AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Jessica D. Travers for the degree of Master of Arts in English presented on December 03, 2012

Title: Caution – Ideological Mechanisms at Work: Interpellation and the Melancholic Turn in Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* and Ernest Hemingway's *The Garden of Eden*

Abstract approved:

Evan Gottlieb

In this thesis I examine the ideological mechanisms that work to constitute, construct, and maintain subject identity. Such mechanisms include repetition, performativity, identification, and interpellation. I incorporate structuralist, post-structuralist, and psychoanalytic theories as a means to discuss the ways in which gender, sexuality, and identity are performative masquerades. Furthermore, these ideological mechanisms and heteronormative paradigms have the paradoxical power to produce both incurable melancholia and unrealized possibilities alike. Given this conversation, I turn to theorists such as Louis Althusser, Slavoj Žižek, and Judith Butler; these theorists employ different theoretical approaches and consequently their explanations regarding how and why identity is manufactured frequently differ. From this productive point of difference, I apply the theories to a literary analysis of Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* and Ernest Hemingway's *The Garden of Eden*. Paired together, the critical theories and literary works act to complicate and nuance each other, and collectively introduce valuable insights regarding who or what is subject.

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Caution – Ideological Mechanisms at Work:
Interpellation and the Melancholic Turn in Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*
and Ernest Hemingway's *The Garden of Eden*

by
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A THESIS

submitted to

Oregon State University

in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the
degree of

Master of Arts

Presented December 03, 2012
Commencement June 2013

Master of Arts thesis of Jessica D. Travers presented on December 03, 2012.

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I understand that my thesis will become part of the permanent collection of Oregon State University libraries. My signature below authorizes release of my thesis to any reader upon request.

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Jessica D. Travers, Author

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I’d like to give my appreciation to the remarkable and supportive faculty, staff, and community of Oregon State’s School of Writing, Literature, and Film. Thank you Susan Meyers for, well, everything. Thanks Ann Leen for your scheduling magic and for knowing all the answers during my many panics. Many thanks to my thesis committee. Dr. Rubert, thanks for being part of this process. Tara, thank you for being an inspiration and for teaching me in your Chaucer course to first and foremost get a sense of the critical conversation. Kerry, thank you for your reassurance and for telling me that it all starts with paragraphs; it was the day you gave me that advice that I began to write this thesis. Evan, you motivated me, inspired me, encouraged me, and helped me get ahold of all this theory stuff! I’ve been so lucky to work with you and gain from your skill, expertise, and guidance. Thanks to all my friends in the department. To my officemates: Andrea, Matt, Allen, Adam, Bill – thanks for being there when I needed to vent, and for being such smart, amazing comrades. Dan, you helped keep me sane. Thanks to Liz, my resourceful and brilliant colleague, your friendship is invaluable. Thank you to my friends and family back home. Thanks Tess for being a sounding board for my ramblings. Thanks Mom and Tom for your ongoing and loving reassurance. Simone, thanks for making graduate school (and life) even more meaningful. Joel, your patience and love made this possible – thank you most of all.

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Caution – Ideological Mechanisms at Work: Interpellation and the Melancholic Turn in Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* and Ernest Hemingway's *The Garden of Eden*

Introduction

> When a thought/ comes a-springing from afar with its held-/ forth figure of image, you spoof it out,/ you spuff it off, you fake it, and/ it fades, and though never comes—and/ with joy you realize for the first time/ 'Thinking's just like nothing—/ So I dont have to think/ any/ more.'
>
> —Jack Kerouac

> Gentlemen, you are criticizing my arithmetic when I am long ago into calculus.
>
> —Ernest Hemingway

While investigating identity formation and subjectivation, I believe it is constructive to consider theorists and theories that arose from the Frankfurt School, psychoanalytic, structuralist, and post-structuralist backgrounds. This kind of theoretical and critical consideration is especially productive, as it examines how the subject interprets, navigates, and is placed by a culture laden with ideological constructs. With that in mind, my thesis will look to Louis Althusser, Jacques Lacan, Slavoj Žižek, and Eve Sedgwick for insight. Additionally, the critic whose theories I will be working most closely with is Judith Butler, especially her theories pertaining to gender performativity, the erroneous conflation of gender and sex constructs, identity formation via

interpellation, and melancholia. In order to fully engage with and tease out Butler's arguments, I consider her postulations in tandem with the schools and writers mentioned just above. This kind of theoretical summit, I maintain, is particularly fruitful because although these theorists often take different critical approaches and use contrasting lenses while explaining how identity is manufactured, the end product is one that can ultimately and productively nuance and contextualize literary analysis. My intention, then, is to consider and potentially complicate various theories regarding identity construction and ideological subject formation via analyses of two distinct literary voices and works: Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* and Ernest Hemingway's *The Garden of Eden*.

My purpose in this endeavor is manifold. I aim to explore how theories regarding subjectification are demonstrated in the literary texts through both language and narrative. We'll see that these voices, ideas, and manifestations not only illuminate, but also occasionally complicate the theories themselves. While doing so, I also look specifically at Butler's understanding of the construction of personal identity, with an especially discerning eye on her consideration of melancholia as injury, an injurious result of limiting ideological choices. For instance, in much of Butler's work, and for my purposes here I will look primarily to her texts *Gender Trouble* and *The Psychic Life of Power*, she examines the ways in which the ideological subject

is hailed or interpellated into taking a position among and because of certain powerful social structures, mechanisms, and pressures. Furthermore, these mechanisms are not benign. In fact, for Butler the mechanisms at work during this process of identity construction are potentially quite pernicious:

> I come into social being, and because I have a certain inevitable attachment to my existence… I am led to embrace the terms that injure me because they constitute me socially… If, then, we understand certain kinds of interpellations to confer identity, those injurious interpellations will constitute identity through injury. (*Psychic Life* 105)

Because we have a necessary desire to be constituted or situated (or maybe even validated) socially, we are willing to, or indeed must endure certain psychic limitations and/or harmful effects.

We'll see, then, that the harms and limitations necessarily connected to subjectivation through cultural hailing fasten the subject in a melancholic state, and this is where Butler converses with the theoretical foundations of Michel Foucault, and even more so with Sigmund Freud's. Žižek deftly explains how Butler has adapted and modified the Freudian theory regarding mourning and melancholia:

> Butler has endeavored to supplement her early 'constructionist' criticism of psychoanalysis by a 'positive' account of the formation of (masculine and feminine) sexual identity, which draws on the Freudian mechanism of mourning and melancholy… Butler's logic is impeccable in its very simplicity: Freud insists that the result of the loss of a libidinal object – the way to overcome the melancholy apropos of this loss – is identification with the lost object: does this not also hold for our sexual identities? Is not the 'normal' heterosexual identity the

> result of successfully overcoming melancholy by identifying with the lost object of the same sex, while the homosexual is the one who refuses fully to come to terms with the loss, and continues to cling to the lost object? Butler's first result is thus that the primordial Foreclosure is not the prohibition of incest: the prohibition of incest already presupposes the predominance of the heterosexual norm… and this norm itself came into place through the foreclosure of the homosexual attachment. (*Ticklish Subject* 269-70)

It is at this site of loss where Butler interjects her revised theory of Freud's mourning and melancholia. For her, the subject does not "refuse" to come to terms with the loss – as Žižek implies above – the subject is instead unable to do so because of strict ideological codes and pressure from the symbolic order. Moreover, in the previous passage Žižek correlates the loss with the homosexual subject (in this instance, the homosexual subject clings to the same-sex object and refuses the disavowal), whereas Butler makes the connection between loss and melancholia by way of the heterosexual subject (the heterosexual subject is socially pressured to disavow the same-sex object or "passionate attachment"). She further grounds her argument through Freud as she points out that, "If the ego is composed of identifications, and the identification is the resolution of desire, then the ego is the residue of desire, the effect of incorporations which, Freud argues in *The Ego and the Id*, trace a lineage of attachment and loss" (*Psychic Life* 102-103). In Butler's view, the loss that accompanies every process of subjectivation relates to certain repudiated desires (which she specifically connects to homosexual proclivities)

and the social prohibition to act on or explore such desires. Because subjects are situated in a nearly dichotomous heterosexual/heteronormative existence, we are unable to properly acknowledge and mourn the loss of such desires that are deemed culturally non-normative. Melancholia, for Freud, is loss without mourning, which results in the inability to make sense of a fractured identity, an identity that is always and constantly being written and rewritten. This state is a difficult, maybe impossible one from which to escape.

In order to navigate through and probe at these theoretical premises, I will turn to how the necessarily unresolved condition of subjecthood is illustrated in both Kerouac's *On the Road* and Hemingway's *The Garden of Eden*. I have specifically chosen these two authors because of their simultaneous divergent and homogenous qualities. Their writing styles and the subject matter in the novels greatly differ, for instance. On the other hand, the authors often come together thematically in their work; for example, gender and sex stereotypes are emphasized in both *On the Road* and *The Garden of Eden*. In fact, it is this similarity that I find especially interesting. Kerouac and Hemingway both came out of and are writing to mid-twentieth century America – a time when gender and sexual codes of identity were strictly defined. It is this shared milieu that makes the two such a productive pairing – it is in response to and out of such a staunch and hyper-traditional cultural space that they are able to use gender and sex norms as means to subvert the

idea that such conventions are innate or natural. Though Kerouac and Hemingway go about it in very different ways, they both illustrate ideological mechanisms at work.

Furthermore, these literary texts pair particularly well with Butler's claims: together they highlight the ideological apparatuses involved in identity formation. More specifically, while considering these theoretical applications and novels in tandem it becomes evident that we all perform the gender to which we are socially assigned and that this performance is limiting. This constriction, according to Butler, causes severe, perpetual, malignant melancholia, a melancholia related to the societal *and* psychic contract regarding heterosexual performance. I will unpack this implicit contract between subject and society, a contractual performative agreement. In doing so, my intention is not to subvert this assumption – I aim, instead, to analyze and expand on Butler's ideological theories and look at how the resulting implications speak not only to gender and sexuality performance but also to heteronormativity and even to the overarching and broader formation of identity. It is with these ideas in mind that in the following chapters I turn to *On the Road* and *The Garden of Eden*. We'll see ideological mechanisms at work through protagonists Sal and Catherine, for instance, as both of these characters demonstrate the performance of gender, sex, and sexuality, and consequently speak to the performance of subjecthood in general.

However, before looking at *On the Road* and *The Garden of Eden* through a primarily Butlerian lens it is important to first establish a critical foundation by getting a sense of the scholarly conversation surrounding each novel. First, let's look at *On the Road* criticism. Given the novel's title, it's perhaps not surprising that mobility and geography are themes commonly addressed while criticizing the text. Tim Cresswell, for example, explores

> the apparent paradox of the ways in which mobility is used in Jack Kerouac's novel *On the Road* (1957). On the one hand the frantic directionless mobility of the central figures in *On the Road* represents a form of resistance to the 'establishment.' On the other hand mobility is clearly a central theme in mainstream North American culture. (249)

In probing this paradox, Cresswell finds that the themes of mobility and cultural geography in Kerouac's text mean to resist hegemonic ideologies, especially those belief systems and myths related to the American Dream. In "Changing Lanes: Textuality Off and On the Road," Simon Rycroft responds to Cresswell, explaining that

> Anglo-American geography has occasionally studied, sometimes plundered literature as a source of geographical meaning, from the subjective experience of characters/ authors to the use of fiction in the reconstruction of topographies and regions… only recently have geographers turned to a more critical engagement with literary texts… and it is in this that I find some problems with… Cresswell's… readings. (425)

Rycroft asserts here that critics like Cresswell should not be limited to a literal or even cultural concept of geography while glossing *On the Road*. The text, for Rycroft, is geographical in terms of its linguistic and discursive

topographical nuances: *On the Road* "represents an innovative departure in… [Kerouac's] work and his experimentation with spontaneous prose and 'sketching'" (425). This destabilization of language and its rhetorical geography, then, speaks to the way *On the Road,* like other Beat literature, liberates restrictive ways of seeing and behaving. Rycroft's criticism also reflects other themes that critics have broached while interpreting the text: the American myth as construct and the connection between improvisational jazz music and the spontaneous narrative style, for instance. Jazz is a thematic element throughout *On the Road*, and critics have related this thread to interpretations regarding race and how "as a young writer, Kerouac attempted to escape from the constraints of the bourgeois position which awaited him by seeking out a liberated discursive space in an exploration of American racial heterogeneity" (Holton 265). While looking at these various themes that have been considered while criticizing *On the Road*, I must also mention here that compared to many critical conversations, for example the one surrounding Hemingway, there is a relatively small body of analysis that considers Kerouac's text. Moreover, and as I've suggested above, there is a common thread that connects much *On the Road* criticism: the text is often read in terms of how its language and narrative highlight the causes and effects of ideological counter-culture.[1] For the most part, however, the broader critical

[1] In addition to aforementioned critical works, Marco Abel's "Speeding Across the

conversation does not examine how the specific themes of gender and especially sexuality in *On the Road* undermine those cultural norms, and this is the niche that I seek to explore.

In contrast to *On the Road*, there is much *Garden of Eden* criticism that examines the ideological realms of gender and sexuality. Additionally, there is a multitude of voices in the conversation around Hemingway's text in general. However, like so much of the *On the Road* criticism, *The Garden of Eden* is often filtered by critics through a common lens, in this case it is the controversy surrounding the novel's posthumous publication. The controversy revolves around the fact that the published novel is a greatly truncated version compared to Hemingway's huge original (unfinished) manuscript. Furthermore, the debate relates not only to the amount of text omitted during editing, but also to the possibility that certain thematic threads may have been cut during the process. In other words, critics have glossed *The Garden of Eden* in a wide variety of ways, using feminist, post-colonial, mythological, and new historical approaches, yet most of these critics then apply their given lens to one principle consideration: considering how and/or why the published text differs from the original manuscript. For example, in their article "Tribal Things: Hemingway's Erotics of Truth," Nancy R. Comley and Robert Scholes

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Rhizome: Deleuze Meets Kerouac on the Road" and Mikelli Eftychia's "'Passing Everybody and Never Halting': Dromos and Speed in Jack Kerouac's *On the Road*" also consider this common lens.

were among the first critics to concentrate on the issue of race and how it is treated in the novel, and they do so while comparing the manuscript to the printed edition. More specifically, they call attention to the way race and "tribal things" (a phrase used in Hemingway's original manuscript) in the novel are connected to sexuality; in doing so, the critics maintain that tribal things have

> an erotic significance, developed explicitly in the manuscript of *The Garden of Eden* but foreshadowed earlier in many parts of the larger Hemingway 'text'… these themes or threads are: (1) the search for truth itself and the means to express it, (2) an interest in race and peoples seen as 'darker' and more 'primitive' than Euro-Americans, and (3) a fascination (attraction/repulsion) with transgressive sexuality. (186)

Though Comley and Scholes use *The Garden of Eden* (both the manuscript and published Scribner versions) as their primary Hemingway reference, they look to his entire body of work as a "text" that illustrates a pattern that speaks to broader cultural anxieties that Hemingway taps into. Another critic, Steven C. Roe, puts *The Garden of Eden* in conversation with the fairy tale "Bluebeard." While doing so, he addresses the theme of the egocentric author – a disposition Roe believes Hemingway feared. In his criticism, Roe contends that this theme speaks to Hemingway's judgment of David, the husband and writer character in *The Garden of Eden*, and to Hemingway's sympathy toward Catherine, the wife and central protagonist:

> In *The Garden of Eden* manuscript, Hemingway employs the story of "Bluebeard" less evasively, to render the disturbing psychological truths… Hemingway stands at an ironic distance from the centralized consciousness of his newly married fictional persona, the writer-protagonist David Bourne, portraying him as a Bluebeard figure. David's "Bluebeardism" lies primarily in his creative vanity… and pride that inform his compulsion to write. Not coincidentally, Catherine… accuses him of appropriating her unruly banter for his artistic ends. (206)

Though Roe focuses on the self-conscious author, he also draws implications from and is largely concerned with Hemingway's original manuscript. Meryl Altman highlights the manuscript controversy and another especially popular critical trend: "Over the past two decades, many critics have complained that Jenks's [the editor's] text is less sexually radical and challenging than what Hemingway actually wrote, that Jenks didn't 'tell all,' but muted the lesbianism and other transgressive or 'queer' themes" (132). Like most critics, Altman focuses on the original manuscript controversy, but while doing so she also considers the ways in which the text queers certain sexual norms. It is this combination that critics most frequently explore and scrutinize. Though I do not stray very far from the themes of queering femininity, masculinity, and sexuality in my reading of *The Garden of Eden*, I do aim to disconnect from the critical trend regarding authorial intent. In doing so, my hope is to allow for more focus and analysis on the implications of gender and sex blurring.

