Chapter II

Making Difference

Do I contradict myself?

Very well then, I contradict myself,

(I am large, I contain multitudes.)

Leaves of Grass

In 1979, Jean François Lyotard's The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge appeared with the argument that in the post-industrial era, the character of knowledge itself had changed. According to Lyotard, it has now become a form of discourse, and a creative force by itself. He argues that from the start of modernity in the late 18th century until roughly 1960, Western civilization had pinned itself to dominant meta-narratives—authoritarian metaphysical explanations and teleological inclinations—that became its acknowledged fundamentals. As a result of these self-legitimated and undisputed ‘grand narratives’ the Western world gravitated towards a positivist and rational Weltanschauung based on enlightenment thesis.

In postmodern society, knowledge is formulated and legitimated, according to Lyotard, in radically different terms: “The grand narrative has lost its credibility, regardless of what mode of unification it uses, regardless of whether it is speculative narrative or a narrative of
emancipation” (37). For Lyotard, there is no longer any grand story to be told and in the postmodern world there is not one form of discourse that stands above all others nor is there any singular form of knowledge that is privileged and can serve as the ground for all others. Rather, there is simply a wealth of various language games, a la Ludwig Wittgenstein. The central idea that Lyotard borrows from Wittgenstein is that the meaning of a term, a phrase or a sentence, is produced through the way in which it is utilized, and how it functions in human interaction. There is no meta-language that reveals a universal structure behind the different types of statements and phrases. Science gives us cognitive statements. But there are, for instance, “performative” (The Postmodern Condition 9) statements. When a President of a University declares at an open meeting of students and faculty "The University is open!" she/he is not making a cognitive statement, but rather performing an action (The Postmodern Condition 9). Lyotard places great importance on the legitimacy of ‘petite’ narratives, on difference, and on the multiplicity and heterogeneity of language games. There are no absolute and universal rules or conditions that are applicable for all statements. Difference is the only reality. Verifiability is valid only for scientific, cognitive, and constative statements. The same rules or conditions are unsuitable for statements of modality, questions, exclamations, and commands. In the Postmodern, the narrative discourse leads the interrogation of the great
variety of languages and language games. The rules and conditions of
discourse are not instituted in advance, but rather materialize from the
interaction itself. To deny difference, to invoke absolute conditions of
discourse, to legitimate and institutionalize one discourse is fascist.
According to Lyotard, this creates the basis for the violent expulsion
and destruction of the ‘other’.

One of the persistent endeavours of western metaphysics,
from the Platonic days, was to evolve a narrative to mediate difference
so that the phenomenological representation of thought and its objects
will be ensured. The answer was the development of a conceptual
discourse designed to tame difference and secure the dialectical order
built fundamentally on the binary of presence and absence. Thought is
transformed into the phenomenological act of thinking so that it can be
adequately and positively represented. The world of representation was
established by the phenomenological thought according to specific
rules. But difference opens endless possibilities in a Dionysian
celebration of life. The closure (and the control) of the opening at the
point of emergence of thought by the deliberate enforcement of
dialectical metaphysics establishes uniform and standardised thinking
based on the ‘good and common’ sense. For the West ‘good sense’
involves a delimitation of thought guided by principles of reason and
the law of contradiction. In order to represent thought metaphysics
should identify and limit difference and deter internal alterity or pure
difference, which it regards as non-sense (madness) in the light of its own ‘superior’ logic. This ‘madness’, the dialectical opposite of reason, was regarded as dangerous in that it makes thought an immeasurable and ungraspable act incapable of gauging its own being.

Beckett captures the incommensurability of being in Molloy’s existence by proxy, Watt’s inappropriate lack of direction and the self-confessed insubstantiality of the protagonist in The Unnamable. What Beckett challenges through his novels is a certain narrative convention devoted to representation that claims to account for being in its totality and to fix it through the organic controlling of difference. Beckett questions this universal narrative by revealing that non-sense or madness, the apparent inverse of reason and sense, has always been actively implicated in the functioning of reason and the production of narratives.

The taming of difference by dialectics is effected through a narrative that inscribes and conceptualises difference. Representation is, then, capable of organising and predicting its own course. In the classical and modernist view, this constitutes the basis of the narrative framework, capable of reflecting the quintessence of being and reality (Difference and Repetition 32).

As we saw in the Introduction, in the classical age and the modern, this narrative was able to set up representation and structure reality on the binary of the world and the self. All subsequent binaries
took off from this basic dyad and always took on the basic form of a
knowing subject facing a known object. In classical representation,
discourse controls difference and fill the gap at the origin of thought
by regarding difference as an inevitable dimension within the totality
presented in metaphysics. In “Theatrum Philosophicum.” Foucault
suggests:

Take difference. It is generally assumed to be a difference
*from or within* something; behind difference, beyond it—
but as its support, its site, its delimitation, and
consequently as the source of its mastery—we pose,
through the concept, the unity of a group and its
breakdown into species in the operation of difference (the
organic domination of the Aristotelian concept). Difference
is transformed into that which must be specified within a
concept, without overstepping its bounds. (356)

The delimitation of difference is effected through the concept so that
the self of thought and of its objects is safe within the structure of
universal representation. The more specific actualizations of difference
in the various fields of knowledge are made to fit that universal
category.

Literature, in this scheme, perpetuates the general system of
representation by replicating its laws unquestioningly. The master
narrative organizes difference beforehand according to the model of
identity and presence and is able to direct the successive representations copied from this narrative. On the contrary, Knott in Watt belongs to the domain of orgic difference and challenges any universal concept of Knott as a pre-identified, autonomous individual.

Language does the demarcation and distribution of difference by organizing it within the space of the concept and makes it function within the play of the narrative. As the narrative of conceptual difference, representation limits difference to a space and time functional within predetermined priorities. Difference guarantees the demarcation between binaries. The dissimilarity between the two parts of the binary and their resemblance to analogous entities that will then create similar groups through replication are the characteristic elements that comprise the metaphysical basis of representation.

Difference is an order of being that invalidates itself while preserving itself and brings on the silencing of the dialectic. This internal emptying is realized through an operation of exhaustion. The ‘silencing’ should not be construed as a simple erasure of the dialectic or the space of representation. It coincides with the reworking of conceptual difference that breaks the act of representation by interrogating the sense of meaning produced in discursive language. It both retracts from and supplements the space of understanding. It is activated by the silent difference between the ‘a’ and the ‘e’ in the Derridian concept of différance. It is never posited as opposite to
speech but functions as writing that silences the conceptual difference between words and their lexical meaning and between the act of speech and the act of writing. It lies beyond the traditional dialectic between speech and writing.

