

The Necessary Agony of Love and Ideas of the Self: A Philosophical Exercise Centered on Nothingness

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This article attends to two daily attachments common in the contemporary world: the idea of an interior self, and a fixation with loving and being loved. The objective is to demonstrate that it is possible to liberate oneself from these attachments, through the conception of nothingness and the emptiness of constructs such as the self. If there is neither a nominalized self nor a love to be lived as an experience, what remains is a philosophical attitude of openness to everything and everyone. We can comprehend how rupture and loss constitute ineluctable experiences in human life.

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1. Introduction

Let us understand by *attachment* whatever presupposes the central basis of emotional stability to a person: what a person takes to be non-transferable, non-modifiable, and inalienable. An attachment concerns something that, for each of us, cannot be otherwise without integrally affecting us.

The aforesaid implies that a person clinging to an attachment has a generated deep-rootedness in what motivates that attachment. This deep-rootedness is not easily uprooted, for it corresponds to a connection with something intimate to a person, who is dependent upon that attachment. This attachment becomes a fundamental part of an individual's life. Losing the motive to the attachment means an overturning of life, a descent into non-sense, which is one of the greatest personal losses conceivable.

Attachment has become one of contemporary humanity's most characteristic issues. Not only are there attachments of the material or tangible type, such as an attachment to a person, an asset, or a thing, but there are also attachments of abstract order such as ideological attachments, mental attachments, moral attachments, and all attachments centered on ideas. Among such attachments are found, principally, the attachment to the

conception of the Self and the attachment to what is understood by Love. Each of these are addressed in this article, in order to open one's conscience to the possibility of liberation from such attachments. That liberation would allow a person to truly be pure, to truly be Nothingness.

This article purposefully and daringly proposes a systematic approach to comprehending both Nothingness and the world, as well as comprehending the fact of being in the world. This alternative system is proposed for the purposes of self-understanding, social tolerance, and the construction of deconstructions that allow a reconstruction. This article is not to be read by someone unprepared for becoming aimlessly adrift; it is not a study for those who fear drowning in nausea and uncertainty. It attempts to speak for Nothingness, by creating from one's own voice a something which partially means Nothingness. It is about unveiling; seeing without seeing; understanding beyond reason.

I propose a form of thought which, without excluding an ontology centered on Being, does not exclude Nothingness either; a perception that implies a constant dialogue between Being and Nothingness, both of which constitute a perpetually moveable and temporary reality in the world and beyond. This proposal also implies a critique of conventional structures for the meaning of love and the forms of constructing love, which we must experience in order to come alive by finding Nothingness within one's own self – without that Nothingness, one's own being is not.

2. Nothingness and Liberation from the Self

I grew up, like the reader, in a culture that believes in the existence of the *self* as a reality oddly independent from one's own self; or, rather, independent from one's own consciousness. However, since consciousness is the way that one grasps and generates the illusion of the self, then the self is not what has that consciousness. Rather, embodied consciousness presupposes the self in reference to the body containing it.

Before understanding the nonexistence of the *self*, one must undergo a search for the self; in the same manner that prior to discerning nonsense one must first search for sense. When nonsense is present, some sense has been understood. And when the self is denied as sense, then we are presented with what we really are.

It is opportune here to mention Michel Foucault who, in his consolidation of a hermeneutic of the self, demonstrated some of the necessary arguments for affirming a denial of the self's reality. Based on Seneca, Foucault assures us that life is not completed upon arriving at any chronological age; rather, life is completed to the degree in which a person achieves 'plenitude'. This plenitude is in relation to the conversion of oneself: "it is about returning the gaze and taking ourselves as the object of contemplation" (Foucault 2001, 259). After that, supposedly, one is ready to die.

For Foucault, basing himself on Seneca, liberty consists in fleeing servitude. This servitude is not towards the world, but servitude in itself. He invites to question how to understand a cult ideology and search for the self that at the same time is congenial with the yearning desire to liberate oneself from the same self which was worshipped. Now, this question is about the liberation of a self that is not the authentic one. Foucault refers to the liberation of oneself just like the liberation of the things and activities that a human being

has understood she has to do in order to deserve something in return. What is deserved must be rejected, as well as that which makes us suppose that we deserve those things. Once we have been able to liberate ourselves from both aspects that surround us, we have also been liberated from the concerns that afflict us. In other words, the message refers to fleeing the false labels about oneself, not the deep self behind those labels; and this is where we need to add its connotation of Nothingness. If I leave myself in order to liberate me from myself, who is it that is liberated? Isn't it that I am to leave myself in order to find myself as Nothingness?

