

Loss, Mourning and Melancholia in Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's Narrative Poem "The Lunatic Girl"

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Abstract

This study aims to analyse the 19th-century American author Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's narrative poem "The Lunatic Girl" within the framework of loss, mourning, melancholia and madness. The paper argues that the female character of the narrative experiences the loss of her boyfriend and her mourning grows into a form of melancholia as she becomes unable to process the work of mourning and remains at the stage of denial, the first stage of grief. That is why she waits for the return of her lover at the seashore every day and goes completely insane. As the mourning grows into madness, she passes away to end her pain and reunite with her dead lover. The study aims to examine the actual reasons for her melancholia and to demonstrate the ways the loss of the love object turns into the loss in the ego. The paper accordingly aims to analyse the narrative levels within the text and investigate the function of the narrator. The study is chiefly based upon the theories of Sigmund Freud, Julia Kristeva, Elizabeth Kübler-Ross and makes use of narratology to explore the narrative levels.

Keywords: Longfellow, mourning, madness, melancholy, loss

HENRY WADSWORTH LONGFELLOW'UN "DELİ KIZ" ADLI MANZUM ŞİİRİNDE KAYIP,
YAS VE MELANKOLİ

Öz

Bu çalışma, 19. yüzyıl Amerikalı yazar Henry Wadsworth Longfellow'un "Deli Kız" eserini kayıp, yas, melankoli, delilik ve çerçevesinde incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Makale, anlatının kadın kahramanın erkek arkadaşının kaybını yaşadığını ve yasının, yas sürecini işleyemediği ve yas tutmanın ilk aşaması olan inkâr aşamasında kaldığı için bir tür melankoliye dönüştüğünü savunmaktadır. Bu yüzden kadın karakter her gün deniz kıyısında sevgilisinin dönüşünü bekler ve tamamen delirir. Yas deliliğe dönüşürken, kadın acısını sona erdirmek ve ölü sevgilisiyle yeniden bir araya gelmek için vefat eder. Çalışma, intiharının gerçek nedenlerini incelemeyi ve aşk nesnesinin kaybının benlikte kayba nasıl dönüştüğünü göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Buna göre makale, metin içindeki anlatım düzeyini de analiz etmeyi ve anlatıcı türünü araştırmayı da amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma esas olarak Sigmund Freud, Julia Kristeva, Elizabeth Kübler Ross'un teorilerine dayanmakta ve anlatı düzeylerini ele almak için anlatıbilimden yararlanmaktadır.

Anahtar sözcükler: Longfellow, yas, delilik, melankoli, kayıp

INTRODUCTION

As mourning is a subjective experience, the response to an imaginary or a real loss and the process of the work of mourning change in accordance with each subject. For the mourning not to grow into a pathological condition, the mourner is to complete each stage of grief and replace the lost object. There are times when the subject sticks to

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the lost object and refuses to replace and release it. The loss of the object is then turned into the loss in and of the ego so that the mourner begins to mourn for not only the lost object but also the lost self in a way that the grief is gradually transformed into melancholia. Losing the loss itself, the melancholic subject gets suicidal and desires for an eventual reunion with the lost object in both sadness and death, at times claiming her/his own life in the end. Within this scope, the present paper aims to analyse the female protagonist of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's narrative poem "The Lunatic Girl" in terms of loss, mourning, stages of grief and melancholia. The study aims to reveal that the female character displays the signs of melancholia and madness due to the recurrent inability to go through the full stages of grief and overidentifies with the loss itself. The study makes use of Freud's theory related to loss, mourning and melancholia, Kristeva's notion of the relationship between melancholia and language, and Elizabeth Kübler-Ross' terminology related with stages of grief to demonstrate the ways the grief is exacerbated by the loss of the sense of loss and is gradually transformed into melancholia, causing the subject to die at the end of the narrative. The study accordingly analyses the type of the narrator and explores the narrative levels within the narrative poem.

MOURNING, STAGES OF GRIEF AND MELANCHOLIA

In his article "Mourning and Melancholia" (1917), Freud elucidates the concept of mourning through exploring the essential differences between the affective state of mourning and the nature of melancholia that might be explained as the abnormal and pathological condition of grief. Unlike melancholia whose exact definition it is not possible to provide and which assumes various forms, mourning might be delineated as mostly taking on only one form, being "regularly 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" (1917, p. 243). At times, these same causes lead to melancholia in some individuals that might be said to previously reveal a disposition or tendency that is triggered by the external circumstances. Furthermore, the work of mourning is finalized within a certain period of time after the loss is processed contrary to melancholia that turns out to be entirely independent of time and event.

