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Introduction: Melancholy Through the Ages

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When the matter is diverse and confused, how should it otherwise be but that the species should be diverse and confused?[1]

Robert Burton's reflection on the myriad species of melancholy provides a fitting introduction to this volume of the *MHRA Working Papers in the Humanities*. The following collection of articles comprises critical insights into the persistent theme of melancholy in its range of manifestations, a range which is reflected by the variety of terms invoked in describing this mental state through the ages, and across the disciplines of literature and science. For instance, Owen Holland's thought-provoking analysis of the 'mulleygrubs', which stubbornly persist in William Morris's utopian landscapes, reveals that even specific individual terms for melancholy are open to more than one interpretation, and may be appropriated, and distorted, for ideological purposes. Esra Almas, meanwhile, demonstrates a culturally specific construction of melancholy in a discussion of the Turkish term *hüzün* in Orhan Pamuk's *Istanbul: Şehir ve Hatıralar* (*Istanbul: Memories and the City*) (2003). With melancholy thus emerging as a nebulous concept which resists easy classification, the six articles featured engage with it under a variety of different guises, taking in issues of mourning, loss, love-melancholy, elegiac poetry and melancholy landscapes and moods.

[1] Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, ed. by Holbrook Jackson (New York: New York Review Books, 2001), The First Partition, p. 174.

Although the reception of melancholy has been shaped by a variety of discourses, it emerged first and foremost among the ancients as the subject of scientific and medical investigation, and has remained a popular subject for consideration by scientists, artists, philosophers and scholars ever since. Most recently, the pathological manifestation of melancholy has once more come under the spotlight in Lars von Trier's 2011 film *Melancholia,* with its portrayal of two sisters suffering from the related conditions of depression and anxiety. This modern interpretation does not, however, ignore the long-standing history of the discourse. The second half of the film features the sudden appearance of a mysterious planet, 'Melancholia', which threatens destruction as it approaches Earth. This recalls the perceived causal link between melancholy and astrology, particularly the planet Saturn, in the later Middle Ages and the Renaissance.[2]

Galenic humoral medicine, which ties astrology to medicine through the influence of the planets over the four bodily humours (black bile, yellow bile, phlegm, blood), explains melancholy as the result of an excess of black bile in the subject's body. The Greek word 'μελαγχολία' (*melagkholia*) is in fact formed from the two words 'μέλας' (*melas*, black) and 'χολή' (*kholē*, bile). Lovesickness is viewed by ancient and medieval medical writers as being a subcategory of melancholy and the renaissance in Galenic and Hippocratic medicine, fuelled by the Latin translations of Graeco-Arabic texts from the late eleventh century onwards, coupled with the ubiquitous presence of lovesickness in (particularly vernacular) literature from the twelfth century forwards, results in melancholy's cohabitation of scientific and literary texts in the later Middle Ages.

[2] See Jennifer Radden, 'Introduction: From Melancholic States to Clinical Depression', in *The Nature of Melancholy from Aristotle to Kristeva*, ed. by Jennifer Radden (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 3-51 (p. 9).

The process of exchange which takes place between science and aesthetics is mirrored in 'melancholy's alleged link with some kind of compensatory quality of brilliance', and the reception of this idea evolved into the perception of melancholy, not just as an 'enabling agent' for creative genius, but also as its 'noxious side effect'.[3] The scientific endeavours which connected melancholy to extremes of mood and temperament led to the recognition of this affliction in the ecstasy of poets and philosophers, an idea which has endured from Plato to the Romantics and beyond. By the nineteenth century, as Jennifer Radden notes, the allegedly normal disposition of melancholy began, in scientific treatment of the subject, to separate from melancholia, or melancholy pathologised.[4] As melancholy's reception continues in a cyclical process, a response to this distinction can be found in literature of the emerging modern period, for example in Georg Büchner's novella *Lenz* (1835), which, rather than romanticising the figure of the tortured genius, provides a sympathetic early portrayal of an author suffering from schizophrenia. This sets the stage for more modern terminology, opening the field to the question of whether science has simply rebranded melancholia as, for example, depression. The significance of the concept of melancholia for Freudian psychoanalysis, which itself draws on a combination of medico-scientific tradition and areas conventionally the subject of literary analysis and composition (dream, myth etc.), is an important indicator of melancholy's liminal position as property of both the arts and the sciences. It is thus highly appropriate that several of the articles in this volume should take Freud as a significant point of reference for their discussions.

Freud's 1917 essay, *Mourning and Melancholia,* claims that while the former allows for the identification of the lost object and the possibility of eventual divestment, the latter

[3] Radden, p. 12.
[4] Ibid.

coincides with a sense of loss which is not so easily defined.[5] An interesting aspect of this notion is taken up in Almas's article, which transfers this non-specific sense of sadness from the inhabitants of a place to the place itself, bringing to the discussion the significance of melancholy landscapes and their reception. In Orhan Pamuk's memoir, Almas argues, Istanbul becomes the 'locus of melancholy' and 'transmits its mood to its inhabitants'. The discussion is complicated by the orientalist descriptions of nineteenth-century French writers who travelled to Istanbul and viewed it as a city in decay, and Almas notes the problematic nature of these descriptions following Edward Said. The article, however, moves beyond the terms of postcolonial theory by framing the alleged loss of grandeur within a discussion of *Mourning and Melancholia*. If the loss of ego results from an 'idealised identification' with the lost subject, then we might ask if a city may not mourn for its past; and, in making that suggestion, an interesting connection arises between melancholy, imperialism and cultural identity.

All of the articles in this journal address the work of writers from the modern period, and indeed we find that the long-standing notion of artistic melancholy continues to be celebrated today. We find, for example, in London's 'The Last Tuesday Society', a scene in which attendees at 'Loss' events are invited to chop onions in order to induce tears, a literary nod to Günter Grass's famous onion cellar episode in *Die Blechtrommel* (*The Tin Drum*) (1959). Such public expressions of loss remind us that melancholy is not only a personal state of mind, but also a performative and aesthetic process, as Adam Crothers's article in this issue demonstrates. Through a close reading of a variety of contemporary elegies written to remember the poet Michael Donaghy, Crothers explores the ways in which the form of a

[5] Sigmund Freud, 'Mourning and Melancholia', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. and ed. by James Strachey et al., 24 vols (London: Vintage, 2001), XIV, pp. 237-60.

poem is tied to the activity which the poem performs and the process of negotiation which takes place between the poem and poet as the writing of the latter unfolds.

Despite our contributors' focus on modern works, however, their discussions of melancholy remain informed by earlier debates. In this area of scholarship, as Jennifer Radden writes in *The Nature of Melancholy*, 'we discover a kind of conversation, or dialogue, conducted across centuries'.[6] Here, Holland connects the etymological roots of the term melancholy ('black bile') to a utopian experiment which seeks to '[drain] it from the social body'. This application of the ancient humoral theory to the collective raises moral questions for a post-Marxist society which would rid itself of those malcontents who suffer their condition as a result of bourgeois idleness. The body as a site of melancholy is a theme also taken up in Maureen Watkins's reading of Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg* (*The Magic Mountain*) (1924). The institutional setting of this novel, whose plot unfolds in a sanatorium in the Swiss Alps, draws attention to the association of melancholy with 'a loss of identity that is compounded by illness'. Like Holland, Watkins engages with the moralising aspect of the discourse by linking melancholy to disease and noting its association with 'laziness and a loss of moral fibre'. This phenomenon is perhaps best illustrated in the example of the protagonist Hans Castorp, who, despite no clear evidence of serious physical illness, remains in a state of inertia rather than taking up his planned career outside the sanatorium.

Moving on from the causes of melancholy, commentators over the centuries have also been motivated to seek or expound upon possible cures. In particular, the conceptualisation of melancholy as an excess of fear and sadness without discernible cause has given rise to somewhat moralising pronouncements. Even Philippe Pinel, an instrumental figure in the reformation of Parisian institutions for the insane, was provoked by his studies on the subject

[6] Jennifer Radden, 'Preface' in Radden, *The Nature of Melancholy,* p. ix.

to proclaim, 'Nothing […] can be more hideous than the figure of a melancholic, brooding over his imaginary misfortunes.'[7] Robert Burton suggests the close relation of cause and cure,

> Nothing begets [melancholy] sooner, increaseth and continueth it oftener, than idleness; a disease familiar to all idle persons […] they will not compose themselves to do aught; they cannot abide work, though it be necessary […] [they] will not use the facile and ready means to do themselves good; and so are still tormented with melancholy.[8]

We have encountered this problem in Holland's dissection of the 'mulleygrubs', and Watkins's analysis of life in the tuberculosis clinic. Similarly, Simon Calder's article, which assesses a selection of George Eliot's fictional writings (with special emphasis upon *Middlemarch*) in the light of Spinoza's *Ethics* also deals with the notion of *melancholia* as an evil which, unlike anguish, is unproductive and does not lead to greater self-knowledge. Though Eliot herself translated Spinoza's *Ethics* into English, Calder's article argues convincingly that Eliot's fiction, rather than simply dramatising Spinoza's descriptions of mental states, refines and critiques them. Ultimately, Calder suggests, Eliot rejects Spinoza's totalising statements about knowledge, happiness and existence in order to present her readers with a more nuanced account of the ways in which human beings can avoid the pit of melancholy by learning to appreciate the importance of varying one's mental perspectives.

As is clearly demonstrated by this brief discussion, melancholy not only resists easy definition as a concept, but it is frequently associated with individuals and concepts which resist (actively or passively) integration into the social and/ or psychic order – the immoral, the lazy, the Oriental, the sick, the dead, the ingenious. It is, for this reason, highly appropriate that Mark Ryan's article chooses to explore melancholy as the site of William Blake's

[7] Philippe Pinel, *A Treatise on Insanity, in Which are Contained the Principles of a New and More Practical Nosology of Maniacal Disorders Than Has Yet Been Offered to the Public*, trans. by D.D. Davis (Sheffield: Cadell & Davies, 1806), pp.136-7. Cited in Radden, p. 205.
[8] Burton, The First Partition, pp. 242-3.

resistance against the prevailing social and intellectual climate in which he found himself. Ryan emphasises the way in which Blake's presentation of the causes and effects of melancholy – though using the common symbolism of eighteenth-century anatomical studies – reacted against the emergent mechanistic understanding of the human body expounded by his contemporaries. In light of this resistant aspect, which sits at the core of the melancholic, the present volume can hardly hope to state definitively what melancholy *is*. Instead, it aims to depict the various veils under which the melancholic performs his or her acts of resistance, and to reveal the processes through which, in eluding definition, the melancholic enters into negotiation with the everyday systems in and through which we exist and experience.

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William Blake's Analysis of Melancholia

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> *I begin to Emerge from a deep pit of Melancholy, Melancholy without any real reason for it, a Disease which God keep you from & all good men.*[1]

Abstract: The eighteenth century consisted of a wide range of theories that presented experimental attempts to understand the workings of the human nervous system. In 1800, the first foundations of psychiatry were in the process of being formed, as a result of much groundwork and anatomical research, as well as the theories of artists and scientists who tried to make sense of the functioning of the body. Certain theorists were more objective than others, but what became known as 'The English Malady' or 'Melancholia' was generally understood simply in terms of its symptoms and classified with other illnesses, such as mania and hypochondria. However, William Blake theorised about cognitive dysfunction like no other poet of his time and his ideas challenged the prevailing *Zeitgeist* of opinion.

Despite the fact that Blake appears to use the symbolism of eighteenth-century anatomical studies, such as that relating to animal spirits, to the extent that his creatures of the psyche, the Zoas, are described in such terms, it is clear that they are not simply rooted in physiology. In rejecting the mechanistic notion of splicing nerves and fibres to study the corporeal functions of the human being, Blake made a profoundly important choice.

This article seeks to explore Blake's analysis of the causes of melancholy and possible solutions to the problem that he presented in his later works, such as *The Four Zoas* and *Jerusalem*. It is an attempt to advance the general field of research into the nature of Blake's interest in cognitive processes and to illuminate some of the essential differences between Blake's ideas and those of his contemporaries on the subject of the causes, symptoms and solutions to 'Melancholia'. As monologistic discourse is a feature of the psychic life of Blake's main character, Albion, the poet's notion of how the structure of language is instrumental in determining psychic health is considered.

While melancholy has been the source of other enquiries in Blake studies (see next paragraph), the extent to which Blake re-evaluated medical advances of his period in relation to psychological states in his poetry requires further research. This article seeks to address William Blake's response to the medical theorisation of mental illness, and specifically that

[1] William Blake, 'Letters to Cumberland: 2nd July, 1800', in *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. by David V. Erdman (New York: Random House, 1988), p. 706. All citations of Blake's writing will be from this collection.

of ‘melancholia’ in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. It will highlight the fact that Blake was fundamentally committed to revising classifications of the mind and that he offered a unique analysis of the problem of ‘melancholia’ and of mental illness in his poetry. It will attempt to demonstrate that Blake’s system advanced classifications based on older physiological observations that outlined a range of symptoms but offered few insights into the causes of mental illness. In discussing Blake’s contribution to this field, the dialogic nature of his art will be stressed in order to demonstrate the detailed nature of his enquiry. This will require reference to those characters in Blake’s myth that represent the mind in its totality, such as Albion and his constituent powers, including Vala, Urizen and Los.

Both Anca Munteanu and Nowell Marshall have concentrated on Blake’s *The Visions of the Daughters of Albion* (1793) in which the figure of Oothoon is violated by Bromion during her relationship with Theotormon.[2] In his consideration of Theotormon, Marshall refers to Julia Kristeva’s analysis of depression as resulting from sexual frustration and correlates this with his own interpretation of the civil humanist model of sex in Blake’s period, arguing that Oothoon’s loss of virginity results in Theotormon’s melancholy.[3] Munteanu focuses more on the figure of Oothoon who is conceived of as typifying the Renaissance conception of spiritual melancholy. Munteanu has also discussed the early works of *The Book of Thel* (1789), *The Gates of Paradise* (1793) and *The Book of Urizen* (1794) in the context of theories of melancholy in both the Renaissance and the eighteenth century.[4] Frank Parisi has analysed the series of pictures in *The Gates of Paradise*, focusing on

[2] Anca Munteanu, ‘Visionary and Artistic Transformations in Blake’s *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*’, *Journal of European Studies*, 36:1 (2006), 61-83; Nowell Marshall, ‘Of Melancholy and Mimesis: Social Bond(age)s in *Visions of the Daughters of Albion*’, in *And Never Know the Joy: Sex and the Erotic in English Poetry*, ed. by C.C. Barfoot (Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V., 2006), pp. 173-187.

[3] Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, trans. by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), p. 3

[4] Anca Munteanu, ‘William Blake and the Transformations of the Renaissance Notion of Melancholy’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Nebraska, 1999), pp. 1-160.

melancholy within the emblematic tradition.[5] Such interpretations have relied on philosophical or aesthetic theories of melancholy rather than medical ones, while other studies, such as Hisao Ishizuka's work on the fascination with nerve fibres in eighteenth-century anatomical investigations, or Marsha Keith Schuchard's work on magnetism and mania, have attempted to link Blake's interest in the body with that of eighteenth-century medical findings.[6] While these studies have scrutinised medical influences on Blake, this article aims to explore Blake's mature treatment of the psychological causes of melancholy within his later poetry as part of his ongoing debate with Enlightenment medical theorisation.

