

Mapping the Boundaries of Melancholy and Depression Through Psychoanalysis and Intimate Literature

Abstract

This essay explores the melancholy/depressive composite, a term coined by Julia Kristeva. Using psychoanalytic theory, the author analyzes the main character Monique from Simone de Beauvoir's short story "The Woman Destroyed". It is argued that Monique's melancholy during the dissolution of her marriage revolves around a paradoxical sense of a loss of the self. It is also put forward that although Monique may not seem to gain therapeutically from psychotherapy, she does in an unorthodox way. Related to this, it is argued that she experiences enlightenment by keeping a diary, which puts pressure on Kristeva's position that literary representations are more about catharsis than about elaboration. This article articulates therefore reasons why journaling is about elaboration and catharsis and hence a therapeutic experience. The final critical suggestion made is that Monique is not completely "destroyed" as the title suggests, but "broken" as the original title (*La femme rompue*) intimates.

"For those who are racked by melancholy writing about it would have meaning only if writing sprang out of that very melancholy" (Kristeva 3). Thus begins Julia Kristeva's *Black Sun Depression and Melancholia*, an ambitious project to understand the "abyss of sorrow" that often renders life unbearable. Kristeva contends that melancholia and depression form a "composite" condition. Echoing Freud's position that both melancholy and depression revolve around that same impossible mourning for the maternal object, she maintains that the two terms differ in degrees of intensity. Melancholy is characterized by a heightened sense of both despondency and exhilaration compared with depression. She also argues that melancholy is irreversible on its own and only responds to antidepressants (10). Still, she is quick to point out that the border between the two remains blurred and hence ill defined.

Furthering Kristeva's attempt to understand the melancholy/depressive composite especially among women, this essay offers an analysis of Simone de

Beauvoir's short story "The Woman Destroyed". Using Freudian theory as a starting point,^[1] I first examine if and how de Beauvoir's main character Monique suffers from a melancholy/depressive composite: "loss of the object, ambivalence, regression of the libido, and a modification of signifying bonds" (Kristeva 10).^[2] This final trait highlights the failure of language to provide a vehicle of relief from the melancholy/depressive state and the ensuing search for the signifier to approach the signified. In other words, for the depressed, language often fails to promote an "auto-stimulation" that is necessary to initiate responses (Kristeva 10). Second, drawing on the psychoanalytic theories of the "mothers of psychoanalysis" (such as, Horney, Deutsch and Klein), I present a reading of Monique's personality and analyze the roots of her depression. This analysis propels us to conclude that the real sense of loss pertains to the loss of her personal identity. Even though this may seem unoriginal, it must be stressed that Monique ironically mourns the loss of an identity that insured her own self-destruction. In other words, her original self-identity had been constructed as a means to discourage development, and the break-up of her marriage curiously does not destroy her, but rather motivates her to put herself back together in new ways. Third, I will show that while Monique may not seem at first glance to gain from psychotherapy, she does so in an unorthodox way that resembles a cathartic experience. Related to this position, this article does not simply argue that journaling is therapeutic, which would hardly be a novel idea. Instead I concentrate on how journaling is therapeutic. For Kristeva, literary representations (which must include diaries) are about catharsis and less about elaboration, awareness of the psychic causes of suffering (24). For de Beauvoir, the diary is first about elaboration and then about catharsis. Thus, while Monique may encounter "the signifier's failure to insure a compensating way out of the states of withdrawal" (Kristeva 10) at first, she eventually finds enlightenment and then healing by writing in her diary and from within the throes of her condition.^[3] The final critical suggestion made therefore is that Monique is not completely "destroyed" as the English title suggests, but rather "broken" as the original title (*La femme rompue*) intimates. (*Rompue* means broken, not destroyed.)

