Psychoanalytic Transference: Julia Kristeva's Struggle for Maternal Identification

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Abstract

By examining Alice Jardine's intellectual biography of Julia Kristeva's life and work, this dissertation engages in intertextual, interpretative, and textually based research, bringing together Jardine's biography with Kristeva's psychoanalytic theories and later autobiographical reflections. Kristeva's own learning to do away with maternal desire is represented unconsciously yet powerfully by Jardine, who, I establish, takes the position as her good-enough biographer. Chapters are structured around six personal moments in Kristeva's life that I have chosen from Jardine's text: the mother and grandmother, father and symbolic fathers, and son and son-substitutes. My dissertation highlights the importance of these moments since they are connected to motherhood and substitutes, creativity and loss, as Kristeva moves in and out of time to mark her own difference and authority between primary and symbolic relations. My understanding of Jardine's narrative suggests that Kristeva is composed of her own textual theories and childhood stories. I argue that Kristeva has lived her life through her psychoanalytic concepts, rebuilding her transitional objects and defense mechanism of projective identification with the maternal while sublimating the loss of her primary relations in symbolic relationships.

Since the unconscious fragments of the personal erupt into a poetic revolution, I read Jardine's biography to understand Kristeva's practice of *writing* what she is *living* at any given moment as representing the energy charges and the psychical marks of the unconscious rhythmic space. As a method, my goal is to play with dynamic approaches to psychoanalysis by weaving together a technique representing a wave of Kristeva's personal experiences as part of her theoretical writing. This way of approaching life and work is critical for me to move from the description of events in Kristeva's life toward psychoanalytical levels of reflection about her works through her theories to demonstrate how Kristeva manifested her own subjectivity.

Refusing to distinguish between the personal and the textual, life and theory, my investigation reads for the entirety of Kristeva's subjectivity, where living and loving take the risk of thinking, as part of distancing from primary relations.

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Contents

Introduction: A "Good-Enough" Biographer

> I do things a bit as they come to me, as if I were swimming. I let myself be carried by the waves. I swim, but there is also the movement of the waves. I never thought I would leave Bulgaria – never! But it's true that in a way all of my studies have been escapes, a way of taking distance from my parents while staying close, distancing myself but at the same time transcending where they were (Kristeva qtd in Jardine 15).
>
> In order to think, one must first lose the mother (Kristeva, *Melanie Klein* 130).

"There is no doubt that Kristeva is one of the most important writers of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries," writes Alice Jardine in *At the Risk of Thinking: An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 2). Jardine's faithful devotion to forming an intellectual identity of Kristeva has to do with the textual combination of life and writing. Jardine's passionate study of Kristeva takes its own risk to reflect and represent the polyphony and multiverse aspects of her work. It also invites readers to journey through Kristeva's memories of distancing from her primary relations. The text is valuable for me in reconstructing and rediscovering Kristeva's early years in Bulgaria and later years in France as Jardine investigates what it means for Julia Kristeva to be a writer and an essential, active-thinking, intellectual woman of our time.

As her former student, research assistant, colleague, and friend, Jardine has been drawn to Kristeva since her early graduate years. Jardine was twenty-five years old in 1976 when she first met Kristeva at Columbia University. The chair of Jardine's Department of French, Michael Riffaterre, offered Jardine the role of Kristeva's research assistant. Jardine was in her second year of graduate studies when she gladly accepted the position, often bringing books for Kristeva from the library. As Jardine recounts, there were so many books to carry that she needed a friend to help her carry them. She also illustrates the great impression Kristeva made on her:

> The Kristeva I met then – only ten years my senior – was mesmerizing to me in every way… What I remember most acutely about Kristeva from that time was the impressive amalgamation of her intellectual brilliance and her devotion to her baby son, David, born in 1975. Over the years, I have stayed attached to David, first babysitting him when he was small, singing "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" with him over and over and over again. In part, it was the way Kristeva looked at David that most fascinated me… One of the most mysterious things for Kristeva about "Julia Kristeva" is how detached the image of the academic celebrity is from the everyday struggles of a mother of a handicapped child, a loving wife, an overworked professor, a practicing psychoanalyst, and of course, someone who think, reads, and writes in every spare minute she has (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 7–8).

Jardine's connection to David is compelling, engaging in "baby talk" with the little one as a maternal substitute. Over the years, Jardine has continued to admire Kristeva as a mother and has maintained a close relationship with Kristeva and David.

Jardine's intimate access to Kristeva's life and work since her early graduate years enabled her to grasp and write about the complexity of the Kristevian texts. Therefore, Jardine seems to be particularly well situated to compile this biography since she can extensively draw on her knowledge of Kristeva's work. For example, Jardine was one of the English translators of Kristeva's early work, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art* (published in 1980 by Columbia University Press) (Kristeva, *Desire in Language: A Semiotic Approach to Literature and Art*). In 1980, she published an article entitled "Theories of the Feminine: Kristeva" in the journal *enclitic* (Jardine, "Theories of the Feminine: Kristeva"). In 1987, she published an interview with Kristeva in *Copyright* (Jardine, "Interview with Julia Kristeva"). That same year, she also published a chapter entitled "Opaque Texts and Transparent Contexts: The Political Difference of Julia Kristeva" in *Poetics of Gender* (edited by Nancy Miller) (Jardine, "Opaque Texts and Transparent Contexts: The Political Difference of Julia Kristeva"). In 1993, this article was reprinted in *Ethics, Politics, and Difference in Julia*

Kristeva's Writing, edited by Kelly Oliver (Jardine, "Opaque Texts and Transparent Contexts: The Political Difference of Julia Kristeva").

Aside from her scholarship on Kristeva, Jardine conducted personal interviews in the summer of 2012, taking her own risk to figure out the making of the person of Julia Kristeva. Like an analyst, she attentively listened to Kristeva's stories through extended interviews:

> The hybridity of what follows is largely due to my reconstitution of Kristeva's reminiscences as, for example, they were shared with me through long, very alive and lively interview sessions. These interviews are not by any means the only sources for what follows, but they are important sources (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 18).

Using Kristeva's interview sessions along with her theoretical work, Jardine conveys how Kristeva's childhood narratives and her relations with primary objects are intimately tied to Kristeva's theoretical explanations. Jardine's limited analyses and intervention transform her (in Kleinian language) into a good breast, whose analyses are considered good milk, rather than a bad breast, whose explanations are deadly. These intimate encounters, similar to the therapeutic frame on the couch, have permitted Jardine to access Kristeva's life events, composed via texts and theories as an essential element in producing discursive networks of Kristeva's life and artistic expressions. For me, the intertextuality and networks of the textual body and personal subjectivity are essential to understand Jardine as her good-enough biographer, contributing to the production of Kristeva as *the* Julia Kristeva.

Jardine recognizes that her biography is one of the first attempts at exploring intimate details of Kristeva's life. But she also recognizes and draws material from the autobiographical dialogue between Kristeva and the young psychoanalyst Samuel Dock, *Je me voyage: Mémoires,* originally published in 2016. Dock undertakes to write about Kristeva's life in dialogue form, which he refers to as "a project at the intersection of biography and psychological research"

(Kristeva and Dock 20). Unlike Jardine's intellectual biography, Dock's interviews represent Kristeva through her own words; like Jardine's text, they consist of Kristeva's biographical details and interweave her deep thinking with difficult life experiences. The interviews and the biography are both vital for providing Kristeva's ideas, given that they are both published in her lifetime.

Jardine establishes her close relationship with Kristeva at the outset of the biography and reaffirms it at the end by including a poem from Kristeva's son, David. In a 2016 talk at the Théâtre national de la Colline, Kristeva quoted from the poem published in *Le Paptin*, a newspaper for people with disabilities. In speaking about surviving his long comas, David expresses his relationship to suffering and writing through the metaphor of hidden objects:

> From the white point to the point / black where is written / without / the day, without the night, the attraction / of words for the withdrawal / of the seas… The hidden objects / are sentences/ Where I'm hiding so as / not to forget love /… To perform / your writing / listen to the silence of the books (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 314).

To accompany this poem, Jardine includes a photo of Kristeva in her garden on the Île de Ré taken by Jardine's daughter, Anna. It is compelling that Jardine ends her intellectual biography of Kristeva with works of art by their children, documenting a bond and demonstrating via artworks the closeness of the maternal waves between these relations. As such, the co-presence of mothers and substitutes becomes translated as the "hidden objects" of maternal passions.

Defining the necessity of Kristeva's intellectual biography for our time, Jardine shares the intimate details of Kristeva's life publicly. She carefully lays out her personal interest in taking on a feminist biographical project that deals with a new model of becoming an intellectual: "a reading of Kristeva's life and work as part of my own search for a new model of inquiry" (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 2). Jardine

represents herself as an "autobiographically inclined biographer" to highlight her approach, which is to situate Kristeva in a central and unique position concerning the intellectual discourse of our time. Jardine recognizes that Kristeva takes her own risk to share private details about her life: "this book was the first time that Julia Kristeva exercised her formidable powers of thinking while also making herself personally vulnerable in public" (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 4). And yet, Jardine offers a few sentences regarding Kristeva's relationship to the biography: "Kristeva is still, thankfully, very much alive. This biography is in some ways premature. It is hybrid, tentative, and only a first attempt at sharing publicly the details of this remarkable woman's life" (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 18).

While Jardine recognizes the premature birth of her text, my close reading of the intellectual biography reflects on Kristeva's own need to contribute to this biography as she enters old age. I consider why Kristeva is protecting her legacy while building an archive of her stories. But most importantly, I am interested in exploring what it means for the dyad to compile Kristeva's narratives that have to do with representing stories of primary relations. I aim to uncover Kristeva's relationship with her mother, and substitutes, through a deep analysis of her and Jardine's work. As I examine Kristeva's connection to the mother in these texts, I suggest that identification with intimate relations can be accessed in the textual semiotic of the inscribed pages.

Jardine establishes Kristeva's emphasis on polyphony and the multiverse, which is vital for exploring Kristeva's intellectual journey and relational trends. Her intimate observations and compassionate understanding of Kristeva's struggles as a mother, writer, overworked professor, and psychoanalyst allow Jardine to take the position as her biographer, one who is good enough.

I am suggesting that the Winnicottian good-enough analyst is similar to the good-enough biographer. The good-enough psychoanalyst facilitates the theoretical framework so that the dimensions of the transitional phenomenon can emerge. The analyst has a theoretical understanding of the client's deepest concerns and helps to bring about the buried matters of maternal transference without necessarily providing an interpretation of the contents to show off his/her cleverness, similar to the biographer.

Jardine is mainly fascinated with how Kristeva has lived a thinking life. I, on the other hand, am more interested in connecting Kristeva's journey from her childhood in Bulgaria to her creating a history of those narratives as an intellectual in Paris. In sharing her intimate stories with Jardine, Kristeva was able to translate her theory into an autobiography that she finds in keeping with her approach. My interest and concerns in the stories, specifically the ones from her childhood in Bulgaria, are based on relating how these early moments are interconnected to her relationships with substitutes in France. I consider Jardine's role as the good-enough biographer and translator of Kristeva's stories to trace how the young Kristeva's memories suppress and sublimate the symbolic objects of her maternal fantasy.

Like a good-enough psychoanalyst, Jardine creates distance from Kristeva's childhood experiences through minimal interpretations. For instance, Jardine's biography begins with Kristeva's life in Bulgaria from 1941-1965, and the section starts by exploring Kristeva's understanding of Freudian screen memory: "we are not determined by our childhood – contrary to what many people think about Freudianism. Our childhood provides us with the seeds of personality, but what one rediscovers in analysis is that one has *reconstructed one's childhood*" (Kristeva quoted Jardine 21, italics mine). When Jardine summarizes Kristeva's understanding of Freudian screen memory, she concludes the introductory section with two words: "And yet…".

What is noteworthy for me is that Jardine does not question the reliability of Kristeva's memory. While she takes us on Kristeva's personal and intellectual journey, charting Kristeva's life and writing, she leaves it for her readers to weave and reconstruct relational patterns about her life.

By beginning Kristeva's biography with her life in Bulgaria and equating it with Freud's understanding of memory, Jardine enters a frame similar to an analytic situation, where patients and analysts have defined roles and emerge out of distinct experiences. And yet, Kristeva's commitment to the theoretical investigation of subject and language has opened a space for me to engage in a psychoanalytic feminist inquiry of Jardine's biography, coupled with Kristeva's own writing. It is precisely the absence of Jardine's analysis and interpretations that becomes critically important for my understanding of motherhood in her intellectual biography. Thus, by reading Jardine's good-enough biography, I establish how Kristeva works through her initial loss, separation, and identification with maternal and paternal substitutes through transferential relations. I am particularly drawn to Freud's concept of screen memory to understand the method of capturing or recalling a memory as caught between the acting and the editing self, a process that inherently results in the displacement of memories. My dissertation establishes that these memories could have been unconsciously rebuilt and reconstituted by the elder Kristeva to be read with her theories of psychoanalytic development. Thus, my dissertation centralizes the *importance of language* and textual analysis and the necessity for intimate presence to locate the historical absence of primary relations through the psychoanalytic framework.

My goal is to account for the maternal absences I noticed in Jardine's biography of Kristeva's personal and textual presence. The absence and presence of the maternal body is the foundation of meaning in writing; my psychoanalytic feminist understanding takes pre-Oedipal relationships as the starting point to create a revolutionary and revisionary story of Kristeva's

psychical development. As a writer, Kristeva is always living in language, engaging in writing to mourn her parents' loss, even as she creates distance from, and transcends, her primary relations.

The Relational and Emotional Logic of Loss

The production of Jardine's biography enacts an analytic experience and relationship, where the dyad, like an analyst and analysand, recover memories of loss by witnessing and taking the risk to convey something of a historical process. Jardine's relationship with Kristeva parallels the one created by the psychoanalytic relationship; both are imbued with language, beginning with the talking cure. Rather than merely remembering and reconstructing events together, Kristeva and Jardine engage with the difficulty of recalling the historical understood as personal. This couple seems to be engaging in the experience of discovering who the thinking intellectual Julia Kristeva is, embedded in particular historical experiences of loss. In his "Experience in Thinking in Analytic Practice," André Green explains the difficulty of remembering and recalling one's historical memory:

> As far as psychoanalysis is concerned, the historical is a very *difficult* notion to handle... Because, for the psyche, the historical could be defined as a combination of:
> – what has happened,
> – what has not happened,
> – what could have happened,
> – what has happened to someone else but not to me,
> – what could not have happened,
> – and finally – to summarize all these alternatives about what has happened – a statement that one would not have even dreamed of as a representation of what really happened (Green 2–3, italics mine).

Jardine and Kristeva's reconstruction of Kristeva's memories is not just about reliving the past but also in the spirit of Green's understanding of the historical happening in the present moment. As a good-enough biographer, Jardine assists Kristeva in remembering Green's notion of "what

has happened." Jardine recounts Kristeva's childhood stories, which are essential in understanding Kristeva's desire for thinking and language related to her personal life and work in the present moment. The psychoanalytic frame represents the Jardine-Kristevian dyadic search and produces a scene of mourning the historical, a challenge to remember the absence. Green's understanding of the past as a "difficult notion to handle" is vital for thinking about the therapist-patient relationship and the search for the intellectual Kristeva – part of the alliance of the dyad that echoes a well-seasoned psychoanalytic scene.

Speaking and entering the symbolic allows us to locate and connect with the maternal body through displacement and sublimation, part of the emotional logic of loss. Thus, loss is also a central locus in Kristevian theory, which constitutes her understanding of the maternal void, semiotic, *chora*, and "Thing." Kristeva's signification of loss provided me with a foundation to develop a conceptual framework for my dissertation. The opening sentence of Jardine's biography is as follows: "Julia Kristeva is the first to admit that she is quite at *a loss* to know who Julia Kristeva is" (Jardine 1, italics mine). When Jardine asked a Kristeva in her seventies – "Who is Julia Kristeva?", Kristeva struggled with providing an answer, alluding to the notion of loss: "It's very *difficult*. Sometimes I do not recognize myself in the demands people make of me to talk about Julia Kristeva. Because I am not entirely sure who this woman is. There is an *image*, there is a *received idea*, there is even sometimes a cult" (Kristeva qtd in Jardine 1, italics mine). The struggle that Kristeva has in answering "who is Julia Kristeva" is the difficulty I have faced occasionally in understanding her theoretical work from the first two decades of her writing in France. As such, my trajectory in being interested in Kristeva (through Jardine's remarkable telling of Kristeva's story) is based on the intellectual challenge brought about by the

difficulty in accessing her work, which provided me the intellectual courage to read it via a psychoanalytic framework.

What is critical for me is how Kristeva focuses on a complex, heterogeneous signifying process of semiotics. I am intrigued by Kristeva's work on maternal loss and the defense, depression, and sublimation of the creative process of the psychic space and her overall commitment to the theoretical investigation of the speaking subject. While unconscious desires and bodily drives exert pressure on our conscious thoughts, at the heart of Kristeva's work are the problems of how we relate to the other's consciousness. Hence, the writer represents the speaking subject as the split object of linguistics, and language as a complex signifying process embedded in history.

It is through Kristeva's psychoanalytic framework that I trace Jardine's desire to uncover the mysteries surrounding Kristeva's life. As Jardine asks Kristeva about stories for her intellectual biography, she unearths Kristeva's memories that trace her primary relations. Thus, Kristeva returns to thinking through these stories, even as she finds herself at *a loss* to know who Julia Kristeva really *is*. Jardine's collection and depiction of Kristeva's stories about her primary relations and Kristeva's feeding her stories to Jardine (in the hope she would write about them) provide a powerful representation of the childhood emotional logic of loss and separation, resistance and identification. Resistance to loss has been a challenge for Kristeva; it is as if it is a challenge to the failed capacity to believe that maternal love can indeed be lost in the early years.

Jardine's biography of Kristeva is essential for remembering and archiving that loss, consolidating Kristeva's life to protect the legacy and memories of her primary relations. Early on in her introduction, Jardine captures Kristeva's understanding of various losses that have occurred in Kristeva's life but that have been coupled with rebirth:

> when one leaves one's language, one's country, one's childhood, one loses a lot of things… and a lot of things are erased just as one erases writing in the sand… But there are always re-beginnings and it has been living through these tests, these deaths and resurrections, that I have achieved satisfaction in life that would have been unimaginable to me beforehand (Kristeva qtd in Jardine 16).

As I read these childhood stories, I see Kristeva presenting in her old age the pain of ambivalence – of having it both ways: remembering the experience of primary relations and her historical memory by disavowing maternal loss. Hence, Jardine's collection of Kristeva's memories provides a powerful representation of Kristeva's childhood memories of the emotional logic of loss of love found in Kristeva's own psychoanalytic understanding of the mother. Their framing of childhood stories of Kristeva's *life* and *thinking* is a way of beginning the mourning process coupled with desire to hold on to the loss, which can be seen as connected to Kristeva's early relationship with her maternal object and substitutes.

Kristeva's desire for language and its cultural and intellectual celebration is the repressed and unconscious refusal of the semiotic element. The rhythms and tones are what Kristeva learns she can become by learning to play her mother tongue like an organ, like the one her father sang to in her childhood. The intersection of maternal loss and my interest in writing about Kristeva's life and work through her good-enough intellectual biography is to bring the body back into language, between words and subjectivity, the semiotic drive and stasis. As such, repressed desires move their way into language through maternal bodily processes as they are negated, repeated, and discharged toward the signification of silence.

I engage in intertextual, interpretative, and textually based research on Kristevian readings of the psychoanalytic framework while producing auto/biographical and theoretical questions. Thus, my dissertation highlights the importance of loss and challenges of maternal relations, a cornerstone of Kristeva's theory. My understanding of Kristeva's semiotic hole

engages in feminist psychoanalytic criticism that focuses on the need for a balanced differentiation of self and world – the need to see the self through others through object relations.

Kristeva understands that women can disrupt their relationship to language, the "spasmodic force" of the unconscious because of their links with the pre-Oedipal mother. My understanding of Jardine's narratives suggests that Kristeva is composed of her own textual art, theories, and childhood stories. While reading her good-enough biography, I suggest that Kristeva is caught within her own theory, which shows the complexity of staying with the maternal. I argue that Kristeva has lived her life through her psychoanalytic concepts, rebuilding her own defense mechanism of projective identification with the maternal and sublimating the loss of her primary relations in symbolic relationships. Hence, Kristeva's negotiation of life and art, writing and theory becomes a means of textual existence. As her writing becomes textualized, her art becomes her own story of maternal loss and abjection based on transferential relations.

Transference and Countertransference: Writing from a Distance

Jardine's formulation of the intellectual biography has created a view of the analytic situation of distance. Thus, countertransferential relations between the couple allow Kristeva to associate her free and spontaneous childhood and adulthood memories. In her "Notes on Biography," Jardine explores her own relationship to the writing of the intellectual biography from a distance:

> First, there is the question of *my* relationship to the biography, a question of the kind of *distance* and tone I have adopted. Yes, I am a great admirer of Julia Kristeva's work and I consider her to be an important personal friend. But – as I have already said – this is not a hagiography. This is not an adoring book. What follows is not the product of the kind of starry-eyed reverence that characterizes many texts written about Kristeva.… But in what follows, I attempt only to provide the ground, the background, and the glue holding

> together this beautiful and brilliant – and imposing – personal and textual presence (Jardine 17–18, first italics original, second mine).

Jardine's role as "an important personal friend" and her countertransference are part of a reflective experience that involves her in the writing of the biography, where the relationship needs to be explained and understood in terms of Jardine's use of the term *distance.* An analyst identifies with their patient's projections at a distance so that s/he can utilize the experience of projective identifications to understand the patients. Similarly, accounting for the production of Kristeva's works, I explore the semiotic forces in Jardine's intellectual biography that brought her Kristevian world into being. Kristeva comments about her education that her "studies have been escapes, a way of taking *distance* from my parents" (Jardine 15, italics mine). In speaking about her relationship to the biography, Jardine also creates distance, similar to how Kristeva established distance from her parents as a form of escape. Jardine's separation from Kristeva is a form of distancing that is similar to how the good-enough therapist listens from a distance as s/he helps the client link her associations with memories. What is compelling for me is that through this distancing, Jardine invites her readers to create their own understanding and interpretations of the childhood scene.

Jardine demonstrates this distance by revealing some aspects of the stories and resists writing about the Kristevian transference. In reading her biography, I am interested in the unconscious sense of the significance of the maternal defense mechanisms of literary projections and the interrelations of Kristeva's personal and textual presence. Jardine recognizes that her biography is as much an intellectual as an intimate one: "the tone of this biography is personal but not completely intimate, with my own unconscious, perhaps transferential connections to Kristeva and her writing surfacing more often than is usual for the genre" (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 19). The countertransference moments are

critical in the psychoanalytic understanding of client – therapist relationships. Following Freud, transference and countertransference became essential concepts through which one can bring past relationships into the present moment through talk therapy. While Freud focused on desires, free associations, and memories, Winnicott's analytic situation was to pull at the ego's needs, integration, and discontinuity in analysis, if safe enough, to allow the true self to emerge. Winnicott understood the analytic scene as a holding environment to fulfill the developmental requirements and to regenerate subjectivity. Giving agency back to his patients, Winnicott saw them as being able to restore primary relations since the analyst provides the holding environment that the adult child was deprived of in the early years.

Jardine and Kristeva's transferential connection reveals the difficulty in narrating the mother, which can only be captured in silences and gaps. The psychoanalytic dialogue between Kristeva and Jardine is not interested in the accuracy of memories, but their reconstruction. The memories and images of the objects, specifically related to the mother and her silence, become critical for my analysis. Jardine's intellectual biography explores how Kristeva's mother was creative and bright but possibly suffered from depression. Through my reading of Jardine, I aim to seek how Kristeva recalls memories of primary relations as a displacement, a reconstruction of memories of her mother. As the stories of the mother and mother-substitutes unfold, I trace how the narratives about the mother are remembered and forgotten, negated and disavowed, which I aim to connect symbolically to Kristeva's writings on maternal abjection and the silence of the mother herself. As such, the transitional and disavowed objects loved in Kristeva's childhood come to stand in her adult mind as visual representations of the intense memories of her early relations with her mother.

Transference and countertransference are significantly present in the Jardine-Kristeva dyad and are worked through in their conversations about childhood stories. I suggest that the strength of the feelings, maternal references, and transferences in the biography emerges as a form of psychotherapy. In other words, the alliance between Jardine and Kristeva is part of working through the painful memories of maternal loss. In addition to the transference and countertransference connection, what is apparent to me are the choices Jardine makes in incorporating particular stories from childhood in the intellectual biography that are critical in thinking about Kristeva's early relationship with the mother. I argue that countertransference helps us understand the transferential connection between Jardine and Kristeva. This concept is also essential for Jardine's biographical relationship with the elder Kristeva. In being un/consciously aware of the biographical collective frame, Jardine lets Kristeva work through her childhood memories without imposing her own beliefs, values, and analysis, which she leaves up to the reader.

The psychoanalytic approach is essential in my analysis since it ascribes creativity by constructing maternal subjectivity. A psychoanalytic understanding of the creation process rests on transference and countertransference. Talk therapy or literary therapy are part of intimate relations with language. Through language, we work through symbolic orders imposed on our psyche and bodies. Now that Kristeva is heading toward old age, her history and autobiographical work reveal a theoretical understanding of the female experience, reflecting how she has lived her life through her theories. While Jardine constructs the Kristevian stories at a distance, I survey her memories closely through the personal and textual to discover how Kristeva reconstructs her unconscious memories of childhood through Freudian screen memories. I explore how Kristeva's psychoanalytic theory about the maternal becomes part of

her own living story, the body that marks itself on blank pages. Having a relationship with maternal substitutes, specifically through language, allows us to return to the pre-Oedipal to trace and identify with the mother. It is precisely language that allows for this understanding, and this is where it is critical to begin with Kristeva's movement into the semiotic. Thus, I illustrate that as Kristeva's life story writes itself through her theories of the loss of the maternal, she unconsciously weaves the narratives into theoretical explanations. Kristeva accesses her mother through the unconscious act of writing and theory, opening psychic spaces, mysterious letters, and dark holes to become closer to the maternal object.

The Waves of Intertextuality: Movement and Swimming

Jardine's presentation of Kristeva's swimming since childhood led me to discover Kristeva's transferential relationship with her mother and mother substitutes. Each of the following chapters addresses an aspect of the Kristevian movement and development from childhood to adulthood and her encounter with unique relationships, beginning with her mother and then shifting to the relationship with her father. I have chosen to include Kristeva's concept of intertextuality because of its psycho-linguistic allusion to Jardine's creative metaphor of swimming and movement. Thus, each chapter explores the movement of the waves of intertextuality between Jardine's biographical details of Kristeva's life and my chosen texts that elaborate, interlace, and reflect different layers of Kristeva's theoretical ideas, where the echoes of the past texts show up in a present one.

Since childhood, Kristeva's ability to 'swim' has permitted her to move towards foreign languages to signify parental loss, which is a deliberate act of meaning creation. The metaphor of swimming in the womb becomes particularly significant as a symbol for primal identification,

which is at the forefront of all object relations of desire. The young Julia moved out of her mother's womb at 8 a.m. on June 24, 1941, in Sliven, Bulgaria. She also distanced herself from primary relations by moving to Paris 24 years later, in 1965, on a doctoral research fellowship. Kristeva's theoretical writings help point towards an aesthetic practice and sublimatory experience that allows access to the infantile repressive passion that the adult Kristeva accesses through signs of spontaneous continuity and movement in her personal and textual presence.

As a child, Kristeva moved away from the care of maternal passions and learned to read and write at a very young age while navigating a love of culture and language. As the Cyrillic alphabet gave her joy at age six or maybe seven, Kristeva continued to maintain a love of primary relations through the alphabet letters, which are part of the pleasure of giving and receiving the materiality of words and text. Kristeva's movement away from her mother in childhood and her love of language via the father *displace* the maternal origin, only to translate her experiences into what she experienced as an exile, a stranger in France. When Kristeva arrived in France, the young linguist also permitted herself to be carried by intellectual waves of intertextuality by incorporating psychoanalysis, semiotics, and strangeness into a kinetic movement, bringing them into dialogue.

In writing about Kristeva's experience with French literature in Sofia as a child, Jardine uses the metaphor of swimming to define Kristeva's relations with movement. She explains: "For the young Kristeva, literature… became the air she breathed, the waters in which she *swam*" (Jardine 56, italics mine). In another instance, based on a 2005 documentary, Jardine discusses how Kristeva loved to swim and read books in French.