Though informed by the broader literary conversation, my analysis focuses most specifically on the ways in which *On the Road* and *The Garden*

of Eden illustrate – and occasionally complicate – contemporary theories regarding the subject and its place in society. And, as I've mentioned, I will specifically apply certain Butlerian concepts that seek to destabilize the subject's position within its ideologically, symbolically, and discursively ordered world.

With this aim in mind, Chapter One focuses on unpacking how Kerouac's character Sal acts to complicate identity construction. Within this focus, I look at how Sal suffers from a state of melancholia – one that is a result of a variety of disavowed proclivities. I argue that one such denied tendency relates to his homoerotic relationship with Dean. He and Dean, his road buddy, have an extremely close bond – one that reinforces certain heteronormative conventions while simultaneously blurring others. Here, I'll look to Sedgwick's theory regarding homosocial bonds and to how such connections speak to certain undercurrents in Sal and Dean's relationship – undercurrents that reflect and respond to the manufacturing of the masculine identity and the regulatory power of heteronormative gender and sex norms, conventions that were especially rigid in 1950's America. Additionally, I'll consider how Sal is both the hero and anti-hero of Kerouac's text: he is ultra-masculine, even as he subverts masculine gender conventions. Ultimately, Sal demolishes the same gender identifications that he aids in upholding. In this

chapter I will also briefly consider the genre of the American novel and how it, like Sal, cannot escape the power of interpellation.

With these considerations still in mind, in Chapter Two I turn to Hemingway's *The Garden of Eden*. Catherine, like Sal, confuses gender identity assumptions, yet she does so from within the boundaries of female identifications. As she attempts to appropriate a masculine identity, she subverts the idea that gender and sex identity codes are somehow innate or natural. Her cumulative and ongoing appropriation of masculinity (and femininity), for instance, exposes that gender is fundamentally dependent on acts of repetition that constitute a series of inherently unstable performances. Beyond the aspect of gender performativity, Catherine also illustrates Butler's theory regarding the culturally deceptive conflation of gender and sexuality. Through her unconventional sexual development, Hemingway's protagonist supports Butler's assertion that gender, sexuality, and sex are not necessarily intertwined or dependent on one another. As Catherine stretches the limits of heteronormative paradigms, we witness an interesting paradox: a result that simultaneously produces incurable melancholia and unrealized possibilities alike.

Ultimately, it is my aim through character and textual analysis and close reading to employ *On the Road* and *The Garden of Eden* as roadmaps while I explore, investigate, and document contemporary theories of identity

formation and subjectivity. These literary texts, then, are to act as case studies; the worlds they describe are evidence. It is through and with these novels that I hope not to prove that subjectification is either solely discursive or inherently psychic – instead, my goal is to consider the mechanisms at work during subjectivation and how these mechanisms influence *both* the ideological and psychic faculties.

Chapter 1: A Complicated Turn: Interpellation in Kerouac's *On the Road*

> Belief supports the fantasy which regulates social reality…The paradox of a being which can reproduce itself only in so far as it is misrecognized and overlooked: the moment we see it 'as it really is', this being dissolves itself into nothingness or, more precisely, it changes into another kind of reality.
>
> —Slavoj Žižek

Jack Kerouac's *On the Road* begins and ends with Sal Paradise reflecting on Dean Moriarty, the hero's anti-hero. Yet, Sal, the central protagonist, is not just thinking about Dean – he is obsessing over him, lamenting him. What is significant then, what we must focus on is not Dean himself, but rather on what claims Sal's preoccupations: Dean as representation, as cultural affect. Kerouac underscores Dean's symbolic significance from the very start by beginning his novel with these ruminations. Sal's notably located reflections are certainly consequential, they illustrate the high value placed on what Dean signifies – what is manifested through Dean for both Sal and for us as readers. This focus on the significance of representation acts as a signpost for the reader, one that tells us that character is ultimately meaningless without ideological and cultural context. It is together that Sal and Dean bring us with them on the road as they expose identity as being not only a cultural construct but also one that, like all other constructs, lacks existence without the symbolic representation.

The novel is not opened and closed with Dean himself, not with his speech or with his actual actions. Kerouac bookends *On the Road* with Sal's meditations on Dean Moriarty – this highlights Dean as symbol, as tool. Yes, this character is a tool for the author, a means to represent or illustrate a particular meaning or implication; however, Dean acts as more than just an authorial implement. He steps off the page, as he plays the part of both societal puppet and cultural puppeteer. Simultaneously, Dean illustrates both subject and interpellator. Yet, one must be careful not to over-simplify or be reductive here. He does more than simply shape and be shaped by the cultural narratives of the time. The power of interpellation and the sources it is manifested by and through are nuanced and complicated by him. Sal is affected by this, which explains his relentless drive to follow Dean, his earnest attempt to understand Dean, and his simultaneous embrace and rejection of what Dean Moriarty represents.

Dean is freedom, he is the American West, he is independence, he is sex – he is concurrently emblematic of both heteronormative codes of masculinity and subversive ones. He holds women to a standard different than men, while at the same time rejecting the male-centered breadwinner ethic that was ubiquitous in the United States during the mid-twentieth century. This paradox is evidenced through Dean, and Kerouac doesn't waste time showing it to the reader. Early in the novel, the "normative" side of this binary is

illustrated, for instance, through Dean's investment in traditional gender roles. We see this demonstrated in his first encounter with Sal. They cross paths in 1947, New York and this encounter makes quite an impression on Sal:

> [that] night we all drank beer and pulled wrists [arm-wrestled] and talked till dawn, and in the morning, while we sat around dumbly smoking butts from ashtrays in the gray light of a gloomy day, Dean got up nervously, paced around, thinking, and decided the thing to do was to have Marylou [Dean's wife] make breakfast and sweep the floor. (*OTR* 3)

This passage underscores a quintessential 1950's American normative masculinity, a masculinity that frames the male figure as one who is defined by competition with other men and domination over females. Moreover, Sal's memory of the evening revolves around Dean specifically: who is here the very illustration of these culturally normative gender codes. As described in this quotation, the men are performing connotatively masculine acts like drinking beer and arm-wrestling. Dean's heteronormative performance is especially highlighted as his anxiety heightens, only to be relived by enacting a severely culturally normative masculine behavior – it's as if he falls back on normative gender codes as a comfort. For Dean, like for subjects in general, stepping outside accepted social ideologies can be disconcerting: thus the need for a kind of gender normative security blanket.

The next time Dean and Sal meet, Sal uses a suggestively jealous tone[2] to inquire: "'where's Marylou?' " (3). Dean then explains that, "she'd apparently whored a few dollars together and gone back to Denver—'the whore!' " (3). The gendered double standard is starkly obvious here. While Dean lauds men for shirking responsibility for the road, he vilifies Marylou for doing the same thing. The same act that makes her a whore would make him a hero.

Though Dean regularly reinforces this hierarchical male-over-female social ideology, he also frequently subverts other mid-twentieth century, middle-class America norms. For instance, he destabilizes the ideal that the masculine social role equates to being the family breadwinner. Dean suddenly and randomly picking up his life to go back on the road is a central and reoccurring event in the novel. We see this pattern through Sal's eyes: "I knew Dean had gone mad again. There was no chance to send money to either wife if he took all his savings out of the bank and bought a car. Everything was up, the jig and all. Behind him charred ruins smoked. He rushed westward" (259). Once again Dean hits the road and heads toward Sal. Also, let's be sure to note Kerouac's specific language here – "either wife." Dean is a serial divorcée; furthermore, there are times when he balances at least two wives

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[2] This refers to the homosocial overtones and sexual undertones between the two men, which will be further addressed below.

simultaneously (if not legally, at least functionally). At other moments in the text, Dean practices a kind of unsecured polyamory, when all parties are cognizant and accepting of each other's role. Other times, he deceptively cheats on one woman for another. More often than not, however, Dean is between female-partnered relationships. Dean's promiscuity and sexually fluid behavior speaks to his not-so-normative side.

Additionally, what may be most important to highlight here is the fact that Dean essentially leaves his wife (whoever that may be at the time) to run off with a man, Sal. This behavior is further evidence regarding how Dean represents the anti-heteronormative. As we've seen illustrated in these two previous passages, though contradictory, Dean is conventionally heteronormative *and* subversively anti-normative. As a result of this paradox, he embodies a paradigm shift occurring during this time and place.

On the Road begins in a post WWII American, in 1947 – a year when a postage stamp cost three cents and "Howdy Doody" premiered on television. The ideology of the American Dream, the myth of Americana with all its large Chevrolet cars and smiling children and pearled necklines, was in full swing. There is little doubt that:

> A bout of nostalgia for the years between 1945 and the early 1960's has created an image of simplicity and calmness, of a society in which a basic consensus reassuringly underlay healthy adolescent rebelliousness. Post-war American society has been depicted as free

> from the need to think deeply and at length about the big questions. (Tallack 213)

Yet, we must be careful not to romanticize a period in U.S. history that upheld Jim Crow laws and legally sanctioned gender and sexual norms. This was a time of paradox and one that teetered on great cultural change. Kerouac considers this time of influx in his *The Origins of the Beat Generation*:

> Like my grandfather this America was invested with wild selfbelieving individuality and this had begun to disappear around the end of World War II with so many great dead guys… when suddenly it began to emerge again, the hipsters began to appear gliding around saying 'Crazy, man.' (Waldman 17)

This social and cultural backdrop in *On the Road* acts not only as a historical framing, but also functions to remind us that Sal and Dean are paradoxical creations of this discursive environment. Moreover, Kerouac brings our attention to this framing and function throughout the text via inter-cultural references and iconography.

We often see these cultural symbols represented through the characters. For instance, Sal carefully describes his very first impression of Dean: "a young Gene Autry—trim, thin-hipped, blue-eyed, with a real Oklahoma accent—a sideburned hero of the snowy West" (*OTR* 2). Pop-culture references are scattered throughout the text, reminding us of the influences that help shape Sal and Dean. However, this reminder is not the only function of such references. These allusions speak to the mechanisms of idealization and

simulation as well. Like Gene Autry, Dean is not a real cowboy: he is a representation, an appropriation, even a simulation of what the culture says about what a cowboy is or should be. Additionally, it's worth noting the immediacy of Sal's idealization of Dean. Sal's first, initial inclination is to put Dean on a pedestal because of his larger-than-life persona. For Sal, as for the reader, Dean is characterized as a kind of icon: "It was like an old-fashioned movie when Dean arrived" (260). Throughout *On the Road*, Dean, along with a collection of other characters, is compared to a variety of cultural and Hollywood celebrities, including Joel McCrea (83), Burgess Meredith (91), and Gary Cooper (258). In the same breath, Sal even compares Dean to both FDR and God: "In that moment, too, he looked so exactly like Franklin Delano Roosevelt—some delusion in my flaming eyes and floating brain—that I drew up in my seat and gasped with amazement. In myriad pricklings of heavenly radiation I had to struggle to see Dean's figure, and he looked like God" (284). These types of comparisons underscore how heavily and thoroughly cultural ideology influences subject identity and identification. As we've seen, Dean is often compared to icons and celebrities, and this speaks to the function of pop-culture as a kind of ideological transmitter. Celebrity-status, moreover, is a kind of consequential mechanism of pop-culture. Celebrity as phenomenon is an example of how interpellation works to enlist subjects: it gives us something with which to identify. Pop-culture paragons are a lens for Sal and

his gang – they look to and through cultural icons while seeing themselves and thus are constructed this or that way. Essentially, we can see that cultural icons are one particular source of interpellation: they shape Sal, Dean, and subjects in general in a profound manner.

We should also notice that the cultural ideologies represented by and identified through Dean become romanticized. By idealizing Dean, Sal effectively sentimentalizes and lauds a very particular series of connected cultural narratives: a narrative that draws direct connections between the West, liberty, and individualism; a narrative that rejects mainstream culture and embraces alternative lifestyles; and a narrative that values copious drug and alcohol consumption, casual sex acts, transience, change, abandon, sovereignty, and spontaneity. Moreover, the road is a direct vein into this narrative for Sal and Dean. The road is a threshold, a kind of fluid, liminal space – it is the entry point, a way into this alternative cultural narrative. Sal and Dean are our guides on the road and into this narrative. They demonstrate for us how subjects bend to, but sometimes also influence, ideological discourses.

Thus, we begin to see the influential power of interpellation as it shapes Sal and Dean's more cerebral identities, and, furthermore, we see how interpellation influences their ideologies and cultural narratives. Yet for Butler, recognition of this filter and interpellative function on the process of

cerebral or psychic identity construction is not entirely comprehensive. For her, even the body is not something that pre-exists social constructions; it too, in other words, is not merely physical but is bound up with the psychic identity. Interpellative cultural influences are (or at least can be) so powerful and deeply ingrained that they affect even the subject's concept of matter and the material. Butler speaks to this by explaining that the subject's concept of what is a body is a performative effect – "a socially constructed product of the effects of power and social regulation" (Jagger 10). First in *Gender Trouble* and then in *Bodies That Matter*, Butler deconstructs the materiality/construction binary by conflating body and social construction; thus the body is not exempt from interpellation.