The liberation that is being spoken of, is due to the fact that "we live within an obligation-recompense system, a system of owing-activity-pleasure" (Foucault 2001, 265); and it is from this relationship with oneself that one must be liberated. We could say that one must liberate himself from the structure in which the self has smeared itself before the surroundings. Here, Foucault allows the motive of his post-structuralism to be glimpsed. In Sartre (2006) we find the same idea, in the sense of the possibilities of the being-in-itself and being-for-itself; an escape from the trivialities of labeling in order to strip the self from his silk clothing, his veils, his concealing. However, outside of this only Nothingness remains; a Nothingness that liberates but does not leave the liberated being. Rather, it has terminated him by absorbing and consuming, consuming this being as well. This has its discrete or profound similarities with the rejection of oneself in pursuit of liberation found in Christianity under the idea that the self must be diluted in divinity. However, what I propose here is about a self that must be diluted in Nothingness; a Nothingness that human beings do not possess, but that possesses him. This is greater than to dilute oneself in God; for the idea of God that is maintained upon thinking that one dilutes oneself in God, is the clearest proof that the self has not yet diluted itself since the idea of the self over God persists. In other words, how would we know that we have diluted ourselves in God if we still have the consciousness to say it? We think that God takes us as instruments when, rather, we carry out our ideas of God as a function to our egotistical self-affirmations.

Now, if we are to dilute ourselves in Nothingness, where does that leave liberty? Could we understand it as the will towards Nothingness? As the will to construct oneself upon deconstructing oneself; from the being towards the not-being?

The cost of exiting the structure is precisely dispersion into Nothingness; and Nothingness even as one more structure. A volatile structure, hazy, that does not cover but undoes; the structure of the unstructured. In that sense, the "conversion towards oneself" would be the return to Nothingness and Nothingness would be the linking aspect of the Being with something that is not it; or the relationship of the Being with what has always been. Passion for liberty can return, in this sense, as a passion towards Nothingness, towards the unstructured. However, if the self is a structure that consciousness manipulates in order to understand itself, then the self is a structure itself. How can we exit that structure without the self, the one to which one had to return to, paying the price by its inexistence? How, at most, to exit this structure that in turn has been structured due to the configuration of a Cosmivision, which in turn responds to other patterns, acts, and people that consciousness has grasped? Learning is one more structure; hence contact with reality and contact with oneself are never understandable without structure, without the mediums, without separation.

If the distinction is only possible based on a “non similarity” with what we encounter – which allows us to see it – then, the seeing of ourselves is the proof that we see something, or someone who in reality is not us but the true self which remains concealed in the veil of Nothingness that configures it. The only manner in which the self is protected is precisely in Nothingness that possesses it; and which attempts, already, to protect it from the annihilation that our self-knowledge supposes. To know ourselves always supposes destroying ourselves. Seeing myself in the mirror implies assuming that I am not what I see, since the distortion that my contact supposes has not allowed me to see what I am, but what I am not. I see what I am not; for I cannot see what I am because I only see what is different and I cannot see differently from myself unless I distinguish myself upon seeing myself. In the same manner, Nothingness cannot be seen because we are not different from it. We see the Being that has a difference from Nothingness, but that Being supposes Nothingness anyways. We see our body, our face, nature, and other bodies – but are we any of those things? Obviously not.