Prevailing Ideas

In *Observations on Maniacal Disorders* (1792) William Pargeter describes the 'outward show' of an individual afflicted with mental illness: 'Let us then figure to ourselves the situation of a fellow creature destitute of the guidance of that governing principle, reason […] and see in how melancholy a posture he appears'.[7] Pargeter's description is indicative of the prevailing opinion of the late eighteenth century that the illness of 'melancholy' equates with a loss of reason. By 1792 classification of the illness had been divided into the two categories of 'mania and melancholia', encouraging Pargeter to cite William Cullen, who studied and advanced understanding of the nervous system in this period. Pargeter states that:

[5] Frank M. Parisi, 'Emblems of Melancholy: *For Children: The Gates of Paradise'* in *Interpreting Blake: Essays*, ed. by Michael Phillips (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 70-110.

[6] Hisao Ishizuka, 'Enlightening the Fibre-Woven Body: William Blake and Eighteenth-Century Fibre Medicine', *Literature and Medicine*, 25:1 (2006), 72-92; Marsha Keith Schuchard, 'Blake's Healing Trio: Magnetism, Medicine, and Mania', *Blake: An Illustrated Quarterly* 23 (1989), 20-32. It is also worth noting the contribution of Richard C. Sha, 'Blake, Liberation and Medicine', in *Liberating Medicine 1720-1835*, ed. by Tristanne Connolly and Steve Clark (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2009), pp. 83-96.

[7] William Pargeter, *Observations on Maniacal Disorders* (Reading: Smart and Cowslade, 1792), p. 2.

> The Nosologists of the present era are far from being consistent in their arrangement of the several genera of this disease. Professor Cullen in his Nosology of mania, has with the greatest propriety altered the arrangement of the two genera Mania et Melancholia, which Linnaeus and others have adopted, and comprehends his idea of the complaint in two words – Insania Universalis [...] the doctrine of Mania includes in some degree that of melancholia, consequently they cannot be generically different.[8]

In a recent publication, Gerold Sedlmayr has highlighted the fact that commentators on mental illness argued that mania and melancholy had distinct characteristics and symptoms but that mania was a development of the illness known as 'melancholia'.[9] The allusion to Linnaeus also implies that the interest in nosologies in diverse subject areas was widespread at this time and that both plant-life and the human mind were considered to be classifiable. This fact is demonstrable in the works of writers of the period, such as Erasmus Darwin and William Blake, whose experience of engraving Darwin's *The Botanic Garden* (1791) provides a possible source for the diverse botanical imagery in Blake's poetry.[10] Darwin's view was that the complexity of the human vascular system accounted for the problem of melancholic madness and distinguished such suffering from that of the lower animals. This was a move away from the prevailing eighteenth-century equation of mental illness and animalistic behaviour, although Darwin's view in 1790 was not typical during a period when rationalism and mental health were viewed as synonymous. Blake's argument runs counter to such synonymity and sources the roots of melancholy in rationalistic discourse, providing a visionary depiction of Darwin's view that, 'where the quantity of general painful sensation is too great in the system inordinate voluntary exertions are produced either of our ideas, as in

[8] Ibid, pp. 4-5.
[9] Gerold Sedlmayr, *The Discourse of Madness in Britain, 1790-1815* (Trier: WVT Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 2011), pp. 40-42.
[10] William Blake, *Jerusalem*, 15:4; Erdman, p. 159. Blake refers to the 'polypus', a species of pond plant-life that was considered to be self-replicating. He develops the image to such an extent in *Jerusalem, Emanation of the Giant Albion* that it becomes an image of political corruption.

melancholy and madness, or of our muscles, as in convulsion'.[11] Pargeter's view that illnesses such as 'melancholia' occur due to the loss of reason is attacked in Blake's poem, *Jerusalem* (1804-1820) in which the figure of the Universal Man, Albion, is a victim of his own reasoning processes. Foucault's view that, 'Language is the first and last structure of madness'[12] provides a philosophical perspective for understanding Blake's description of the cure that his upholder of prophecy, Los, attempts:

> (I call them by their English names: English, the rough basement.
> Los built the stubborn structure of the Language, acting against
> Albions melancholy, who must else have been a Dumb despair.)[13]

Repetition of language is such that the form and content of *Jerusalem* resemble the cognitive processes that prevent Albion from escaping from his despair. Blake proceeds to rework linguistic structures, replicates them in his work and, as Saree Makdisi argues, he rotates the imagery of his visual art so that one image can appear in different positions in varying contexts.[14] The crucial facts of Blake's art revolve around such replication but this mutability is borne out at a more profound linguistic level, where ambiguity between and within lines of poetry, or in the visual art itself, is fundamental to a basic recognition of Blake's need to depict the contours of mental suffering through the contortions of language. Albion's own suffering is expressed through erroneous reasoning which leads to a disturbance of his perceptual faculties. In addition, as Julie Joosten has argued, 'Los's language […] emerges to offer an alternative organizing principle to the melancholic symptomatology that diminishes

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[11] Erasmus Darwin, *Zoonomia, or, the Laws of Organic Life*, 2 vols (London: J. Johnson, 1794–96), I, p. 395.
[12] Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (New York: Random House, 1965), p. 100.
[13] William Blake, *Jerusalem, The Emanation of the Giant Albion*, 40: 57–59; Erdman, p. 183.
[14] Saree Makdisi, 'The Political Aesthetic of Blake's Images', in *The Cambridge Companion to William Blake*, ed. by Morris Eaves (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 110–131.

Albion'.[15] The keynote of *Jerusalem* is Albion's insistence on monologistic discourse, which excludes the possibility of escape from melancholy. Blake explores the nature of discourse as the prime constituent factor of mental illness and describes the proliferation of ideas that lead to 'Dumb despair' which results from over-analysis and continual rationalism. Blake's attempts to awaken his protagonist Albion also affect the mental life of the artist, 'Reasonings like vast Serpents infold around my limbs | Bruising my minute articulations'. [16] The implication is that Albion's 'souls disease' is that of the artist and, by extension, his fellow man. The dialogic nature of illness resulting in dumbness is summarised by Blake as reasoning 'on both sides'.[17] The 'One error not remov'd'[18] that can pull the Self apart is specifically the cause of reasoning backwards and forwards and creating not a dialogue with the outside world but rather within the Self, which leads to a growth of 'Selfhood'. Los must also undergo the psychic disintegration that Albion experiences, the form of which involves a separation between what Blake refers to as his 'Emanation' and Man: 'Man divided from his Emanation is a dark Spectre | His Emanation is an ever-weeping melancholy Shadow'.[19] An 'Emanation' is a feminine counterpart of the bisexual male figures in Blake's mythology and Blake refers to the Spectre as 'the Reasoning Power in Man'.[20] When mental debates persist, Blake's view is that melancholy is an inevitable result and that in order for the threat of monologism to be overcome, a process of 'Self-annihilation' is required. However, such a process is not possible when the Spectre and the 'melancholy Shadow' are resistant. This is the psychological system that Blake posits and in the context of eighteenth-century mind-body theorisation, it offers a dissection of the concepts of 'melancholia' or 'despair'. Blake

[15] Julie Joosten, '"Minute Particulars" and the Visionary Labor of Words', *European Romantic Review*, 19:2 (2008), 113–118 (p. 113).
[16] William Blake, *Jerusalem*, 4:13; Erdman, p. 146.
[17] William Blake, *Jerusalem*, 41:13; Erdman, p. 188.
[18] William Blake, *Jerusalem*, 41:11; Erdman, p. 188.
[19] William Blake, *Jerusalem*, 53: 25-26; Erdman, p. 203.
[20] William Blake, *Jerusalem*, 74: 10-11; Erdman, p. 229.

does not appear to be interested in the debate concerning the categorisations of mania and melancholy as he never refers to 'mania' but instead supports an anti-rationalistic agenda in equating 'despair' with stubborn debates of the mind. The loss of the Emanation is indicative of the devouring of imaginative consciousness by an immersion in the folly of rationalistic discourse that Blake viewed as typical of Enlightenment thinking. One characteristic of 'melancholia' can be found in the writings of one of Pargeter's contemporaries, Thomas Arnold. In terms of Arnold's cataloguing of different contemporary definitions of melancholy, Blake's analysis aligns itself with observations of the illness as 'a permanent delirium' fixing on single ideas, but his point of view concerning its cause is different.[21] Blake's descriptions are also distinct from those of Arnold, who distances himself from eighteenth-century notions of 'melancholia' that he views as Galenic. However, Arnold is especially interested in the 'melancholia hypochondriaca of the ancients', which is typified by, 'an irrational, and insane imbecility of the mind' arising due to 'a distressed imagination'.[22]

The prevailing ideologies against which Blake fought focused on the abasement of the imagination, the promotion of reason and the denigration of enthusiasm, psychological disturbance resulting from pride, 'vapours' and the 'spleen', and the treatment of the insane as animals. On this basis, it can be argued that early mechanistic theories, such as Nicholas Robinson's early eighteenth-century idea that mental illness was caused by the improper elasticity of nerve fibres, or Thomas Willis's late seventeenth-century explanation of mental phenomena as a result of changes in the central nervous system and animal spirits, led to

[21] Thomas Arnold, *Observations on the Nature, Kinds, Causes and Prevention of Insanity* (London: G. Robinson and T. Cadwell, 1786), p. 26. Paul Youngquist notes in *Monstrosities, Bodies and British Romanticism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003) that Arnold's allusion to 'permanent delirium' indicates that 'aberrant speech becomes the main symptom of melancholia [...] in Coleridge's day' (p. 102). However, this is a misreading, as Arnold is merely citing one of the commonly held ideas of the period.
[22] Arnold, p. 174.

deep-seated reductionism.[23] These influential theories, concerning the spleen, vapours and the types of nerve reactions, were used to explain such disorders as mania, melancholy, hysteria and hypochondria. These theories were inherited by Blake and his contemporaries and although the symptoms were studied and categorised, an understanding of psychological factors was rudimentary and undeveloped. In this context, Blake sought a system to explain the nature of mental phenomena, which was possibly in part due to a wish to understand his own visionary experiences.

Blake's View of Melancholy

In his visual and verbal works, Blake is frequently concerned with an exploration of guilt, panic and rage. This concern with the primitive level of Man's being provides the foregrounding for *Jerusalem*: 'ancient porches of Albion are | Darken'd! They are drawn thro'unbounded space, scatter'd upon | The Void in incoherent despair!'[24] At this point in the poem there is the recognition that the demarcation of identity can be lost, resulting in an 'unbounded' state, or that mental illness is connected with a lack of characteristics, or indefiniteness. Albion is 'Enlarg'd without dimension, terrible', adrift in the 'unbounded night' where his perfection is 'wither'd & darken'd'.[25] In the first book of *Jerusalem*, this indefiniteness of being is apparent in Albion, Jerusalem, Los, the Spectre and the children of Los and Albion, and Blake strives to explain the reasons for, and effects of, this disintegration. Blake situates these figures in the human 'brain' or 'breast', makes the remarkable claim that they control physical processes, such as digestion, and claims that they

[23] Nicholas Robinson, *A New System of the Spleen, Vapours and Hypochondriack Melancholy* (London: Samuel Aris, 1729); Thomas Willis, *An Essay of the Pathology of the Brain and Nervous Stock* (London: T. Dring, 1681).
[24] William Blake, *Jerusalem*, 5:1-3; Erdman, p. 147.
[25] William Blake, *Jerusalem*, 5: 5-8; Erdman, p. 147.

are of ancient origin, 'the Daughters of Albion | Names anciently rememberd, but now contemn'd as fictions! Although in every bosom they controll our Vegetative powers.'[26] The depth of Blake's psycho-physiological analysis of mental disturbance is unique in a period when psychological factors were not considered to this degree and political attacks on dissenters arose as a result of the fact that mental illness was equated with religious fanaticism.[27]

George H. Gilpin notes that, '[t]he abstraction and inhumanity of the prevailing science and philosophy had been a target of Blake as early as his burlesque of a fashionable salon of intellectuals in *An Island in the Moon* (1784)'.[28] In fact, the denigration of a dependence on reason is exemplified throughout this work, in which the commentators, such as 'The Antiquarian', are blind to their own error, and in which the poet claims that 'Voltaire was immersed in matter, & seems to have understood very little but what he saw before his eyes'.[29] In defiance of the beliefs prevalent in his historical context, Blake sought a system to explain the nature of dysfunctional mental phenomena. In *The Book of Urizen*, *The Four Zoas* and *Jerusalem*, rational thought is presented as a contributing factor to the development of solipsistic despair. Urizen and Albion's insistence on rationalistic enquiry is frequently referred to by scholars as the Ulro of 'single vision' and leads to further errors of perception and confusion. Blake argues that in order to escape from an endless cycle of false perception, exemplified in Albion's 'deadly sleep', his obsession with the nature goddess Vala, and the reasoning Urizen's entrapment within the body, a transcending of 'Selfhood' is required.[30] Without this, Man's entrapment in his spectral state is considerable. Blake expresses this state

[26] William Blake, *Jerusalem*, 5: 37-39; Erdman, p. 148.
[27] Roy Porter states that, 'In his Satires, Swift saw lunacy infecting Dissenters and free-thinkers' (*Madness: A Brief History* [New York: O.U.P., 2002], p. 79).
[28] George H. Gilpin, 'William Blake and the World's Body of Science', *Studies in Romanticism*, 43 (2004), 35-56 (p. 35).
[29] William Blake, *Island in the Moon*, 1, l: 84-85; Erdman, p. 451.
[30] William Blake, *Jerusalem* 15:6; Erdman, p. 159.

in terms of not being 'Organized', being a 'Non-entity' and experiencing the perpetual, cyclical torments of 'Despair'.[31] Blake explains the nature of this entrapment in referring to the spectre as being 'mutually tormented by | Those that thou tormentest', highlighting the double-bind nature of disturbing mental discourses.[32] As exemplified, Blake's narrative is a maelstrom of psychological activity, as each faculty is a world unto itself, but ever-changing and attempting to adapt to the influences and control of other faculties. As Blake's inscription illustrates, 'Each Man is in his | Spectre's Power | Untill the arrival | of that hour | When his | Humanity | awake | And cast his Spectre | into the Lake'.[33] The image of the 'Lake' suggests a repository of the consciousness, a place to which spectral thoughts can be consigned. A stage of wakefulness is necessary in order for this change to occur and such a stage implies that Man is asleep prior to the destruction of the 'Spectre' and while under its influence. The outset of the poem reveals the main conflict as being between Man's 'Humanity' and his 'Spectre' with 'Humanity' unable to reign while the Spectral influence is in the ascendant. The implication is that the Spectre must be destroyed in order for Humanity to become dominant. According to this view, the Spectre and Man's Humanity are not in communication with each other, but one exists while the other is asleep. At the outset of *Jerusalem*, Blake depicts the struggle between the Spectre and Man's Humanity, with each trying to assert its dominance over the other.

