating pains of Agnes midst the idyllic setting.

Joan Mellen accuses Bergman of misogynistic undercurrents in the film. Commenting on the physical rottenness of Agnes, she quotes in her *Bergman and Women: "Cries and Whispers"*, "Stripped of its cumbersome and portentous metaphysics, this portrayal reveals in Bergman a man for whom not only sexuality or its intimations are vile, but particularly the female functions" (5). Blackwell, extending Mellen and Pauline Kael's feminist arraignment of Bergman's women as the 'Other', says, "The film destroys and erases the evil mother's body as sexual and then reifies the body of the all-nurturing, self-abnegating good mother" (Blackwell 166). Contrary to these allegations, the heterogeneous, plotless, intricate narrative style that Bergman adopts must be seen as one rupturing the masculinist linear narrativity. For Bergman, it is the question of the being which occupies the centre in his films; "the human face, the human soul" as a he clarifies in an interview on *The Dick Cavett Show* (1971) are of paramount

relevance to him. The mother instead of being the "non-body and all-body" as claimed by Blackwell (Blackwell 184), is subdued sexual force which erupts in the daughters as incongruity and eccentricity. Thus, the mother occupying the space of silence is beyond (masculinized) language and explicability. Multiple subjectivities, presence of women as fluid, a-structural, empathetic, self-authenticating and disavowing, operate against the hegemonic fixity of selfhood imposed upon women. Anna's metafictional voiceover, disembodied and transcending the physical realms, connects the central figure to the audience as a whole and locates itself at the locus of the text. The 'vulgar' specularity that one is exposed to, rather than stigmatizing the woman as masochistic, hysteric and delusional, serves to remove and uproot the male spectator from his privileged position through transparent defamiliarization. Time, by ceasing to exist in the household, appeals to a universal, historic position of the women. Bergman deconstructs the internal/external binarism by extracting the viewers and pulling them deep inside the interiors of the body and soul and creating an effect of distantiation. For Jesse Kalin, the film illustrates a phenomenological perspective by voyaging into individual consciousnesses where "we find both ourselves and the world already there and under way, beautiful and terrifying, yet also never fully revealed, subject to mysterious forces and haunted by impenetrable secrets and burdens of the past" (150).

The three sisters represent divided selves of their mother with possibilities of ontological and homosexual unity. Their desire to associate with the primal self of the mother is manifested in the moments of physical attachment which also serve as instances of disclosure. The contradiction in the memories of the mother as melancholic, indifferent, inert and occasionally loving generates anticipation of liberation and fears of being engulfed. This duality produces the parallel emotions of returning to the ideal state of primordial unity and being devoured by the

shadow of the m/other. Disposition towards this symbiotic, pre-symbolic, pre-cultural joining with the mother's body is also an instrument against patriarchal shame, alienation and estrangement; however, the mythological zone of unity also bears the anxieties of self-loss (death wish). The dolls in the flashback sequence (symbolically exhibiting the sisters as props in the mansion), the white gown of the sisters reminiscent of Agnes' memory of the mother against the redness of the setting, the infantile jealousies against mother's intimacy with Maria, their collective crisis in the manor, build the dual responses towards the film. Agnes' repeated efforts to kiss her sisters and pull them towards herself establish a possibility of merging with the sisters, the second mothers, to retrieve the lost identification. Eve Ruecshmann proffers a psychoanalytic reading of the film in her *The Internal World of Sisters* and examines the paradoxical bond between the sisters where they wait for death and sustenance, affection and distance, rebellion and acceptance. In the film, Ruecshmann finds an unconscious desire for Adrienne Rich's 'retrospective journey' through which the daughters return to the 'first love with the mother' beyond the Law of the Father (137). In *Cries and Whispers* this journey is constantly deflated by the difference between the sisters, their silence, economic hierarchies of the present which destroys the mythic value of all memories. In an elaborate discussion on the sisters, Ruecshmann perceives Karin (in her flashbacks of the mother) as both desiring the "pre-oedipal bliss" and aggressive towards the mother, exploring the mysterious subjectivity of the mother and urging for warmth, yearning for the lost touch and turning the sisters into potential mothers (Ruecshmann 139). Maria's inflated narcissism emanates from the mother's overgrown attachment and protection. Thus, one finds her overt indulgences in sexuality, narcissistic attachments and perpetual gratification of self-image. Karin is the most repressed of the sisters, adopting a persona of apathy, matriarchy and erratic emotional shifts. Closed, away from the

realities of death, and appearing as unfeeling, Karin's suffering is the most haunting in the film; her rejection of all touch situates her as prohibition and neurotically distant.