It is in the incomprehension of me that I can truly be. If I am to escape from my self based on the cognitive structures that – assuming I am me – I have generated, I only play with myself; for it would be like attempting to completely eat myself which I would never achieve – who eats or who is eaten? There is a point in which I could not eat myself completely. And in the same manner, I cannot escape the self from within the cognitive structures which I have learnt being me, or believing to be what I am. To believe that I know who I am, is like being at sea and looking to dry myself off in the depths of it. It is like running to escape from myself or to reach myself; like attempting to see myself without reflecting myself in something that I am not. Neither can I see the self, based on the actions that this same self performs; for if that were so, it would not be possible for me to escape my own labeling, unless I were said to value myself from a “not valuing” posture. Even so, such a posture of not valuing would be, in any case, a valuing in itself; which, furthermore, would presuppose what was supposed to be eradicated, for I cannot pretend that I do not judge myself by judging myself. Only the delusion, in which I think of escaping from a content valuing in order to exchange it for a non-content valuing, is possible for me. Nothingness is a manner of Being; Nothingness as giver of the Being. Having arrived at this point, we are not far from Stoicism. But it is not a Stoicism based on cosmopolitanism, but rather revolving around Nothingness. And how can one revolve around something that is not? Simply by not being.

Now, how is that upon not being I can revolve and, therefore, still be while revolving? Here I refer to a modality of being that escapes the possibility of being known. Hence, if man only *is* in the conscience and if the conscience only grasps that which is possible to be known, then once we have removed the characteristic of a cognizable object from man, we have also subtracted the faculty of being known from the conscience. Therefore, it follows that this is where the self *is* while not being cognizable, but only interpreted and, hence, distorted. The self is existent in the conscience which, however, fakes it and makes it appear. Everything is the conscience’s fiction; a creation that sustains the spectacle that we perceive from within the scenery, like puppets with invisible cords. Consequently we could ask: how can one be without knowing that I am? Well, it is better to know that one does not know who one is before assuming that we do know; for in reality

what I believe I am is evidently not what I am. Likewise, the other person is not what I see, he is not what he seems to be, which is why we all speak and interact with people who do not exist, without them ever being just so. If, in regard to myself, I only have appearances, that itself is also what the other person represents for me. There is nothing more inauthentic than a search for authenticity. When one needs to let go of one's own ideas about oneself in order to have oneself a little, it is upon leaving that we come closer, turning ourselves towards the Nothingness that we are. We must be willing to fall in order to go higher, to put the Being to sleep in order to awaken in Nothingness. It is time to climb the depths, value the light of the darkness, become blind in order to see, listen to our silences, be insensitive to the sensitive in order to gain sensitivity, and assume the death that living represents. We must close our eyes in order to begin to see; a seeing-upon-not-seeing. We must leave the self – which has already left itself – in order to assume the being of Nothingness and the Nothingness of Everything; contemplate Nothingness in order to, finally, contemplate Everything, without the burden of the self.

With all of this, without a doubt it is assumed that these approaches open the doors to an alternate modality of knowledge; to know without knowing, to learn by unlearning, and to be in Nothingness. Not the being *and* nothing but, rather, the Being *in* Nothingness; the Being that is Nothingness; the not-being that is a be-coming.

Previously, that experience of be-coming was located in the depositing of oneself in God; and, even today, in those who assume such a faith, the Birth of the being is in God. In the end, seen from the perspective I am proposing, the issue has only a few, yet key, differences. God is Nothingness with a distinct name; it is Nothingness by its common and most popular name, Nothingness by its stage name. That is why the denial of the word and idea of Nothingness has presupposed, in the history of humanity, the linking of such a name with the word *God*; in other words, with an innumerable amount of connotations that have evidently been encultured. Therefore, it is preferable to embrace Nothingness by its real name than by its stage name, and outside of the implications that are assumed by the enculturation of its art. In such a manner, “be-coming” is to become Nothingness; and this becoming Nothingness is a manner of new birth. By *be-coming* we could be outside of everything that we have supposedly been previously born to; this is to say, to the appearance of the world of the Being.

Seneca opts for the stage name of Nothingness when he assumes that the philosophy about divinity is what frees us from the philosophy of darkness, which is that of human beings. Truly he is an older person when he says it and he yearns more for the supposed salvation than for Truth. I assume that neither one nor the other can be obtained; there is no need for salvation, for there is nothing to be saved from, upon dying. Furthermore, there isn't any possible Truth either, for the only absolute issue to which we could add ourselves is Nothingness. But once after the be-coming, after Nothingness being, there would no possibility of realizing it, of assuming it, of being conscious in any manner. The be-coming does not suppose a latter birth; on the contrary, when our be-coming has arrived, we are simply Nothingness. Or, better yet, Nothingness is.