> how she would *swim in the Black Sea as a child*, but then go sit in the shade and work obsessively on her French vocabulary. French was her 'window of dreams,' a way to be elsewhere without being exiled. She dreamed of France.

> But she did not need to go there – and never imagined she would – because she had her books in French (Jardine 136, italics mine).

Jardine identifies Kristeva's relationship with literature in Bulgaria through the symbol of swimming and the chosen transitional object, her books in French, to connect it as an object of freedom. Even though the young Julia never imagined she would go to France, she did go and has continued to build her relationship with the French language. The joy of freedom she obtained from swimming and moving towards her books and studies in French provided her with a beautiful fragility of imagination to escape her present situation "as a way to be elsewhere."

Kristeva's separation from her mother country caused her immense spiritual suffering. Her experiencing of exile was a way to find solitude in thinking and writing to mourn both the psychic and actual deaths of her primary relations. Jardine identifies how Kristeva experienced spiritual suffering during the early years in Paris, which is tied to her ability to continue swimming through the complex waves of life:

> Once again, counter to the usual image of Kristeva as a rising star in 1960s Paris, she returned to the theme of *swimming through life*, and admitted having experienced more sadness and loneliness at the time than most of her readers know about… (Jardine 96, italics mine).

The symbol of swimming captures Kristeva's dynamism and forward movement, pushing through waves of isolation and separation. Since childhood, Kristeva has learned to swim through life's challenges and to ride the waves of difficulty by moving towards and beyond the complexity of thinking and living, a heritage she received from her parents. Still, shifting toward a foreign language has been a way to arrive at sensual pleasures and to go beyond herself.

For Kristeva, writing in French also aided her in healing the wounds of separation and psychic suffering, providing her with the joy of discovery as she continued to swim in the language, looking for novel ways to express her solitude and alienation. In the following

example, Jardine comes back to the metaphor of swimming, but this time connects it to Kristeva's desire for language:

> In the early days, though, she was also hanging onto her work, to her writing, looking for ever-renewed languages with which *to continue swimming*. There were 'befores' and 'afters,' and she searched for what would get her through the tough parts in between. She remembers those first few years in Paris as a time of going beyond herself, of experiencing exile as an exile of/from the self (Jardine 97, italics mine).

As she experiences the death of her Bulgarian self, Kristeva incarnates herself in French, and Jardine uses the swimming symbol once again for Kristeva to move beyond pain and grief as a stranger in France. Kristeva's feelings of being rejected as a foreigner and her state of "going beyond" towards her preferred form of psychoanalysis and maternity are part of her childhood desire to swim through life.

The concept of intertextuality has been vital for Kristeva to define the intersectional nature of language, which is how texts come to speak to one another by mirroring and repeating each other. Thus, texts produce a flow of networks both at the time of writing and of later readings. The notion of intertextuality is one of her most compelling attempts at textual play – the repetitions of waves of the speaking subject, its history, and the infrastructure of textual representation and linguistic structures in dialogue. Kristeva also stays active in dialogue with the dialogical space of the text, which she explores in "Word, Dialogue and Novel": "any text is the absorption and transformation of another. The notion of *intertexuality* replaces that of intersubjectivity, and poetic language is read as at least *double*" (Kristeva, "Word, Dialogue, and Novel" 66, italics original) . Kristeva's understanding of intertextuality is coupled with the intersection of the poetic flow and its movement of language, related to the maternal.

My reading of Kristeva's personal and textual presence aims to understand the insertion of the speaking subject into maternal memories, where texts absorb each other and flow into the

literary structure through metaphorical waves. Jardine quotes Kristeva's response to one of the questions presented to her at a talk she gave in 2016 at the Théâtre national de la Colline (the same talk in which she quoted David's poem discussed earlier) – "Of What Use Are Poets in Times of Distress?":

> For me, the poet is above all a musician of language, he upsets the maternal and/or national language because he takes hold of its nerve – the voice and meaning accorded… The poet is at the root of this 'inner touch,' he is the *carrier wave* of incarnated universality. Why the poet? Because by readjusting sense and sensibility, by testing unspeakable passions, the poet crosses through identities, borders and foundations, and he makes co-presence shareable… (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 313, italics mine).

In alluding to the metaphor of waves, the poet becomes an important figure for Kristeva to define the intersubjective relations between mother and children. Kristeva's centralization of motherhood represents a set of poetic metaphorical waves, which helps me to weave together literary and psychoanalytic theory, linking the Kristevian semiotic to the signifying process of her primary relations. Kristeva's elucidation of bodily drives, revolutionary modes of artistic creation, and transgressive possibilities of literary and cultural production is critical for locating the relationship of subjectivity to language, psychoanalysis, and motherhood. Kristeva's understanding of poetic melodies and her interdisciplinary thinking permit me to explore the intimate encounters of love and abjection, transference and depression related to the maternal and substitutes.

The Kristevian semiotic disposition links writing practices to the unconscious, a dark space based on drive, capable of regression, transgression, and poetic revolution. Thus, the concept of intertextuality becomes important for my understanding of Kristeva's work on semiotics – the bodily drives that flow their way into language through psychoanalysis, which provided Kristeva with the necessary intimacy to swim through herself. Whether in her own

psychoanalysis or her work as a psychoanalyst, the couch is a vital space for Kristeva to feel implicated within the semiotic, the bodily drives that make their way into language. As Kristeva travels through the fluidity of life and theory, she marks the absence of her own maternal stories, which can be retraced through psychoanalytic modalities that make it possible for these theories to reconstruct loss.

In the state of exile as a foreigner, stranger, and writer, Kristeva establishes and embodies her own distance and movement. In an interview with Birgitte Huitfeldt Midttun in 2006, Kristeva says, "When I write, I stand beside something, never in the middle of it. One keeps a distance. A distance also to oneself as well, a kind of exile from oneself, where one in a sense is a stranger to oneself, in order to be able to write" (Kristeva qtd in Midttun 165). What is noteworthy is that before embarking on her interview with Kristeva, what Midttun notices is Kristeva's movement: "Kristeva is already there when we arrive. We see her at once, at the end of the corridor, pacing back and forth, three times '*un moment*' before we are admitted into her office" (Midttun 164). While staying physically active (she goes for walks every morning after breakfast, Jardine tells us), constant development has also become a theoretical basis for moving in theory, which becomes part of the Kristevian intimate and poetic revolution.

Methodology

The starting point of my analysis is the baby's primary identification with the maternal object, as understood in psychoanalytic theory. In the core early experience of the baby at the mother's breast, it does not differentiate itself cognitively from its object but thinks of itself as an extension of her body. The object of desire causes our drive to turn toward that primal object; psychoanalysis and object relations theory (re-)define the maternal metaphor as the primal love

object. Primary identification provides me with a coherent basis to devise a conceptual framework for my dissertation. I centralize the importance of the Kristevian notion of the semiotic by outlining the double task of recognition and identification through transferential relations. The process of transference is critical for incorporating the mother as a primary mental object of loss, resulting in functional and psychical relations to the maternal body: introjection and projection, identification and substitution, and sublimation and reparation.

The waves of intersection and the intertextuality of object relations theory, the defense mechanism, and Kristeva's biographical narratives allow me to engage with the psychoanalytic theory of transference. This approach permits me to submit my desire and intersect it with maternal separation, loss, and identification through maternal substitutes. Since identities are created at the pre-Oedipal stage, my analysis of the interconnection of Kristeva's relationship with her mother (by detouring through the preverbal origin and the pre-Oedipal analysis) constructs the Kristevian self-fragmented self from the hole into wholeness, unavailable to either language or memory. Kristeva has written that women's psychological experience gives the axis to the semiotic to embody female patterns of subjectivity in relation to language and interconnectedness. This aspect of the semiotic is critical for a psychoanalytic feminist approach to motherhood, where Kristeva's writing on maternity comes to function as a creative textual body of poetic language.

My understanding of Kristeva's subjectivity is not just based on psychoanalyzing Jardine's biography. Departing from that tradition, I aim to focus on Humanities as an interdisciplinary method to include textual analysis within the signifying process of unconscious relations with primary objects, found both in their personal and the textual presence. By tracing

the semiotic to the body and drives in the signifying process, I explore the Kristevian modality of language. Kristeva explains this method in her *Revolution in Poetic Language*:

> This modality is the one Freudian psychoanalysis points to in postulating not only the *facilitation* and the structuring *disposition* of drives, but also the so-called *primary processes* which displace and condense both energies and their inscription. Discrete quantities of energy move through the body of the subject who is not yet constituted as such and, in the course of his development, they are arranged according to the various constraints imposed on this body – always already involved in a semiotic process – by family and social structures (Kristeva, "The Semiotic Chora Ordering the Drives" 25, italics original).

According to Freudian psychoanalysis, children develop through instinctual drives from birth: the unconscious process, the repressed desire, and psychological defenses (such as splitting created by the ego) can become obstacles to development. For Freud, understanding our unconscious defenses is a normal process of human growth based on the individual developmental stage developed through the lifespan. However, if defenses develop prematurely, it manifests in anxiety and depression in later adulthood.

In addition to intertextuality, the Kristevian semiotic is also an essential concept for my work as it links to the pre-Oedipal space, tied to both the oral and anal primary processes of the maternal body. In Klein's understanding, psychical development occurs through progression, ego defenses, projection, and identification. Projection is a valuable defense for my project since it represents how the unacceptable emotional self is split from consciousness and projected onto another object – a human or inanimate object. Kristeva agrees with both Klein and Freud that the body forms the basis through which satisfaction of physical needs and pleasures constitutes subjectivity. However, since our instinctual drives become energy charges and psychical marks, for Kristeva the unconscious becomes a rhythmic space tied to the mother's body as a holding container.

My aim is to read the personal events described in Jardine's biography as textual. By weaving complex networks and structures, I explore how Kristeva translates the body into writing as part of the transference and sublimation to recover and reconnect with the loss of primary relations. Jardine highlights that Kristeva writes what she is living: "*Writing* related to her *thinking* about what she's *living* at any given moment" (Jardine 164, italics original). The textual body and personal subjectivity, text and life, words and flesh, body and mind are part of the Kristevian life. As a textualized body, I aim to place the psychical body back into the text and construct Kristeva in the most literalized way. The mental complexities of the personal and textual are found in the split of the psyche, which weaves together the personal as part of the unconscious memories.

Since the unconscious fragments of the personal erupt into a poetic revolution, Kristeva's practice of writing what she is living at any given moment represents the energy charges and the psychical marks of the unconscious rhythmic space. As a method, my goal is to play with the dynamic approaches to psychoanalysis by weaving together a technique representing a wave of Kristeva's personal experiences as part of her writing. This way of approaching life and work is critical for me to take the risk and move from the description of events in Kristeva's life toward psychoanalytical levels of reflection about her works through her theories to demonstrate how Kristeva manifests her own subjectivity. The pedagogical terms of this method are that the body of experiences is understood through its theory, claiming no distinction between life and text. While playing with this personal and textual approach, I am interested in analyzing the patterns between Kristeva's relations, where the textual moments are part of the more extensive discursive network of lived experiences. Hence, the relationship between the intimate/intimacy to the maternal object helps me understand Julia Kristeva as a thinking intellectual.

Neither fashionable nor traditional, my approach to personal intimacy with the text is to understand it through its own theory by dividing the chapters into two parts. This structure is a way to represent my approach towards personal relations, as a Freudian working through of the dimensions, where meaningful insight emerges through foregrounding relations with primary love objects. This project is critical since it also speaks to a part of the feminist psychoanalytic understanding that ties intimacy as a method to object relations, connected to Kristeva's account of maternal passions. Deep, meaningful relationships are part of the beauty of literature, where intimate connections are worked through personal and textual encounters. Therefore, I am interested in understanding how this method raises the possibility of theoretical intimacy – the intertextuality of lives and literature interweave, and the integration of life and theory helps formulate a deep connection and to explain larger fields of psychoanalytic inquiry.

Chapter Breakdown

This dissertation is structured around six personal moments in Kristeva's life, as collected by Jardine. The first part of each chapter focuses on a specific instance of Kristeva's primary relationships (with her mother and grandmother, her father and symbolic fathers, and her son and son-substitutes). The second part of each chapter then elaborates Kristeva's theoretical stance on motherhood, symbolic fathers, creativity, and pre-Oedipal loss, as connected to her life story of motherhood and substitutes, mourning and melancholia. These scenes of Kristeva's intimacy with her loved ones, their genealogical moments, and their conversations fascinate me. As I split them into parts, I pay particular attention to moments and movements that I connect to her texts and theories, linking to Kristeva's subjectivity while foregrounding it in the psychoanalytic tradition. Kristeva reveals herself under my investigation – the text links to her subjective

experience through relations to primary objects. The reason for this method is to take Kristeva's own psychoanalytical framework seriously and to carefully read both the textual and the personal implications of her ideas. My goal is to claim this space with the unique, detailed specificity of my method of reading the personal with the theoretical. I use intimacy and primary relations to take command of the unique value and style of encountering the work of Julia Kristeva as a thinking intellectual.

In the first chapter, "Transitional Objects and the Semiotic Hole," I demonstrate how Kristeva's childhood experiences reveal the complexity of staying in the maternal realm and the necessity she felt to run toward language and literature. It explains that Kristeva's unconscious refusal to identify with a dollhouse as a child was to overcome her mother's silence. As Kristeva unconsciously developed a relationship with the pre-Oedipal space, her childhood interest and curiosity led her to wonder what was inside the doll's hole. Living her theory and the logic of the tension between the semiotic and the symbolic, the young Kristeva is remembered as rejecting and accepting the maternal realm while disavowing and affirming a particular psychoanalytic move from resistance to transference through her selected transitional object, books. What is striking about Kristeva is how her inability to play with a doll and dollhouse is connected to her loss of the transitional phenomenon, unlike the desire for books, that is, her selection of one transitional object over another.

The second chapter, "Sublimation: Flowers and French," explores the use of flowers as symbols of mother substitutes in Jardine's intellectual biography. I suggest that the associations of flowers with Kristeva's running, her romanticization of Bulgaria as a land of roses, and her relationship with the literary imagination via Colette are part of a Kristevian repression of the maternal body that comes to be associated with the maternal position of distance. The delicate

flower in the Kristevian scene is remembered not as an object of insignificance from her childhood. Instead, it relates to the repression of more significant events, such as maternal separation and reparation, where the symbol of flowers later accounts for maternal passions. Kristeva's life and work on maternal passions is a reminder of her own ability to regain access to the originating symbiosis with the mother; psychoanalysis and literary life are imperative to access the imaginary, the suppressed discourse of maternal passions.

While the first two chapters focus on the relationship with the mother and mother-substitutes, the following two chapters move toward the father and symbolic fathers through the desire for language. The third chapter, "Letters and Language," recounts Kristeva's childhood memories of her relationship with the Bulgarian celebration of letters, *Azbouka* – the festival of Alphabet Day – and Kristeva's desire for symbolic recognition as a child. Alphabet Day is a clear marker of Kristeva's entrance into the symbolic as she incorporates her father's early lessons about the alphabet through the triangular relationships of the "I" and "you." The personal and textual presence of a transferential connection is in Alphabet Day, where the letter embodies these governing principles. The symbolic recognition of the young Julia through the personification of the letter brings about her later entry into relationships with languages, providing her larger meaning in life. The young Kristeva's move towards letters demonstrates an endurance of depression, thus having mastered a valuable recipe for working through maternal separation in her young unconscious mind.

The fourth chapter, "Foreigner: Secrets and the Sacred," travels to France with Kristeva and explores her relationship with symbolic fathers. As a foreigner in France, Kristeva was highly driven to fulfill academic expectations, and she instinctively looked up to male figures to strengthen her father complex. The important male scholars and writers that Kristeva was

introduced to include Lucien Goldmann (her supervisor), Roland Barthes (her mentor), and Émile Benveniste (her "fatherly soulmate"). I write about the poetic structure of language and Kristeva's relationship with Benveniste by centralizing the body of the poet as an experience of transcendence. Even though the great linguist was deprived of speech in his last years of life, he was able to leave the message of the "double signifyingness" – the THEO, which I tie to Kristeva's understanding of the poetic message of the secret and the sacred transferential connection with her own father.

Moving on from real and symbolic mothers and fathers, the last two chapters focus on Kristeva's own experience of motherhood: first, as a mother to her son David and then, as an analyst transferential mother with a son substitute. The fifth chapter, "The Maternal Holding Experience: Life and Death, Tears and Blood," explores the *jouissance* Kristeva discovers by becoming a mother; entering the womb of therapy helped her to locate her newfound desire for maternity and incorporate the concept of motherhood into her theory of language. More pertinently, her life as a mother became integrated into all her work. As I write about Kristeva's advocating for maternity based on an ethics of care (which encompasses reproduction and separation, loss and death), she does so along with her own experience with David and her journey towards a poetics of maternity.

Finally, in the sixth chapter, "Poetic Listening and the Maternal Tongue," I establish that it is Kristeva's movement away from Jacques Lacan and to André Green that permits her to develop her own form of psychoanalysis. Moreover, I unpack the Kristevian discourse of the depressed with the aid of Green's notion of the dead mother complex to explore the poetics of depression and maternal absence. Through a comparative analysis of Green's "psychic hole" and Kristeva's "Thing," I convey the silences of the blank page – the poetics of semiotic rhythms. I

explore Kristeva as an analyst who successfully initiates a transitional semiotic link in therapy with her Patient B based on her understanding of the workings of trauma related to one's mother tongue. Thus, the pattern I establish with these chapters, beginning with her own mother in the first chapter through to becoming a mother substitute in chapter six, supports my argument about the centrality of motherhood for Kristeva.

My dissertation is a reading that begins and ends with the maternal realm. It demonstrates Kristeva's ability to produce a new body of language based on identification and psychoanalytic transference of love for the archaic mother. Moreover, her semiotic rhythms and tones are also built on a revolution against symbolic grammar and the structure of signification. Through Alice Jardine's intellectual biography, I write about Kristeva's intellectual growth by tracing her education and relations to her primary objects based on psychoanalytic inquiry. Her elucidation of bodily drives and revolutionary modes of creation are critical in exploring the relationship of subjectivity to language and the body. Refusing to distinguish between the personal and the textual, life and theory, my investigation reads for the entirety of Kristeva's subjectivity, where living and loving take the risk of thinking, as part of distancing from primary relations.

Chapter 1: Transitional Objects and the Semiotic Hole

> I remember that I once received the gift of a dollhouse: a representation of a house, where there's a doll, a bathroom, a kitchen, a dining room, etc. And then there's the little girl who's supposed to take care of all that! Me? I was really disappointed because I didn't want to take care of all that! I never played with it much. It's still pretty much all in one piece. It stayed in a cupboard. I thought it was ridiculous for little girls to push strollers. Me? I had my books. They might have been kept in a drawer, but I really used them, and they ended up completely torn apart through use. So this gift of a dollhouse disappointed me a little. On the other hand, in that package of things that little girls were supposed to have – the bathroom, the kitchen, etc. – there was that little dollhouse doll which could sit up in order to be bathed because there was a hole in its buttocks – a hole in order to be able to sit her up on a little peg… I found it all so absolutely stupid. In all of that, the only thing that interested me was to see what was inside of the hole! My mother said I would be a doctor (Kristeva qtd in Jardine 45–46).

The diagnosis of transference and countertransference in the Jardine-Kristeva dialogue helps me to explore how defense mechanisms are implicated in our theories and life stories, the personal and the textual. In this chapter, my close reading of Jardine's text lays out a methodological approach, which reveals necessary details about Kristeva's early life and relations with her mother. Through Kristeva's construction of her doll and dollhouse story, I think about how this narrative worked for the adult Kristeva to support her long-time theoretical understanding of the pre-Oedipal mother and the semiotic.

The first part of the chapter identifies Kristeva's denial of the maternal realm in the early years, which is based on her inability to play with dolls and a dollhouse, potential Winnicottian transitional objects. I suggest that Kristeva's movement from the dollhouse to the books is a continuous process of mourning the mother as the young Julia transitions from the semiotic to the symbolic. For Kristeva, the semiotic is not just about fusion with the maternal object; rather, it is a space of abjection and an entry into the process of splitting, the constitution of self-other that takes place just before separation from the maternal body. While the symbolic reigns in the

young Kristeva's mind, I illustrate that the use and destruction of the books can be read as a semiotic disruption and a transitional phenomenon, a way to distance from the mother while preserving a bond with her. Kristeva's negation of the dollhouse and her transition towards the books, then returning to the doll's hole in Jardine's interview, allows me to analyze the semiotic/symbolic dynamic in her theoretical writing to create a personal and textual typology – a transferential connection to Kristevian texts.

The second part of the chapter connects Kristeva's journey from her childhood in Bulgaria and reads it through "The Semiotic and the Symbolic" from *Revolution in Poetic Language*, which explores how the semiotic bodily drive is discharged into the structure of signification and the grammar/structure of the symbolic. Specifically, I am interested in the history of Kristeva's ideas that are tied to her relationship with transitional objects. I establish that Kristeva's interest in how human subjectivity becomes inserted into discourse, language, and unconscious history is part of her own desire for the dark hole. The challenges of the semiotic are to give meaning to language; to live and to love is to feel alive in a Kristevian life, which is to master a method for maternal separation: narcissistically identifying with her mother through the dark hole brings Kristeva, through her understanding of the unconscious and the emotional logic of loss, back to working through the loss of her primary relations.

Part I: Kristina Kristeva's Silence

Jardine's biography presents Kristina Kristeva as coming from a bourgeois family that was a product of the "religious polyphony" of the Balkans (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 36). A Bulgarian, Kristina's ancestry on her mother's side shares links with the monotheistic traditions in Eastern Europe, including Judaism,

Christianity, and Islam (Jews converted to Sabhatic Zevi to Islam and then Orthodox Christianity). Kristina's family and their religious history are part of the multifaith in her mystical heritage, which shows up in Kristeva's fiction, such as in *Murder in Byzantium* (2006; *Meurtre à Byzance*, 2004) (Kristeva, *Murder in Byzantium: A Novel*). Despite her hybridized spiritual history, however, Kristina was raised as a passionate atheist and was entirely secular (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 37). As a scientist, Kristina studied Darwinism and excelled at math and drawing. After her marriage, she sacrificed her career to devote her time and energy to her family and the raising of Julia and her younger sister, Ivanka. (Kristeva's only younger sibling, Ivanka, was born in January 1945.)

Kristina gave birth to her eldest daughter at her home in Silven, Bulgaria. After the birth, Kristina became ill and was unable to breastfeed the infant Julia (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 22), who had to be fed sheep milk from a bottle (which led to a lifetime intolerance of milk) and was cared for by her father and her father's adopted mother, Yordana. Jardine also tells us that Kristeva's name is a modern version of Yordana. When Kristeva was only three years old, Yordana passed away.

In her account to Jardine, Kristeva splits her mother into two. On the one hand, she criticizes her mother for lacking the ambition to pursue a career after her marriage and makes a point of letting her mother know that she was compromising herself by not pursuing a career: "you are letting yourself be crushed" (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 39). On the other hand, she admired her and credited her early academic success to her mother, who passionately tutored her for many years: "she owes a lot of her academic success to her because her mother was very hands-on about tutoring her in math and science" (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 39). There

are multiple instances in Jardine's biography that Kristeva's mother's help and hands-on tutoring is referred to as allowing her to succeed in school and win competitions.

Since identification is important for a defensive position and developmental process, the young Kristeva learned to model herself unconsciously on her mother's desire for Darwinism and rationality. As Jardine writes, "she was much closer to her mother's scientific mind, becoming the family spokesperson for Darwin" (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 40). Even though Kristina disagreed with her husband, she seems to have gone along with his ideas about church and remained silent about her beliefs regarding religion. Kristeva describes her mother's pleasing personality:

> My mother never disputed pap's ideas, but one could sense that she went to church only to please him, that she herself did not believe. She had studied biology and so her ideas were the opposite of my father's. At the dinner table, we would tease my father. We called him a dinosaur and we would say that, as Darwin argued, we descended from monkeys. My mother was a strong Darwinian. And papa would get furious! He would yell, 'Yes, of course you are both descendants of monkeys' (because my sister would follow me in my teasing of him). 'Yes, yes it's very easy to see! One just has to take a look at you to see that you descend from the monkeys!' (Kristeva qtd in Jardine 38–39).

It becomes clear from Jardine's intellectual biography that since childhood, Kristeva identified with the intelligence and rationality of her mother. Yet, she also drew on her father's literary imagination, carrying on his notions of religiosity in her writing, as I will elaborate in chapter three.

The semiology of sadness is a Kristevian understanding, where there is no imagination that is not overtly or secretly melancholic. Jardine points to Kristina's intelligence and shows how Kristeva couples it with silence:

> Kristeva admits that she believes that her mother was, in some ways, more intelligent than her father. His intelligence was literary, imaginative. Her mother was more rational, reasonable, and pragmatic. But she had learned to

> be *silent*, to never put herself out front – to the point where some thought that she was depressed. (Jardine 39–40, italics mine).

Kristeva's understanding of depressive artists is part of the hidden phase of narcissism as the one who is consumed by sadness and grief as he/she works through the void of a lost object, which seems to be based on her mother. While Kristeva reveals her narratives about Kristina's silence and possible depression, it is my understanding that the maternal stories that are hers are also collectively part of our own. Kristeva's early relationship with her mother is part of Freudian melancholia: the pain and conflicts of ambivalence – of having love/hate both ways.[1] While writing about the possibility of Kristina's depression, Jardine notes that she was also a talented artist:

> But she was also an artist, and in particular was very good at drawing. For Kristeva, drawing is where there is no distance between thought and hand; it is thinking in action. She attributes her fascination with drawing to her mother: 'A face, a countryside, an animal, a flower, an object – they all unexpectedly lived again at the tip of her pencil, with a prevision all the more surprising because it came so naturally to her: without forcing it, without thinking about it, as if it were nothing, my mother drew as others breathe or embroider…' (Jardine 37–38).

Kristina's intense desire to draw fascinated the young Julia. Jardine relates a story about a radio show competition that asked for illustrations of "the fastest mode of transport in the world." Ivanka thought it was an airplane, while Kristeva corrected her sister and claimed it was "Sputnik." Kristina's answer was, "I think, rather, that it's thought." The young Kristeva was

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[1] In "Mourning and Melancholia," Sigmund Freud writes about the concept of narcissistic identification. That is, despite having to face a conflict, the ego is unable to abandon the love-object (Freud, "Mourning and Melancholia" 316). I suggest that the process of narcissistic identification and the conflict of its ambivalence is a useful unconscious strategy to resist the love-object. Here, I am not interested in Freud's understanding of resistance, which is the ability to act out transference. Rather, I approach resistance as a challenge to the loss of love. I trace the early Kristevian narcissistic identification to examine how the conflicts of ambivalence with the maternal object and the opposition of love/hate and self/(m)other carves space for resistance and challenge towards the love-object.

quick to challenge her, insisting one could not draw thought since it is invisible. Her mother took on the challenge and eventually helped Kristeva win the contest:

> on the card, her mother had drawn a large snowman, melting and tipping to his left, his head falling off as if cut off by the invisible guillotine that was a ray of the sun. To the right of the snowman was the earth (and Sputnik in all of its horrible glory) that the snowman was imagining, even as it was perishing. The young Kristeva was deeply impressed by this vision of mortality, by this vision of how ideas survive after death. The body dies, but Sputnik continues. One cannot help but wonder whether this maternal inspiration might not be in part behind Kristeva's nonstop production of ideas for over 50 years! (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 38).