Los, though not immune to the disease of Albion, does not fall prey to it immediately. Rather, after he has opposed Albion directly, berated him for his self-obsession and shown his refusal to do Albion's bidding, the death of 'Selfhood' slowly but unmistakably creeps up on him. The disease itself is expressed in different ways: Self as explored in *Urizen, Milton* and *Jerusalem* involves linguistic repetition as in 'One King, One God, One Law', which

[31] William Blake, *Jerusalem*, 17: 41-47; Erdman, p. 162.
[32] William Blake, *Jerusalem*, 17: 46-47; Erdman, p. 162.
[33] William Blake, *Jerusalem*, 37; Erdman, p. 184.

compounds the idea that, in uttering a thought, the psyche must find itself enclosed to a greater degree.[34] The threats of annihilation and hopes of Self-annihilation recur throughout the texts but the way in which the ideas are explored offer a picture of the Self that is resistant both to the acceptance of other modes of discourse and persuasion as well as to its own modes of reasoning. The attempts to reason on both sides imply that there is dissatisfaction with both points of view. Although Self-annihilation, as Paul Youngquist states, 'involves the clarification of identity by rejecting false accretions', the process is obstructed by the Selfhood's habit of dismantling its own rationalisations.[35] Throughout *Jerusalem*, Blake lists a range of symptoms connected with psychological demise: these are physical and mental problems, which later culminate in 'raving', a term of which Blake would have been aware in a period when people referred to 'raving madness'. Such symptoms include physical shaking, nervous problems, depression (despair, melancholy), 'shrieks' and 'pain', and a range of other descriptions of mental disorder. 'Selfhood' is responsible for psychological pain, as Blake views the problem, and it is the growth of reason that leads to a range of psychic dilemmas and recurrence of complexes that lead to 'eternal death'.[36]

Conclusion

For Blake, the linguistic classifications and approaches of the Enlightenment theorists of the subject of mental illness - such as mania, melancholy and hypochondria, either with reference to ancient humoral theory or the discoveries of anatomical science on the subject of the nervous system - were indicative of the causes of such illness. For example, while Blake makes use of the imagery of anatomical science, as Ishizuka has demonstrated, his viewpoint is set against the findings of fibre theorists. In relation to the works of William Pargeter and

[34] William Blake, *The Book of Urizen*, 4:40 Erdman, p. 72.
[35] Paul Youngquist, 'Criticism and the Experience of Blake's Milton', *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900*, 30: 4 (1990), 555-571 (p. 562).
[36] William Blake, *America, a Prophecy* 2.17; Erdman, p. 52.

Thomas Arnold, Blake's argument delves much more deeply into the cognitive aberrations which these theorists merely described without approaching an understanding of their causes. For Blake, Self-annihilation is synonymous with the painful process of wiping away the selfishness associated with the 'Selfhood', and it is this egotism that repeatedly stands as an obstacle to the annihilation of the Self. The process recurs, as trauma is not a problem that has a beginning and end. It moves from one extreme to the next and then repeats itself in different patterns. These patterns are shifting, irregular but strangely repetitive. This is the reason why in *The Four Zoas*, *Milton* and *Jerusalem*, cycles of trauma are evident on both the structural and thematic levels of the narratives. Trauma is the erasing of the Self's errors through the medium of despair, melancholy and pain. The loss of the spirit is one that occurs after 'the torments of Love and Jealousy',[37] the latter represented in the image of the 'wheel without wheel', the affections of Albion pushing against each other, much like a machine that generates the cavern of the Self.[38] The more restricted Man's vision becomes, the greater is the possibility of return to this cavern. This is the reason that eternity and hell are adjacent to each other in Blake: they are different experiential worlds but one leads to the other and vice versa. Trauma or the erasure of the errors of the soul can lead to illumination, as Self-annihilation creates the possibility of contact with eternity and the toppling of the high towers of the Self into chaos. In *Jerusalem*, Blake states that the Individual can never be so glorious that he is safe from the dangers within, and he states that one error can lead to a loss of equilibrium.[39] The implication is that the brain is asleep in a very specific and detrimental sense, as in this state Man accepts the delusion of his Self and the 'grand towers' of his individuality. This delusion of the Self is the sleep to which Blake refers and it generates a loss of Self and leads to insanity and despair. In stating this, Blake is associating reason with

[37] William Blake, *The Four Zoas*, subtitle; Erdman, p. 300.
[38] William Blake, *Jerusalem*, 65:21; Erdman, p. 216.
[39] William Blake, *Jerusalem*, 41:11; Erdman, p. 188.

delusion as he is interested in dismantling the rational system that existed in his day. Deism, the monarchy and the rationalism of the Enlightenment theorists represent reason as tantamount to madness for the poet.

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'A *Jeu de Melancholie'*: George Eliot's Reflections on Dejection.

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Abstract: This article reassesses George Eliot and Baruch Spinoza's ideas about the ethical salience of two modes of sorrow: anguish and *melancholia*. Although Eliot finished translating Spinoza's *Ethics* in 1856, one year before publishing her first work of fiction, the only book-length account of the influence of Spinoza's moral treatise on Eliot's ethical fiction remains Dorothy Atkins's *George Eliot and Spinoza* (1978). This article challenges Atkins's thesis that Eliot 'dramatizes' the process of *total liberation* from the passions that Spinoza 'describes'.

Spinoza distinguished between three kinds of knowledge: knowledge of the first kind, which includes all knowledge afforded by the passions and is the sole cause of falsity; rational knowledge, which concerns the eternal structure of reality; and intuitive knowledge, which concerns the unchanging essence of things *apart from their relations*. Once it is understood that passion-ideas are only fallible because they – and they alone – concern *the relation between particular bodies*, it becomes evident that the same thing that makes them 'inadequate' in an epistemological sense makes them necessary as a means of working out how to live. The object of this article is to compare Spinoza and Eliot's responses to this fact.

In Section I, an analysis of Will Ladislaw's passions in Chapter Seventy-Eight of *Middlemarch* (1871-2) enables us to recognise how Spinoza and Eliot anticipated neurobiologist Antonio Damasio in acknowledging that the passions provide the foundation for all subsequent moral reasoning. In Section II, the work of Spinoza scholar Michael Lebuffe sheds light on the means by which Dorothea Casaubon distinguishes 'good' from 'bad' passions in Chapter Eighty of *Middlemarch*. Finally, in Section III, a turn to *Mr Gilfil's Love-Story* (1857) and a critical assessment of Spinoza's ideas about intuitive cognition enables us to trace the discrepancy between Spinoza and Eliot's ethics back to a fundamental difference in their thoughts about that most problematic passion, *melancholia*.

In March 1859, George Eliot informed John Blackwood that her next work of fiction, *The Lifted Veil,* was to be 'a slight story of an outré kind – not a *jeu d'esprit*, but a *jeu de melancholie.*'[1] Later Eliot would defend that same 'painful story' on ethical grounds, as the

[1] Quoted in Gillian Beer, 'Myth and the Single Consciousness: *Middlemarch* and "The Lifted Veil"', in *This Particular Web: Essays on* Middlemarch, ed. by Ian Adam (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1975), pp. 91-115 (p. 95). For an extended comparative analysis of Spinoza's *Ethics* and *The Lifted Veil*, see the author's 'George Eliot, Spinoza and the Ethics of Literature', in *Spinoza Beyond Philosophy*, ed. by Beth Lord (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012)

embodiment of an idea that 'justifies its painfulness'.[2] This process of oscillation – between attending to, and acknowledging the peril of attending to, sorrowful conditions and characters – pervades Eliot's writing. In this article I demonstrate how Eliot's ethical interest both in sorrowful passions and in reflective knowledge concerning sorrowful passions can be traced back to a moral treatise, Spinoza's *Ethics,* which Eliot translated in the early 1850s. As we explore the relations between Spinoza's treatise and Eliot's fiction, we will have cause to question Dorothy Atkins's claim that Eliot's fiction merely 'dramatizes' the condition of human bondage and the process of gradual liberation from 'inadequate' knowledge that Spinoza 'describes'.[3] At the same time, however, much light will be shed on Eliot's depictions of dejection in *Mr Gilfil's Love-Story* (1857) and *Middlemarch* (1871-2) by a closer assessment of Spinoza's idea that power and virtue are synonymous (E IVDef.8.)[4]; of Spinoza's declaration that knowledge is 'the primary and only basis of virtue' (E IVP26); and of Spinoza's interpretation of the melancholic individual as a being that has become absolutely ignorant/ powerless/ devoid of virtue due to the influence of external forces (E IIIP11S; E IVP20S).

In *George Eliot and Spinoza*, Atkins asserted that Spinoza promotes a 'three-stage process of understanding', wherein humans liberate themselves from bondage by proceeding 'from inadequate perceptions based on imagination or opinion, through adequate ideas based on reason, to ultimate understanding based on intuited knowledge of the fundamental essence

[2] George Eliot, *The Lifted Veil & Brother Jacob*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 88.
[3] Dorothy Atkins, *George Eliot and Spinoza* (Salzburg: Salzburg Studies in English Literature, 1978), p. 64.
[4] Baruch Spinoza*, Ethics*, trans. by George Eliot (Salzburg: Institut für Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Salzburg, 1981). Rather than citing page references, I use Edwin Curley's referencing system to cite the Book (in Roman numerals) and proposition/ axiom/ scholium (P/A/S, in Arabic numerals) of all excerpts from the *Ethics* (*E*).

of things'.[5] According to Atkins, 'we can see this process at work in George Eliot's novels', which reveal how 'successful' characters, like Dorothea Casaubon,[6] come to be determined 'solely by their essential human nature',[7] whilst 'unhappy and sinful' individuals, like Rosamond Lydgate, 'remain stuck in situations formed by ideas based on inadequate knowledge'.[8] Atkins thus captures some important features of Spinoza's complex account of the way to salvation, which is, indeed, premised on a distinction between three kinds of knowledge: imaginative knowledge (including passionate knowledge); rational knowledge; and intuitive knowledge (E IIP40S). Ultimately, however, Atkins's unwarranted assertions about Eliot's characters are a product of her misunderstanding of Spinoza's notion of the 'inadequate' idea.

Whereas Atkins assumed (and assumed that Spinoza and Eliot believed) that all knowledge derived from the passions is inferior to 'adequate' – rational or intuitive – knowledge, I will reveal that more light can be shed on both Spinoza's and Eliot's ethics by a comparative analysis of their ideas concerning three further distinctions: that between joyful and sorrowful passions (explored in Section I); that between good and evil emotions (explored in Section II); and that between passionate and non-passionate emotions (explored in Section III). This process will enable us to assess Spinoza's and Eliot's ideas about the genesis and effects of two types of sorrow, anguish and melancholia, in light of Spinoza's claims about the ethical salience of each of the three kinds of knowledge. In different ways, Spinoza and Eliot reveal that that which makes 'inadequate' ideas inadequate as vehicles for acquiring perfect knowledge (i.e., their having to do with *particular relations*) is the same

[5] Atkins, p. 88.
[6] Ibid, p. 80.
[7] Ibid, p. 88.
[8] Ibid, p. 88.

thing that makes them necessary, though by no means sufficient, when it comes to the business of working out how to live.

I

In Part III of the *Ethics*, 'On the Nature and Origin of the Emotions', Spinoza separates all passive transitions or *passiones* into two categories: modes of *laetitia* (interpreted by Eliot as pleasure) and modes of *tristitia* (interpreted by Eliot as pain).(E IIIP11S). The former are elations or ideas about one's transition 'from less to greater perfection' and the latter are dejections or ideas about one's transition 'from greater to less perfection' (E IIIDef.Aff.2-3.).[9] For Spinoza, all that we know about the power of particular things to affect us, we know by virtue of these passions, or by passions that are 'derived from' or 'compounded of' *laetitia*, *tristitia* and *cupiditas* (desire) (E IIIP56). As the neurobiologist Antonio Damasio has recently posited in *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow and the Feeling Brain*, Spinoza recognized that 'the cultural construction of what *ought* to be considered good or bad' depends on foundations laid and maintained by the passions, conceived as 'ideas of the body in the process of manoeuvring itself into states of optimal survival'.[10] As Damasio explains, it is by recognising and categorising certain types of internal transition as modes of *laetitia* or *tristita* that beings equip themselves with 'maps of joy and sorrow', and it is these maps that mark the way to states of 'greater functional harmony' or to states of 'functional disequilibrium', respectively.[11] It would be hard to find a clearer demonstration of the virtue

[9] Amelie Rorty offers *elation* and *dejection* as translations of *laetitia* and *tristitia* on the grounds that these terms 'better capture Spinoza's view that ... [the passions are] expression[s] of a *change* [...] in the body's powers or vitality' in 'Spinoza on the Pathos of Idolatrous Love and the Hilarity of True Love', in *The Philosophy of (Erotic) Love,* ed. by Robert Solomon and Kathleen Higgins (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1991), pp. 352-371 (p. 371).
[10] Antonio Damasio, *Looking for Spinoza: Joy, Sorrow and the Feeling Brain* (London: Vintage, 2004), p. 140.
[11] Ibid, pp. 137-8.

of forming these maps and of 'stamping' them with 'appropriate saliences'[12] than can be found in Chapters Seventy-Seven to Eighty of *Middlemarch*, to which we will now turn.

As Will Ladislaw registers the fact that the woman that he loves, Dorothea Casaubon, has discovered him addressing another woman, Rosamond Lydgate, 'with low-toned fervour'[13] in the Lydgates' dining-room, Eliot enables us to see how a being's 'decision-making space' might be fruitfully 'narrowed' by the cognitive work performed by its passions.[14] As Damasio asserts, our passions prepare the way for more complex deliberative processes by conferring 'positive or negative signals' on present 'events' and possible 'options' before any 'nonautomated' mental activity occurs.[15] Thus, as Dorothea departs and Rosamond 'lays the tips of her fingers on Will's coat-sleeve', Eliot's narrator begins to chart the evolution of Will's earliest, 'inadequate' judgments

> "Don't touch me!" he said, with an utterance like the cut of a lash, darting from her, and changing from pink to white and back again, as if his whole frame were tingling with the pain of the sting. (*M*, 777)

This being's observation that its 'whole frame' is stinging with pain is its first recognition that a dejection of considerable magnitude is occurring; and its marking of Rosamond's fingertips as the source of that sting is its earliest effort to add appropriate salience to its 'inadequate' idea of that dejection. By this point, if the being has acquired the habit of recognizing all modes of *tristitia* that involve 'the idea of an external cause' as cases of hatred, it will have inferred that it here hates Rosamond (E IIIP13S). Having done so, and having recognised also that he is affected by 'a horrible inclination to stay and shatter' the object of his hatred (*M,* 778), Will is able to recognize the transition that he is undergoing as

[12] Ibid, pp. 165; pp. 178-79.
[13] George Eliot, *Middlemarch* (London: Penguin, 2003), p. 777. Subsequent citations from this edition will be referenced, in parentheses, as *M* followed by the page number.
[14] Damasio, pp. 147-8.
[15] Ibid, pp. 147-8; 167.

a mode of anger, conceived as dejection accompanied by 'the desire to inflict injury on an object of hatred' (E IIIP40S). Ultimately, it is only because Will 'acknowledge[s]' some 'law' against this emotion, that - though pacing around with 'the restlessness of a wild animal' - he compels himself to 'vent [...] his rage' indirectly, 'snatching up Rosamond's words ... as if they', and not her finger-tips, 'were reptiles to be throttled and flung off.' (*M*,778). In order to appreciate Spinoza's and Eliot's ideas about the genesis and virtue of such 'repressive law[s]', we must shift our attention to Part IV of the *Ethics*, in which Spinoza endeavours to develop 'dictates of reason' that could be warranted by an 'adequate' understanding of the cognitive limits of the work conducted by each particular passion-type.

II

Given his belief that power is virtue (E IVDef.8.), Spinoza might be expected to promote all power-enhancing (i.e., joyful) *passiones* and to oppose all sorrowful *passiones*. As Spinoza scholar Michael Lebuffe has recently argued, however, he rather 'conceives of the passions, both forms of joy and forms of sadness, as bad for people just because they create a kind of imbalance.'[16] To make sense of Spinoza's idea that some forms of disempowerment can be good, we must consider a distinction that he draws between two modes of *tristitia*: *melancholia* and anguish/*dolor* (E IIIP11S). Having asserted that the term anguish applies 'when one part of [a being] is more affected than the rest' and that the term *melancholia* applies when 'the whole being' is affected, Spinoza deduces that of all possible transitions to lesser perfection only *melancholia* is necessarily evil (E IVP42). As such, there is a sense in which Spinoza acknowledged that it is possible for all types of passive transition *but melancholia* to be good.