I recognize that, having arrived at the point of nullifying the Being in Nothingness or in God – the cultured nothing and made somewhat distinctly to what it was – an aspect is had in common: the contempt or trivialization of the world's goods, or of the things

normally valued. I agree with Foucault (2001, 270) in affirming that “we know ourselves when as a condition we also have a point of view about nature.” That point of view about nature is similar to the point of view we can have about ourselves: it is not what we believe. It is veiled. In the end, a human being is only a minuscule point in this Universe and that is a good consequence of attempting to know nature, which surrounds us. What interiority does that point have? What importance does it have? Rather, with regard to the point that we are, “the only problem that is set forth in it is, precisely, to situate oneself where it is and to, at the same time, accept the system of apparent rationality that inserted one in that point of the world” (Foucault 2001, 271). Now, into which system of apparent rationality that has inserted us here does Foucault refer to? God or chaos? Such an issue was a pending issue for him; and the answer that we have provided her is not centered, in fact, neither in God nor on chaos but in Nothingness.

For Foucault, seeing oneself and seeing the world’s nature in which we are is not something dissociable; it is not about electing one or the other but that both, in the adequate attitude of searching, fulfill the same objective. Foucault’s being is inevitably associated to Heidegger’s “being in the world.”

The knowledge movement that Foucault proposes, distinctly from the Platonic one, proposes the elevation of oneself in the world in order to complete it further; and, seen from above, to understand the being as part of the system. The only possible decision is between “dying or living” (Foucault 2001, 277). Once having elected living, one is in the system; and once having elected dying, one is outside it. In the end, that is the only important issue. The choice for life is made each day; hence the real decision is for existence, not for life’s essence.

Now, if there is only consciousness – still engulfed by Nothingness – and the self is diluted in it, how can we understand that the self is capable of loving? I will now set forth such an issue.

3. Nothingness and Liberation from Love

Love, we have been told, is everything we need to live a happy life. Our conscience repeats over and over again that love can bring sense to our life. Having previously established the unlikelihood of sense as an idea, I will now address love in the same manner. Love itself is an attachment and is also the source of many other attachments, making *love* one of a person’s strongest attachments, second only to the *self* as an attachment.

Given that each person experiences love in different manners, and understands and *feels* it in many ways, we must begin by saying that love is something very specific and always related to someone who says that he or she loves. This breaks the univocal sense of love, for there is more than one way to conceive love since there is no common expression of love due to the unending nuances of that word, *love*, and to the countless manners of expressing it. Therefore, *love* as a concept does not exist. It is only a term that we use to conceptualize things that we think or feel about someone. Of course the use of the word *love* assumes an unnecessary consistency in the vastly diverse manners in which each person understands what is felt and perceived. There is no love but only people who say that they

love; people who use the concept in order to express themselves, and to dignify what they feel, taking advantage of the consensus that “love is good.” Love, therefore, can be related to two concepts, supposedly univocal: Goodness and God.

Firstly, a natural quality of goodness is attributed to love, which it does not really have because there is no natural goodness. Neither is there a noun *love* which exists independently from humans. Furthermore, when it is affirmed that “God is Love” it is being assumed that love *is*, even without the existence of humanity; but since the idea of God depends on humanity, even more so must we recognize that on humanity depends that which we have assumed as intrinsically related to said God. Love is only one more of the constructs which we must let go in order to better understand the mystery assumed by life connected to Nothingness. We have believed that love, derived from supreme Goodness, is therefore good itself. This does not coincide with the experiences of some individuals who say they suffer due to love, a statement which perhaps we have also said ourselves. Love, say others, is something that must be correctly understood so as not to err in the manner of loving. However, if the issue is to correctly understand love, then it is implied that when we speak of love we confront a symbolic issue, constructed in continuous relativity, since there is no consensus on “correctly understanding,” not even conceptually.