Mourning and melancholia display common symptoms in almost every aspect which might be reckoned as such: "a profoundly painful dejection, cessation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, inhibition of all activity" (Freud, 1917, p. 244). In this respect, what distinguishes melancholia from mourning is the presence of "a lowering of the self-regarding feelings to a degree that finds utterance in self-reproaches and self-revilings, and culminates in a delusional expectation of punishment" (Freud, 1917, p. 243). The loss in the mourning thus transforms into the loss in and of the ego in melancholia, that leads the subject to redirect the hatred against the other into oneself. As for the nature of the loss in mourning, it is of vital significance to underline that it mostly manifests itself as a physical loss in the form of the death of the loved object that "proceeds to demand all libido shall be withdrawn and from its attachments to that object" (Freud, 1917, p 243) rather than the Thing in melancholia as Kristeva (1989) suggests "let me posit the "Thing" as 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" (p. 13). This physical loss of the object of desire ends up for the grieving subject with "a clinging to the object through the medium of a hallucinatory wishful psychosis" (Freud, 1917, p. 244) so that the subject engrosses him/herself in the thoughts and activities that physically prolong the presence of object. Once the process that involves the phases of "each single one of the memories and expectations in which the libido is bound to the object is brought up and hypercathected, and detachment of the libido is accomplished in respect of it" (Freud, 1917, p. 245) is at an end, the ego of the subject becomes liberated from the loss and ultimately overcomes the inhibition. In contrast to melancholia, the mourning is terminated when the loss is processed and at times another substitute for the lost loved object is found.

Melancholia evinces the loss in the form of something of a more ideal nature and eventually brings about the loss of the sense of the loss since there seems to be nothing conscious about the loss in the first place, as put forth by Freud, who states that "melancholia is in some way related to an object-loss which is withdrawn from consciousness, in contradistinction to mourning, in which there is nothing about the loss that is unconscious" (Freud, 1917, p. 245). That is exactly why melancholia is considered to be of a pathological origin. Melancholia devours the ego of the unconsciously grieving subject unlike the work of mourning which decreases the value of the outer world without the presence of the lost object. Therefore, the melancholized subject begins to blame her/himself for the loss, simultaneously fighting against the neurotic feelings of guilt that surrounds her/his subjective identity. This ever-present conflict manifests itself in the language of the subject who is mostly coerced into mutism and, when not, only debases him/her as "the analogy with mourning led us to conclude that he had suffered a loss in regard to an object; what he tells us points a loss in regard to his ego" (Freud, 1917, p. 247). Hence, there seems to be a contradiction between the internal loss and external discourse of the subject. Freud particularly emphasizes that the actual reason for the subject to develop melancholia within time is that "the free libido was not displaced on to another object; it was withdrawn into the ego" (Freud, 1917, p. 249) and thereupon "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" (Freud, 1917, p. 249). In a way, an object-loss turns out to be an ego-loss due to a fixation to this object of desire and the ego is wholly altered due to the over-identification with the object, thus leading melancholia to grow into pathological mourning.

Melancholia might beget sadistic tendency and suicide as well if it is to be aggravated within time. Freud accentuates the presence of mania in melancholia that causes circular insanity in some subjects and eventually brings about suicide. As melancholia is a very complex phenomenon, it is not so easy a task to detach the libido from the not-really-lost object as "melancholia contains something more than normal mourning" (Freud, 1917, p. 256). The relation of the subject with the lost object is not a complex one in mourning unlike melancholia in which "the relation to the object is no simple one; it is complicated by the conflict due to ambivalence" (Freud, 1917, p. 256). The presence of ambivalence in melancholia leads the subject to both hate and love the introjected object at the same time and "in melancholia, accordingly, countless separate struggles are carried

on over the object, in which hate and love contend with each other" (Freud, 1917, p. 256). Thus, the loss of the object cannot be processed by the melancholic subject and ends up with a form of sadism or masochism and mostly suicide and insanity or madness. Furthermore, mourning forces the grieving subject to give up on the lost object since the loss is discernible, visible and physical and the conflict with the lost object proves to be external, but melancholia breeds ambivalence and regression of the libido and hence, the conflict majorly takes place within the ego.

