

THE GENDERED SUBJECT OF MELANCHOLY

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İSTANBUL BİLGİ ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
KÜLTÜREL İNCELEMELER YÜKSEK LİSANS PROGRAMI

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2010

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Melankolinin Cinsiyetli Öznesi

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Toplam Sayfa Sayısı: 64

Key Words

- 1) Psychoanalysis
- 2) Melancholy
- 3) Gender
- 4) Normative Heterosexuality
- 5) Feminine Depression

Anahtar Kelimeler

- 1) Psikanaliz
- 2) Melankoli
- 3) Toplumsal Cinsiyet
- 4) Normatif Heteroseksüellik
- 5) Kadınısı Depresyon

ABSTRACT

In this study the relationship between melancholy and gender is investigated in the works of Julia Kristeva and Judith Butler. In the first chapter Freud's theory of melancholy and several lines of discussions relevant to the issue are covered. In the two chapters following this chapter that introduces the Freudian concept of melancholy, the discrete ways in which Kristeva and Butler articulate the psychoanalytic notion of melancholy and the category of gender are presented successively.

Julia Kristeva investigates melancholy in conjunction to language and signification. In the melancholy situation, Kristeva diagnoses an uneasy relationship between the subject and language, and thus between subject and meaning. Failing to establish the necessary identification with the father, which would entail her entrance into the symbolic realm, the melancholic cannot compensate the loss of the maternal object, renounces this loss, and ends up clinging to the maternal object. Kristeva, by pointing to the specific relation a woman has to her mother and to her mother's body, argues that there exists a necessary bond between womanhood and melancholy.

Judith Butler's theory of "gender melancholy" introduces the issue of power to the discussions about the relationship between melancholy and gender. In Butler's work, within a Foucauldian problematic, melancholy is taken as one of the regulatory mechanisms of power in the production of normative heterosexuality, and together with its psychic and social consequences. "Gender melancholy" proves to be a challenging theory in its novel treatment of melancholy as intrinsic to gender as such.

ÖZET

Bu çalışmada melankoli ve toplumsal cinsiyet ilişkisi Julia Kristeva ve Judith Butler'ın çalışmaları kapsamında incelenmiştir. Çalışmanın ilk bölümünde Freud'un melankoli teorisi ve bu teorinin içерdiği tartışmalar ele alınmıştır. Freudcu melankoli kavramını tanıtan bu bölümden sonraki iki bölümde sırasıyla Kristeva ve Butler'ın bu psikanalitik melankoli kavramını toplumsal cinsiyet kategorisiyle nasıl ilişkilendirdikleri konu edilmiştir.

Kristeva melankoliyi dil ve anlamlama bağlamında inceler. Kristeva melankoli durumunda özne ve dil, dolayısıyla özne ve anlam arasında sorunlu bir ilişki tespit etmektedir. Babaya sembolik alana girmesini sağlayacak gerekli özdeşleşmeyi kuramayan özne, annesel nesnenin kaybını ikame edememekte, bu kaybı reddetmeyece ve umutsuzca annesel nesneye bağlı kalmaktadır. Kristeva, anneyle ve onun bedeniyle olan özgül ilişkisine işaret ederek, kadın ve melankoli arasında kaçınılmaz bir bağ olduğunu öne sürer.

Judith Butler'ın “toplumsal cinsiyet melankolisi” teorisi melankoli ve toplumsal cinsiyet ilişkisi tartışmalarına iktidar meselesini sokar. Butler'ın çalışmasında, Foucaultcu bir sorunsal çerçevesinde, melankoli, normatif heteroseksüelliğin üretilmesinde iktidarin düzenleyici işleyişlerinden bir tanesi olarak, psişik ve toplumsal sonuçlarıyla birlikte ele alınır. “Toplumsal cinsiyet melankolisi” melankolinin toplumsal cinsiyete içkin olduğunu iddia etmesiyle özgün bir teoridir.

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Introduction

In this thesis, an investigation of the psychoanalytical notion of melancholy in terms of gender in the works of Julia Kristeva and Judith Butler is aimed. Thinking melancholy and gender together renders a fruitful space for both the study of melancholy and that of gender. Considering melancholy in gender terms helps us to posit the issue of melancholy in a sociopolitical level of thought, rather than conceiving it in the largely individual-based perspectives of psychological and psychiatric discourses. This latter kind of perspective reduces the wide-ranging concept of melancholy to a clinical phenomenon. On the other hand, positing melancholy in gender context approximates us to the subject of melancholy, to its production, and reproduction. Through this study, we testify the way in which this subject is always and inevitably gendered, and we see how different gender positions require and evoke different modalities of melancholy.

Such a discussion of melancholy-gender couple also contributes to gender theories. Gender as a very complex and extensive category, concerning a wide range of frames of reference, also consists of psychological processes like identification, desire, fantasy, and repression. Thus drawing on these processes, while trying to understand the dynamics of melancholy, tells much about the gender issue.

In conformity with the aim of the study, in the first chapter of the thesis, an introductory account of the Freudian notion of melancholy, which Freud undertook in his 1917 essay “Mourning and Melancholia”, is given.

This essay is of central importance to the present study not only because it has been a classic in the discussions about melancholy, but also because Kristeva and Butler maintain a dialogue with this text.

In the second chapter of this thesis, Julia Kristeva's melancholy notion, which she developed in *Black Sun*, is scrutinized. Hers is a quite fragmentary, sometimes quite poetic account of melancholy, what she specifies as the melancholy/ depressive composite. Kristeva's account underscores the central role of language for the speaking being with its function of producing and reproducing meaning, and remarks the coincidence of the break-down of language with the break-down of the subject in the context of melancholy. In Kristeva's writing, a compelling relationship among melancholy, gender and language is established; whereby the melancholic appears as the female subject, who is in "an impossible mourning for the maternal Thing".

In the third chapter, Judith Butler's "melancholy gender" theory, which is prominent with the way it includes the issue of power in melancholy discourse, is examined. Within a Foucauldian problematic, melancholy is taken as one of the regulatory mechanisms of power in the production of normative heterosexuality, and together with its psychic and social consequences. This theory shows how normative heterosexuality renders certain cathexes and their losses as illegible, and reformulates mourning as a political process.

Chapter-1: Freud’s “Mourning and Melancholia”: A Theory of Loss

1.1 Introduction

“Mourning and Melancholia”¹ (1917) is a comprehensive essay, which sets the basis for the psychoanalytic investigation of melancholy, with its inclusion of a wide range of psychological issues and processes. This essay is also the one that inspires and sets the conceptual framework of the present work, and also of the works it cited and made use of. The essay not only deals with the explanation of the mechanism of melancholy, but also, at the same time, does present extensive contributions to the analytic body of knowledge. While investigating the melancholic state; the text contains several lines of discussions. Firstly, the text includes at its heart a very important argumentation about the mechanism of identification. Secondly, an account of narcissism, as a condition of the melancholic occasion, is covered. Thirdly, in this text, the critical agency as something apart from the ego, as an independent agency is intimated.

¹ Freud’s essay “Trauer Und Melancholie” is translated into English often as “Mourning and Melancholia”. The works that draw on and refer to this essay use the two terms, “melancholy” and “melancholia” interchangeably; but in general the term “melancholy” is used in the works that cover this issue. Thus in the present work, the more common designation of “melancholy” will be used, except those citations from the translations of Freud’s texts, where the German “melancholie” is translated as “melancholia”.

1.2 Melancholy: A Common Pathology?

Before setting to engage in Freud's theory of melancholy, we will draw on the concept of melancholy, and the sense in which Freud uses it. In the beginning of "Mourning and Melancholia", Freud points to the uncertainty of the definition of melancholia, noting that "[e]ven in descriptive psychiatry the definition of melancholia is uncertain", and it "takes on various clinical forms that do not seem definitely to warrant reduction to a unity" (164). Indeed Freud takes melancholy in two senses. In "Mourning and Melancholia", he takes it exclusively as a "pathological" state, in *The Ego and the Id* (1923) on the other hand he takes melancholy, notably the melancholic identification as a pervasive experience lived by every person.

Jennifer Radden in "Freud and Love" covers the question of whether Freud conceived melancholic states as common and normal, or designated them as rare and pathological. Radden shows that Freud's writings include both interpretations, and argues that his account of melancholy is vague. While Radden considers the originality of Freud's theory of melancholy, she also thinks that he is affected by the older, Renaissance tradition of representing melancholy, which, she argues, rather than adopting a narrow definition of melancholy as pathology, engages in the experience of melancholy in terms of a broader scope. Indeed, Freud does have an understanding of melancholy going far beyond today's notion of clinical depression, with its rich connotations. "[T]he fate of melancholia as a

mental disorder has not been what Freud's innovative and striking reframing at the start of this century deserved," (55) writes Radden pointing that these rich connotations of his writing has dwindled in medical and psychiatric analyses. "Left was a disorder of abject despair," she concludes (57). Choosing Hamlet as his melancholic figure, it is obvious that Freud's concept of melancholy, even when he recognizes it as pathology, is quite far from a comprehension of melancholy as abject and wretched. Like Freud's melancholy figure Hamlet, the melancholic "has a keener eye for the truth than others who are not melancholic" (*MM* 167).