To construct life as a function of love is to attach oneself to a terrible and insane non-sense. For which one of us can affirm what love is without becoming, through such an affirmation, a falsifier? Love is the product of the exercise of evaluation based on the unique hierarchy created by each individual. There are no absolute values due to the fact that all values depend on the person who makes the value, and said value is certainly far from being absolute.

Love is one more of the fallacies that impede the recognition of Nothingness. If love is something that is felt, then that feeling may stop; if it is something that is thought, then it can cease being thought in that same manner in which it is thought of at a specific moment; if love is a conviction, then it cannot be univocal; if love is an emotional reaction, it is even less solidly founded; if love is a feeling, it is even more variable and contingent than any of the aforesaid; if love is a decision, then just like all other decisions it is subordinated to chaos and to natural and cultural change.

Here we may state that “there are people who have loved each other their whole lives.” This statement would need to be analyzed to distinguish how there are certainly people who “have lived together their whole lives,” but this cannot guarantee that these people have truly loved each other, since it is possible for their union to be due to other motives that have nothing to do with love. One such motive is the attachment to love, which adheres to the attachment to the person who supposedly gives us love, or who allows us to be individuals who love and are loved. Relationships can be based on the mutual and perpetual utilization of one another; in this case, it is not about infinite love or unconditional altruism, but only a romantic manner of mutually using each other. Love is born out of personal benefit. There is no love without conditions; they are always present, consciously or unconsciously. Mutual utilization is obvious.

An act of loving, in the same manner as other acts, is contingent. It is subject to a series of circumstances, which are not necessarily voluntary for an individual, in order to remain unchanged. What is most likely is that love is never the same one day as the next.

Things change, as do our perspectives on things, and our needs change. When our needs change, undoubtedly our perception of the person we say that we love also changes; therefore, perhaps we would cease to love that person. We have previously established that love is only a word – used to understand a series of things that we do or feel – for love as such is nothing more than a fantasy. Love is a desirable and highly profitable illusion in which to place our illustrious and very human senses of life.

If love is a symbolic construction, then just like other constructs that we create, it has an expiry date and outcome. The object of love does not expire but it is only an illusion in our minds; the expiry is remitted when our symbolic connotation towards the object of love is inverted, resulting in a loss of interest. Love is unstable, fragile, and most importantly temporary. We have repeatedly heard about the need to care for love, and told utterly ridiculous recommendations such as “watering it like a plant.” If love is equivalent to a plant, then just like a plant, love must die at some time; unless, of course, we purchase a plastic plant to compare it to. It is true that there can be more virtue in daily winning the love of the same person than in convincing a different person each evening. However, the issue is that even a person who is deeply in love can cease to be so without adequate care. For this reason, if we accept that love is something that we must take care of, then we assume its fragility, its temporariness, and the need to maintain in our minds, intrepidly and permanently, the image of that being who we say we love. But, since that person changes, along with his or her perceptions, no matter how much we may attempt to repress their mobility, there is no perpetuity in loving relationships, although this does not withdraw – as previously indicated – the possibility of the company’s perpetuity.

Once again, there is no such thing as love, but only the word ‘love’ that is useful for the identification of our relationship types. The attachment to love supposes, naturally, the implicit possibility of attaching oneself to the loved objects; to the people concretely loved. When a man attaches himself to someone else because that person allows him to feel that he is able to love, not only is he using that person but he is also enslaving himself. If this man decides someday – due to the precariousness of love, previously referred to – that he no longer desires to love his partner, it is likely that they intensely and insanelly will search for a manner in which to still be loved; they may plead, beg, and drag themselves to the man to the degree implied by the attachment; but all of this is, naturally, blindness. To refuse to let go of a person who has ceased to love us is like asking for that person not to set us free from such an attachment; it is to plead for an attachment, a noose to the throat, a gun before our eyes. In order to beg to be loved, one simply needs to be miserable. A miserable person who begs to be loved does not realize that he begs for something that is not even necessary in itself and that, furthermore, is false, non-existent, and fictional. The attachment to love leads us towards all of that and is only surpassed by the attachment to the person who we say to love.