II. FALLING INTO A MELANCHOLY/DEPRESSIVE STATE

If de Beauvoir paints a global portrait of the condition of women in *The Second Sex*, she focuses on the condition of one individual woman, Monique, in her short story “The Woman Destroyed”. When we first meet Monique, she is brimming with happiness. She is proud and satisfied for having dedicated her life to her husband and daughters. Her contented state is reflected in her description of a blissful vacation alone in southern France, while her husband is off attending a conference. Upon her return to Paris, however, she learns directly from him that he has been having an affair. He also confesses in passing that he has had one extra-marital affair after another for the last eight years; and yet she had considered their relationship to be defined by transparency. (“Each of us used to be able to see entirely into the other” (131).) At first, she reacts to her husband’s confession with the tactic of the smile: adopting “an understanding, kindly attitude that she must stick to” (142); pretending that everything is normal; keeping up “the appearance of tranquility” (148); and maintaining her marriage as the “model pair” (166). The beginning of her depression is a refusal to feel depressed. She doesn’t feel shock or loss so much as a refusal to feel shock and loss. If we consider Freud’s essay “Mourning and Melancholia”, it is easy to draw the conclusion that she does not yet suffer from melancholy. She does not exhibit the distinguishing mental features of melancholy, such as “a cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, inhibition of all activity and a lowering of the self-regarding feelings that finds utterance in self-reproaches and self-revilings...” (Freud 244). Further, she still remains blind to the reality around her, to the role she plays; melancholy on the other hand draws reality into focus (Freud 246-7).

Slowly, the role she plays (and has always played) of pleasing others, of ignoring her own needs, and of deceiving herself becomes unbearable. She grows ambivalent about her feelings and is moved to “coach” herself as a way to manage her emotions. “No point in losing one’s emotions,” (131), she scolds herself. She also counsels herself, “I have to bottle up my anxieties, rein back my impulses” (152), and “I must learn to control myself” (188). This type of inner dialogue is the first sign that Monique is actually falling into a state of melancholy. Her self-scolding suggests that she reproaches and vilifies herself for the person she had become in the past.

But Monique first directs her anger at her husband, the “swine” (190), and then she eventually targets the person she had become. She sees a psychiatrist, who

allegedly manipulates her feelings. She quickly renounces psychotherapy; cuts off all contact with her friends and family; and turns to alcohol and drugs. Again, this is an example of turning aggression toward the ambivalently and unconsciously held lost object (her husband) into animosity toward her self. This also appears to be a case of her ego's attempt to restore self-respect by debasing the self that she has hated all along.

To understand this final statement, it is necessary first to examine the antecedents of her current breakdown. More specifically, it is important to explore facets of the self that she is trying to destroy. The melancholy/depression composite turns out to be a necessary step for Monique to recover a sense of true self. Put more succinctly, she descends into an abyss, hoping to rid herself of an inauthentic self, to wipe the slate clean and to become fundamentally who she is.^[4]

III. ROOTS OF HER MELANCHOLY AND DEPRESSION:

The most distinctive feature of Monique's condition is the fragile boundary between honesty and self-deception. There are two main personality traits that set the stage for self-deception. She plays the role of the *Mater Dolorosa* and the role of a child.

The *Mater Dolorosa*: The weeping woman is exemplified by the icon of Mary at the foot of the cross, shouldering the emotional responsibility for the crucifixion of Christ, while the men wipe their hands clean of the crime. To use more contemporary vocabulary, Monique is the epitome of what Carol Gilligan refers to as a "woman who has an injunction to care, a responsibility to discern and alleviate the real and recognizable trouble of the real world" (100). If Monique defines herself by an absolute dedication to others, she simultaneously ignores her own development. Her internal conflict involves balancing an ethic of responsibility for others with the demands of personal integrity. This conflict is summarized by these comments: "Here is one of the reasons—indeed the main reason—why I have not the least wish to be tied down to a job: I should find it hard to bear if I were not entirely free to help the people who need me" (127). She chances upon an orphan teenage girl in the streets and quickly becomes her advocate, or better yet, her surrogate mother, after having already devoted an entire life to two daughters of her own. We understand how much Monique has given to her daughters when she

confesses: “If I have failed with the bringing up of my daughters, my whole life has been a mere failure” (215). In regards to her husband Maurice, she declares in her diary: “He has been enough for me: I have lived only for him” (135); “I have never asked anything for myself that I did not also wish for him” (135); “My longings, wishes, interests have always been identical with his” (149). When Maurice asks her to take a job (seeing that their daughters have left home) she responds: “But I do not want one; not for the moment, anyhow. I want to live for myself a little, after all this time” (125). This statement represents a foreboding of things to come. She will be forced to live for herself, now that she is left without the crutch of defining herself according to the needs of others. Thus, when she does grieve the break-up of her marriage, she is mostly grieving the loss of the personality that she had constructed to serve the needs of others. Paradoxically, she grieves the loss of a self that encouraged her own destruction.