[16] Michael Lebuffe, 'The Anatomy of the Passions', in *The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza's* Ethics, ed. by Olli Koistinen (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 188-222 (p. 221).

Spinoza's distinction between a species of sorrowful passion – anguish – that might sometimes be trusted, both as an interpreter and as a guide, and a species of sorrowful passion – *melancholia* – that must never be trusted closely coheres with the difference that Eliot invites us to observe in Chapter Seventy-Eight of *Middlemarch*. There, when Will curses Rosamond, her body merely registers 'a bewildering novelty of pain' (*M*, 779). As a result, Rosamond 'almost [loses] the sense of her identity'; by the end of the chapter, she is 'tottering in the midst as a lonely bewildered consciousness'(*M*, 780). If this radically passive transition can certainly be said to be 'bad' for Rosamond, this is only because it is epistemologically useless. Meanwhile, however, Will's relatively active sorrowful transition is relatively good. As Spinoza would assert and Eliot intimates, it is good insofar as it enables him to recognise how central a role his 'good' relation to Dorothea has been playing in his attempt to maintain a particular 'equilibrium of life functions'.[17] As a mode of anguish, it enables him to see that he 'never had a *preference* for [Dorothea], any more than [he had] a preference for breathing' and it enables him to associate the idea of his loss of her with the idea of having 'dropped into hell' (*M*, 778).

An analysis of Dorothea's shifting conceptions of the salience of her relation to Will will now enable us to refine and revise our ideas about the virtue of the passions. By recognising and analysing three clear transitions in Dorothea's thinking over the course of Chapter Eighty, we will be able to recognise how that chapter tentatively dramatises the way in which ideas afforded by three distinct 'kinds' of knowledge might radically change one's conceptions about one's *passiones* and their objects. Since the first of Dorothea's three transitions is effected by a particularly discriminating, *anguished* assessment of her relation to Will, it will be fruitful to approach that transition via Spinoza's account of the conditions under which modes of *tristitia* can be virtuous, as presented in the forty-third proposition of

[17] Damasio, p.174.

Part IV of the *Ethics*. Explicating Spinoza's argument, Lebuffe asserts that if 'one affect (pleasure, at 4P43) acts on one part of the body in such a way that it outstrips (*superet*) the others', then the passion that Spinoza conceives as its opposite '(pain, at 4P43)' can function as a corrective for the excessively-affected part, bringing it 'back into the service of the whole body's striving.'[18] Below, an analysis of Dorothea's initial, *indignant* response to Will will help us to recognise how a complex derivation of dejection and desire – Spinoza's *indignatio* – might fruitfully 'outstrip' the excessive approval of a love-object (*favor*) that Spinoza conceived as its opposite (E IIIP22S).

As any reader of *Middlemarch* will know, Dorothea has a propensity (and, indeed, a conscious desire) to believe in a neighbour's innocence, 'even if the rest of the world belie[s] him' (*M*, 734). As she conceives Will's 'low-toned' address to Rosamond, however, the narrator informs us that she 'never [felt] animated by a more self-possessed energy' (*M*, 775):

> It was as if she had drunk a great draught of scorn that stimulated her susceptibility to other feelings [...] She had never felt anything like this triumphant power of indignation [...] and she took it as a sign of new strength (*M*, 775-6).

It is not until the eightieth chapter of *Middlemarch* that the idea that Dorothea has experienced a pain-induced *increase* in power is put to the test (*M*, 786). Initially, the 'excited throng' that Dorothea's emotions underwent in Chapter Seventy-Seven seems to have been outstripped by concomitant increases in Dorothea's susceptibility to a disempowering concatenation of *passiones*, including 'jealous offended pride'; an 'anger [that flames] out in fitful returns of spurning reproach'; and 'despair' (*M*, 786-7). Ultimately, however, as Dorothea emerges from 'the waves of suffering' and once again acquires some 'power of thought', the result is clearly not entirely evil (*M*, 786).

[18] Lebuffe, p. 217.

From an 'inadequate' perspective, Dorothea's indignation does her a great deal of good, since of all the passions only this one can outstrip her propensity to confer favourable interpretations and afford her a truer/ more empowering understanding of her past and present relations to Will (*M*, 734). As Dorothea oscillates between conceiving Will favourably, as 'the bright creature whom once she had trusted', and conceiving Will indignantly, as 'a changed belief exhausted of hope', her anguish informs her that she '"did love him!"' (*M*, 786). Thus, as Dorothea 'discover[s] her passion to herself in the unshrinking utterance of despair', 'the mysterious incorporeal might of her anguish' empowers her with ethically-salient 'inadequate' knowledge (*M*, 786).

It is only later, however, when Dorothea stops 'wrestling with her grief' and 'make[s] it a sharer in her thoughts', that she is able to 'live through that yesterday morning deliberately, forcing herself [...] to think of it as bound up with another woman's life' (*M*, 787). As Dorothea now endeavours to conceive Rosamond as 'a woman towards whom she had set out with a longing to carry some clearness and comfort' (*M*, 787), she undergoes a second and – from Spinoza's perspective – far more virtuous transition. Indeed, now that Dorothea's deliberations are informed by rational ideas about the nature and effects both of her 'jealous indignation' and of her antecedent 'longing' (now conceived as instantiations of the abstract passion-types that we have here been discussing), she is no longer capable of conceiving her indignation as 'good' (*M*, 788). In the words of Eliot's narrator, 'the dominant spirit of justice' within Dorothea here reveals 'the truer measure of things', '[just] as acquired knowledge asserts itself and will not let us see as we saw in the day of our ignorance' (*M*, 788).

Crucially, Dorothea is still considering nothing else besides the homeostatic function of her passions, but now she is conceiving her passions not only as parts of herself, but also as parts of the broader 'social organisation' (E IVP40). As such, her 'second attempt to see

and save Rosamond' (*M*, 790) might be conceived Spinozistically, as the necessary result of her renewed commitment to 'just' rules of behaviour (E IVP37S2). Because of the general susceptibility of human beings to 'terrible collapse[s] of illusion', such as that which Rosamond undergoes as an object of Will and Dorothea's scorn (*M*, 780), Spinoza theorises that it is both good and right for humans to construct, and then consent to abide by, rules that will insure each one of them against the condition of complete disempowerment that he calls *melancholia.*

Judging from this 'adequate' perspective, Spinoza concludes that 'whatever we desire as a result of being affected by [...] emotions related to hatred' is 'evil', not because it necessarily diminishes our power but because it necessarily elicits 'discord' in the state (E, IVP45Coroll.2.). Ultimately, however, precisely because Dorothea does *not* experience this law against anger as 'repressive', her decision *does* empower her directly. As such, our final task must be to assess whether the joyous vision of herself as 'a part of that involuntary, palpitating life' with which Dorothea now becomes blessed can be interpreted as a sign of her having undergone a further (and final) transition, to Spinozan salvation (*M*, 788). In order to address that question, we must first familiarise ourselves with Spinoza's distinction between conceiving oneself 'inadequately' (i.e., as related to other beings) and conceiving oneself intuitively (i.e., as one is in oneself, *qua* part of Nature/God/Substance) (E VP29S).

III

The final proposition of the *Ethics* asserts that the blessedness afforded by intuitive cognition is 'not the reward of virtue, but virtue itself' (E VP42&Dem.). This is because to have an 'adequate' idea of oneself is not only to *conceive oneself as*, but also to *become motivated by*, nothing but one's inalienable desire to thrive. According to Spinoza, to conceive oneself 'adequately' is to stop being affected by 'passive' (because relational)

elations, dejections and desires, and to become affected by an active desire to thrive that precedes all relations and the active elation that follows from desiring to be what we are (E IIIP58-9). Now, when Dorothea decides that 'the objects of her rescue [are] not to be sought out by her fancy', she effectively decides to conceive herself in this second Spinozan manner (*M*, 788). At least temporarily, she stops being motivated by her newly-acknowledged passion for Will (or by the confused idea that her capacity to thrive is inextricably bound up with the preservation of a certain relation to that particular being); and becomes motivated, instead, by an active desire to remain a virtuous and empowering rescuer of objects, no matter what those objects are or what her antecedent relation to those objects happens to be. It is not that Dorothea stops having 'inadequate' ideas, for her thoughts about what to do in the present still concern her relation to other beings, such as Rosamond. Now, however, Dorothea's 'inadequate' ideas about herself and her relations have been illuminated by her intuitive understanding that every 'individual' is just 'part' of a universal web, all (relatively functional) parts of which have the power and pleasure of liberating other (relatively dysfunctional) parts from their sorrowful conditions (*M*, 788).

In Spinoza's parlance, it could be said that by virtue of experiencing a qualitativelydistinct mode of pleasure and conceiving her intuitive conception of herself *as part of* an involuntary palpitating life *as the cause* of that pleasure (*M*, 788), Dorothea experiences the 'intellectual love of God.' (E VP32Dem.) The key thing to note here is that, for Spinoza, Nature and God are different names for the same infinite and indivisible Substance (E IP14), which can be conceived 'under the attribute of Thought', as the sum of all 'thinking things', or 'under the attribute of Extension', as the sum of all 'extended things' (E IIP1-2). It is because he believed that that part of God's mind which is the reader's mind might liberate itself from its passions by acquiring an 'adequate' understanding of its real nature that Spinoza composed such a highly abstract moral treatise. Now, because Eliot's

fictions concern concrete individuals, in contradistinction to Spinoza's abstract 'lines' and 'planes' (E IIIPref.), it is evident that Eliot did not desire to effect so radical a departure from the first kind of knowledge as Spinoza did. At the same time, however, our analysis of Chapter Eighty of *Middlemarch* has given us cause to conclude that something akin to the intellectual love of God *did* maintain *some* role in Eliot's moral thought. In order to appreciate what that role was, we must shift our attention to one of the *Scenes of Clerical Life* that Eliot composed immediately after she finished translating Spinoza's *Ethics* in 1856. As we will see, those same Spinozan ideas that have illuminated the elations, dejections and desires of Dorothea in just one chapter in *Middlemarch* can likewise shed a great deal of light on the transitions undergone by Caterina Sarti over the twenty-one chapters of *Mr Gilfil's Love-Story*.

In the third chapter of *Mr Gilfil's Love-Story*, as Caterina reflects on the 'purgatory' that is her transition from the life of a Milanese orphan to the life of a lady at Cheverel Manor, she comes to associate the 'new dispensation of soap-and-water' that accompanies that transition with 'the sofa in Lady Cheverel's sitting-room' and proceeds to categorise her pain, appropriately, as a mode of 'initiatory anguish.'[19] Later, however, when Caterina's childhood sweetheart, Captain Anthony Wybrow, endeavours to kiss her, despite being engaged to Miss Assher, Caterina 'has just self-recognition enough left to be conscious that the fumes of charcoal will master [her] senses unless [s]he bursts a way for [her]self to the fresh air' (*MGL*, 135). Because Caterina is unable (or does not desire) to establish 'whether pain or pleasure predominate[s]', she soon loses sight of the 'clear rigid outline of painful certainty' that once informed – and ensured the success of – her inalienable endeavour to thrive (*MGL*, 135). Thus she becomes infected by 'fierce palpitations of triumph and hatred'

[19] George Eliot, 'Mr. Gilfil's Love-Story', in *Scenes of Clerical Life* (London: Penguin, 1998), pp. 77-194 (p. 110). Subsequent citations from this edition will be referenced, in parentheses, as *MGL* followed by the page number.

(*MGL*, 130). Ultimately, as Caterina conceives that Anthony was, in fact, dying of a heart attack, when she was hurrying towards his location, 'dream[ing] [...] in the madness of her passion, that she [could kill him]' (*MGL*, 164), her desire to be is absolutely outstripped by a desire 'to confess how wicked she *had been,* that [others] [...] might punish her' (*MGL*, 170; my italics). This is Dorothea's journey in reverse. Whereas Dorothea joyously ascends from sorrowful 'inadequate' knowledge, via rational knowledge of the genesis and virtue of the passions, to intuitive knowledge of the fundamental nature of particulars, Caterina joylessly yields from a state of active yearning, via bondage to *passiones* that are derivations of hatred, to *melancholia*.

Were Eliot merely endeavouring to reveal the universal truth and applicability of Spinoza's ascent and descent narratives, we might expect her 'successful' characters to inform their more salvageable neighbours that their passionate loves and ambitions are truly 'species of mania' which 'retain the mind in the contemplation of one object alone', greatly increasing their susceptibility to the condition of total ignorance, disempowerment and self-loss that is *melancholia* (E IVP44S). Within *Mr Gilfil's Love-Story*, we do, in fact, encounter a reading of Caterina's condition that is Christian in form, but Spinozan in spirit. When Caterina confesses that 'no one was ever so wicked' as she, Eliot's protagonist, Maynard Gilfil, endeavours to persuade her that she errs in associating herself with the 'bad passions' that contingently affected her (*MGL*, 185): 'our thoughts are often worse than we are', he explains: 'we don't see each other's whole nature. But God sees that you could not have committed that crime' (*MGL,* 185). If we bear in mind that Spinoza conceived the act of understanding oneself in light of one's intuitive knowledge as the elation of one part of Nature/God accompanied by the idea of that same part as its cause, or as God loving Himself (E VP32), then it is clear to see that Eliot is seizing upon her first opportunity to make a revised version of Spinoza's moral wisdom palatable to a predominantly Christian readership.

Ultimately, however, Caterina's return from the clutch of inescapable *melancholia* only lasts long enough to grant her new husband, Mr Gilfil, 'a few months of perfect happiness' (*MGL*, 192). Indeed, in the story's final paragraphs, Maynard's own, potentially 'plenteous' nature is 'crushed and maimed' by his passionate assessment of the salience of Caterina's death (*MGL*, 185; 194). As Eliot's narrator reflects, 'love meant nothing for [Maynard] but to love Caterina': with the loss of this object 'it seemed as if all pleasure had lost its vehicle.' (*MGL*, 178)

Meanwhile, in *Middlemarch*, it is Eliot's narrator who tempts us with a neat Spinozan moral, that 'we are on a perilous margin when we begin to look passively at our future selves' (*M,* 783). At the end of Chapter Seventy-Nine, Will Ladislaw is said to be 'arriving' at that margin: he imagines that 'the cruelty of his outburst to Rosamond has made an obligation for him' and (believing himself to have lost Dorothea) he dreads 'his own distaste for his spoiled life, which would leave him in motiveless levity' (*M*, 783). As these reflections on Will's 'pleasureless yielding to the small solicitations of circumstance' are so very closely followed by an account of Dorothea's joyful 'yearn[ing] towards the perfect Right' (*M*, 782-3; 788), Spinoza's association of activity both with virtue and with a qualitatively distinct mode of pleasure can hardly be considered irrelevant. At the same time, however, it is impossible to square Atkins's claim that Dorothea completes Spinoza's pilgrimage (a process that involves *becoming and remaining* unaffected by one's love for particular beings) with the narrator's testimony that Dorothea ultimately became a mother and acquired a reputation for getting overly 'absorbed into the life' of her second husband, Will Ladislaw (*M,* 836).