In a different manner from Freud, who proposes a comprehensive explanation for melancholia in comparison with the work of mourning, Kristeva provides a blurred outline of melancholia coincident and coextensive with depression, to which she refers as melancholy/depressive composite. She explicates melancholia as "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" (1989, p. 9). What distinguishes melancholia from depression is thus the presence of despondency and exhilaration of more intensity and phases. The boundaries of depression and melancholia are so merged and blurred that accordingly, "psychiatrists ascribe the concept of "melancholia" to the illness that is irreversible on its own (that responds only to the administration of antidepressants)" (Kristeva, 1989, p. 10). Kristeva thus explains the common characteristics of depression and melancholia as "object loss and a modification of signifying bonds" (1989, p.10).

The object loss the melancholic subject experiences particularly manifests itself in the fragile bond with language. Daily discourse of the subject proves to be mostly obsessed with this loss and turns out to be often repetitive, tedious, chaotic and recurring. "Instead of functioning as a "rewards system," language, on the contrary, hyperactivates the "anxiety-punishment" pair" (Kristeva, 1989, p. 10) and thereupon the subject is forced into mutism and asymbolia. Besides the failure of the signifier, this aggressiveness to the loss reveals itself with "the states of withdrawal in which the subject takes refuge to the point of inaction (pretending to be dead) or even suicide" (Kristeva, 1989, p. 10). The lost object is aimed to be reconstructed and resurrected in sadness and death while the sorrow, and even tears, serve as a substitute for the lack.

The nature of the loss in Kristevian melancholy/depressive composite is dissimilar to the Freudian notion of loss. According to Kristeva, "the depressed narcissist mourns not an Object but the Thing" (1989, p. 13) and this Thing is beyond the sign systems and the signifying bonds. Hence, the subject experiences a loss that is not signifiable in itself, "of something unrepresentable, that perhaps only devouring might represent, or an *invocation* might point out, but no word could signify" (Kristeva, 1989, p. 13). The actual reason for the subject not to be able to overcome this loss and manage the state is that the loss is beyond the symbolic while the depressive affect is majorly demonstrated in the speech of the subject. The fact that the loss is beyond and above the language leads the melancholic subject to deny the speech. Kristeva calls this symbolic breakdown as denial of the signifier, which she explains "I shall call *denial* the rejection of the signifier as well as representatives of drives and affects" (1989, p. 44) and emphasizes that the symbolic asymbolia provides a new sphere for the subject to reunite with the nonlost thing. The persistent symbolic breakdowns might grow into a pattern of psychosis and suicide within time if not prevented.

The process of grief for death and the dying is suggested by Elizabeth Kübler-Ross to be composed of five main stages in the form of denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. The first emotional and conscious response to dying and the death of oneself and the other might be accepted as denial even though “since in our unconscious we cannot perceive our own death and do believe in our own immortality” (Kübler-Ross, 2009, p. 11). It is of vital significance to remember that this initial phase of confrontation might keep recurring in later periods of time since “denial, at least partial denial, is used by almost all patients, not only during the first stages of illness or following confrontation, but also later on from time to time” (Kübler-Ross, 2009, p. 32). While even denying the existence of the impending death, the terminally ill subject partially accepts this fact as “denial is usually a temporary defense and will soon be replaced by partial acceptance” (Kübler-Ross, 2009, p. 32). Kübler-Ross associates isolation with the later phases of confrontation, coexisting and coincident with the defense of denial and highlights that “he can then talk about his health and his illness, his mortality and his immortality as if they were twin brothers permitted to exist side by side, thus facing death and still maintaining hope” (2009, p. 34). In a very real sense, these defenses are mostly focused for the subjective experience of illness and death, yet it must be taken into consideration that they simultaneously remain viable for the demise of the other.