Let us examine more profoundly why Monique has an almost obsessive urge to serve the needs of others. A compulsive need for approval and affection motivates her to seek to live for others. This need must be the result of an inner conflict. On the one hand, she strives to become someone extraordinary. Seeing that personal development is a daunting process, since it forces people out of comfortable roles, Monique fails to venture into the territory of self-definition. It may very well be too risky for her to mold herself in a creative and critical way. She might be afraid of isolation, as she separates herself out from the rest of the crowd. Further, she may fear that her sheltered life will not guarantee the pursuit of her dreams.

She invests a defensive urge for transcendence into a love object (her husband) and the self-glorification that is so desperately needed is now located in the romantic partner. The love partner is transformed into a divine ideal in which personal meaning and fulfillment are dissolved into the other. More concretely, she gains self-esteem by projecting herself into her husband, a medical doctor who serves the needs of the poor and works as a specialist seeking a cure for leukemia. On an ostensible level, she lives through him, seeing that she had renounced medical school when she became pregnant. On a deeper level, if she is seen as all giving to such an “extraordinary” man, then others will view her as an extension of him and virtuous. This suggests that her definition of self stems from those around her. If society defines Monique thru this “admirable” role, then she is freed from having to define herself and from the angst associated with the search for a more authentic

self-identity. And yet, the more Monique lives her life for others, discounting her emotions, the more she despises herself on an unconscious level for being so inauthentic.

In short, one could describe Monique as leading a life of emotional barrenness and a throttling of feeling. Masked desires and avoided conflicts breed mendacity. Eventually, she questions if she has lost sight of the truth: “Is it possible to be so mistaken about one’s life as all that?” (224), and “I always imagined myself to be honest. It is dreadful to think that behind me my own past is no longer anything but shifting darkness” (226). It is perhaps more succinct to speak about lurking shadows, for she also plays the role of a child, while a more authentic Monique remains nothing but a shadow.

The Child: Two very interesting features about Monique’s parents present themselves in the story. Her father represents an “ideal”. He too was a doctor, like her husband. Her mother is totally absent. Her mother neither appears in the story, nor is she referred to in her diary at any point. Monique confesses, “I found it very hard to accept that all children lie to their mothers. Not to me. I am not the kind of mother that is lied to: not a wife that is lied to. Idiotic vanity” (136). The absence of a confession on Monique’s part about whether she would lie to her mother is troubling. Either we are to assume that Monique did not have a mother or that she considers herself to be so perfect that she would never have lied to her. Her mother could also be absent in her diary, as there is no boundary between them. She need not speak about her mother, since she is the imaginary embodiment of her mother. In light of her propensity to act child-like this seems highly plausible. Relevant is Deutsch’s comment on female development. She writes: “A pre-pubertal attempt at liberation from the mother that has failed or was too weak can inhibit future psychological growth and leave a definitely infantile imprint on the woman’s entire personality” (21). Monique acts like a child in more ways than one. Instead of using her own mental powers to comprehend the complexity of her failed marriage, she reads the horoscopes, consults a graphologist, and reverts to Miss Lonely heart’s column in the newspaper. She travels to New York to ask her daughter for advice, and in an exchange of roles, her daughter predicts that her mother will find herself (252).

There is yet another more convincing reason to believe that she has never fully matured. Monique is not connected to the concrete situations of her life. She is detached from life and from herself. When life turns messy, when she no longer knows the truth from lies, she must re-organize the wardrobes and buy Maurice new socks, sweaters, and pajamas in a desperate attempt to find order among disorder. “Well-filled cupboards with everything in its place are a great comfort to one. Plenty: security.... The heaps of delicate handkerchiefs and stockings and lingerie gave me the feeling that the future could not possibly let me down” (180). Like a child who displays her fantasies and anxieties in play, Monique displays her emotions in “keeping house.” In the absence of emotional order and tidiness, she must create material order. Naïve statements also suggest that she has never fully matured: “How involved everything becomes as soon as one begins to have hidden motives” (182). She even confesses that she comprehends that she is like a child: “He is lying so as to ease things for me” (176).

What are the psychological benefits of this behavior? Monique has lowered her intellectual and moral qualities in order to make sure she does not understand reality. She does not wish to comprehend that she has wasted her life on a man who has turned out to be less than ideal, a real swine, seemingly addicted to deception, material possessions and personal career concerns.^[5] The sense of disappointment is even more acute, given that she too could have become a doctor, had she not renounced her medical studies after she became pregnant.^[6] To comfort herself from these realizations (that must needle her conscious), she lives a life of lies in order to feel as if she committed her life to a noble cause.