At this stage we *can* recognise a kind of success in Dorothea and Maynard's final descent, from a state of *active yearning* to assist abstract others to a state of *passive yielding* to their love for concrete others. Confronting that perilous margin between (potentially virtuous) anguish and (certainly vicious) melancholia, Spinoza was prepared to insure his

readers against loss by creating two fictions: one of a totally active transition to the perpetually-recurring act of becoming what we each always already essentially are; another of a totally passive transition to a state of total alienation from one's essence. Through presenting such episodes as Will's return from 'hell' and Caterina's descent from, then return to, 'purgatory', Eliot presents us with a more porous picture of different gradations of sorrow and with a clear sense of the virtue of oscillating between that knowing awareness of 'the largeness of the world' that affects the best of us (*M*, 788) and a loving acknowledgment of such 'small solicitations' as affect us all (*M*, 782-3). Ultimately, Eliot's own loving acknowledgment of the virtue of her protagonists' perilous investments is a testament to her refusal to embrace Spinoza's fictions.

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Utopia and the Prohibition of Melancholy: Mulleygrubs and Malcontents in William Morris's *News from Nowhere*

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Constipation and melancholy have always gone together.[1]
Walter Benjamin

Abstract: This article has been written as part of my ongoing PhD research. My project re-reads William Morris's utopian romance *News from Nowhere* (1890) as a mundane intervention into a series of different discursive spaces, which include, but are not limited to, the particular civic space of Trafalgar Square; the metropolitan space of *fin de siècle* London; the figurative space of the national imaginary, as well as its more tangible built environment; the political debates and *lieux de mémoire* of the early British socialist movement and, finally, the generic space of the narrative utopia. The word mundane has a twofold meaning, signifying both the dullness of the routine of political agitation, as well as the non-transcendent worldliness of Morris's utopianism, which is immanently rooted in the everyday life of late Victorian society. In this article, I examine the status of melancholy in Morris's projected utopian society, responding to recent critical discussion of the marginal figure of the Mulleygrub in Nowhere. I do so with reference to Frederic Jameson's elaboration of the utopian impulse, as well as Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic account of the psychical state of melancholy. The ambivalent status and semantic instability of the Mulleygrubs – a word which can refer both to physical ailments and to psychological dejection – has led some commentators to argue that residual forms of exclusivity persist in Morris's ostensibly hospitable post-revolutionary society. This bears out Wolf Lepenies' hypothesis that utopia necessarily entails a prohibition of melancholy. I argue that the situation is more complexly nuanced. The uncertainty surrounding the Mulleygrubs does not necessarily imply a proscriptive, or prescriptive, desire to cure the 'disease' of melancholy; rather, it should be read as part of an attempted self-supersession on the part of the heart-sick revolutionary agents who brought Nowhere into being in the hope of superseding the lived reality of alienation and widespread social melancholia.

The etymological roots of the word melancholy come from the Greek *melagkholia* (from *melas*/*melanos* black + *kholē* bile), but where does this black bile come from

[1] Walter Benjamin, 'Left-wing Melancholy', trans. by Ben Brewster, in *Selected Writings*, ed. by Michael W. Jennings, 4 vols (Cambridge, MA.: Belknap Press, 1996-2003), II (1999), pp. 423-427 (p. 426).

and what would it be to live in a world which has succeeded in draining it from the social body? This question has troubled would-be founders of an ideal commonwealth at least since Plato's *Republic* promised 'not to promote the particular happiness of a single class, but, so far as possible, of the whole community'.[2] William Morris's utopian romance *News from Nowhere* (1890) is emphatically *not* an attempt to figure forth a blueprint for an ideal society. As Morris remarked, '[t]he only safe way of reading a utopia is to consider it as the expression of the temperament of its author'.[3] Nonetheless, like the *Republic*, the post-revolutionary communist society presented in *News from Nowhere* is concerned with strategies for the (non-utilitarian) maximisation of happiness. The nature of the relationship between utopian speculation and melancholic stasis has been intimated by Wolf Lepenies, who suggests that 'the inadequacy of melancholy' as a response to the nightmare of historical change 'releases utopian desire'.[4] The protagonist William Guest's dream of Nowhere, then, is just as much a clarion call against the 'desperate pessimists' whom Morris encountered in the course of his socialist activism, as it is a vision of a happier future.[5] However, it is unclear what place, if any, this future leaves for those who fall prey to melancholy, or whether it can be assumed that the social 'disease' of melancholy has been universally 'cured'. In this essay I offer a reading of *News from Nowhere* which sets out to answer this question with reference to the ambivalent status accorded to the so-called Mulleygrubs in Nowhere.

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[2] Plato, *The Republic*, trans. by Desmond Lee (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1955, repr. 1987), pp. 185-6.

[3] William Morris, 'Looking Backward' in *Political Writings: Contributions to 'Justice' and 'Commonweal' 1883-1890*, ed. by Nicholas Salmon (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1994), pp. 419-25 (p. 420).

[4] Wolf Lepenies, *Melancholy and Society*, trans. by Jeremy Gaines & Doris Jones (Harvard, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 21.

[5] William Morris, *Journalism: Contributions to 'Commonweal' 1885-1890*, ed. by Nicholas Salmon (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1996), p. 260.

Happiness is seemingly ubiquitous in *News from Nowhere*. This is hardly surprising given that the pioneers of Nowhere soon found themselves asking the following question: 'What is the object of Revolution? Surely to make people happy.'[6] The projected society into which William Guest has awoken ostensibly manifests the values of fellowship, conviviality and tolerance. It is a dream-vision of realised communism which provoked Paul Meier to suggest that Morris's utopia constitutes 'an act of faith in the possibility of being happy'.[7] The happiness to which Meier refers has been brought about by the actualisation of a society of non-alienated labour and free co-operation between federated communes. This social reorganisation has inculcated possibilities for human self-development and flourishing. Nowhere is described as a 'happy world' (*CW*, XVI, 136) which has realised the 'happiness and rest of complete communism' (*CW*, XVI, 186). This vision of generalised contentment has a functionally utopian value insofar as it encourages readers to interrogate the set of capitalistic social relations which reproduce unhappiness on such a widespread scale in the present. The image of such achieved happiness in a distant future, however, might offer little more than palliative consolation. Insofar as utopian speculation offers a response to the injustices of the present historical moment, such speculation, by itself, can never entirely supersede the immanent contradictions of this present. The contradictions must first be forced through in the worldlier sphere of social praxis.

Wolf Lepenies usefully draws out the implications of this aspect of the utopian problematic in his ambitious history of melancholy and society. Lepenies notes that

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[6] *The Collected Works of William Morris*, ed. by May Morris, 24 vols (London: Routledge/Thoemmes Press, 1910-15; repr. 1992), XVI, 92. Further references will be given, in brackets, in the body of the text in the following form: *CW*, XVI, 92.

[7] Paul Meier, *William Morris: The Marxist Dreamer*, trans. by Frank Gubb, 2nd edn, 2 vols (Hassocks: Harvester, 1978), I: 260.

'in utopia, a counterworld is being devised and with it a counter to melancholy', but he goes on to point out that '[t]he danger for a utopia resides only in the residues of world that might manage to survive and might thus provoke melancholy'.[8] One way in which the residues of the old world survive in Nowhere is in the character of Old Hammond. Ensconced in the British Library, he is a solitary figure in Nowhere – a last vestige, perhaps, of the capitalistic division of intellectual and manual labour. By his own admission, Hammond is 'much tied to the past, [*his*] past' (*CW*, XVI, 55), but this situation must, to some extent, preclude his being fully present in the redeemed future. As Matthew Beaumont suggests, Hammond's unique insight into the past makes him something of an 'anachronism' and an 'anomalous presence' in Nowhere.[9] Hammond is a repository of historical consciousness in Nowhere; his narrative of 'How the Change Came' offers an account of the revolutionary process which brought Nowhere into being, but the story which he has to tell is suffused with a certain kind of melancholy. What, for example, are we to make of the claim that '[n]ot a few' of the reactionaries and counter-revolutionaries 'actually died of worry', whilst 'many committed suicide' (*CW*, XVI, 129)? Like Walter Benjamin's vision of the 'angel of history', Hammond's face remains turned towards the past.[10] His act of bearing witness to the catastrophe of Nowhere's (pre)history sets him apart from the majority of Nowhere's inhabitants, who are less familiar with the 'brisk, hot-headed times' of

[8] Lepenies, p. 175.

[9] Matthew Beaumont, '*News from Nowhere* and the Here and Now: Reification and the Representation of the Present in Utopian Fiction', *Victorian Studies*, 47, 1 (2004), 33-54 (p. 43).

[10] Walter Benjamin, 'On the Concept of History', trans. by Harry Zohn, in *Selected Writings*, ed. by Michal W. Jennings (Cambridge, MA.: Belknap, 1996-2003), IV (2003), 389-400 (p. 392). In this essay, Benjamin refers to Paul Klee's painting, *Angelus Novus*, which 'shows an angel who seems about to move away from something he stares at. His eyes are wide, his mouth is open, his wings are spread.' Benjamin suggests that '[t]his is how the angel of history must look. His face is turned towards the past. Where a chain of events appears before *us*, *he* sees one single catastrophe, which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it at his feet.'

the immediate post-revolutionary period (*CW*, XVI, 55). Neither Guest nor we can ever know what Hammond leaves *out* of this account, nor what recursive sadness is contained within the onward movement of the narrative he presents. The dead will never be awakened, although it remains possible that the loss they represent will become a source of melancholy.

The idea that the failure adequately to mourn a lost object might precipitate the psychical state of melancholy was put forward by Sigmund Freud in his short essay 'Mourning and Melancholia' (first drafted in 1915). In Freud's account:

> the distinguishing mental features of melancholia are a profoundly painful dejection, 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.[11]

Freud's path-breaking elucidation of the connection between mourning and melancholia represents an attempt to move beyond the contemporary consensus that melancholia was a 'pathological condition' needing to be referred to various forms of 'medical treatment'.[12] In Nowhere, however, the cessations of interest in the outside world, which Freud diagnostically couples with melancholia, are seemingly unheard of. This is because Nowherean society is oriented towards praxis: all human self-activity has become externally directed such that 'by far the greater number […] would be unhappy if they were not engaged in actually making things' (*CW*, XVI, 84). *News from Nowhere* presents a vision of a society in which the sensuous reality of non-alienated labour has become a means towards self-fulfilment, as well as a source of pleasure. Forms of healthy *Vergegenständlichung* (objectification) prevail such that each person individually realises the human potential to 'put forth whatever is in him, and make his hands set forth his mind and his soul' (*CW*, XVI, 150).

[11] Sigmund Freud, 'Mourning and Melancholia [1915]', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, 24 vols, trans. by James Strachey (London: Vintage, 2001), XIV, p. 244.
[12] Ibid., pp. 243-4.

Ostensibly, the change in productive relations in Nowhere precludes the (re)emergence of melancholic inwardness which thrives in a capitalist society of alienated commodity-production. It is unclear why anyone should fall into a depressive mood if everyone is 'free to exercise his [or her] special faculty to the utmost' (*CW*, XVI, 81). We cannot be entirely certain, however, that all traces of melancholy have been successfully flushed out from Nowhere's social body.

The presence or absence of melancholy in Nowhere is difficult to determine, given that Guest only encounters a limited number of the society's inhabitants. A clue is offered, though, in some passing remarks made by one of his hosts which acknowledge melancholy as a social phenomenon belonging to the pre-revolutionary era. During Guest's tour of some de-familiarised London locales, his guide Dick somewhat abruptly mentions that

> in the early days of our epoch there were a good many people who were hereditarily afflicted with a disease called Idleness, because they were the direct descendents of those who in the bad times used to force other people to work for them.
>
> (*CW*, XVI, 39)

He goes on to assert that he is

> happy to say that all that is gone by now; the disease is either extinct, or exists in such a mild form that a short course of aperient medicine carries it off. It is sometimes called Blue-devils now, or the Mulleygrubs. Queer names, ain't they?
>
> (*Ibid*.)

Dick's account of the changed social relations of production implies that there are two distinct, but not unconnected sources of the 'disease called Idleness', only one of which has properly been eradicated. The first source of idleness is identified with the bourgeoisie, the class of parasites who used to exploit the labour of others. The projected elimination of this class *as a class* during the revolution has ensured that the associated form of idleness has disappeared. However, Dick's casual off-handedness

about the persistence of the 'disease' – 'it is either extinct, or exists in […] a mild form' – should alert us to the fact that something is awry in his account, particularly given that the suggestion of its persistence includes that unusual word: 'Mulleygrubs', or 'Blue-devils'. So what are the mulleygrubs?

The Oxford English Dictionary (OED) lists the following ways in which the word can be used:

> Mulligrub, n., **1.a.** A state or fit of depression; low spirits. Also: a bad temper or mood. […] **b.** stomach ache, colic; diarrhoea. […] **2.** A fit or bout of mulligrubs. *Obs. rare*. **3.** A sulky or ill-tempered person.[13]

The queerness which Dick associates with the mulleygrubs partly stems from the word's semantic instability. As this definition makes clear, its meaning bifurcates to include both bodily and mental afflictions. It is equally clear from this twofold definition that Dick is likely to have confused the lack of motivation to labour which stems from depression with that which arises in connection with the supplementary meaning of the word – referring to an ailment which it would be possible to treat with a 'short course of aperient medicine' (*CW*, XVI, 39). Frederic Jameson includes such aperient medicines in a list of 'Utopian supplements' which fulfil a recuperative function within capitalist society by ensuring that consumers achieve accommodation-through-gratification with the status quo.[14] For Jameson, such curious quirks of the free-market represent 'doses of utopian excess' which are 'carefully measured out in all our commodities'.[15] Commodity consumption is an arena of libidinal investment which encompasses 'even the most subordinate and shamefaced products of everyday life, such as aspirins, laxatives and deodorants […] all harbouring muted promises of

[13] <http://dictionary.oed.com/> [accessed 08/11/2010].
[14] Frederic Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (London: Verso, 2005; repr. 2007), p. 6.
[15] Ibid.

a transfigured body'.[16] Jameson's detection of a utopian impulse in the listed chemical supplements, an impulse which is related to the desire to rid the body of its black bile, bears out Wolf Lepenies' suggestion that '[u]topian thought […] does not – as a reaction to the misery of the moment – allow for melancholy'.[17] With reference to my particular example, Dick's mention of aperient medicine in Nowhere seems to verify Lepenies' suggestion that the concept of utopia entails a prohibition of melancholy.

Some recent commentators have seized upon Dick's unenthusiastic mention of Mulleygrubs in order to claim that residual forms of exclusivity exist in Nowhere, despite its apparent openness and tolerance. Patrick Parrinder, for example, reads Dick's remarks as evidence of a libertarian-eugenic current in Morris's thought.[18] Meanwhile, Marcus Waithe's measured discussion of the limits of utopian hospitality in Nowhere notes that Morris's 'refusal to grant Guest indefinite asylum' preserves 'the integrity of utopian borders', adding that '[t]he eradication of "Mulleygrubs" and the elimination of idleness have a similar effect'.[19] He quotes Dick's discussion of idleness and points out that 'this is a form of dissent that has never been tolerated in Nowhere, not during the transition phase, and not afterwards'.[20] This analysis overlooks the fact that idleness itself is not actually proscribed in Nowhere, nor is it deemed to be problematic, as evidenced during the boat-trip up the Thames, where Ellen's idleness is described as 'the idleness of a person, strong and well-knit in body and mind, deliberately resting' (*CW*, XVI, 189). More pertinently, Waithe's construal of the Mulleygrubs' 'idleness' as a tacit form of dissent implies that it is both

[16] Ibid.
[17] Lepenies, p. 91.
[18] Patrick Parrinder, 'Eugenics and Utopia: Sexual Selection from Galton to Morris', *Utopian Studies*, 8.2 (1997), 1-12.
[19] Marcus Waithe, *William Morris's Utopia of Strangers: Victorian Medievalism and the Ideal of Hospitality* (Woodbridge: D.S. Brewer, 2006), p. 195.
[20] Ibid., p. 168.

intentional and willed, which it may not be. As has been shown, the form of idleness that is *not* tolerated in Nowhere is the form of class-based idleness identified with the exploitative – and, crucially, superseded – social relations of the capitalist mode of production. Thus, if it is to be maintained that the reference to Mulleygrubs represents a moment of unwitting exclusivity in Morris's utopian society, we must force the ambivalent status of the Mulleygrubs into the open.