Evidence of this kind of deconstruction is found in *On the Road*. For example, let's return to Sal's initial description of Dean as, "a young Gene Autry—trim, thin-hipped, blue-eyed." Here, Sal filters Dean's body, the material through a cultural lens. Before being treated by this lens, Dean's body does not exist, at least not in the conscious sense, for Sal. In a way, then, we see that it is not only the ideological but also the physical, the material that is affected by interpellation. Or to put it another way, the physical *is* ideological. For Butler, the result of such reconceptualization of the material is that sex is "produced as a normative constraint. Hence the category of sex becomes a cultural norm through which bodies are materialized" (Jagger 10). Essentially,

Butler contends that not only is gender socially manipulated and produced, but also that sexual identity and sex are discursively established and thus performed. Body and sex do not come before gender and thus do not somehow lead to or create gender. The body is not a neutral shell which culture fills. In other words, our comprehension of our own material bodies is so heavily shaped by interpellation's power and strength as an ideological mechanism that the effect is that those bodies are effectively culturally produced.

In *Bodies That Matter* Butler is primarily arguing with and responding to certain feminist discourse; much of her theoretical work is a kind of critique of the older, essentialist feminist tenet that the female body is directly related to the feminine identity, that the female identity, including gender, is somehow directly related to the female-sexed body. Butler contends, however, that the body is not prediscursive. Moreover, and as we've seen via Dean and Sal, Butler's ideas pertaining to sex as a construct are not applicable solely to the female identity; they apply to the construction of the masculine identity as well. In other words, the male body also is being regulated and produced. As Butler argues:

> the bounding, forming, and deforming of sexed bodies is animated by a set of founding prohibitions, a set of enforced criteria of intelligibility… we are not merely considering how bodies appear from the vantage point of a theoretical position of epistemic location at a distance from bodies themselves… we are asking how the criteria of intelligible sex operates to constitute a field of bodies, and how

> precisely we might understand specific criteria to produce the bodies that they regulate. (*Bodies* 55)

Bodies, then, are formed culturally, the same way that gender or race or religion or any other ideology is created.

In Kerouac's novel, Sal often functions as a stand-in for society at large – not that he is typical or conventional necessarily, but especially compared to Dean, he does represent the more commonplace America. It is through Sal's eyes that we often become privy to what mid-twentieth century America saw and accepted as norms. With that in mind, we see Dean's body constructed through Sal's eyes, and thus through society's ideologies. Sal imposes his beliefs about Dean, who he is or who he should be onto Dean's material body. In other words, Dean's body is filtered through Sal's belief systems. Sal upholds Dean as a kind of god-like persona, and thus he views Dean's body in an idyllic manner. Sal explains that, "I saw Dean leaning like a statue toward her, ready to fly" (*OTR* 289). In a later episode, he says, "When I looked up again bold noble Dean was standing … looking down at me" (301). Sal believes Dean is quasi-divine and thus interprets his body accordingly.

Before going too much further into the results of interpellation and its powers, let's further consider this means of cultural hailing. Looking at Dean more closely can help illustrate exactly *how* cultural narrative, ideology, and identity are imposed or transmitted. As I've noted, interpellation is the

primary cultural mechanism by which the transmission of ideologies occurs. Sal admires Dean, and thus he is hailed or interpellated by him and what he represents. Sal admits that "With the coming of Dean Moriarty began the part of my life you could call my life on the road. Before that I'd often dreamed of going West to see the country, always vaguely planning and never taking off" (1). Before his travels and affairs with Dean, Sal did not claim or was not claimed by the cultural narrative described above. Dean and all that he signifies changes Sal, hails him into accepting certain social ideologies. Butler succinctly explains the mechanism that engenders such influence:

> Althusser's doctrine of interpellation continues to structure contemporary debate on subject formation, offering a way to account for a subject who comes into being as a consequence of language, yet always within its terms. The theory of interpellation appears to stage a social scene in which a subject is hailed, the subject turns around, and the subject then accepts the terms by which he or she is hailed. This is, no doubt, a scene both punitive and reduced, for the call is made by an officer of 'the Law,' and this officer is cast as singular and speaking. (*Psychic Life* 106)

In Althusserian terms, Dean allegorically signifies the police officer or "the Law" calling out to the pedestrian, thus positioning him. Though this is a fitting analogy, the irony is not to be ignored: Dean, the social misfit and law-breaker, is situated in the novel as one who hails or calls out the same way Althusser's enforcer of the law does. As illustrated by Butler, Althusser sets up his officer of the law to represent the mechanisms at work in society that not only call out to but also (or consequentially) normalize the subject. This

officer uses cultural norms, for instance, as a means to regulate a population. By turning toward the officer's call, the subject answers it, is interpellated, and thus subjectivated. For the most part, Dean rails against the very norms that the officer upholds. Moreover, Dean attempts to not turn toward the call of interpellation, the officer's hail; and therein lies the irony of his being a stand-in, a representation of the Althusserian officer. Furthermore, Sal then is the pedestrian or subject who is being hailed and thus positioned. As we see in Kerouac's text, as a result of this interpellation, Sal follows Dean, literally and metaphorically.

Ultimately, however, Sal fails to fully appropriate the particular masculine, freewheeling identity embodied by Dean. This is one failure, among others, that leads Sal into a state of melancholia. This state of being is the result of something inevitable: by adopting certain ideologies or certain identity subscriptions, other subscriptions are by default rejected. In other words, considering again Althusser's analogy, when turning toward the voice of the law, the subject is necessarily turning away from a different voice. Accepting one calling means denying another. And some of those potential identifications that are inevitably and unavoidably ignored or orphaned cannot, according to Butler, be successfully grieved. She points out that homosexuality as a disavowed identity, for instance, is particularly "ungrievable" because of its social status as being especially forbidden.

Moreover, ungrievable identifications are a problem because as Butler reminds us, "in *The Ego and the Id* Freud himself acknowledges that melancholy, the unfinished process of grieving, is central to the formation of the identifications that form the ego" (*Psychic Life* 132). Thus, the essentially inescapable result of turning toward the call of interpellation, the hailing of ideology, as described, is a state of melancholia.

There is a propensity, I think, to believe that the melancholic state is the result of a kind of denial of an authentic self. Butler argues, though, that we must reconsider this inclination by understanding that melancholia is not the result of the subject turning away from itself (some sort of essential or inherent self): instead, the self is actually constituted via such a turn. As Butler describes, one must have a "readiness to accept guilt to gain a purchase on identity" (*Psychic Life* 109). The inability to answer all hailings is inevitable, as this gap is where the subject is established, and melancholia is the injurious result of forced choice. And this guilt and related melancholia is something with which Sal is quite familiar.

In order to understand the nature of Sal's specific melancholia, we must further consider how he is interpellated and by what. Throughout the entirety of the novel, Sal and Dean go back and forth, from east to west and west to east. During all of this, Sal is constantly called or hailed in two conflicting directions – by that which is signified by the West coast and inversely by the

East coast, which is to say by the non-normative and by the normative. It is at least Sal's third escape from the East when he finds himself in San Francisco and "ran immediately to Dean" (*OTR* 182). Here Dean embodies for Sal what is represented by the West coast and the rejection of conventional ideologies. When Sal finds him, Dean is completely disillusioned by the heteronormative lifestyle, despite having "a little house now" (182) with a wife and son. The domesticity of the white-bread life is not adequate for Dean, which is why he sent for Sal. When his homosocial partner arrives Dean exclaims, "You've finally come to *me*" (183). Not surprisingly, the two hit the road together once again. It is during this trip, their last one eastward, that Sal explains, "we were permeated completely with the strange Gray Myth of the West and the weird dark Myth of the East," (245). Sal recognizes being pulled by opposing ideologies. By answering the call of one, Sal inevitably denies the other, which is the source of his melancholia.

Freud's concept of melancholy is "the unfinished process of grieving… [it] is central to the formation of the identifications that form the ego" (*Psychic Life* 132). For him, then, melancholia is the result of unfinished mourning. Butler adopts and then adapts Freud's ideas and describes melancholia as the result of the subject being unable to answer hailings deemed culturally non-normative. For instance, a subject's inability to answer sexually deviant proclivities may result in melancholia; furthermore, gender is "a kind of

melancholy… one of melancholy's effects" (*Psychic Life* 132). Melancholia is the result of being unable to answer oppositely binaried interpellations, regardless of such hailings being confirmative or not. In other words, if you're black, you can't be white. If you're a male, you can't be a female. Or, in Sal's case, you can't simultaneously be a conformist and a non-conformist. Butler makes this point with reference to heterosexuality and homosexuality. She argues that:

> perhaps there is a way of developing a typology of 'refusal' and 'exclusion' that might help us distinguish between what is rigorously repudiated and foreclosed, and what happens to be less rigidly or permanently declined. Surely there is, say, a way of accounting for homosexuality which presupposes that it is rooted in an unconscious repudiation of heterosexuality and which, in making that presumption, determines repudiated heterosexuality to be the unconscious 'truth' of lived homosexuality. (*Psychic Life* 165-6)

Butler points out here that because homosexuality is culturally connoted as a kind of psychic disavowal of heterosexuality, homosexuality is considered somehow less authentic than the "truthful" or "real" heterosexuality. Through this pairing, she insinuates (or maybe more obviously says) that it is homosexuality in particular that is permanently declined. Because heterosexuality is culturally supported, the disavowal of homosexuality is more definite than most, if not all other facets of identity. Žižek further complicates

the relationship between dominant and subversive ideologies:

> the identity of its own position (that of a worker, a woman, an African-American…) is 'mediated' by the Other[3] (there is no worker without a capitalist organizing the production process, etc.), so that if one is to get rid of the oppressive Other, one has substantially to transform the content of one's own position. That is also the fatal flaw of the precipitate historicization; those who want 'free sexuality delivered of the Oedipal burden of guilt and anxiety' proceed the same way as the worker who want to survive *as a worker* without a capitalist; they also fail to take into account the way their position is 'mediated' by the Other. (*The Ticklish Subject* 72)

So, we see for Žižek that the marginalized ideology is necessitated by the dominant – essentially, the normative and Othered subject positions rely on each other to exist. Without homosexuality, for instance, heterosexuality would not be a coherent ideology, dominant or otherwise. Then for him and Butler both there is an inherently dependent relationship between the heteronormative and the unconventional.

Now, let's turn our focus to how melancholia ties into these ideas regarding hetero- and homosexuality, the dominant and the subversive. For Butler, the melancholia of heterosexuality carries more weight than say the melancholia caused by the inability to answer the calls from both the East and West coasts – an issue from which Sal suffers melancholia. In other words, the argument is that the disavowal of a particular sexuality is more significant

[3] Note that Žižek uses the capital "O" Other differently than I have here. He uses "Other" to connote the more oppressive or dominant ideology or identity construct (the "big Other" or the symbolic order – whereas, I use "Other" to connote the marginalized ideology or identity. However, this difference is merely linguistically semantic and does not alter the logical sequence or consequences.

because "the 'givenness' of sexual difference is clearly not to be denied" (*Psychic Life* 164). This "givenness" may not initially seem inherent in Sal's struggle between East and West. Yet, I'd argue that it is because the "givenness" is directly related to what is socially expected or normative. "Givenness" is not exclusive to sexual identity. Thus, when Sal feels pressure to "turn towards" the East and avow all the normativity that is connoted by it, he is repudiating a part of his identity that is as consequential as sexuality.

It should be noted too that Butler illustrates that the disavowal of homosexuality *must* result in melancholia because it *cannot* be successfully mourned. She contends that because social norms do not recognize homosexuality as a viable option, the subject cannot successfully mourn the loss of it. In other words, how can one mourn something that was never an attainable or acceptable alternative? This idea that the inability to properly or fully mourn loss as being the cause for melancholia will be further addressed shortly; however, first it's important to note a finer point here, one that reinforces the analogy that connects Sal's melancholia to the melancholia of heterosexuality. Sal's state of melancholia is partially caused by the societal pressure he feels to disavow the West coast and all the anti-convention it represents; furthermore, his melancholia is even further entrenched because mainstream culture does not even recognize the West as a viable option. This choice is not taken seriously by the conventional American culture – the

culture that, by default, Sal is part of. It is not taken seriously by the mainstream because the identity embodied by the West is not the American ideal in 1950's America. Butler asks:

> Where does this ideal emerge from? Is it arbitrarily manufactured by the ego, or do such ideals retain the trace of social regulation and normativity?... The ideals by which the ego judges itself clearly are ones by which the ego will be found wanting. The melancholic compares him- or herself invidiously with such social ideals. (*Psychic Life* 185)

Thus, we see here that ideals are socially constructed. Yet, moreover, the more important point I hope to highlight here is the power of ideals. The disavowal of an ideal's binary opposite (whatever that may be) can result in melancholia. The disavowal of homosexuality is one example, as Butler successfully contends. However, I argue that the power of the ideological ideal(s) is certainly transferable to other identities and identifications, to say the East and what it represents in *On the Road*. Thus, it is Sal's inability to answer one calling by heeding another (the ideal), combined with the powerlessness to properly mourn his "lost choice" or lost object[4] that causes his melancholia. Through Sal's ideological struggle between East and West coasts, we see not only that the power of the normative is strong, but also that the consequences of not answering its callings are injurious.

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[4] The lost object is a Freudian term used while describing the earliest stages of subject formation. For Freud, the lost object is "lost" during early childhood development and is most commonly associated with the loss of a "love interest" or the mother. As we've seen, the inability to mourn this loss is what Freud describes as melancholia.

To fully understand melancholia and how it is manifested through Sal, it's important to thoroughly consider the central factors that cause it: an unclaimed identity (or facet of such) and the inability to adequately or satisfactorily mourn that lost identity. First, let's look more closely at the former reason. As we've seen, Sal is interpellated by counterculture Americana, which is represented through both the West coast and Dean. During this interpellative process, Sal is both passively assigned and actively claims certain parts of his identity – he is called and he turns. Furthermore, by turning toward the voice of such ideological callings, he inevitably denies others, which remain unclaimed.

Throughout Kerouac's novel, there is a distinct barrier established between domesticity – the seemingly unclaimed ideology in this text – and anti-heteronormativity. Sal often teeters on that line – he is interpellated by both sides of the ideological spectrum. Sal flirts with the domestic/ heteronormative lifestyle when he considers settling down with and taking care of Terry, a young poor Hispanic mother he meets in California. While the two are together, Sal works regularly and goes home to the same place every night. He demonstrates the stability expected of him by bourgeois society: "Every day I earned approximately a dollar and a half. It was just enough to buy groceries in the evening on the bicycle. The days rolled by. I forgot all about… Dean and Carlo and the bloody road" (*OTR* 97). In this scenario, Sal

is disavowing the interpellations of Dean and the non-normative identifications he represents. Here, Sal is the breadwinner; he is a family man, secure and reliable. Here he is answering the call of bourgeois or conventional heteronormativity. In doing so, he thus turns away from the interpellations of the counterculture narrative.