Although what is dominant may be the extensive pathologization of melancholic experience; there are commentators of Freud, who articulate his notion of melancholy as a major aspect of human condition. Judith Butler and Julia Kristeva, whose theories will be discussed in following chapters, despite their great divergences in their explanation of the relationship between gender and melancholy, on the one hand keep that sense of melancholy as pathology, and stress on the other hand that melancholy is intrinsic to subjectivity. Judith Butler argues melancholy to be a component of heterosexual gender formation in the present conditions of compulsory heterosexuality. Julia Kristeva, on the other hand, restricts occasions of melancholy, and takes melancholy to be a universal state and propensity especially for women, and also for homosexuals. These articulations of melancholy, by Kristeva and Butler, while stating the need to overcome melancholy, do also point to the positive and ethical aspects of mourning and melancholy.

1.3 A Failure to Lose: A Loss in the Ego

In “Mourning and Melancholia” Freud begins his investigation of “pathological” melancholy by comparing it to the “normal” process of mourning on the basis of the correlation of the symptoms of the two conditions. Freud distinguishes between the conscious process of mourning, in which the libido is slowly detached from the lost love object until the ego is free and uninhibited; and the unconscious process of melancholia, which is marked not by the withdrawal of libido from the object, but rather by an identification of the ego² with the abandoned object. Through comparing them, Freud aims to reveal the peculiarity of melancholy, its very nature.

Freud defines mourning as “the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one's country, liberty, an ideal, and so on”, which is marked by “painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, [and] inhibition of all activity” (164-165). Such inhibition and circumscription in the ego result because of the absorbing work of mourning. The process of grief is stated to end by the detachment of the libido from the lost object, which by no means is an easy task. The work of mourning is achieved through the testing of reality, at the expense of immense energy and time, in the result of which “the ego becomes free and uninhibited again” (166).

² In this chapter the use of the term “ego” is not in the sense as an agency of the psychic apparatus, but it used in the sense that designates “self”.

Melancholy similarly is generated by the loss of a loved object, but here, Freud takes notice that “there is a loss of a more ideal kind”, that there is “an unconscious loss of a love-object in contradistinction to mourning in which there is nothing unconscious about the loss,” (166). That means, in melancholy, there may not be an actual loss, i.e. the death of the object, which is marked consciously. Rather, the object is lost as a love object, and that loss takes place in the unconscious of the psyche of the subject. Thus, in melancholy, the loss has something like an enigmatic character. The people around the subject of melancholy and even she, herself, cannot give a full account of the grief that is absorbing her. She may not perceive what she has lost, even when she knows that she has lost something. In Freud’s formulation: “[s]he knows whom [s]he has lost but not *what* [s]he has lost in them” (166). Also observed in melancholy is an imbalance between the loss and the response given to it, an unproportionality of the suffering in comparison to the occurred loss. The pain devouring the subject is hard to be accounted for by regarding the loss that has occurred.

In addition to the symptoms of mourning; painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, and inhibition of all activity; Freud observes that “[t]he melancholic displays something other than that which is lacking in mourning—an extraordinary diminution in [her] self-regard, an impoverishment of [her] ego on a grand scale” inferring that “in mourning it is the world which has become poor and empty; in melancholia it is the ego itself” (167). The talk of the melancholic which is observed to be insistent and to be sharply directed

upon her very self with repetitive self-reproaches and self-abasements, is said to point to a loss in herself, rather than to the external world. Thus melancholy appears as something about the very ego of the melancholic. Freud pursues the process by which an object loss does turn out to cause an alteration in the ego.

Freud observes that the complaints of the melancholic by no means fit her, “but that with insignificant modifications they do fit someone else, some person whom the patient loves, has loved or ought to love” (169). This explains the contradiction that is pointed out about the melancholic: her belittling herself without feeling shame before others, and her behaving like someone who is done injustice rather than someone who is devoured by remorse. Freud argues that the melancholic is not ashamed or submissive, because all these self-reproaches are primarily reproaches against a loved object, which have been shifted away from the object on to her own ego.

In the light of all these symptoms and his observations, Freud structures the complex process of melancholy. In the following quotation, there is a compact account of the mechanism of melancholy, which covers the process by which an object loss turns out to be a loss in the ego. Freud writes:

An object-choice, an attachment of the libido to a particular person, had at one time existed; then, owing to a real slight or disappointment coming from this loved person, the object-relationship was shattered. (...) But the free libido was not displaced on to another object; it was withdrawn into the ego. There, however, it was not employed in any unspecified way, but served to establish an identification of the ego with the abandoned object. Thus the shadow of the object fell upon the ego, and the latter could henceforth be judged by a special agency, as

though it were an object, the forsaken object. In this way an object-loss was transformed into an ego-loss and the conflict between the ego and the loved person into a cleavage between the critical activity of the ego and the ego as altered by identification (170).

According to this quotation, unconscious identification with the lost/abandoned object appears to be the determinative factor in the picture of melancholia. Unlike mourning, which is a slow and laborious way of getting to terms with loss, melancholy is “the repudiation of loss”, “a failure of proper grief”. Identification with the lost object is the mode in which the lost object is incorporated, preserved in the ego. For such an identification to be, Freud implies, there must not only be a strong fixation to the love object, but also the object-cathexis³ must have little power of resistance (170). Freud explains this contradiction by referring to the notion of narcissism, which we will refer to subsequently. In the melancholy condition, Freud specifies a splitting of the ego, and the emergence of critical activity. It is through the operation of the “critical agency” that—given that the lost object is incorporated in the ego—the ego is judged and suffers as if it were the lost object.

³ The term cathexis was introduced to analytical literature as a translation for Freud’s German term “Besetzung”. In Freudian theory the term cathexis is central and designates the investment/concentration of libidinal energy in an object, idea, or person. Unlike object-cathexis, in which an object is invested with libidinal energy, ego-cathexis is known as the withdrawal of cathexis from the object and attached to the ego.

“To cathect” an object, idea, or person, thus, means to invest that object, idea, or person with libidinal energy.

1.4 Ambivalence and Rage Inverted

In Freud's representation of the melancholic identification, a process whereby "an object-loss was transformed into an ego-loss and the conflict between the ego and the loved person into a cleavage between the critical activity of the ego and the ego as altered by identification" is included. Here two things need to be closely explained, in order to understand why identification with the lost/abandoned object breeds such pain and suffering in the subject. Firstly, a conflict between the ego and love object is mentioned. For Freud, this conflict is due to ambivalence, and he recognizes ambivalence in terms of the love object as a precondition of melancholy. Secondly, a splitting of the ego, a "cleavage between the critical activity of the ego and the ego as altered by identification" is at stake.

Freud writes that "the loss of a love-object to be an excellent opportunity for the ambivalence in love-relationships to make itself effective and come into the open"; and adds that "all those situations of being slighted, neglected or disappointed" can import opposed feelings of love and hate into the relationship or reinforce an already existing ambivalence" (172).

Through identification this ambivalence relating to the object is turned round upon the subject's own self as a conflict between one part of the ego and the critical agency. In this picture hate and other negative feelings are directed to the part of the ego altered by identification while the critical agency appears as the executant of the sadistic actions. Later, in *The*

Ego and the Id, Freud identifies in melancholy an “excessively strong super-ego”, which “has obtained a hold upon consciousness rages against the ego with merciless violence” (53). The displacement of ambivalent feelings and the formation of the critical agency make the existence of negative feelings for one’s self comprehensible. It is through critical agency that the ego can judge, debase, torture itself like an object. For Freud, it is this sadism inverted on the self that explains “the riddle of the tendency to suicide” in melancholy, and makes the latter so dangerous.

Julia Kristeva in *Black Sun* writes of the ambivalence, the aggressiveness with respect to the object, which turns round as a suicidal tendency: “ ‘I love that object,’ is what that person seems to say about the lost object, ‘but even more so I hate it, and in order not to lose it, I imbed it in myself; but because I hate it, that other within myself is a bad self, I am bad, I am non-existent, I shall kill myself’ ” (11). Through internalization of the object, the suicidal act becomes a disguise of massacring the other.

Accordingly, the cause of melancholy appears not only as the internalization of the lost object, but also as the internalization of the ambivalent attachment to the lost object. We see that, the notion of ambivalence is not much elaborated by Freud, therewithal it also is not the most covered issue in the later commentaries of his melancholy theory.

1.5 From Narcissistic Object Choice to Narcissistic Regression

Above we pointed to the picture of melancholy, which, for Freud, is marked by a contradiction of the coexistence of a strong fixation to the loved object with the lack of resistance of the bond that binds the subject to the love object, and we added that Freud finds the key to this contradiction by referring to the notion of narcissism. Freud dwells on the issue of narcissism and on the relationships between the ego and external objects in *On Narcissism: an Introduction* (1914) in terms of the normal course of psychosexual development, and also by referring to some pathological states. In investigating the issue of narcissism, the concepts of “primary narcissism” and “secondary narcissism” are distinguished. Freud argues primary narcissism, in which libido is exclusively cathected to the ego, is to be a characteristic of early infancy. In this phase of development, the differentiation between self and non-self is not recognized, and the infant enjoys full omnipotence. It is with frustrations that this state of primary narcissism is shattered. It is later in the course of psychosexual development that the libido is directed to external objects. Secondary narcissism, on the other hand, is superimposed on primary narcissism, and consists of a return to the ego-cathexis occurring after objects have been cathected and abandoned (75).

In the picture of melancholy illustrated above, we infer the existence of secondary narcissism, whereby the libido that is withdrawn from the external world is directed to the ego. Freud writes that melancholic’s

“object-choice has been effected on a narcissistic basis, so that the object-cathexis, when obstacles come in its way, can regress into narcissism” (*MM* 170). Since the object-choice is affected on a narcissistic basis in melancholy, we infer that, the loss of the object is experienced as a narcissistic loss, and this explains the way the ego becomes poor and empty in melancholy.

