

“Mapping the Boundaries of Melancholy and Depression  
Through Psychoanalysis and Intimate Literature”  
Article submission to *Psyart*, June 2013

Comments for Referees:

My comments to the referees' concerns and criticisms are in italics.

1-"Generally the author is best when reading intimately, not when dropping names of theorists she imagines will be impressive to the reader." & "There is an ironic, even humorously inadvertent, hint that the author herself recognizes that sometimes the psychotherapist's tools are rather too blunt for literary analysis." *In response to these kindred points, I have cut down drastically on the name-dropping and have developed my own arguments that are enlightened, but not heavily burdened by psychoanalytic theory.*

2- "My question is simply this: Does one need this small army of heavies to read de Beauvoir's story and recognize that Monique is having a crisis of personal identity? It seems like heavy-handedness, if not overkill. What other kind of loss could even a naïve reader completely ignorant of Horney et al imagine Monique to be suffering?"

*In response to this criticism, I have elaborated on what the sense of loss of identity means: For example, I write in my article: "This analysis will allow us to conclude that the real sense of loss pertains to the loss of her personal identity. Even though this may seem unoriginal, it must be stressed that Monique ironically mourns the loss of an identity that insured her own self-destruction. In other words, her original self-identity had been constructed as a means to discourage development, and the break-up of her marriage curiously does not destroy her, but rather propels her to put herself back together in new ways."*

3- "The author admits that "while Monique may not seem at first glance to gain relief from psychotherapy, she does experience catharsis by keeping a diary, which we as readers have access to, since it is the story itself." Is this anything more profound than saying that many people, especially women like Monique, find it helpful to keep a diary recording their experiences and emotions?" *In response to this very pertinent criticism, I have reworked my presentation of the section on journaling; my arguments are more nuanced. I write, for instance, "Eventually the journaling process becomes therapeutic, as it is a form of enlightenment and then a cathartic experience for Monique. Although the idea that journaling is therapeutic seems unimaginative, it should be pointed out that this statement puts pressure on Kristeva's position. She holds that literary representations are more about catharsis than about elaboration. (24). If we wish to speak about catharsis in Monique's case, then we would have to return first to the psychiatrist's office, where she tells the psychiatrist off." I present therefore four precise explanations as to why journaling is both about elaboration and catharsis and hence therapeutic.*

4-"Particularly intriguing is the discussion of whether the woman is rompue or destroyed (ecrasee? Detruite?)--even though this question is alas not satisfactorily answered by the author—even though the author says Monique is broken but not destroyed, the case is not

quite persuasively made.” *To this, I respond that I have attempted to make my case much more explicit. For example, this is how I summarize my position in the conclusion:*

*“If Monique is able to engage in the therapeutic process of telling the psychiatrist off and writing a diary, then it becomes evident that she has begun a journey of healing. This reveals that Monique is not completely “destroyed” as the English title suggests, but rather “broken” as the original French title intimates. She is broken, in fact, and trying to put herself back together again. Further, if we are going to talk about destruction, then it becomes apparent that the dissolution of her marriage allows her to destroy the disingenuous identities of the Mater Dolorosa and the child, which propels her to define herself in new ways.”*

*Thank you very much for your feedback.*