Once Sal realizes earning a dollar and a half a day picking cotton is not sustainable, he heads back East and promises to meet Terry there. However, the familial life on the East coast is not sustainable for Sal either: "I had been spending a quiet Christmas in the country… [with] the Christmas tree, the presents…the roasting of turkey and… the talk of the relatives" (115). These cultural signifiers of domesticity and heteronormativity – Christmas, relatives, roasting turkey – act to interpellate Sal, just as the family life with Terry does. Yet, the interpellative power of Dean and what he represents is strong as well: "but now the bug was on me again, and the bug's name was Dean Moriarty and I was off on another spurt around the road" (115). We see that Sal is pulled in two distinct directions: he is interpellated by opposing ideologies and the inability to answer or turn towards both voices leaves him melancholic and confused. As he explains while East with family: "'I want to marry a girl,' I told them, 'so I can rest my soul with her till we both get old. This can't go on all the time—all this franticness and jumping around. We've got to go someplace, find something'… It was a sad night" (117). We see here that Sal

cannot answer the call from both ideologies simultaneously; ultimately, his identity is the result and culmination of a series of failures and losses, disavowed calls, which he is unable to mourn and which subsequently result in his melancholia.

Another principal acknowledgment here is that the culmination of these dichotomous interpellations is not Sal's discovery of some kind of ultimately real or authentic self. Sal acutely demonstrates to us a condition common in all subjects – that the outcome of this ongoing process is a patchwork identity, which is constructed in large part by various forces outside of his control; he is not and moreover cannot be autonomous during the process of subject formation. Butler describes this as follows:

> To make of melancholia a simple "refusal" to grieve its losses conjures a subject who might already be something without its losses… it [the subject] can never produce itself autonomously … [and] the social is "turned back" into the psychic, only to leave its trace in the voice of conscience… To persist in one's being means to be given over from the start to social terms that are never fully one's own. (*Psychic Life* 196-7)

In order for the subject's identity to be constituted, it must perform according to the terms of society, as the subject does not exist without society. Moreover, socially prohibited ideologies heighten "judgments of conscience" (196). Thus, Sal's melancholia shows us "that only by absorbing the other [that which is not disavowed, the heterosexual as Butler describes] as oneself

does one become something at all" (195-6). Subjects then are their losses and failures. There is no identity, no authentic self prior to these disavowals.

Sal eventually realizes that an authentic self is not an actuality, and as he realizes this so does the reader. Ultimately, Sal is without will. He is guided by the hand of interpellation – epitomized by the road itself. The road is an interpellative vein, an access point to various cultural hailings. While on the road, Sal encounters many callings – some of which he can turn towards, while others he must disavow. Meanwhile, the idea of authenticity of self essentially dissolves as Sal is simultaneously hailed by Dean and the anti-mainstream on the one hand, and also on the other hand by the contrasting, ubiquitously homogenous 1950's, Donna Reed/"Leave it to Beaver" American culture myth. He is interpellatively swayed by the cultures of which he is part; as the road unravels in front of him, he is formed by it and all its attractions. No matter how much Sal (or Dean for that matter, as he is subject to the same ideological mechanisms as Sal) attempts to reject a cultural narrative, dominant or otherwise, he is still part of the symbolic order[5] – he like all of us is subject to the cultural mechanisms at work, he is no more an autonomous individual than those he rails against. Not only is identity formation universal and inescapable, it inevitably functions as a norming mechanism. Furthermore, the

[5] The symbolic order is a Lacanian term referring to the structure that incorporates the ideological, cultural, linguistic, and discursive forces in a society.

limitations from construction and the way "social discourse wields the power to form and regulate a subject through the imposition of its own terms" (*Psychic Life* 197), leaves Sal, and the reader by extension, melancholic and anxious. Again, like Sal, we realize that with choice comes limitations, and that as we turn toward one call we unavoidably repudiate another.

Butler states that, "Melancholia is precisely the effect of unavowable loss" (*Psychic Life* 170) – and for her this loss relates to a forfeiture of an object of desire or an ideal. Butler reasons that homosexual desire is one such ungrievable loss; in fact, it is the paradigmatic one for her. In other words, during the very early stages of subject formation when a subject turns toward the call of heteronormativity and heterosexuality, queerness and homosexuality in turn go disavowed. This is what Butler refers to as the "melancholic turn," as the turn leads to an unavoidable sadness because of the limitations it carries or implies. As we've seen previously, Sal idealizes Dean, even gives him god-like status. To Sal, Dean is a kind of savior: "Dean found me when he finally decided I was worth saving" (*OTR* 175). We see there is little doubt that Sal's "poorchild Angel Dean" (212) is an object of desire for him (in Freudian terms, Dean represents Sal's lost object), and that Sal feels an explicit attachment to Dean. Butler remarks, "for the melancholic, breaking the attachment constitutes a second loss of the object. If the object lost its externality when it became the psychic ideal, it now loses its ideality as the ego

turns against conscience, thus decentering itself" (*Psychic Life* 192). She adds via Freud that, "there can be no severing of this attachment to the object without a direct 'declaration' of loss and the desanctification of the object by externalizing aggression against it" (192). In order to deal with the loss, a negative connotation is assigned to the disavowed hailing – the disavowed object even becomes demonized in a sense. Dean, then, is both angel and devil.

Each time that Sal answers the interpellations of normative culture, he rejects counterculture and aggressively condemns Dean by association. For instance, by the end of his first trip out West, Sal becomes disenchanted by both it and Dean: "Dean was sweating around. It was the end; I wanted to get out… We were all thinking we'd never see one another again and we didn't care" (*OTR* 178). Moreover, Sal explains, "I lost faith in him [Dean] that year" (171). Once Sal turns toward the calling of the East, he must disavow those of the West and Dean, and as a result denigrates them. Evidence of this type of cycle is common in our culture's public arena today; for instance, closeted figures like Ted Haggard condemn their own disavowed proclivities. One implication is that this cycle strengthens binary cultural constructions. This not only further limits our choices for subjective modeling, which demonstrates, ultimately, that there is no inherent value or virtue in either side of such culturally binaried ideologies, but it also demonstrates that additional

value or merit is ascribed to a particular calling or ideology after it is disavowed, as well as before. When Dean and Sal desecrate mainstream culture it's not because it is inherently base, but instead because they have to in order to cope with the loss of cultural authority that follows from their initial rejection of it.

For Butler, this scenario and melancholia are especially relevant, as previously mentioned, to sexuality and homosexual desire: aspects, again, that are highly evident in *On the Road*. Keeping this in mind, let us turn back to the specific relationship Sal and Dean share and to what their relationship represents. The two are more than mere friends – the bond they share is close, intimate, and I would argue erotic. The eroticism between the two men is not illustrated explicitly in the text, which supports Butler's contention regarding the repudiation of desire. I must be clear here in my intentions – I do not seek to prove or argue that Sal and Dean are closeted homosexuals. I do, however, claim that the relationship between the men is a homosocial one, which speaks to the injurious nature of ideologies that strictly define both sexuality and gender arrangements. By confusing sexuality, for instance, their relationship shows us that sexuality can be much more fluid and nuanced than normative gender discourses would have us believe. Furthermore, they demonstrate to the reader that the regulatory power of heteronormative codes is a powerful one.

Through Sal's first person point of view, we are privy to the intensity of his feelings for Dean. As formerly discussed, the two men follow each other around the United States and then to Mexico. They repeatedly leave their families and female partners for one another. This kind of relationship closely resembles what we, as Westerners, would consider a tryst, a romantic affair of sorts. While watching a public wedding gathering, Sal comments that those in the wedding party, "were well dressed, and they were strange" (190). Though Sal is questioning heteronormativity through his discomfort with the wedding tradition, he actually embraces marriage a few passages later. Yet the kind of marriage he incorporates into his life is not conventional. At this part of the text, he and Dean are traveling together and they've agreed to run away to Italy. Sal describes this moment:

> And so we picked up our bags, he the trunk with his one good arm and I the rest, and staggered to the cable-car stop; in a moment rolled down the hill with our legs dangling to the sidewalk from the jiggling shelf, two broken-down heroes of the Western night… First thing, we went to a bar down on Market Street and decided everything—that we would stick together and be buddies till we died. (190-1)

The romantic connotations in this passage paired with its proximity to the previous wedding scene speak to an emblematic, anti-heteronormative marriage between Sal and Dean. Moreover, several moments in the language are implicitly sexual: words like "dangling" and "jiggling" bring to the reader's mind not only the physicality of the body, but specifically to the male body.

Additionally, a sexual image of Sal and Dean physically attached is manifested through the phase "stick together." These suggestions underscore the bond the men share and speak to its homosocial, implicitly erotic nature.

This intimate bond between the two men is tied to Eve Sedgwick's argument relating to homosocial desire: "To draw the 'homosocial' back into the orbit of 'desire,' of the potentially erotic, then, is to hypothesize the potential unbrokenness of a continuum between homosocial and homosexual—a continuum whose visibility, for men, in our society, is radically disrupted" (1-2). In other words, Sal and Dean's relationship exposes that the line between homosocial and homosexual is blurry and slippery. Notably, there is very little literary criticism regarding the influences of and meanings of sexuality in *On the Road*; and there is even less criticism (in fact none that I could find) regarding homoeroticism in the text. The absence may be due to the fact that critics most often turn to the work of William S. Burroughs and/or Allen Ginsberg while considering sexuality and especially homoerotic themes in Beat literature. Another possible reason Kerouac's text has not been interpreted through a more sexually flexible lens may be that Sal and Dean are often glossed as representing nearly the opposite of what I have posed here: they have been interpreted as representations of a masculine identity that, though changing with the times, remains conventional in the heterosexual sense.

In his article "Mobility as Resistance: a Geographical Reading of Kerouac's 'On the Road,' Tim Cresswell proposes that "the road" and Sal and Dean's non-attachment to place signify a rebellion against certain ideological norms; their mobility, in other words, subverts cultural conventions of the time and place. In his section "The Road and Sexuality," Cresswell points out that "the mobility of Sal and Dean is a lack of commitment to traditional forms of sexual relationship" (257). For Cresswell, "unattached male heterosexuality," does subvert certain conventions associated with the American Dream – such as placing roots and having 2.5 kids. However, he also explains that the "unattached male heterosexuality" paradoxically functions to "reinforce the tired dualism of male/female and public/private" (258). In this sense, unattached heterosexuality functions not to subvert but to strengthen conventional sex and gender codes. He notes: "travel in space is connected with masculinity while place and home are feminine. Such images are firmly rooted in the dominant ideology of the United States which connects the woman to the home and the men with the public arena outside the home" (Cresswell 258). I agree with Cresswell that the men's mobility acts to subvert certain American Dream ideologies; however, I don't find this to be paradoxical. I argue that Sal and Dean do not in fact "reinforce the tired dualism of male/female and public/private" with their unusual mobility, but rather effectively confuse conventional gender and sexual roles. They reject

the dominant ideology (the American Dream or myth) not for some ideal of masculinity represented through their mobility, but for each other, for an ideology that is undoubtedly tinged with the homoerotic. Thus, their mobility actually carries with it themes of homoeroticism and homosocial bonds, which does not stabilize the "tired dualism," but instead actually subverts the male/female and heterosexuality/homosexuality binaries. The mobility showcased in *On the Road* is not an example of "unattached male heterosexuality," but instead an example of attached homosocialism. The novel repeatedly demonstrates that Sal and Dean's relationship confuses the sexuality of the heteronormative masculine identity.

Let's turn back to Sedgwick's continuum of sexual bonding, as it is related to Butler's melancholic turn. Disavowing the fact that the continuum between homosocial and homosexual exists can lead to melancholy; Sal repudiates it when he attempts to lead a heteronormative lifestyle, as does Dean. When both men try settling down with women, as we have seen, they become melancholic and restless. By contrast, when they turn toward the call of a more fluid lifestyle, one that accesses "the potential unbrokenness" of the continuum, they are less prone to melancholia. One implication here, then, is that the rigidity of cultural norms, those interpellative turnings that reject fluidity can very well be injurious by engendering melancholia.

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, Kerouac's novel is bookended by Sal's thoughts of Dean. The first line of the text, "I first met Dean not long after my wife and I split up" (*OTR* 1), underscores the significance of the timing of Dean's appearance in Sal's life. Sal's heteronormative break-up happens outside the text, and thus the novel begins with his rejection of such a lifestyle. Furthermore, this first line is short, direct, and lacks excessive modifiers or imagery. The last line of the novel, by contrast, seems impulsive; the sentence is protracted as the language grows and recedes, and modifiers modify other modifiers:

> So in America when the sun goes down and I sit on the old broken-down river pier watching the long, long skies over New Jersey and sense all that raw land that rolls in one unbelievable huge bulge over to the West Coast, and all that road going, all the people dreaming in the immensity of it, and in Iowa I know by now the children must be crying in the land where they let the children cry, and tonight the stars'll be out, and don't you know that God is Pooh Bear? the evening star must be drooping and shedding her sparkler dims on the prairie, which is just before the coming of complete night that blesses the earth, darkens all rivers, cups the peaks and folds the final shore in, and nobody, nobody knows what's going to happen to anybody besides the forlorn rags of growing old, I think of Dean Moriarty, I even think of Old Dean Moriarty the father we never found, I think of Dean Moriarty. (307)

This closing line, which despite its length is one single sentence, is certainly quite representative of beat-style spontaneous stream-of-consciousness prose and poetry. And as I've pointed out, it greatly contrasts the opening sentence. The resulting effect tells us something about who Sal is as a character at the

start of the novel versus who he is by the end, after his many and varied travels and experiences. In a way, his pre- and post- “on-the-road” identities are mirrored in the style and language reflected in these two representative lines. By the end of the novel, Sal is more complicated and nuanced. The prose itself illustrates the evolution Sal has undergone over the course of the novel – it speaks to the fluidity of his identity. This fluidity in prose and in character, I contest, exposes that the lines that separate various facets of identity, especially gender and sexuality, are simulated and ideologically constructed. In other words, not only are ideologies constructed, but so are the distinctions between them – which we see as the lines become blurry and confused. The division between gender and sex, heterosexuality and homosexuality becomes cloudy, for instance. Such exposure acts to undermine and deconstruct both the ideological constructions and the lines between them.

It is the fluidity of the last sentence in *On the Road* that finally signifies and ultimately registers how unstable and changing Sal’s identity really is; it oscillates, shifts, and morphs, just like all subject identities. In fact, in this sense, by revealing the nature of subject-identity as one that is not only discursively manufactured, but also fluid and flexible, Sal’s final sentence speaks to the unnaturalness or non-existence of identity outside the symbolic order. This proposition is predicated on the post-structuralist theory that subjecthood is dependent on the social mechanisms that work to establish the

subject's actuality. In other words, the subject does not truly exist prior to being hailed; the discursive environment gives way to and is necessary in the founding of the subject's very existence. This contention does not go unchallenged, however. Psychoanalyst and philosopher Jacques Lacan disagrees with the claim, as exemplified in this passage by Žižek:

> In 'post-structuralism', the subject is usually reduced to so-called subjectivation, he is conceived as an effect of a fundamentally non-subjective process: the subject is always caught in, traversed by the pre-subjective process… and the emphasis is on the 'individuals' different modes of 'experiencing', 'living' their positions as 'subjects', 'actors', 'agents' of the historical process… But with Lacan, we have quite another notion of the subject. To put it simply: if we make an abstraction, if we subtract all the richness of the different modes of subjectivation, all the fullness of experience present in the way the individuals are 'living' their subject-positions, what remains is an empty place which was filled with this richness; this original void, this lack of symbolic structure, *is* the subject. (*Sublime* 174-5)

We see here then that Lacan complicates the typical post-structuralist account of subjectivation by arguing that discourse does not entirely or definitely construct the subject, and moreover that subjecthood is actually the lack of discursive symbolic structure, not the result or product of it. The subject, in other words, is found in the gaps of social fabric. His assertions, thusly, lead us to a line of definitive questions regarding Sal and the existence of subject identity: does Sal demonstrate to us that subjecthood is founded via a socially mechanistic process or, as Lacan insinuates, does his subjectness represent the very lack or gap that is the subject itself? Does his identity precede

subjectivation? And if so, does this validate the existence of Sal's identity (and thus the subject's)?