Nevertheless, Freud states that the conclusion that “the disposition to succumb to melancholia [...] lies in the narcissistic type of object choice [...] lacks confirmation” and hesitates “to include this regression from object-cathexis to the still narcissistic oral phase of the libido in our characterization of melancholia” (171).

1.6 Denying Loss: Melancholic Identification

In “Mourning and Melancholia” Freud deals with the notion of identification in the context of melancholy. The term “melancholic identification” is used to designate a type of identification, whereby an object-cathexis is replaced by an identification through the incorporation of the lost object. In this essay, melancholic identification appears as the cause of failure in proper mourning, an inability to come to terms with loss. In mourning, grief is resolved through decathexis; while in melancholy the grief is unresolved, since there is an identification of the ego with the abandoned object, and the bond is not quit.

In *The Ego and the Id*, Freud revises and extends his notion of melancholic identification, which was in “Mourning and Melancholia” taken to be peculiar to the melancholic state. In this new formulation, this structure is designated to be “common and typical” in human life. Freud points to the centrality of melancholic identification in ego development. He alleges the substitution of identification with object-cathexis to have “a great share in determining the form taken by the ego”, and states that “it makes an essential contribution towards building up what is called its ‘character’ ” (28). Freud goes so far as to picture the ego as an elegiac formation supposing that “the character of the ego is a precipitate of abandoned object-cathexes and that it contains the history of those object-choices” (29).

Freud writes:

When it happens that a person has to give up a sexual object, there quite often ensues an alteration of his ego which can only be described as a setting up of the object inside the ego, as it occurs in melancholia.... It may be that this identification is the sole condition under which the id can give up its objects. At any rate, the process, especially in the early phases of development, is a very frequent one, and it makes it possible to suppose that the character of the ego is a precipitate of abandoned object-cathexes and that it contains the history of those object choices (28).

If, as Freud argues, “identification is the sole condition under which the id can give up its objects”; then, it would not be possible to imagine a proper mourning, as depicted in “Mourning and Melancholia”, in which there is a final breaking of the attachment. Thus, melancholy may be taken as a means of coping with the loss, rather than regarding it as a failed mourning.

In this context, following this line of argument, it would then not be going too far to suppose that there is always something melancholic about the ego; that melancholy is not just a psychological disorder happening to some people, but it is of human’s “nature”. It must be the charm of the notion of melancholic identification that it is very much adopted outside of the psychology discipline, in order to shed light as well on social and cultural issues. Judith Butler, combining the notion of melancholic identification with Freud’s views on psychosexual development and the Oedipal complex, comes up with the theory of “melancholy gender”, which alleges gender identifications to be melancholic identifications. Julia

Kristeva on the other hand, following a quite different line of discussion, sees identification with the mother to breed melancholy.

Chapter-2: Her Mute Sorrow: Signification, Gender, and Melancholy in Julia Kristeva's *Black Sun*

2.1. Introduction

Being caught in woman's speech is not merely a matter of chance that could be explained by the greater frequency of feminine depression—a sociologically proven fact. This may also reveal an aspect of feminine sexuality: its addiction to the maternal Thing and its lesser aptitude for restorative [homosexual] perversion.

—Kristeva, *Black Sun*

Julia Kristeva's *Black Sun* (1989) is an extensive study on melancholy, which investigates melancholy in conjunction to signification. The account of melancholy, she presented is distinctive with the stress she puts on the melancholic subject's unique relation to signifying bonds, specifically to language. The book explores the origins of melancholy, the nature of melancholic discourse, and the ways of (re)constructing the bonds between the melancholic subject and the symbolic realm within the writer's main project of conjoining psychoanalysis and semiotics. Kristeva, working mainly at the intersection of semiotics/linguistics and psychoanalysis; while analyzing melancholy, particularly feminine melancholy, presents explanations relating to the interrelationships between language, subjectivity, and the body.

In *Black Sun*, Kristeva offers an interpretation of melancholy that is different from the classical psychoanalytic accounts of melancholy in the way that, while the latter deals with "objectal depression", Kristeva investigates "narcissistic depression". In objectal melancholy, what is at stake is a loss of an object—a loss of something that is "other" than oneself. That means the loss takes place post-Oedipally, after acquisition of language

and the self -other distinction. In narcissistic melancholy, what is at stake is not a loss of an object, but the loss of the maternal Thing—the loss of something that is undifferentiated from the self. Such loss points to an early loss, which is previous to the libidinal object relation, and takes place pre-Oedipally, before the acquisition of language. In this context, the loss is experienced in a pre-verbal realm, in an affective state.

Kristeva claims that, the loss of the Thing—the loss of the mother as the Thing—is experienced differently by the male and the female subject. Since the female subject has a unique relation to the maternal Thing, her losing the mother is more problematic, her reconciling with the loss is much more laborious. Thus, that specific relation to the mother, to the maternal body is alleged by Kristeva to render her more vulnerable to melancholy.

The book opens with the sentence: “For those who are racked by melancholia, writing about it would have meaning only if writing sprang out of that very melancholia” (*BS* 3), thereby points to the main issue of *Black Sun*, the problematic relationship of the melancholic to signification, and that the meaning loss in the melancholic situation is to be recovered only through (re)signification. In the first two chapters “Psychoanalysis — A Counterdepressant” and “The Life and Death of Speech”, Kristeva explicates the melancholic experience, “symbolic breakdown” of the melancholic, “the blankness of asymbolia” in which she is sunk, and the function of psychoanalysis in helping the melancholic to gain her symbolic capacities, and thereby give meaning to life. In these chapters, which mainly concern our work, she presents an extensive account of her understanding of

melancholy. The third chapter “Illustrations of Feminine Depression” consists of case stories of her melancholic female patients, illustrating her theory about feminine melancholy, its connection to the uneasy relationship of the female subject to her mother. In the second part of the book, the role of art, specifically literature, the implication of affects and drives in artifice is considered. In “Beauty The Depressive's Other Realm” Kristeva points that art provides a “sublimatory hold over the lost Thing” being a “counterpoise” to loss (97). Art, for Kristeva, on the one hand, helps the melancholic to grasp, at least approach the lost Thing, and on the other hand, it expels that abject Thing, and its destructive charm through representation. In the following chapters, Kristeva covers the way that “the artist is melancholy’s most intimate witness and the most ferocious combatant of the symbolic abdication enveloping him” in the works of Hans Holbein, Gerard de Nerval, Fyodor Dostoyevsky and Marguerite Duras.

2.2 Psychoanalysis, Signification and Melancholy

Nothing takes place in psychoanalytic treatment but an interchange of words between patient and the analyst.

—Sigmund Freud, *Introductory Lectures*

Melancholia then ends up in asymbolia, in loss of meaning: if I am no longer of translating or metaphorizing, I become silent and I die.

—Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun*

Write your self. Your body must be heard.

—Helene Cixous, *The Laugh of Medusa*

The relationship of subjectivity to language constitutes the very essence of the psychoanalytic practice. Because of the relationship between language and subjectivity, “the psychoanalyst can work backward from language in order to diagnose the analysand’s problems with self-image” (Oliver, *The Portable Kristeva*, “Introduction”, xiv). Psychoanalysis, as a “talking cure” helps to bring the unconscious ideas to consciousness through language, and thus, the analysand articulates the unnamable suffering of which grip she has been locked.

Kristeva elaborates on the relationship between language and psychoanalysis. Following Lacan, Kristeva maintains the role of language in the constitution of subjectivity, and looks into how the subject is threatened with the breakdown of language. Nevertheless, she by asserting the heterogeneity of all signification—that all signification is composed of two elements, the symbolic and the semiotic⁴—challenges the Lacanian notion

⁴ In 24th note to the first chapter in *Black Sun*, Kristeva quotes from *Revolution in Poetic Language*, where she alleges the two moments of signification: “ ‘We understand the term semiotic in its Greek sense [...] distinctive mark, trace, index, precursory sign, imprint, trace, figuration. [...] This modality is the one Freudian psychoanalysis points to in

of signification as the exclusive realm of the paternal law. She argues that the logic of signification is already present in the materiality of the body (Oliver, xvi). It is by the means of the semiotic element of signification, through which affects make their way into signification, the melancholic experience may be addressed, the affective character of the melancholic suffering may be represented, thus managed to be resolved.

Kristeva observes in melancholy the disintegration of semiotic imprints (drive related representatives and affect representations) from signifiers (*BS* 52), and takes it as a primary feature of melancholic state. For Kristeva, the striking symptom of the melancholic is psychomotor, affective, ideational, and linguistic retardation (34)—a general failure in concatenating signifiers (words and actions) (40). Melancholic's speech reveals her disbelief in language: it is repetitive, monotonous; broken with gaps, silences, and unable to complete verbal sequences. Since it is language

postulating not only the *facilitation* and the structuring *disposition* of drives, but also the so-called primary *processes* which displace and condense both energies and their inscription. Discrete quantities of energy move through the body of the subject who is not yet constituted as such and, in the course of his development, they are arranged according to the various constraints imposed on this body—always already involved in a semiotic process—by family and social structures. In this way the drives, which are "energy" charges as well as "psychical" marks, articulate what we call a *chora*: a nonexpressive totality formed by the drives and their stases in a motility that is as full of movement as it is regulated" (25). The symbolic on the other hand is identified with judgment and the grammatical sentence: "We shall distinguish the semiotic (drives and their articulation) from the realm of signification, which is always that of a proposition or judgment, in other words, a realm of positions. This positionality [...] is structured as a break in the signifying process, establishing the identification of the subject and its object as preconditions of propositionality. We shall call this break, which produces the positing of signification, a thetic phase. All enunciation, whether of a word or of a sentence, is thetic" (43).

that constitutes and reproduces the subject, the death of language is the death of the subject. “For the speaking beings life is a meaningful life” writes Kristeva (6), and when meaning abandons the life, the subject confronts a deathly void.