What is interesting about the image of the large snowman is that it is a white object, which could inherently come to stand for the mother's silence and depression, tipping to the left. The left side of the brain is associated with thinking, which is coincidentally the exact part falling off the snowman as if Kristina is representing her invisibility of thought based on the sacrifices she had been forced to make when she entered motherhood. On the right side, as Jardine tells us, the "snowman was imagining, even as it was perishing." Even though Kristina sacrificed her career, she continued to draw, create, and imagine, without thinking about it, as if it were nothing. Kristina's drawing about thinking suggests that Kristina may have identified herself as a perishing snowman, specifically since we are told that Kristina "had learned to be *silent*, to never put herself out front…" (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 39). Kristina's silence and identification with the snowman and its idealization through its vision of mortality is a defense against aggression. As Kristina's ego identifies with the perishing of the large snowman, what may have become a shadow are rejected parts of herself, remorse, and feelings of unworthiness. While Kristeva identifies with her mother's representation of the snowman drawing, one can see an account of maternal depression and the possibility of Kristina's split ego: the left side (her desire to become a scientist) is cut off while

the right side is capable of imagination, even as it views itself as dying. As Kristina mourns the loss of her own subjectivity, she splits her ego into two, with one part of the ego critically assessing the other part of herself. It seems, then, as Kristina mourns her own loss of thinking, she does not experience a complete withdrawal into melancholia but instead develops an integral unconscious strategy of drawing, even without thinking, to resist patriarchal systems that may have caused her to become silent in the first place. Her drawing of the melting snowman demonstrates an intuitive understanding of resistance, which is an ability to act out the transference, while also resisting the paternal systems that may have caused her narcissistic identification to split her ego.

Representing herself through the snowman, Kristina forms a narcissistic identification while negotiating her loss. It is as if the loss becomes a part of one's identification with the self that can only be spoken through silence. Therefore, Kristina's ego is left with only parts of the shadow of the snowman. It is as if Kristina desired to go beyond herself, to transcend her maternal situation, seeking autonomous subjectivity through thinking and aesthetic production while recognizing her alienation in a maternal situation. Kristina's love of drawing, specifically Kristina's silence in the image of a large snowman, becomes a psychic representation of repressed energy displacement, perhaps an active effort on her part to represent her own forced passivity. Since silence is encouraged and vulnerability is admired as a feminine and motherly ideal, it seems that Kristina could express her identification with the snowman. Kristeva's attachment to thoughts and thinking comes from her mother's desire to become a *thinking* scientist. As such, Kristina's drawing expresses her own situation of maternity and death, juxtaposed against thinking with mortality. Kristina's desire for thinking in some ways survives through Kristeva, who now advocates for imagining and writing, examplified by Jardine's title of

the intellectual biography, *At the Risk of Thinking*. Kristeva's initial refusal of identification with the dollhouse as a child, as I will explore below, is the desire to internalize and transcend the mother and her silences, choosing books instead.

Transitional Objects: Dolls and a Dollhouse

In seeking Kristeva's own abjection of the mother and transition into the symbolic phase and the maternal 'Thing' of mourning and melancholia, in this section, I explore how a symbiotic relationship is constructed in the pre-Oedipal phase and the maternal objects involved. In unpacking the abjection of the mother and literary maternal continuity through books, I show how the adult Kristeva shifts towards language as poetically revolutionary, that is, language as a signifying process, discharging our repressed maternal desires and impulses through a disruptive liberation of ethics and care, work and love. Kristeva's potential for her own poetic revolution as a writer reveals that we cannot change the world at the level of the 'given' message, but we can go beyond the speaking subject to other networks, of imagination and fantasies, towards maternal rhythms and temporality.

Jardine describes two critical stories from Kristeva's childhood: the first of little Julia refusing the doll and instead, choosing to read books. Jardine writes:

> There are two stories from Kristeva's Bulgarian childhood that *I* really want you to know. One has to do with Kristeva's love of books and her impatience with anything that smacked of girlish destiny. She especially did not like any kind of dolls, although they were continually thrust upon her (Jardine 45, italics original).

In recounting the first story of Kristeva's childhood scene, Jardine discusses Kristeva's relationship with objects and elaborates on Kristeva's dislike for dolls and a dollhouse by banishing it to a cupboard, as in the epigraph. Objects in the outer world, as Freud has outlined,

are useful for releasing the tension of the drive; the objects formulate an association to the impulse and aggressive energies. However, I read the childhood story of Kristeva's rejection of this dollhouse through a Winnicottian understanding, as the place of the reconfigured loss of fantasy, where Kristeva captures fragments of the maternal absence and silence, or the transitional object, which is remembered only to be displaced with books. Could Kristeva have constructed these childhood stories as a way to fantasize the maternal while displacing her loss and desires onto the displaced objects themselves? An indication is that memories of the mother from Kristeva's childhood are projected onto one another and that the fear of the loss of love escapes into the innocent scenes of Kristeva's childhood. As such, the images of Kristeva's own childhood objects arise out of her "surviving childhood recollections" (Freud, "Screen Memories" 558). And they relate to her later experiences as an adult of mourning and melancholia and emerge through her engagement with life. Through my analysis of the story of the doll and dollhouse, I suggest that the memories of the mother are expressed as part of early childhood experiences and are observed as empty; the maternal symbolic objects of the doll and books are singled out among many other objects of loss.

It seems that the young Kristeva had already internalized that caring (and crying, as chapter 5 will show) are gendered behaviours, and that one needs to keep maternal/emotional behaviours in check to progress towards success. The dollhouse is a representation/connection with the mother's body, and her denial is a way to reject the maternal space, specifically her mother's silences. As such, Kristeva's disapproval of the gendered gift of the dollhouse is indicative of her reluctance to engage in the mothering relation as a child. That is evident in her refusal to play with the doll, which was a way of refusing to train to be a mother. The refusal to identify with the dolls as a young female subject to be mothered is also a way to refuse

identification with her own mother, whom she could have observed as a child as perishing while critiquing her for being crushed by the demands of motherhood.

The young Julia neither found nor created the transitional objects of the doll and dollhouse but was gifted them. Winnicott discusses the experience of transitional objects not as elements but as an intermediate experience that stands between fantasy and memory, existing between the internal and the external world. Winnicott's notion of the formation of symbols through inner representations of the loss of the transitional object helps us understand Kristeva's childhood memory of the mother. Winnicott reminds us that the transitional object undergoes repression since "it is not forgotten and it is not mourned. It loses meaning..." (Winnicott, "Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena" 7). The Winnicottian understanding is that the transitional object, even as it widens into that of play, can survive both love and hate as it becomes decathected and forgotten. Therefore, when it spread into the whole cultural field, the dollhouse remained a rejected object in Kristeva's narrative. Through the Winnicottian understanding of the cultural experience as a third area of play, the objects are remembered as having become diffused, while the desire for language and books becomea the transitional state which the young Kristeva enjoyed. Therefore, the sequence of the dollhouse and the relationship to the mother is maintained in hidden ways, such as the desire for the hole.

Refusing to play with the doll and dollhouse and keeping it together in one piece shows the psychophysical architecture of the young Kristeva, who as an adult, as Jardine points out in her intellectual biography, maintains a "keep calm and carry on" attitude during moments of distress. It is precisely Kristeva's desire to refigure and re-signify the maternal imaginary that is based on her refusal to play with the doll. Winnicott connects the forgotten mother to the forgotten transitional object that is remembered only in flashes and through images of childhood

in our reconstruction of the maternal memory. Since the transitional object comes to stand for the intermediate experience of the mother and the recollection of the actual and the fantasized mother's loss, then what is actually being remembered by the older Julia is her disavowal of the forgotten, the inner representation of a lost object, the silent mother who "never disputed papa's ideas" (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 38). Since the mother had learned to put aside her desire for a career, Kristeva as a child also discarded the doll safely in a cupboard while at the same time unconsciously identifying with her mother's internalized desires for thinking.

If maternal memory is to be seen not as an isolated event but rather as a relation produced between the contents of various memories throughout our lives, then why did Kristeva recall this childhood experience for Jardine? Why did she think it was worth remembering while others were repressed, forgotten, or omitted? Why is the silent mother more relevant and memorable than what is remembered?

Psychoanalysis reminds us of the significance of insignificant objects from our early memories, which are critical for capturing a particular childhood moment in the psychoanalytic dialogue between the patient and the therapist. In the Jardine-Kristeva dialogue, the recollection of the memory and its symbolic objects comes to stand for the mother, that is, the contents of childhood scenes themselves provide a refuge for escaped wishes, displaced desires, and repressed fantasy, which the young Kristeva was able to re-locate through her love of books.

Books

Kristeva has enjoyed reading books from very early days. She used her reading and thinking to stay calm, but the use of thinking and intellect is all the time an internalized desire and a

disavowal of the maternal. It seems to me that as a child, Kristeva recognized the challenges of the semiotic by giving meaning to the mother through language. To live and to be alive for the young Kristeva was to master the narcissistic identification with the maternal object, a way to work through her loss and bring Kristeva once again back to the maternal realm. On the one hand, Kristeva's fear of loss of love is disguised through the refusal to play with a dollhouse, which I read as a refusal to remember the split mother, whom she constructed in her childhood as a silent object to repress the fantasy and the desire for the semiotic. On the other hand, the knowledge of her loss moves her towards the intermediate area of experience through her desire for books. The move to language for Kristeva is to reinvent the self through books, which is the desire to master the world through words.[2]

When the young Julia chooses books as her transitional object, the maternal desire for learning, which Kristina was forced to abandon when she entered motherhood, erupts into her psyche. Internalizing her mother's desire for thinking, the young Kristeva is symbolizing her mother's own loss of books and writing. Kristeva's internalization of her mother's unfulfilled and failed desire is part of the Lacanian mirror stage as identification. If the Lacanian unconscious is structured like language – it is through structures of language that we can tap into Kristeva's repressed desire and unconscious desire for a scientific career, like her mother. Kristeva's desire for language and books can be seen as based on the effects of the signifier – the

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[2] The adult Kristeva has elaborated the question of subjectivity and history, and what traverses language, specifically, the connection between language and unconscious desire, based on repression and satisfaction. Jardine's writing is critical for reminding her readers that Kristeva attributes "her love of language as an *unknown* rather than as an *object*" (Jardine 21, italics original). Because the emotional development of the mother is a lack, Kristeva as a child and as an adult maintained a relationship with Kristina in often hidden but also displaced ways through her desire for the hole, a mysterious, unknown space.

desire speaks through the m(other) as she signifies her place in the young Julia's mind. Kristeva maintained a relationship with books to come to terms with her psychic development to survive the instinctual loving and hating, pure aggression through maternal memory.

The Winnicottian intermediate area of experience of the transitional object is a symbolic internal representation of the mother that stands between Kristeva's internal and external world. Through the juxtaposition of a doll/dollhouse with books and a hole, Kristeva narrates a memory and fantasy of Kristina in the context of loss of love and separation, idealization and identification. Winnicott examines the childhood scene as a world of fantasy and destruction through the relationship with transitional objects. To gain omnipotence and externality, one can only use the object by first relating to and then destroying it. Acting out gendered roles (or rejecting them) provided the young Kristeva with an integral understanding of how gendered roles are embodied and disavowed. The books are part of the ambivalence of love and hate, obsession and aggression, sadness and depression that becomes part of the Kristevian unconscious fantasy.[3] Kristeva's dollhouse was "pretty much left in one piece" and her books "ended up completely torn apart through use"; Kristeva could thus externalize her books and use them while refusing to play the childhood fantasy game of care and love. Since books were also her transitional objects, they continued to signify her mother's absence and loss, as they were put away in the drawer, just like the dolls that were placed in the cupboard. As such, the Kristevian

[3] In "The Use of an Object and Relating through Identifications", Winnicott writes: "A new feature thus arrives in the theory of object-relating. The subject says to the object: 'I destroyed you', and the object is there to receive the communication. From now on the subject says: 'Hullo object!' 'I destroyed you.' 'I love you.' 'You have value for me because of your survival of my destruction of you.' 'While I am loving you I am all the time destroying you in (unconscious) *fantasy*'. Here fantasy begins for the individual. The subject can now *use* the object that has survived" (Winnicott, "The Use of an Object and Relating through Identifications" 120–21).

destruction of books is part of the transitional space to master the maternal terrain and desire for thinking, while mourning maternal loss in her childhood years.

Hole/Wholeness

The doll as an object of desire is part of Winnicott's object relating – the doll's hole as an object becomes meaningful, and the young Julia is enriched by the feeling of having found the object of desire that is disavowed. Observing Kristeva's interest in the doll's hole, her mother could project her own desire for science: "My mother said I would be a doctor." The signifier can be articulated through psychoanalysis; the demand of maternal desire returns to Kristeva through both maternal silence and inspiring sounds of the mother predicting Kristeva's future profession. Had this been the desire that Kristina wanted to pursue but was unable to because of her entry into motherhood? Kristeva chases her childhood interest towards mastery and mystery to peek and see the inside of a doll's hole through the semiotic. Kristeva's curiosity about the hole is the intermediate element in the childhood scenes between the suppressed fantasy of her mother's desire for her to become a doctor and the memory trace. The maternal images establish relations between the self and the social – mother – as the outer/inner. Though the young Julia could aesthetically recognize herself through identification/ recognition of the Lacanian "I" in the mirror, it is a lost image of wholeness – the field of desire that the mother herself could not attain. As such, Kristeva works through her mother's desire in writing (just as her mother found solace in the aesthetic act of drawing), which is described as a form of breathing in Jardine's biography, a primal need for survival.

Fascinated by holes, Kristeva attempts to master the image of wholeness through writing. The w/hole itself becomes an alienating signifier, which is part of an internal representation of

maternal separation. The young Julia's desire to return to a primary identification with the hole is part of a phantasy to be released from the fragmented terrains towards a whole identity.[4] Through the hole, she is able to break from the inner into the outer, seeking to move from the hole into wholeness. In "Love, Guilt and Reparation", Klein explores the paranoid-schizoid position of infants and how destruction emerges through the projection of one's own rage and guilt towards the love object (Klein 61). The paranoid-schizoid position provides security to children, specifically when the phantasy of primal maternal destruction at the breast becomes too great. At this position, the love object becomes a good object elsewhere – not as a whole object but as part objects. On the other hand, the depressive position stresses being unable to produce a whole object, creating the need for abject dependence, which is the inability to move towards sublimation.

Kristeva's juxtaposition of a doll and dollhouse with books assists her in splitting the mother into part objects while recognizing the need to make her w/hole once again. Kristeva's desire for the doll's hole, as a frustratingly whole object, is part of the aggressive phantasies of destruction, emerging from drives that create the necessity for reparative fantasies in the pre-Oedipal phase. The splitting of the mother and the idealization of the doll's hole is a defense against aggression. Therefore, hate has to spring forth in order to create the experience of love that is less idealized and, in turn, more authentic – the splitting of hate integrated with love. To restore her dislike for the doll, the young Kristeva desperately tries to heal the damage through the hole to make the mother once again whole. Generated by Klein's formulation, the

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[4] Klein understands phantasy as a state of mind of an infant during the primary stages of psychical development. Unlike fantasy, which is part of imagination that anyone can create, phantasies are an expression of internal object relations, an innate unconscious process that can be related to the external world through introjection and projection.

juxtaposition of dolls and books could be understood as the projective identification of love and aggressive drives located in the dark spaces of the pre-Oedipal phase. By diminishing her dislike for the bad objects and strengthening her relationship to the good, Kristeva was able to tolerate the Kleinian paranoid-schizoid position through the doll's hole and to produce reparative capacities of the semiotic to compensate for her repressed desire and aggression.

Kristeva's moment of transference and identification with her mother's desire is when she becomes the kind of mother her mother wasn't able to be, one capable of being creative and scientific and not just procreative. After all, Kristeva did train to become a psychoanalyst. Unlike her mother, she became a mother by compartmentalizing her life as a writer, psychoanalyst, and professor. Even as a child, Kristeva could sort through the dolls and the books while classifying them in their appropriate place: the cupboard and the drawer. As Jardine admires Kristeva's highly functional thinking and work, she asks her the following question:

> When I ask her how she has managed to raise David, be married to Sollers, have a demanding full-time job as a professor and psychoanalyst, and write so many books, she always first evokes those who have helped her, starting with Sollers, but quickly moves onto her thinking, philosophizing, theorizing and of course, writing about what she is in the middle of living. When asked how she does it all, she responds that she has the capacity to *compartmentalize* because she has learned to be a 'multiverse,' adding that this is something that we all need to grapple with in today's world… (Jardine 164, italics mine).

Kristeva has maintained a presence as a 'multiverse' since childhood through the art of compartmentalization. She kept her dollhouse in one piece and safely placed it in the cupboard and her books in the drawer, torn apart. As the following chapters will show, Kristeva understood the importance of living and thinking through her desire for language. Kristeva initially traveled to France to study French linguistics, but eventually became interested in the question of subjectivity and history, and what traverses language, as she continued her practice to be a 'multiverse.'

Kristeva's relationship with objects shows that she could safely put away desires, whether they remained untouched like the dollhouse or fell apart like the mother's drawing of the snowman and her torn books. However, as a child, she understood that had she only played with the doll and the dollhouse, she would have suffered fragmentation and silence, as her mother had. Kristeva expresses that:

> there are people who suffer from this, who feel fragmented, unable to put themselves together, to feel *whole*. Where am I? How do I unify myself in the midst of all this? That is why we must constantly revisit this problem, find ways to think it, communicate it, speak it, write it… We mustn't stop thinking it… trying to find a new language for all of it (Kristeva qtd in Jardine 164, italics mine).

The seeds were planted in Kristeva's early years to classify her transitional objects so that she could escape fragmentation through the ability to read, write, think, and constantly learn new languages, all of which open possibilities to create new fragments, facets of oneself as part of a multiverse.

Kristeva's early desire to feel whole compelled her to compartmentalize her dolls, dollhouse, and books in their spaces and thus achieve wholeness through fragmentation. By representing the mother through the hole, Kristeva was able to deny the dollhouse while keeping it in one piece. In forming a symbol of the dollhouse, Kristeva found a psychical and internalized representation of the transitional object as the loss of the mother. As such, the maternal was silently forgotten, except through a dark hole. It is also significant that Kristeva provided her mother's analysis rather than her own: "my mother said I would be a doctor."

The transference movement arises in Kristeva's story through her dissection of a human body. Kristeva eventually entered medical school to become a doctor to please her parents, but it was a short-lived experience:

> At one point, Kristeva thought that she would become a doctor. At university she took the medical exam mostly to please her parents. But she also took the exam in French literature. Although she succeeded at both, in fact scoring higher in letters than in science, at first she decided to follow her parents' wishes by pursuing medicine. However, during the very first class in medicine, the professor took the students to the local morgue. Kristeva stepped up to the plate, determined as always, and successfully *dissected a human body*. Then, as she was leaving, she promptly fainted. *She decided to go back to literature*! (Jardine 48–49, italics mine).

Unlike the doll that was left untouched, Kristeva's dissection of a dead body as a medical student involves the Winnicottian capacity to use an object: "This change (from relating to usage) means that the subject destroys the object" (Winnicott, "Transitional Objects and Transitional Phenomena" 120). The destruction of the flesh through dissection and Kristeva's survival of the experience (she "promptly fainted") allows her to step into her own field of passion and disassociate from parental desires. Unlike the doll that couldn't be used or destroyed and was kept in one piece, the experience of dissection, destruction, and her own survival of the dissected body helped Kristeva develop her autonomy and go back to literature and books, her chosen transitional objects.

Writing the body into the text manifests complex structures that include repressed desires. The primal drives intersect to produce the self that is writing, which Kristeva claims to be living in any given moment. The personal modes of textual production in which Kristeva practices the art of writing connect to the maternal body's poetic rhythms. The story of the local morgue defines the projective mechanism of the dead dissected body and the destruction that allows Kristeva to find externality, placing maternal desire (objects) outside herself. Kristeva's theoretical work allows her to reconnect bodily drives to language, which becomes critical for the adult Kristeva to engage in theory. In France, Kristeva eventually becomes fascinated with the psychic mechanism of the human subject, tracing the radicality of poetics to look beyond the

given message and into fantasies and imagination. Bringing language back to the body allowed Kristeva to escape her parents' wish that she pursue medicine and to find her voice in the flesh of French mentality. Her decision to go back to literature was part of the impulse to destroy and repair the primal objects, while putting them outside the area of projection. Literature holds the capacity to restore the psychic destruction of the maternal object.

Finally making her way into motherhood, Kristeva begins to write about love and the ethics of care, of maternal passion, similar to love in transference. The Kristevian understanding of the mother is that she directs the final separation and abjection of the infant from her body, and yet, she is caught up in grieving the loss of that relationship. For me, Kristeva's remembering of the hole is significant for her theorizing of the semiotic as an adult in Paris. In other words, I suggest that Kristeva's curiosity about the doll's hole as a child enabled her writings on motherhood, which in her old age, she narrates back to Jardine.

As a child, the young Julia unconsciously formulated an entire way of experiencing herself by splitting her mother into love/hate objectal relations. She found that the underlying drama of this mental work could be expressed through objects and reflected complex organizations of material/maternal experiences, which built a sense of the Kristevian self as a whole object. What is important is that Kristeva's regard for books is built into the experience of the desire for language itself. The juxtaposition of dolls and books, hate and love protects the containment – the dark spaces of the maternal container. By splitting the mother into good/bad, love/hate, Kristeva could contain the mother's image as a loving object while refusing to play with hated and distasteful objects to discharge aggressive impulses. Kristeva's dolls and books represent a complex relationship between self and others, and also between the two polarized states, conceptually and emotionally, of the pre-Oedipal Kleinian position. This conceptual

organization and the emotional tone of splitting the love object was a young Kristeva's earliest organization of experience. Keeping the two separate and apart was young Kristeva's attempt to clearly distinguish the mother's good breast from the bad one.

Part II: The Pre-Oedipal Dark Spaces of the Semiotic

In this section, I examine Kristeva's theoretical apparatus as displacement and substitution of maternal loss. Kristeva's early desire to peek and see what was inside the hole helps me trace Kristeva's poetic disruption of codified language, i.e. the semiotic, while paying attention to Kristeva's elucidation of the psychic mechanism in human subjectivity. My tracing of Kristeva's negation of the doll, except her interest in the doll's hole, echoes her desire for the semiotic. Yet, the only interpretation of the memory of the doll and dollhouse we get from Jardine's good-enough biography, before she moves on to the next story, is: "Kristeva was only interested in what was inside of the little dollhouse doll" (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 46). It seems that, initially, the young Julia refused enjoyment of the maternal transitional state, displaying a fear of the maternal object as silent and lost, but the imaginary space then freed itself from the logos. The joys of renewing subjectivity by playing with the symbolic fields are located in the semiotic of the bodily drive, the poetic quality, and the rhythmic tone of the baby's babbling.

My goal in this section is to demonstrate what is groundbreaking in Kristeva's theorizing, and how this revolutionary quality in her approach to poetic language relates to her life. My charting of Kristeva's rejection of the maternal space as a child is critical for understanding her early desire for language. Even as she threaded through the marked and dark spaces of maternal silence in childhood, I suggest that what was at stake in Kristeva's work on the semiotic,

abjection, maternal time, and passion was an unconscious attempt to symbolize her mother. While defying and defining the maternal defense mechanism of identification, I probe Kristeva's displacement of maternal loss through her own theories to look deeper inside the hole. Thus, I read the dollhouse (even as an un-played object) as signifying a particular relationship between the child and the mother during play, both sharing in the lack of a language of the symbolic.

In the early 1970s, while she was settling into life in Paris, Kristeva became mindful of the unconscious mind and paid closer attention to the hidden languages that codify psychical systems. Entering the French linguistic scene, Kristeva began to recognize that writers are not always conscious of what they write, and so she started to take human subjectivity seriously – in history via psychoanalysis and semiotics. She also began to focus on Freud and his understanding of the unconscious, hidden behind the textual and historical. Her breakthrough book in French, *Semiotike,* was published in 1969 and collected eleven articles written from 1966 to 1969 (Kristeva, *Sēmeiōtikē: Recherches Pour Une Sémanalyse*). The text is quite dense and requires deep knowledge of linguistics, semiotics and philosophy.

Kristeva's early writings in Paris suggest that her relationship to language and her understanding of the symbolic and semiotic are a necessary space to re-imagine the opening to the maternal. Jardine points out that semanalysis is a critical practice that is "a combination of semiotics and psychoanalysis, where the critical language of analysis remains carefully isomorphic to the form of the discourse being analysed" (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 19). Since Kristeva wanted to be taken seriously as a writer, in *Semiotike* she demonstrated her mastery of semiotics, Marxism, linguistics, and philosophy (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 121).

The psycho-linguistic understanding of language, desire, subjectivity, and identity Kristeva demonstrated in *Semiotike* became the hallmark of *Révolution du langage poétique* (*Revolution in Poetic Language*), published in 1974. Bringing the concept of intertextuality to the forefront, Kristeva explored the urgency of the multiplicity of origins and meaning in linguistics and paid critical attention to the symbolic dimension of language that allows it to refer to itself. The semiotic aspects of language break through the symbolic and include the babbling of the infant, poetry, and the dialectical interaction of the semiotic and symbolic. She organically structures the Greek term "semiotic" (meaning trace, proof, engraved sign, mark) through *chora*:

> Discrete quantities of energy move through the body of the subject who is not yet constituted as such, and in the course of his development, they are arranged according to the various constraints imposed on this body – always already involved in a semiotic process – by family and social structures. In this way, the drives, which are 'energy' charges as well as 'psychical' marks, articulate what we call a *chora:* a non-expressive totality formed by the drives and their stases in a motility that is as full of movement as it is regulated (Kristeva, "The Semiotic and the Symbolic" 2071-2072).

As Kristeva writes about the disposition of drives and their disfiguration, she connects them with the semiotic and its relation to the maternal drives. She restructures the Freudian understanding of the oral and anal drives – the primal drives – through the maternal realm as they get coded into our DNA and RNA, part of the psyche and our sensorimotor organization:

> Drives involve pre-Oedipal semiotic functions and energy discharges that connect and orient the body to the mother. We must emphasize that 'drives' are always already ambiguous, simultaneously assimilating and destructive; this dualism… as in the configuration of the DNA and RNA molecule, makes the semiotized body a place of permanent scission (Kristeva, "The Semiotic and the Symbolic" 2074).

Kristeva sees the Freudian drives as part of the genetic programming of the semiotic, memorized and encoded into genes for later language acquisition, but also constantly available to be accessed at the level of the unconscious. At the genetic level, drives can be part of Klein's

Oedipal phase before projective elements are directed onto the mother's body, making the mother a non-object of dependence.

Kristeva's notion of the semiotic is helpful since the scene of pre-symbolic functions is related to the Kleinian primal phantasies of aggression, the splitting of the mother into good/bad objects, and the later need for reparation through creation. The pleasure and pain of the defense mechanism produce a separation from the mother and possibility for isolation – to experience oneself as both good/bad objects. Kristeva has written about the process of the thetic, a rupture that brings the subject-in-process towards the breakthrough of the semiotic through identification with the image of the object. The repressed memory of the mother is a part of the thetic phase that formulates an identity based on fusion and division.

When the Kristevian semiotic breaks through the symbolic, we find ourselves in poetry or madness. It is here that one locates creativity that ruptures and disrupts signification to create new meaning. The thetic break is subversive as it redefines subjectivity, such as when we interrupt our bond and separate from the maternal body. When the semiotic erupts into the symbolic, it produces the thetic while creating an impulse for creativity and reconfiguring a new subjectivity. Creativity and madness are related; the narrative of a hysteric is the textuality of a schizophrenic. And yet, artists are caught in a dilemma as they struggle to maintain the boundaries of being consumed by their own work.

Concerning language Kristeva's maternal subjectivity is part of the subject-in-process that distances itself from the symbolic linguistic field to manipulate meanings. To assume an independent speaking subject position, one must break, separate, and detach from one's infantile dependency on the maternal body. However, repression returns through material and semiotic qualities. The return of the semiotic is a reminder that the speaking subject is always already in a

position of fictitious mastery. As Kristeva's subject strives to constitute itself towards wholeness, it is constantly fractured and must be reconstituted through imaginative richness because of its suppressed relations to the maternal body.

The infantile repression of the mother moves the Kristevian subject to identify with the mother but only through mastery and harmony, a position of difference in distance, unity, autonomy, detachment, and independence that forms the mature, ideal Kristevian ego. Kristeva's poetics of revolution maintains the distinction of the symbolic as a structure. In contrast to Saussure, who focused on an absence of the speaker, Kristeva's notion of the semiotic is an aspect of language that cannot be known – unless it breaks through the symbolic through the thetic phase. For instance, the mother's voice and the music of poetry are semiotic representations, emanating from pre-Oedipal bodily drives. The Kristevian revolution is part of a transformation that brings about the subject-in-process through semiotic movement, which is a refusal of stasis through renewal, rebirth, and innovation: the *chora.*

Chora and Maternal Continuity

Kristeva's notion of the *chora* is inevitable. The semiotic comes from the pre-Oedipal drives, associated with the womblike space of the *chora*, which is connected to a maternal body that is un-signifiable. The eruption of the semiotic into the symbolic is a creative desire for poetic language that produces space for new cultural meaning. The *chora* is an empty space, a dark hole that cannot be represented or named. Adopting this concept from Plato, Kristeva calls this maternal container nourishing. It has no unity, identity, or deity but is a regulating process, which has its own ordering of preverbal semiotic space and logical categories, transcending

language. Neither assigned nor a position, signification is produced by splitting the semiotic, emerging from the *chora* in the thetic phase.