If a man is only attached to love but is free from the attachment to the person who was thought to be “the only person I would ever love,” or “the only person who would ever love me,” then, at least he is able to release the desire of exclusivity with another person. The issue is that even without such a person, if the attachment to love continues in an irrational manner, then this individual will search for an enslaving substitute; he will play the same games, put on the same binds, and once again fall into the role of the man who

“waters his little love plant,” in order to become once again deceived and begin to search for new candidates to play the role of the person who “loves me.” New actors will be told that they have performed the best role.

There are some who avoid deception and fall into the denial of indifference or the finitude of love. But the denial of indifference is just as naïve as the affirmation of love. An unending relationship does not remove each of its members from the evasion of rupture, of simulation, of blindness, or from the apathy of being alone once again. What these people do not realize is that we human beings profoundly fear loneliness and that this fear of loneliness is the source of our ideas of love. It would have to be said, emphatically, that we are always alone; no matter who is at our table, in our home or bed, we are still alone and we die alone. Company is only a manner of tolerating loneliness, but this is always there; everything contrary to this loneliness is yet another simulation.

It could be objected at this point that the examples provided are not applicable in relationships where couples know each other mutually and act according to their knowledge of each other. So, to confront such an objection, it would suffice to respond that if love is founded in the knowledge we have of the other person, then it is once again precarious and false. We have no certainties of anything due to Nothingness. The other person has a part of Nothingness that I will never be able to see, for I see what is visible; and that which I see is always followed by an interpretation from within my parameters, which are always fallible. The fact that said parameters may be favourable to one individual or another, that someone may benefit from my tastes or appreciations, has nothing to do with the fact that those suppositions that uphold them may or may not be true.

Two people who love each other are only a sick couple, two people infected with the other person’s virus. They are two individuals who believe that they love and hold strong to the faith that “what is theirs” is a story apart from the rest of the world, distinguishable from the failed experiences of the people who do not know how to love. This couple, however, is not exempt from mediocrity; their love is nothing more than the evasion of their own loneliness, the denial of their own Nothingness, the concealing of their fears and, without a doubt, of the salvation they so desire. Furthermore, if they are “blessed by God” in their love, they will feel privileged and chosen; they will be thankful to be part of the elite of those who have found love, those who are happy. This is yet another supposition: that love provides perpetual happiness; when there is nothing perpetual in anything human anyhow, though we may wish to see it as so.

We are so empty that we need to view ourselves through the eyes of someone who, additionally, tells us that he or she loves us. We feel so profoundly solitary that we desire someone to fight beside us against the rest of the world. We live so unsurely that we yearn for someone who has been born explicitly to love us. We are so overwhelmed that we want to deposit our hope in somebody who is always at our side. We so desire control that we sign acts of commitment until death do us part. We are so scarcely ethical that we swear lifelong love without realizing that love is subject to contingencies that we do not manage. We are so poor that we want to enrich ourselves with love. We are so naïve that we assume that Someone gives us their Love from the highest. We are so imaginative that we also think that said superior Being plans things so that someone else may be our destiny. We are so tremendously mortal that we beg for that person to accompany us even after death. We are

so immature that we get upset if somebody dares to question (now, for example) the veracity, plenitude, beauty, and greatness of Love (capitalized) which, furthermore, we believe to possess. We are so innocent, as a whole, that we even guarantee that we are capable of unconditional loyalty. We are so arrogant that we believe to be the center of other people's lives, assuming that they will in us, their reason for being. We are so credulous that we think that all we need is love. In the end, all of this is simply vanity.

I don't want to seem to be an imperturbable Stoic when I affirm the precariousness of human relationships. Simply, I deem it convenient for us to awaken to the reality of love's equivocality, to how limited even the term itself is. It isn't that there are better, more intelligent, or foolish loves, but that each and every one of the suppositions that is related to the concept of "love" is only a very relative construct, contextually located in the individual's interior and exterior.