Bergman integrates women's sexuality with the colour red in the film. Flashbacks, insides of the manor, blood imagery, dress, wine, food, flesh are all stained with carmine temporality. Emerging and closing with red frames, the memory insets represent passion, betrayal, derision, removal, injunction, abandonment, rebellion, humiliation. Use of red and blood shapes the *mise-en-scène* of the film. The sequences dissolve to red screen, followed by a close-up, red screen and character present; the close-up and look into the camera provide a separate subjectivity to the individual under self-investigation. Karin and Maria's coming together against a red background, kissing and whispering words of love over Bach's music reflects a metalinguistic connectedness, which according to Rice, "wordlessly…communicated to the unconscious with supra-verbal immediacy" (154). Eva Ruecshmann beautifully deliberates on the scene;

> What follows is another one of Bergman's "spaces in the midst of a chaos of confusion and conflicting impulses," a beautifully choreographed "ballet'' of wordless touching between the two sisters, accompanied by a Bach cello piece. This nonverbal moment of connection, similar to the one between the depressed mother and Agnes, here conveys joy and exhilaration. The camera pans back and forth between Karin's and Maria's profiled faces as they cry happily and passionately stroke each other in a moment of great emotional release and forgiveness. (Ruecshmann 142)

Anna kissing Agnes, Maria and Karin's kiss, as well as Agnes' desperation to touch Maria's lips echo Irigaray's "Kiss me. Two lips kiss two lips. Openness is ours again" (73), from her essay *When Our Lips Speak*. Irigaray's new voice of multiplicities and decategorization aims at producing the same history, language and stories for women: a new horizon opens and devours

the old regime. She assimilates the transcendental and the erotic for God to shine forth through the senses and blood. “My blood is coming back from their senses…Their words are becoming empty, bloodless, dead skins. While our lips are becoming red again. They’re stirring, they’re moving, they want to speak” (75). On the other hand, Karin self-impairment brings about a destruction of the fictional, fantasmatic body. Red wine spills on the white tablecloth as Frederik gorges on meat and the scene is later followed by Karin’s remark, “It's all a tissue of lies”. Karin’s ‘lies’ refer to her own persona, her conformism, submission, identity. Through her damaging and blocking the sexual passage, scourging and expiation, Karin manifests her sexuality in a masochistic way. She lacerates her labia and in this painful pleasure, for Karin, repression is expression; Karin’s blood too contributes to the purgatory, non-meaning, indecipherability of female sexuality. William Friedkin’s *The Exorcist* (1973) and Lars von Trier’ *Antichrist* (2009) borrow desecration of a similar kind. It serves as a contrast to the Christ-like blood shedding of Agnes. The bodies of the sisters belong to the prelinguistic Lacanian Real and spaces of paralinguistic gestures and intonations, all of which remain non-interpretable. Karin’s genital disfigurement alludes to the originary *jouissance*[3] which escapes post the entry of the signifier. This return of the pre-ontological compulsion to enjoy marks Karin’s action in the face of the empty bourgeois metaphor (Frederik). The mythical opacity of Karin’s *jouissance* stands against the paternal understanding of sexuality and is itself a reassertion of the pre-condition of subjectivity. Even Agnes’ guttural, jarring emissions, clenching muscles, horror-stricken facial gesticulations are never communicated thorough language; Bergman tries to turn them to images through zooms, panning, high-angle shots, foreshortenings, diagonals and verticals. Maria with her domestic dollhouse sensibilities, distorted birdcage, narcissistic mirror, daughter to shield her from involvement is the trapped in her sensuality and childlike ego-

centrism. However, outside Agnes' spiritual realm and Karin's repressions, Maria's over-indulgence in sexuality functions as the third factor in re-constructing the mother of the past. Through the creation of the *Pieta*, Bergman tries to assemble the maternal and the sexual together-the visual articulation of desire, instinct and the spiritual. With the last appearance of the red screen, the present of the sisters and Anna turns void, the husbands re-enter as a negative force and the maternal mansion is lost. The moments of union embedded within filmic present turns into absurd gestures of filmic past. Memory of touch is negated, instances of tenderness are forgotten and Maria prepares to exit as the experienced (falsified) adult; Karin: You touched me. Don't you remember that? Maria: I don't recall each stupid act and never try forcing me to answer for one".