Through bringing the body into discourse by positing “the semiotic”, Kristeva like the other so called French feminists highlights the role of the pre-Oedipal, the imaginary, the maternal— which is ignored by the male-biased psychoanalytic thought preoccupied by the Oedipal paternal factor — in the constitution of subjectivity, and access to culture and language.

Semiotic negativity is what brings dynamism to subjectivity and language. Kristeva traces the semiotic in the ruptures of speech and subjectivity, in the drive-based transgressions that disrupt the coherence of the subject and language, in the avant-garde texts, specifically poetry, and in the borderline states of the subject.

Since for Kristeva the signifying process is a dialectical process between “the semiotic” and “the symbolic”, the break between them breeds problems, causes the loss of meaning. In melancholy situation, Kristeva diagnoses that an abyss separates words from affective experience, and thus explains the function of analysis:

By analyzing—that is, by dissolving—the denial mechanism wherein depressive persons are stuck, analytic cure can implement a genuine “graft” of symbolic potential and place at the subject’s disposal dual discursive strategies working at the intersection of affective and linguistic inscriptions, at the intersection of the semiotic and the symbolic. (52)

Defining affect as “the most archaic inscription of inner and outer events”, Kristeva explains the transition from affects to symbols as occurring after separation—noting that “lack is necessary for the sign to emerge”—and through identification “no longer with the lost object but with a third party—father, form, schema” (23). Identification with the form, which is taken as an indispensable moment of child’s development, as well as the analysis’ aim, is an elaborate process that we will thereafter cover in detail.

2.3 The Melancholic Experience: Impossible Mourning for the Maternal Thing

I am saturnine, bereft, disconsolate
—Nerval, “The Disinherited”

Where does this black sun come from? Out of what eerie galaxy do its invisible, lethargic rays reach me, pinning me down to the ground, to my bed, compelling me to silence, to renunciation?

—Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun*

For Kristeva, the melancholic goes through “an abyss of sorrow”, “a noncommunicable grief” that causes her to “lose all interest in words, actions, and even life itself” (3). The abyss, that of sorrow and grief, tears her away from life, from language, thus she remains alone and mute on the far side of life, “[a]bsent from other people’s meaning, alien, accidental with respect to naive happiness” (4). She is both the nihilist, bearing witness to the meaninglessness of Being, and the mystic, devoutly clinging to the lost Thing; turning away from the worldly things, worldly meaning, and worldly language.

Kristeva retraces the melancholy situation, and there she detects at the root a precocious narcissistic trauma. “The disenchantment that I experience here and now [...] appears, under scrutiny, to awaken echoes of old traumas, to which I realize I have never been able to resign myself” (4-5). The melancholic seems to be saying:

I can thus discover antecedents to my current breakdown in a loss, death, or grief over someone or something that I once loved. The disappearance of that essential being continues to deprive me of what is most worthwhile in me; I live it as a wound or deprivation, discovering just the same that my grief

is the deferment of the hatred or desire for ascendancy that I nurture with respect to the one who betrayed or abandoned me. My depression points to my not knowing how to lose—I have perhaps been unable to find a valid compensation for the loss? It follows that any loss entails the loss of my being—and of Being itself. (5)

The melancholic's sadness does not point to—and cannot be explained with regard to—a loss of a specific, nameable this or that object, or person. Rather, any loss stirs the maelstrom of past, pulling her into an archaic experience of bereavement, “the disappearance of that essential being”, rendering her that premature being again. Since she lacks the symbolic support, due to a paternal weakness or absence, she fails to name that essential being as an object, to pose it as an other, to represent it; thus she fails to manage to lose it, to mourn it.

Throughout *Black Sun*, Kristeva uses the terms “melancholia” and “depression” interchangeably, nevertheless she acknowledges a distinction between them⁵, which she ignores, and grounds her analysis on the same element involved in both: “impossible mourning for the maternal object” (9). She writes that “I shall examine matters from a *Freudian point of view*. On that basis, I shall try to bring out, from the core of the melancholy/depressive composite, blurred as its borders may be, what pertains to a

⁵ Kristeva writes: “I shall call *melancholia* the institutional symptomatology of inhibition and asymbolia that becomes established now and then or chronically in a person, alternating more often than not with the so-called manic phase of exaltation. When the two phenomena, despondency and exhilaration, are of lesser intensity and frequency, it is then possible to speak of neurotic depression” (BS 9). In the following page, Kristeva writes that “[t]he terms melancholia and depression refer to a composite that might be called melancholy/depressive, whose borders are in fact blurred, and within which psychiatrists ascribe the concept of ‘melancholia’ to the illness that is irreversible on its own (that responds only to the administration of antidepressants)” (10). Relying on their common structure, throughout the text, Kristeva uses the terms “melancholia” and “depression” interchangeably.

common experience of *object loss* and of a *modification of signifying bonds*" (10). In accordance with the general view of psychoanalytic thought, Kristeva designates "object loss", mainly "intolerance for object loss" as the primary feature—cause—of the melancholy/ depressive composite. For Kristeva, the second feature—both cause and symptom—of the melancholy landscape is "modification of signifying bonds" that she explicates as "the signifier's failure to insure a compensating way out of the states of withdrawal in which the subject takes refuge" (10). These two features of the melancholy situation prove to be interrelated: the melancholic is intolerant for the loss of the Thing, since she lacks the necessary symbolic means to get over it.

Let us look closer to the structure of "impossible mourning for the maternal object" that Kristeva diagnoses in the melancholic state. The issue of the maternal object takes us to the concept of "the Thing". In Kristeva's words, the Thing is "the real that does not lend itself to signification, the center of attraction and repulsion, seat of the sexuality from which the object of desire will become separated [...] [it] is an imagined sun, bright and black at the same time (13). Although Kristeva does not directly equate the Thing to the maternal object, she uses the designation "the maternal Thing"; she takes the maternal body as representative of the Thing.

"My necessary Thing is also and absolutely my enemy, my foil, the delightful focus of my hatred" writes Kristeva pointing to the abject face of the Thing (15). The melancholic is the one, who fails to separate her from the Thing, "to summon the anality that could establish separations and

frontiers”; since “[she] cannot inscribe [her] violence in ‘no,’ nor in any other sign” (15). When the infant fails to separate from that abject other, mother indeed, as Judith Butler argues, “the place of the maternal body is established in the body, ‘encrypted’ [...] and given permanent residence there as a dead and deadening part of the body’ (*Gender Trouble* 68).

For Kristeva, the loss of the Thing cannot be understood in terms of the accounts the classical psychoanalytic theory that deals with the loss of the object, in the framework of “objectal melancholy”. What she talks about is “narcissistic melancholy”, which points to a loss earlier than any object love/catheisis.⁶ Kristeva explains narcissistic melancholy as:

Far from a hidden attack on an other who is thought to be hostile because he is frustrating, sadness would point to a primitive self—wounded, incomplete, empty. Persons thus affected do not consider themselves wronged but afflicted with a fundamental flaw, a congenital deficiency. [...] Their sadness would be rather the most archaic expression of an unsymbolizable, unnamable narcissistic wound, so precocious that no outside agent (subject or agent) can be used as referent. For such narcissistic depressed persons, sadness is really the sole object; more precisely it is a substitute object they become attached to, an object they tame and cherish for lack of another. In such a case, suicide is not a disguised act of war but a merging with sadness and, beyond it, with that impossible love, never reached, always elsewhere, such as the promises of nothingness, of death. (12)

As the above passage indicates, narcissistic melancholy points to a loss in the early phase of the human life, a loss experienced by “a primitive self”, which has not yet discerned the mother from the self; thus experiences

⁶ Kristeva maintains that classical psychoanalytic theory takes melancholy as objectal melancholy, emerges with the loss of the love object, toward which the self feels both love and hate. At the core of objectal melancholy, there is the mechanism of identification, through which the conflict between the self and the object transforms into one between the very self (11). As another form of melancholy, Kristeva points to the structure narcissistic melancholy that harbors an unfinished grief over the maternal Thing.

the loss of the mother as a narcissistic loss, as “a fundamental flaw” and “a congenital deficiency”. In such a case, when the loss occurs before the infant enters the symbolic realm, the infant cannot articulate what she has lost. Lacking faith in language, the melancholic is a prisoner of sadness, a mute prisoner of affect incapable of sublimating her sadness.⁷

⁷ Kristeva defines affect as “the psychic representation of energy displacements caused by external and internal traumas” (21), as “the most archaic inscription of inner and outer events” (23). The realm of affects is designated as enigmatic and vague, because “[n]o conceptual framework in the existing sciences (linguistics, in particular) has proved adequate for understanding this apparently very rudimentary representation, pre-sign and pre-language” (21).

2.4 Negation of Loss: “Matricide is Our Vital Necessity”

The void of the lost object can only be compensated through language⁸. To say it reversely, the emergence of sign requires the absence of the object, or rather the acceptance of loss. As Kristeva states, mourning for the Thing “comes out of transposing, beyond loss and on an imaginary or symbolic level, the imprints of an interchange with the other articulated according to a certain [semiotic] order” (40). What is at stake is indeed a translation of semiotic imprints of an interchange with the other—that of drive-related, affective traces of a symbiotic relationship with the mother/the Thing—to signification.