In Lacanian terms, Sal, as subject, begins not as the product of various discursive agents, but rather as the lack of those very agents. For Lacan, the

> lack of symbolic structure, *is* the subject, the subject of the signifier. The *subject* is… strictly opposed to the effect of subjectivation: what the subjectivation masks is not a pre- or trans-subjective process of writing but a lack in the structure, a lack which is the subject… the subject of the signifier is a retroactive effect of the failure of its own representation. (*Sublime Object* 175)

This account complicates the Althusserian idea that the subject is founded at the moment s/he turns toward the hailing of interpellation (not before) because as an "effect," retroactive or otherwise, subjecthood is subsequent to that which calls it, subsequent to the signifier. Lacan offers a rather compelling addition to the post-structuralist account of subject formation. The Lacanian account regarding *subject as lack* is an especially appealing supplement of identity construction because it seems to be a potential meeting place, a place of common ground between post-structuralist theory, which I employed while discussing subject formation in *On the Road*, and psychoanalysis. This common ground can be found by linking together Lacan and Butler – by specifically connecting Lacan's concept that, "the subject tries to articulate itself in a signifying representation; the representation fails; instead of a richness we have a lack, and this void opened by the failure *is* the subject"

(*Sublime Object* 175) to Butler's concept regarding melancholia. Remember that for Butler the state of melancholia is one caused by the disavowal of an interpellation and, furthermore, the inability to successfully mourn the loss of that unanswered calling; the disavowed calling, moreover, especially cannot be successfully mourned because it is not socially validated. The connection, the common ground between Lacan and Butler then is this: if for Lacan the subject is the parts that have not or cannot be successfully interpellated, the void or the subject is in a sense the post-interpellation *leftovers* (to borrow a term from Žižek), and for Butler, though the subject is a product of interpellation, the subject is also necessarily melancholic because of a lack, it lacks the ability to mourn what has been unsuccessfully interpellated, to mourn the leftovers, if you will. Thus, Lacan and Butler agree that these leftovers exist. Furthermore, if the leftovers are in fact the subject, then melancholia is caused by the inability to mourn self as subject.[6] This idea also highlights another point of reconciliation between the Butlerian and Lacanian/ Žižekian accounts of subjectivity: if both "sides" agree on the existence of such leftovers, as it seems they do, then they also agree that the leftovers, the subject does not precede subjectification, but is rather created by it.

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[6] Note that my argument here is contingent on the idea that what the subject is is that which escaped interpellation or subjectification (the more post-structuralist interpretation). Or to put the contingency another way, the subject is constituted through a failure to identify with the symbolic order (the psychoanalytic interpretation).

Kerouac's *On the Road* has been coined the quintessential American novel, and it is within the framework of the novel that we see Sal deconstruct and reconstruct subjectification and the identity of the social subject by acting as a representative example of how subjecthood is created. Through him, through his manufactured identity we see interpellation and other ideological mechanisms at work during subject formation. It is in a very similar way that *On the Road* itself acts to (de)construct the tradition of the great American novel. This paradox is manifested as the text upholds American novel traditions while simultaneously subverting them.

What exactly does it mean to be an American novel? While assessing this matter, let's turn to Leslie A. Fiedler and his classic text *Love and Death in the American Novel*. He contends that the American novel is not simply a sub-genre of European literature, but rather that the great American novel stands on its own and is a tradition in and of itself. And it is this particular tradition that Fiedler looks to define. He writes:

> In a sense, our novels seem not primitive, perhaps, but innocent, unfallen in a disturbing way, almost juvenile… Merely finding a language, learning to talk in a land where there are no conventions of conversation, no special class idioms and no dialogue between classes, no continuing literary language—this exhausts the American writer. He is forever *beginning*, saying for the first time (without real tradition there can never be a second time) what it is like to stand alone before nature, or in a city as appallingly lonely as any virgin forest. (4)

At first glance, *On the Road* very much fits into this category Fiedler delineates. The novel's spontaneous prose does not adhere to conventions; in a sense, *On the Road* finds its own language, its unique voice. And Kerouac, both stylistically and thematically, does conjure a particular innocence – a kind of purity found in youth and possibility. Kerouac is forever beginning through his characters: Dean and Sal begin anew each time they hit the road. Additionally, whether it is in the open West or in the crowded East, in the end, Sal and Dean ultimately stands alone.

On the other hand, *On the Road* dismantles what defines the great American novel tradition. For instance, Kerouac is not "forever *beginning*" as evidenced by his scattering of inter-textual references throughout the novel. For example, Kerouac references "Schopenhauer's dichotomy" (*OTR* 3), and his imagery of "flaming eyes and floating brain" (284) alludes to both Ralph Waldo Emerson's famed transparent eyeball and to the line "His flashing eyes, his floating hair!," from Samuel Taylor Coleridge's canonical poem "Kubla Khan." Kerouac is obviously not only cognizant of past literary tradition but is influenced by it. Additionally, Kerouac's language, his spontaneous prose is unconventional only because it has convention as a contrast. His unconventional prosaic style is Othered; it is marginalized through comparison. In other words, *On the Road* is obliged to both convention and to the past in order to appear new. Thus Kerouac and the great American novel

are not "forever *beginning*." He can write "new" language only because of what has come before him. And the great American novel tradition can exist only because of what came before it. Moreover, like we've seen with Sal, nothing escapes interpellation. Nothing is "unfallen" because everything is influenced and hailed by the present and past. *On the Road* is no exception. As a representation of the great American novel, it demonstrates that the tradition is exempt neither from the text of history nor from the power of interpellation. The identity of the great American novel, like Sal's and our own, is a construction of patch-worked ideologies.

Chapter 2: Writing Identity: Melancholia in Hemingway's *The Garden of Eden*

> Why was it in those areas—apropos of the body, of the wife, of boys, and of truth—that the practice of pleasures became a matter for debate? Why did the bringing of sexual activity into these relations occasion anxiety, discussion, and reflection? Why did these axes of everyday experience give rise to a way of thinking that sought to rarefy sexual behavior, to moderate and condition it, and to define an austere style in the practice of pleasures? How did sexual behavior, insofar as it implied these different types of relations, come to be conceived as a domain of moral experience?
>
> —Michel Foucault

When putting Jack Kerouac's and Ernest Hemingway's works in a conversation with each other, it is hard to ignore their distinct and contrasting takes on writing and literature. Ernest Hemingway's language is typically compact, elegant, verb-driven, and calculated, whereas Kerouac's prose is more breathless, spontaneous, adjective-heavy, and ardent. Though Kerouac's *On the Road* is an iconic American novel, Hemingway himself is arguably the more iconic American novelist. That said, my objective here is not to compare the two authors or their authorial intent – doing so, I think, would prove relatively fruitless. However, while considering Hemingway's *The Garden of Eden*, it's worthwhile to at least briefly revisit an observation mentioned in the introductory chapter: there is a well-established and critical debate regarding the differences between the posthumously published version of the text and Hemingway's unfinished manuscript. The *Publisher's Note* included in Scribner's published edition explains that the

> novel was not in finished form at the time of the author's death. In preparing this book for publication we have made some cuts in the manuscript and some routine copy editing corrections. Beyond a very small number of minor interpolations for clarity and consistency, nothing had been added. In every significant respect the work is all the author's. (v)

Despite Scribner's note of reassurance, there has been an abundance of criticism that looks at the discrepancies between Hemingway's lengthy manuscript and the abridged published novel. In his renowned article "The Ending of Hemingway's *Garden of Eden,*" Robert E. Fleming pursues this issue of potentially questionable, though well-intentioned, editorial choices. Much of Fleming's energy focuses on the ending of the novel; he makes the case that the published version's closing is too satisfying, too clean, essentially too happy:

> The Jenks [Scribner's editor] edition of *The Garden of Eden* has rendered a valuable service to Hemingway readers and scholars and should be acknowledged for the good work it contains. However, in the handling of the ending, Jenks altered the novel so that it runs counter to the pattern of tragedy Hemingway had been preparing… For Hemingway had very deliberately been constructing a tragic novel with his multiple tales of betrayal, jealously, and guilt. (40)

Fleming has been a forerunner in *The Garden of Eden* criticism and helped initiate the trend that emphasizes focus on manuscript discrepancies. We can see from the above passage that for Fleming the end of the published novel does not correlate with Hemingway's original intentions. Though it is important to consider and be aware of such scholarly criticisms, as they are a

significant part of the broader conversation surrounding the novel, it is, I'd argue, impossible to know without question what Hemingway had in mind for the published text – it is my belief that we must simply continue with the publication as it is. It is for this reason that in this thesis I refer to and use only the printed, Scribner version. Furthermore, as I previously noted, for my purposes the novel is used as a kind of case study to tease out and explore theory and various ideological mechanisms, and thus authorial intent serves little purpose here.

Therefore, putting the objective of the author (presumed or otherwise) and biographical criticism aside, let us instead turn to what I believe is a more productive and revealing matter: the investigation of how both *On the Road* and *The Garden of Eden* probe at and reveal the inner mechanisms at work during subjectivation and ideological construction. It is through this interpretive operation that I mean to bring these two authors and their texts together in a truly meaningful way.

As we've seen in the previous chapter, *On the Road* demonstrates the complexities and grey areas of both gender and sexual performativity. When paired with Butler's theories regarding subjection, Sal and Dean show us that, on the one hand, identity may not be quite as nuanced as one may think – that, in fact, identity can be teased apart, such that its causations and interpellations can be delineated and traced to a particular source(s). On the other hand, this

is not to say that subject identity, as a result of cultural interpellations, is simple or straightforward. It is to say, instead, that identity facets, such as masculinity and heterosexuality, are methodically and ideologically constructed, and additionally that the mechanisms of subjectivation cause a state of melancholia in the subject – a subject whose identity subscription and identifications necessarily mean denying another.

Even more so than Kerouac's Sal, Hemingway's Catherine suffers from and confronts melancholia, a result of the constrictive cultural interpellations. Hemingway's characters are often known for displaying, embodying, or evoking a strong sense of masculinity. Thomas Strychacz explains that, "evaluations of Hemingway's work—perhaps more so than in the case of any other writer—seem unable to ignore the he-man roles Hemingway performed in life and often wrote about… [Hemingway is] an author invested to his detriment in the 'glorification of machismo, blood sports, physical violence and war" (3). On the other hand, there are scholars who point out that Hemingway's focus on masculinity does more than reinforce the masculine gender identity – they argue his focus effectively questions masculinity as well. In a discussion of Hemingway's later and unfinished works (most specifically *A Moveable Feast* and *The Garden of Eden*), J. Gerald Kennedy highlights that Hemingway "contends with the complications of gender trouble" (183). I agree with Kennedy's interpretation and see the complexities

of gender emphasized in *The Garden of Eden*. Hemingway does not depart from masculinity as a defining theme in *The Garden of Eden,* yet it manifested in a most compelling manner and in a way that is different from most of his other works – we see masculinity through the identity of a woman. It is through this manifestation that masculinity and gender become confused and the complexities of such identifications are revealed.

As we will see, Catherine, the female protagonist, explicitly and dutifully attempts to reject what is identified as the feminine for what is discursively constituted as masculine identity conventions. Her performance as a man exposes the manufactured nature of gender, and, furthermore, her inability to successfully appropriate a masculine identity leaves her in a state of melancholia. Catherine shows us that

> the "normal" constitution of gender presentation, the gender that is performed is constituted by a set of disavowed attachments, identifications which constitute a different domain of the "unperformable"… and this absence produces a culture of heterosexual melancholy, one which can be read in the hyperbolic identifications by which mundane heterosexual masculinity and femininity confirm themselves. (*Psychic Life* 147)

However, before investigating her specific failed transformation and the resulting consequences and telling implications, it's valuable to first consider how exactly Hemingway introduces subjecthood and identity in both a textually local and global sense.

Hemingway establishes the social subject, the individual as a kind of generic vessel right from the start of the text. *The Garden of Eden* presents us with two competing protagonists: Catherine Bourne and David Bourne, newlyweds. We are quickly introduced to the couple and to their general station in life; the opening lines show us:

> They were living at le Grau du Roi then and the hotel was on a canal that ran from the walled city of Aigues Mortes down to the sea. They could see the towers…they fished… they drank… It was a cheerful and friendly town and the young couple liked the hotel… the girl often had a headache until her coffee came… and the young man was learning to remember that. (*GOE* 3-4)

Our introduction to the Bournes brings us into their milieu. We learn they are young and newly in love – the couple is on their honeymoon in Southern Europe (France and Spain) post WWI. However, what is most striking here are not the contextual details of time and place and circumstance – what I see especially highlighted is the way the characters interact with their context, the way they are represented. The protagonists are continually referred to in the generic third person, instead of using their specific personal pronouns: the Bournes, Catherine, and David. In fact, Hemingway goes quite some time before introducing the protagonists' proper names. The couple is referred to as "they," "the young couple," "the young man," and "the girl" for multiple pages: we wait seven pages before learning David's name and seventeen pages before Catherine's. This delay is most certainly consequential – it underscores

the concept that the characters' individual identities are not the primary factor; instead the emphasis is put on what the characters symbolize. The delay of using and the lack of personal pronouns illustrate that Catherine and David are stand-ins – like social-shells, waiting to be filled by cultural fodder. We see, then, that this strategy stresses not the characters' individuality, but instead what Catherine and David signify (at least seemingly): a girl and a boy, the feminine and the masculine.

Furthermore, this use of generic pronouns continues and is used heavily throughout the text. As a result we are constantly reminded not only that the characters are authorial tools, but also, and more significantly I'd argue, that individuals are culturally formed social subjects – that in a very real sense, like Catherine and David, we are all generic vessels, each filled with and shaped by a variety of powerful societal interpellations. Hemingway as an author creates characters, and society as an interpellator creates subjects. This is not to say, however, that social subjects are seamlessly analogous to the literary characters; characters are obviously entirely constructed authorial devices, lacking any sort of what may be considered freewill or mindful thought. They, arguably, have less agency than "real" or "authentic" subjects. That said, though, the subject, like characters such as Catherine and David, is essentially a discursive, interpellated product. This is a postulation that can be followed

throughout Hemingway's novel, especially by considering gender, sexuality, and sexual difference as both constructions and discursive limitations.