The order which resists this opposition, and resists it because it transports it, is announced in a movement of difference (with an a) between two differences or two letters, a difference which belongs neither to the voice nor to the writing in the usual sense, and which is located, as the strange space that will keep us together here for an hour, between speech and writing, and beyond the tranquil familiarity which links us to one and the other, occasionally reassuring us in our illusion that they are two.

(Margins of Philosophy 5)

Real difference corresponds to a disturbance in language, which dissolves our confidence in the belief that conceptual difference can adequately represent us and thereby insure our self-presence. It defamiliarizes the familiar and the customary without ever venturing out of site of this familiarity. In “From Restricted to General Economy,” Derrida explains, “The known is related to the unknown, meaning to nonmeaning” (271). It fails to lead us towards the final resolution in a totality that can be represented through dialectical methodology. Difference transgresses the Hegelian process of meaning by
transforming into a rebellious element that breaks up the system of representation based on that logic.

In *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, Lyotard probes the possibility of the name and the referent after one has dispensed with the traditional knowledge-legitimating schemes. According to Lyotard, the fundamental unit of communication is a ‘phrase.’ "To learn names," he writes, "is to situate them in relation to other names by means of phrases" (*The Differend* 44). A specific referent first achieves its meaning in and through its linkage with other phrases. A referent can be located within many different networks of names, and the linkages between phases are not ‘right’ or ‘wrong,’ but rather suitable or unsuitable, useful or superfluous, meaningful or senseless. The ‘phrase’ is primary, and there is no meta-language for ‘phrasing.’

Ultimately, there is no firm ground from which to arbitrate between different, heterogeneous ‘phrasings.’ There is no logos outside the agonistic struggle of the differend. The ‘phrase’ is not identical to a sentence, a judgment or proposition: ‘eh?’ ‘whoops’ or ‘Oh, damn’ are all phrases. Phrases always present a possible world. The subject is positioned by the phrase, and the phrase arranges itself in relation to other phrases. The presentation (not representation) is always a placement or a placing. The phrase signifies that something is taking place. The real offense is the hegemony of one phrase over another: to rule, to eliminate, to invalidate, to displace, or to negate. Nazism or,
for that matter, any authoritarian political setup is precisely such a
denial, refusal, and an attempt to stifle all other forms of language
games except its own. This, for Lyotard, is barbarism, terror in its
purist form. Hegelian dialectics had disastrous applications—
epistemological, political and linguistic—down the years, which
include the modernist legions of repressive social theories and
reductive narrative practices. Statistical approximations obliterated
singularities, the marginal was repressed as the center exercised all
permeating authority, and in epistemology the latter part of all binaries
was perpetually condemned to be the secondary, the one-down, the
negative, the not positive. Orgic difference was systematically
appropriated in discourse by legitimizing binary difference (conceptual
difference) as real and scientific.

As we shall see in the later part of this chapter, Beckett’s
narrative intrudes into the narrative of representation to offset the prim
and orderly enunciation of difference. It initiates evasions within
similarities and brings on the infinite within the finite and otherness
within the self-identical.

Reviewing Levinas’ work in “Violence and Metaphysics: an
Essay on the Thought of Emmanuel Levinas,” Derrida associates the
Greek origins of western philosophy with, what he calls, “the opening
of the opening” (Writing and Difference 83). It is an indistinct moment
when thought, attempting to figure out Being and entrench itself within
that knowledge, experiences the possibility of infinite non-closure. The
violent force of the opening is linked to the inescapable and
ungraspable presence of a radical alterity symptomatic of the
equivocation of being in general, and of the elusiveness of thought. An
irrational and irreducible element is operative within the very space of
meaning produced by the various discourses of western philosophy in
their attempts to represent being. This constituent refuses to be
displaced and be kept as a binary opposite to it but rather continues to
persist within the same space. Generating an interior distance, it forms
an internal alterity or a point of difference within the same that resists
integration of thought into an identical repetition of the same. Linda
Hutcheon asserts how “Historical and narrative continuity and closure
are contested” and “The concept of alienated otherness (based on
binary oppositions that conceal hierarchies) gives way, as I have
argued, to that of differences” (Poetics of Postmodernism 12) in
postmodernity.

Beckett’s fiction, a postmodern attempt at shattering the hold of
dialectical epistemology and the representative closure of the language
of philosophy, performs a similar act of internal distancing that
employs the concept of difference.

It is in the original space of uncertainty—the differential level—
that thought’s most fundamental being is inscribed and entrenched. It
is not the spontaneous embodiment of an a-priori essence—a self-
identical positive difference—that can be affirmed and represented so that it can dedicate itself to the objective quest of knowledge. Rather, thought’s pursuit of knowledge is from the beginning closely related to the destiny of its own existence as a positive identity. It is defined in terms of an all-engrossing action, that of making difference. The modes of self-production of thought provide an answer to the question about the emergence of knowledge and at the same time problamatize it. The interrogative action that takes precedence over all answers is self-reflexive. It is tied to the possibility of self-knowledge along with the risk of doubt and ignorance. The origin of thought is thus linked to difference and self-difference. Enlightenment philosophy, on the other hand, induces the tidy and systematic logic of dialectics to bear upon thought. For it, thought contains a fundamental ignorance or blank that needs to be disciplined as it seeks to legitimise itself in its pursuit of knowledge.

The self-reflexive structure of thought could be equated with self-difference. There is an apparent contradiction at work here: in order to be and identify this being as its own ground for knowledge and in order to overcome the resistance of non-being that survives through the persistence of the self-reflexive, thought is compelled to differentiate itself further from that being. Thought’s drive towards self-knowledge and its attempt at the embodiment of objective
knowledge through reflection is violated constantly by an act of violence that springs with this compulsion.

The violence attached to thought, according to Deleuze, is of a transgressive nature and is tied to a primal act of infraction, which he regards as making a difference. To him: “Difference is that by which the given is given, that by which the given is given as diverse” (*Difference and Repetition* 222). Deleuze further divides difference into two, organic difference and orgic difference. He names conceptual difference as organic difference and proposes orgic difference as that which represents the untamed and untameable dimension of absolute difference. Organic difference conceptualises a system by differentiating it, in a very rudimentary way, from all that is excluded from it. In this process the internal contradictions and differences of the system are overlooked for the sake of a tenable whole. It suppresses inherent multiplicities and alternatives to project a self-regulated and unified identity. This involves an act of approximation. As James Gleick presenting an overview of the theory of Chaos (*Chaos: Making a New Science*) suggests, all approximations tend to be authoritarian, unrealistic and highly unreliable.