That critical task of *transposition* consists of two facets: the mourning gone through for the object (and in its shadow the mourning for the archaic Thing), and the subject’s acceptance of a set of signs (signifying precisely because of the absence of the object) only thus opens to serial organization. (41)

Under the condition that one consents to lose the object, and translates that loss to signifying bonds she triumphs over melancholy. The transition to symbolic order presumes the consent to lose the essential object. Consenting to lose her mother, the child finds her again first in imagination, then in words. Kristeva calls this process negation⁹. The depressed is the one who disavows negation. She is the fanatic who remains

⁸ It should be noted that, language here refers to language in its heterogeneity, involving both the semiotic and the symbolic elements of language; not to language as symbolic order.

⁹ Kristeva makes a distinction between denial and negation: “ I shall call denial the rejection of the signifier as well as semiotic representatives of drives and affects. Negation will be understood as the intellectual process that leads the repressed to representation on the condition of denying it and, on that account, shares in the signifier’s advent” (BS 44).

faithful to her loss through her depression. She has “lost the meaning, the value of [her] mother tongue for want of losing the mother”, whereby the lost body of the mother thus remains “walled up within the crypt of the inexpressible affect” (53).

At the core of melancholy, at the core of that impossible mourning for the maternal Thing, Kristeva determines a paternal failure, a paternal absence. She links the denial of signifiers in depressive speech to the denial of the father's function. The paternal function, to which Kristeva refers as a condition of negating the loss of the maternal Thing, is not just the Oedipal function. In addition to the stern Oedipal paternal figure, she introduces the notion of “the imaginary father” as a supporting and loving father that is inspired by Freud's notion of the father in individual prehistory, with which one sets up her first identification.

For Kristeva, owing to imaginary father, separation from mother is not only painful but also pleasurable; in a sense it establishes the link between love and symbol.¹⁰ The “primary identification” with “the father in individual prehistory” “provides a compensation for the Thing, and secures the subject to another dimension, that of imaginary adherence, reminding

¹⁰ Kelly Oliver writes: “In ‘Freud and Love,’ against Lacan, Kristeva suggests that the paternal function does not just include castration threats and law. The father is not merely the stern father of the law. Rather, she proposes a loving father, what she calls ‘the imaginary father.’ The imaginary father provides the loving support that enables the child to abject, or separate from, its mother and enter the social. [...] On the traditional model of both Lacan and Freud, the child enters the social or language out of fear of castration. [...] Kristeva insists, however, that separation begins prior to the mirror stage or Oedipal situation and that this separation is not only painful but also pleasurable” (*The Portable Kristeva*, p.133-134.)

one of the bond of faith, which is just what disintegrates in the depressed person” (13).

In the melancholy situation, primary identification is not as strong as to ensure future symbolic identifications, and this results in failing to commit matricide, thus failing to become a subject. Matricide is a question of life for one, since when matricidal drive is prevented, given that the maternal object has been introjected, this destructive drive is inverted on the self, possibly bearing one to suicide.

2.5 Feminine Melancholy: A Fate?

“For man and for woman the loss of the mother is a biological and psychic necessity, the first step on the way to becoming autonomous” writes Kristeva, and embarks on her striking claim that “[m]atricide is our vital necessity, the *sine qua non* condition of our individuation” (27-28). The prevention of matricidal drive, results in an inversion of the matricidal drive on the self, and a consequent melancholic putting death of the self takes place, instead of matricide. For Kristeva, matricide must be eroticized provided that it is to take place under optimal circumstances. This eroticization is achieved in three ways. In the first instance, the lost object may be recovered as erotic object, as in the case of male heterosexuality and female homosexuality. In the second instance, the lost object is transformed into a sublime erotic object through social, cultural, and aesthetic productions. In the third instance, the lost object “is transposed by means of an unbelievable symbolic effort, the advent of which one can only admire, which eroticizes the *other* (the other sex, in the case of heterosexual woman)” (28).

Since a woman’s “specular identification with the mother” and her “introduction of the maternal body and self” is more immediate, Kristeva claims matricide to be more difficult for a woman (28). One makes of the mother a “death-bearing woman” in order to expel her. Nevertheless, in case of a woman, this process is more difficult: “Indeed, how can She be that bloodthirsty Fury, since I am She (sexually and narcissistically), She is I?”

What is consequent is “only an implosive mood that walls itself in and kills me secretly” (29). Given her maternal identification, the destructive drive is not turned outside—as action, representation, or creation—it is turned inside.

Repression of both the maternal love and identification requires, as Kristeva puts, “an unbelievable symbolic effort”. As it is seen, unlike the consolidation of male heterosexual gender identity, the consolidation of female heterosexual gender identity requires a great deal of effort. That means, a heterosexual gender identity for any woman depends on a primary repression of the maternal cathexis. And it is no surprise, that women may fail to pass this exam, and end up in homosexuality or melancholy; or at least, they are expected from time to time to be caught by bouts of melancholy. Kristeva, by assuming matricide as an indispensable moment of healthy subjectivity, together with the impossibility of a complete separation of a woman from the maternal body, infers that femininity is a melancholy sexuality. Due to the same reasons—his identification with his mother—the homosexual man is alleged to “[share] the same depressive economy” (29).

Kristeva talks of “the tremendous psychic, intellectual, and affective effort a woman must make in order to find the other sex as erotic object” (30), while heterosexual man and homosexual woman can recover the lost maternal as erotic object. Indeed, one cannot overlook that a “tremendous psychic, intellectual, and affective effort” is involved in a woman’s transition to symbolic order together with her cathecting an object of a sex other than that of the primary maternal object. Nevertheless, considering the

hegemony of heterosexism, being a homosexual does not seem as a very helpful flight from melancholy for a woman. Maybe through being a homosexual, a woman has the chance to displace her love for her mother onto other same-sex objects; nevertheless, in this case, she confronts another form of impossibility because of the prevalent taboo against homosexuality. On that account, female homosexuality is as well a laborious a compensation for maternal loss.

Chapter-3: Judith Butler's Theory of Melancholy Gender

3.1. Introduction

“It may at first seem strange to think of gender as a kind of melancholy, or as one of melancholy’s effects” are the opening sentences of the chapter “Melancholy Gender/ Refused Identification” in *The Psychic Life of Power* (1997); in the following pages Butler goes on to affirm her thesis that all gender identity is founded on ungrieved loss. Although there have been claims that establish a relationship between discrete gender identities and melancholy, especially between femininity and melancholy, as in the works of Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva, Butler writes “there has been little effort to understand the melancholic denial/preservation of homosexuality in the production of gender within the heterosexual frame” (*Gender Trouble* 73). Unlike the works of Irigaray and Kristeva, which do not attend to the issue of the production of heterosexual identities, and take the heterosexual gender system as granted, Butler directly tends to the question of the constitution of heterosexual gender identities and its relation to melancholy. She scrutinizes the processes that consolidate the binary gender system; and deconstructs the seeming coherence of the categories of sex, gender, and sexuality.

Judith Butler’s theory of “melancholy gender” is a brilliant theory that forges an original link between melancholy and gender, which depends on the linking of the psychoanalytic account of the psyche to Foucault’s theory of power. Butler introduces the notion of “melancholy gender” first in *Gender Trouble* (1990; reissued 1999), later develops it in *The Psychic*

Life of Power, specifically in the chapter “Melancholy Gender/ Refused Identification”. Although both works are marked with Butler’s convergence of the Foucauldian power theory with Freudian psychoanalysis, their emphases are on different points. In the former work, Butler occupies herself with elaborating her theory of “gender performativity” by using psychoanalytic terms. In the latter work, Butler, starting with a Foucauldian problematic, focuses on the issue of power, and undertakes an investigation of the psychic form that power takes. In this context, melancholy appears as one of power’s regulatory operations in the production of normative heterosexuality. Following Freud’s theory of melancholy, Butler takes melancholy as the result of ungrieved loss that is interiorized, and applies this structure to gender. Claiming gender to be “acquired at least in part through the repudiation of homosexual attachments” (*PLP* 136), Butler suggests gender melancholy as the result of ungrieved and ungrievable loss of homosexual attachments.

It should be noted that Butler, for the most part, takes melancholy in a social, cultural and political context. Following Freud’s theory of melancholy, Butler takes melancholy as the result of ungrieved loss that is interiorized, and applies this structure to gender. For Butler, “gender is acquired at least in part through the repudiation of homosexual attachments” (*PLP* 136). Since, in a heterosexist culture homosexual love is foreclosed, such loss can never be named and mourned, and that breeds a pervasive melancholy.

Incorporating the psyche with the social, and proposing a way to think melancholy in a social, cultural and political context; I believe Butler inspires us to think the psychic matters, even the seemingly deepest singular experience or the individual pathology in the context of a wider picture.

3.2 Melancholic Identification: A Paradigm of the Formation of the Gendered Subject

In forming her theory of gender melancholy, in conceiving “gender as a kind of melancholy, or as one of melancholy’s effects”, Butler heavily draws on the Freudian psychoanalysis, specifically on the arguments covered in the texts “Mourning and Melancholia” (1917) and *The Ego and the Id* (1923). As we have seen in the previous chapter, in “Mourning and Melancholia” Freud gives a detailed account of the mechanism of melancholy, which he takes as a discrete pathology; whereas in his later essay, in *The Ego and the Id*, he takes melancholia in developmental terms, asserts its generality in human life, and claims it to be central to the formation of the identifications that form the ego. Such identification is not momentary or occasional, but, as Butler states, “becomes a new structure of identity; in effect, the other becomes part of the ego through the permanent internalization of the other’s attributes” (*GT* 74).