The imaginary phase brings a child from the semiotic *chora* into the constitution of objectivity and the fantasized castration phase as the entrance into the symbolic realm. The child's entry into the Symbolic represses the *chora* within language, exposing its disruption and silences, refusing to be caught within the order. Kristeva suggests that subjectivity is constituted through the interaction of the semiotic as pre-Oedipal (the oral and anal stages), as heterogeneous, flowing from the c*hora*. For Kristeva*,* the *chora* is "neither model nor copy"; it "precedes and underlies figuration and thus specularization, and is analogous only to vocal or kinetic rhythm" (Kristeva, "The Semiotic and the Symbolic" 2073). Connected to the pre-Oedipal semiotic of the Freudian primal phases, it is connected to the mother's body: "the mother's body is therefore what mediates the symbolic law organizing social relations and becomes the ordering principle of the semiotic *chora*, which is on the path of destruction, aggressivity and death" (Kristeva, "The Semiotic and the Symbolic" 2074–75).

Kristeva's speaking subject is also a subject-in-process that attempts a vision of agential authority through the possibilities she sees for the semiotic. The possibilities of the *chora* highlight the repressed and marginalized, where the subject-in-process engages with movement and heterogeneity. The semiotic is a kind of writing that is not rigid, stable, or coherent but rather subversive and disruptive. In writing about the complexity of identity, imaginary, and maternal continuity in her introduction to *The Kristeva Reader*, Toril Moi quotes Kristeva*:*

> I think that in the imaginary, maternal continuity is what guarantees identity. One may imagine other social systems where it would be different… The imaginary of the work of art, that is really the most extraordinary and the most unsettling imitation of the mother-child dependence. [It is] its substitution and its displacement towards a limit which is fascinating because inhuman. The work of art is independence conquered through inhumanity. The work of art

> cuts off natural filiation, it is patricide and matricide, it is superbly solitary. But look back-stage, as does the analyst, and you will find a dependence, a secret mother on whom this sublimation is constructed (Kristeva qtd in Moi, "Introduction" 14).

Through Kristeva's understanding of maternal continuity, the personal and textual, I centralize that Kristevian female creativity and sublimation needs to be understood psychoanalytically through intimate relationships of progress and development, loss and separation. As a stranger and writer in France, Kristeva moved towards her work on the semiotic and located a new language based on her own maternal identification. And yet, her own transference of love is tied to the ideal ego of the semiotic rhythms and tones.

Conclusion

Kristeva's narratives of the mother from Jardine represent the maternal bond as unconsciously desired and denied. Through the unconscious Kleinian splitting, the young Kristeva could separate while moving towards tolerating the capacity for loss and restoring her relationship with the mother through books. Upon arriving in France, Kristeva maintained her ambition to become an intellectual with the goal of revolt. Swimming through life, Kristeva eventually realized that part of her desire for revolution was an intimate one, a psychic battle. I suggest that this internalized desire is connected to the formation of symbols, which helps us to understand her own maternal loss. While collecting Kristeva's stories through Jardine's biography, I discovered how Kristeva reconstructed her unconscious memories of her mother from her childhood. In this chapter, I read the young Kristeva's separation, loss, and maternal silence through her choice of Winnicottian transitional objects and her denial of the dollhouse as representing her rejection of mothering. At the same time, her beloved books and move to literature held the capacity for satisfaction and psychic integrity through destruction and survival. On the one hand, I suggest

that there is a clear rejection of the mother. On the other, her recognition of the doll's hole and her desire for books and learning is a move towards wholeness, to save the part of the self that is recognized as fragmented, falling apart.

Since she held a view of her mother as a silent, potentially depressed object, the young Kristeva followed precisely the path that the mother had been unable to attain. Early identification with maternal desire is a defense against loss. By becoming what the mother could not be, Kristeva was able to grieve her loss. For her, literary writing, academic work, and psychoanalytic theorizing are a form of bereavement – a defense to hold onto the mother's desire, to hold onto something that continues to be part of her while mourning her loss. Kristeva is the recipient of maternal projected feelings – the desire for education and a career and identification with them as if they were her own. As such, the mother's repressed desires and feelings are internalized by Kristeva, as she splits her mother into Kleinian good and bad objects. Rather than identify with her silence and depression, she internalizes and identifies with her desire for education through her writing on the semiotic.

Chapter Two: Sublimation: Flowers and French

> [I]t's something that's just part of my character: not to cry. My mother used to tell me about it. As soon as I could walk, I wouldn't walk but would rather, *run*. And I ran very, very fast! So I started running… And there is a park in Sofia called the Park of Roses where I would run and run until I would fall… and mama would yell, "But stop! Stop! And I would fall and she would catch up with me. I would stand up, with my knees all bloody and my mother would plead with me, "Please stop! Your knees are all bloody!" And I would reply: "Listen mama, don't be upset. Let me comfort you." And then I would take off running… (Kristeva qtd in Jardine 46, italics original).

Living her theory of the contradiction between the semiotic and symbolic as a child, Kristeva rejected the maternal realm by moving towards resistance and transference, which are inherently part of the fear of solitude and separation. As a child, Kristeva could imagine the mother only on the condition that she could let her go. Jardine's collection of Kristeva's childhood stories shows that since her young years, Kristeva has always run fast and worked fast, though very mindfully and intently, paying close attention to small details. The young thinking intellectual could psychically create the mother through rejection and absence and make her magically exist again through flowery representation to mourn her abandonment. On the one hand, Kristina unconsciously recognizes the transgressive movement and runs after her daughter to keep her close to the maternal container. On the other hand, Kristeva comforts her mother only to run away faster to construct her subjectivity, away from the space that kept the young Julia tied to her mother, which, as we saw in the previous chapter Kristeva later theorized as the semiotic. As discussed there, the young Kristeva mastered the recipe for separation by developing a deep understanding of the struggle between mystery and meaning, dollhouse and books, hole and wholeness. My task in this chapter is to explore how flowers work symbolically in Jardine's intellectual biography and Kristeva's theory of maternal passions. I illustrate how the quote I

have identified in the epigraph of this chapter plays out and connects Kristeva's biography to her later theoretical writings.

In Jardine's account, there is a pattern of flowers associated with maternal substitutes. Kristeva's compulsion to repeat this central fantasy in relation to her grandmother's garden, her native country, and her preferred literature defines a psychological process of maternity as the universally repressed. The first part of the chapter shows how flowers are linked to her grandmother on account of her garden. Then I pursue her romanticization of Bulgaria as a land of roses. Finally, I discuss the flowers that accompany descriptions of Kristeva's early relationship with the French language and literature, particularly Colette. By unpacking the unconscious imagination of the young Kristeva and her search for freedom associated with flowers, I demonstrate how Kristeva identifies with her grandmother's garden to negotiate and come to terms with her own ego. On the one hand, the flower as a symbol disavows losing the mother in the first place and, on the other, is a repressed wish to repair the loss with a 'missing' link. Rather than destroy herself, Kristeva's symbolic relationship with flowers eventually provides her with the ability to build her own literary garden.

Jardine enables Kristeva to rediscover her own capacity to reconstruct fantasies and imagine her relations with her mother in childhood. I suggest that as the memory trace of the delicate Kristevian flower is projected onto maternal substitutes, the fear of loss of maternal love and separation escapes into innocent childhood scenes while exaggerating the intermediate elements of the flowers. My goal is to follow the same methodology from chapter one and read the buried stories of the semiotic and abjection, complex and abstract vocabularies, and intellectual and theoretical insights as personal narratives. In the second part, I turn to Kristeva's theoretical writings on maternal passions and Colette, which account for her early experiences. I

explore how *Colette* (2004) and Kristeva's writings on maternal passions are associated with the unconscious presence of the mother herself. The primary mechanism for care and creativity is a Kristevian move from fantasy to thought, from thinking to sublimation. Traumatic separation is a psychical form of maternal abjection and the phantasmic need to repair the damage once inflicted through bloody knees, the image of which, I argue, shows that Kristeva's relationship with internalized objects and maternal substitutes is part of the guilt of maternal abjection. Anxiety emerging from maternal abjection is a source of creativity, which Kristeva comes back to via literature, specifically Colette, and via her study on maternal passions.

Part I: Maternal Substitutes and Delicate Flowers

Nevena and the Grandmother's Garden

The importance of flowers to Kristeva is evident in her unpacking of Freud's 1899 paper on screen memories. Kristeva comments in the 2011 documentary *Histoires d'amour et de passerelles*, written and directed by Teri When-Damisch:

> our childhood provides us with the *seeds* of personality, but what one rediscovers in analysis is that one has reconstructed one's childhood. *Something is given to us, but we have rebuilt it*. Therefore, one never finds the exact, current situation in the past. Lots of people who entertained this idea are disappointed by analysis. They complain: But I can never find the memory that explains who I am now… I can't find the delicate *flower*… the love… the enigma… That's why I say that memories are not deterministic; they are invitations to travel (Kristeva qtd in Jardine 21, italics mine).

In her endnote, Jardine highlights that "Kristeva makes the following remarks while looking at photos of herself as a child" (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 320). Jardine evokes Kristeva's own understanding of childhood memory through the Freudian lens as she recognizes the possibility of the reconstruction of Kristeva's childhood memories. In an essay titled "Screen Memories" (1899), Freud reminds us that memory is not an

isolated event but rather a relation produced from the contents of various memories throughout our lives. Why are specific childhood experiences, such as Kristeva's relationship with the delicate flower, worth remembering, while others, such as a very particular aspect of her relationship with her mother Kristina, are repressed, forgotten, or omitted? As Kristeva remembers her childhood by gazing at photographs of her young life, there are two psychical forces at work that produce the nostalgic memory: the first force wants to remember an event related to the mother; the second force resists the remembering of the mother. These two forces do not cancel each other out but instead form a compromise with the repressed memory taking the form of a maternal substitution and its love investment. Therefore, the love related to the mother through the delicate flowers could be an unconscious strategy to resist maternal identification; the memory of the delicate flower escapes to other sources, and maternal substitutes render the childhood scene innocent.

Freud claims that powerful motives and desires trigger the formation and selection of memories. As we suppress the symbolic objects of our fantasy, they escape to the childhood scene, which ensures their harmlessness and innocence. The two scenes – the adult Kristeva looking at a picture of herself as a child – connect because her thoughts and impressions are linked symbolically. This is what Freud refers to as a screen memory (Freud, "Screen Memories" 553). As the delicate flowers are reconstructed in Kristeva's childhood memories, the recollection of the significant mother is both remembered and forgotten. It is also important to note that Kristeva uses flowers not just in reference to herself (quoted in the epigraph) but more generally in her discussion of screen memories. As the maternal substitutes are hidden, my understanding of Kristeva's screen memory of flowers reconstructs a particular childhood event

that points to the separation and fear related to the loss of love. In Freud's words, they are "an allusion dressed up in a *flowery* disguise" (Freud, "Screen Memories" 554, italics original). [5]

Kristeva's early experience with religion emerged from her maternal grandmother's Bulgarian Christian Orthodox history. Jardine devotes a small section to Kristeva's maternal grandmother, Nevena (36–37). Nevena was a member of the Bulgarian nobility and while she came from an aristocratic background, her husband was a shopkeeper. Nevena's middle name was Zhekova, a version of Jacob that is genealogically traced back to the Jewish dissident Sabbati Zevi. Kristeva's reference to the "religious polyphony" of her mother's family relates to Nevena's heritage, which is linked to Zevi, a seventeenth-century Jewish mystic from the Balkans (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 36). Zevi claimed to be the long-awaited Jewish messiah (the 'second coming') and later converted to Islam (the sect of Zevi still has followers in Turkey). By the eighteenth century, Kristeva's grandmother's family had turned towards Orthodox Christianity. The "religious polyphony" of her ancestry provided the young Kristeva with a deep understanding of religion as syncretic, something that, as an adult, she revisited in *Murder in Byzantium*, in which the links between Judaism, Islam, and Christianity in Eastern Europe are romanticized. In writing about Kristeva's mystical heritage and her mother's atheism, Jardine reminds us that "the stories she inherited are what matters for her life's work" (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 37). The religious polyphony and the mysticism on her maternal side complicated

[5] In "Screen Memories", Freud recounts a story of his fictional patient's fascination with a yellow flower. The narrative scene begins with a childhood scene where a small boy snatches yellow flowers from his girl cousin in the farm, and then, throws out the flower for the bread that in Freud's words, "tasted absolutely delicious" (Freud, "Screen Memories" 549). Freud analyzes both bread and flower as the libidinal desire, connected symbolically to the powerful human motives of hunger and love.

Kristeva's relationship to Orthodox Christianity and, as will be discussed in chapter three, foreshadows the role of her father and Kristeva's fascination with the preverbal, where Kristeva replaces praying with thinking.

My goal in this section is to assess varying notions of incorporation and maternal identification in the Jardine-Kristeva dyad through the symbolic basis of Kristeva's grandmother's subjectivity. My reading of Kristeva's associations to flowers and gardens is that they have provided her with a refuge for escaped wishes, displaced desires, and repressed maternal fantasies. Freud insists that the intermediate elements of childhood scenes are a form of visual representations of displacement, which stands between the suppressed fantasy and the memory-trace. As such, the grandmother's garden is a symbolic internal representation of the mother's body that stands between young Julia's internal and external reality. The young Kristeva was able to maintain a separation from the maternal structure that she understood as an adult as the semiotic, an aspect of language that is difficult to know.

Another psychoanalytic reading of Kristeva's relationship to her grandmother is as a Kleinian good breast, in which she can locate freedom and independence. Kristeva's relationship to her grandmother's garden provides a space for reparation, as part of a symbolic creation through incorporation, introjection, and identification; that is, the essential wish to sadistically destroy and unite with the maternal other through the substitutive transitional object, perhaps a double displaced transference – not just to the grandmother but to her garden. In writing a few pages later about the birth of Kristeva's younger sister Ivanka (born in 1945) and the political stress of communist rule Kristeva and her family experienced at this time, Jardine returns to Kristeva's running: "In any case, she rebelled against that economy, preferring instead to *run wild in her grandmother's garden among the flowers,* or among the beautiful old Byzantine

churches by the sea. These are very physical memories for her" (Jardine 41, italics mine). Kristeva escapes to the maternal grandmother's garden (once again by running) to gain a sense of freedom and peace as she restores her relationship to the internalized anxiety of separation. Kristeva claims that, as a young independent girl, she did not suffer directly under communism. However, Jardine tells us that Kristeva did internalize fear-inducing stories and discusses an event that occurred in her grandmother's town that forced her to run: "One night, she was scared when loudspeakers in the streets of her grandmother's town warned of impending executions and she and her mother *ran all the way home*, pushing the baby carriage with her sister in it frantically before them, with the baby even falling out at one point" (Jardine 40, italics mine). In this passage, Jardine again evokes an image of Kristeva running, but this time towards her grandmother's home for safety *with* her mother (rather than away from her) and her baby sister.

As Freud has outlined, narcissism is a borderline state in which an individual comes to terms with his/her image and is unsure of its identity. The psychoanalytic framework reminds us that one can never really separate from the love object without falling into narcissistic identification and guilt, internalizing the love object into oneself. Guilt is intensified and reinforced as part of the fear of losing the loved one, as part of transference. As a child, Kristeva immersed herself in the French language and literature in her grandmother's garden to negotiate autonomy and freedom, escaping from her mother in the original attachment to find full expression through her displaced relationship. Through Kristeva's relationship to the garden, we learn how escaping from the mother towards the grandmother's garden allowed the young Julia to locate full expression, authenticity, and freedom.

Klein has reminded us that the introjection of the other brings us back to our most primitive states, drawing strength from infantile wishes. The grandmother's garden stands in for

the mother, which Kristeva merges with the primary oral gratification of a literary text. Transferring from her mother to her grandmother produces the longing to become one with the mother's body, to identify with her as she moves towards a sacrifice of reparation through the gardens. The ultimate escape towards imagination is the Kristevian intimate revolution that eventually brought her towards the transformational process of the semiotic. The transition from the mother to the maternal grandmother is about identification, assimilation, and internalization – to take something from outside and install it within herself, where the grandmother's space replaces and substitutes for the mother's absence. The other is absorbed metaphorically and digested through security and attachment, providing a childhood condition for mourning in hiding.

Kristeva's understanding of childhood aggression and anxiety stimulates the drive to restore the mother; the guilt of separation is a move towards an instinctual drive to find new objects and associations to give expression to maternal reparation. Kristeva's capacity to lose the mother, on the one hand, and to move beyond reparative mourning is to silently hide and escape into imagination as a self-described romantic. On the other hand, the young Julia could imagine the mother's breast in text while climbing towards the trees, narcissistically creating and reconstructing the ability to lose her in the first place. The grandmother's garden gave her the space to retrieve lost feelings of love; Kristeva's longing for flowers and then literature displaces the desire to preserve and restore maternal flowery flesh in literary creation, a psychic and bodily need to be nourished through the maternal ink of her writing.

The young Kristeva's intense desire for running disavows connection but is a move towards wholeness from maternal fragmentation. She rebuilds loss through the imaginative richness of the grandmother's garden, and in the following example, Jardine repeats Kristeva's

desire of escape in her grandmother's house, but this time connects it to a treehouse and literature:

> For her, *the ultimate escape* was that of the imagination, away from any form of predictable, one-dimensional thought. As a child at her maternal grandmother's house*, she would hide high in the trees in order to read Hugo or Colette* without interruption. Reading was a great adventure in an overly pragmatic world for this self-described romantic (Jardine 48, italics mine).

Building on the previous narrative that focused on her grandmother's flower garden, the tree is here associated symbolically with reading and literature. As Kristeva reconciles with her own psyche and childhood, she searches for lost time through her association of flowers. Earlier in the intellectual biography there is another example of this linkage that specifically names Colette: "Sometimes she even links her relationship to time itself to her observation of plants and *flowers* in her grandmother's garden, echoing the rhapsodic love of nature of Rousseau *and Colette*" (Jardine 22, italics mine). As Kristeva seeks the love object as a child, she sublimates the conflicted feelings towards her mother by detouring through literature. The "running story" in the epigraph was an important narrative for Kristeva as part of her own unconscious realization and need for a forceful separation from the maternal as a lost object, which she understood to be a biological and psychological necessity.

To link our relationship to time and literature is itself a move towards the Kristevian understanding of identification, a negotiation of temporality that is part of an attachment to language and creativity. The Kristevian relationship to time is an imaginary state, bringing Kristeva back to placing affects, desires, and emotions in maternal signs and literary imagination as a form of escape. Jardine returns to Kristeva's relationship to flowers repeatedly in her intellectual biography, and references to reading Colette invariably include it:

> When she was learning French in Bulgaria, Kristeva was given short excerpts – *some of which were about flowers* – to read from Colette. Kristeva has always

> loved flowers. She has talked in French magazine interviews about her love *of gardening* at the Île de Ré, all in precise descriptive detail. And when, as a little girl, she climbed to the *treetops* to read, she read Colette out loud, learning passages by heart. She is drawn to Colette's rapturous textual absorption of the *scents of food and perfumes*, and the hushed sounds of lovers' voices (Jardine 265-266, italics mine).

Kristeva's intense love for Colette and the scents of food and perfumes is part of this transference, which is signaled by their being associated with flowers. For Kristeva, reading Colette demonstrates the imaginary and phantasmic building of the maternal object that develops into the workings of imagination through French literature. French literature for Kristeva builds on orality, fulfills the loss of the love-object, and forms a childhood fantasy of the oral relationship and bond we form with the primal mother. Seeking enjoyment in the French literary tradition with Colette and learning passages by heart became an avenue to re-enter the maternal space. Reading this foreign literature allowed her to regress to the imaginary phase, where she could once again consume the maternal ink.

Reading satisfies the oral stage as one connects to maternal identification. What is particularly noteworthy are the ways in which Kristeva's reminisces about flowers and reading Colette are metaphorically incorporated through psychic absorption. The young Kristeva understood resistance through her relationships to objects, an unconscious identification that was absorbed through the symbolic basis of subjectivity. Identification and absorption become the central psychic mechanisms through which the young Kristeva unconsciously incorporates aspects of the Other, relating to the work of maternal memory. Specifically, mourning and escaping melancholia comes through the unconscious absorption of the love object. Hence, Kristeva's loss of the maternal itself goes missing as it is incorporated through the memory of Colette, the scents hidden within an absence. as if she has really lost nothing; the written and spoken words replace maternal absence. In another passage on Colette, Jardine writes, "with

Colette, she moves onto the terrain of 'an alphabet written as part of the world's flesh'" (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 265). The desire for restoration through letters and words is part of an impulse to repair through literary reparation, which provided Kristeva her own theory of psychic development and, through this line of reasoning, the desire to think through the mother.

The process of Kristeva's recollection of memory is not to be seen as an isolated event but rather as a relation produced between the contents of various memories and their visual representations. There are reasons to believe in the constructed nature of Kristeva's childhood memories of flowers in relation to the grandmother – these scenes could have been fantasized about as Kristeva travels through these memories. It is also possible that Kristeva could have projected the maternal loss onto the memories of her grandmother's garden and constructed a childhood fantasy to displace maternal loss and desires onto the flowery objects themselves. The feeling of loss of love could have been disguised in the overemphasized objects in Jardine and Kristeva's dialogue, such as the need to repeat the scene of the grandmother's garden.

Bulgaria, the Country of Roses

I continue to follow the trails of flowers in Jardine to show that, in addition to the flowers associated with her grandmother, Kristeva's motherland, Bulgaria, is another mother-substitute associated with flowers. Kristeva explicitly links her country to roses:

> In *At The Risk of Thought,* Kristeva also evokes with affection the larger Bulgarian countryside, especially the gorgeous 'valley of roses': 'Bulgaria is the *country of roses*, for between two mountains, a valley is planted with roses from east to west and reputable refineries extract a magnificent essence. A *scented country* then, but also a country with an extraordinary cultural memory' (Jardine 23, italics mine).

Bulgaria in Kristeva's description is attributed with feelings to sublimate and identify with the mother. In the young Kristeva's unconscious mind, her motherland and its gorgeous valley of roses were a territory that stood for the mother, one that replaced the loss of the real mother. Klein reminds us that we displace love objects from early relations to other people and things. We tend to develop interests and activities tied to a land, which is associated with the parts of the mother's body that gave us pleasure and satisfaction, especially the bountiful and plentiful breast of the w/hole mother. The longing for Bulgaria is part and parcel of Kristeva's longing for her maternal heritage. It has become a phantasy of a holding container with similar qualities to the aesthetic experience of the mother. The association with flowers presents strong emotions of love and beauty, joy and admiration, dependency and devotion, birth and death, which are the realms connected by Klein to the maternal body.

As the young Julia negotiates and reconfigures her new subjectivity as an independent and autonomous young girl, flowers come to stand for Bulgaria's impulse for creativity and literary imagination, emanating from pre-Oedipal drives. In writing about memories of Bulgaria, Jardine quotes the following from Kristeva:

> when I speak of and think about Bulgaria, or about Sofia – both of which abound with memories – these memories, every time I evoke them, there is nothing fixed or determinant about them. What matters in my experience of memory is the voyage toward and through it… it's a perpetual questioning. (Kristeva qtd in Jardine 28).

This perpetual questioning in Kristeva's narrative of the roses and their beauty is tied to dealing with her psychic development of loss and separation as a coming to terms with her own childhood memories of Bulgaria, which are also tied to the father's religiosity, resistance, and independence:

> Kristeva has often stated that she experienced the Orthodox faith of her father as dissident – as secretive and associated with the unknown – and that it was

> this experience that kept her from completely identifying with the Bulgarian communist identity of the time. She has spoken of a force of resistance sleeping within the Orthodox faith, absorbed by her along with the *incense* and *flowers* of the church where her father sang (Jardine 35, italics mine).

Jardine points to Kristeva's relationship to her father's dissident orthodox faith and her absorption of flowers as holding possibilities for escape and freedom:

> She has also pondered the extent to which her immersion as a young child in the atmospherics of Orthodox Christianity may have embedded in her a curiosity about mystery that has remained alive even through her repeatedly articulated atheism: 'Christian orthodoxy permeated me, and not in a dogmatic or religious way, *stricto sensu*. Rather, it constituted for me a somewhat fleeting spiritual climate… I can still smell the incense, see the profusion of *flowers* on the altar' (Jardine 136–37, italics mine)**.**

Though Kristeva opted for Darwinism early on and, like her mother, has remained a devout atheist, she associates her father's love of Orthodox Christianity to nostalgic memories of its flowers and incense.

Kristeva's early theoretical writings hardly mention Bulgaria. Rather it is in her fiction that she worked through her connection to her motherland. In *Lost Unicorn of Velvet Revolutions: Heterotopias of the Seminar* (2013), Miglena Nikolchina suggests that although Bulgaria is hardly ever mentioned in Kristeva's work, it is still present as a shadow:

> In the course of twenty-five years or so – in fact, until the collapse of the Eastern bloc system – Bulgaria is hardly mentioned in her writing. One notable exception is the painful – and rather unusual for her – confessional tone of "The Novel as Polylogue," in which she states that she speaks 'in French and about literature because of Yalta' (Nikolchina, *Lost Unicorns of the Velvet Revolutions: Heterotopias of the Seminar* 112).

In her 2004 *Matricide in Language,* Nikolchina treats Kristeva's theory as a novel: "the polylogic reading allows me to follow Kristeva's interdisciplinary work along the trajectory of a secret narrative: the narrative of an irrecoverable lost territory, of an immortal sorrow, of a disconsolate wandering" (Nikolchina, *Matricide in Language: Writing Theory in Kristeva and Woolf* 45). Treating Kristevian theory in terms of stories, Nikolchina follows Kristeva's analytic

discourse on women, literature, exile, and Bulgaria as a lost territory, the invisible maternal continent. The link between the maternal and thinking, symbolic power and language evacuates the maternal to establish a pact. Kristeva's movement towards language emerges as a powerful idealizing energy of the matricidal impulse in the presence of the Third, as I discuss further in the next chapter in relation to Kristeva's father.

Kristeva's narratives of running away from her mother towards the Park of Roses, eventually leaving her motherland Bulgaria (associated with roses) and experiencing the slow death of the mother tongue are important for showing her earlier instances of matricide, and that she finds comfort and autonomy in foreign sources. And yet, Kristeva has returned to her country of origin in her fiction, beginning with *The Samurai* (1992): "Almost never mentioned before *The Samurai,* Kristeva's country of origin, Bulgaria, becomes more and more explicitly present in her subsequent writing. This growing presence of the lost object, however, takes the form of a veritable return of the abject…" (Nikolchina, *Lost Unicorns of the Velvet Revolutions: Heterotopias of the Seminar* 119). What is particularly important about this "return of the abject" is that it occurs in French, the language Kristeva associates with flowers. Considering Kristeva's relationship with her motherland, Nikolchina writes that Kristeva seems to be hiding the process of mourning behind "tough terminological machinery" as a "purely theoretical shadow of the lost territory" (Nikolchina, *Lost Unicorns of the Velvet Revolutions: Heterotopias of the Seminar* 113). In Bulgaria, Kristeva was already engaging in this genre of writing, which she brought to the intellectual scene in Paris. She was using language to elude censorship – learned in her early years working as a journalist in Bulgaria, as I will elaborate further in chapter three. The density of her work, which many readers found overwhelming in the early years, is part of the continuous matricide, the displacement of maternal origin.

Kristeva's love for the French language is part of her own personal narrative of seeking a lost object. After her arrival in France, Kristeva began to incarnate herself in French and counted only on herself to move forward "as she always does" (in Jardine's understanding of her), while recognizing the slow loss of her maternal heritage. According to Jardine, Kristeva first sensed a death-like experience of the Bulgarian language when writing in French:

> I remember my first two articles [written in French] – "Bakhtin, The Word, Dialogue and Novel" and "For a Semiology of Programmes." I had a cold, like today, it was winter. I was seeing my own hand write and I had the impression that I was writing in a *dead language* and that someone inside me was also dead. In fact, something else was dying inside me: *the Bulgarian language* (Kristeva qtd in Jardine 70, italics mine).