This original operation of thought is the most important aspect of the production of identity and the multiplicity of identities within the identity. Deleuze calls attention to the “difference that thinking makes in thought, that geniality of thinking, that profound fracture of
the I” (Difference and Repetition 266). Difference resists all dialectical resolutions and inflexibly remains what it is—pure difference. Thought is a force impelled by the internal other, a presence that resists repetitive identity within presence and the same within the same.

According to Deleuze, representation executes the organization of being by means of the hierarchical allocation of organic difference. The law of sufficient reason governs this discursive and conceptual practise articulated around the model of the same. The organic strapping of difference that happens in representation engenders the objectification—through limitation and identification—in any narrative, of the outside world. Under such a model, the world is perceived and represented as a stable and self-identical space of objectivity where recognition becomes the basis for the institution of a predictable reality organized around the subject-object duality. Deleuze says, “Recognition may be defined by the harmonious exercise of all the faculties upon a supposed same object: the same object may be seen, touched, remembered, imagined or conceived” (Difference and Repetition 133). The concept of self-identical objectivity is based on the possibility of a unified and internally consistent subject. The subject is established as an immutable unified whole unaffected by difference. Difference is regarded as an external force which has to be
tamed but has no access to the internal space of the thinking subject.

Deleuze continues:

An object is recognised, however, when one faculty locates it as identical to that of another, or rather when all the faculties together relate their given and relate themselves to a form of identity in the object. Recognition thus relies upon a subjective principle of collaboration of the faculties for ‘everybody’ - in other words, a common sense as a concordia facultatum; while simultaneously, for the philosopher, the form of identity in objects relies upon a ground in the unity of a thinking subject, of which all other faculties must be modalities. (Difference and Repetition 133)

The cognitive apparatus that brings about the taming of difference through the discursive power of representation is based on common sense and good sense. They constitute the discursive and empirical world of the text supporting representation in its conceptual appropriation of reality. It is a space defined by the ability to think in common that tames the orgic and paradoxical nature of difference in general. Deleuze defines common sense as “the norm of identity from the point of view of the pure Self and the form of the unspecified object that corresponds to it” (Difference and Repetition 133), and good sense as “the norm of distribution from the point of view of the
empirical selves and the objects qualified as this or that kind of thing” (133-134). Through the collaborative effort of common sense and good sense, a universal appropriation of reality based on the fixed organic distribution of difference is achieved. This in turn preserves the subject-object duality and establishes all foundational oppositions that preside over representation. A conceptual evaluation of reality occurs along with its empirical perception because organic difference is based, as we have seen, on the possibility to judge in common. Through the act of judging, one reaches the correct evaluation of reality together with a verdict on the proper way to think about reality. The existence of the world depends on concordance—what everybody agrees to—and on recognition, what everybody recognizes as implicitly true and self-identical from the beginning. Concordance implies the hegemony of a version of meaning that is devoted to the triumph of the Doxa and the common opinion. Meaning, when shared in common and reproduced correctly, stabilizes thought around the model of identity and operates the organic distribution of difference that in turn allows the same objective world to be recognized by all.

For Deleuze “the task of modern philosophy has been defined: to overturn Platonism” (Difference and Repetition 59). Platonism proposes infinite representation and its logical heir, Hegelian dialectics, continues the process. Deleuze describes it as the taming of difference through the organic representation of being. In dialectics,
the inherent difference of being is submitted to the original hold of identity. Deleuze writes:

The point is that in the last resort infinite representation does not free itself from the principle of identity as a presupposition of representation [. . .]. Infinite representation invokes a foundation. While this foundation is not the identical itself, it is nevertheless a way of taking the principle of identity particularly seriously, giving it an infinite value and rendering it coextensive with the whole, and in this manner allowing it to reign over existence itself. (Difference and Repetition 49)

The principle of universal identity took on the contradiction resulting from the self coming across its own alterity within the infinite representation of its being, and enforces organic difference. Identity was regarded as the adequate condition for difference to exist. Hegel’s dialectics is the “final and most powerful homage rendered to the old principle” (Difference and Repetition 50). Post-Hegelianism is a reaction against the warped concepts of identity and negativity, and postmodernity is synonymous with this reaction. Deleuze points out that

the contemporary novelist’s art which revolves around difference and repetition, not only in its most abstract reflections but also in its effective techniques; the
discovery in a variety of fields of a power peculiar to repetition, a power which also inhabits the unconscious, language and art. All these signs may be attributed to a generalised anti-Hegelianism: difference and repetition have taken the place of the identical and the negative, of identity and contradiction. (*Difference and Repetition* xix)

Beckett’s texts explore a version of meaning that is defined in relation to a fundamental economy of difference and non-sense. He is aware of the fact that the fabrication of meaning in modernity (done in the most emphatic and positive fashion) was an exercise in futility because of the pervasive and insinuating presence of non-sense within the production carried out by the language of modernity. The productive role assigned to non-sense in Beckett’s text should be understood in relation to an attempted interrogation of the restricted version of meaning posited by classical representation. It involves a critique of common sense and good sense, the cornerstones of the phenomenology of meaning. Through the device of parody their inability to orchestrate the scene of representation is highlighted just as repetition makes difference operate within the predictability and identification defined by the subject/object duality.

This textual strategy triggered by orgic difference operating below the surface brings on a major shift in the structure of representation and in a way defines the Beckettian credo. Expressing
the orgic nature of difference in the text in order to enforce a radical change in meaning necessitates transgressive textual practices located beyond the purview of the traditional concept of mimetic expression based on the form-content dyad. The shift and the resultant change in meaning need to be acted out rather than represented. Hence, in Beckett’s text, the emphasis is on the performative act rather than the merely descriptive enunciation of the narrative. The resultant theatricality resists all simplistic readings. At the same time, Beckett does not profess the collapse of organic representation with the glee of a triumphant gladiator nor does he become nostalgic about the demise. He just traces out the effects of this collapse by presenting in a highly suggestive manner the permeation of orgic difference into the scene of representation.

The presence of an unrepresentable other in Arsene’s speech destabilizing the very meaning of his words is inscribed as a type of difference within the same that brings into mind Derrida’s conceptualisation of ‘Différance’. It is a difference located beyond presence in a non-place which is “never presented as such” and which “derives from no category of being, whether present or absent” (“Différance” 6). Différance calls into question the act of separation of the empirical and the intelligible that has becomes the locus of the phenomenology of meaning in the West. It is the uncharted territory dodging the very organisation of space performed by representation in
order to make the appearance of the world identifiable and recognizable. Temporally différance deflates the logic of linear time by embodying a “past that has never been present” (“Difference” 16).