Between the reality, that the film records and the unconscious, ethereal quality of the images all objectivity is subjectivity. Dreams collide and a new world suspended in the middle of waking and sleeping is formed. Agnes's agony is the cause of the gathering and her death becomes a space for both separation/distance and an imagined sharing. Bergman does not turn the female into a decadent entity through Agnes' puking, dissevering, choking, secretions and sweat; rather Agnes is elevated and restored as a metaphor of all humanity deprived of communication and elementary feelings. The beckoning of the dead creates a fissure where the reality of the dead engages with the dream of the living and the reality of the living with the dream of the dead. Perhaps, the living and the dead confront each other in a dream-territory and the 'ghost' is comprehended by the sisters as their unconscious fear materialized. Agnes' spirit (an in-itself) deferred in a temporal nowhereness waits for the other's compassion to depart (Agnes: I'm dead, you see. The trouble is I can't get to sleep. I can't leave you all…Can't anyone help me? Anna: It's but a dream, Agnes. Agnes: No, it's not a dream. Perhaps for you it's

a dream but not for me.). Agnes returns as the indestructible undead, death drive personified, lie in its purest form. For Maria and Karin, Agnes' dead body represents the decomposition of the flesh and is nothingness transmuted. This long tradition in Swedish cinema of the dead returning to associate with the living is discussed through the works of Victor Sjöström and Mauritz Stiller by Maurizio Cinquegrani in his essay, *Shadows of Shadows: The Undead in Ingmar Bergman's Cinema*. To explicate the spectral presence in the films of Bergman, Cinquegrani iterates Derrida's hauntology from *Specters of Marx*; ''hauntology is the encounter with the otherness of the ghost, the structural openness directed by specters of the past toward the living'' (131). Thus, the ghost appears with a responsibility forced on the living to decode the incomprehensibility of its language, solve its riddled, ambiguous construct and inculcate it within the realms of knowledge. *Cries and Whispers* assimilates a dual response towards the dead- to dispossess oneself of the ghost and to understand its function and relation to the past. Thus, Karin rejects the awakening of the putrefying Agnes (Karin: It's pure morbidity, disgusting, meaningless. She's already begun to rot. She has foul spots on her hands.). Agnes resuscitates due to an internal contradiction in the act of mourning (of the sisters). On the other hand, in *Wild Strawberries*, the spectral presence of the past re-formulates the meanings of the present. Ironically, Isak Borg's waking up from the first nightmare sequence is the beginning of his life and the film from deadness and illusion; parallel to his real journey, his dead parents, siblings, lost lovers and guilt complexes emerge in Borg's symbolic quest. Highlighting Žižek's theory regarding the coming of the dead due to "disturbance in the symbolic rite of their burial" (Cinquegrani 136) and "desire of the living to keep the dead among them…to stop them from returning and interrupt normality" (Cinquegrani 141), Cinquegrani asserts that the diary situates the spectre in its desired position and grants the bonding and care that it yearned for. Anna's reading of the diary

foregrounds the lack in the presentness of the present and its completion in rejoining with the past. As a faint echo from Beckett's dying Malone, Agnes' diary recounts the past and fantasizes future, to populate the silence before death, to protest as a parallel to dissolution. The recurrence of the garden, where the mother failed to achieve completion and relatedness, indicates an intra and extradiegetic cinematic setting. Agnes' look outside the frame of the window (screen) moves beyond the filmic space to an ambiguous reality beyond the illusory. Though the sisters fail in retrieving the lost object (the separated mother), the past event (also an echo of a future phenomenon) in the end seem to congregate the three sisters in a transformation of the familiar garden into a utopian 'otherwhere'. The intersubjective violence and disruption of selves that the sisters proffer each other are reflective of the social and political order of a society and corrupted patriarchy. For a brief moment, Anna cradling the swing of the three sisters presents a redeeming image of a kind mother and sororal faith and trust. The flashback, with the sisters and Anna in the idyllic garden of the past (in contrast to the landscape in mist in the beginning), is also an event from a distant future, where timelines corrode and existence locates Holy Communion in togetherness.