Little by little, her mind awakens from a slumber when she allows herself to feel depressed, and she is able to see herself clearly in the mirror. Or, perhaps it is more fitting to argue that Monique needed to live in a world of fantasy in order to understand eventually the reality around her. Besides the therapeutic benefits of living in a world of lies, it might also be a natural course or progression in order to achieve a more complete understanding of reality. This idea is akin to Van Gogh’s desire to render reality less real in order to render it more real.^[7]

The transformation that occurs in Monique is not sudden, but is real for sure, even though some literary critics such as Toril Moi consider Monique a “hapless” character.^[8] “From now on, always, everywhere, there is a reverse side to my words

and my actions that escape me” (220), she reminds herself. She also eventually admits, “I had a foreknowledge of the deception” (172), and most significantly, “The whole thing is my fault. I had an inspiration this morning” (212). How is such a transformation possible? Is de Beauvoir’s presentation unrealistic? How could a woman go from acting in such bad faith, to descending into an abyss of despair during her melancholia, to an admission that she might have been at fault?

Does the psychiatrist assist her with her depression? Monique’s experience with the psychiatrist is at first glance pathetic. She might react so negatively toward him, lest she lose her ideal image of the *Mater Dolorosa* and therefore become a rejected self. Or, perhaps she fears that the psychiatrist could help her to see reality, and she would discover that she and her husband are in fact mediocre like everyone else. Or, does she worry about being left an empty shell, with no more lies to embellish her? Is this a question of fear of the unknown? Does she want to remain ill? For she deserves nothing better than the neurotic state she has created for herself?

Monique agrees to see the psychiatrist on the recommendation of her friend, “not for an analysis but an immediate palliative treatment” (234). The psychiatrist advises her to find a job, “she obeys” (242) him. He coaches her on how to construct her self-image and advises her to take up her diary again. His recommendation is nothing but a “gimmick” (240); his words are simple “claptrap” (243). More importantly, she seems to harbor a deep and fundamental resentment for the psychiatrist:

Here we are! I was sent to the psychiatrist. I was made to recover a little strength before the final blow was struck. It’s like those Nazi doctors who brought the victims back to life so that they could be tortured again. I shouted at him, ‘Nazi! Torturer!’ He looked shattered. Really it was he who was the victim. He even went so far as to say to me, ‘Monique! Have pity on me!’ (242)

While such a comparison may seem exaggerated at best, offensive at worst, it drives home the message that simply finding one’s voice is therapeutic. She finds her voice by yelling at an authority figure, a doctor, who symbolizes her husband and father. If at first the psychiatrist appears in a negative light, on second thought, he is pivotal

to Monique's cure. By insulting him, she is able not only to express her emotions to an authority figure, but also to purge herself of the frustration of being deprived of the means of her voice, let alone her angry voice. Hence, her experience with the psychiatrist is cathartic in the strictest sense of the term.

IV. THE DIARY: A FORM OF CATHARSIS OR ELABORATION?

In light of this character analysis, one could easily draw the conclusion that Monique has not been the author of her story. Of course, de Beauvoir is the author of the story on a superficial level, and yet on a more profound one, Monique fails to assume the role of a character in her own life story. In some respects, she resembles high-functioning autistics that learn by rote typical behavior and emotions. Language is artificial. It is a not an authentic or near-authentic interpretation of emotions or thoughts. To return to Kristeva's remark at the beginning of this essay, it is in this respect that language fails to insure a compensating way out of a state of melancholy torpor.

Eventually, the journaling process becomes a form of enlightenment as well as a cathartic experience and hence therapeutic for Monique. Even though it may seem unimaginative to contend that journaling is therapeutic, it should be pointed out that the goal of this analysis to investigate precisely how journaling is therapeutic. Kristeva holds that literary representations are more about catharsis than about elaboration. (24). Nuanced explanations below should prove that the journaling process is therapeutic for de Beauvoir's heroine because it is actually first about elaboration and then about catharsis.

Some may consider diary writing nothing more than a solipsistic activity that encourages narcissistic behavior at best, mendacity at worst. If we consider the example of Tolstoy keeping two diaries, one for himself—locked up in a drawer—and one for his nosy wife to peruse, then it is clear that fiction exists in so-called factional intimate literature, such as diaries, journals, memoirs, and autobiographies. Even if intimate literature may appear closer to the truth, it does contain strands of fiction, just as life does. Seeing that journaling is a process of narration, and not just a bullet-point list of events, Monique is able to develop a conscious sense of identity. After all, narrative does not simply capture aspects of

the self for description; it builds the self as it relates stories about the self. In the absence of freedom to define life based on reality, a life of fantasy is at least a covert way to define oneself according to one's own terms. More succinctly, Monique constructs herself as she tells stories about herself, and it must feel "good" for her to take charge of her life by writing her own life story, regardless of whether it is true or not. What's more, the purpose of creative stories is not so much to reproduce reality, but rather to deform it, and the result of this deformed reality is to begin to chip away at a former self-identity that was set in stone.