I have identified two possible frames of reference with which to pin down the reason for Dick's hostility to the Mulleygrubs' idleness. Firstly, there is an idleness which arises from the constitutive lassitude of the bourgeoisie as a class and, secondly, there is a very different kind of 'idleness' that results from an overabundance of black bile brewed up by blue devils. If the first way of accounting for Dick's hostility can be explained with reference to the supersession of class society, this leaves us to account for the second. Dick's uncritical adoption of the assumption that a 'short course of aperient medicine', as opposed to, say, psycho-therapy, might be enough to rid any given Mulleygrub of his or her 'idleness' is partly indicative of Morris's failure to think beyond the fin de siècle milieu of 'medical materialism', described by William James.[21] What is less clear, however, is whether Dick is being similarly retrogressive in his desire to prevent people from suffering bouts of the Mulleygrubs. This is especially so given Old Hammond's account of the motive-force behind the revolutionary upheaval which brought Nowhere into being:

> Looking back now, we can see that the great motive-power of the change was a longing for freedom and equality, akin if you please to the unreasonable passion of the lover; a sickness of heart that rejected with loathing the aimless solitary life of the well-to-do educated man of [the nineteenth century].
>
> (*CW*, XVI, 104-5).

[21] William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (London, 1906), pp. 13-4.

The reference to the 'unreasonable passion of the lover' is telling, not least because the various intimations of sexual jealousy – Clara's affair and the incident described in Maple-Durham (*CW*, XVI, 55-6, 166) – provide further evidence of the persistence of 'negative' emotion in Nowhere. Jealousy, like melancholy, feeds upon a lack: unavoidably, these emotions will threaten to disturb the plenitude of social life in Nowhere. But the fact that Hammond identifies the very revolutionaries who brought Nowhere into being with such moments of negativity and heart-sickness is surely significant. This identification complicates the pseudo-dystopian reading of Nowhere as an implicitly intolerant society which seeks to root out and liquidate, or coercively cure, rogue members who fall prey to the Mulleygrubs. In light of Old Hammond's remark, it is more convincing to read the desire to eradicate the Mulleygrubs as a project of self-supersession on the part of heart-sick revolutionaries and as part of a collective effort to supersede the pre-revolutionary legacy of alienation and social melancholia. This curiously self-contradictory position has been clarified by Terry Eagleton, who concurs that the hope for social revolution does indeed go together with a project of self-supersession: '[t]he only reason for being a Marxist is to get to the point where you can stop being one'.[22] The above-cited examples prove that this project is as-yet incomplete in Nowhere; more troublingly, we are asked to recognise that it is a project which may never achieve completion. Negativity lingers in the very name of Nowhere. Far from betraying a moment of unspoken intolerance, then, Dick's ambivalence about the Mulleygrubs suggests that the problem of melancholia is one which Nowhere has yet to resolve, and which nowhere has yet solved.

[22] Terry Eagleton, *Walter Benjamin: Or, Towards A Revolutionary Criticism* (London: Verso, 1981; repr. 2009), p. 161.

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Melancholy and Loss in Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg.*

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Abstract: In this paper I examine the theme of melancholy in relation to Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg*. I argue that in connection with the very overt subject of physical illness in the novel, specifically the condition of tuberculosis, there is also the theme of melancholy which is evident in the novel's subject matter, characters and structure. Relating my discussion to the psychoanalytic theories of Sigmund Freud and Julia Kristeva, I argue that the pervading sense of melancholy in *Der Zauberberg* can be attributed to a sense of loss at a number of levels, including not only concrete losses such as the death or desertion of a loved one, but also abstract losses, such as the loss of hope experienced by the terminally ill. I examine how the loss incurred by the deprivation of meaning in life experienced by the seriously ill can be compounded by further losses experienced through institutional life, such as the loss of dignity, self-respect and a sense of identity, leading in some cases to thoughts of, or actual suicide. In addition I note how the structure of the novel echoes the feeling of disorientation and timelessness experienced by those in a melancholic state, and how a sense of loss continues when the main protagonist, through whose eyes we view the events of the narrative, disappears and most probably dies at end of the novel.

This paper relates to a wider exploration of 'Impotence, Mental Illness and Suicide' in relation to Mann's novel, as a chapter of my thesis which relates to 'Thomas Mann and the Body', and focuses particularly on issues of the taboo. My work addresses taboo acts and conditions, and the theme of melancholy relates both to the stigmatised condition of mental illness, and the taboo act of suicide.

Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg* (1924) is set in the years preceding the First World War, from 1907-1914, in a tuberculosis clinic in the Swiss Alps, and spans seven years of the life of the main protagonist, Hans Castorp, while he is resident there.[1] The inmates of the Berghof sanatorium are diseased or dying, or caring for the sick, and therefore lead a melancholy existence in the constant shadow of death and disease, which is exacerbated by the tedious and stultifying routine of institutional life. The resultant sense of malaise is endemic at all levels of the sanatorium, affecting patients,

[1] I use the following editions of the text in German and English: Thomas Mann, *Der Zauberberg*, (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 2007), referred to hereafter as *DZ*, and Thomas Mann, *The Magic Mountain*, trans. by H. T. Lowe-Porter (London: Vintage, 1999), hereafter referred to as *MM*.

visitors and staff. Closely interwoven with the overt subject matter of physical disease in *Der Zauberberg*, therefore, is the theme of psychological illness, which is manifested in some of the characters as melancholy, or depression, and which in some cases leads to suicidal tendencies or actual suicide.[2] I argue that the all-pervasive sense of melancholy in *Der Zauberberg* can be attributed to the experience of loss at a number of levels, whether these are concrete losses, such as the death or desertion of a loved one, or more abstract ones, such as the loss of hope experienced by the terminally ill.

Psychoanalytic theory places a sense of loss at the root of melancholy: Freud argues that melancholy is closely associated with mourning in that both are connected to 'object-loss'.[3] However, Freud notes that while in mourning the individual is aware of what he or she has lost, with melancholy the loss is not always identifiable, as the lost object may be 'withdrawn from consciousness'.[4] This could be a once-held ambition that has been thwarted or suppressed, but nevertheless leaves a sense of emptiness. In *Der Zauberberg* both real mourning and a more generalised sense of loss are evident, and the two often coexist. For instance, the overriding task of the Berghof's resident chief doctor, Hofrat Behrens, is to cure his patients and return

[2] For the purposes of this article I have used 'depression' and 'melancholy' interchangeably. 'Depression' is a more common term now for what was once referred to as 'melancholy', and generally has a more negative tone: depression does not convey the romantic association that can sometimes be signified by the term melancholy. In *Der Zauberberg*, however, Thomas Mann tends to debunk the romantic myths associated with both tuberculosis and melancholy, detaching the latter from its connection with an artistic or spiritual nature, or ethereal beauty, and locating it instead in quite ordinary and often very unattractive individuals, such as the character Wehsal, who I examine in this article on p. 52. Mann also explores the condition of hysteria which is another form of mental illness closely associated with institutional life, but space does not permit me to discuss this further here.

[3] Sigmund Freud, 'Mourning and Melancholia', in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Works of Sigmund Freud,* trans. and ed. by James Strachey et al., 24 vols (London: Vintage, 2001), XIV, pp. 237-60 (p. 245).

[4] Freud, p. 245.

them to life in the 'flatland'.[5] However, Behrens also displays symptoms of tuberculosis himself, and is prone to bouts of melancholy. Although the bacterial cause of tuberculosis had been discovered in 1882 by Robert Koch, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries tuberculosis was nevertheless not widely treatable, and Behrens' inability to cure himself and others continually undermines his professional role as a physician. Moreover, Behrens is firmly attached to the Berghof by his continuing grief over the loss of his wife who is buried nearby; she also succumbed to tuberculosis, despite Behrens' attempts to cure her. Thus Behrens has suffered multiple losses: the loss associated with his bereavement; the deterioration of his health; and the loss of faith in his vocation as a healer.

Deaths from tuberculosis regularly occur at the sanatorium, so the mourning associated with bereavement is common. For instance, the mother known as *Tous-les-deux* aimlessly roams the grounds of the Berghof, distraught at the loss of one son and the imminent death of the other. Hans Castorp, too, eventually experiences the loss to tuberculosis of his cousin, Joachim, whom he initially came to visit, grew to love, and from whom he became almost inseparable during his prolonged stay. Moreover, even those inmates who are not grieving for dead friends or relatives are likely to be suffering a sense of loss at their enforced isolation from the living ones they have left behind for their new existence at the sanatorium. While there is a superficial jovial camaraderie during mealtimes at the Berghof, reinforced by the inmates' common experience of disease, there are nevertheless also 'die Stillen und Finstern, die in den Pausen den Kopf in die Hände stützten und starrten' (*DZ*, 108) ('the silent, gloomy ones […] who in the pauses between courses leaned their heads on their hands and

[5] In *Der Zauberberg* the expression 'the flatland' is used to refer to the world outside the sanatorium and away from the mountain on which it is situated.

stared before them' [*MM*, 76]), indicating the general listlessness associated with a melancholic state.

Moreover, sanatorium life involves interminable hours when the patients follow the 'cure' in the isolation of their rooms or balconies, where they must inevitably confront their fears concerning their personal illness and its prognosis. The patients of the Berghof are therefore, almost in their entirety, suffering a generalised sense of loss, owing to the deprivation of meaning in life engendered by their tuberculosis diagnosis, often considered a death sentence. Melancholy and loss then become self-perpetuating: as Julia Kristeva notes, melancholy leads to a loss of 'interest in words, actions, and even life itself'.[6] The sense of pointlessness is clearly evident in an exchange between three of the patients, Hermione Kleefeld, Rasmussen and Gänser:

> [Hermione Kleefeld] seufzte aus ihrer halben Lunge, indem sie kopfschüttelnd ihre vom Dummheit umschleierten Augen zur Decke richtete. "Lustig, Rasmussen!" sagte sie hierauf und schlug ihrem Kameraden auf die abfallende Schulter. "Machen Sie Witze!"
> "Ich weiß nur wenige" erwiderte Rasmussen und ließ die Hände wie Flossen in Brusthöhe hängen; "die aber wollen mir nicht vonstatten gehn, ich bin immer so müde." "Es möchte kein Hund" sagten Gänser hinter den Zähnen, "so oder ähnlich noch viel länger leben." Und sie lachten achselzuchend (*DZ*, 306).

> [Hermione Kleefeld] shook her head, fetched a sigh from her one lung, and rolled up to the ceiling her dull and stolid eyes. "Cheer up, Rasmussen", she said, and slapped her comrade on the drooping shoulder. "Make a few jokes"!"
> "I don't know many", he responded, letting his hands flap finlike before his breast, "and those I do I can't tell, I'm so tired all the time."
> "Not even a dog", Gänser said through his teeth, "would want to live longer – if he had to live like this."
> They laughed and shrugged their shoulders (*MM* , 218).

[6] Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia*, trans. by Léon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), pp. 3-4.

The tiredness; the sigh; the dull expression; the drooping shoulder; the indifferent shrug; and the cheerless laughter represent characteristic symptoms of a melancholic condition.

The melancholy accompanying serious illness is further compounded by other losses experienced at the sanatorium. Some residents form romantic attachments there and can experience a keen sense of loss when these liaisons break down. Losing a lover can provoke a melancholic state comparable to that of mourning. Hans Castorp falls in love with fellow-patient, Clawdia Chauchat, with whom he eventually spends a single night of passion, after which she leaves the sanatorium. Following this loss Hans Castorp listlessly awaits her return, but when she does so it is with another man, the enigmatic and powerful, but also sick and dying, Pieter Peeperkorn. This unexpected thwarting of Hans Castorp's hopes renews and intensifies his initial loss. Moreover, following Clawdia Chauchat's final departure, after Peeperkorn's death, Hans Castorp sinks further into depression as he realises that there is no hope of her returning. Hans Castorp has already at an early age experienced lost loves, losing his mother, father and grandfather to illness; and as an adolescent he experienced the loss of his first romantic love when his infatuation with fellow schoolboy Pribislav Hippe ended with Hippe's departure from the school. In her study of depression and melancholia Kristeva pertinently expresses how each subsequent loss reinforces a former one:

> Conscious of our being doomed to lose our loves, we grieve perhaps even more when we glimpse in our lover the shadow of a long lost former loved one.[7]

Significantly Clawdia Chauchat is a revenant – a visual reminder of Pribislav Hippe - and thus Hans Castorp's earlier loss is renewed. Similarly, it is possible that Hans

[7] Kristeva, *Black Sun*, p. 5.

Castorp's memory of the initial loss of Hippe deepens his sadness at the loss of Clawdia Chauchat, as it brings with it the sense of the inevitability of failed relationships. This is a recurring theme in Thomas Mann: in *Tonio Kröger* (1903), for example, Mann stresses Tonio's anguish at falling in love with the blond, blue-eyed Inge who reminds him of his childhood friend Hans Hansen, as Tonio knows from previous experience that his new love will cost him 'viel Schmerz, Drangsal und Demütigung' ('much pain, distress and humiliation'.)[8]

According to Freud, melancholy can result not only from the loss of a loved person, but also from the loss of 'an abstraction that has taken the place of one, such as one's country, liberty, an ideal and so on'.[9] This is very evident in the character of Joachim, whose dedication to serving his country in the army is thwarted by the seriousness of his tuberculosis. Joachim's diseased body forces him to exist as a passive invalid at the sanatorium, rather than pursue the active and purposeful soldier's life that he craves. Consequently, Joachim obsessively replaces the discipline and structure of army life with a zealous adherence to the curative regime of the Berghof. In doing so, however, Joachim suffers a further loss as he resists his evident attraction to a fellow inmate, Marusja, assuming that to succumb to his attraction would distract him from a speedy recovery and return to his regiment. Joachim is thus physically and psychologically trapped, unable to fulfil either his sexual desire or his chosen vocation, and he becomes withdrawn and antisocial. A state of melancholy caused by loss can therefore provoke other related losses, such as the loss of a sense of worth, dignity and self-respect.

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[8] See Thomas Mann, 'Tonio Kröger', in *Sämtliche Erzählungen* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer Verlag, 1972), pp. 213-266 (p. 221), and *Death in Venice and Other Stories*, trans. by David Luke (London: Vintage, 1998), pp. 137-194 (p. 147).
[9] Freud, p. 243.