Kristeva recognizes that her switch from Bulgarian to French was a painful labour of transition, like the pains of matricide. For Kristeva, the problem of matricide is the process of individuation; the separation from the primary origin appears as death. To enter language, the writing subject has to come to terms with the loss and abjection of the archaic mother; imaginary matricide becomes the necessary condition of individuation and symbolic recognition. Kristeva teaches her own wandering Bulgarian child to name the unnameable and invisible forces within her to speak the narrative of exile.

Although she became an exemplary foreigner, well integrated into French culture, Kristeva experienced sadness, suffering, and loneliness. Her writing of her own depression during her early years in France had to do with writing in French, something that is repeated in Jardine's narrative:

> She goes back to the feelings she had when writing in French, her impression that she was confronting a death within herself. She experienced it as a death of her Bulgarian self, but with another self slowly coming into view. This suffering was not always consciously lived. But at times it was. For example, Kristeva would catch herself feeling at war with time. She would stare at her mother's handwriting in the letters mailed to her: it was the handwriting of a woman no longer young. She missed her parents deeply. She felt the passage

> of time acutely, felt like she herself was passing. She has described this suffering as incisive and painful but invisible to others. But she did not allow it to take over her spirit. She decided to think it, to live it, and to move beyond it, because that effort provided her with a kind of happiness, a beyond (Jardine 96-97)

Kristeva experienced the pain of separation and matricide when looking at her mother's letters. Her desire to write was part of mourning the lost object as she experiences the death of her Bulgarian self. The move from Bulgaria and Bulgarian was Kristeva's unconscious strategy to break away from primary relations. Running away from the maternal and moving away from Bulgaria are examples of separation, which for her produced the experience of dying as matricide was mourned in a dead language.

Kristeva's understanding of the melancholic's philosophy and feminine depression is essential in thinking about our relation to our maternal lineage, particularly our relationship to the motherland. As Kristeva locates her place in exile as a permanent condition in France, she marks Bulgarian as a dead language, as suffering and trauma are hidden in the mother tongue. With the death of her Bulgarian self, "Kristeva decided to resurrect herself, to reincarnate herself in French" (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 97). Kristeva describes the trauma she experienced as she switched permanently from Bulgarian to French:

> At the crossroads of two languages and two durations at last, I fossilize an idiom that seeks clarity, excavating pathos-filled allusions. Beneath the smooth appearance of those French words, polished like stone holy-water fonts, the dark gliding of orthodox icons is revealed. Giant or dwarf, the monster who emerges takes pleasure in never being content, while exasperating the natives: those of the *country of origin* as well as those of *the host country* (Kristeva qtd in Jardine 70, italics mine).

The maternal heritage of Kristeva's relations to Bulgarian is fossilized and the move to French reveals the naming and un-naming of the lost territory. Kristeva is caught in a structure where

she is forced to deal with the crisis of meaning: “the monster who emerges takes pleasure in never being content.” To lose one’s native country and maternal language puts one on a path towards psychic freedom, just as one does away with the maternal container. Desire for a foreign language, in Kristeva’s case French, is to be both inside and outside, to seek the object of one’s desire.

Kristeva emerges and writes about her experience as an exile, and the strangeness and foreignness in France. As she moved from Bulgaria to Paris, she embraced herself as a foreigner: “The passion she showed for dissidence as a young intellectual is also aligned with her later reflections upon her own situation as a major foreign woman writer and theorist in France” (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 58). Kristeva’s memories of Bulgaria and her suffering further carried her towards the desire for foreign tongues. Rather than Bulgarian, Kristeva describes French as "her language of freedom” (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 48). This is noteworthy since it represents possibilities for understanding our mother tongue as a language of entrapment, a link to the mother that needs to be abandoned for further growth and development. While Bulgarian is represented as a total loss of self, the foreign language translates the missing mother by bringing her nothingness into a oneness that has always already been lost.

French, Flowers and Freedom

Jardine reminds us that Kristeva was very independent from a young age and a very good student. Since her childhood, French literature has allowed Kristeva to transcend – escape from – the childhood scenario. Kristeva’s parents wished to give her a multilingual upbringing, but since

her father was not member of the Bulgarian Communist Party, Kristeva was excluded from attending foreign-language schools:

> Kristeva's parents would've liked her to be able to continue her education in one of the Russian, French, English, or even American schools in Sofia – the schools where the children of the red nomenklatura were sent. But, again, she could not, mostly because her father was not a communist (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 47).

Kristeva's parents overcame this challenge by sending Kristeva to a Bulgarian school in the morning and then for French lessons in the afternoon. Jardine writes about Kristeva's relationship to French becoming the centre of her early life:

> At first – when Kristeva was six or seven – her parents enrolled her in the French 'maternal school' where she was taught by French Catholic – Dominican – nuns. For a couple of years, she absorbed languages, especially French, like a sponge and was taught to memorize songs and French literary text, with the nuns teaching her fables by La Fontaine, poems by Hugo, and stories by Colette. She remembers plays in French with lots of bright costumes. She learned 'La Marseillaise' before she learned the Bulgarian National Anthem, recited the fables of La Fontaine before she learned to recite the poems of the nineteenth-century Bulgarian National Poet, Hristo Botev. She even prayed in French (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 42).

It is noteworthy that Kristeva was taught French poems and literary texts, plays and prayers in French by nuns. The goal of the French "maternal school" was to raise children just as a mother would. This type of education provided intellectual stimuli and improved language skills while engaging children in activities such as singing, drawing, games, and other recreational activities. When the Dominican nuns were condemned as spies and chased out of Bulgaria during World War II, Kristeva was able to continue her studies at the Alliance Française, which for her was a place of calm amidst chaos and violence (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 43).

Kristeva has fond memories of the time she attended the Alliance Française. What Jardine describes is Kristeva's early learning there of foreign languages while also highlighting the importance of French in providing her the independence she desired from a young age:

> There, two to three afternoons a week, she continued her linguistic and literary studies begun at the French maternal school. She strengthened her command of French and eventually learned Russian and English. Kristeva has consistently spoken of French as her language of freedom, a language that has allowed her to ask questions and to develop a singular voice. She has spoken of 'traveling through herself,' most often in French, as a way (unconsciously) to transcend her childhood situation (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 48).

The primal oral wish of Kristeva as a child was to incorporate and absorb foreign languages, particularly French, fulfilling the aggressive and seductive phantasies that had already been mapped onto the maternal body. My Kristevian reading is an understanding of how the young Kristeva herself may have potentially escaped out of hopelessness and helplessness, dependency and narcissistic identification through French to rediscover her own strangeness and authenticity through the unique experience of translation.

Kristeva took French literature studies very seriously, even before she left for France, by taking French language and literature courses by correspondence. Kristeva's desire for French literature is part of the primitive phantasy of the mother, who is not physically there but is eternally ever-present, as part of a displaced identification. Jardine explicitly puts it in these terms: "literature was Kristeva's other avenue of escape. She *devoured* 'the classics'…" (Jardine 48, italics mine). Devouring 'the classics' is indicative of the early phases of oral satisfaction, a matrix for transference, away from the fear and anxiety of solitude and separation from the maternal object, which Kristeva depended upon to displace feelings of love/hate and projection/introjection as she eventually annihilated her mother's body into the spaces of blankness and silence. As Jardine writes, "For her, French literature was the 'flesh of French

mentality' – a cherished vehicle of the eighteenth-century French Enlightenment. It was in many ways how she consoled herself. She also likes to say that it was how she found out about *love*" (Jardine 49, italics mine). Since Kristeva's mother valued the Enlightenment and rationality, she becomes hidden within the flesh of French mentality as Kristeva regresses back to remembering her mother's love, refusing to shed tears and maintaining her "keep calm and carry on" posture in times of adversity.

As an adult, Kristeva continues her work of caring for others in her family, similar to the way she comforted her mother as a child as she ran in the Park of Roses. Writing about Kristeva now, Jardine writes that, "Kristeva explains that she takes care of herself by taking care of others. She admits that a family for her is about complex caring rather than comfort" (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 47). Flowers come to represent an ethics of love, comfort, and care, and are a symbol to value those who care for others in our society. The internalized desire of a mother's care is a feminine need to exist through affection, an ethics that is primarily grounded in the mother-infant bond, represented through flowery reparation. Jardine provides the example of Kristeva's current writing space surrounded by flowers, a house given to her by her French in-laws:

> One of the greatest gifts the Joyaux family gave to Kristeva was a real home in France, a space she has loved for decades now, a place where she does her best writing, where she goes to relax, swim, and play with her family… But it is mostly residential, and the Joyaux property is hidden behind walls of towering *sanguenite flowers* (see wormwood or *artemisia maritima*) – the favourite flowers of Artemis, both a remedy and a poison – that grew profusely in the salty earth of Ré. *Behind the walls of flowers*, one finds three separate, modest size homes: the main house (where Kristeva writes), a small house for Sollers (every room filled floor to ceiling with books), and a small residence for their son David (where he loves to retreat to read or look at his photographs). Surrounding the three small houses are *colorful gardens*, bordered by a stone wall separating the property from the sea (Jardine 102, italics mine).

Even now Kristeva's office is filled with flowers. The greatest gift of a "real home in France," "a place where she does her best writing, where she goes to relax," is like the ultimate imaginative escape to her maternal grandmother's garden, where the young Julia ran wild and sought freedom to consume literature.

Kristeva's sublimation of the mother even as an adult is a reminder that one can never really separate from the love object without falling into narcissistic identification and internalizing the other into oneself. Describing Kristeva's relations to literature, Jardine also discusses how she even now reads books and walks in the garden to fuel herself:

> She reads all the time, always has – books only, though, because she hates reading on the screen… She also likes to take long walks, especially in what she refers to as 'my France': the Luxembourg Gardens but also Versailles and the Chateaux de la Loire, when she can. She has never moved away from the Luxembourg Gardens, having over time lived on various nearby streets…. Just so she can refuel close by (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 163–64).

The books Kristeva has read in French since childhood have provided her with a beautiful fragility of imagination to escape her present situation, even in France. What is also noteworthy is that France is the substitute home she has made for herself as she has found ways to live in in the vicinity of gardens and flowers. France is associated with gardens, perhaps reminding her of how she would go to her grandmother's garden to escape as a child. In the garden, Kristeva walks to move through time and space. Just as she associates Bulgaria with the valley of roses, Kristeva refers to Luxembourg Gardens as "my France," using the foreign space to continue her desire for flowers.

Kristeva's escape to France and her relationship with the French language as a source of freedom are particularly useful to locate her maternal fixation. It is through this foreign language that Kristeva relocates her mother's flesh, the ability to become one with her body. The mother

becomes the forbidden shadow in flowery disguise that follows Kristeva throughout her life as she successfully internalizes and projects her love onto a series of objects. Through thinking and reading, Kristeva could absent others from herself, to make the mother exist in flowery symbols that the mother herself drew (as discussed in chapter one); it may be that Kristeva's own fascination with flowery symbols and French is part of consoling and mourning, loving and escaping the mother she was forced to abandon in childhood. Reading Jardine's understanding of Kristeva's life and work, I have emphasized and established the flowery patterns in Kristeva's narratives of displacement and sublimation. It is indeed in France that Kristeva became a serious student of linguistics, semiotics, and psychoanalysis to further negotiate autonomy and independence.

Part II: Maternal Passions

Kristeva's theoretical undertaking parallels her own childhood stories and strategically serves as a reminder of the infantile need to move away from narcissistic identification and forced separation from the mother. In this part, I focus on the centrality of motherhood and flowers in the chapter "The Passion According to Motherhood" in *Hatred and Forgiveness* (2010), where the core passion of maternal love is manifested in a pregnant woman, a passionate state characterized by oppositional forces. The desire for maternal language, which is also Kristeva's own desire for a new ethics outside duty and morality, arises from the art of maternity and the poetics of motherhood. Kristeva's recollection and reconstruction of the mother reveal that she repressed her desire for the mother into books and language, only to re-locate her in the flowery disguise of her theoretical understanding of maternal passion.

Motherhood for Kristeva is a model of love, situated in the mother's sacrifice, as she directs the final separation and abjection of the infant from her body, where bodily drives and forces subvert language, an important concept for the Kristevian subject. Motherhood allows us to remedy oppositional pairs and link with a substitute object by moving through the doubling of narcissism, projective identifications, and separation. The oppositional forces of pleasure and suffering emerge from a linguistic reflexive consciousness through the language of passion related to the mother's body. The interaction between primordial emotions and linguistics is an imaginary formation: "passion is an imaginary state; the imaginary is the organ of passion, its chosen terrain for action and even its very being" (Kristeva, "The Passion According to Motherhood" 81). As discussed in chapter one, the cyclical time of maternal passion is that of pre-signification, the *chora*, the space before space that gives meaning to the drives and creativities. The infantile repression of the maternal body, explored through Kristeva's own childhood, can be identified with the position of difference in the *distance* while being in unity and autonomy, detachment and independence that form the ideal ego.

The models of the psyche that Kristeva takes from both Freud and Klein are a part of early patterns of the relationship of identification and recognition, loss and bloody abjection that become Kristevian lifelong complexes in often hidden ways. Kristeva's extension of the Freudian and Kleinian models through her theoretical analysis of love and abjection is part of a deeper understanding of the cultural and psychoanalytic models of the infant's separation from the maternal body that occurs through matricide. And yet, the process of motherhood prescribes a valuable relation to attachment and detachment but also one that can foster freedom – the flowering of a relationship with sublimation, formulating a perceived link of omnipotence. Kristeva reminds us of Freud, who discusses the necessity of psychosexual shifts for human

development — the change of object and attachment from the mother to the father. The change from maternal to paternal identification moves girls toward "extraneousness" as they experience estrangement from the symbolic order – hidden in dissociative personality, false self, depression, and hysteria (Kristeva, "The Passion According to Motherhood" 83). Disappointed by the link, a female can move towards maternal passion as it holds a possibility for subjectivity.

Kristeva's discourse of maternal passion is important for the psychical space and primary identification with love objects. In her understanding of maternal passion, Kristeva returns to the Freudian analysis of the change of love-object and attachment from the mother to the father in the Oedipal stage. Kristeva has outlined how maternal relationships have been subjugated to the paternal imaginary idealization that forecloses structural differentiation. Kristeva's movement toward maternal passion outside the paternal, is a means of locating her own mother, even as she navigates her loss in the margins of the blank page. Through her creation of text, Kristeva develops a new object with subjectivity, a subject in its own right and yet, inseparable from her mother.

Kristeva explores the psychic necessity of formulating a subjectivity of the subject-in-process in which she becomes a "speaking subject" through detachment from dependency on the maternal body. However, she clearly writes about the repression returning through the desire for maternal passions, the manifestation of repressed semiotic qualities. The passionate state is a move towards the possibility of satisfaction and working through one's own drives, where the individual becomes "fully and thus solely a *subject* of sharing and reflexivity" (Kristeva, "The Passion According to Motherhood" 88). The metaphor of gestation, tied to the birthing from a mother's body, produces the capacity to produce new meaning. Hence, mothers can germinate a new object with subjectivity as they transition the child into the symbolic through language. The

maternal passion produces a possibility toward subjectivity through reliance based on an ethics of love and care. One's connection to the transformation of emotions is generated by the bio-psychic events of the oppositional forces of passionate encounters with the maternal object, which can be worked through the experiences of gestation, birth and rebirth. Kristeva insists she is not pro-birth, but is rather interested in the structures of motherhood, which is about cyclical experiences and continual rebirths: "motherhood is a biological and symbolic process, and analytical, self-analytical, or sublimatory work can arrive at the same structural modifications. I am emphasizing the structural experience of motherhood: I am not fundamentally 'pro-birth'" (Kristeva, "The Passion According to Motherhood" 87).

The core passion of maternal love is manifested in the first phase of a pregnant woman, a passionate state characterized by the oppositional forces of desires and emotions, suffering and pleasure, the need to vomit out the fetus counteracted with the desire to hold onto the child forever. Kristeva claims that "passion is an imaginary state; the imaginary is the organ of passion, its chosen terrain for action and even its very being" (Kristeva, "The Passion According to Motherhood" 81). Therefore, the imaginary process of maternal passion, specifically in relation to matricide, becomes the groundwork for healing and creativity, a restorative relationship.

For Kristeva, birthing is the original and plural beginning – a temporality of all beginnings. To become the mother of an-other is a valuable process as one works through one's own attachment and detachment to the love-object. It is an ethics, a love towards freedom and liberation. Thus, Kristeva herself maintains the flow of a relationship with sublimation, symbiosis, formulating a link of omnipotence in reparation. Kristeva takes the risk of thinking by claiming that "the 'good-enough mother' loves no one: her passion is eclipsed in a detachment

that, without necessarily becoming monstrous (which happens, but not fatally), is called serenity. No other link and every link… A mother loves nothing and no one if not '*flowering*'" (Kristeva, "The Passion According to Motherhood" 91, italics mine). The passion, beginning with doubling and following with detachment through expulsion (and even abjection), is based on pure emotions and love. Kristeva reminds us that one is never really finished with doing away with the repressed maternal passion, formulating a necessary and repetitive process of continuing to make new links of ethics and reliance.

The oppositional forces of pleasure and suffering, fascination and repulsion, passion and fatigue, love and hate emanate through the linguistic reflexive consciousness. As a psychical state, maternal passion flows through oppositional forces of attachment and aggression, loving and hating. It is also part of a regression, displaced into a passion for love that "takes the path of sublimation without ceasing to be a passion" (Kristeva, "The Passion According to Motherhood" 86). It is precisely through the passion for love that the Winnicottian good-enough mother sacrifices her child while she links with her child; she does so by holding the capacity to transition the child from maternal to phallic identification, nature to culture, dependence to independence, semiotic to symbolic and from hallucination towards adaptation via a transitional object.

Colette

It is precisely through Colette that Kristeva uses a flower to produce the desire for symbolic revolution to reactivate her own relationship to the Thing – the mother – the forbidden territory. In this section, I seek the interaction between Kristeva's theory and life by tracing Kristeva's intimate literary relations with Colette. I seek to understand how Colette fulfills Kristeva's need

to escape as an alienated subject but one capable of entering the creation of thought and thinking of maternal passions. I read Kristeva's escape into literature, particularly her work with Colette, as an example of French literature that is linked to flowers, a repressed wish to move back towards the mother's terrain.

Kristeva's work in France built on her own unconscious inseparability from the mother. While I explore the concept of abjection in chapter five, here I am interested in the mirroring of life and the theory of maternal passions and Colette as a restorative relationship with her own mother. I suggest that as Kristeva re-collects and recreates the stories and symbols about her mother that I have observed across a variety of anecdotes in Jardine, she is drawing on those stories to reformulate her own link. When Kristeva writes about Colette, she does so by demonstrating an interaction between primordial emotions and literature as part of a sensual delight. In turning to the role of flowers in her study of *Colette* and "The Passion According to Motherhood" from *Hatred and Forgiveness*, I focus on how Kristeva identifies with Colette's flowery symbols to work through her own melancholic suffering, having dealt with texts of male French writers earlier.

Devoting an entire study to Colette in 2002 (2004 in English translation), as the final volume of her female genius trilogy that included volumes on Melanie Klein (2000, 2001 in English translation) and Hannah Arendt (2001, 2004 in English translation), Kristeva documented the lives of women she admired. Focusing on Klein (on madness), Arendt (on life), and Colette (on words), Kristeva moved from *a desire in* language towards the female writer's relation to language and its involvement in a signifying process and an emphasis on new beginnings. Through her detailed biographies, Kristeva inserted herself intertextually into a series of imaginary 'daughter-mother' couples that are not just about birthing but rebirths.

Kristeva's joining the works of these three women through the term genius is a way to categorize their resistance in the context of psychoanalysis, philosophy, and literature. Jardine assesses Kristeva's devotion to the study of these women by categorizing their genius on three levels, specifically in relation to flowering:

> 1) emphasis on singularity/originality but only within a web of human relationship, linkage, and care; 2) an identification of thought with life, where to live is to think-sublimate-create; 3) an insistence on the temporality of starting anew, of re-birth, of c*ontinual flowering – of getting up and continuing to run even after falling down*. (Jardine 263, italics mine).

Through her own insistence on sublimation, Kristeva's writings on female genius seem to echo her own childhood narrative of the "running story" from the epigraph. Kristeva raises the position of these genius "mothers" to the source of thought itself; writing and thinking through the female genius trilogy is what generates the desire for maternal restorative reparation and becomes a foundation for the Kristevian source of creativity and continual flowering.

Kristeva's own maternal passion is redefined through her study of Colette's text, which heightened her sensual pleasure. By reading Colette, Kristeva was able to move away from maternal suppression to passion. A union with Colette's writing is what helped her to move towards and beyond the pleasure of feeding and reading. The mother's displacement in flowers is useful for unpacking the relations between self and object, Kristeva and Colette, as part of the biological foundations of separation from the mother's body. It is also through Colette that Kristeva understands the melancholic writer and its signification: "when the light of dawn following the night of love is offered as a final metaphor for writing, Colette suggests that writing may *overcome depression*. The *rose*, a mystical symbol, metamorphoses the woman writer's grieving solitude into floral vitality" (Kristeva, *Colette* 112, first italics original, second italics mine). Kristeva refuses a pathological turn to mourning as the rose becomes part of the

coupling of a mystical symbol of the love in transference. Identification of the feminine with the maternal shows that female desire emerges from being in a relationship with an object.

The desire for flowers and the relationship with the maternal object is critical for Kristeva, whether in depression or in a state of passion. The melancholic who fails the process of matricide instead destroys herself in feminine depression as she reclaims the primary love object. In *Colette*, Kristeva quotes Colette from *La naissance du jour* to highlight the connection between depression and a rose: "I was now just like the one I've described many a time, you know, that *solitary* and *upstanding* woman, like a *sad rose*, which, in being *defoliated*, has only a *stronger* bearing" (Colette qtd in Kristeva, *Colette* 112). Through Colette's flowers, Kristeva reduces her own suffering of depression and formulates a stronger bond; deep into the unconscious, she finds the symbol of the sad rose – the maternal source of pleasure and passion.

In her earlier work, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* (1989; *Soliel Noir: Dépression et mélancholie* 1987), Kristeva analyzes the nostalgic dedication to the lost mother in the depressed, who mourns not an object but a 'Thing.' Since a 'Thing' is not signifiable, no meaning is generated, and the depressed finds herself in silence, alone with the unnamed Thing, such as a sad rose. The Kristevian creative subjectivity reactivates the semiotic – the maternal source – to play with the Thing to renew her relationship with the maternal by locating her own psychic freedom. Without a flowery symbol, the maternal can be rejected in the signifying practice through naming and un-naming; the alienated subject finds herself buried alive, a loss that is concealed from ever being either assimilated or spoken. Still, the maternal loss itself goes missing, hidden within a crisis of meaning itself.

The movement of the bodily flesh is written through Kristeva's intense love for Colette. I suggest that Kristeva identifies as Colette's daughter by splitting the cycles of life movement

through birth, death, and rebirth. Jardine writes about Kristeva's relations to new beginnings through Colette: "In speaking of her life, Kristeva often quotes Colette: 'to be reborn has never been too much for me.' Indeed, these are the words that Kristeva would like inscribed on her tombstone" (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 16). The Kristevian subject is a subject of theory, embedded as part of theory itself; Kristeva colludes with Colette here as a jouissance of an inscribed body/text. Kristeva's desire to have Colette's writing on her tombstone is a disavowal of parting that suggests a measure against it so that even death could not separate the imagined daughter-mother passion. It is indeed through Colette's depression and solitude, the literary nurturing and care that Kristeva travels through herself and constructs herself as a thinking intellect.

The Kristevian interaction between primordial emotions and flowery sensation, letters and linguistics, is tied to the maternal imaginary formation of Sido, Colette's mother. Kristeva is particularly captivated by the mother-daughter relationship in Colette's novels and the omnipresence of Colette's own mother. In *Colette* Kristeva addresses writing in relation to the maternal figure, Sido and blossoming of flowers:

> Writing is *through* love and is performed *with* the death of the other. As such, it finds its source in a maternal figure named Sido. Colette designates her with a brief, fleeting phrase that places the 'heart' in the 'letter' on the same level: 'In my mother's heart, in her letters. […]. I therefore know where to locate the origins of my vocation.' In fact, *Break of Day* opens with the letter from Sido announcing to Jouvenel that she cannot 'spend a week or so' at her daughter's wedding because the ever-so-rare blossoming of *her pink cactus* keeps her at home… (Kristeva, *Colette* 111, italics original, last italics mine).

The imaginary intervenes in the struggles of the depressive through the maternal figure, Sido's care for the pink cactus. Depression and melancholia, then, are the psychosocial circumstances in the pre-Oedipal phase that lead one to abdicate signs to hold onto the mother if the mother is unable to be replaced with signs. It is through symbols that a transfer ensues and that the mother

becomes a flowery thing rather than *the* flowery Thing. Feminine depression relies on a female's assessment of genius and its sexuality – it is a part of the desire and abjection of the maternal Thing. Feminine depression also negates entry into the symbolic order, a system that is predicated on mastering the maternal absence. The idealization of the phallus is based on putting to death the feminine body, which is part of the maternal realm.

Kristeva uses flower imagery once again when she comes back to Colette's notion of ideal mothering. Sido's refuseal to visit her daughter Colette so that she could tend to her flowers is a pivotal moment for Kristeva. As Kristeva writes, "her own Sido, who refuses to visit her daughter, whom she adores, because 'her *pink cactus is probably going to flower*" (Kristeva, "The Passion According to Motherhood" 91, italics mine). The Kristevian understanding here is that the good-enough mother loves no one but her flowers because her passion is dominated by her own detachment from her daughter. Kristeva's maternal passions are important for psychic unity in the unconsciousness as well as the incorporeal space since it is tied to the early senses of maternal food and feeding, bonding and care, scents and pleasure, which Kristeva ties to Colette.

Fascinated by the encounter of a mother-daughter relationship in Colette, Kristeva uses Colette's mother Sido to examine the concept of maternal passions as the forceful inseparability from the mother and her early passionate state, which is also a biblical allusion to Mary and her suffering. The implication is that mothers who suffer are saints, which is also hinted at in the "Fatigue in the Feminine" chapter of *Hatred and Forgiveness*. "Fatigue in the Feminine" tells the story of a mother who experiences no pain when she falls and breaks her ankle because she is too busy taking care of her mother, who is suffering from Alzheimer's, and a son with a brain tumor (Kristeva, "Fatigue in the Feminine"). Kelly Oliver highlights the importance of the working through of feminine fatigue in relation to maternal passion: "On Kristeva's account, then, it is

not primarily passion that is uniquely human but rather dispassion or the sublimation of passion, which is essential to maternal passion as successful mothering" (Oliver 4). The assessment of Kristeva's passionate mothering is what Oliver specifically points out as successful mothering, as structured by alluding to Colette's mother Sido. Oliver's understanding of Kristeva's notion of passionate maternal suffering is to turn away from one's children to attend and care for one's own flowers so that the mother can herself bloom, rather than fall into the fatigue of the feminine (Oliver 7).

To engage in flowery symbols is to be obsessed with one's own cosmic beginnings, gaining access to the repressed infantile desires for matricide. Kristeva seeks love in transference from past to present, a consequence of the repressed memories of her mother from childhood. In the clinical setting, the therapist guides the patient towards creation and innovation of the psychic apparatus rather than the patient repeatedly rejecting the analytic scene by falling "in love with the doctor in order to move the analysis forward" (Freud, "Observations on Love in Transference" 343). The maternal passions in transference are also part of an aesthetically sublimatory experience. Kristeva's work serves as a reminder that the mind and spirit can be preserved through an ethics of care grounded in the maternal-infant relationship. This bond signifies a turning outwards towards others that is based on the need to value those who care for others: "the end of the cure diffuses passion, but by increasing objects and discourse of passion, by doing away with the link (notably, that of transference) so as to make others possible" (Kristeva, "The Passion According to Motherhood" 94). Kristeva's relationship with flowery associations and her own relationship with creating other links, such as caring for her own literary garden, have generated the desire for restorative reparation and is the source of foundation of creativity.