LONGFELLOW AND *THE LUNATIC GIRL*

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807-1882) remains one of the most eminent poets of the 19th century American literature since “for the space of a whole generation he has been the most popular and beloved of American poets” (American Academy of Arts& Sciences, 1881, p.407) and finds international fame in his lifetime unlike the other poets and his contemporaries that achieve posthumous fame. His creation of a poetic persona and finding a unique voice in poetry proves to be relatively natural and simple in comparison with the other poets since “Longfellow’s invention of himself as a poet was one with his assumption of a leading place in the social order, an accession that must have seemed very natural to him” (Gartner, 2000, p. 59). Regardless of this well-deserved reputation, remarkable poetic skills, and “although he was notoriously “literary” in half a dozen languages, a translator and something of a literary antiquarian” (Bewley, 1963, p. 298), he comes to be largely forgotten or, to say the least, “generally ignored by modern academics constructing the canon of American literature” (Glover, 1994, p. vi) while the modern readers are “apt to find him ‘sentimental’ in the worst sense” (Glover, 1994, p. vi) even though Trollope claims that “there is about him a clearness in his mode of telling his story, and at the same time, as I have said before, a purity and a pathos in his manner of telling it, which will insure him against oblivion” (1881, p. 406). Penned and published anonymously in the year 1825 in the *United States Literary Gazette* as “Longfellow must have offered the poems to the “*Gazette*” anonymously” (Higginson, 2020, p. 16), the narrative poem “The Lunatic Girl” is regarded as one of his many juvenile poems and is the focus of the present study.

Most beautiful, most gentle! Yet how lost
To all that gladdens the fair earth; the eye
That watched her being; the maternal care

That kept and nourished her; and the calm light
 That steals from our own thoughts, and softly rests
 On youth's green vallies and smooth-sliding waters. (lines 1-6)

The narrator begins to recount the dramatic story of a mad girl in an elegiac tone. The first six lines of the narrative might thereupon be interpreted as a kind of prologue to the story of this victimized female along with the frame narrative. The narrator in this respect is positioned as a heterodiegetic narrator who comes to be the narrator-focalizer at the same time, as the implied and historical readers are presented the events from the viewpoint of this narrator who observes the female protagonist and the incidents from without but precisely remains not involved in the happenings. The narrator provides a depiction of the female character as being “most beautiful” (line 1) concerning her physical qualities and “most gentle” (line 1) in terms of disposition and nature. Nevertheless, she seems to be totally lost and lonely to the outer world and to the mother “that kept and nourished her” (line 4), showing a complete disregard for the bounties of nature and her youth.

Alas! few suns of life, and fewer winds,
 Had withered or had wasted the fresh rose
 That bloomed upon her cheek; but one chill frost
 Came in that early Autumn, when ripe thought
 Is rich and beautiful, and blighted it;
 And the fair stalk grew languid day by day,
 And drooped - and drooped, and shed its many leaves.
 'Tis said that some have died of love; and some,
 Love's passionate feelings and heart-wasting cares,
 have spurned life's threshold with a desperate foot:
 And others have gone mad, - and she was one! (lines 7-17)

The speaker draws an apt analogy between the fresh rose and the early youth of the protagonist, between the petals of this rose and her fairness along with her hypersensitiveness. Owing to times of hardships that manifested themselves as “few suns” (line 7) and “fewer winds” (line 7) in relation to the imagery of rose and “despite care and sympathy” (Gale, 2003, p. 151), the naïve and young girl is doomed to waste the best years of her life attempting to overcome and compensate for these misfortunes. Yet, the fatal and final blow catches her “in that early Autumn” (line 10), robbing her of a seemingly eternal beauty, youthfulness and innocence, and she is beginning to fade quietly but quickly. The narrator removes the veil of secrecy at this point and sheds light on the mysterious tragedy: the protagonist has gone mad with love.

Her lover died at sea; and they had felt
 A coldness for each other when they parted;
 But love returned again, and to her ear
 Came tidings that the ship which bore her lover
 Had sullenly gone down at sea, and all were lost. (lines 18-22)