Neither is this issue about deciding that nobody will be loved henceforth other than oneself for, as previously established, even the *self* is a fantasy: what would I love of myself but my present well being? Care for oneself is more honest than self-love, which is why the un-attachment to love is so important in self-care. This personal care assumes the disconnection from any slavery that would assume perpetuity. I can decide to affirm my sentiment towards somebody but I cannot call this love, for that is a polyvalent term, based on the multiplicity of senses originated in each individual according to his different stages of life. It is not about not feeling; it is about not turning what is felt into something absolute. It is not about not doing something worthwhile for another human being; it is about not harming oneself by excluding self-care. Part of the attention and respect that I owe other human beings consists in allowing them to do things for themselves and not for me to do things in their name and/or in the name of love. It is not about not helping others; it is about doing so naturally and not due to the clearest demonstration of our insignificance, the attachment to love and be loved. It is true that we come to establish the meaning of oneself through others, but we should not close ourselves off to the rest of the world for one person only.

I am not proclaiming the death or finalization of love right now. True love never ends, for in reality, it never began. Something that is not, cannot end. Love will never be extinguished in the world, for it has never commenced. Let us not erase what we understand by love; let us erase the implications which we have assumed the act of loving has. Nobody is guiltier of generating expectations of love than the person who creates those expectations. What we feel and have labeled *love* is temporary. Nobody can be complained to for the fact of ceasing to love, since in reality, the act of loving never occurred. The only person responsible for a disillusion is the one who had the illusion in the first place; the only person who suffers due to a non-love is one who has forged expectations as a function of love itself, which is the exclusive responsibility of the one who created such expectations. If I am sad due to an infidelity, I am the one responsible for my sadness upon having created expectations for myself with such a thing we call love; in reality, the other person ceased pretending with me and began pretending with someone else. If I am frustrated because somebody did not respond to me as I had hoped, or did not show love to me as I desired, once again I am the guilty person for having naively assumed that the other person would have had to adapt to me.

Each person who claims to suffer due to love must ask if this suffering is actually due to one's own egocentrism and the frustrated desire for control and exclusive possession. When it is affirmed that the person who feels betrayed is, in reality, guilty of the betrayal itself while hoping for the contrary, this is not the affirmation that one is directly responsible for what happened; neither is this referring to a completely conscious guiltiness, for it is almost impossible to grow up without yearning for that which we have been told is the best part of life. Neither are we guilty of not being able to be unconditional upon desiring or attaching oneself to love, for nobody can love without implicit expectations.

This is not to say we cannot partially enjoy everything that we have submitted to the term "love." We can do so, as long as we understand that possession, control, exclusivity, perpetuity, univocity, supremacy, and a-timeliness, have nothing to do with love; in spite of us having paradoxically constructed our idea of love based on the aforesaid. All living being may perhaps need the fiction of loving and being loved for a while, but once we awaken to Nothingness, we can only retain the memories of slavery.

To love is not something prohibited, not even the attachment to love. If love is something constructed, then each person can enjoy his constructs while they are being solidified. But it must be understood that no construction is perpetual due to the simple fact that Nothingness surrounds everything and that everything that is, can also not-be; that the Being and Nothingness are in a constant dialectic, which is the closest thing to reality that we have before us. If we require a little bit of fiction in order to further enjoy intimate relationships, then welcome be this fiction, as long as we understand that the curtain must always be lowered at the end of the act. To love is to attempt as strongly as possible to give life a sense; we spend life in this way, constructing a sense while we destroy the life that we give to others, due to love. It would be much better to assume ourselves as being without a sense and without love, sharing the honour of not having anything to offer and, even so, attempting to die for someone else.

When we say that we love someone, in reality we only affirm that we need them in order to give a little bit of value to our life, that we are pleased to perceive that we are important to that person, that our ego requires attention, that we are defenseless and need some company, that we require something to live for, that we attempt to fill our emptiness with the body of somebody draped over the sofa, that we yearn to compensate our immature lacks, that we are to overturn the best in us in order to provide evidence that we still have a bit of value, that we can feel that we are somebody when our name is spit out from someone else's lips, that we are afraid to live without being taken into account, that we need to be heard prior to the unending and tiresome monologues, that we have to wring out our spirit with someone similar to us or, at most, that we don't want to believe we are incapable of giving ourselves and doing that which everybody wants: to love. And we want to love in order to add ourselves onto another person without knowing that love can subtract from us and, little by little, turn us into strangers for our own selves. We are neither the sum nor the subtraction behind the loving experiences. Love will consist, in any case, in neither adding nor subtracting ourselves.