Conclusion

In the first part of this chapter, I have explored the Kristevian need to go from flowers to French to trace and analyze the primal loss of separation. My goal has been to write about Kristeva's personal life through Jardine's intellectual biography and think through Kristeva's own theory to examine the young Julia's psychic life. My reading of Kristeva's relationship and fascination with flowers and French, both as a child and later in life, explores the repressed need for maternal nourishment and nurturance, detoured in the first instance through her grandmother. Then, I move towards Kristeva's framing of the joy, beauty, and enrichment of Bulgaria as the land of roses, which may have come to structure her unconscious mind, felt to be the mother's body. The desire to make reparation with the motherland is bound up with the anxiety of losing the loved one, expressed by Kristeva in creative and constructive ways. I conclude the first section with French literature, which builds on the early Kristevian relationship to orality; it was Kristeva's wish to devour the text to compensate for the loss of the love-object while forming a childhood phantasy of the oral relationship with the primal mother.

The second part focused on Kristeva's exploration of maternal passions and Colette, which I suggest are associated with the unconscious presence of the mother herself. In the process of separating from Kristina, Kristeva's own maternal separation and reparation is organized in intermediary and transitional structures. Rather than move towards an instinctual drive, the Kristevian ego represses pleasure towards the love-object while sublimating maternal passion towards literary desire in flowery disguise. Kristina is still the constant force and fascination behind Kristeva's writings, and it is Kristeva's relationship to flowers that

enumerates how they worked for her as the substitute for the love investment; the desire for contact with the mother has to do with our continued relations with mother-substitutes.

Chapter Three: Mother Tongue: Letters and Language

> Bulgaria is the only country in the world celebrating a national festival of culture, moreover, a festival of the alphabet, honouring its two learned saints. This commemoration consists of a procession in the squares of towns and villages (I lived in the capital, Sofia), processions in which school children participated (I wore my top student ribbon and also a letter to personify this alphabet), but also those who work in the domain of culture: artists, journalists, professors, writers, etc. On this occasion, the entire population celebrates the verbal and the written. This moment is of capital symbolic importance, because it shows how deeply culture is rooted in the Bulgarian people (Kristeva qtd in Jardine 43-44).

The Kristevian understanding of desire in language locates it in maternal space as her writing moves through the psychoanalytic concept of transference. Thus, the intersubjectivity of the mother tongue guides Kristeva towards hidden identities, encapsulated through Bulgarian. Running away from her mother in chapter two, Kristeva adheres to the celebration of language in Bulgaria to repress maternal emotion through an ethics of care and comfort. In this chapter, I trace the heterogeneity operating within the psychic economy of linguistics by situating Jardine's understanding of young Julia's relationship with her father Stoyan Kristev, and her desire to learn foreign languages as a child. The necessity of entering the symbolic, embedded in the desire for language, is a critical place for regression as the mother functions through a 'Thing' in Kristeva's work. Kristeva separated from her primary relations as a child and moved from Bulgarian to French to explore the heterogeneity of language, a way to escape from her early childhood situation. Differentiating between the semiotic and symbolic, where *chora* becomes neither assigned nor a position, Kristeva comes to the constitution of objectivity and subjectivity from the semiotic *chora*. I suggest that Kristeva's unique relationship with her father and her desire for languages is about authoring the mother, where the young Julia relocates her, only to displace her primary relations into exile and strangeness.

The first part of this chapter explores Kristeva's construction and idealization of her father through language and religiosity. Through Jardine's intellectual biography, I explore how Kristeva learned early on to please her father even when it was challenging for her because of his priest-like behaviour. My examination of Kristeva's special relationship with her father as a golden child relates to Kristeva's idealization of linguistics and religion because of her father's early insights into languages, where letters of the Bulgarian alphabet get attached to the father. First, I assess how as a child Kristeva separated from the mother and immersed herself into letters and language to continue loving her in sublimation. Then, I look at Kristeva's father's passion for religion and Jardine's understanding of Kristeva's complex relationship to Orthodox Christianity, precisely the Kristevian fascination with the preverbal. I emphasize how Kristeva's course of study and desire for language mark a psychical space between mother and father to celebrate their primal difference and define the complexity between these relations through the love of letters.

The second part of this chapter develops a connection between Kristeva's memory traces and the reconstruction of her early relationships in France. I look at "My Alphabet, or, How I am a Letter" from *Passions of Our Time* (2018) to explore the symbolic recognition of letters that Kristeva attaches to the importance of *Azbouka* (letter in Bulgarian) to her childhood relationship with her father. Then I read Kristeva's *The Sense and Non-Sense of Revolt: The Powers and Limits of Psychoanalysis* to explore the strangeness of what it means to be an "I" in relation to another through a primary identification of the father of individual prehistory in language and religion that creates a narcissistic ego. While Kristeva as a child unconsciously projects herself as the third entity in the triangular relations and identifies with the loving father, as an adult she turns to Freud to understand the language of the 'I' as oscillating between the life and death

drives. Connecting religion to revolution, I will discuss Kristeva's understanding of the Freudian revolt of the father in analytic space and compare it to the *jouissance* of the 'religious man' and to Kristeva's own father.

The silent and symbolic death of our mother tongue is part of the Freudian death drive, which accounts for later relations with foreign languages as a transitional semiotic link to the mother herself. Thus, the second part of the chapter turns to Kristeva's *Strangers to Ourselves* (1991) to consider how Kristeva localizes foreignness within the Freudian unconscious in relation to uncanny strangeness. The repressed that ought to have remained a secret, the split drive that divides the love/hate, fascination and repulsion of the foreign and the foreigner are all a part of the discovery of otherness at the heart of the self that, in Kristeva's thinking, begins with a possibility of psychic re-birth through the symbolic death of the maternal source of words. While the mother's body, rhythms, and articulations are critical in preventing rigid codes, Kristeva's move to displace the maternal as a foreign fetish object brings about the jouissance of revolution as she disrupts the theoretical subject in language. My goal is to draw on Kristeva's complexity of staying with the maternal by showing how she mourns her mother through linguistic representation. Kristeva reminds us that separation and sublimation are significant psychical processes; the maternal object brings the child to the father, an action that holds the key to culture. While Kristeva's father was the one who constructed French as a language of freedom for Kristeva and is associated with religiosity and musicality, it was her mother that Kristeva essentially mourns.

Part I: Fatherhood

Stoyan Kristev and Religiosity

Kristeva's father, Stoyan Kristev (Kristev means "of the cross" and originated during the Crusades), was born an orphan and was adopted (though not legally) and raised in the countryside by his adopted mother, Yordana. Stoyan's father, who was an officer in the Bulgarian army, died during the Balkan wars, which took place in 1912 and 1913. His biological mother, named Mithra, died in childbirth (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 28). Stoyan was interested in foreign languages and literatures, particularly Russian. He introduced his daughters to poetry, literature, and foreign tongues, and wanted them to learn languages and be financially independent (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 30). Kristeva's father also loved music and passed those talents on to Kristeva's younger sister, Ivanka. Kristeva describes memories of Ivanka, a talented musician, giving concerts to families and friends. She talks about the sibling rivalry with her sister and how Ivanka's musical abilities taught her to appreciate another woman's talents (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 31).

As an orphan, Kristeva's father was left with two options: to join the military or to enter the priesthood. A practicing Orthodox Christian, Stoyan decided to study theology. When World War Two ended, he left the seminary and originally decided to study medicine since Bulgaria's communist regime was cracking down on religion but changed his mind since he would have to be stationed in the countryside to practice medicine:

> It is more likely that he thought that his future in communist Bulgaria was going to be more viable as a doctor. However, this changed when he found out that – as was the law after September 9, 1944, the official date of the liberation of Bulgaria from fascism… he was going to have to go to the countryside as a 'barefoot doctor' to treat the poor with no help or supplies (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 32).

Stoyan decided not to pursue medicine so his daughters could obtain a quality education in Sofia. Jardine describes Stoyan writing to maintain his mental stability in these new circumstances:

> Kristeva's father, though not a communist, joined such functionaries at the Holy Synod, which in the Orthodox Church is a permanent council at the top of the religious hierarchy. At what was, in the end, a Soviet-style Ministry of Religion, he patiently administered and interpreted *while keeping himself sane by writing fascinating stories and essays*, *both under his own name and as a ghostwriter*, on Christian Orthodoxy for Christians trying to carry on with their lives in the young communist state – for example, essays on the place of the Virgin in Orthodox Christianity or on such and such a Bulgarian saint who had struggled against the Turkish occupation (Jardine 33, italics mine).

What is noteworthy is that Stoyan had a sharp and critical mind, and Kristeva seems to have idealized and internalized his idea of changing the world through literature and imagination, but she was also aware that her father's passion for religion required concealing, as when attending communion with his daughters:

> the spiritual climate had something of the forbidden about it: the importance of the story about how, when they were very young, Stoyan Kristev took Kristeva and her sister to communion only in the earliest and darkest morning hours *so as to avoid being seen* cannot be overestimated when thinking about the overall shape of Kristeva's work and *about the centrality of religion to this work* (Jardine 35, italics mine)

Jardine points out that Kristeva's production of ideas in her writing and the centrality of religion in her work were inspired by her father's relationship with Orthodox Christianity (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 36).

In 2014, Jardine travelled with Kristeva to Sofia to assist her in locating the childhood memories and intimacies of Bulgaria that Kristeva experienced with her family. What stood out for Jardine was her visit to Kristeva's family apartment and its institutional surroundings, which get associated with Stoyan in Jardine's biography. As Jardine writes, Kristeva's world as a child "was closely bordered by the family apartment, the Saint Nedelya Church, and her school"

(Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 41). In particular, Jardine notices how the church was close to where Kristeva's family lived:

> During a trip to Sofia in 2014 when I accompanied Kristeva to her *childhood haunts*, I was struck by how central her family's apartments were, *how close they were to the church where her father sang in his free time*. I was also struck by how well Kristeva remembered her way around the streets, as if she had been walking in these neighborhoods her entire life (Jardine 23, italics mine).

Jardine shows that as Kristeva's intellectual biographer, she has entered the unconscious means of the Kristevian story. In articulating the screen memories, she surveys her childhood history related to the father and his singing in church.

As discussed in chapter one, the young Julia was not afraid to challenge her father. She resisted his ideas about religion while advocating for the Darwinism that her mother strongly favoured. In this way, Kristeva could come to identify with the intellectualization of both parents even though they held opposing beliefs: a Darwinian biologist mother focused on rationality and her Orthodox father's devotion to religion, which she nostalgically remembers through the "flowers on the altar" discussed in chapter two. However, in Jardine's biography, Kristeva's father also becomes a powerful protective figure, an object of desire whose idealization of his daughter has the potential to repair destructive impulses in her body. Rather than her mother, Kristeva's father is associated with providing her with the Kleinian feeling of security:

> Kristeva describes herself as having been a true *fille à papa* (daddy's girl): she looked like her father; her father adored her; he was a father in love. The feeling was mutual, for Kristeva adored him as well. She has often spoken of how being held by such a loving father psychically imprinted her. In fact, to this day she attributes her inability to be jealous of anyone to the intensity of her father's love, noting that she 'can never seem to envy anyone.' She explains that even when there has been conflict in her life, the legacy of having been certain of her father's love as a child is that she has never wavered in her sense that she is right and that the other person is wrong (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 29).

Kristev's idealization of his daughter and Kristeva's experience of being a "daddy's girl" can be explained by drawing on Klein's splitting of the paranoid-schizoid position. As a child, Kristeva retreated into the safety of her father's love at the age when children are consumed with excessive anxiety, destruction, and the fear of being disintegrated (for Freud, this is part of the death drive). For Klein, the baby desires to consume the mother at the breast and to control her through the oral drives while moving into the paranoid-schizoid position. An infant identifies with the mother's breast as the primary love object, s/he psychically splits her into the good/bad object of separation. Klein's baby recognizes the breast as external (although still a primary object of love) that the baby has constructed from within and turns itself into an internal object through the phantasy of omnipotence. As a child, Kristeva seems to have pushed away aggressive phantasies through projection: the certainty of her father's love gave her the sense "that she is right and that the other person is wrong." Kristeva's early identification with the father became an essential part of her emotional development since it was supported by the restorative nature of her father's intense love for her.

Stoyan Kristev's Influence on his Daughter

Kristeva believes that one cannot change the world without shifting the way it is imagined and spoken, both of which take place in language. Stoyan introduced his eldest daughter to the desire for language in her early years. Aside from piquing his children's interest in foreign languages, Kristev took his daughters to the theatre and the opera. He also encouraged the young Julia and her sister to stay physically active by enrolling them in sports. In an interview with Martin Legros from 2020, Kristeva claims that:

> My father did not want to stand up against the regime, he nevertheless marked his inner dissent by his readings (Dostoyevsky) and by his songs in church.

> The purpose of his life, he said, was to get his daughters out of these 'hell bowels' – a phrase borrowed from Dante's *The Divine Comedy*. There was only 'one way to save yourself,' he said, and that was to learn foreign languages (Legros).

Jardine writes about Stoyan's use of digestive language:

> There was a widely accepted saying in communist Bulgaria at the time, namely that the Bulgarian people were caught 'in the intestines of hell.' Kristeva's father felt that the only way out – the only ticket out of hell – was through gaining cultural capital: music for Ivanka and foreign languages and literatures for Julia (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 41).

The metaphor of intestines and bowels to describe life under the Bulgarian communist regime provided digestive juices to process the realities of communist everyday life. The concept of "the intestines of hell" is intriguing since Kristeva's father had ulcers and was often in severe pain at night. He eventually died in September 1989 because of an operation related to his ulcers. According to Kristeva, her father was murdered in a socialist hospital because of medical experiments performed on the elderly by the Communist Party. Kristeva's family was not allowed to see him in his last moments; they were ostensibly kept away because of the fear of spreading germs, and his body was cremated without the family's consent.

As a young journalist in Sofia, Kristeva continued her passion for writing, like her father. She wrote for a newspaper and continued her love affair with French literature: "She had always read and written about literature, especially French literature, with great pleasure from her six year old self at the Alliance Française to her twenty-two-year-old self writing newspaper literary reviews" (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 55). Jardine writes about how, as a 13-year-old, Kristeva first wrote stories for her high school and later did paid work as a journalist for the newspaper *Popular Youth* (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 49–50). When Kristeva became a

journalist, she became financially independent, getting paid more than her father. Until she left for France, Kristeva remained active in Bulgarian intellectual circles.

Kristeva's multilayered writing journey began when she published a short review of Albert Koen's work entitled "Western Europe Through the Eyes of a Journalist." In writing about the Bulgarian communist dissident journalist Albert Koen and his book *Roads and Stops* (1962), Kristeva demonstrates her resistance as a journalist. This can be seen in an example provided by Jardine that focuses on the notion of "doublespeak":

> she carefully utilized codes of 'openness' to praise Koen's ways of observing Western cities while simultaneously adding a heavy vocabulary of communist cliché to judge what he saw there. Her review is an accomplished exercise in 'doublespeak,' in the kind of palimpsestic (multilayered, often purposefully opaque) prose used by dissident intellectuals on the communist side of the Iron Curtain… in her review of Koen's collection of essays, Kristeva walked a fine line between adhering to the communist party line and pushing the boundaries of that line, writing, 'Koen's articles are marked by well-grounded analysis, broad perspective, communist passion, and a vivid journalistic style' (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 51–52).

Kristeva's review of Koen's work caused alarm for her own safety, and there were articles published in the newspaper where she was labeled as "a cosmopolitan agent of the capitalist hyena," "a spy," and "a Zionist" (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 53). It seems from Jardine's biography that Kristeva's father (rather than Kristeva) feared that the government would come and take them away. He took her to a monastery to figure out their plans of escape:

> Her father was deeply worried, hiding newspaper headlines so as not to alarm Kristeva's mother and sister. He took Kristeva out of the city to a café near a monastery in the mountains where he asked repeatedly, clearly distraught, what they were going to do. He feared that they would be thrown into one of the labor camps that were said to exist on the banks of the Danube (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 53).

But no one came to her home because "she was not a known activist" (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 53). Moreover, Kristeva was serving as a translator in both French and Russian for influential politicians that were coming to visit Bulgaria.

Kristeva received a degree from the University of Sofia in 1963 in Romance Philology. Her doctoral thesis was on the French New Novel, which she wrote while completing her doctorate in Comparative Literature at the Academy of Sciences in 1964 (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 54) and continuously impressing her professors: "Kristeva's professor of Comparative Literature, Emil Georgiev, liked her even though he did not know much about French literature. What he did know was that it was important to get this brilliant young woman out of Cold-War Bulgaria" (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 54). Kristeva published her first book in Bulgarian in 1964: *Characteristics Trends in Twentieth-Century Western Literature.* Nikolchina provides a precise summary of it:

> In this book the twenty-three-year-old author discusses the 'character trends' in a manner characteristic of the time and place: On the surface, this is a critique of decadent Western literature and philosophy; in effect, this is a smart and seductive presentation of authors and books otherwise unavailable because of censorship (Nikolchina, *Lost Unicorns of the Velvet Revolutions: Heterotopias of the Seminar* 114).

Kristeva had learned earlier that one linguistic "mishap" could, in the communist regime, lead to the literal death of the author. Kristeva's own theoretical project is part of the multilayered writing she learned to write in the context of communist repression in Bulgaria, which she seems to have learned as a child from her father.

It is precisely Kristeva's father's desire for letters that activates Kristeva's love for language, which Jardine recognizes has to do with the mystery in letters. Jardine identifies Kristeva's celebration of language as a child and her relations to foreign language:

> Kristeva's belief in the power of letters, of syllables, of words, of the sonorities of language to creatively shape all invention, to evoke mystery uncoverable by logic or syntax, to profoundly change any status quo, runs deep – I would argue, *all the way back to her childhood*. There was the celebration of the Slavic alphabet, *and her parents gave her access to a foreign tongue* (Jardine 136, italics mine).

The celebration of the alphabet influenced the young intellectual through a specific childhood temporality as Kristeva plays with the significant memory of letters and language as an adult. Kristeva later recounted finding her early experience with language as one of longing, one of the most critical elements of her childhood:

> Like most excellent students, Kristeva longed for symbolic recognition. In relation to this longing, there are two stories that she wants everyone to know about her Bulgarian childhood…. First, Bulgaria holds a festival of the alphabet every spring, and from the age of seven she was an avid participant in the festival, often receiving a Prix d'Excellence (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 43).

What is particularly compelling about the celebration of the alphabet and her identification with the letter is that it had an award with a French title, and the young Kristeva received symbolic recognition. As I will show in part II, Kristeva defines her relationship to writing through her father's early teaching of the significance of letters. Kristev's passion for letters is projected onto Kristeva, which she overcompensates for by becoming his golden child.

Part II: Bulgaria: Alphabet Day

Kristeva's ability to read and write began at a young age and is recounted in "My Alphabet: Or, How I am a Letter" from *Passions of Our Time* (2018), which is about her father and his

religiosity. This text is critical since it explores the festival of the alphabet's intellectual and cultural significance as a crucial childhood instance for Kristeva, coupled with its symbolic recognition of the Bulgarian language. Kristeva begins the text with the recollection of a cherished childhood memory: "Today, May 24, is Writing Day in Sofia. It is my first Alphabet Day. I am six maybe seven years old. At any rate, I already know how to read and write, I like that, and I am making fast progress" (Kristeva, "My Alphabet, or How I Am a Letter." 3).

Kristeva demonstrates pleasure through language instead of desire in language. At six or maybe seven years old, the young Julia is in the Freudian latent stage where powerful id energies are repressed, and children tend to sublimate into other areas of intellectual pursuits and growth. She is also at the age often associated with reason, an early developmental stage when the control of cognitive functioning is growing rapidly. The festival of the alphabet holds symbolic importance for the capital; the Bulgarian festival celebrates belonging to the Slavic family of cultures that write in the Cyrillic script. Alphabet Day has been celebrated in Bulgaria every year since 1851 to honour the two brothers, monks Cyril and Methodius (venerated in the Eastern Orthodox Church as saints), who defended the right to write even at the cost of suffering:

> So in 863 Cyril and Methodius departed for Moravia, and there they created the *Azbouka*. Strictly speaking, Cyril was the inventor, the scholar, and the visionary. The role of political promoter and educator fell to Methodius, especially after the death of his younger brother. But their life in Moravia, under a hostile Latin clergy, was nothing but one of privation and suffering. Methodius was even thrown into jail. In the end, the two missionaries finally reached Venice, where they defended the right to write and speak about God outside of the three sacred languages, Hebrew, Latin and Greek (Kristeva, "My Alphabet, or How I Am a Letter." 6).

Kristeva provides an important history lesson about the creation of the Slavic alphabet and its relationship to religion, which she connects to her father's intense desire for letters, recalling her father's religious devotion to the alphabet, where Bulgarian is constructed as a sacred language:

> For me, this long story culminated in the *Prayer for the Alphabet, Azboutchna Molitva*, by Constantine de Preslav, another of the two brothers' disciples, whom my father adored. I had a father who prayed for the Alphabet. He asked God to breathe the Word into his heart… 'speech and writing united' (Kristeva, "My Alphabet, or How I Am a Letter." 7)

Stoyan's worshipping of language was part of the joy of words, of the idea of speech and writing united. He took the young Julia to a school parade as a child to celebrate the festival. Kristeva's account of it begins with her father's explanation:

> A practicing Orthodox, and passionate about letters, my father accompanies me up to my school parade while explaining the etymology of the Bulgarian word for "alphabet": *Azbouka*…. 'But a life lesson,' predicts Papa. 'A faith, if you'd rather.' Of course I wouldn't rather. My father knows it, and already suffers from my tomboy and rebellious behaviour, where I never miss the chance to mock his teachings and religious beliefs. But today, it is a celebration: *I hold my tongue*, I listen. Attentively. Because it is my curiosity that feeds my revolt. Az, A in *azbouka*, designates the first letter, the A, and as you said, it is clearly 'I' here meaning 'you' (Kristeva, "'My Alphabet, or How I Am a Letter.'" 4, italics mine).

In celebrating her mother tongue, Kristeva decides to hold her own tongue and listen attentively, similar to an analyst, since she is eager to learn the religious lesson of her father. As Kristeva chooses the memory of her native Bulgaria and its celebration of language and culture as the topic of an essay she writes later in life about her father, she defines the celebration of letters as one of the first moments that she develops her intense idealization of language, a love affair she continues in France.

Even when Kristev visited his daughter in France, he prayed for the alphabet: "Later on when he visited me in Paris, Papa went to Notre Dame to recite his *Prayer for the Alphabet*. It was composed of thirty-nine verses, each beginning with a letter of the alphabet, in the same order as they appeared in our *Azbouka*" (Kristeva, "My Alphabet, or How I Am a Letter." 9). Idealizing her father gave the young Julia a desire for ambition and a goal-oriented mindset with compulsive efficiency. As she negotiated the strangeness of language and subjectivity-in-

process, she became a young thinking intellectual from an early age. As passionate as Kristev was about letters, Kristeva remembers him for providing her with a life lesson of the strangeness of an "I" in a language in relation to an-other:

> 'Alphabet' is *Azbouka* in Bulgarian. 'Why *Azbouka*, Papa? Strange… *Az* (meaning "I" in Bulgarian), I get it: it's me. But *bouk*, would it be the book? *Le livre*?' After finishing French kindergarten with Dominicans, and while continuing French at the Alliance Française, I was just beginning English (Kristeva, "My Alphabet, or How I Am a Letter." 4)

When Kristeva recalls this childhood encounter with language, she focuses on how she was given access to foreign languages. The young Kristeva negotiates the problems of subjectivity through multilingualism as she constructs an identity between herself and the book. Kristeva comes out of childhood helplessness by recognizing the strangeness of the *Az* ("I" in Bulgarian), from which she was able to obtain imaginary satisfaction; this phantasm of letters and languages develops into the workings of imagination through the *bouk*.

Wearing a letter to personify the alphabet is the young Kristevian embodiment of language and initiates entry to the symbolic while formulating the subjectivity of the body that writes itself. Kristeva explores her own interpretation of the Alphabet Day chant:

> *Az bouki vedi glagoli dobro est*…: 'I/letters/understand/the word/the good/is';… Meaning: 'I am the letters, I understand the word, so the good exists.' Or else: 'Being the letter, I understand the word that is the good.' But also, 'I am the letter, the word, the good.' Or even: 'I am writing.' Better still: 'I *is* a Writing,' because 'To write the good is to be,' in other words: 'The Word writes itself in me only so the good exists.' Et cetera. (Kristeva, "My Alphabet, or How I Am a Letter." 5)

While appearing towards a unity of the 'I,' postponed indefinitely, the young Kristeva negotiates a pre-symbolic reality to gain access to alternative languages. Before the mirror phase, semiotic energies begin to prepare the child for speech, the repression of the mother, and instinctual drive energies that are suppressed if one is to become a subject. The Word that writes itself in the

subject is part of the repressed memory of "the good." In speaking about her memories of Sofia at a tender age, Kristeva cultivates "her alphabet in the flesh of the world" (Kristeva, "My Alphabet, or How I Am a Letter." 3).

Kristeva follows Lacan and Freud, who show that the repressed bodily drives exert immense pressure throughout one's later life, opening the possibility for change through the signifying process of the subject-in-trial, but her writings on the semiotic highlights the role of the mother in bringing the infant from dependency to the speaking subject of the "I" in safety and security. The triangular relationship between the mother/father/child is critical for creating boundaries between love objects. Kristeva explores the process of writing and joys from mouth to tongue, breast, and fingers through the memory of the Alphabet Day:

> I turned the curves and the down strokes every which way, the sounds and the lessons of lost Slav reborn in my mouth, under my tongue, in my breast, in my fingers. And out of them, I extracted the ancient melody via present-day Bulgarian, I drew the graphic and wrested meaning from it, I *incorporated* it, I *recreated* it. The alphabet came to life in me, for me, I could be all the letters… the alphabet has become my organ to take pleasure (*jouir*) from time out of time (Kristeva, "My Alphabet, or How I Am a Letter." 5)

Kristeva associates the pleasure of letters with their incorporation, removing oneself from everyday life and becoming part of time out of time. This is precisely where the semiotic emerges from her mother tongue and specifically the Cyrillic letters (coming through the law of the father). As Kristeva incorporates the ancient melody, she becomes the letter, where the "organ to take pleasure" reveals the musicality of the semiotic. As such, Kristeva's relationship with her father's literary imagination gave her a space to re-access the mother: I suggest that having an idealized relationship with her father allows Kristeva to understand her mother. Kristeva's father's relations with Bulgaria and Bulgarian are used as displacement to give

meaning to the mother, to get to know her once again as Kristeva doesn't just recreate the letters but incorporates them in the pleasure of the alphabet.

Kristeva's memorializing of the Alphabet Day explicitly recalls her relationship to the father in her native Bulgaria. What is important here is that when she writes about it in French many decades later, she connects it to the euphoric memory of a flower:

> imprinted in me, the alphabet overtakes me; alphabet is all around me, yet there is neither all nor alphabet: only *a euphoric memory*, a call to write, unrelated to any literature. Another kind of life, **'**cooling and *rose*,' as Marcel Proust would say. I will never forget this first May 24 when I became a letter (Kristeva, "My Alphabet, or How I Am a Letter." 3–4, italics mine).

Even though the elated screen memory is presented as "unrelated to any literature," Kristeva goes on to quote Proust, and not just any quote but one that evokes flowers. The desire to write is the repression of her own mother based on "another kind of life, cooling and rose," precisely the connection to French literature and flowers that I made in the previous chapter. Becoming one with the letter is the starting point for the language theory that Kristeva develops out of this early experience, which she represents through a critical childhood instance of symbolic recognition and the rituals of cultural and intellectual significance as a celebration of the letters.

There is another text in which Kristeva connects the Cyrillic alphabet with the memory of Byzantium and the fragrance of flowers. About fourteen years before writing "My Alphabet, or How I Am a Letter," Kristeva wrote in *Colette* (2004) about her memory of Alphabet Day:

> as for the alphabets I remember that twenty-fourths of May of my childhood, the holiday celebrating the Cyrillic alphabet. Each parade, loaded down with roses and peonies, drunk on their beauty in full bloom and on their fragrance, which blurred my vision until I no longer knew where I began and where I ended, I held up a different letter of the Slavic alphabet. I was one mark among others, … the silkiness of shirts and of hair, in the ocher wind that, in Byzantium or what remains of it, goes heavy with the stubborn *fragrance of flowers*. The alphabet, engraved within me, got the better of me; all around me was the alphabet, yet there was neither all nor alphabet - nothing but a jubilant memory, a call to writing specific to no literature, a sort of surplus life,

> "refreshing and pink" as Marcel Proust would've said (Kristeva, *Colette* 4-5 italics mine).