I look to Catherine as an illustration of how such identity constructs can result in limiting, pernicious, and melancholic consequences. Before doing so, however, let us first consider the ways she demonstrates potentially less harmful outcomes of discursive power. For example, Catherine illustrates the way repetition functions during identity formation, and repetition can paradoxically be both a pernicious *and* productive mechanism. In this vein, Butler reminds us that for Foucault, "the subject who is produced through subjection is not produced at an instant in its totality. Instead, it is in the process of being produced, it is repeatedly produced (which is not the same as being produced anew again and again)" (*Psychic Life* 93). It is in this repeated production that I believe Butler finds a certain liberation from discursive restraint. She explains this liberating function of discourse and discusses the limitations of the mechanisms at work during subjectivation while contending that:

> It is precisely the possibility of a repetition which does not consolidate that dissociated unity, the subject, but which proliferates effects which undermine the force of normalization. The term which not only names, but forms and frames the subject – let us use Foucault's example of homosexuality – mobilizes a reverse discourse against the very regime of normalization by which it is spawned. (*Psychic Life* 93)

The "regime of normalization" via discourse produces the culturally understood identity type of "homosexuality," and the associated cultural implications, as an inverse response to what is typical, to what is not "normal" or heterosexual. At the same time, this response acts to validate the norm. What is anomalous, then, has the potential both confuse the norm and disrupt convention, *and also* to solidify it. So we begin to see that what is outside the reference of normality is spawned from the "regime of normalization" and vice versa. This double movement illustrates that the non-normative, essentially and paradoxically, both stabilizes and destabilizes normativity.

Furthermore, we must also see that normalization requires a certain amount of regularity, sameness, and rigidity in order to safeguard its stability and continuation. Yet the process of subject formation, as it occurs over and over again, repeatedly introduces performative opportunities for "slippage" or deviation from the norm. In other words, subjectification and identity formation requires constant repetition and although, as Butler points out, this constant reproduction does not denote a new product each time, it does mean that the process of identity formation is not stagnant and is instead fluid and consequently relatively unstable. Moreover, if we accept that one of the primary and potentially harmful consequences of discursive power is its ability to normalize social subjects to the point of limitation – to homogenize and eradicate difference in the subject (and the subject population) via rigid

repetition – then we can see that the inverse possibility of fluidity in subject formation is a potentially undermining and liberating prospect.

It is with this sense of undermining fluidity that Hemingway's Catherine discovers a means to obtain a certain amount of control over her own identity formation. In what is perhaps a case of dramatic irony, she turns to what is normative, that is, to what is ultimately construed as the cultural default setting in order to Other herself. Catherine appropriates the masculine identity: she embraces it, subverts it, undermines it, and, ultimately, disproves its naturalness or innateness. By desiring normativity, which is manifested via the masculine identity, Catherine subverts the very identity she means to perform. Returning to Butler's words here, Catherine undermines "the force of normalization" via the process of repetition. She subverts what is normative by repeating it and thus she "mobilizes a reverse discourse against the very regime of normalization."

Let's play out these ideas in terms of how Catherine specifically acts to repeat what is normative and thus subvert it. Consider the example explained by Butler that heteronormativity is normalized by homosexuality and then apply it to femininity and masculinity; considering this application, I don't think it is too far a leap to surmise that masculinity is normalized by femininity. A man is a man because he's not a woman. As subjects repeat these two gender constructs, the outcome is, essentially and historically, the

continued normalization of masculinity and the conception of femininity as the deviation.

It should be noted here that in the previous chapter a slightly different working definition of normativity was used. Whereas in *On the Road* gender normativity is associated more with men being connected with masculinity and females being connected with femininity, in *The Garden of Eden* gender normativity is associated with the aforementioned definition *and* with one that connotes the male gender as the "norm" or default setting. Lack, for instance – which in psychoanalytic parlance is traditionally associated with the female (Freud) or the feminine signifier (Lacan) – is underscored more in Hemingway's text. The reason for the slightly contrasting, though significant, differences in definition may pertain to the time periods in which the novels take place. *The Garden of Eden* takes place ten or so years before *On the Road*, which may account for the way it alternatively works with two, albeit related, different definitions of normativity, including the rather more old-fashioned idea of "woman" being a deviation from "man." Either way, we'll see that in *The Garden of Eden* Catherine intentionally reproduces and appropriates the normative (the masculine) in a variety of transformative ways. The consequences are quite telling.

Early in the text, Catherine is described as having culturally stereotypical feminine qualities, both intellectually and physically. She is

portrayed, initially, in a submissive and socially compliant light. For instance, though Catherine prefers wearing shorts, she "went to mass on Sunday wearing a skirt and a long-sleeved cashmere sweater with her hair covered with a scarf" (*GOE* 6). Note that her physical appearance is described as being conventionally quite girlish and that Catherine is aware of the gender masquerade she must partake in. Again early in the text, she is described through David's eyes: "when he looked at the girl now her breasts showed beautifully against the worn cloth" (6). Just a short time later she is illustrated with: "her shoulders back and her chin up and she shook her head so her heavy tawny hair slapped around her cheeks and then bowed forward so it all fell forward and covered her face… then shook her hair back… brushed it back looking at it critically" (12-13). We are shown that Catherine is young, beautiful, and feminine. Moreover, it is clear that one especially significant element in this sketch is Catherine's hair – her long tawny locks are a representation, a manifestation of her femininity.

Accordingly, her self-described "change" – her transformation toward masculinity – begins with a haircut. Mark Spilka goes so far as to say that, "*The Garden of Eden*, in its roughly completed manuscript form, is chiefly a novel about haircuts—or about haircuts and the narratives and counter-narratives they inspire" (149). This thematic element is first illustrated through Catherine, though the theme evolves throughout the text. We first become

aware of Catherine's identity change, as represented through her hair-cuts, when after sex she explains to her husband that "I'm going to be changed" (*GOE* 12). Afterward, she departs from the bed to venture to Aigues Mortes alone; during this scene, Catherine's hair is again referenced as "blowing in the wind" (13) – once more our attention is brought to her hair as a marker of her femininity. It is this signifier of her identity that Catherine changes first. She returns from Aigues Mortes and

> her hair was cropped as short as a boy's. It was cut with no compromises. It was brushed back, heavy as always, but the sides were cut short and the ears that grew close to her head were clear and the tawny line of her hair was cropped close to her head and smooth and sweeping back. (14-5)

Catherine cuts her long tresses not as a fashion statement, but instead because she wishes to appropriate the opposite gender. She has taken a masculine code of identification and repeated it, reproduced it by cropping her hair. Through her appropriation she repeats what the discourse has assigned as a masculine identity attribute. Typically, the constant repetition of such attributes functions to strengthen their normalizing power – repetition, in other words, usually stabilizes the masculine identity. However, as a female repeating a masculine identification Catherine acts to destabilize this mechanistic function of repetition that occurs during identity formation. It is this destabilization that begins to confuse and amalgamate genders. She explains to David, "'you see,' she said. 'That's the surprise. I'm a girl. But now I'm a boy too and I can do

anything and anything and anything'" (15). For Catherine, cutting her hair is a way to display her desire to recover her lost object, masculinity. We begin to get a glimpse here of what is more to come – Catherine is deeply envious of the masculine identity, embodied in her husband, David.

Moreover, she feels constrained by the feminine identity she is culturally assigned and by the female identity codes that interpellate her. This is, ultimately, a central source of her melancholy. Masculinity connotes power, ability, and independence, for Catherine – all attributes she desires. This is why it is so imperative for Catherine that her change, her appropriation of the masculine identity be authentic. Plagiarizing is not her aim. In fact, she assures David that, "It isn't faked or phony. It's a true boy's haircut" (15). This "true boy's haircut" signifies her masculinity or desire for it – it represents her performance as a man. Paradoxically, Catherine's earnest need for masculine authenticity exposes the inauthenticity of the masculine identity. As she repeats masculinity she produces it, and as a female this production is subversive insofar as it invalidates the concept that masculinity is a gender code that is somehow natural or inherent or exclusively male. Furthermore, Catherine's overly insistent and adamant assurances regarding the "true boy's haircut" demonstrate that actually she is in fact attempting to convince herself, not her husband that she has successfully appropriated the masculine gender.

Despite this attempt, however, she's ultimately unconvinced and thus continues in her efforts to satisfy her yearning for masculine authenticity.

For instance, she repeatedly gets her hair cropped shorter and shorter, each time attempting to better replicate a male cut and the masculine identity. The severity of her haircut is implied when David: "heard the door open and she came in and for and instant he did now know her" (45). Catherine explains that, "I told the coiffeur that I wanted it all brushed forward and he brushed it and it came down to my nose and I could hardly see through it and I said I wanted it cut like a boy when he would first go to public school… I just had him keep shortening it" (46). For Catherine, the less hair she has the less femininity she has too. Yet, a shorter crop is still not enough. She seeks to simulate an even more "real" masculinity: "But it isn't even really a boy's haircut… everything's going wrong" (80). Here we begin to really see Catherine's gender anxiety and it pushes her to take further action.

In her next attempt to legitimately annex the masculine, Catherine aims to replicate a particular, specific man – a man who represents an ideal of masculinity in her eyes. She begins to copy David, the object of her jealously. Moreover, Catherine's emulation acts to blur the line between her and David, and consequently between femininity and masculinity. We become aware of this consequence as Catherine likens her and David's physical appearances. Having a boy's haircut is not enough for her; it's not close enough to her ideal

of masculinity, so she raises the bar, she moves beyond just haircuts. Later in this chapter, for instance, we will see that Catherine has a deep jealousy for David's position as an author and therefore acts out against this position. His profession is a powerful representation of his masculinity – and for Catherine David's masculinity connotes social power and ideological freedom. Moreover, David and the masculine identity idealized through him are for Catherine a stark contrast to herself and the feminine identity she feel limited by. Though the limited-omniscient narration never puts us directly in Catherine's head, we see through her actions that for her she and David must be alike, as alike as she can make it.

It is in this spirit of appropriation that Catherine convinces David to go to the coiffeur with her. David watches as, "Monsieur Jean began cutting Catherine's hair very carefully and skillfully and David watched her dark serious face" (79). For Catherine this trip to the coiffeur is not like the ones previous; this time it's about more than just her own haircut, about more than her own appropriation of masculinity. She wants and eventually convinces David to cut and color his hair too, in the same ways that hers has been done. For her this advances the validation of her own masculinity (by further blurring the genders). In fact, this act of confusion goes even further as David begins to approximate feminine codes of behavior.

Catherine asks the coiffeur to make David's hair "the same as mine" (81). David initially rejects the idea of having the same cut and color as Catherine's; these changes are a kind of resignation of his masculinity. However, there are various instances in the novel when David not only resigns a sense of his masculinity, but also explicitly appropriates certain feminine qualities. In this instance as the coiffeur, David does resign. Again, Catherine tells the coiffeur to make David's hair like hers:

> 'Just the same.' When it was cut David stood up and ran his hand over his head. It felt cool and comfortable. 'Aren't you going to lighten it?' 'No. We've had enough miracles for one day' [David]. 'Just a little?' [Catherine]. 'No.' David looked at Catherine and then at his own face in the mirror. His was as brown as hers and it was her haircut… He looked once more in the mirror and walked over then and sat down. The coiffeur looked at Catherine. 'Go ahead and do it,' she said. (82)

As we can see, this is not an innocent trip to the barber. It is fraught with the symbolic: Catherine gets closer to achieving masculinity by further replicating and repeating her ideal masculine figure, David; David, moreover, appropriates femininity by cropping and coloring his hair to match Catherine's. Together they successfully obscure gender identifications.

This muddying of gender norms manifested through David is again underscored a few nights after the incident at the coiffeur. As we've seen, not only does Catherine wish to assume a masculine identity, she also seeks to feminize her husband's identity as a means to further authenticate her identification with the male gender. This gender confusion is quite clear in the

couple's dialogue. While lying in bed together, Catherine initiates a discussion: " 'David?' " 'Yes.' 'How are you my girl?' 'I'm fine.' 'Let me feel your hair girl. Who cut it? Was it Jean? It's cut so full and has so much body and it's the same as mine. Let me kiss you girl. Oh you have lovely lips. Shut your eyes girl'" (85-6). By referring to David as "girl," Catherine tries to solidify her masculine position in the relationship. Furthermore, David does not reject being called "girl"; in fact, he answers the call, he is hailed. As a result, David acts to confuse gender codes, and implicitly subvert the existence of gender as an innate characteristic. As both Catherine and David "become" the other's gender, performance as construct becomes evident. In other words, together Catherine and David support Butler's ideas that:

> Such acts, gestures, enactments, generally construed, are *performative* in the sense that the essence or identity that they otherwise purport to express are *fabrications* manufactured and sustained through corporeal signs and other discursive means. That the gendered body is performative suggests that it has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute reality. This also suggests that if that reality is fabricated as an interior essence, that very interiority is an effect and function of a decidedly public and social discourse, the public regulation of fantasy… an illusion discursively maintained for the purposes of the regulation of sexuality within the obligatory from of reproductive heterosexuality. (*Gender Trouble* 173)

Here Butler is suggesting that even the "very interiority" of a subject, its psychic power is somehow constructed or at least affected by external cultural pressures. Catherine and David exemplify these cultural mechanisms at work. By disavowing their culturally assigned genders, they uphold that the

“gendered body is performative.” By appropriating the opposite gender, as Catherine does by adopting masculinity and David femininity, the reality of the performative is undoubtedly exposed. Additionally, the masquerade of gender identity is connected to the ideological mechanism of repetition described above. For Butler, the repeated performance of gender acts to expose that gender is not innate because, as her logic explains, if gender were “natural” there would be no reason for the identity or ideology to be validated by way of repletion. Thus, it is through the repetition of masculinity that Catherine illustrates the unnaturalness of gender and consequently confuses and destabilizes the identification.

Essentially, repetition of normative codes is meant to solidify them, to authenticate and verify them. Yet as Catherine repeats masculine normativity in the ways we’ve seen described above, she acts to do the opposite of repetition’s ideological and interpellative task – she does not ratify masculinity or the normalization of gender identities, but rather disrupts and confuses them. Thus, she exposes gender for what it is: a construction engendered and preserved by culture[7]. As a result, while lauding masculinity Catherine critiques the male gender by appropriating it. By appropriating and repeating

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[7] It is noteworthy here to mention the significance of the culture Catherine and David are part of, as it, at least in part, facilitates their gender “transgressions.” Both are of a privileged class status and are living in Southern Europe, a locale with a population who is most likely more accepting of difference compared to the United States at this time.

socially masculine attributes, Catherine further exposes masculinity as a performative. In Butler's words: "*By imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself – as well as its contingency*" (*Gender Trouble* 175). In a sense, by performing as a man Catherine is performing an act of drag. It is with this performance that she reveals the manufactured nature of gender and the fact that its existence is contingent on being able to be imitated.

As we've seen, then, gender as a performative act is certainly revealed via Catherine in *The Garden of Eden*. Given our postmodern position, illustrating that gender is a cultural construction may not be an extremely far-fetched concept. However, Catherine also exposes that sexuality too is blurred, complicated, and facilitated by societal interpellations. The changes to her physical appearance, by way of dress and hairstyle, are not the only evidence of Catherine's desire to change, to be Othered and adopt the masculine identity.