Generally speaking, différance, as does Beckett’s text, suspends the vectors through which the discourse of representation carries out the conceptual ordering of being. With différance there is no means to identify any progression or change because it coincides with the rebellious and amorphous quality of that change. It is an event that starts nowhere. In Derrida’s words “there is nowhere to begin [. . .] and because what is put into question is precisely the quest for a rightful beginning, an absolute point of departure” (“Difference” 6). As he departs on his fantastic voyage, Molloy is submitted to this very force of the lack of an absolute beginning that always situates him within the nomadic and non-sensical. He says:

He is a queer one the one who comes to see me. [. . .] It was he told me I’d begun all wrong, that I should have begun differently. He must be right. I began at the beginning, like an old ballocks, can you imagine that? Here is my beginning [. . . ]. It gave me lot of trouble. It was the beginning, do you understand? Whereas now it is nearly the end. Is what I do now any better? I don’t know. (4)
Molloy is doomed to oscillate between a beginning that increasingly looks like an ending and an ending that seems to be very much like a beginning.

The organic representation of difference is slowly supplanted by a transgressive practice of repetition that deploys orgic difference and causes the representation of the objective world to become equivalent to the utterances produced by the subject. The subject then becomes a construct of its own narrative and cannot operate as the centre that can dominate its utterances. It is disembodied and scattered throughout the narrative by a language that it does not own any longer. The subject finds itself generated by the perverse logic of a meaning fuelled by non-sense that subverts the logic of representation. Arsene’s rather lengthy “short statement” (39) extending over twenty-four pages (39-63) is the meandering explanation of a phenomenon that he cannot identify or represent. It betrays the fact that he himself has become the creation of the phenomenon—a nameless yet pathetically personal voice propelled and tormented by a language that dominates it. In the same way, the Gall’s incident (70-74) where Watt comes across the weird father-son pair who had come to repair the piano becomes, for him, an intangible event that could not be narrated in a straightforward fashion. For Watt, Gall’s “fugitive penetration” (70) is not an event which he could master in an objective way as a subject but an incident which has come to register within himself as an inexplicable
phenomenon of “great formal brilliance and indeterminable 

purport” (74). For him it was a repetition or one out of an endless replication of images in a set of parallel mirrors for which there was no original but only copies.

In a sense it resembled all the incidents of note proposed to Watt during his stay in Mr. Knott’s house, and of which a certain number will be recorded in this place, without addition, or subtraction, and in a sense not.

It resembled them in the sense that it was not ended, when it was past, but continued to unfold, in Watt’s head, from beginning to end, over and over again, the complex connections of its lights and shadows, the passing from silence to sound and from sound to silence, the stillness before the movement and the stillness after. (72)

This confused subjectivity disorients Watt and Molloy so much so that they cannot situate and identify the outside world. Molloy’s incapacity to name, know and recognize himself and Watt’s powerlessness in naming the objects in Knott’s house are the results of this general sense of disorientation. Difference thus inscribes a level located beyond the simple designation of an objective reality and the assured presence of an already identified subjectivity. Whether one is static like Watt or on the move like Molloy or tied down but rocking like Malone is irrelevant, for, one enters here a world that resists the
simple opposition between motion and immobility. In *Watt* as well as The Trilogy, internal thought and the external world alternatively problematizes each other and reshapes the nature of their mutual entanglement away from the logic of representation. As a result the static structure orchestrating the subject/object relation in representation based on the identity of the subject and the sameness of the object is upset.

As Foucault suggests in “Theatrum Philosophicum,” the presence of difference and non-sense takes Beckett’s text to a level of double distancing from

- a central and founding subject to which events occur while it deploys meaning around itself; and an object that is a threshold and point of convergence for recognizable forms and the attributes we affirm. (351)

The change occurring in *Watt* cannot be articulated in space and time by means of a system of causality that could pinpoint a particular moment or an objectively discernible fact affecting an already defined subject. On the contrary, the event at the origin of the change expresses the dissolution of all central subjectivity as well as the disappearance of all directly stated objective reality.

The change is not fixable in time because it implies a contestation of the linear version of time at work in representation. Further, it requires a certain kind of logic of expression that lies
beyond the simple process of signification at work in representation. Foucault asks whether it requires a transgressive temporality characterised by “The eternal present?” and answers that it may be so “Only on the condition that we conceive the present as lacking plenitude and the eternal as lacking unity: the (multiple) eternity of the (displaced) present” (“Theatrum Philosophicum” 350). It is the expression of a space both old and ceaselessly renewed, a space of difference and repetition, of repetition as difference. It is the point of eternal return. It testifies to the predominance of the orgic within the organic in the production of meaning.

Arsene tries to express in words the change affecting the world described in Watt when he says:

I did not, need I add, see the thing happen, nor hear it, but I perceived it with a perception so sensuous that in comparison the impressions of a man buried alive in Lisbon on Lisbon’s great day seem a frigid and artificial construction of the understanding. (43)

It amounts to an event that is now lodged within the mind and the language of Watt the character and thus constitutes the contents of the novel. However, as an event, this changing condition is indistinguishable from what happens to the novel Watt itself, to its language and form. The novel is engaged in an act of representation of a reality and in the production and retrieval of the meaning of this
change. Simultaneously it is itself being engaged by the force of this reality, which, because it concerns language, impinges on the very form of the novel, which is now equated to Watt’s mind. The change is not located outside of the novel as a referent, nor is it the fictional product of something that happens internally to the novel or to its language. It points to another space, one that reformulates the difference between inside and outside in general and between fiction and reality in particular. Internally, Watt can be equated with a sense-making activity of writing that registers as event-change in that it displaces the discursive language that produces its being and is the only instrument through which it can express the nature of the change. The being of the novel is thus a fortiori differential. It is always being created. It is a presence that is always in the future. What Watt reacts to is the external event that brings about the production of the internal change that registers in its language. But this event cannot be fixed as an external referent but can only be represented as that intangible outside. Arsene, struggling to capture the essence of the change, can only sum up thus: “Everything that happened happened inside it, and at the same time everything that happened happened outside it” (43). Later, after filling up time with meaningless words, he comes back to his obsession. He says:

But in what did the change consist? What has changed, and how? What was changed, if my information is correct, was
the sentiment that a change, other than a change of degree, had taken place. (44)

The reference to the change by Arsene points to an impossible double-space that the novel occupies and hence its impossibility. The text is figuratively submitted to a change which is produced through its language and which happens to this language.