Kristeva's recollection of the childhood memory of *Azbouka* shows the repressed desire for the mother as re-located in flowers and French, as the previous chapter demonstrated. We do not know where Kristeva's mother was when Kristeva was celebrating this event of symbolic importance for her motherland and mother tongue. What is left in the adult Kristeva's memory of the childhood scene from the celebration of Alphabet Day are the images, objects, and their associations of displacement related to her father. The symbolic recognition but also abandonment of her native language allows for a distancing from the primary origin, a way to heal from maternal separation. Kristeva's approach to language allows for this understanding, specifically where the maternal narratives of flowers themselves flow and blossom.

Kristeva's mother is represented through the hidden shadows of the white space, the normative expectation of maternity. It is no coincidence that Kristeva attached the alphabet letters onto her white silk blouse: "I would pin the big letter on my *white silk blouse* and join the parade, repeating this magic formula" (Kristeva, "'My Alphabet, or How I Am a Letter.'" 4, italics mine). The whiteness of the blouse signifies longing for the maternal body and her emptiness that embodies through the figure of the lack of the mother, the Thing. The presence and absence of the white silk blouse is continuous and interruptive, like the black hole, the unnamed mother who has fallen into psychic silence as a blank page. I suggest that in "My Alphabet: Or, How I am a Letter," Kristeva has taken the mother and rebuilt her in the shape of the father. In her celebration of Papa's letters and language, Kristeva returns to the primary scene of separation, a return to rejection, between drive and language, that constitutes the maternal object as a negation. The silences of the maternal body and the complexity of its reunion, the disavowal of oralization in sublimation are paradoxically part of the attempt and difficulty of a

Kristevian notion of a subject-in- process. The white blouse stands for feminized maternal depression. The absence/silence is part of the inability to speak the maternal object, framing the gendered dynamics of her mute speech, annihilating her body into the spaces of blankness and silence. The maternal story of pain, grief, loss, and silence is withdrawn into a white space that becomes a space for mourning.

As the celebration proceeded every year, the young Julia was caught in a primary narcissism of letters and language while actively participating in a masculine appropriation of the maternal – a Kleinian phantasy. The repression of motherhood and the mourning through language come to function as the displacement of the maternal origin. Resisting linear modes of reasoning by challenging Freud, Klein formulates matricide as the essential step for psychic development; that is, matricide produces our capacity to think, the need to believe, and the desire to know. It is a critical period of Kristeva's life as a child when she initiates the Kleinian splitting by embodying letters. Specifically, Kristeva constructs an internal maternal object through the phantasy of language to signify her omnipotence. As the event marks the matricide, her desire for letters and language splits the maternal Thing from symbolic recognition to locate her inner strangeness in France. Evoking revolution through poetics, Kristeva's subject-in-process constantly negotiates the splitting from the demands of having to separate from the maternal object.

Kristeva's memory-traces and reconstruction of her early relationship with her own mother tongue are part of taking distance from the maternal origin and living in exile in France as a stranger, translating this separation into a theory of thetic abjection. Understanding trauma as hidden in the mother tongue, Kristeva abandoned Bulgarian and yet still remains tied to it as she clings to French:

> In the end, and in spite of everything, I cling to French 'the other language' for me – because one of the greatest French writers, perhaps the greatest in the twentieth century, was a translator. I am thinking of Proust, of course: 'Great books are written in a kind of foreign language' (Kristeva, "My Alphabet, or How I Am a Letter." 10).

As Kristeva makes meaning exist for herself in French, she does so by translating the trauma of the mother tongue and reclaiming the letter of the Bulgarian alphabet. And yet, she loosely removes the umbilical cord of her mother's tongue by making herself into a foreigner: "Alchemy of naming where I am alone with the French language. And there, in that exile that my imagination attempts to live in French, my suffering comes back. Bulgaria, my suffering" (Kristeva, "My Alphabet, or How I Am a Letter." 9). Kristeva explores the problem of matricide but also one that is a necessary condition for individuation and entry into the subject's symbolic capacity. The process of matricide can include negotiation with languages to rebuild subjectivity in a way that sublimates the relationship to one's mother tongue.

Kristeva's desire to live in exile as a permanent condition reflects the necessity to distance oneself from the origin – it is to take distance from the maternal. Even in her young years, Kristeva understood that physical and psychical separation from the mother's body is necessary for autonomy and independence as one transitions in and out of maternal phantasy, towards a new love-object to create, detach, and re-create new links without a paternal desire to master its object. This process is initiated through the mother's body, voice, rhythms, and articulations. The societal roles and language are submitted to the infant and transmitted to the unconscious for an aggressive move towards paternal structures. Kristeva's own negation of the maternal origin and rebuilding through the euphoric memory of letters and language is not always already engraved and tied to the maternal body as part of the delightful memory of May 24 when she becomes a letter of the alphabet. The maternal aptitude for abjection is an election

of paternity, the Third for the child in the triangular relationship of love. Repressing her mother, Kristeva moved to identify with the paternal position of difference in distance, unity and autonomy, detachment and independence that forms the idealized ego of the 'I.'

Father, Revolt and the Language of the "I"

In this section, I turn to Kristeva's theoretical work *The Sense and Nonsense of Revolt* (2001) to locate the Freudian revolt of the father in the analytic space – the analytical adventure of free associations, working through transference, displacements of prohibition open possibilities for rebirth and renewal of the psychical space. Reading Kristeva's text, I expand on the centrality of religion to discuss the importance of Kristeva's father's passion for faith, possibly rooted in the religious tradition that satisfied Kristeva's father's desire for transgression, for the sacred and secrets. I am interested in understanding the religious link, the purity of the spiritual man, and the formation of identity by looking at the concept of the father's place, his idealization, and revolt in Kristeva's understanding of the father in the Freudian analytical space.

Kristeva is interested in the revolutionary nature of language, constituted through relations with others through the internal drives and sacrifice. Kristeva writes about the taboos organized in the psyche, particularly in the origin of the murder of the father:

> one day the sons plotted conspiracy and revolted (there we are!) against the father: they killed him and ate him. After this totemic meal, they identified with him, and after this primary ceremony of humanity, which saw the concomitance of revolt and feast (remember this concomitance!), they replaced the dead father with the image of the father, with the totem symbol of power, the figure of the ancestor. From then on, guilt and repentance cemented the bond, the social pact, among the sons, among the brothers; they felt guilty and banded together as a result of this guilt, and 'the dead father becomes stronger than the living one had been' (Kristeva, *The Sense and Non-Sense of Revolt: The Powers and Limits of Psychoanalysis* 143).

For Kristeva, the Freudian father embodies both authority and law; the dead father becomes the idealized one. The revolt against the father is at the same time an identification with him that forges a link with his rule, power, and authority by taking over his place. The collective pact of the brothers creates a space to have an identification with power and a collaborative link of the brothers: “Thanks to this, the brothers no longer feel excluded but rather have the imaginary certainty of being identified with the power that, prior to the revolt, oppressed them” (Kristeva, *The Sense and Non-Sense of Revolt: The Powers and Limits of Psychoanalysis* 23). A crucial aspect of the brothers’ rebelling against the father’s symbolic power is the abandoning of what Kristeva calls the "maternal container": “Brothers rebelling against the father’s authority in order to establish a *socius* – is a transversal link that is constituted by the evacuation of the maternal: in order to establish the symbolic pact, one has to get rid of the domestic, corporal, maternal container” (Kristeva, *The Sense and Non-Sense of Revolt: The Powers and Limits of Psychoanalysis* 21). Psychical life is formed through the guilt generated by the flight from the maternal object – unconscious thoughts are part of the hidden desire to destroy the maternal, and the need for a symbolic pact is based on identification and idealization of the paternal, concealed beneath the urge to revolt. Freud’s positing of an identification with an imaginary father is part of a mythical schema – an archaic experience of paternity, where the father continues the revolt in creative endeavours and religious freedom.

For Kristeva, underneath the purity of the religious man is his revolt in pleasure and repentance, rupture and displacement. Kristeva ties the purity of the spiritual man to the feeling of identity and, specifically, to the ideologies of religion, ceremonies of food, and eating in its strictly ritualized forms. Rituals and rites are symbolically significant to restrict powers to the purified. Part of the primal oneness is that a child desires to break from maternal orality (the pure

subject can defend against the maternal) but longs to return as a form of regression. The child is forced towards rationality and separateness, where the maternal element is embodied in the figure of defilement, as part of aesthetic experience. Kristeva writes about this in the experience of an "I":

> if you are convinced that revolt is revealed beneath purity, if you agree that 'I' can neither include myself nor identify myself without abolishing the authority that oppressed me before and that in this act of abolition-identification lies all the violence of consuming rage and murder, then a crucial question is raised: what modern modes might re-create what was in the not-so-distant past the jouissance of the religious man? Are we capable of this revolt? (Kristeva, *The Sense and Non-Sense of Revolt: The Powers and Limits of Psychoanalysis* 24).

The jouissance of the 'religious man' is to formulate an intimate revolt; religious values permitted him to link towards human dignity to transgress the law, while being integrated in it. Kristeva's understanding of revolt is that it is not only about transgression but a displacement of authority within the psyche of the "I." The repression of the feminine by identifying with the father's power is to differentiate from the primary experience of nurturance and negates dependency and mutual recognition.

The role of a father as a primary figure in the mother-child dyad is vital in the early stages of development. The necessary precondition for thinking an "I" is losing the mother and then locating her body through objects: that is, to create the ability to think through language, separation, and independence, we must first abject the mother. Translating this separation as Kristeva's theory of thetic abjection, both parts of the mother and child dyad experience co-excitation since they are involved with repressing the semiotic. The intersubjective relationships of recognition, nurturance, and attunement are an essential part of relationships with the maternal but one that can be considered a loss of the subject's freedom. Thus, the denial of dependency is caught in the masculinist ideals of paternity and separation.

Language becomes critical as the child transitions into the symbolic, becoming an "I" capable of referring to a predetermined space. This very "I" of the ego seeks an object to displace the mother's loss. Since entry into the symbolic is what creates the loss, it is also language that can substitute and sublimate the mother's loss for the Kristevian baby. At six months, the child is fascinated by the image in the mirror that Lacan refers to as primary identification, the only true "I" (the ideal/specular I) before language takes over. The Lacanian baby looks into the mirror and (mis)recognizes that s/he is a whole object through the reflections in the mirror, aesthetically identifies itself – the identification/recognition of the "I" in the mirror, the image of wholeness s/he can never attain. Moreover, the child in the mirror recognizes that s/he is separate from the mother object. This is important for Kristeva's semiotic because it is precisely this image of identification with the mother that the speaking subject will spend their life endeavouring to identify and to appropriate, a refusal of an internal loss. Unlike Lacan, who sees the prelinguistic force emerging from the symbolic, Kristeva locates the energy of the semiotic in the signifying order, such as the poetic force, reactivating our link to the maternal.

Kristeva links revolt to language, power, and prohibitions of the paternal figures. Turning towards Freudian and Lacanian theory, she creates a model of language to understand the process of the psychoanalytic experience. Kristeva understands revolt as a return and a displacement. As such, revolt is both a "place of prohibition and jouissance" (Kristeva, *The Sense and Non-Sense of Revolt: The Powers and Limits of Psychoanalysis* 30). The prohibition of the purifier is constituted as the one who is capable of symbolism. And yet, it is necessary to examine the unconscious desires in the constitution of the symbolic pact through exclusion and inclusion in revolt: "for this, the purifier wants to confront authority (value or law), to revolt against it while also being included in it" (Kristeva, *The Sense and Non-Sense of Revolt: The*

Powers and Limits of Psychoanalysis 23). The "impure" one fails to respect boundaries, whereas the purifier is keen on defending against the maternal, through which separation exists through rituals of the obsessive compulsive.

Moving away from perversion and taboos, the Kristevian subject finds agency in creative activities or in the religious figure of the loving and idealized father, which is an essential phase of subjectification. After the period of subjectification, the subject moves towards the love investment with the father of prehistory, a kind of sublimation and identification that consolidates the narcissistic ego: "the ego invents itself; that is, it loves itself in so far as it is identified with the imaginary loving father, and this is not a sexual libido but a narcissistic one" (Kristeva, *The Sense and Non-Sense of Revolt: The Powers and Limits of Psychoanalysis* 54). While Kristeva's father chose religion as a form of revolt, Kristeva chose analysis – her personal structures of revolt can be found in psychoanalysis and the narrative enunciation embedded in the poetic revolution of literature and culture. In other words, rather than choosing the religious pact, she looked to psychoanalytic transference to search for lost time.

Kristeva's understanding of her father's religiosity is a form of revolt. She recognizes the need for jouissance and violence in an intimate revolution that satisfied his desire for transgression, an important personal insight that made for the uniqueness of her theoretical approach to psychoanalysis. For Kristeva, her father established a symbolic pact that provided him a form of stability by turning to the sacred; his daughter understood that the idealization of religion in its purity is related to the violence of revolt:

> the dialectic inherent in the process of revolt, inherent in the constitution of all sacred or social space, was distributed as if the function of purity had been delegated to certain individuals and the function of revolt to others, although one must keep in mind that these two categories converge and one is never possible without the other (Kristeva, *The Sense and Non-Sense of Revolt: The Powers and Limits of Psychoanalysis* 26).

Transgression is softened and obscured by the pleasurable revolt itself. Purity and values, aggression and perversion are the conditions where the subject comes to revolt against structures of power. The primary identification with the father of individual prehistory creates a narcissistic ego of the 'I'; when the subject desires, the self can be loved (even towards death) as long as it is identified with the imaginary loving and idealized father. Kristeva writes about the relation between the self and inherited ideas:

> It is a matter of pushing the need for the universal *and* the need for singularity to the limit in each individual, making this simultaneous movement the source of both thought and language. 'There is meaning': this will be my universal. And 'I' use the words of the tribe to inscribe my singularity. *Je est un autre* ('I is another'): this will be my difference, and 'I' will express my specificity by distorting the nevertheless necessary clichés of the codes of communication and by constantly deconstructing ideas/concepts/ideologies/philosophies that 'I' have inherited. (Kristeva, *The Sense and Non-Sense of Revolt: The Powers and Limits of Psychoanalysis* 19)

This is precisely the place where the speaking subject enters language as s/he psychically murders the mother in the presence of a third. Kristeva turns to Freud's "primary" identification in relation to "the father of the individual's own personal prehistory," this archaic father of the individual's prehistory – the child already moves away from the mother-infant dyad into the third space, not towards the symbolic (or the father of the law or the father who forbids) but rather, "the beginning of the third space prefigured by the mother's desire for someone other than the child (her father? the child's father? an extrafamilial or symbolic agency?)" (Kristeva, *The Sense and Non-Sense of Revolt: The Powers and Limits of Psychoanalysis* 53). This imaginary space makes room for the third idealization and the lover's discourse Freud refers to as the "father of the individual's own personal prehistory." The language and drives (of the "I") are acquired to repress and suppress the maternal object, while at the same time, repression and rejection of the maternal object give rise to language; as such, it is language that symbolizes repression.

The Kristevian desire for language is based on the primary identification of the father of individual prehistory and language through repression and disavowal. In writing about rejection in *Revolution in Poetic Language*, Kristeva elaborates that "Rejection rejects origin since it is always already the repetition of an impulse that is itself a rejection. Its law is one of returning, as opposed to one of becoming; it returns only to separate again immediately and thus appear as an impossible forward movement" (Kristeva, "Freud's Notion of Expulsion: Rejection" 147). Repression returns as revolt, which foregrounds the need for identity with another. Kristeva participated in this revolt by seeking "the meaning of language and the architecture of the idea in the human mind" (Kristeva, *The Sense and Non-Sense of Revolt: The Powers and Limits of Psychoanalysis* 19). As the young Kristevian ego identifies with the imaginary father of prehistory (who, I suggest, is thought through with her own), she moves towards the disengagement of the internal Freudian death drives when she holds her tongue to listen attentively to her father: "Because it is my curiosity that *feeds my revolt*" (Kristeva, "'My Alphabet, or How I Am a Letter.'" 4, italics mine). The infant projects herself onto the third in the triangular relations and identifies with the loving father, the "father of individual prehistory." This symbolic third replaces the interdependence of the dual mother-child relations, in the words of Kristeva: "this trusting recognition given to me by the father loving the mother and loved by her and that I, in turn, devote to him changes my stammering into linguistic signs whose value he determines" (Kristeva, "In Jerusalem: Monotheisms and Secularization and the Need to Believe" 245).

Kristeva understands the concept of *significance* as the capacity for representation of the 'I' that oscillates between the life and death drives. The death drive is responsible for

consolidating the narcissistic ego since its love investment is its own self-image. In the words of Kristeva,

> a production of the ego itself, that is quite simply its own aptitude to imagine, to signify, to speak, to think: the ego inverts *significance* when it deeroticizes and utilizes the death drive, internal to its narcissism. You must admit, at the very least, it's dramatic! Language abandons in the favor of a vaster process that I have called *significance* that Freud calls the 'thought process' or 'intellectualization' leads the founder of psychoanalysis to relate the idealization-sublimation-religion-culture series to… the death drive (Kristeva, *The Sense and Non-Sense of Revolt: The Powers and Limits of Psychoanalysis* 55).

Kristeva discusses linguistic abilities and representations that arise from the instinctual impulses of the father of prehistory, which Freud sees as "the thought process or intellectualization." The narcissistic childhood fantasy of defense against solitude and separation is an identification with language and culture as the young Juila holds back her tongue during Alphabet Day to listen to her father's explanation of the letter.

Can sublimation of the mother hold the key to culture? The silent utterance (even that of the depressed) can turn to culture employing sublimation to identify with the originary pleasure, which Kristeva understands through experience of language as displacement:

> This experience of language is not necessarily a regression: while it respects repression, it renders it more subtle and porous, permeable to the pull of drives, which, thus filtered by words, becomes other than desire-pleasure [*plaisir*]. It is rather a displacement of the perversion inherent to the part-object of desire-pleasure into a foreign fetish-object, which is a third and universal medium: *It is language transformed into an object of pleasure* [jouissance]." (Kristeva, "The Impudence of Uttering: Mother Tongue" 686, italics original)

As the experience of language becomes a foreign fetish object of pleasure, the Kristevian child abandons the oral drive for narcissistic ones. And yet, the ego identifies with the archaic father and moves into the object of pleasure to produce a linguistic representation while placing itself in the death drive: "the libido detached from the object turns toward Narcissus and threatens him"

(Kristeva, *The Sense and Non-Sense of Revolt: The Powers and Limits of Psychoanalysis* 56). As the mother brings the child to the father in the triangular relations, Kristeva reminds us that the maternal realm is itself caught in the split of the death drive. Sublimity related to the narcissistic identification of the love object is where the subject becomes an object through idealization and identification with the father: "I am an object like my father."

Linguistic signs rely on the capacity for symbolization, an alchemy of sublimation. To save Narcissus and the destruction that threatens its ego, I turn toward Kristeva's explorations of primary relations in understanding writers:

> a new object, which is not mommy or daddy, the breast or any other external erotic object, or the body itself, but an artificial, internal object that Narcissus is capable of producing: his own representations, speech, sounds, colors, and so forth. This alchemy of sublimation, which Freud placed at the heart of the ability to think, is of the greatest interest to us in understanding the work of writers (Kristeva, *The Sense and Non-Sense of Revolt: The Powers and Limits of Psychoanalysis* 56).

For Kristeva, literature and psychoanalysis then become the domain of poetic revolution, where the sublimation of drives and creative activities are part of the revolutionary displacement of the primary identification.

Revolt can revolve around desire and pleasure, narcissistically obtained in language and textual theory. The evolution of desire opens space for passivity and possibilities, the revolution found through Kristeva's father's cultural memory to resist the political economy of communist Bulgaria. As Kristeva describes sublimation, 'the object a' and language in the work of writers:

> Well, 'the object a' in literature and literary theory is language; not this or that lover, fetish, or social code located on a thematic or psychological level but language. Extreme narcissism? Not solely, because language, and nothing else, leads to exteriority. If the moment of sublimation has failed, however, the signs of language will not be invested in any way, and thought processes will have no interest for the subject. Hallucination, or psychosis, is a result of this failure. And as for writers, they assume this alchemy of sublimation most intensely. I'm not trying to suggest that sublimation is only an aesthetic activity. In

> aesthetic activity, however, this rather dangerous dynamic is hypostatized; its objects – sounds, colours, words, and so on – become a narcissistically invested production as well as a mode of life with others. Yet the mechanism of sublimation is indispensable and subjacent to the thought process in every speaking being (Kristeva, *The Sense and Non-Sense of Revolt: The Powers and Limits of Psychoanalysis* 56–57).

Language is an active part of psychical representation, based on words and objects, and deviation of language related to the primary process is found within the maternal object, the rhythms of her tunes and lullabies that need to be reworked through the conventions of linguistic structures. The work of writers, poets, and artists takes us back to the origin to transmute the violence of drives and energies so that the patterns of the intimate revolution can return us to the moments before the separation between the self and mother, to re-experience the division before entering into the symbolic.

Estrangement and Mother Tongue

In the first part of this chapter, I explored the Bulgarian Alphabet Day, which in Kristeva's narration is attached to the euphoric memory of her father and concludes with the nostalgia of loss as she writes about herself in France. In this part, I am interested in situating her experience of being an outsider within the unique experience of translating the mother tongue. When Kristeva abandons her mother tongue, she negotiates her sense of temporality with symbolic objects – the inner strangeness recovers through the mysterious, translating the loss through the foreign language. Writing about herself in French as emerging out of strangeness, Kristeva describes the process in terms of the dynamic experience of translation:

> I will go even further. If we were not all translators, if we were not constantly exposing the strangeness of our inner life – with its derogations made of their stereotypical codes called national languages – to transpose it into other signs, would we have a psychic life, would we be living beings? 'To estrange' one's self from one's self and to continue to be the messenger of this constantly

> rediscovered strangeness: is this not how we fight our latent psychoses and how we succeed where a psychotic or an autistic fails, that is in naming the sense of time? (Kristeva, "My Alphabet, or How I Am a Letter." 10).

Taking on the risk and task to translate the mother tongue is at the heart of creative activity – a way to unite the experience of strangeness and the foreign, even in the clinical experience. The impossible and frustrating mother and the words which need to be linked to her loss help to rediscover one's strangeness as we search for the maternal garden through translation and retranslation. Kristeva's longing to negotiate and question identity and her need to take distance from her primary origin are part of the repressed wish to remain in a state of exile and strangeness.

What does it mean to translate the mother through foreign languages by embodying the strangeness of our inner life through mysterious holes? *Strangers to Ourselves*, one of Kristeva's central texts, plays with the condition of foreignness, nationalism and xenophobia that is imbued with her experiences of estrangement and mother tongue. In this vital text, Kristeva comes to evaluate her own foreignness and opens the possibility for psychic re-birth.

The communicative ability of the letter and pleasure comes from time and out of time. The desire to access the pre-Oedipal drives of language and the absorption of letters and words are converted into an object of pleasure and a desire in language as a space to reconnect with the maternal body. Even though the father becomes the fetishized object of love and authority, the Kristevian child is tied to the repressed desire for primal oneness of the mother. As a writer herself, Kristeva transforms the work of her own art into a lover's fetish in France, that she herself understands to be emerging out of an activating sorrow, which can be disavowed.

Unable to bring the memory-trace of the mother through a foreign tongue, the depressed one fails the transition into the melody of a new language. The story of maternal loss has to do

with dead language, a dead mother's tongue, which is a part of reducing the link to the maternal words:

> Why then did you cut off the maternal source of words? What did you dream up concerning those new people you spoke to in an artificial language, a prosthesis… Silence has not been forced upon you, it is within you: a refusal to speak, a fitful sleep riven to an anguish that wants to remain mute, the private property of your proud and mortified discretion, that silence is a harsh light (Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves* 16).

To translate the mother from the inner vocations is to become a translator by becoming a *stranger* and a *writer*. In *Passions of Our Time,* Kristeva writes about mourning and discovering strangeness through language. She writes, "to estrange one's self from one's self and to continue to be the messenger of this constantly rediscovered strangeness: is this not how we fight our latent psychoses…" (Kristeva, "My Alphabet, or How I Am a Letter" 10). Kristeva points to the possibility of her own sadness and grieving memories of childhood by naming the sense of loss of time as part of understanding *strangeness*, which she does in French. As a writer who translates the mother tongue, it seems to me that the passion of our time is the desire to move back to the maternal source of words through writing, giving letters and language life and meaning, the maternal source of words.

In discussing crossing frontiers and interrogating multiplicities of identities, Kristeva's understanding of the individual psyche and its development illustrates the notion of her own foreignness in France. She writes, "Nowhere is one more a foreigner than in France… the French set a compact social texture and an unbeatable national pride against foreigners" (Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves* 38). The stranger in France struggles to be received and to become assimilated. And yet, it is also in France that her own foreignness is an admirable fascination: "one is nowhere better as a foreigner than in France… you are an object of fascination: one notices you, one talks about you, one hates or admires you, or both at the same time… You are a

problem, a desire – positive or negative, never neutral" (Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves* 39). Like Kristeva's concept of abjection, a stranger is fascinated or repulsed, barely assimilated or repulsed. In France, one's otherness can also become a cultural exception if one is recognized as a great scientist or artist:

> the entire nation will appropriate your performance, will assimilate it along with its own better accomplishments, and give you recognition better than elsewhere. This will not happen without a twinkling of the eye directed at your oddity, so un-French but they will all be carried off with great panache and splendor (Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves* 40).

In asking who a foreigner is, Kristeva answers that it is "the one who does not belong to the group, who is not '*one of them*,' the other" (Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves* 95). While defining foreignness based on political regulations, rights and legislation, Kristeva turns to Freud to localize the foreignness of national languages, cultures, and drives as one encounters *the other*. The strange is part of the psyche but also beyond the pathological: "the foreigner is within us: we are our own foreigners, we are divided" (Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves* 181). It is precisely this split where the process of transference resides. The otherness of the other splits and divides into love/hate for oneself: "psychoanalysis is then experienced as a journey to the strangeness of the other end of oneself, toward an ethics of respect for the irreconcilable" (Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves* 182). It is the journey towards knowing oneself, and recognizing that strangeness is part of our split psyche where the conflict of ambivalence resides within us. Kristeva, no matter how separation is lived, splitting is a painful process that arouses aggression and violence, sadness and depression, guilt and reparation; it remains a process necessary for endurance in language and entry into the symbolic, which for Kristeva means moving away from our mother's tongue. Kristeva recognizes that this murdering is gendered, and that it is part of the sadistic

phantasies towards the primary relations of the maternal body, taken from the interior and projected onto the external world.

To trace the underlying psychological phenomena of 'uncanny strangeness,' Kristeva returns to Freud's "*Das Unheimliche*" ("The Uncanny," originally published in 1919). Freud introduces the concept of the uncanny by writing the following: "There is no doubt that this belongs to the realm of frightening, of what evokes fear and dread" (Freud, "The Uncanny" 123). Kristeva explores the etymological/semantic study of the German word that is both frightening and familiar through a Freudian understanding of the term:

> Freud wanted to demonstrate at the outset, on the basis of a semantic study of the German adjective *heimlich* and its antonym *unheimlich* that a negative meaning close to that of the antonym is already tied to the positive term *Heimlich*, 'friendlily comfortable,' which will also signify 'concealed, kept from sight,' 'deceitful and malicious,' 'behind someone's back'. Thus, the very word *heimlich*, the familiar and intimate reversed into their opposites, brought together with the contrary meaning of 'uncanny strangeness' harboured in *unheimlich* (Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves* 182).

What is noteworthy is that uncanny strangeness signifies as that which is concealed and kept from sight, similar to a hidden hole, but can be understood through the process of anxiety and repetition compulsion, where the acting out is the psychical process of the repressed. Kristeva recognizes that even though there is no mention of foreigners in Freud's concept of the uncanny, it is still useful to define how strangeness resides on the borders, waiting to be constructed and deconstructed within our psychological realm. The secret of the unconscious is that one has to consciously bring things that are hidden out of the repressed. As we discover in analysis through symbolic figures and their substitutes, the familiar and the frightening past come through the uncanny and strangeness from the outside.