She demonstrates her desires for masculinity and Otherness in the bedroom as well. More often than not, while having sex Catherine identifies as a man. During one bedroom session, for instance, she asks David, "'now can I be a boy again?' 'Why?' … 'I loved it… I'll only be a boy at night and won't embarrass you. Don't worry about it please.' 'All right, boy'" (*GOE* 56). Though Hemingway leaves the explicit details to the reader's imagination,

Catherine implicitly performs as a man during sex; she plays the role of the man and David pretends to be the woman. In fact, "Catherine's nighttime games… actually pose a threat to another dominant ideology: the ideology of heterosexuality" (Moddelmog 263). Her queering actions in the bedroom expose that not only is gender a cultural masquerade, but also that sex and sexuality are culturally manufactured and performative.

In other words, like gender, sex and sexuality are performances. These identifications are also touched by the interpellative power of society. Furthermore, while considering the nature of these identifications we must also address the idea that sex, gender, and sexuality are intrinsically related, that one necessarily leads to the other (and then to the other again). By blurring the lines between these constructions, Catherine and David act to confuse and ultimately dissolve that correlative assumption. Again before having sex Catherine tells David, "'don't call me girl'" (*GOE* 17). She wants to be a boy during sex. However, David points out that, "'Where I'm holding you you are a girl,' he said. He held her tight around her breasts and he opened and closed his fingers feeling her and the hard erect freshness between his fingers" (17). Initially, we see here that Catherine's status as a female is defined by her body, if nothing else. Yet Catherine subverts even this seemingly safe and "biological" assumption by telling David: "'they're just my dowry'… 'The new is my surprise. Feel. No leave them. They'll be there. Feel my cheeks

and the back of my neck. Oh it feels so wonderful and good and clean and new. Please love me David the way I am. Please understand and love me… I'm Peter'" (17). Catherine's "new" speaks to her gender and sex shifting. It's her change to the masculine identity. Catherine wants David to feel the parts of her that she believes represent her masculine identity (Peter) – the nape of her neck, for example. Thus, in a way, she exists simultaneously as female and male.

Whilst she represents both genders, we see here too that Catherine's body, the parts that presumably make her female – her breasts and vagina – don't even define her as a female. By defining her female body parts as a dowry, a kind of cultural habit or practice she essentially debunks the idea that the body or sex is immune to cultural construction, thus supporting Butler's contentions. Additionally, it is also worthwhile to note that David is game for Catherine's gender and sex reversals during sex play. This speaks to his sexual flexibility and his desire to recover his lost object as well – this functionally blurs the lines of gender convention and heteronormativity even further.

Here Butler describes the assumption, the fantasy that sex, sexuality, and gender are each necessarily connected, and while doing so she also connects it to the related subversion of such an assumption:

> the performance is in the recognition of a radical contingency in the relation between sex and gender in the face of cultural configurations of casual unities that are regularly assumed to be natural and necessary.

> In the place of the law of heterosexual coherence, we see sex and gender denaturalized by means of performance which avows their distinctness and dramatizes the cultural mechanism of their fabricated unity. (*Gender Trouble* 175)

In other words, subjects are interpellated to believe that not only are gender and sex innate, but also that they are interconnected and dependent on one another. However, by exposing the idea that gender and sex are not innate – and included in this loop is sexuality as well – that they are social constructions and cultural fabrications then sex, sexuality, and gender are not necessarily intertwined either. As we've seen, Catherine acts to support this claim as she confuses sex and gender, and her ambiguities help to illustrate that these identity niches are not fundamentally contingent upon one another.

This kind of fluidity, blurring, and confusion of sexual convention and heteronormativity are further complicated when Marita, Catherine and David's shared partner, is introduced in the text. Outwardly, Marita is brought in as a kind of band-aid for Catherine and David's failing monogamous relationship. This certainly ties into one of the themes we see shared in *The Garden of Eden* and *On the Road*: monogamy and heteronormativity continually fail in these novels. Though polyamory and/or queer relationships do not always work out as a plausible alternative, these possibilities combined with the failed monogamous relationships do introduce implications regarding the potential limits of culturally normative sexual lifestyles. By representing queered

models of eroticism, both *The Garden of Eden* and *On the Road* destabilize normative ideals of sexuality and consequently these texts illustrate the productive possibilities of non-normative and more fluid identifications.

Hemingway introduces us to such unconventional sexual alternatives through Catherine, David, and Marita's relationship. When driving back to their village from Cannes, Catherine and David stop for drinks at a café; it is here that they first see and meet Marita: "'Who are those two [Marita is with a female friend]?' Catherine said … 'The one is a damned handsome girl.' 'Yes she is. And here she comes over'" (89). After initial introductions, Catherine makes the first explicit advance, "'would you like to have a drink with us?'" (90). Though the girl[8] does not accept this first invitation, Catherine and David are obviously smitten with her: "'I liked her. Didn't you?' [Catherine]. 'I suppose so' [David]" (91). Just a few days after this first meeting, Catherine brings Marita home to David, like an offering: "'look who I brought to see you'" (95). David looks at Marita: "'don't be frightened,' he said. 'What do you think you've got into?'" (95). David's ominous comment is quite telling of the coming relationship between the three. Though they enjoy a short period of blissful polyamory, the relationship eventually does break down – primarily due to jealousy and power issues. However, the problematic

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[8] Notably, once Marita enters the scene Hemingway refers to her as "the girl" more so than Catherine. This move may speak to the way Marita takes Catherine's position as the female in the relationship, while Catherine further shifts into the masculine.

dynamics of envy and dominance do not stem from the usual sources one would suspect. On the surface it seems that Catherine becomes jealous of the relationship David and Marita share; yet, what we see is that Catherine actually envies only David. Her resentful proclivities would manifest despite Marita's involvement. Catherine's jealousy is significant, no doubt, and soon I will address her desire to be what David represents, that is, to be the masculine part of the triad and beyond. Before doing so, however, I must sufficiently highlight this idea that though the love triangle ultimately fails the reason is not because the unconventional relationship is somehow inherently flawed. True, sexual transgression is primarily demonstrated in *The Garden of Eden* via Catherine and her sex and gender shifting; although, transgressive sexuality and its progressive potential is also illustrated by way of the mere introduction of the trio's sexual relations. Through this relationship we see the queering and confusion of both heterosexuality and monogamy. Debra A. Moddelmog goes so far as to say that "lesbian desire and male homosexual desire… are crucial to the drama and… precipitate the central conflicts of the text" (257). Ultimately, these desires and the simultaneous polyamorous and queered relationship destabilize normative ideals of sexuality. This destabilization, in

turn, establishes that

> ‘identity’ is assured through the stabilizing concepts of sex, gender, and sexuality, the very notion of ‘the person’ is called into question by the cultural emergence of those ‘incoherent’ or ‘discontinuous’ gendered beings who appear to be persons but who fail to conform to the gendered norms of cultural intelligibility by which persons are defined. (*Gender Trouble* 23)

Here Butler calls identity into question as she uses sex, gender, and sexuality as linchpins – once these identifications are pulled, the assurance of identity falls away. Catherine, David, and Marita speak to these identifications and to their tenuous nature. They also demonstrate the power these norms have on identity formation. What their collective destabilizing effect calls into question may be not the existence of identity itself, but rather the ways in which identity is formed. Ultimately, by queering heteronormativity the threesome substantiates that there is transgressive potential in writing and rewriting identity, sexual and otherwise.

Though we’ve seen here how ideological mechanisms, such as repetition, can function to confuse gender codes, let’s not forget that such a liberating result is a bit of a paradox because such mechanisms also restrict identity fluidity – and melancholia, for instance, is one of the ways this restriction is manifested. We can continue to look to Catherine as we consider this pernicious outcome: she is a clear embodiment of the melancholic result. Though her attempt to appropriate a masculine sexuality and gender and the resulting subversion is initially empowering for her, she is ultimately unable to

fully commandeer masculinity. For Butler, this failure would not be surprising, as all subjects fall short of fully performing gender, an impossible symbolic ideal (thus the need for repletion, as noted previously). Catherine's failure is not due to a lack of trying – she changes her physical appearance to look more masculine, she pretends to be a man in the bedroom, and masculates herself by feminizing her partner(s). Essentially, Catherine's inability to annex the male gender, her inability to successfully perform this gender is a result of the society and discourse of which she is part: "her behavior is attributable to the limitations on and expectations of women in the first half of the twentieth century" (*Hemingway's The Garden of Eden: Twenty-five Years of Criticism* xvii). Catherine is ultimately limited by society's norms, discourses, and expectations, and moreover she is unable to successfully mourn these limitations because of social and ideological prohibition.

She is frustrated with the societal limitations imposed upon her and with the female gender she is culturally expected to perform; she is frustrated and bored with a system that denounces her desire for a more manifold gender and sexuality spectrum. We see her frustration displayed when she asks David, "'do you like me as a girl'… 'Yes' he said. 'That's good,' she said. 'I'm glad someone likes it because it's a god damned bore'" (*GOE* 70). Catherine continues to illustrate her dissatisfaction, caused from heteronormative ideological limitations, in various ways – most notably,

through her relationship with David. She compares her status as a woman with David's position as a man; in him she sees a lack in herself – the result is that she is deeply and powerfully jealous of David. Essentially, her adamant desire to avow the masculine identity and ultimate failure is evident through the envy she has for her husband.

Thus, we must then look at David in order see what it is that Catherine desires to emulate. One way we see David's masculinity represented is through his profession: a writer. His writing career symbolizes for the reader and for Catherine a certain independence – and in the earlier twentieth century this independence is typically associated with men more than with women. Moreover, David's writing revolves around stereotypically masculine themes: war, hunting, and male role models, for instance. For Catherine, David largely *is* his writing. Remember too that he is set up as an ideal of masculinity. His writing thus becomes a central obsession for her.[9] His manuscript and success as a writer represent all that she cannot have, all she cannot be.

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[9] Making a correlation between writing and masculine agency is, of course, an established tradition in feminist interpretation – most notably in Gilbert and Gubar's distinguished *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination.* The authors famously explain that from their experience teaching and researching women's literature they noticed a "coherence of theme and imagery… in the works of writers who were often geographically, historically, and psychologically distant from each other," and from there they "decided… that the striking coherence… in literature by women could be explained by a common, female impulse to struggle free from social and literary confinement through strategic redefinition of self, art, and society" (*xi-xii*). Their deduction can be applied to Catherine, insofar as she desires this kind of outlet in order to be free from

This is a continual and central tension in the novel and one that eventually leads to its coda. The tension begins when David's editor sends him newspaper clippings that praise his work – Catherine fixates on these clippings, as they are a representation of his success as an author and as a man. We can hear the bitterness in her tone as she and David bicker back and forth:

> 'So make your own [drink], you clipping reader,' she said. 'What was that?' the young man said to her. 'I didn't say it.' But she had said it and he said to her, 'Why don't you just shut up about the clippings.' 'Why?' she said, leaning toward him and speaking too loudly. 'Why should I shut up? Just because you wrote this morning? Do you think I married you because you're a writer? You and your clippings.' (39)

As time passes, Catherine's resentfulness heightens and eventually she shifts her focus from the newspaper clippings to the manuscript David has been working on throughout their travels. As soon as he completes the work, Catherine destroys it in a fit of rage, burning both the clippings (from newspapers that gave David positive reviews of his earlier work) and the entire manuscript. Once David realizes what she has done, a climatic quarrel erupts:

> Inside the room he opened the big Vuitton suitcase. The pile of cahiers that the stories had been written in was gone. So were the four bulky envelopes from the bank that contained the press clippings… He had not believed that the stories could be gone. He had not believed she could do it… 'They [the clippings and manuscript] were worthless and I hated them' [Catherine]… 'Did everything burn up?' 'Yes. I poured on some petrol…it made a big fire and everything burned… 'Can we not talk about them?' David asked. 'I want to talk about them,'

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social confinements, from limitations that she associates with her feminine gender. Catherine sees writing, however, as a strictly masculine outlet, thus her envy of the profession and the freedom it connotes.

> Catherine said. 'I want to make you realize why it was necessary to burn them.' 'Write it out,' David said. 'I'd rather not hear it now.' 'But I can't write things, David.' " (219-23)

Their fight culminates with Catherine's admission of lack – she cannot write, she cannot take away David's masculinity nor can she authentically appropriate it. David and Marita attribute her violent action to her deteriorating mental stability: "'all I want to do is kill you,' David said. 'And the only reason I don't do it is because you are crazy'" (223). The implicit blame placed on Catherine speaks to the title of the novel. It may be easy to gloss Catherine as Eve, biting the apple of multiple temptations and transgressions. Alternatively, she is the devil, the ultimate temptress. I maintain, however, that she represents neither of these Biblical characters. Instead, she is the catalyst that exposes the myth as fantasy. Catherine burns the writings not because she is insane or evil, but instead because she is unable to successfully perform the masculine identity, the myth that David represents.

Catherine rejects ideological limitation and her "revolt in melancholia can be distilled by marshaling aggression in the service of mourning, but also, necessarily, of life" (*Psychic Life* 191). In a sense, as a man David is able to write or create his own identity and as a woman Catherine is more limited in such construction. These limitations cause her to lash out and thus destroy his writing; symbolically, she attempts to level his power of identity creation. Burning David's manuscript and subsequently fleeing are Catherine's final

attempts to establish an independent identity, to push away from the ideologies that stifle her: "I'm of age and because I'm married to you doesn't make me your slave or your chattel. I'm going and you can't stop me" (*GOE* 225). Behind her she leaves a note for David – one that exemplifies her melancholic state:

> David, I knew very suddenly you must know how terrible it was. Worse than hitting someone, a child is the worst I guess—with a car… I did it and I knew I did it and I can't undo it. It's too awful to understand. But it happened… I do not ask for forgiveness… I am sorry. What a useless word. (237)

Throughout the text, Catherine aims to fill a void she feels within herself, she searches for her lost object. Ultimately, we see that she looks to the Other, in this case the masculine, for satisfaction. Her dissatisfaction and melancholia, however, lead her to intentionally cause a traumatic event (burning the writings) – we see her reference this trauma in the letter. Trauma is her last ditch effort to find meaning and this fails as well. Catherine is sorry not for burning David's work – she is sorry for her failure, her failure to recover her lost object via simulation. Moreover, she realizes the futility, which we see in her frustration and regret: "what a useless word."