Another related reason why journaling is therapeutic is that narrative (whether in literature or in psychoanalysis) encourages self-awareness. This type of self-awareness differs from the conscious process of building an identity explored in the previous paragraph. It has more to do with discoveries of the unconscious realm as opposed to inventions of conscious identity. While words are involved in narrative and psychoanalytic treatments, the workings of the mind may resist or even defy words and seek to be communicated instead through images such as dreams and body language. The explicit and implicit attempt to discover what lies buried in the unconscious realm is akin to translation. Not only since psychoanalysis and literature are translations of the unconscious realm into the conscious realm, but also since they translate psychic visions into words. Without that translation, visions evaporate. This is perhaps why Kristeva claims that for the depressed language often fails to promote an "auto-stimulation" that is necessary to initiate responses (Kristeva 10). Words may not provoke 'auto-stimulation' because they fail to chip away at the encrusted images that torture the mind. Monique wrestles in fact with the problem of language in her diary: "Words say nothing!" (223) "Then, these pages lie, so they get things so wrong" (223). Still, she sees the diary in another light: "What an odd thing a diary is: the things you omit are more important than those you put in" (130). The therapeutic nature of journaling is thus related to the provocative silences of the unconscious as opposed to the explicit or not so explicit messages of the conscious. The diary is a place where she can begin to explore uncharted territory of her unconscious through images and gaps that reveal that which she does not wish to reveal on a conscious level. The written record of these gaps and masked images may very well insure that Monique can muse on them and comprehend them better than were she on the couch.

Analyzing still another therapeutic effect of journaling, we should recall that intimate literature helped to give birth to literature. More specifically, before the novel was born, writers first wrote diaries, journals, letters, and memoirs. It was as if the thinking social animal had to discover its voice in a private realm before it could make its voice public. Analogously, Monique must first find a space of her own before she can tell her story to others. The diary becomes a place where she can explore realms of anxieties and fantasies. This is analogous to what Klein discloses in her essay “The Psycho-analytic Play Technique” about her patient Rita. If Rita finds the open space safer than the psychiatrist’s office, Monique finds the diary a safe environment. I am not suggesting that she feels necessarily freer to express herself in the pages of her diary than in the psychiatrist’s office, as we do know that she therapeutically tells the psychiatrist off. What I am arguing, nonetheless, is that the journaling process (because it takes place in a “safe” environment) embodies creative development, which fosters individual growth. It is the process of playing with words and putting them in creative combinations and patterns that allows Monique to chip away at the encrusted images (such as the *Mater Dolorosa* and the child) that have defined her personality. This position brings to mind Baudelaire’s lines: “I have kneaded mud, and made it into gold” (“*J’ai pétri de la boue, et j’en ai fait de l’or*”) (in Ladenson 51).

Finally, the diary also represents a cathartic experience: “I have taken to my pen again not to go back over the same ground but because of the emptiness within me, around me, is so vast that this movement of my hand is necessary to tell myself that I am still alive” (224). This is one of Monique’s most important confessions. The fact that diary writing is a highly physical activity involving the mind and a moving hand, a piece of paper, and a pen—as opposed to a more abstract process like speaking or even more so, simply thinking—means that the body is actually involved in the therapy. Writing becomes a vomiting of ideas on a paper and a carving out of new ideas on a smooth piece of stone. This cathartic experience must indeed be so very therapeutic, as it involves the body. The healing process must include the body and not just the intellect, since most of what one thinks and says comes from the body as well as from the mind. Monique could intellectualize, seeking profound elaboration, on the origins of her anger or sadness, but her understanding would be incomplete without the interaction of the body. Metaphorically speaking, Monique’s hand armed with a pen acts as a conduit for the rest of the body. Or still another metaphor to illustrate the point: her hand is the translator of her body just as a

screaming baby translates her basic needs of the body. It must feel therapeutic for Monique to allow her pen to discharge the pent-up feelings that lie buried in her body. It is in this respect that diary writing is not only about elaboration, but also about catharsis.