The forces of difference unsettle the language in *Watt* from the inside, preventing it from functioning as an instrument in the universal discourse of representation and as a device to keep difference at bay. As a result, meaning is also submitted to a fundamental change in character. It is transformed into the field of orgic difference to constitute a game of paradox that serves only to jeopardize the secure world of representation.

The mysterious Galls incident illustrates once again that the object of representation and the text as object, along with the subject of representation, are submitted to a paradoxical logic of meaning impelled by difference. Surging from within language, it disintegrates all time-honoured identities, upsets all binaries and produces a stratum of empirical reality that eludes the model regulating classical representation.

In *Logic of Sense*, Deleuze introduces a radical concept of meaning de-linking it from its customary faithfulness to the Platonic model of representation. Meaning is conceived as the force that propels
the simulacrum and is linked to the notion of the event. It is regarded as the ultimate event, a strange and effervescent fabrication that forever surpasses and thereby defuses the phenomenological space to which it is relegated to in representation. Meaning exceeds its phenomenological base built on good sense and common sense since in reality it functions in accordance with the lack-excess structure. Meaning is lacking because it cannot be defined, positively, by the scientific objectivity of linguists. It refuses to be reduced to the categories of sign, signification or demonstration or, for that matter, to any one of the operative functions of the system of representational language. However, meaning is also excessive because it attaches itself ad infinitum to the totality of all these categories. It is a function that encloses, generates, and at the same time suspends them. Because it is dispassionate in relation to these categories, meaning neutralizes the reductive brand of meaning at work in these categories. Here we come across the transgressive nature of meaning, a fundamental characteristic exclusively investigated by Beckett.

Meaning is located neither completely in the inside nor completely on the outside of language, but in a dimension that is neither inside nor outside. In fact, meaning articulates the difference between the inside and the outside. It thus refuses to limit itself to any one of the categories of language identified by linguists. Meaning is never totally present or completely absent. Like difference, meaning is
the differential function that repeats the lack at the origin of language and thought and the excessive fabrication of their representations. Meaning obeys a serial logic that renders it intangible and locates it in an itinerant non-place resisting positive identification. This brings in to mind Molloy and his transgressive activities through which he tries to make sense of the actions in terms of an introductory non-sense that cannot be excluded from this process.

The acknowledgement of the paradoxical structure of meaning leads to its reassessment. Language shapes reality from the inside and at the same time reacts or responds to the external solicitation of this reality. Since any external solicitation, as in Arsene’s experience of change (Watt 44), is felt internally at the same instance, pinpointing the precise meaning of reality (whether it is internal or external) becomes problematic.

Does objective reality precede the moment when it is made meaningful for an impassive fixed subject or does it only materialize after it has been made comprehensible by a dynamic all-knowing subject? Deleuze points to a concurrence between these two magnitudes, a kind of coincidence that completely transforms the nature of what is objective and what is subjective. Both of them emerge simultaneously because of the logic of meaning that transpires within language and exceeds the limits set by representation. Language as the channel for this logic of meaning ceases to be a simple, passive,
transparent, mediator in a process that assumes from the beginning the unchallenged presence of the empirical and the intelligible. Instead, it becomes the active function where this opposition is cancelled through the persistence of non-sense.

The Gall's incident in *Watt* (70-74) shows that meaning is a dimension that, like difference, problematizes the relationship between activity and passivity as they are placed within the objective-subjective binary at work in representation. The event as text implies a writing that corresponds to the form of the novel itself, as it is an activity lacking in itself and yet capable, through the power of its own displaced language, of fabricating disproportionate and boundless levels of reality.

This structure recovered by *Watt* and intensified in *Molloy*, is a dimension that challenges both the absolute presence of an unchanging subject able, through language, to think and speak the true meaning of all reality and the transcendence of a universal object willing to be appropriated. Things and words are constantly re-distributed and repeated differentially on either side of a border represented by meaning. Beckett’s texts presuppose all the consequences of the change. It engineers the production of meaning irreducible to the requirements of representation and its organic taming of difference. Meaning in Beckett is a force which, because it is caught in a structure of boundless regression, is not fixable or identifiable.
Consequently, it produces objects that escape the clutch of representation and are located beyond identity and recognition because they correspond to a tentative subjective movement that does not control them.

The non-place where difference resides suggests an economy of non-rapport capable of destabilizing any direct relationship between two represented positive terms. Non-rapport suggests, in the words of Derrida in “From Restricted to General Economy,” “An absolutely unique relation: of a language to a sovereign silence which tolerates no relations, tolerates no symmetry with that which tilts itself and slides in order to be related to it”(264). However, this silence is not located outside discursive language in some kind of indescribable realm that would directly oppose it. The sovereign silence does not destabilize language and speech by overpowering it. Rather, it exhausts it from within. It worms its way in to the discursive language and occupies the inner non-place within which language is now inscribed.

Beckett’s transgressive texts reside in a similar non-place. In *Watt*, for example, the non-place corresponds to Erskine’s silence as he gushes out the torrent of words and the absolute inner void lurking behind the excessive production of narratives by Watt. Erskine’s silence functions as a lack of ground, which acts as missed presence within Knott’s imperfect non-presence. It also triggers the exhibition of the simulaclrum at the heart of Watt’s non-sensical narrative.
Nevertheless, Watt’s multiple states fail to add up dialectically to compile one overreaching true account. Within the boundaries of their created space, they seem to disseminate, lose energy, exhaust themselves and die out. In postmodern literature difference, thus, overthrows dialectics through a process of internal fatigue.

Transgression introduces the process of diminution rather than amplification, in which excess returns to lack with a difference, creating a surplus of lacks and a lack of presence. The task of writing is to activate the transgressive practice of difference within language. It brings together, within a common syntax, the subordinated and minor discursive texts besides stimulating the operation of non-relation, which cannot simply stand free of syntax. Derrida notes in “From Restricted to General Economy” that it is

A relation, however, which must rigorously, scientifically, place into a common syntax both the subordinated significations and the operation which is non-relation, which has no signification and freely keeps itself outside syntax. (264)

This is precisely what is articulated in Watt’s disjointed oral account to the narrator (164-167). The disorganized syntactic order of his talk is a language game performed deliberately and methodically by Beckett. It occurs within the very language of representation to execute an internal dislocation aiming at offsetting this language.
Watt’s chaotic and disordered utterances serve to disrupt the structure of syntax and meaning. Watt tells the narrator, “Day of most, night of part, Knott with now. Now till up, little seen so oh, little heard so oh. Night still morning from” (55), and later becomes all the more inarticulate when he blabbers: “Deen did taw? Tonk. Tog da taw? Tonk. Luf puk saw? Hap! Deen did tub? Ton sparp. Tog da tub? Ton wonk” (166).