> Agnes: It's wonderful to be together again…such an event for me, especially since I haven't been out of doors for so long. Suddenly we began to laugh and run toward the old swing…We sat in it like three good little sisters…All my aches and pains were gone. The people I am most fond of in the world were with me. I could hear their chatting around me. I could feel the presence of their bodies, the warmth of their hands. I wanted to hold the moment fast and thought: come what may, this is happiness. I cannot wish for anything better. Now, for a few minutes, I can experience perfection. And I feel profoundly grateful to my life, which gives me so much.

Bergman's cinema provides an authentic unpleasure to the audience through its psycho-physiological deliberations and its Brechtian, political consciousness manifests inside the deconstruction of traditional filmmaking. It is often charged with an innate ambiguity and performative paradox; one is almost perpetually face to face with the central character, with no interstices to escape. The face overwhelms and transcends narration and cinematic frame, imprinting itself as negation of images. Bergman's storytelling is experimental, auteuristic and symbolical comprising the beauty of incoherence and multiple interpretations. For Bergman, women, both in theatre and films, can gaze into the mirror/eye of the 'real' audience in a manner of looking through, transcending it and turning it non-existent; in being lucid with their physical selves, they can move through fluid spaces inaccessible to the other gender. The 'double (androgynous) self' that Bergman acknowledges is evident from the shift of his androcentric films to those of gynocentric interiority. We explore the futurity of the cinematic world (and of men's subjectivity) affected by the female other. Bergman's women are often located in the presymbolic, prelinguistic zone of the Real where speech eludes subjectivity. The director himself manoeuvres from the position of the Symbolic and therefore, his art, like Beckett, is on this failure of art to express. Her body then becomes a tool of disseminated libidinal forces along with their indigenous languages and expulsions. On the other hand are the hopeful, possible mothers like Alma in *Hour of the Wolf*, Marianne in *Wild Strawberries*, Mia in *The Seventh Seal*. Parallel to the forgiving women we locate the strained mother-daughter relation between self-absorbed pianist Charlotte and morbidly depressive Eve in *Autumn Sonata* (*Höstsonaten*, 1978). The story of impaired Eve, with a dead daughter in her past and living with her disabled sister Helena, her repressed sexuality and trauma related to the mother's continuous absence,

represents the scission between art and life. In these films, women, as the predominant gender, the sexual body, with its own languages and silences, in contrast to man's philosophical overtones, acquire a resounding existence. Focus shifts on women-related issues after *The Seventh Seal* and especially in later Bergman we find attempts to explore and locate female subjectivity. Men as unidimensional and peripheral, ineffectual spiritual spokesmen, centre on the ethical issues, but fail in caring for others, providing no transcendence or protection in a world devoid of belief. Women, on the other hand, are rooted in their bodily processes, inside a fundamental level of physicality and sexuality, where experience is grounded. Through the duality of silence and screams, the actresses often construct an opposition against the regime of patriarchy. Close-up of the woman's expressions as a recurrent motif posits the face as an object of experience and accords a separate language to it. This alterity which faces the viewer as Other involves and coerces them to generate a response. Tangible and unfolding as consciousness, this look of the on-screen Other, is pre-theoretical, precognitive and pre-phenomenological; the relation is elemental and unfurls as sensation. The power of speech is repositioned on the body of the woman and the body contradicts, confronts and subverts against all external forces. Empirical knowledge and expressions of the body transcend the limited knowledge of God and the conscious self. Rather than scrutinizing them as victims of sexuality, it seems appropriate to unravel them as finding the men inadequate against their unrepressed desires. The body of the woman in Bergman's films is a schizophrenic subject which functions as an extradiegetic instrument often overwhelming the filmic narration and its apparatus.

Notes

1. Žižek adopts the concept of the "vanishing mediators" in *For They Know Not What They Do: Enjoyment as a Political Factor* (179-228).
2. For a detailed understanding of Kristeva's concept of 'chora', see *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (133).
3. For a thought-inspiring discussion Lacan's *jouissance,* refer to Suzanne Barnard's introduction to the subject in *Reading Seminar XX: Lacan's Major Work on Love, Knowledge and Feminine Sexuality* (2-20).

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