The protagonist experiences the physical loss (decease) of her boyfriend and displays the symptoms of mourning in accordance with this object loss as inhibition, deep dejection, loss of interest in anything except what is implicitly and explicitly related with the image of dead and

passiveness or pretending to be dead. In this respect, the loss turns out to be visible and discernible, yet it should be underlined that even though the loss is physical, there is no signifier that demonstrates it is physical: no corpse, no gravestone, no funeral, no ceremony, no grave, no witness to the sunk ship. This leads the work of mourning to be extremely intricate for the female subject, particularly for the act of processing the loss itself and at times for finding a new substitute for the lost object as the loss is not so simple to perceive and discern at a conscious level. Another reason for the loss of the object to be relatively compelling and complicated for the subject might be “the coldness” (line 19) or, more precisely, a kind of resentment towards each other “when they parted” (line 19). This might constitute a burden of guilt over the loss and the subject might simultaneously experience and fight against the neurotic feelings of guilt, particularly self-recriminations and the ensuing helplessness. This leads the mourning to grow into melancholia, as the grieving subject begins to blame herself for the loss which within time turns into the loss of the ego as the ego is gradually devoured due to this sudden loss and the related self-recriminations.

I saw her in her native vale, when high
The aspiring lark up from the reedy river
Mounted, on cheerful pinion; and she sat
Casting smooth pebbles into a clear fountain,
And marking how they sunk; and oft she sighed
For him that perished thus in the vast deep.
She had a sea-shell, that her lover brought
From the far-distant ocean, and she pressed
Its smooth cold lips unto her ear, and thought
It whispered tiding of the dark blue sea;
And sad, she cried, "The tides are out! - and now
I see his corse upon the stormy beach!" (lines 23-34)

The heterodiegetic narrator relates his story of personally meeting this poor mad girl and observing her from without, having the dual function of both narrating and focalizing the diegesis. At an unconscious level, this becomes the story of the heterodiegetic narrator, but at a conscious level, this is the story of the girl's going mad with grief and her narrative situation. To be more exact, the speaker is the first-person narrator who turns out to be visible as a narrator and tells the story of another character/protagonist without being directly involved in the incidents, and “the narrator as narrator is always at the higher diegetic level; at the very most, he can as a person be identified with a character” (Bal & Lewin, 1983, p. 243). Apropos of focalization, it might be said that there exists an external focalization within the narrative. To the eye of this focalizer, the focalized woman tries to be fully aware of the untimely demise and drowning of the young man she is in love with by analogy with the sinking of the smooth pebbles. She is presented to be casting the pebbles and watching “how they sunk” (line 26) in order to wholly grasp the decease of her boyfriend.

Grief leads the female subject to submerge herself totally in the things and activities that are strongly reminiscent and prolong the presence of the dead one. The lunatic girl overwhelmed by a deep dolor reunites with the lost one in sadness, tears and silence along with the memories and the

gifts from the late boyfriend. She uses the sea-shell to bring the tidings of him and the ocean, and this eventually induces hallucinations and illusions as well as wishful psychosis as she sees the corpse of her lover on the beach when the tides retreat. These hallucinations severely aggravate the situation and transform the neurosis into a psychosis, the mourning into the clinical melancholia and ends up with the loss of the sense of loss since the loss turns unconscious within time. The physical loss grows into the loss of the self and sanity as the subject experiences self-recriminations, illness (psychotic attacks within this context) and helplessness. The hatred and anger induced by the loss is gradually redirected to the ego of the subject, thus mourning grows into melancholia.

Around her neck a string of rose-lipped shells,
And coral, and white pearl, was loosely hung;
And close beside her lay a delicate fan,
Made of the halcyon's blue wing; and when
She looked upon it, it would calm her thoughts
As that bird calms the ocean, - for it gave
Mournful, yet pleasant, memory. (lines 35-41)

The subject rekindles the memories with the presence of the gifts so that she can achieve a temporary recuperation as memories are able to provide a maternal realm for the mourning female to be reunited with the dead lover. In a very real sense, she attempts to overcome the absence of the boyfriend with what is left of him and ameliorate the affect. The necklace of "rose-lipped shells" (line 35) and "a delicate fan" (line 37) alleviate the pain since "it gave mournful, yet pleasant, memory" (line 41). In a way, this accordingly suggests that the subject has not still processed the loss since she is unable to detach her libido from the image of the deceased boyfriend. She correspondingly fails to adapt to the new world without the existence of him.