Although Freud does recognize the significance of this kind of identification, he does not conclude that all identifications arise from object loss. In *The Ego and the Id* he points to another type of identification, which is “[i]ndividual's first and most important identification, his identification with his father in his own personal prehistory”, and states it not to be “the consequence or outcome of an object-cathexis”, he rather takes it as “a direct and immediate identification and takes place earlier than any object-cathexis” (31).

Butler incorrectly assumes that in Freudian theory all identifications are preceded by loss. She renounces the idea that the identification with the father does not follow the melancholic pattern, but claims it to be an effect of the loss of the father as a love-object—in the context of identification with the father, Butler speaks in terms of the boy, since she is obsessed with the loss and repression of homosexual cathexis as the constitutive factor in gender acquisition; and thus remains curiously silent about the girl's relationship to her father—and thus takes melancholy as the paradigm of ego formation. Butler ignores the fact that Freud's postulate of primary paternal identification implies a necessary moment in a child's development, and it applies to female children as well as male children. In maintaining that “because identifications substitute for object relations, and identifications are the consequence of loss” (*GT* 80), Butler generalizes all identifications to come about as substitutions for lost objects.

Following this line of thought, and extending Freud's theory of melancholic identification, Butler claims the centrality of melancholy in the acquisition of gender identity, and writes that “[t]his process of internalizing lost loves becomes pertinent to gender formation when we realize that the incest taboo initiates a loss a loss of a love-object for the ego and the ego recuperates from this loss through internalization of the of the tabooed object of desire” (*GT* 75). This claim depends on her specific reading of the Oedipal situation and its resolution, which departs from Freud's narrative in some significant points.

Let us here remember the classical Oedipal story in order to follow Butler's reading. In Freudian theory, Oedipus complex designates the child's feelings of desire toward the parent of the opposite sex, accompanied by feelings of rivalry and hate towards the parent of the same-sex. The normal resolution of the Oedipus complex, for Freud, is achieved through the giving up of the object-cathexis for the parent of the opposite sex, and the enactment of an identification with the same-sex parent. In *The Ego and the Id*, where Freud tells this narrative in terms of the little boy, he writes that the little boy has to give up his "object-cathexis of his mother" and its place must be "filled by one of two things: either an identification with his mother or an intensification of his identification with his father" (32). In the following sentence he adds that "[w]e are accustomed to regard the latter outcome as the more normal" (32). Such identification, however, is not concomitant with what we know about loss and the melancholic identification expected to follow. That means, although the melancholic model would produce an identification with the lost object, in this case, an identification with the mother; in Freud's Oedipal model the outcome is the reinforcement of a preexisting identification with the father. Freud recognizes this inconsistency and writes "[t]hese identifications are not what we should have expected, since they do not introduce the abandoned object into the ego; but this alternative outcome may also occur" (32). In the following pages Freud states that, the factor that determines which identification—with the mother or the father—is accomplished in terms of the Oedipal child depends on the strength or weakness of femininity or

masculinity in its disposition, implying that identification with the same-sex parent is probable. Butler refuses this explanation, and criticizes Freud's idea of sexual dispositions, which for her implies them to be "the primary sexual facts of the psyche", and states sexual dispositions to be "produced effects of a law imposed by culture and by the complicitous and transvaluating acts of the ego ideal" (*GT* 81).

Unlike Freud, Butler, depending on the model of melancholic identification gives a quite different interpretation to the Oedipal process. She takes the resolution of the Oedipal situation, the acquisition of gender identity as a process by which the ego identifies with the lost object. I think that she reaches such a conclusion by starting with the fact that identification with the same-sex parent is the frequent outcome in the resolution of the Oedipal complex; and infers, depending on the model of melancholic identification, that since an identification with the same-sex parent is formed, there must have been the loss of the same-sex parent. That means, the girl loses her mother as a love-object, thus identifies with her; whereas the boy loses his father as a love-object, thus identifies with him. In the context of gender formation, the loss referred by Butler is imposed as a prohibition that is internalized in the process of forming of gender identity. Now, let us look at how prohibition is considered in Freudian and Butlerian thoughts, and how they are taken as significant in the context of gender formation.

3.2.1 The Primacy of the Taboo against Homosexuality

Butler, like Freud avows the founding role of prohibition in the formation sexual and gender identities, and writes: “In melancholia, the loved object is lost through a variety of means: separation, death, or the breaking of an emotional tie. In the Oedipal situation, however, the loss is dictated by a *prohibition* attended by a set of punishments” (*GT* 81).

The incest taboo is taken as the founding prohibition in Freudian thought. It is a corner-stone in explaining the human society and the human individual. In Freudian theory, the internalization of the prohibition, forced through castration anxiety, marks the resolution of Oedipus complex with its consequences of the consolidation of selfhood and gender identity.

Although Butler asserts the role of prohibition in the formation sex and gender identities, in her thought the prohibition against homosexuality is the primary prohibition. Butler argues that the taboo against homosexuality must precede the incest taboo, since “the taboo against homosexuality in effect creates the heterosexual ‘dispositions’ by which the Oedipal complex becomes possible” (*GT* 82). For Butler, heterosexuality is generated through a prohibition that forces the loss of homosexual attachments. Thus, the heterosexual dispositions are to be regarded not as original or innate; they are rather to be regarded as effects of a law, which being internalized, produces and regulates discrete gender identity and heterosexuality.

In her book *Judith Butler*, Sara Salih states that Butler, by arguing that the taboo against homosexuality precedes the incest taboo, implies that

“the child’s primary desire is always for the parent of the same-sex” (55).

Indeed, since Butler reads gender identification as a melancholic identification, and since she claims the prohibition against homosexuality to precede the incest taboo, she reaches the conclusion that heterosexual subjects are formed by a melancholic identification with an internalized same-sex lost object. This hypothesis of Butler is criticized by some writers, since they think she implies that the child has only homosexual cathexis, only loses a same-sex object, and thus identifies with it.¹¹

Indeed Butler does not attend to the cases whereby heterosexual objects are catheted and lost. She confines herself to state that, in terms of the loss of heterosexual objects, one has the chance to substitute the lost heterosexual objects with other heterosexual objects, comparing it to the loss of homosexual objects, whereby one does not have the chance—or it is harder—to substitute them by establishing new homosexual cathexes. What poses a bigger problem in her theorizations about identification, is her ignoring of a child’s love for the opposite sex parent and its identification with him or her. This blindspot seems to come about due to her exclusive occupation with homosexual cathexes.

Nevertheless, her exclusive occupation with homosexual cathexes may be taken as a move by which she tries to reverse heterosexualist assumptions, and thus to affirm homosexual cathexes. I do not regard it possible that Butler does not mean that the child only has homosexual

¹¹ “The oedipalized melancholics about whom Freud writes can “lose” objects of either sex; it is entirely possible for an opposite-sexed identification to transpire as the consequence of a melancholic incorporation.” (Rothenberg, Valente 2001)

cathexes, and only loses them. The stress that Butler puts on the loss of homosexual objects may be explained in the context of prevalent conditions of compulsory heterosexuality in which, homosexual attachments are rendered as illegible, abject, and non-existent. Even though we take these points into consideration, it is still problematic that Butler does not even allude to the contingency of opposite-sex identification, and just focuses on the same-sex identification, which she reduces to happen as an effect of loss.

Butler points to the differences between the loss of a heterosexual object and that of a homosexual object in terms of the heterosexual hegemony.

In the case of a prohibited heterosexual union, it is the object which is denied, but not the modality of desire, so that the desire is deflected from that object onto other objects of the opposite sex. But in the case of a prohibited homosexual union, it is clear that both the desire and the object require renunciation and so become subject to the internalizing strategies of melancholia (75).

As we know from Freud's "Mourning and Melancholia", the work of mourning- grief- is completed through decathexis- detachment of the libido from the object- and subsequent making of new attachments. As Butler states in terms of the loss of a heterosexual object, the loss is borne as grief, since there is no prohibition on heterosexual attachment, there is a chance of substitution of the lost heterosexual object with other heterosexual objects. Whereas "[i]n the case of the prohibition against homosexual incest through which heterosexual identity is established, however, the loss is sustained

through a melancholic structure” (88), since there is a prevalent taboo against homosexuality that bars the possibility of making new homosexual attachments. Take the case of the Oedipal girl that loses her father as a love-object with the force of the incest taboo; in this case, she, in the future has the chance to displace her desire onto other opposite-sex objects. However, she does not have the chance to displace her desire for her mother onto other same-sex objects; she has to renounce, thus, lose not only the object of her desire, but also the aim of her desire because of the prohibition against homosexuality. The girl has to forget, disavow her desire in order not to trouble her heterosexual identity as a woman. For Butler, the girl rather “installs that barred object [the mother] as a part of the [her] ego, indeed, as a melancholic identification”; thus, “the identification contains within it both the prohibition and the desire and so embodies the ungrieved loss of the homosexual cathexis” (*PLP* 169).

3.2.2 Never Loved, Never Lost: A Double Disavowal Which Founds Heterosexuality

As we have stated, for Butler, heterosexual identity is established in part through the loss of homosexual attachments, which is enforced by the taboo against homosexuality. Since “the prohibition on homosexuality operates throughout a largely heterosexual culture as one of its defining operations, [...] the loss of homosexual objects and aims [...] would appear to be foreclosed from the start” (*PLP* 139). The concept “foreclose” is used

by Butler in order to show the way in which homosexual love is rendered impossible from the start, to point to the way how a certain kind of unreality is attributed to homosexuality in a manner refusing to avow its very being. To foreclose homosexual love is also to foreclose its loss. Thus, under these circumstances, “homosexual love is subjected to a double disavowal, a never having loved, and a never having lost” (139). A woman insisting on her heterosexuality seems to be saying: “I never lost another woman, and hence never lost another woman”. For Butler, this never-never founds the heterosexual melancholic subject.