The attempt, here, is to reach the heart of silence that will diffuse discursive language and make it function within the larger context that establishes the non-relation between words and things within language. This is exemplified by the strange relationship between Watt and the narrator played out across the fence. Non-relation is not an ablative movement as it fails to enforce a complete break. It is intransitive in nature and points to a rupturing, which is also a failed binding. The absence of relationship implies a much deeper relationship that generates a puzzled and puzzling reunion between word and thing, or subject and object. Establishing a non-relation entails neutralization that vetoes the possibility of re-establishing any new interiority. The interior space is preserved, but it is now defined in connection with the non-relation. This manoeuvre, the act of writing, involves a certain withdrawal that executes the dispersal of the thought within the core, which in turn institutes the non-relation. An exhibition of this could be found in Molloy. Molloy’s transgressive act of pulling out from the
world of routine discursive representation neutralizes its organization and forces him to reside within a space that exceeds and dissolves this world. This explains his perceptible lack of interest in life and his departure from the world of men.

The glorious, the truly glorious weather would have gladdened any other heart than mine. But I have no reason to be gladdened by the sun and I take good care not to be. The Aegean, thirsting for heat and light, him I killed, he killed himself, early on, in me. The pale gloom of rainy days are better fitted to my taste, no, that’s not it, to my humour no, that is not it either, I had neither taste nor humour, I lost them early on. (29-30)

However, this separation does not amount to a complete rejection or disappearance of the world. It is borne of a reluctance to read the code that normally makes this world intelligible, allowing us to possess it while we continue to possess ourselves.

Molloy’s parallel code, while professing a rebuff and an unwillingness to reside within the code, also inscribes this code and the connection it establishes between subject and object or subject and subject within it. Molloy’s lack of hearing, his forgetting of language and science, his ignorance about propriety and property demonstrates that he belongs to another code.
Apathy in *Molloy* can be linked to this disquieting non-relationship. It involves an act of neutralization that purposefully steers clear of any simplistic remedies. A simple elimination of the act of representation or of the world will only result in the creation of a domain of meaningful silence that, as in romantic derision, could then function as an alternative language still contained within the logic of representation. As Watt noticed after Arsene leaves the house, difference or non-relation insists on the act of erasure. Beckett embodies it in a writing that never lets being simply settle into itself as in metaphysics. The apparently uncomplicated incident of darkness melting away at daybreak becomes an unsettling and confusing experience for Molloy. “But even as he looked it was effaced, not abruptly, no, and not gently either, but by a firm unhurried hand, wiped away” (59).

The heart of the transgressive act recommended by non-relation lies within difference that separates the ‘e’ and the ‘a’ of the Derridian différance. It is a difference that neutralizes the represented difference by resisting representation, and by way of endless deferring placing meaning away from the reach of conceptual understanding. The result is a kind of writing that negates the movement of the dialectic and, in the course, reinscribes the same within the other.

The enforcement of difference and the enacting of the non-relationship involve a rewriting of discursive language. This writing
turns out to be transgressive and strategic, and not simply subversive. For no matter how much Watt alters the syntax that systematizes meaning and understanding in the language of representation, the narrator ultimately is able to reorganize this space and salvage the meaning. The narrator after hearing Watt’s attempts at linguistic and syntactic variations, in the beginning, has this to say: “These were sounds that at first, though we walked face to face, were devoid of significance for me” (164). However, a few lines later he announces: “But soon I grew used to these sounds, and then I understood as well as before” (165). All the subsequent linguistic and semantic evasions, which grew more and more complicated as it progressed, were successfully deciphered despite problems with his hearing: “But soon I grew used to these sounds, and then I understood as well as ever, that is to say fully one half of what won its way past my tympan [. . . .]. For my hearing began to fail” (169). However, the sense of difference places this act of understanding not as the universal experience but as an incomprehensible operation taking place against the backdrop of a deeper silence. This silence speaks louder than the words because the authoritarian voices of meaning and reason cannot silence it completely. In “From Restricted to General Economy,” Derrida describes this silence: “in pretending to silence meaning, it says non meaning, it slides and it erases itself, does not maintain itself, silences itself, not as silence but as speech” (262). It is precisely this act of
exhausting and displacing, occurring within representation, which institutes non-relation as a power capable of transgressing the internal space of metaphysics. It is a type of transgression that pushes the boundaries of understanding further by altering its indicators and regulations all the while remaining implicated in the very operation that replaces the limits of understanding. Yet, comprehension does not reassure any kind of ownership nor does it guarantee that the meaning could be replicated as in a scientific experiment. When one takes leave of the well-defined world of understanding and identity that makes up the space of representation, one is bound to feel like Arsene, deserted rather than deserting, the same and another at the same time. In epistemological terms, this is a radical departure from the despotic totality of Hegelian thinking.

Beckett’s text recovers the violent internecine transaction that thought entertains with itself as it continues to grapple with the question of being and the possibility of self-knowledge. It takes the form of an induction of difference and repetition in place of a dialectical methodology of representation and the play of a permanent act of transgression in place of any claim for an entirely new and unique narrative strategy. The novels of Samuel Beckett endorse the differential level of thought in such a way that they put forward the undeniable presence of the other within the same. They also challenge the dialectical space that has informed a philosophical practice shaped
by the idea of an interior-exterior binary, and a resultant self-identity of the subject and objective and absolute knowledge of the outside. Self-reflexivity, as we have seen earlier, is the result of this transgressive act. It takes fiction to the realms of endless play and releases the writer from the demands of objective seriousness. He is now free to engage in narrative games and enter the labyrinth of human consciousness.