V. CONCLUSIONS

If Monique is able to engage in the therapeutic process of telling the psychiatrist off and writing a diary, then it becomes evident that she has begun a journey of healing. This proves that Monique is not completely “destroyed” as the English title suggests, but rather “broken” as the original French title intimates. She is broken, in fact, and attempts to put herself back together *après coup*. Further, if we are going to talk about destruction, then it becomes apparent that the dissolution of her marriage allows her to destroy the disingenuous identities of the *Mater Dolorosa* and the child. Thus, ironically, this story is not so much about the loss of her husband, but rather about the loss of Monique’s identity that had insured originally her own destruction.

In an attempt to render a message of healing to the character’s conscious realm (and to readers’), Monique has a dream: she’s wearing a sky-blue dress and the sky is blue (238). These images act as a polysemy of meaning, representing possibilities of new life. The dream must bathe Monique in a plethora of optimistic feelings.

In real life, she visits her daughter in New York who tells her that she’ll find herself again (252). Returning to Paris, she finds the door to her home closed. “It will not open if I do not stir,” she confesses and adds: “Do not stir: ever. Stop the flow of time and of life. But I know that I shall move. The door will open slowly, and I shall see what there is behind the door. It is the future. The door to the future will open” (253).

It is thanks to journaling that Monique eventually moves to open the door. As argued earlier, diary writing is therapeutic for Monique, as it encourages first and foremost elaboration or an awareness of the causes of her suffering. More concretely, journaling helps her to: develop a keener sense of conscious identity by constructing stories of herself; journey into uncharted territories of the unconscious realm; and

navigate in a safe environment where she can imagine new creative images of herself. The journaling process is also cathartic in the sense that it allows her to write literally with her whole body, which harbors pent-up feelings.

This final idea supports Kristeva's claim that literary representations are cathartic in nature. And yet, I put pressure on Kristeva's work by highlighting how elaboration is just as important, if not more so, to the success of Monique's therapy. It should also be stressed that Kristeva maintains that antidepressants are the only remedy for melancholy. Monique shows us that language is key to her treatment.

If we return to the beginning of this article and to the trait of the melancholy/depressive composite as the "failure of language to provide a vehicle of relief from the melancholy/depressive state," we must conclude that Monique journeys beyond the melancholy/depressive condition thanks to the vehicle of written language. Kindred to Sartre's existentialist hero Roquentin who finds meaning in life thanks to art, de Beauvoir's heroine finds auto-stimulation in language and assumes the responsibility to create her own essence. Hence, when we talk about an attempt to understand the boundaries of melancholy and depression, it becomes clear from de Beauvoir's work that language plays a fundamental role in rendering the boundaries of these conditions more yielding. While this may not be a novel conclusion especially for psychoanalysts, it is a reaffirmation (and a nuanced one at that) of the power of what I would call "word therapy". Such a message should not be taken lightly in a day and age when mental health specialists rely on (for complex reasons) psychopharmacology while ignoring the alchemy of emotions that can take place thanks to journaling and a piece of literature as rich in psychological musings as de Beauvoir's.

Endnotes

- [1] I am referring to Freud's 1917 essay "Mourning and Melancholy".
- [2] Freud highlights three of these four preconditions of melancholy in his "Mourning and Melancholy" essay: loss of the object, ambivalence, and regression of libido into the ego (258). Kristeva adds to the discussion on melancholy by emphasizing the challenge for language to stimulate recovery.
- [3] My use of the terms depression and melancholy is based on Kristeva's composite argument, and hence I will not differentiate the terms, even though differences exist especially if we consider different forms of depression such as hostile, retarded, agitated or anxious.
- [4] Some may find the idea of "becoming fundamentally herself" antiquated at best, naïve at worst in light of the Post-Modern and Post-Structuralist view on the dissolution of the self or the disappearance of the subject. I use this vocabulary, however, in order to highlight Monique's suppressed personality and to emphasize her need to define herself on her own terms through the experience of melancholy and writing a diary.
- [5] Monique writes in fact in her diary that, "If Maurice is a swine, then I have wrecked myself loving him" (190), as well as: "I have committed my life to love so selfish a man" (199).
- [6] She mentions only in passing her spoiled plans to become a doctor (196).
- [7] Similarly, Nietzsche asks in *Beyond Good and Evil*: "How could anything originate out of its opposite? For example, truth out of error? Or the will to truth out of the will to deception? Or the generous deed out of selfishness?" (1)
- [8] See Moi's *Feminist Theory and Simone de Beauvoir* (81).

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