Once I marked,
When through the mountain hollows and green woods,
That bent beneath its footsteps, the loud wind
Came with a voice as of the restless deep,
She raised her head, and on her pale, cold cheek
A beauty of diviner seeming came;
And then she spread her hands, and smiled, as if
She welcomed a long absent friend, - and then
Shrunk timorously back again, and wept. (lines 41-49)

Via external focalization, the heterodiegetic narrator explains to the explicit and implied readers what he observes from without in the form of behaviours, facial mimics, lamentations and gestures the grieving woman displays in the aftermath of the tragic demise of the lover. As she resolutely sticks to the phase of denial, she experiences complete isolation from anyone or anything, simply awaiting the return of the dead man at the fountain. This denial stage simultaneously includes the partial acceptance of the death as well, since at a conscious level, she is partially aware of the absence of the man, but at an unconscious level she pretends that he is still somehow alive and might return at any moment.

The narrator-focalizer depicts a change of posture in the subject, referring to it as “a beauty of diviner seeming” (line 46). This accordingly implies the change in mood state as the mourning is aggravated by the recurrent phase of denial and isolation, and transformed into the clinical melancholia. “Diviner” (line 46) might denote a rejection of earthly pursuits and spiritual transcendence and, more exactly, indicates the presence of mania that brings about circular insanity. Furthermore, she suffers from hallucinations and visions that mostly accompany melancholia since the narrator-focalizer envisages the girl as spreading hands to embrace “a long absent friend” (line 48), the dead man within this context. This manic phase is followed by a depressive one and intense fits of crying as the girl notices that what she sees is simply a dream or an illusion. The symptoms of mourning in this sense are replaced by the symptoms of melancholia as her self and subjective identity are what is disrupted and destroyed rather than the external world.

I turned away a multitude of thoughts,
 Mournful and dark, were crowding on my mind;
 And as I left that lost and ruined one, -
 A living monument that still on earth
 There is warm love and deep sincerity, -
 She gazed upon the west, where the blue sky
 Held, like an ocean, in its wide embrace
 Those fairy islands of bright cloud, that lay
 So calm and quietly in the thin ether. (lines 50-58)

The narrator identifies with the grieving subject as she overidentifies with the dead and the loss. He represents her narrative situation in a way that arouses pity and fear in the implied and historical readers so that they might correspondingly identify with this lunatic woman. Upon this situation neurosis, the narrator feels so gloomy and leaves the girl behind. Meanwhile, he regards “that lost and ruined one” (line 52) as the embodiment of selfless devotion and love. What is of significance in these lines is that the subject is consequently lost while she loses the sense of loss along with the sense of the physical loss. That is exactly why her situation turns into melancholia within time.

And then she pointed where, alone and high,
 One little cloud sailed onward, like a lost
 And wandering bark, and fainter grew, and fainter,
 And soon was swallowed up in the blue depths;
 And, when it sunk away, she turned again
 With sad despondency and tears to earth. (lines 58-63)

The subject keenly seeks any signs of the lost object in nature to prolong the object constancy. This time she yields to the celestial sky probably with the hope of receiving a message from the dead one, mistaking the bark the small ship the lover is aboard. Yet, she feels utterly heartbroken once that little cloud vanishes like her lover’s sunk ship. That is why she aims to reunite with him in tears and dejection, since they provide a realm and an imaginary world for them together. Solely in sadness and sorrow she becomes able to find a substitute that might replace the loss and compensate for the lack of the object. Moreover, she remains strongly attached to the image and

the lost object. This destroys her subjectivity and sexual identity as a female while the act of mourning and melancholia along with the lost object turn into the subject. She reconstructs and rebuilds the object in her lost subjectivity.

Three long and weary months - yet not a whisper
 Of stern reproach for that cold parting! Then
 She sat no longer by her favorite fountain!-
 She was at rest forever. (lines 64-67) (Longfellow, 1998, pp. 19-20)

Once the mourning is aggravated by the loss of the sense of loss, melancholia occurs in the subject, ultimately turning into a madness and claiming her life in the end. Since the subject becomes recurrently unable to process and overcome the physical loss, the loss is transformed into a more ideal and unconscious one. She becomes lost with the loss itself, cutting all bonds with language and the world in complete isolation and finally experiencing the loss of life. As she denies speech, the loss becomes more intricate and chaotic and eventually, she dies after three months. Even though the masochistic tendency caused by the presence of melancholia and madness costs her life, the narrator does not lift the veil on the form of death. She might have committed suicide in any way to rejoin the lost object since death makes it possible to be reunited with the lost one in another world and realm.