The only thing that can really be with us without subtracting or adding something is, effectively, Nothingness. It is enjoyable to know that when Nothingness will be in us, it will always be itself and it neither adds to nor subtracts from us; it will simply vanish us.

To possess Nothingness is to let oneself be possessed upon understanding that there is no possible control: one lives, feels, remains, floats, flies, and in the end will die in it, above it, by it, with it, and in it. There is no way out when the circle is outside, when the circumference can be seen from inside and when there is no way of becoming a fugitive other than by not-being.

The euphoria of knowing oneself to be without passions is probably the greatest passion that exists. When we feverishly desire the closeness of another person, we only desire to place their face on the feared and empty reflection of Nothingness. We can ask Nothingness how it wants to be labelled today or what it will dress up as, what name it would like us to place on our lips as we call it, or who it will be and how will you appear. From which places will it come today? In what manner will it escape? How are we to find it without an appropriate signal? Or is it that perhaps it has already appeared in the doubt about its presence? Is it in need of quenching the desire of it? Is it present in our incurable need of it? Is it Nothingness which we see in the mirror? Are they Nothingness' grey hairs, wrinkles on the forehead, bags under the eyes, dirtiness? How is Nothingness to be hidden from oneself? How can I represent Nothingness when faced with someone else's Being?

Nothingness possesses the beings we say that we love; it constitutes the ever-present possibility of absence in those who are and who will be with us. Relationships are not static; they can neither last forever nor be in the same manner all the time. The contemplation of Nothingness must teach us limits, lightness, finitude, smallness, and impenetrable borders. Only for a time does Nothingness position itself in those who must deliver a message for us. Upon people's exit from our lives we must close the link of attachment towards them; only the absence is left and, in it, once again Nothingness. My relationship and the relationships of all individuals, constantly, are with Nothingness; not with people, for each man and woman is simply a container of the nothing that it possesses as a preamble of the Nothingness into which it will become.

So great is my smallness and so small is my greatness; there is nothing behind me, only Nothingness. How can a person free oneself from the Nothingness behind all other liberations?

4. Conclusion

We have received the common teaching that we are all different from one another in many ways and that it is in these differences that we should be loved. Based on this teaching, the majority of people accept the idea of being appreciated, seen, and considered for who they are. However, in order to comprehend a wider vision of oneself, less centered on the univocity of one's Being, this article questions the value placed on such substantial differences, reducing uniqueness merely as an accessory issue to the self.

The recognition of the incompatibility between what we are and what we believe ourselves to be, allows for the detachment from "self-knowledge"; subject to self-validation which is conditioned by the veracity of one's self-created version. The knowledge that one has of others, or the labels by which we identify others, lacks legitimacy if it is understood that they are based on partial perceptions. If our defining ideas about those we supposedly love can be conditioned by what we want to see in them and what we have attributed to their

being, when we make the decision to love them we are losing the opportunity to question who it is that we truly love: Nothingness is based on this concept, on the partiality and simplicity of what we have believed to be the sustainment of the Being. Nothingness represents the emptiness of human appreciations and categories; it is the breakwater from which it is assumed that there are no certainties, so as to ensure the truth of our symbolizations. Nothingness is what we know about truth, about the symbols we place on our surroundings.

There is no such thing as that which we call love but, rather, only values or feelings which we label with the word "love." The experience of love is not a generalized experience. It is unique to each individual, subject to the characteristics of each person who partakes in love. The idea of being obligatorily called to love in a particular manner is an attachment that has been deeply rooted through our cultural teachings. To detach oneself from the idea of being what we believe to be, or from loving in a correct manner, is a way in which to contemplate Nothingness and its implicated possibilities.

After the detachment from this idea of the self and the need to love, what remains is a nihilistic experience, which may lead to anguish if interpreted as something terrifying. On the contrary, the optimal standpoint from which to comprehend Nothingness is to associate it with the possibility of a great accumulation of new constructs or meanings. One of a person's main duties is to detach from the compulsion of self-labelling; to know that one is different to what one has believed to be, and to allow oneself to live differently to one's existence. A person is invited to a corresponding right to call, or not to call, one's life *love*.

References

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