We know that, as long as a loss is not avowed and articulated, thus mourned, it results in an impossible mourning, whereby the loss is tortuously kept inside. The taboo on homosexuality, foreclosing not only homosexual love, but also mourning for homosexual love, results in “a melancholic identification which effectively turns homosexual desire back upon itself” writes Butler, and states “this turning back upon itself” to be “precisely the action of self-beratement and guilt” (142).

In the context of a heterosexual culture, where the enforcement of the loss of homosexual cathexes is one of its defining operations, these ungrieved losses cannot be taken as individual cases, rather the situation is to be comprehended as a kind of social melancholy. “Where there is no public recognition or discourse which such a loss might be named or mourned, then melancholia takes on cultural dimensions of contemporary consequence” (139) writes Butler. She adds that things get harder, when AIDS is in question. Under such circumstances, grieving those that died of

AIDS becomes an impossible task, and melancholy gets more and more acute. Melancholy, thus, needs to be seen as one of the regulatory operations of power, which restrains the visibility of certain loves, ignores the reality of certain losses, and renders some sufferings inarticulate.

3.3 Melancholy and Performativity

3.3.1 Incorporation as the Mode of Melancholic Gender Identification

Butler, in explaining how melancholic gender identifications take place, and in trying to answer the question where gender identifications are to be found, writes that “[t]he interior psychic space in which identifications are said to be preserved makes sense only if we can understand that interior space as a fantasized locale that serves yet another psychic function” (*GT* 86). Drawing on Abraham and Torok, Butler concludes that gender identifications are incorporated.¹² Designating incorporation as a fantasy, an antimetaphorical process means that; “the interior space into which an object is taken is imagined, and imagined within a language that can conjure and reify such spaces” (86). But, where is this in incorporated space? Unlike Abraham and Torok, who state that incorporated objects are encrypted in “an intrapsychic tomb”, Butler argues that incorporated space to be the very body, or the body *per se*. “As an antimetaphorical activity, incorporation *literalizes* the loss *on* or *in* the body and so appears as the facticity of the

¹² The following quotation from Butler summarizes Abraham and Torok’s conception of incorporation, which she takes as the manner by which gender identification is accomplished. “Abraham and Torok suggest that introjection of the loss characteristic of mourning establishes *an empty space*, literalized by the empty mouth which becomes the condition of speech and signification. The successful displacement of the libido from the lost object is achieved through the formation of *words* which both signify and displace that object; this displacement from the original object is an essentially metaphorical activity in which words “figure” the absence and surpass it. Introjection is understood to be the work of mourning, but incorporation, which denotes a *magical* resolution of loss, characterizes melancholy. Whereas introjection finds the possibility of metaphorical signification, incorporation is antimetaphorical precisely because it maintains the loss as radically unnameable; in other words, incorporation is not only a failure to name or avow the loss, but erodes the conditions of metaphorical signification itself.” (*GT* 86-87)

body, the means by which the body comes to bear ‘sex’ as its literal truth” writes Butler (87). Thus, as Prosser writes in “Judith Butler: Queer Feminism and the Transubstantiation of Sex” “it is only via this fantasy of literalization that the body comes ‘to bear a sex’ as literal truth, that gender gets inscribed on the body as sex and sex appears as the literal embodiment of gender” (260).

Sara Salih writes that “[l]ike gender, the body conceals its genealogy and presents itself as a ‘natural fact’ or a given, whereas, by arguing that relinquished desire is ‘encrypted’ on the body, Butler asserts that the body is the effect of desire rather than its cause” (57). Indeed, in Butler’s gender theorization, the body appears as a fantasized surface on which the disavowed desire is encrypted. It is taken as a psychically incorporated space, a product of melancholic gender incorporation. That means, there is no “natural body” before its cultural inscription by gender identification, which is accomplished by the literalizing fantasy of incorporation; the body is produced, its margins and erogenous zones are defined by the internalized prohibition and desire.

3.3.2 Gender Performativity as the Acting Out of Unresolved Grief

It is in this context that Butler develops her theory about gender performativity by linking it to melancholy, and formulates performativity as the “acting out” of unresolved grief, whereby performative genders are designated as allegories of gender melancholy. For Butler “[p]erformance

allegorizes a loss it cannot grieve, allegorizes the incorporative fantasy of melancholia whereby an object is phantasmatically taken in or on as a way of refusing to let it go”; thus “gender itself might be understood in part as the ‘acting out’ of unresolved grief” (*PLP* 145-146). “The straight man *becomes* (mimes, cites, appropriates, assumes the status of) the man he “never” loved and never grieved; the straight woman becomes the woman she never loved and never grieved. It is in this sense then, that what is most apparently performed as gender is the sign and symptom of a pervasive disavowal” (*PLP* 147).

Butler takes drag as the iconographic figure of gender melancholy in illustrating the fantasies that consolidate gender.

Drag thus allegorizes heterosexual melancholy, the melancholy by which a masculine gender is formed from the refusal to grieve the masculine as a possibility of love; a feminine gender is formed (taken on, assumed) through the incorporative fantasy by which the feminine is excluded as a possible object of love, an exclusion never grieved, but ‘preserved’ through the heightening of feminine identification itself (*PLP* 177).

Although Butler is primarily concerned with heterosexual melancholy-- since what is pervasive is heterosexual melancholy- she does not mention that only heterosexual people suffer gender melancholy, she does as well mention homosexual melancholy. As Salih states in *The Judith Butler Reader*, for Butler, “[a]ll stable gender identities are melancholic, founded on a prohibited primary desire that is written on the body and [...] rigid gender boundaries conceal the loss of an original, unacknowledged and unresolved love” (57). Butler thinks that, a homosexual—like the

heterosexual, who maintains the repressed homosexuality through melancholic incorporation—maintains that heterosexuality, which she may find unthinkable. That means, no matter what sexual position is in question, any sexual position becomes haunted by what it excluded. Nevertheless, for Butler, heterosexual and homosexual melancholy cannot be taken as parallel experiences, since “the heterosexual refusal to acknowledge the primary homosexual attachment is culturally enforced by a prohibition on homosexuality” (*GT* 89).

What is also provided in rethinking the notion of gender performativity through melancholy is the way in which it revises the seeming voluntarism implied in the notion of gender performativity. The following quotation from her essay “Reply to Adam Phillips” explains how the theory of melancholy gender, with its implication of a kind of loss that is enforced by the taboo against homosexuality regulates the performance of gender.

If I acquire my gender through the repudiation of my love for one of my own gender, then that repudiation lives on in the acting out of my gender, a repudiation that calls to be read in terms of rivalry, aggression, idealization, and melancholia. If I am a woman to the extent that I have never loved one, there is both aggression and shame locked into that “never,” that “no way,” which suggests that whatever gender I am is threatened fundamentally by the return of that love rendered unthinkable by that defensive “never.” And what I act, indeed, what I “choose,” has something therefore profoundly unchosen in it that runs through the course of that “performance” (90).

Butler argues that the notion of gender performativity is to be rethought through melancholy, through the notion of acting out—acting out

of unresolved grief—and “in the pantomimic response to loss whereby the lost other is incorporated as the very formative identifications of the ego” (90).

3.4 Melancholy and Power

In “Introduction” we stated that Butler’s theory of melancholy gender, which is informed by a queer feminist critique, constructs the relation between melancholy and the production of normative heterosexual identity. Hitherto we have covered that law, specifically the taboo against homosexuality, by enforcing the loss of homosexual attachments regulates the performance of gender, thus reproduces the heterosexual matrix. Still, how the taboo against homosexuality operates at the individual level, how the internalization of the taboo as an interior moral directive is achieved needs more explanation. These questions lead us to the complex relationship between subject and power, especially to the issue of the subject’s assumption of power, which Butler discusses in *The Psychic Life of Power*.

3.4.1 An Account of Psychic Subjection

The Psychic Life of Power presents a linking of Foucauldian and psychoanalytic theories aiming to elaborate the way power constitutes the subject, which, for Butler, is possible only with an inclusion of a theory of psyche. The text begins with an introduction of Foucauldian notion of power and its assumption of subjection as the simultaneous subordination and forming of the subject. According to this notion of power, which Butler avows, the relationship between the subject and power is not taken as a mechanical process, whereby norms are enforced on a subject, and later

internalized by the subject as they are. Such an account presupposes a given subject and a sovereign working of power. Rather, subjection “designates a certain kind of restriction *in* production, a restriction without which the production of the subject cannot take place, a restriction through which that production takes place” (84).

What Butler considers to be missing from Foucault’s account of the subject, is an elaboration of “the specific mechanisms of how the subject is formed in submission” (2), the way power constitutes the subject. For Butler, this paradox of subjection—implying subjectivity and subjugation at once—may be explained by referring to psychoanalysis and its conception of psyche. “An account of subjection must be traced in the turns of the psychic life [...] in the peculiar turning of a subject against itself that takes place in the acts of self-reproach, conscience, and melancholia that work in tandem with processes of social regulation” writes Butler (18-19).

Butler determines a desire for the norm and for subjection, and explains it by referring to “a prior desire for social existence”, which she illustrates in terms of the dependency of the infant, who has no choice other than to depend and form an attachment in order to persist in psychic and social sense, and also in the material sense. About the desire for social existence, which motivates one’s assumption of power, Butler contends “where social categories guarantee a recognizable and enduring social existence, the embrace of such categories, even as they work in the service of subjection, is often preferred to no social existence at all” (20).