For Freud, loss can include 'all those situations of being slighted, neglected or disappointed' and this is the case with the wretched character, Wehsal, whose very name suggests an aching and oppressive misery.[10] Wehsal is obsessed by his unrequited desire for Clawdia Chauchat and is full of self-loathing. According to Freud, in contrast to true mourning, in the melancholic person there is an evident 'impoverishment of his ego on a grand scale'.[11] Moreover, Freud identifies 'a lowering of the self-regarding feelings to a degree that finds utterance in self-reproaches and self-revilings'.[12] Significantly Wehsal continually complains about his feelings of rejection, and constantly bemoans his unattractiveness, uttering self-deprecating remarks such as: 'Bin ich denn kein Mann? Ist ein widerwärtiger Mann kein Mann?' (*DZ*, 848) ('Am I not a man? Even if I am repulsive? [*MM*, 616]). Wehsal also experiences regular bouts of uncontrollable weeping, which signify the inadequacy of language to express the melancholic state: as Kristeva points out, depression is a 'noncommunicable grief'.[13] Tears therefore, for Kristeva, are 'metaphors of non-speech, of a "semiotics" that linguistic communication does not account for'.[14] Moreover, tears are a manifestation of Kristeva's notion of 'the abject', the disintegration of the body's margins which, as Elizabeth Wright points out, 'signals the precarious grasp the subject has over its identity and its borders'.[15]

Thus melancholy is associated with a loss of identity that is compounded by illness. Disease undermines the integrity of the body: the organs are destroyed, and in

[10] Freud, p. 251. The German noun 'Weh' means 'grief' or 'pain'.
[11] Freud, p. 246.
[12] Ibid, p. 244.
[13] Kristeva, *Black Sun*, p. 3.
[14] Julia Kristeva, 'Stabat Mater', trans. by Léon S. Roudiez, in *The Kristeva Reader*, ed. by Toril Moi (Oxford: Blackwell, 1986), pp. 160-86 (p. 174).
[15] See *Feminism and Psychoanalysis: A Critical Dictionary*, ed. by Elizabeth Wright (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), p. 198. For Kristeva's theories of abjection see Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. by Léon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

the clinical setting the body becomes a site of intrusion and experimentation. For Kristeva, serious illness is one of the main factors contributing to melancholy: she notes that a depressive state can be triggered by 'a fatal illness, some accident or handicap that abruptly wrests me away from what seemed to me the normal category of normal people'.[16] The sense of isolation from normality is exaggerated by institutional life, where individuals are no longer defined by their place in society as members of a family, a town, a nation or a place of work, for instance. Rather they are classified by what they have in common, in this case their disease. Consequently a hierarchy of illness arises, in which the more severely ill command more respect, leading some inmates to exaggerate their symptoms, and provoking accusations of hypochondria and malingering. This charge is levelled at Hans Castorp by his mentor, Settembrini, who urges him to leave the sanatorium and avoid becoming institutionalised. Settembrini views the Berghof as a place '[wo] Tote nichtig und sinnlos wohnen' (*DZ*, 83) ('peopled by the vacant and idle dead' [*MM*, 57]).

When travelling to the mountains Hans Castorp had already begun to distance himself from the flatland, abandoning his book on ocean steamships, despite its relevance to his chosen profession, and sampling the sense of freedom engendered by the journey, which was setting an increasing expanse of time and space between him and the duties of his life below. Hans Castorp is therefore readily seduced by the undemanding routine of life at the Berghof: soon after his arrival he becomes ill himself, but despite the mildness of his illness he quickly withdraws from any connection with life outside the sanatorium, as indicated by his ceasing to read the newspapers. Hans Castorp continues to exist at the Berghof in an aimless and melancholic state for seven years, unable to re-engage with life in the outside world

[16] Kristeva, *Black Sun*, pp. 3-4.

and unwilling to take up his promising career as an engineer. Melancholy thus becomes associated with laziness and a loss of moral fibre, and hence a reprehensible condition. Kristeva points out how at certain points in history melancholy has been associated with religious doubt or even sinfulness. For instance, invoking Dante's *Inferno*, she notes that 'the melancholic shadows constitute "the sect of the wicked displeasing both to God and His enemies."'[17] The often persistent Christian notion that melancholy suggests impiety or an ingratitude for life can provoke feelings of shame and guilt which can further exacerbate the condition.

Furthermore, in *Der Zauberberg* melancholy is perceived as contagious, and is recognised by the Berghof's authorities as a potential threat to morale. When Hans Castorp is at his most bored and depressed, Behrens expresses his concern that he will infect other inmates, with 'das Gift der Reichsverdrossenheit' (*DZ*, 860) ('the toxin of your disaffection' [*MM*, 625]). Hans Castorp himself begins to recognise that melancholy has become a widespread malignancy in the institution.

> Er sah durchaus Unheimliches, Bösartiges, und er wußte was er sah: Das Leben ohne Zeit, das sorg - und hoffnungslose Leben, das Leben als stagnierende betriebsame Liederlichkeit, das tote Leben (*DZ*, 863).
>
> He saw on every side the uncanny and the malign, and he knew what it was he saw: life without time, life without care or hope, life as depravity, assiduous stagnation; life as dead (*MM*, 627).

The sense of timelessness to which Hans Castorp refers indicates the loss of orientation in the world, both temporally and spatially, that is experienced in the depressed state. For instance, a lack of direction is evident in the character of Clawdia Chauchat who aimlessly travels between sanatoriums, regularly drawn back to the Berghof in a circular fashion, as if searching for something lost, and unable to move

[17] Kristeva, *Black Sun*, p. 8.

forwards. Kristeva identifies a 'denial of sequentiality' in the melancholic person. [18] She argues:

> Melancholy people […] live within a skewed time sense. It does not pass by, the before/after notion does not rule it, does not direct it from a past towards a goal. Massive, weighty, doubtless traumatic because laden with too much sorrow or too much joy, a *moment* blocks the horizon of depressive temporality or rather removes any horizon, any perspective.[19]

Significantly, upon his arrival at the sanatorium Hans Castorp forgets how old he is. Similarly, in an episode in which he becomes lost in the snow, Castorp realises that he has been moving in a circle, and that his confused perception has greatly altered his sense of both the time that has passed and the distance he has covered. After sheltering from a snowstorm beside a mountain hut he imagines that at least an hour and a half must have elapsed when, in fact, it has been only fifteen minutes.

A distorted sense of time is evident throughout *Der Zauberberg* and is reflected in the structure of the novel. Hans Castorp's first three weeks on the mountain occupy the first four chapters of the novel, while the rest of his seven-year stay is contained in the remaining three. This echoes the way in which the constant routine at the Berghof has the contradictory effect of both expanding time, and condensing it. Moreover, the residents are distanced from outside events, which might otherwise lend structure to their personal narratives. Michael Beddow has related the pervading sense of melancholy in *Der Zauberberg* to a general malaise associated with the epoch about which Mann is writing, in which society itself appears to have lost direction. Quoting Mann's own words, Beddow comments:

> And if the general ethos of their age 'secretly reveals itself as devoid of hope, prospects or purpose' and offers 'no satisfactory answer to

[18] Ibid, p. 20
[19] Ibid, p. 60.

> the question of what it is all for', the result will be 'a certain disabling effect' on all but the most robustly vital of individuals.[20]

In relation to the characters in *Der Zauberberg* this 'disabling effect' can be seen as both a physical and psychological one.

For some of the Berghof's inmates, suicide is seen as the only way out of the impasse of the half-life they experience on the mountain. This sentiment is articulated by Herr Albin who regularly threatens to end his life. Faced with a terminal prognosis he complains:

> Ich bin im dritten Jahr hier...ich habe es satt und spiele nicht mehr mit, - können Sie mir das verargern? Unheilbar, meine Damen, - sehen Sie mich an, wie ich hier sitze, bin ich unheilbar, - der Hofrat selbst macht kaum noch ehren – und schandenhalber ein Hehl daraus. Gönnen Sie mir das bißchen Ungebundenheit, das für mich aus dieser Tatsache resultiert! (*DZ*, 114).

> I am in my third year up here – I'm sick of it, fed up, I can't play the game any more – do you blame me for that? Incurable, ladies, as I sit here before you, an incurable case; the Hofrat himself is hardly at pains any longer to pretend I am not. Grant me at least the freedom which is all I can get out of the situation (*MM*, 79).

Herr Albin thus expresses the loss of hope and lack of control over one's own destiny felt by the incurably ill, and perceives suicide as a release from the pointlessness of a life that inevitably ends in physical dissolution. Herr Albin does not follow through with his threats, but Pieter Peeperkorn, on the other hand, does take his own life. Before his arrival at the sanatorium, Peeperkorn's *raison d'être* had been to love and live life to the full, but this is curtailed by the aging process and serious illness. During his time at the Berghof, Peeperkorn continues to exhibit a certain *joie de vivre* and periods of elation, but these very quickly turn to melancholy, fuelled by his

[20] Michael Beddow, 'The Magic Mountain', in *The Cambridge Companion to Thomas Mann*, ed. by Richie Robertson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), pp. 137-50 (p. 141).

alcoholism. Moreover, Peeperkorn's elated episodes could be a form of mania, and therefore yet another aspect of his depression.[21] For Peeperkorn suicide is the only acceptable solution to the loss of dignity he feels at the deterioration of his body.

In *Der Zauberberg*, therefore, melancholy is presented as closely linked to physical debility, and can be traced to a number of manifestations of a sense of loss which compound and reinforce one another. In some cases melancholy can be temporary: a mourned love-object may at some stage be replaced; however, for those condemned as terminally ill, the denial of life and of a future, and consequently the loss of hope, engenders an all-pervasive melancholy that is as infectious as disease itself. The palpable sense of melancholy which is evident throughout *Der Zauberberg* is transmitted through the novel's subject matter, its characters and even its structure. Furthermore, the reader accompanies Hans Castorp on his journey to the Berghof and shares his thoughts, experiences and emotions during his seven-year stay there, but at the end of the novel Hans Castorp disappears somewhere in the trenches of the First World War and most likely dies on the battlefield, thus continuing the cycle of loss.

[21] Freud notes that 'the most remarkable characteristic of melancholia […] is its tendency to change round into mania – a state which is the opposite of it in its symptoms.' ('Mourning and Melancholia', p. 253). Interestingly Freud relates this manic condition to the elated state of alcoholic intoxication as both are the result of a temporary 'triumph' over the cause of the depression. Freud states that 'in mania, the ego must have got over the loss of the object (or its mourning over the loss, or perhaps the object itself), and thereupon the whole quota of anticathexis which the painful suffering of melancholia had drawn to itself from the ego and 'bound' will have become available. Moreover, the manic subject plainly demonstrates his liberation from the object which was the cause of his suffering, by seeking like a ravenously hungry man for new object-cathexis.' (See 'Mourning and Melancholia', pp. 253-55).

A Melancholy of my Own: Melancholy in Orhan Pamuk's *Istanbul: Memories and the City*

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It is a melancholy of mine own, compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects.[1]

Abstract: Turkish novelist and 2006 Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk's memoir *Istanbul: Şehir ve Hatıralar* (*Istanbul: Memories and the City*) (2003) is a recent addition to the literature on melancholy. In the memoir, Pamuk identifies with the city, and diagnoses its predominant mood as the melancholy of a city in a state of decrepitude. Istanbul in his account is a humanized city suffering from chronic, even pathological, sadness, which transmits its mood to its inhabitants. Pamuk uses a Turkish word, *hüzün,* denoting a medley of melancholy, sadness and *tristesse,* to unite the city, its past and its present within a timeless as well as transnational feeling. This article addresses a key question in the context of Pamuk's personalised understanding: how does melancholy make sense when relating to Istanbul, and, reciprocally, what makes the city's melancholy, as it arises from Pamuk's work, stand out from the large body of literature on the term? I respond by tracing the imagery of melancholy in Pamuk's work, in relation to the complex meanings and imagery of the term, to show how they find expression in the memoir.

'The Tower of Babel never yielded such confusion of tongues as this chaos of melancholy doth variety of symptoms,' laments Robert Burton in his colossal *Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621).[2] Burton's complaint, dating from four centuries ago, highlights the difficulty in defining the term. Derived from the Greek *melan khole,* or black bile, and linked to the theory

[1] William Shakespeare, *As You Like It,* ed. by S.C. Burchell (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1954), IV.1.17.

[2] Robert Burton, *Anatomy of Melancholy* (London: J.M. Dent, 1932), p.12.

of the four humours, melancholy was originally viewed as a form of mental illness, caused by an invasion of the brain by vapours rising from the spleen, the source of black, bilious humour. It was also associated with gloom resulting from intellectual talent, scholarly pursuits and creativity, defining thus a gamut of contradictory mental, emotional and intellectual states.[3] Its conceptions and representations, ranging from Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther* (1774) to Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *Memories of My Melancholy Whores* (2005) and Lars von Trier's 2011 film *Melancholia*; from the theory of the four humours to psychoanalysis; from the blues to *fado*; from spleen to *saudade* and *tristesse* are connected, though not necessarily equivalent, to the term. With theorists such as Aristotle, Avicenna, Walter Benjamin, Sigmund Freud and Judith Butler, melancholy traverses the arts, sciences and literatures across cultures and histories.[4]

Orhan Pamuk's *Istanbul: Memories and the City* (2003) is a recent addition to the literature on melancholy.[5] In the memoir, Pamuk identifies the predominant mood of the city

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[3] See Jennifer Radden, 'Introduction: From Melancholic States to Clinical Depression' *The Nature of Melancholy from Aristotle to Kristeva*, ed. by Jennifer Radden (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), pp. 3-51.

[4] For Aristotle, Avicenna and Sigmund Freud, see Jennifer Radden, *The Nature of Melancholy: From Aristotle to Kristeva* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). For Walter Benjamin's elaboration of the term, see his *The Writer of Modern Life: Essays on Charles Baudelaire*, ed. by Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006). Judith Butler's comprehensive discussion of melancholy can be found in *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), pp. 132-198.

[5] This article is based on the Turkish title, *İstanbul: Şehir ve Hatıralar* (*Istanbul: City and the Memories*) (İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2003). I use the English translation by Maureen

as the melancholy of a city in decrepitude:

> Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun yıkım duygusu, yoksulluk ve şehri kaplayan yıkıntıların verdiği hüzün, bütün hayatım boyunca, İstanbul'u belirleyen şeyler oldu. Hayatım bu hüzünle savaşarak ya da onu, bütün İstanbullular gibi en sonunda benimseyerek geçti. (15)
>
> For me, it has always been a city of ruins and of end-of-empire melancholy. I have spent my life either battling with this melancholy or (like all *Istanbullus*) making it my own. (6)

Pamuk's Istanbul is a humanised city suffering from chronic, even pathological sadness, which transmits its mood to its inhabitants. The inhabitants of Istanbul accumulate and personalise melancholy through experiencing the city. Nevertheless, notwithstanding the attribution of melancholy to a city, the above lines echo the quotation from *As You Like It* which opens this article and encapsulates the struggle to come up with a personal and personalised conception of melancholy. This article stems from a key question about Pamuk's personalised understanding: how does melancholy make sense when relating to Istanbul, and, reciprocally, what makes the city's melancholy, as it arises in the memoir, stand out from the large body of literature on the term? The following pages aim to answer these questions by tracing the imagery of melancholy in Pamuk's work, particularly the memoir.

Freely, *Istanbul: Memories of A City* (London: Faber-Farrar, 2005). Freely's translation omits subtleties of meaning crucial for a nuanced reading of Pamuk's melancholy which, due to space constraints, will be traced elsewhere.