Along with the ideal of representation, classical western philosophy gave paramount importance to metaphysics as the definitive methodology for the resolution of questions regarding Being. An inherent desire to transcend the totality of being and to fix essence as an objective fact beyond the borders of reality characterise metaphysics. It forces a closure on the self-reflexive interrogation of being. The fact is that metaphysics is not the only operating methodology of philosophy. It should only be taken as one among the many discursive procedures available. As a discourse, it is an attempt to tame the self-differentiation present at the origin of thought as an interrogative sub-text in order to establish the possibility of presence and self-identity. This newfound sense of self-reflexivity becomes a critical action that paradoxically prevents thought from coinciding with itself and instead causes it to repeat itself differentially, thus problematizing the process of representation.
This self-reflexive structure simply recovers the fundamental ambiguity and duplicity attendant on the birth of thought. In order to be born into it, to know itself as well as to be successfully repeated to itself, thought is compelled to differentiate itself from itself. There are two contrary, though simultaneously produced and structurally dependent, moments in the history of thought in the West, as enunciated by Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition*. On one hand, difference is mastered so that it can be identified, recognised and given an identity different from non-identity. On the other hand, thought finds itself dispossessed of its identity as soon as it starts assuming it and thus fails to achieve a conclusive meaning for itself. Beckett’s text is located within the breach produced by the tension between these two contradictory tendencies. Deleuze points out:

> In effect, difference ceases to be reflexive and recovers an effectively real concept only to the extent that it designated catastrophes: either breaks of continuity in the series of resemblances or impassable fissures between the analogical structures. It ceases to be reflexive only in order to be catastrophic. ([*Difference and Repetition* 35])

In its self-reflexivity thought remains a question to itself, a catastrophe that cannot be adequately resolved as long as the question of being remains problematic. Reflecting on itself, thought weaves a narrative maze where it can always lose itself and where it produces
doubles of itself. The narrative voice of *The Unnamable* confesses the reality of the mirror doubles of itself when it says:

> But it is time I gave this solitary a name, nothing doing without proper names. I therefore baptise him Worm. It was high time. Worm. I don’t like it, but I haven’t much choice. It will be my name too, when the time comes, when I needn’t be called Mahood anymore, if that happy time ever comes. Before Mahood there were others like him, of the same breed and creed, armed with the same prong. (385)

The voice of *The Unnamable* multiplies identities and at the same time collapses the future and past into the present. It testifies to the impossibility of a unified (conceptually different) self within any narrative.

Beckett’s narrative is crucial in the postmodernist concept of difference because it is narrative that feeds on the metaphysical narrative of classical representation while at the same time obstructing and exceeding it. At work in this narrative is aporia, which is captured very well by Beckett when Molloy mulls over the reflexive moment, accompanying the composition of his text. “It is in the tranquillity of decomposition that I remember the long confused emotion which was my life” (24). The voice of *The Unnamable* is much more forthright when it ponders:
What am I to do, what shall I do, what should I do, in my situation, how proceed? By aporia pure and simple? Or by affirmations and negations invalidated as uttered, or sooner or later. (331)

Molloy gives a pertinent illustration of what the voice suggests when he concludes his narrative with the words: “Then I went back into the house and wrote. It is midnight. The rain is beating on the windows. It was not midnight. It was not raining.” (199). The act of writing amounts to a rebellious economy of difference that threatens to make all representation impossible and thus paves the way to a Deleuzian catastrophe. Rather than giving fixity to thought within a feasible reality, writing, in fact, decomposes the reality and makes the thought question its own viability.

Thought’s attempts to identity knowledge through metaphysics and its conceptual apparatus are inevitably related to an economy of ignorance. This corresponds to the resistance offered by difference, which works against the very movement of identification and origin. Dyads like knowledge and ignorance, meaning and silence, light and darkness are in fact interwoven and occur non-dialectically, all are instances of actualised difference. One easily recognizes the recurring themes in Beckett’s text where binaries like light and shadow and words and silence are regressed to the point of their problematic existence within the self-interrogative. It is a writing which seems to
detach itself from and at the same time adhere to its own point of receding origin. The text is itself without known source and has only its own self-contested appearance as writing to go by in order to comprehend itself. Located within postmodernity Beckett’s text redisCOVERS the truth that the origin is a point of return—a repetition that produces difference—towards all possible origins. That is, towards what has never been it but keeps registering as what will have been. Lyotard’s theorization of the ‘post’ in the postmodern comes very close to this Beckettian “future anterior” (The Postmodern Condition 81).

In Molloy the point of emergence of the writing is actually preceded by a reading that nullifies it because of its inability to understand it: “When he comes for the fresh pages he brings back the previous week’s. They are marked with signs I don’t understand” (3). It is followed by a bold act of appropriation. “Here is my beginning. It must mean something, or they would not keep it. Here it is” (4). However, it fails to stabilise the text by overriding and complicating it as the narrative totters between what will have been and what will not, to end in the despairing note:

I have spoken of a voice telling me things. I was getting to know it better now, to understand what it wanted. It did not use the words that Moran had been taught when he was little and that he in his turn had taught to his little one. So that at first I did not know what it wanted. But in the end I
understood this language. I understood it, I understand it, all wrong perhaps. That is not what matters. It told me to write the report. Does this mean I am freer now than I was? I do not know. I shall learn. Then I went back into the house and wrote. (199)

The inscription of a universal discourse of narrative as the locus in the encapsulation of being will relegate writing to a subordinate role. It is to escape this predicament that in Beckett self-reflexivity intervenes in the act of writing, displacing the object it attempts to grasp as well as the methodology that makes this knowledge possible. This makes the text doubly transgressive in relation to the traditional process of representation: first, by achieving a kind of stasis (indecision) that blocks representation from within, and secondly, by effecting an excessive production of doubles that multiply among themselves singularly without ever achieving a common identity. The way the narrator of *The Unnamable* shuttles between identities and names without ever coalescing into the singularity of a narrating—and narrated—subject testifies to this (385). Beckett’s writing perpetuates the transformation of the referent, which it attempts in vain to shape and stabilise while remaining ignorant to itself because writing itself is the very activity that enacts this transformation.

Beckett’s narrative is postmodern as it recapitulates the narrative process without ever submitting to the easy way of metaphysics and
conventional representation. In *Watt*, representation is exposed as a doomed action rooted in metaphysics striving to inscribe and tame difference in order to reproduce the totality of the order of being. As we have seen earlier, in Beckett, the process of representation is experienced as absolute difference or orgic difference. Reflection soon turns into questioning, into self-reflection, into the awareness of what always misses the coming into being of ideas and identities. Beckett’s narrative is a kind of differential repetition belonging to the orgic difference because it is born of the very difference which also prevents it from ever knowing when and how it was born. A movement of difference that continues to constitute it as always other than itself forever draws the text. The sense of absence of origin in Beckett has its echo in Foucault when he proposes in *The Order of Things* that:

> It is always against a background of the already begun that man is able to reflect on what may serve him as origin. For man, then, origin is by no means the beginning – a sort of dawn of history from which his ulterior acquisitions would have accumulated. Origin, for man, is much more the way which man in general, any man, articulates itself upon the already begun of labour, life, and language. (330)

What makes Beckett eminently postmodern is his ability to regard this lack of ‘origin’ not as a loss but rather as a condition from which a radical critique of any metaphysics claiming to recover the myth of
origin, identity and presence at the cost of difference, be launched. In the subsequent chapters, we will discuss in detail the actual textual practices in his oeuvre that promote the Deleuzian concept of pure difference and lack of origin.