Through a reading of Hegel, Nietzsche, Freud, Foucault and Althusser, Butler follows what she calls “the subject’s structuring attachment to subjection”. What is common in their accounts of the subject is the implication of a kind of reflexivity accompanied by attitudes of self-beratement and self-renunciation. For Butler, the psychic form of power is marked by this reflexive gesture, “a figure of turning, a turning back upon oneself or even a turning on oneself” which “operates as part of the explanation of how a subject is produced, and so there is no subject [...] who makes this turn”; rather “the turn appears as the tropological inauguration of the subject” (PLP 3). It is through this turn that the individual assumes power, and becomes a subject; in short “becomes the principle of its own subjection”.

In her “melancholy gender” theory, Butler asserts that the ungrieved loss of the homosexual cathexes prompts “a melancholic identification which effectively turns homosexual desire back upon itself”, whereby homosexual desire is transformed into guilt. Drawing on Freud, Butler maintains the ego-ideal to be “precisely the ideal of social rectitude defined over and against homosexuality” (141).

3.4.2 The Disciplinary Production of Gender

Although Freud states that the “normal” or “the most frequent” resolution of the Oedipus complex is that the children identify with the object parents, he does not mention that these identifications occur within

the taboos and laws of the heterosexual matrix. Butler argues that regulation of sexuality works through “a foreclosure that structures the forms that any attachment may assume” (*GT* 24) and links it to “the Foucauldian notion of a regulatory ideal”, “an ideal according to which certain forms of love become possible, and others, impossible” (25). Under the prevalent conditions of heterosexuality, needless to say, the attachments that are foreclosed are the homosexual ones, while the regulatory ideal is that of heterosexuality.

As Freud does, Butler takes the super-ego and the ego ideal¹³ as the regulatory mechanisms through which social ideals are psychically maintained. She contends the ego ideal to be involved in the internalization of gender identities, and in the successful consolidation of masculinity and femininity, and the law of heterosexuality (79-80). That means, the prohibition against homosexuality operates at the individual level through the construction of the ego ideal, which prescribes “the appropriate rechanneling and sublimation of desire” (80). Thus, for Butler, gender dispositions are not “the primary sexual facts of the psyche, but produced effects of a law imposed by culture and by the complicitous and transvaluating acts of the ego ideal” (81).

The prohibition against homosexuality forces the individual to approximate the heterosexual ideal. However, achieving the heterosexual

¹³ In *Gender Trouble* Butler does not discriminate between the terms ego-ideal and super-ego, uses them interchangeably, indeed uses the term ego-ideal instead of super-ego in the contexts where the term super-ego is appropriate. (In the 24th of the “Notes to Chapter 2” in this book she writes that Freud does not make a distinction between them in *The Ego and the Id* (207) and she does the same. Whereas in *The Psychic Life of Power*, she makes the necessary distinction between these terms by writing “[w]ithin psychoanalysis we think of social sanction as encoded in the ego-ideal and patrolled by the super-ego”(25).

ideal is not a singular act but an ever-lasting process; it is a ritualized production regulated through the internalized force of prohibition.

Conclusion

Starting with the aim of investigating “the gendered subject of melancholy”, we have covered the works of Julia Kristeva and Judith Butler regarding the relationship between melancholy and gender. Their works present disparate engagements with the topic due to their specific projects and the singular contexts of their writings. The work of Kristeva, located at the intersection of semiotics/linguistics and psychoanalysis, and depending on Lacan’s integration of Freudian psychoanalysis and structural semiology focuses on the melancholic subject’s uneasy relation to signifying bonds. Consequent to an argumentation pointing to the feminine subject’s unique relation to the maternal body, she claims continuity between femininity and melancholy, and thus, designates the subject of melancholy as woman. On the other hand, Judith Butler’s theorizations about the relationship between melancholy and gender constitute “a certain cultural engagement with psychoanalytic theory that belongs neither to the fields of psychology nor to psychoanalysis, but that nevertheless seeks to establish an intellectual relationship to those enterprises” (*PLP* 138). Motivated by the Foucauldian problematic of the tangled relationship between power and subject, Butler makes use of psychoanalytic theory in order to elaborate the Foucauldian account of subjection. As distinct from those works, which claim a relationship between discrete gender identities and melancholy, especially between femininity and melancholy; “melancholy gender” proves to be a challenging theory in its novel treatment of melancholy as intrinsic to

gender as such. According to Butler's theory, heterosexual gender identity is acquired in part through the foreclosure/loss of homosexual attachments. Within Butler's Foucauldian problematic, "melancholic denial/preservation of homosexuality in the production of gender within the heterosexual frame" appears as one of the regulatory mechanisms of power.

A Critique of Julia Kristeva's Melancholy Theory: Is Melancholy Woman?

As we have seen, Kristeva alleges the female subject to be more vulnerable than the male subject to melancholy because of the specific relation she has to her mother and to her mother's body, that is, to the (maternal) Thing. Kristeva, by considering matricide as a necessary condition of autonomous, thus, for her, healthy subjectivity, together with the impossibility of a complete separation of a woman from the maternal body, infers that femininity is a melancholy sexuality. For women, a complete act of matricide seems impossible owing to their identification with their mothers. On the other hand, since identification with the mother is the normative identification for the girl in the context of heterosexual culture, her not establishing identification with the mother will trouble her gender, and cause other complications, of which costs are hardly less than identifying with the mother. That means, for Kristeva, all roads lead to a dead end situation for women.

In *Black Sun*, Kristeva argues that it is only through psychoanalysis that a thorough psychic transformation can take place. She also praises work

of art as a therapeutic device, which secures “sublimatory hold over the lost Thing”; but nevertheless she prioritizes analysis as “an elaboration in the sense of ‘becoming aware’ of the inter- and intrapsychic causes of moral suffering [...] which aims at dissolving this symptom” (24). It is indeed curious that in *Black Sun* three of the four melancholy artists that Kristeva covers are men; while all subjects of the clinical, thus undesirable, cases of melancholy that she includes are women¹⁴. Thus, Juliana Schiesari in *The Gendering of Melancholia* (1992) seems right to maintain “when melancholia is considered undesirable it is stereotypically metaphorized as feminine or viewed as an affliction women bring on men; when melancholia is valued as a creative condition, however, its privilege is grounded on an implicit or explicit exclusion of women” (18).

Although Kristeva is certain about the greater frequency of depression in woman, she does not need to take into account the possible social and cultural factors that might help to give a fuller account about women’s depression; but rather she is contended with her postulation of feminine melancholy as a result of maternal identification. Relating to this frailty of Kristeva’s theory of feminine melancholy: Kelly Oliver in *The Colonization of Psychic Space* (2004) writes that Kristeva’s “account of feminine sexuality in *Black Sun* only gives us recourse to an infinite regress of depressed mothers to account for any particular case of depression”, according to which “we can diagnose the mother’s depression as a result of

¹⁴ Here, we are to remember Kristeva’s work on female genius, her *Female Genius* trilogy in order not to do injustice to her by claiming she exclusively considers men when creativity and genius are in question.

her own identification with her mother, that is, with what Kristeva calls the maternal thing that traps her in an unrepresentable realm of buried affects” (109). For Oliver Kristeva’s theory of feminine depression “either begs the question of the depressive mother or leaves us wondering if depression is a natural or essential part of the female or maternal psyche, neither of which adequately explains maternal depression” (110). Oliver claims a reading of maternal/ female depression as a form of social melancholy, which points “the loss of a lovable and loved self-image” in terms of the woman, to be more productive. According to this account, the woman is not melancholic because she identifies with her mother, but because she identifies through her mother with a socially devalued femininity. What constitute the core of woman’s melancholy then are the social norms, which enforce woman to identify with the mother while at the same time, devalue that very maternity.

A Critique of Judith Butler’s Melancholy Gender Theory

We have stated Judith Butler’s theory of melancholy gender to be distinctive by the way it connects melancholy and gender in a novel fashion. Her theory leads to considering melancholy as an operation of power, as a process through which one turns against oneself, and becomes the principle of its own subjection. Butler inculcates the psychoanalytic notion of melancholy with a sociopolitical sense, and offers a relationship between the psyche and the social. She shows that our affects like grief, shame, and guilt cannot be understood by taking them as exclusively intra-psychic and inter-

psychic phenomena; but they also need to be approached as effects of social and political processes. On that account, a cure for our sufferings cannot only be found in the consulting room or on the individual level, but it also comes about by opening up space in the social realm through which we will have an opportunity to articulate our affects and experiences.

It seems that Butler in regarding melancholic identification as the structure of gender formation, she aims to affirm the primacy and generality of homosexual cathexes. This aim, I think, leads her to a strategic use of psychoanalytic concepts and theories, and thus, to a reductionist appropriation of the psychoanalytic theory. We have covered some of the reductions she does because of her privileged occupation with the loss of homosexual object: the way she ignores identification with the opposite sex, and any kind of identification that does not follow the melancholic pattern. Rather she claims the father as the primary object for the boy, but she does not substantiate that argument.

Melancholy, for Butler, works out as a pattern in explaining the formation of the heterosexual subject. She ignores the different experiences of melancholy, thus the different affects involved, in achieving a feminine gender identity and a masculine gender identity; and thus levels the differences between psychosexual developments of different sexes. It is obvious that melancholy gender would be a more illuminating and compelling theory if it took notice of sexual difference.

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