Melancholy in Pamuk's work

In the contemporary popular sense of the word, melancholy, denoting deep, pensive and long-lasting sadness, is a recurrent theme in Pamuk's work. His earlier novels, *Cevdet Bey ve Oğulları* (*Cevdet Bey and His Sons*) (1982), *Sessiz Ev* (*Silent House*) (1983), and *Beyaz Kale* (*White Castle*) (1985), recount bitter opposition between the main characters and their surroundings.[6] In later novels, the melancholic disposition becomes an attribute of the main character: Galip in *Kara Kitap* (*The Black Book*) (1990) in search of a lost lover; Osman in *Yeni Hayat* (*The New Life*) (1994) on a quest to find Canan, the object of his unrequited love; Kara in *Benim Adim Kırmızı* (*My Name Is Red*) (1998) commissioned to revive a fading art and solve a murder case, while trying to rekindle an old love; Ka in *Kar* (*Snow*) (2002) reconciling bitter oppositions to win the heart of the beautiful İpek, an old flame, in the derelict city of Kars in northeast Turkey; Kemal in *Masumiyet Müzesi* (*The Museum of Innocence*) (2008) realising the strength of his love for Füsun, a distant relative, only after he loses her.[7]

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[6] Orhan Pamuk, *Cevdet Bey ve Oğullari* (*Cevdet Bey and his Sons*) (İstanbul: Iletişim, 1982); *Sessiz Ev* (*Silent House*) (İstanbul: İletişim, 1983); *Beyaz Kale* (*White Castle*) (İstanbul: İletişim, 1985). Dates in this and the following note refer to publication in Turkish.

[7] Orhan Pamuk, *Kara Kitap* (*The Black Book*) (İstanbul: İletişim, 1990); *Yeni Hayat* (*New Life*) (İstanbul: İletişim 1994); *Benim Adim Kirmizi* (*My Name Is Red*) (İstanbul: İletişim 1998); *Kar* (*Snow*) (Istanbul: Iletişim 2002); *Masumiyet Muzesi* (*Museum of Innocence*) (İstanbul: İletişim, 2008).

Melancholy appears as a leitmotif that characterises the plot and the protagonists, entailing futile quests or searches that end in vain. This loss, however, does not simply convey sadness or pessimism; it leads to a generative urge that accompanies the feeling of loss. All of Pamuk's novels end with a character transfiguring the story into a novel. Melancholy as such is not simple sadness. With a further twist, the creativity that accompanies loss is itself melancholic. Pamuk's use relates to the contemporary conceptions of the term. The uses of melancholy in social and cultural studies mostly take their cue from Sigmund Freud's 1917 essay, 'Mourning and Melancholia'.[8] Freud differentiated mourning from melancholia, and defined the first as a normal, and the second as a pathological reaction to loss. In usual mourning, the subject overcomes the feeling of loss after a period of grief; with melancholia, however, the subject resists confronting the loss of the object and preserves it through a process of introjection. Recent conceptualisations of melancholia, on the other hand, provide alternative readings of Freud's essay. Melancholia is not about loss, but about the introjection of the lost object, an idealised identification with it and the emerging confusion between the object and the self.[9] In other words, it is a loss that feeds the sufferer.

[8] 'Sigmund Freud, "Mourning and Melancholy" (1917)' in *The Nature of Melancholy from Aristotle to Kristeva*, ed. by Jennifer Radden, pp. 283-94.

[9] See Ross Chambers, *Mélancolie et Opposition: Les débuts du modernisme en France* (Paris: Corti, 1987) and Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989) on the link between melancholia and imagination; see Judith Butler, *The Psychic Life of Power: Theories in Subjection* (1997) on the link between melancholia and the ego.

The blur between the self and the object, loss and gain, resonates in the distinction between melancholia and melancholy. Pamuk's melancholy feeds upon this same blur: drawing from the intimate link between the popular and the pathological, the individual and the collective, he develops an understanding of the concept that becomes a trademark of his writing. It is in his *Istanbul*, however, that the aesthetic is explored in terms of its cultural implications.

Hüzün: the names of melancholy in Istanbul

Pamuk's own brand of melancholy has a specific name: *hüzün.* In the memoir, he uses this Turkish word, denoting a medley of melancholy, sadness and *tristesse*, to unite the city and its past and its present within a timeless as well as a transnational feeling. In the eponymous chapter devoted to its definition, *hüzün* emerges through a dialogue with definitions from Eastern and Western traditions. Starting with the Arabic etymology of the word, Pamuk bases the Turkish understanding of the word on Islam, and its use in the *Koran* (82). However, he cites two contradictory approaches in Islam to evoke the ambiguity of the concept. In the traditional Islamic understanding, *hüzün* is considered a sign of excessive attachment to earthly pleasures. In the Sufi understanding of the word, on the other hand, *hüzün* is cherished as an awareness of the separation of the self from God, as well as an effort on God's part to break away from loneliness and it is therefore a constitutive part of the Creation.

The Islamic conception is contrasted with the Western tradition, as melancholy is introduced as the counterpart of *hüzün*. With references to the etymology of the word, to Aristotle, and to Montaigne, Pamuk's melancholy reveals a scholarly disposition, alluding to the role of creativity and scholarly learning in the concept. Pamuk's Western-perspectived account of *hüzün* draws mainly from Burton's *Anatomy of Melancholy*, a work that praises melancholy, and, while not excluding collective or religious melancholy, focuses on it as an individual feeling of loss (82–3). The second Western source in this chapter on *hüzün*, on the other hand, shows that the term generates mixed responses in Western traditions as well. The link between *hüzün* and the fall of the Ottoman Empire, for Pamuk, evokes *tristesse* -- the same sadness that the late French anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss detects in the ex-colonies in the tropics and defines in his *Tristes Tropiques* (1955). Involving another major temporal leap, *tristesse* allows for an allusion to the legacy of Western colonialism, and thus for the incorporation of a political note. Nevertheless, Pamuk is quick to fend off the likeness he evokes between *hüzün*, melancholy and *tristesse*. *Hüzün* in Istanbul diverts not only from its Islamic understanding but also from Burton's individualistic and from Lévi-Strauss's anthropological approach. Unlike the Islamic understanding, Pamuk's use of the concept is about the relation to the city and not to God; unlike Burton's scholarly melancholy, *hüzün* is collective and rooted in the everyday. And finally, unlike *tristesse*, the legacy of colonialism on a 'guilt-ridden Westerner', *hüzün* is a local feeling that escapes the outside observer (93).

An idiosyncratic appreciation of the city's 'beautiful places', it is a local aesthetics conjoined with this feeling.

Pamuk's emphasis shifts his historical source of the term to incorporate opposites. In this autobiography moulded around a city, tracing personal feelings is inextricably linked to tracing collective ones, particularly the city's cultural history and its present. Pamuk comments:

> Çocukluğumun İstanbul'unun bende uyandırdığı yoğun hüzün duygusunun kaynaklarını sezmek için, bir yandan tarihe, Osmanlı Devleti'nin yıkılışının sonuçlarına, bir yandan da bu tarihin şehrin "güzel" manzaralarında ve insanlarında yansıyış biçimine bakmak gerek. (93)
>
> If I am to convey the intensity of the *hüzün* that Istanbul caused me to feel as a child, I must describe the history of the city following the destruction of the Ottoman Empire, and - even more important - the way this history is reflected in the city's 'beautiful' landscapes and its people. (82)

The feeling as such becomes the motif that combines experiences of the city with its history and geography. The same point helps makes sense of the difference between melancholy and *hüzün.* In Pamuk's words,

> Şimdi hüznü melankoliden ayıran şeye geliyoruz. Tek bir kişinin duyduğu melankoliye değil, milyonlarca kişinin ortaklaşa hissettiği o kara duyguya, hüzne yaklaşıyoruz. Bütün bir şehrin, İstanbul'un hüznünden söz etmeye çalışıyorum. (94)
>
> Now we begin to understand *hüzün* as, not the melancholy of a solitary person, but the black mood shared by millions of people together. What I am trying to explain is the *hüzün* of an entire city, of Istanbul. (83)

What distinguishes *hüzün* from melancholy is its communality. This recurring theme throughout the memoir marks Istanbul, emerging in its views, its imperial past and decrepit present, and in its inhabitants.

A recurring theme throughout the memoir, *hüzün* also marks the representations of the city. Pamuk's memoir draws from a wide array of travellers, ranging from a fellow Nobel laureate, the Russian Joseph Brodsky (214–15), to the eighteenth-century Austrian painter Antoine-Ignace Melling (Chapter 7, 'Melling's Bosphorus') and Le Corbusier (34). Nevertheless, the main emphasis is placed upon the French writers who visited the city in the nineteenth century, Gérard de Nerval, Gustave Flaubert, Théophile Gautier and the great Turcophile, Pierre Loti. To cite an example, in the chapter on Gautier, Pamuk refers to Gautier's account of his sojourn in the city, *Constantinople* (1853), as a proclamation of the melancholy of the city: a walk through the neighbourhoods and cemeteries along the Byzantine walls, for Gautier, is the most melancholic on earth (209). Nevertheless, for Pamuk, rather than simply poeticising the exotic decrepitude of the city, these writers mainly reflected on their individual problems: the beginnings of a deadly depression in Nerval in Chapter 23, a friend's cherished memories overlapping with rekindled public interest in Istanbul for Gautier (Chapter 24), syphilis for Flaubert (Chapter 31) and wanderlust coupled with belle-époque ennui in Loti's case. These, and similar depictions of the city, according to Pamuk, are formative to the melancholy image of the city:

> Anlatmaya çalıştığım şey, [hüznün] bir kavram olarak keşfi, ifade edilmesi, seslendirilmesi ve bunların itibarlı Fransız şairlerince (melankolik arkadaşı Nerval'in etkisiyle Gautier) ilk yazılmış olmasının sonuçları. (220)
>
> What I am trying to explain is that the roots of our *hüzün* are European: the concept was first explored, expressed, and poeticized in French (by Gautier, under the influence of his friend Nerval). (210)

The above lines both pay homage and convey a sense of indebtedness to the work of the nineteenth-century French writers.[10] The choice of period and writers is significant: the nineteenth century marks the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent impoverishment of the city, as opposed to the unprecedented expansion of the Western European Empires, notably the French and the British. These writers' outlook on Istanbul epitomises the Orientalist tradition that Edward Said has problematised in *Orientalism*.[11] Pamuk's preoccupation with the Western origins of *hüzün* displays melancholy not simply as an aesthetic sensibility but also as a sign of an East-West rift and as a 'Western' product

[10] Absent from the memoir, but pivotal to Pamuk's understanding is the urban melancholy of Charles Baudelaire, and Walter Benjamin's interpretation of it (*Les Fleurs du Mal*, trans. by James N McGowan [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993]). Baudelaire's melancholy, almost always associated with the streets of Paris, is characterised by glorification of melancholy and the man of sensibility who is prone to the feeling. In 'The Swan' from *Parisian Tableaux* (1861), a stroll along the boulevards newly designed by Baron Haussmann, makes him remember all who have lost something they may not find again. Baudelaire's Paris in this poem is an allegory and his melancholy feeds on the loss brought by the rapid urbanisation of the city. Baudelaire's Paris and the link between melancholy and urbanscape are made even more significant by Walter Benjamin's writings on the topic, notably *The Writer of Modern Life: Essays on Charles Baudelaire*.. Benjamin contributes to the tradition of the melancholic thinker not only through his depictions of Baudelaire as a genius nourished by melancholy, but also through his persona. Due to space constraints, this line of thought will be traced elsewhere.

[11] Edward Said, *Orientalism* (London: Routledge, 1978).

introjected by the East. Nevertheless, instead of setting East against West, as in the initial theorising of the concept in the eponymous chapter on *hüzün*, the rest of the memoir presents the concept in its myriad faces within the perimeters of Istanbul. In other words, Pamuk's response to the Western origins of *hüzün* is one that makes them part of *his* literary cityscape.

With Abdülhak Şinasi Hisar the Bosporus memoirist, Reşat Ekrem Koçu the writer of the unfinished *Istanbul Encyclopaedia*, Yahya Kemal the great poet of the republic and of Istanbul, and Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar the novelist of Istanbul, or 'the four lonely melancholic writers' of the early twentieth century, as Pamuk refers to them in chapter 20, the western 'roots' of *hüzün* acquire different undertones.[12] *Hüzün* is not the same as the melancholy of the scholar. Like Burton's *Anatomy,* Koçu's *Encyclopaedia* stems from the writer's melancholy. However, unlike Burton's work, Koçu's encyclopaedia is unfinished, a failure that Pamuk considers a sign of Istanbul's disorientating cityscape, as well as the writer's melancholy. Pamuk's favourite Turkish writers of the early twentieth century reflected on the decrepitude of the city through their knowledge of French literature in order to develop a sensibility that bridges the remains of the Ottoman Empire and the emerging culture of the Turkish Republic, and to find in it a means both to be authentic and to emulate their favourite writers (101). Thus, we read about Tanpınar and Kemal following Gautier's footsteps in the

[12] Esra Akcan points to the similarity between Baudelaire's and Pamuk's conceptions of melancholy, where the term becomes a feeling attached to the object, and not to the subject (179). See Esra Akcan, 'Melancholy and "The Other"', *Cogito*, 43 (2005), 1-11.

1940s, almost a century later, as well as the young Pamuk travelling into the same derelict parts of the city in the 1970s, nearly thirty years later. The presence of the Ottoman past through the monumental buildings feeds these writers' nostalgia for past grandeur as well as their awareness of present decrepitude: *hüzün* becomes a 'choice' (93).

Pamuk's *hüzün* infiltrates the city itself as its mark of distinction, its collective emotion and part of everyday reality, uniting the city and its inhabitants, the newcomers with the locals (83). The two-page-long inventory of the scenes that evoke the feeling ranges from

> hiç kimsenin altı yıldır yes ve no demekten başka bir şey öğrenemediği, bitip tükenmez İngilizce derslerinde canları sıkılan öğrencilerden. (98)
>
> bored high-school students in never ending English classes where after six years no one has learned to say anything but "yes" and "no". (88)

to

> sonbahar yaklaşırken Balkanlar'dan, Doğu ve Kuzey Avrupa'dan gelip Güney'e giderken Boğaz'ın, adaların üzerinden geçen leylekleri bütün şehrin seyretmesinden. (101)
>
> the storks flying south from the Balkans and northern and western Europe as autumn nears, gazing down over the entire city as they waft over the Bosphorus and the islands of the Marmara. (89)

Hüzün in this context is not an elitist feeling exclusive to artistic creativity, but a sensibility that informs both high and low culture—the poetics of the city and a quotidian way of dealing with them. The memoir doubly implicates the city as a locus of melancholy, one that draws from multiple histories, heritages and traditions.

Conclusion

Melancholy is private and public, personal and collective; it can be affirmative, but also pathological and hostile. *Hüzün*, or Istanbul's melancholy according to Pamuk, speaks to the same contradictions inherent in the concept. It allows the self to connect to society, the city to Islamic and Western traditions, the individual to the public, and high culture to low. Istanbul's *hüzün* does not simply combine the city with the self, the East and the West, and the past and the present; it emerges as an emotion, which draws from and relates to different, even contrasting conceptions of the term. What starts out as a natural outcome of the past glory of a bygone empire is elaborated so that its definition changes with each perspective included; drawing from histories that took place and are unique to Istanbul's distinctive history and topography, comprising all, and yet reducible to none. And perhaps the skill with which Pamuk can join these within the literary cityscape of Istanbul leads him to claim that the melancholy of the city has no counterpart in either Eastern or Western cultures.

A means of self empowerment, *hüzün* in the memoir is glorified. The city and the text, in other words, lament, but also celebrate decay, loss and the resulting melancholy and isolation, making Istanbul's *hüzün* something exceptional and definitive. The literary as well as the philosophical representations of *hüzün* invoked in the memoir establish melancholy not as a lack but as an ideal, not pathological but poetic, with Istanbul as its literary capital.