How and why Catherine fails in this recovery is debatable. I think it comes down to the question of whether or not gender and sexual difference exist outside the symbolic order, or to put it another way the question of whether or not sexual difference comes from the psyche or from external

ideological forces. While considering this, I return to Žižek and Butler. The two theorists are often considered to be in contention with one another, as Žižek, for instance, often disagrees with many post-structuralist tenets Butler is thought to uphold. That being said, I think the two theorists would agree that Catherine's failure to repossess masculinity is at least partially psychologically rooted. In this regard, Žižek takes a Lacanian stance:

> Lacan claims that sexual difference is 'real'… [and] that it is 'impossible' – impossible to symbolize, to formulate as a symbolic norm. In other words, it is not that we have homosexuals, fetishists, and other perverts *in spite of* the normative fact of sexual difference – that is, as proofs of the failure of sexual difference to impose the norm; it is not that sexual difference is the ultimate point of reference which anchors the contingent drifting of sexuality; it is, on the contrary, on account of the gap which forever persists between the real of sexual difference and the determinate forms of heterosexual symbolic norms that we have the multitude of 'perverse' forms of sexuality. (*Ticklish Subject* 273)

Žižek argues here that sexual difference is ultimately "real" or inherent and, moreover, that the gap "between the real of sexual difference" proves this assertion. Additionally, the "real" difference is grounded in the psychic life. Butler goes on to explain that "the 'givenness' of sexual difference is clearly not to be denied… [and] sexual difference [is] the primary *guarantor* of loss in our psychic lives… all separation and loss [can] be traced back to that structuring loss of the other sex by which we emerge as this sexed being in the world" (*Psychic Life* 164-5). By stating that the subject emerges as a sexed being into the world, it seems that Butler agrees that sexual difference may be

a psychic one. Though I think Žižek would define the cause of this psychic difference (and limitation) as non-discursive and Butler as discursive, they at least agree that the limitation exists and that sexual difference is an affect (at least partially) of a psychic life. The distinction between gender and sex and the impetus of each are further complicated as Žižek explains that

> in her more recent writings, Butler herself seems to concede… the key distinction between sexual difference and the 'social construction of gender': the status of sexual difference is not directly that of a contingent socio-symbolic formation; rather, sexual difference indicates the enigmatic domain which lies between, no longer biology and not yet the space of socio-symbolic construction. (*Ticklish Subject* 275)

We see here that Žižek and Butler agree that sex or sexual difference cannot be reduced to being a biological effect, nor is sex purely a social construct.

Taking Butler's and Žižek's arguments into account, it seems that Catherine never really had a chance of success in terms of recovering or appropriating her lost object, masculinity. How could she "succeed" given the complexity of what's being navigated. One thing is definite, however, though this very complicated issue regarding gender and sexual difference is ultimately left unresolved, Catherine successfully demonstrates the complications and nuances involved. Moreover, we see that the combination of ideological force and psychic limitation impels Catherine to disavow her masculine identity; furthermore, this combination engenders her inability to mourn that disavowal, which leads to her ultimate melancholic state.

It's strangely poetic, even uncanny perhaps, that before his suicide Hemingway never completed his final manuscript of *The Garden of Eden.* Like the text itself, Catherine's identity, like our own, ultimately remains unfinished. This parallel highlights, I think, the idea that a text is truly never complete – a text in the sense of a novel, or history, or an identity, for that matter. For Butler, gender, sex, and sexuality as performative constructs are never finished or finally composed. Catherine's inability to write her identity as masculine can be interpreted as a failure; however, she *is* successful in not fully answering the call of femininity. It is here that we can find a place of power:

> The inaugurative scene of interpellation is one in which a certain failure to be constituted becomes the condition of possibility for constituting oneself. Social discourse wields the power to form and regulate a subject through the imposition of its own terms. (*Psychic Life* 197).

By not "turning" toward the hailing of the feminine ideology, Catherine does achieve something: self-construction. In this sense, at least, it is she, not David who is the true writer.

Conclusion

> *In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself—as well as its contingency.* Indeed, part of the pleasure, the giddiness of the performance is in the recognition of a radical contingency in the relation between sex and gender in the face of cultural configurations of causal unities that are regularly assumed to be natural and necessary. In the place of the law of heterosexual coherence, we see sex and gender denaturalized by means of a performance which avows their distinctness and dramatizes the cultural mechanism of their fabricated unity.
>
> — Judith Butler

Among other structuralist and poststructuralists, Butler and Žižek both tend to lean on and borrow from psychoanalytic theory while considering identity formation. I have already touched on tensions between the two theorists and their theories; however, as I simultaneously conclude and look forward here, I think it is important to further consider a potential meeting point. While doing so, it's significant to note that this consideration implies a shift from examining subjectivity from a more discursive point of view to a more psychoanalytic standpoint, and, moreover, this adjustment brings with it a different set of assumptions.

A Foucauldian perspective, for instance, focuses heavily on the discursive impact and elements at play during subjectification. This discursive perspective interprets the subject as a flat surface or plane – metaphorically speaking – a surface upon which ideologies are constituted. Here, the subject

is established and mediated by various discursive belief systems. From a psychoanalytic perspective, by contrast, the subject has more inherent depth – the subject is metaphorically more spherical, by comparison. Moreover, a post-structuralist might say that the subject is the effect of interpellations, whereas a psychoanalytic or Lacanian interpretation may argue that the subject is the gap between or void of those same interpellations. In making this move from a post-structuralist/discursive idea of subjectification to a more psychoanalytic position, I look to Freud and his theory regarding das unheimliche or the uncanny. I believe that his theory invites an interesting and complicating conversation with regard to identity formation in *On the Road*, *The Garden of Eden*, and in us as subjects.[10]

I believe the uncanny speaks to a potential point of possibility in subject formation; it exposes a rift, a certain out-of-jointedness in the construction of identity. As we've seen, repetition is a crucial mechanism, an interpellative and ideological tool that enables subjects to identify with and consequently reproduce established social codes and identifications that are deemed "normal" by the dominant culture. Thus, the cycle continues. It is a cycle that both benefits and hinders the subject. It is beneficial insofar as it

[10] Although Freud applies his theory of the uncanny to something or someone outside of or other than the subject, I will be applying it directly to the subject herself. In the spirit of accuracy, it is significant enough to note this change in application; however, for my purposes here, this modification does not substantially alter the theory itself. In other words, Freud's theory and meaning remain intact while being transferred to an examination of personal subjecthood.

constitutes the subject, without this cycle the subject does not exist. However, the trade off is that the subject is limited by society's protocols. The uncanny is a kind of mirror that reflects a slip in the cyclical repetition, a space where subjects recognize themselves in dominant identifications, yet something is not quite right. The uncanny is both familiar and unfamiliar – it is home and foreign. The uncanny, this slip, this not-quite-rightness has a certain productive capacity because it is an opportunity for newness, for the avant-garde, for ideological invention and innovation.

Before further considering this potential place of opportunity, let's look at Freud's definition of the uncanny, which is, well, uncanny. It's a slippery explanation – one that evades certainty. It's also a lengthy definition; he examines the term over multiple chapters in his *The Uncanny*. Freud writes that:

> There is no doubt that this [the uncanny] belongs to the realm of the frightening, of what evokes fear and dread. It is equally beyond doubt that the work is not always used in a clearly definable sense, and so it commonly merges with what arouses fear in general. Yet one may presume that there exists a specific affective nucleus, which justifies the use of a special conceptual term. One would like to know the nature of this common nucleus, which allows us to distinguish the 'uncanny' within the field of the frightening. (123)

The term 'uncanny' is certainly multifaceted, and we see in the above passage that one of its dimensions relates to the realm of fear. While considering the uncanny and subjectivation together, this element of fear is telling: I believe it

speaks to the subject's trepidation to disavow convention and embrace the marginal, even if the non-normative is the subject's preferred or desired proclivity. In other words, the disavowed Other, the Other that is rejected due to the terms of society is an uncanny one. While describing the Other, Butler explains that:

> Indeed, the "other" may be an ideal, a country, a concept of liberty, in which the loss of such ideals is compensated by the interiorized ideality of conscience. An other or an ideal may be "lost" by being rendered unspeakable, that is, lost through prohibition or foreclosure: unspeakable, impossible to declare, but emerging in the indirection of complaint and the heightened judgments of conscience. (*Psychic Life* 196)

Butler's "other" is that which is untouchable, unrecoverable, repressed, desired and at the same time unattainable – it is thus both familiar and unfamiliar. I see this "other" that Butler refers to manifested through and reflected in the uncanny, and thus Butler and Freud, post-structuralism and psychoanalysis, subjectivity and the uncanny begin to overlap. We can look to the uncanny to see what is "rendered unspeakable" – moreover, "it seems obvious that something should be frightening precisely because it is unknown and unfamiliar" (Freud 124-5). Thus, not only is the uncanny connected to that which is feared, but it also relates to the "unspeakable" and repressed. Again, let's turn to Freud:

> if psychoanalytic theory is right in asserting that every affect arising from an emotional impulse – of whatever kind – is converted into fear by being repressed, it follows that among those things that are felt to be

> frightening there must be one group in which it can be shown that the frightening element is something that has been repressed now returns. This species of the frightening would then constitute the uncanny… the uncanny as 'something that should have remained hidden and has come into the open.' (Freud 147-8)

The repressed or hidden object, then, is what Butler refers to as the 'other' and is also the uncanny. Furthermore, though fear and the repressed are certainly connected, the repressed is its own distinct component of the uncanny.

Aside from fear and repression, another facet of the uncanny that I will discuss, and have alluded to above, relates to its slipperiness. It is hard to grasp onto this term and idea; the theory is evasive because of its inherent duality. In his discussion of the uncanny, Freud suggests a dichotomous element. While describing the term in *The Uncanny*, Freud goes into a long definitional explanation and exploration. While doing so, he uses and refers to images that are certainly at odds with each other. First he describes the uncanny as something that is "at ease in the house… the warm living room… very comfortable and familiar… cosy intimacy." Then he changes gears and explains that the term references that which is "concealed, kept hidden… uneasy… locked away" (128-33). We can see that the uncanny's dichotomous nature is best represented by its ability to be simultaneously familiar and unfamiliar, comfortable and uncomfortable. Thus, we have three central dimensions of the uncanny: the feared, the repressed, and the dichotomous. These three dimensions speak to the relationship between the uncanny and

subjectification. In fact, we've already seen evidence of this connection in *On the Road* and *The Garden of Eden*.

Sal's literal journey and travels are very much uncanny, as he constantly vacillates between what is familiar to him and what is unfamiliar. At the start of the novel, New York and his aunt's home are familiar for Sal and the road feels strange. Yet, by the end of *On the Road* this relationship reverses: traveling becomes home for Sal. On their last trip together, Sal and Dean go to Mexico – a place Sal has never been before; however, despite Mexico being a foreign land to him, a physical environment entirely unfamiliar to him, Sal feels at home on the road: "I, in the back seat, suffered in a pool of sweat. I got out of the car and stood swaying in the blackness… For the first time in my life the weather was not something that touched me, that caressed me, froze or sweated me, but became me. The atmosphere and I became the same" (*OTR* 293-4). The terms of the dichotomy have reversed by the end of the novel, as is evident in this quotation; furthermore, the uncanny duality between the familiar and unfamiliar is unmistakable. The open air and the road are familiar to Sal now, whereas normative society is stifling and unfamiliar to him. Though Sal vacillates between contrasting physical spaces, it is his dichotomous identity that most troubles him.

This is where the elements of fear and repression of the uncanny enter. Sal has desires that do not fit easily with the dominant ideologies of his time

and place, as demonstrated through his rejection of the normative 1950's myth of Americana, for instance, and especially through his homosocial relationship with Dean. Dean represents Sal's lost object – he is what Sal cannot have, he is what Sal cannot be. No matter how many times Sal leaves Dean, denies or disavows his lost object, it returns: "all the time I was thinking of Dean and how he got back on that train and rode over three thousand miles over that awful land and never knew why he had come anyway, except to see me" (307). Ultimately, Sal cannot fully repress what Dean represents: his lost other. In this way, Dean is Sal's uncanny manifestation.

Even more explicitly than *On the Road*, *The Garden of Eden* is fraught with elements of the uncanny, and it is in these uncanny moments that subjectification is especially highlighted. For instance, and as I've discussed in the second chapter, Catherine seeks to appropriate the masculine identity – she assumes familiar identity attributes, but as a female does so in unfamiliar ways. Additionally, Catherine tries to recover what she has foreclosed by muddying the distinction between the familiar and the unfamiliar: "I am you [David] and her [Marita]… I'm everybody" (*GOE* 196). As we can see, she means to be both male and female in order to reconcile her repressed identity. The result is an uncanny one – Catherine becomes both recognized and unrecognizable. Throughout the novel, she frequently looks at herself in the mirror and she obsesses over buying a large mirror for the bar in her room; it's as if she is

aware of her dichotomous identity and is looking for it in her reflection. It is during a height of her identity transformation that

> Catherine stood up and looked at herself very seriously in the mirror. Her face had never been so dark and her hair was like the bark of a young white birch tree. 'I like it so much,' she said. 'Too much.' She looked in the mirror as though she had never seen the girl she was looking at. (81)

Catherine is pleased by what she sees in the mirror: an uncanny reflection of self – the lost object reflected.

Lastly, let's look outside of these literary texts for evidence that showcases both the uncanny and the process of identity formation, and the connection between the two.[11] Drag queens and kings are a revealing example, I think. First, consider drag performance as an example of the uncanny. Take, for instance, a drag queen who successfully exaggerates the female performance – this performance is successful insofar as it highlights that which is socially identified as feminine. Thus, the queen reminds us of the familiar in an unfamiliar way. One function of drag, of course, is to confuse cultural gender codings and to expose their unnaturalness by attempting to look "authentic" – and the result is again an uncanny one.

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[11] By looking at this connection, Freudian idea of the subject and the Lacanian interpretation of subjectivity are conflated a bit. Though I think this conflation is a productive means to think about the subject and its construction, the distinction between the two analyses should be noted. For Lacan, the subject is the lack of symbolic structure; however, this gap (the subject) is still contingent on the symbolic order. On the other hand, for Freud, there is at least part of the subject that is not an effect of society.

Let's also consider what's at stake in the drag performance's connection to subjectivation. Because we can assume that gender is socially constructed, as I hope is clear in this thesis, and also assume that at least part of the subject exists outside of social construction, as Freudian psychoanalysis maintains, then genderlessness or at least gender ambiguity is one example of a lost object. Furthermore, if the lost object is what we repress and thus fear, and thus becomes manifested through the uncanny, then gender ambiguity and confusion is an example of the uncanny. Freud explains that, "it may be that the uncanny… is something familiar… that has been repressed and then reappears, and that everything uncanny satisfies this condition" (152). Thus, I see that gender ambiguity and flexibility is something that was once more familiar, and has been made unfamiliar through the process of subjectivation; this flexibility is continually repressed during interpellation, and consequently reappears through the uncanny (i.e. genderlessness and drag). We see evidence of this process in drag – this kind of performance speaks to subject repression of gender lack or, again, at least to gender ambiguity. Let me be clear, however, that I do not mean to imply that the drag performer herself is ultimately repressing the female *or* male gender; the implication I do mean to convey here is that drag as a phenomenon speaks to part of the social subject that was once familiar and is now and continually repressed.

The phenomenon of drag evidences our ability to overcome such repression by being cognizant and taking hold of our own identity performance. This is not to say that drag represents some part of a pre-symbolic self; in fact, it does the exact opposite: drag reminds us that identity, gender and otherwise, *is* already and always a performance. This is a beneficial reminder, as it illustrates to us that one performance is not more authentic, natural, or superior than another. It also highlights for us that one of the more productive qualities of identity performativity is our ability to find possibility and power in the slips or gaps in the symbolic order.

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