Beckett’s texts refuse to fill in the lack at the site of the origin so that a narrative answer to the question of being can be offered. They work towards erasure and decomposition rather than fulfilment and composition. Refusing to recoil from the void out of which they originate, they continue to repeat the absence and to excavate the aporia beyond the metaphysical idea of transcendence. Beckett uses ignorance and non-sense as tools to destabilise the model of absolute knowledge that constitutes the framework of the Hegelian system of dialectics. Consequently, a contestation is registered at the site of the opening of language into writing; in ‘the opening of the opening’, that brings thought into itself.

Beckett’s postmodernity also resides in the way the texts negotiate the question of their own autonomous existence within the temporal present – their relative freedom and capacity for self-invention vis-à-vis their inexorable existence as language. Attitude towards the present can be oriented in two directions. The first could be taken as a Platonic attitude of thought towards difference, which generates a kind of mechanical repetition based on the platonic concept of sameness, which in turn functions as the basis for the organic
taming of being founded on presence and identity. In this metaphysical
version, according to Deleuze, the prefix ‘re’ appended to presentation
defines a type of repetition of the present (to re-present is to ‘make
present’ again) that guarantees the permanence of that present and the
infinite possibility of its eternal presence and retrieval (Difference and
Repetition 71-128). The second attitude captures the fleeting
dimension of a present informed by the Deleuzian orgic difference, the
feral and unrepresentable foundation of being. The first attitude is
engaged in the flaccid framing of a universal representation of the
present through contemplation of its essence and of the limiting of
difference. Deleuze calls this “reflexive representation” (Difference
and Repetition 35). The second attitude actively engages the status of
the present and interrogates the limits imposed on its representation.
Here, thought is less engaged in the organic limiting and identification
of the entity than in the recognition that it plays an active role in the
closure of reality. However, thought coincides with the breach of the
limit itself with, what Deleuze calls, the “secret repetition”
(Difference and Repetition xx) or transgressive repetition animated by
orgic difference. Thought is not positioned passively outside the play
of difference nor does it inertly embody internal principles that govern
difference. Thought operates at the margins of this process. On one
hand, thought is free to act independently of the present that
constitutes it; on the other hand, the very force of that present
operating as orgic difference defines it. In “Theatrum Philosophicum” Foucault points out:

The freeing of difference requires thought without contradiction, without dialectics, without negation; thought that accepts divergence; affirmative thought whose instrument is disjunction; thought of the multiple—of the nomadic and dispersed multiplicity that is not limited or confined by the constraints of the same; thought that does not conform to a pedagogical model (the fakery of prepared answers) but attacks insoluble problems—that is, a thought which addresses a multiplicity of exceptional points, which is displaced as we distinguish their conditions and which insists upon and subsists in the play of repetitions.(358-359)

The act of appropriation at the beginning of Molloy points to the fact that the text which is part of a discursive space conditioned by representation is transgressed by the truth that Molloy’s writing immediately takes the form of a contingent presence that defies being attached to any universals of the present or the origin. Beckett’s postmodern attitude to the present, the enigmatic presence of Molloy, takes the form of an investigation of Molloy’s identity through Molloy’s own fictions where even Moran (who is after him) becomes a figment of his solipsistic fantasies. It fails to result in a conclusive
possession of that present and instead ends up as a problematization of the constituents of this contingent present. Molloy sums up his life as the product of his own narrative discourse and attempts a feeble negation of reality around him as he passes into the silence of his fiction:

I have spoken a voice telling me things. I was getting to know it better now, to understand what it wanted. It did not use the words that Moran had been taught when he was little and that he in his turn had taught to his little one. So that at first I did not know what it wanted. But in the end I understood this language. I understood it, I understand it, all wrong perhaps. That is not what matters. It told me to write the report. Does this mean I am freer now than I was? I do not know. I shall learn. Then I went back into the house and wrote, It is midnight. The rain is beating on the windows. It was not midnight. It was not raining. (199)

Molloy challenges the fictional present (the positive present tense is contested and requisitioned by the past tense in the negative) he has painstakingly constructed and by extension questions the validity of any objective reality outside the fictional one.

The particular attitude of the text towards the question of the limit and the questioning of language is one of the aspects that brings Molloy within postmodernity. This attitude entails an attempted
withdrawal from representation, which is more of a problematization of activity and passivity in general. The text does not actively resist representation nor does it passively submit to it. Rather it recoils from it and is therefore able to criticize it from within the attitude. Through the act the text displaces the very limits that enclose being within the closure of representation but purposefully fails to generate an alternate space that would enforce a different concept of essence. The way Molloy engages in self-invention through self-criticism and self-questioning and the way it coincides with its own closure gives it a postmodern ethos. This act is precisely what constitutes the orgic becoming of the text itself as difference, as transgressive production of difference. It transforms the text into a singular and contingent experience of infinite freedom that refuses to be encapsulated within the limits of organic difference. On the epistemological level, this change is tantamount to a radical methodological and philosophic shift. It involves a critical action that, in Foucault's words in "Theatrum Philosophicum," lays down certain demands:

First, it was necessary, along with Aristotle, to abandon the identity of the concept, to reject resemblance within representation, and simultaneously to free ourselves from the philosophy of representation; and now, it is necessary to free ourselves from Hegel—from the opposition of
predicates, from contradiction and negation, from all dialectics. (359)

The transgressive activation of difference is, as we have seen earlier, non-dialectic in character and reinforces the dissolution of limits.

In Beckett, the concurrence of thought with the transgressive act of de-limiting produces a double reality in which the subject becomes its own indefinite object (Molloy and Moran interchanging their narrative identities). The identification of the object now depends on the critical attitude of a subject that converts itself into its own object while at the same time accepting its own the closure as subject. This differential forays to the frontiers of identity constitute thought’s most terrifying moments of autonomy. The furthering of the limits will not resolve this postmodern predicament but will only modulate towards the generation of yet other unpredictable forms of being. In Beckett’s postmodern fictions, a general sense of impossibility and ignorance lurks in the background of any attempt to make possible knowledge or understanding. The result is a surfeit of repetition, of simulacra as points of evasion.