Via a metatextual analysis of the text, it might be said that what the female subject is afflicted with in the first place turns out to be grief at the physical loss of the object of desire (the decease of the young boyfriend within this context) and its cultural expression as mourning. Although this loss turns out to be the physical absence of the loved object, there seems to be no indicators or signs that prove that it is physical: no dead body to bury in the first instance or no death certificate or no grave whether shallow or deep. This fosters a feeling of fervent hope that the object is soon to return from the ocean and cannot be dead in any way. That is exactly a compelling and convincing cause for the rejection of the loss. While the grieving subject expectantly waits for the arrival of the ship and the return of the object by the seashore, she repeatedly experiences the first phase of grief as denial and isolation. She refuses to accept the presence of loss at a conscious level, while unconsciously she seeks any signs from the dead one and tries to comprehend his death by analogy with the pebbles or celestial things. As she begins to exist in total isolation, she withdraws from the other and denies the speech. This symbolic asymbolia leads to the refusal of the sign and signifying system so that she can never articulate the loss. Her mute feminine depression is accompanied by the loss of speech while she only utters a sigh and at times manifests the symptoms of wishful psychosis. As the denial of speech prevents the subject from making sense of the loss, her neurosis is transformed into a severe psychosis. She begins to suffer from hallucinations, illusions and visions while she loses the contact with external reality. This turns out to be the initial phase of melancholia. The distorting reality results in the effort of the subject to re-establish and recreate her own reality in an imaginary world. Within time, she loses her sense of the loss and her sanity as she loses her life to rejoin the object.

The discourse of the melancholic subject proves to be fragile and obsessed with the not-really-lost object. She remains mute for the most part of the narrative and only utters things that are directly related with the loss, the lost object or the image of the object. This reveals that

language starts to function as an anxiety-punishment mechanism for the subject, escalating her condition more and more. She lapses and relapses into a sullen silence to alleviate the pain and transform the affect into the soothing effect. The long, brooding silences are followed with the periods of inactivity and attacks of insomnia. The recurring phases of inactivity and moments of withdrawal imply the presence of impending death or pretending to be dead as well as an omen of possible suicide. It is accordingly accompanied by the growing tendency of masochism and sadism along with the regression of libido and at times the presence of ambivalence. Furthermore, the neurotic feelings of guilt manifested in the form of helplessness, self-recriminations and illness might be regarded as the chief reason behind the mourning's change into melancholia as the hatred and anger induced by the loss is redirected to the ego of the subject while the subject loses her former self and her sense of loss. It is no longer the external world that becomes poor with the absence of object but her ego and subjective identity. Her inability to limit the loss to the outer world leads her to overidentify with and introject the loss. Ultimately, she is lost within the loss.

CONCLUSION

The repeated patterns of withdrawal and the persistent act of denial ultimately transform mourning into melancholia. As the grieving subject denies speech in the symbolic, she can never talk about and make sense of the loss, so the loss of the object turns into the loss of the Thing. This is actually what makes the loss beyond the language. The girl denies speech so much that even her tragic story is narrated through another man. Even if she insists on denial of speech in the symbolic, she would have overcome the loss if she were to articulate her feelings on the loss in the semiotic, but the denial and the ensuing isolation along with the symbolic asymbolia severely aggravate the situation and bring about melancholia and madness. To end her agony and re-experience a reunion with the lost object, she loses her life and sanity. This turns out to be the only way out. If the implied and historical readers are to have heard or read her story firsthand, she would have survived the tragic event no matter what. As she becomes repeatedly unable to transpose the traumatic experience, the experience itself transforms her subjective identity. As for the narrative strategies, it might be emphasized that the whole story in the diegesis universe is recounted via the heterodiegetic focalizer-narrator who sees the protagonist from without. In this respect, the focalized character is seen from without by the focalizer-narrator. The narrator is accordingly explained as "the narrator who is visible ("first person") but who tells a story from which he is absent" (Bal & Lewin, 1983, p. 243). Furthermore, it is possible to ascribe what the implied and historical author(s) do to the narrator and focalizer as "everything that has been traditionally looked on as author's intrusions, the traces of the implied author, can be analysed as traces of the narrator and of the focalizer" (Bal & Lewin, 1983, p. 250).

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