Kristeva claims that Freud's concepts of uncanny strangeness and the repressed can be used to understand how foreignness is constructed and deconstructed in ourselves. Yet,

foreignness is ours as much as it is part of an other. Depersonalization emerges from the conflict of a split self that refuses to embrace the foreign within us. In Kristeva's words:

> To discover our disturbing otherness, for that indeed is what bursts in to confront that 'demon,' that threat, that apprehension generated by the projective apparition of the other at the heart of what we persist in maintaining as a proper, solid 'us.' By recognizing *our* uncanny strangeness we shall neither suffer from it nor enjoyed from the outside. The foreigner is within me, hence we are all foreigners. If I am a foreigner, there are no foreigners. (Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves* 192, italics original).

As we work through our fears and the psyche, we hold the capacity to seek foreignness in ourselves, realizing that "the foreigner is within me."

The defence against uncanny strangeness is part of the Freudian return of the repressed, which can locate pleasures in estrangement. Kristeva quotes Freud to describe the process of repression: "Under certain conditions, however, the repressed 'that ought to have remained secret' shows up again and produces a feeling of uncanny strangeness" (Freud qtd in Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves* 184). Kristeva's discussion of uncanny strangeness through Freud also describes strangeness as a narcissistic defence mechanism. This is precisely the space where the unpleasant and uncontained parts of the secretive and hated self are projected onto a substituted image, which shelters the dangerous that is originally found within oneself. The defense mechanism that arises from internal anxiety is projected onto a stranger since one can no longer contain or confront the image of destruction or death.

Like the mysterious hole that is strangely familiar, the uncanny strangeness is also related to the phantasy of intra-uterine existence. Drawing on her understanding of Freud, Kristeva writes about the source of strangeness in the early primal relationship:

> it often happens that neurotic men declare that they feel there is something uncanny about the female genital organs. This *unheimlich* place, however, is the entrance of the former Heim of all human beings, to the place where each

> one of us lived once upon a time and in the beginning (Freud qtd in Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves* 185).

How do death and the maternal, the feminine and the drives become a pretext for uncanny strangeness? Kristeva's answer is that it has to do with the horror of separation and death:

> The *death* and the *feminine*, the end and the beginning that engross and compose us only to frighten us when they break through… A disturbing symptom of this may be found in epilepsy and madness, and their presence in our fellow beings worries us the more as we dimly sense them in ourselves (Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves* 185, italics original).

The foreigner within us is repressed and provoked by infantile desires and fears of the mother's omnipotence. The encounter with uncanny strangeness is about the foreigner that is living within us, which began with the *death* and the *feminine*, the shock of the sensual experience of the senses related to separation and the move towards independence. Kristeva links this to the memory of the maternal container and the bodily boundaries one develops in the early years:

> Confronting the foreigner whom I reject and with whom at the same time I identify, I lose my boundaries, I no longer have a container, the memory of experiences when I had been abandoned overwhelmed me, I lose my composure. I feel 'lost,' 'indistinct,' 'hazy.' The uncanny strangeness allows for many variations: they all repeat the difficulty I have in situating myself with respect to the other and keep going over the course of identification – projection that lies at the foundation of my reaching autonomy (Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves* 187).

The very autonomy that comes out of identification-projection and uncanny strangeness is also a space where a foreigner can find liberation and confidence by letting go of the native language as Kristeva explains:

> Lacking the reins of the maternal tongue, the foreigner who learns a new language is capable of the most unforeseen audacities when using it – intellectual daring and obscenities as well. Such and such a person who hardly dared to speak in public and made awkward remarks in his native language, discovers himself to be a dauntless speaker in the other one…. As in hallucination, his verbal constructs – learned or shocking – are centered in a void, disassociated from both body and passions, left hostage to the maternal tongue.… His language does not bother him, because he keeps silent on his drives: the foreigner can utter all sorts of indecencies without being shaken by

> any repugnance or even excitement, since his unconscious shelters itself on the other side of the border. Analytic therapy or, more exceptionally, an intense solitary exploration through memory and body, might, however, bring forth the miracle of meditation that welds the original and the acquired into one of those mobile and innovative syntheses that great immigrant scholars or artists are capable of (Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves* 31–32).

This is precisely where Kristeva notes that in the state of exile, to speak another language is the main condition for feeling alive. The foreigner can be trapped in their native language and learns to free herself and findsagency, independence, freedom and autonomy in her experience of speaking a new language. It is easier for the foreigner to innovate because she sees herself as not belonging to anything yet everything.

Our mother tongue are the words we need to link the memory-trace of our repressed childhood. Kristeva writes about the language of loss and silence in one's mother tongue:

> *Not speaking one's mother tongue*. Living with resonances and reasoning that are cut off from the body's nocturnal memory, from the bittersweet slumber of childhood. Bearing within oneself like a secret vault, or like a handicapped child – cherished and useless – that language of the past that withers without ever leaving you. You improve your ability with another instrument, as one expresses oneself with algebra or violin (Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves* 15, italics mine).

The role of depression and trauma, pain and matricide in shaping human history and subjectivity is part of the suffering inherent in the primary relations of the mother tongue. The memory-trace of the mother tongue is needed to trace the mother; the mother tongue functions as the language of loss and silence. The literary imagination and culture re-locate the maternal flesh as one *runs* back into the arms of the mother, to *fall* in love with her all over again. Kristeva's falling for French literature and culture is a Winnicottian move of externalizing the object that relocates the mother in strangeness; one can only move from "relating" to the object through the "use" of an object; one has to externalize the mother by destroying her, only to relocate the traces of her body and identity, recognizing oneself as a stranger to oneself.

Conclusion

My discussion in this chapter points to the necessity for Kristeva of exiting, and existing outside, her mother's body through her father. Entrance into letters and language allowed Kristeva to live outside her mother's silence and to become an outspoken young girl. I have analyzed young Kristeva's relationship with Kristev in the early years and his lessons during the Alphabet festival in Bulgaria. I have read Kristeva's representation of her father's *Azbouka* lessons as an early impulse that negotiated between matricide and her mother tongue. As Kristeva becomes her father's golden daughter and develops an intense love for him, she seems to repress her desire for her mother through her father. I suggest that Kristeva has been caught in a father complex. Still, the relationships with the father and language are really about authoring the mother, as they are embedded in the white space, the maternal holding container.

As I examine Kristeva's childhood psychic life alongside her adulthood theorizing, I establish that her own literary life is deeply rooted in her psyche and her incredible ability to work through the loss of the primary object. As Kristeva develops her theory of language, engaging with father's time and mother's space, the pre-Oedipal realm becomes marked through mourning and creativity. Maternal mourning and reparation become for her a psychic necessity for textual identification with primary objects. As I write about her transferential connection with maternal memories, I connect them with the paternal stories, reconstructed here through maternal complexities of time and space. The personal stories of Kristeva's relationships allow us to see precisely how she rediscovers her unconscious memories, reconstituted through temporality, embodying letters and language to mark the blank page.

As Kristeva comes to her father's *Azbouka* as a child, she demonstrates the necessity of matricide as an essential element for optimal growth and success that she was able to master in the early years by developing a lifelong love relationship with foreign tongues. Kristeva's fear of regression into dependency on her mother as a child leads her to recognize the symbolic significance of language, where the mother tongue not only become associated with death but also lost objects in her writings, the repressed and desired in language. Kristeva's travelling through herself and escape towards France and the French language reveals the repressed desire to return to the maternal; entrance into the French language is a Kristevian avenue of taking distance from her primary origins while transcending her childhood scene.

Chapter Four: The Foreigner: From Hidden Secrets to the Sacred

> There is one story Kristeva tells often, always with emotion. During one of her last visits with Benveniste, she was standing by his bed at the *Créteil* Hospital when he asked her to come closer, and with a shy smile, he started tracing letters on her chest with his index finger. She was startled, embarrassed, not sure what to think. But she soon understood that he was trying to say something, so she found a pencil and paper, and he slowly and carefully wrote the letters THEO. What was he trying to say to Kristeva? Was he evoking God (*theos)*? Theory (*theoria*)? She admits that even all these years later, those four letters traced shakily on her body, over her heart, by this dignified, brilliant, dying man, remain enigmatic (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 127).

Living in the shadows of paternal power, Kristeva arrived in France to make new acquaintances and ultimately built her attachment to influential male figures. Jardine identifies how Kristeva's life and early work have been critiqued for subscribing to masculine aesthetics, privileging the canon of male writers and associating with a male intellectual circle during her first years in France. The last chapter traced Kristeva's relationship with her father, how she strove to be the best, getting prizes and honors for her studies in school and immersing herself in language and literature since her early years. In this chapter, my focus is on the stories in Jardine's biography in which Kristeva bonds with male intellectuals in her early days in France. From them, one can see how Kristeva constructed an unconscious relationship with father substitutes, recognizing that maturity and success depend upon patriarchal standards that entails building links with paternal objects.

In celebrating Alphabet Day with her father during her childhood, Kristeva had understood the importance of moving into language. At the same time, she deepened her desire for language in France by attaching to paternal figures. In examining Jardine's narratives of Kristeva as an early doctoral student, I establish that Kristeva's rapid inclusion in male avant-garde circles manifested a desire to re-create the childhood scene of books as transitional objects,

which was made possible as a foreigner studying in France. I argue that similar to her celebration of Alphabet Day with her father, Kristeva's encounter with, and seeking of, male mentors in France, particularly Émile Benveniste, was critical for her recognizing, incorporating, and internalizing the experience of the letter of the alphabet.

In the first part of this chapter, I look at how as a study-abroad student, Kristeva not only successfully encountered male contemporaries but also built deep and personal relationships with mentors such as Lucien Goldmann, Roland Barthes, and Émile Benveniste. In my reading of Kristeva's bonding with these three important male figures I first address Kristeva's rejection of Goldmann and Marxism, which helps her to turn towards Barthes's nature of language. Next, I show how Kristeva's relations with Barthes and his academic support moved her to understanding the field of semiotics, which she further builds through her ties with Benveniste's secret and sacred dimensions – the philosophy of poetic language. I suggest that Kristeva's desire for inclusivity in France and her attachment to male intellectuals, especially Benveniste, were based on the strong bond she developed with her father through letters and language.

In the second part of this chapter, I further develop the relation between Kristeva and Benveniste by turning to Kristeva's chapter "Emile Benveniste, A Linguist Who Neither Says Nor Hides, But Signifies," from *Passions of Our Times* (2018). I have selected this work of Kristeva's for the relations between writing and poetic language, originating from Benveniste's conversations with the young Bulgarian. Kristeva values Benveniste as a great linguist and builds a personal and textual connection with his life and work. Her writing is critical in centralizing Benveniste's notion of "double signifyingness language," transmitted through the bodily experiences of the heart and soul of the poetic message in one of her last encounters.

As I think about the relationship between the poetic in writing and Benveniste's message of THEO inscribed on Kristeva's chest by a "dignified, brilliant, dying man" (Jardine 127), I further connect it in the final part of the chapter to another essay from *Passions of Our Times*, namely "A Father is Being Beaten to Death." What emerges from my reading of Kristeva's essay about the Freudian "dead father" as a clinical experience of transference and countertransference is her process of working through while at the same time memorializing the death of father figures. Benveniste's choosing to send his student the message of Theo on her body, close to her heart, leads me to establish Kristeva's representations of paternal relations through the frameworks of the mysteriously secret to the holy sacred. By moving the secrecy of Benveniste's message of THEO from God to Theory, from the spiritual to the poetical, the mystical to the psychoanalytical, Kristeva's representations of paternal relations become embedded in the Freudian theory of the "dead father" as a clinical experience. The real and symbolic fathers are coupled with the desirable paternal figures of masculine aesthetics and paternity, where religion and sublimation become the fantasy of the beaten fathers (real and figurative) as the foundation of the Christian faith.

Part I: France, Fathers, and Foreignness

Goldmann, Barthes, and Benveniste

Jardine's intellectual biography mythologizes the narrative of how Kristeva came to France on a doctoral research fellowship at the age of 25 to study at the University of Paris VII. Jardine provides details about the young, excited, and anxious Kristeva, who landed at Paris's Le Bourget (Orly) Airport on December 15, 1965, with five dollars in her pocket, a toothbrush, and two books by Hegel, the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the *Science of Logic*. Two elements of this

story are significant for me: first, Kristeva's suitcase didn't include her father's hidden copy of Freud's *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* – one of the only copies of Freud in Bulgaria, which she had been reading (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 55). Second, because Jardine romanticizes Kristeva's excitement of hopping on a plane and escaping to a foreign country, whose literature and culture she most admired, what we don't read at this point is how the young linguist from Bulgaria felt when she physically and psychically distanced herself from her primary relations.

When Kristeva arrived in France as a young Bulgarian, she was supported by symbolic father figures, while working through her primary relations and father's complex. While Jardine's biographical convention of linearity does not bind me, I follow each of the three thinkers in the order she met them to draw on different aspects of the special relationship Kristeva established with each. I begin with Lucien Goldmann because when Kristeva arrived in Paris, she was advised by a friend to study structuralism from a Marxist perspective and to contact Goldmann, a brilliant Marxist Romanian Jew. Even though Goldmann was one of the first important male mentors she encountered in Paris, and Kristeva deeply cared for her supervisor, their relationship changed after she decided to distance herself from Marxism in her doctoral thesis. My reading of the drama and internal conflict with Goldmann during Kristeva's oral exam reveals Goldmann's unconscious and hidden primary relations, which had to do with Kristeva's newly acquired psychoanalytic knowledge about his oral conflicts and primary narcissism.

I then consider Kristeva's relationship with Barthes as the young Bulgarian made the most of her opportunity to present at his seminar. Jardine illustrates how French male intellectuals, particularly Barthes, successfully guided Kristeva as a foreigner, and yet she fails to

articulate that their relations were based on a form of Orientalism. Unlike Goldmann and Benveniste, who were not ethnically French, Barthes' idealization of Kristeva as a mysterious and fetishized stranger celebrates her foreignness. In the last section, I explore Kristeva's bond with her important teacher Benveniste, whom Jardine refers to as Kristeva's "fatherly soulmate" since he provided her with the intellectual permission to pursue her studies of *semanalysis* (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 123). I trace Kristeva's transferential connection with the dying Benveniste, when he inscribed the sacred and secret message of Theo on her chest – coming to stand for Kristeva as the most essential father substitute.

The Oral Conflicts of the Oedipal Father: Lucien Goldmann

The first significant relationship with a male figure I explore here is the one Kristeva established with her thesis director,[6] the "adorable" Lucien Goldmann (Kristeva's favourite word to describe him). Kristeva also describes him as "a large man, a true *bon vivant*, and very charming" (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 82). When Kristeva arrived in Paris, she took her friend's recommendation and immediately contacted Goldmann, who agreed to meet with her at his home. The first encounter between Goldmann and Kristeva sets the scene for their relationship. In Kristeva's memories, Goldmann is depicted as more interested in talking about himself and in devouring cakes and cookies than he is in Kristeva's academic interests. As I show in this section, the initial meeting at the tea salon and the memory

[6] In France, there are two levels of doctorate study: *doctorat de 3éme cycle*, (postgraduate doctorate) which is the equivalent to the PhD obtained in US and Canada. Second, there is the *doctorate d'État* (State Doctorate) and there are no equivalent to this PhD in the US and Canada.

of Goldmann's devouring of cookies sets the scene for Kristeva's evaluation of his self-centredness and primary narcissism, which she psychoanalyzes during her oral exam.

In contrast to running away from her mother, as analyzed in chapter two, Kristeva describes herself as running towards Goldmann: "suddenly someone like Lucien Goldmann invites me to his house!? *I ran*!! But he was walking downstairs as I was walking up. He had forgotten our appointment" (Kristeva qtd in Jardine 82, italics mine). In her reminiscence, Kristeva highlights her disappointment and Goldmann's fixation on orality as they arrived at a tea salon and he encouraged her to order lots of sweet deserts while he spent the entire time speaking: "It was obvious that what I was saying didn't interest him. He wanted to speak only about himself. I was fascinated. I didn't eat anything…" (Kristeva qtd in Jardine 82). In contrast, Goldmann ate all of the cookies on their way out: "As they were leaving the tea salon, Goldmann turned around and saw all their cookies still sitting on their table. He said, 'Oh no, we mustn't leave anything to the capitalists!' and promptly devoured all of them on the way out" (Jardine 83).

Kristeva's newly acquired understanding of psychoanalysis permitted her to see Goldmann's narcissistic identification with Marxism. Kristeva's oral exam was scheduled in June 1968, directly around the time of the student and worker uprisings. Her dissertation jury consisted of Goldmann (her supervisor), Roland Barthes (her friend and committee member), and Jean Dubois (a well-known French linguist). Kristeva had realized during her doctorate years, while attending seminars on psychoanalysis with Barthes and Lacan, that humans are shaped as much by language as economics, if not more. Aside from attending seminars on psychoanalysis, Kristeva's research on her dissertation had permitted her to discover her love for

language as a realm of the unknown – and not just as an object. Her research led her toward histories and stories of human subjects and led her to turn away from Marxism.

Goldmann's resistance to new forms of writing in Paris, especially psychoanalysis, became apparent during the exam. In Kristeva's account, he is constructed as an Oedipal father (rather than a loving one) and is translated into an object of love-hate projection, characterized not only as lacking the ability to be a good-enough supervisor but also represented as a Kleinian bad breast, an object that generates anger and frustration in Kristeva:

> At the beginning of the defense, Goldmann praised Kristeva's work as truly original and deserving of its high grade… *But*, said Goldmann, why are you so interested in sex? Why are you not interested in the belly? In food? It seems that everyone in the room looked at each other awkwardly. It was fairly clear that Goldmann wanted his star student to return to his form of Marxist literary analysis. But all Kristeva could think of was the cakes and cookies he had devoured at their first meeting and for the first (and last) time in her life, she lost her temper with a teacher (Jardine 86, italics original).

Goldmann appears in this episode as unable to gratify Kristeva's need for approval, and his lack of support for psychoanalysis seems to validate for readers Kristeva's destructive impulses toward him. In this scene, Kristeva's disapproval of her supervisor permits her to "lose her temper" toward her not-good-enough supervisor. The following description reveals the intense emotions that came up for both Kristeva and Goldmann during the oral exam:

> In a sudden outburst of temper, Kristeva raised her voice and addressed her teacher informally, using his first name (as he had allowed): 'Listen here Lucien.' But she continued in the formal form of *vous,* thereby taking her distance. Goldmann was surprised… She continued formally but with emotion. She insisted that she would not return to the repetitive and simplistic discourses of 'the human condition' or representations of 'pity for those without enough food.' She called that approach 'archaic' and no longer done by those serious about literature. She chided him for talking about the belly, which was merely a matter of talking about himself, and blamed him for not engaging at all with the subject of her thesis. Tears rolled down Goldmann's cheeks. He and Kristeva became friends again eventually, but not like before (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 87).

In stepping up to defend the importance of psychoanalysis, Kristeva calls Goldmann's approach 'archaic,' similar to a Freudian Oedipal father. At the same time, identifying his love for sweet treats as a form of primary narcissism allows her to locate it in the oral stage. Paradoxically, it seems to me that Goldmann's representation as an Oedipal father is coupled with his primary oral conflict with the mother. What becomes important for me is that Kristeva's understanding of Goldmann's repressed desires related to the maternal object evolves when she develops her knowledge of psychoanalysis in her thesis. She no longer sees Goldmann only as an academic interested in Marxism but reassesses and revaluates his "pity for those without enough food" as having to do with his hidden relations with primary love objects. Kristeva thus translates Goldmann's Marxism as a repressed identification with the mother. She reads his relations with food through a psychoanalytic framework as an early identification with the orality of the maternal breast.

When Kristeva becomes her own speaking subject during the defense, she forcefully speaks as an intellectual who takes the risk of thinking by psychoanalyzing her supervisor. In Jardine's end note about the exam scene, the good-enough biographer shows how she helped the older Kristeva process the conflict with Goldmann at the defense:

> Kristeva was visibly moved as she told me this story. Afterward, we talked about how her experience with Goldmann was so different from that of many intellectual women caught in these kinds of situations. When the male mentor has so much power, it is usually the female student reduced to tears. (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 332)

When Kristeva ran away from her mother in the "running story," it was Kristeva's mother, like Goldmann, who cried – and not Kristeva. Rather than allow herself to be reduced to tears, she forcefully wanted to change the form of language through an analytic revolt as a gendered speaking subject.

Despite the drama at the defense, Kristeva received her *doctorat de 3éme* in French literature (semiotics) for her thesis *Le Texte du roman: Approche sémiologique d'une structure discursive* (*The Text of the Novel: A Semiological Approach to Discursive Structure*) (Kristeva, *Le Text Du Roman: Approche Sémiologique d'une Structure Discursive Transformationnelle*). However, before she defended it in June of 1968, Kristeva had been working at an inhuman pace, writing constantly and publishing articles in prestigious journals such as *Critique, Langages* and *Tel Quel*, and despite her supervisor's critique, she continued to dig deeply into psychoanalytic theory after her defence. For example, in the following year, she published her first two important books: *Sēmeiōtikē: Recherches pour une sémanalyse* (*Semiotike: Research for a Semanalysis*) and *Le Langage, cet inconnu: Une initiation à la linguistique* (*Language, the Unknown*: *An Initiation into Linguistics*). As Jardine has identified, two key aspects emerge in *Semiotike*. The first is Kristeva's engagement with the Freudian unconscious, while the second is her criticism of Marx (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 119). Kristeva's move towards the unconscious allowed her to develop the study of linguistics by combining semiotics and psychoanalysis, which was a way to reintroduce the body back into language. Still, it was not only her fascination with psychoanalysis but also her criticism of Marxism that comes to the fore in *Semiotike*:

> Kristeva's early forays into psychoanalytic theory also contain a cautious but distinctive fascination with the irrational, even the mystical, combined with an explicit effort to discredit the scientific/rational practice of reducing literary practice to a reflection of social reality (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 119).

In fusing the methods of psychoanalysis and semiotics through semanalysis, she creates a new approach to get at the complexity of the signifying processes, which were beginning to form forcefully both in life and writing when she presented her thesis with a critical analysis of

Goldmann's oral conflicts as a way to signify a heterogeneous process of bodily drives that make their way into language.

Kristeva as the Mysterious Foreigner: Roland Barthes

The second most important relationship with a male figure that I want to discuss here is with Kristeva's good-enough mentor, Barthes. While attending Goldmann's seminars, Kristeva also attended Barthes's seminar at the École des Hautes Études, learning about semiotics and Freud. In contrast to Goldmann, who is constructed as a bad breast in Jardine's intellectual biography, Barthes seems to have satisfied and encouraged Kristeva's hunger for psychoanalysis by providing her a Kleinian feeling of security and relief. Kristeva developed a deep connection with Barthes. The bond between the student and teacher strengthened, and their roles often reversed.

When Kristeva entered the French structuralism and poststructuralism theoretical scene in the mid-1960s, language was becoming pivotal to understanding history as textuality. Kristeva has fond memories of the seminars with Barthes, which fascinated her:

> She remembers the warm ambiance of the seminar, filled with foreign students like herself listening with rapt attention to the seemingly magic words of the famous instructor. She, too, was mesmerized. She was especially intrigued by the strange and new mixture of reference to thinkers and writers like Freud and Mallarmé, and to the field of semiotics, that Barthes offered. She knew a lot about Russian formalists, but not so much about semiotics, and almost nothing about psychoanalysis except what she had been able to glean from the hidden volume of Freud in her childhood home. (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 83)

That the ambiance of Barthes' seminar is described as warm suggests a transferential connection to the spiritual climate with her father in church, which is described in comparable terms, as

discussed in the previous chapter. Moreover, just as Kristeva's father introduced her to his secret copy of Freud, Barthes also further intrigued her by referencing Freud.

Barthes is not represented as a Freudian Oedipal father but a loving one with affectionate characteristics. Rather than being self-centred like Goldmann, Barthes is identified as a selfless figure who appreciates Kristeva's thoughts, her sublimatory capacity and how she maintained high ambitions to become an influential intellectual with the goal of revolt. Barthes celebrated Kristeva's foreignness and writings:

> Coming from Bulgarian intellectual circles, she knew more about an international array of authors and disciplines than her more classically trained French classmates and professors. Fortunately, they wanted to know more. Most of all, they wanted to know more about this young, beautiful Eastern European woman who spoke perfect French. Especially Roland Barthes. Kristeva and Barthes came to genuinely love each other (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 85).

Jardine's depiction draws attention to the fetishization of Kristeva's otherness that occurred in Paris – a part of a repressed fantasy of incorporation that involves an act of identification based on sameness and the differentiation of the beautiful stranger.

Impressed by his young foreign student and wanting to know more about and from her, in 1966 Barthes invited Kristeva to give a seminar on Bakhtin. Kristeva used it as an opportunity to speak about the importance of the speaking subject in history and to critique structuralism for having forgotten both the speaking subject and its history. In Jardine's words, "she was a smash hit" (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 84). A year later in 1967, she published "Bakhtine, le mot, le dialogue et le roman" ("Word, Dialogue and Novel") in the journal *Critique*, in which she traced the intertextual relations of the textual play between the text and the subject through Mikhail Bakhtin's concepts of dialogism and carnivalism. Kristeva's primary goal in this piece was to engage in a structural analysis of the

narrative and its dialogic character. Through Bakhtin, she insists that “literary structure does not simply *exist* but is generated in relation to *another* structure” (Kristeva, “Word, Dialogue, and Novel” 64–65). She extended this work in her first book in French, *Semiotike: Research for a Semanalysis*, which appeared two years later in 1969. Kristeva’s introduction of the intertextual is important for thinking about the dialogue that occurs in writing. She presents cultural context as a space where texts meet, coincide, and intersect as part of a linguistic dialogue.

Unlike Kristeva’s supervisor Goldmann, Barthes highly admired his young student and acknowledged her intellectual work. In a review of *Semiotike* that appeared in *La Quinzaine Littéraraire* in 1970 under the title "L’étrangère" (the strange or foreign female), Barthes expressed appreciation of how Kristeva was able to preserve her independence and located her within an intellectual lineage:

> I already owe her a lot and have done so right from the start. And now I have been made to feel again – and this time in its entirety – the force of her work. Force here means displacement. Julia Kristeva changes the order of things: she always destroys the latest preconception, the one we thought we could be comforted by, the one of which we could be proud: what she displaces is the already-said, that is to say, the instance of the signified; what she subverts is the authority of monologic silence and of filiation (Barthes qtd in Moi, *The Kristeva Reader*).

It seems to me that Barthes’ appreciation of “the force" of Kristeva’s work is tied to how she takes command of her writing by incorporating her voice – a symbolic daughter who disrupts filiation. In her writings, Kristeva learned to go beyond herself, even as she experienced herself in exile, to translate the paternal figure into a sublimatory creation. Kristeva begins *Semiotike* with the following question: “To work on language, to labour in the materiality of that which society regards as a means of contact and understanding, isn’t that at one stroke to declare oneself a stranger/foreigner [étranger] to language?” (Kristeva qtd in Moi, *The Kristeva Reader* 3). Perhaps alluding to her own personal situation as a stranger in Paris, a foreigner on the

theoretical scene, Kristeva drew on her otherness to put her own mark on the new science of semiology. While she worked through her own foreignness, it was precisely Barthes who helped her to understand the universal quality of language, which sees meaning as a structure. Thus, her intellectual bonding with Barthes enabled her to see writing outside of the subject. When Kristeva situates and embodies her position as a stranger in France, she understands the semiotic approach, where becoming a foreigner helps to situate her understanding of language as foreign.

Barthes' appreciation of Kristeva was also evident when Kristeva defended her state doctoral thesis, *Revolution in Poetic Language,* in 1973 under the direction of Jean-Claude Chevalier (a French linguist). The members of her dissertation committee were again Goldmann, Dubois and Barthes. In an uncanny repetition of the first exam, during which Kristeva was critiqued by Goldmann, this time she was challenged by Chevalier and Barthes came to her rescue:

> At the defense, Chevalier challenged Kristeva by claiming that with all her emphasis on human subjectivity, she had left the social out of her interpretation of poetic signification. What saved the experience for Kristeva was Barthes proclaiming at the end of the exam what she took as a supreme compliment (although it did not please everyone in the room): 'The novel today, it is this thesis.' This compliment from Barthes meant much more to her than all the praise – all the success – that followed the publication of *Revolution* in the *Tel Quel Collection* by Éditions du Seuil on March 1, 1974 (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 140–41).

Kristeva's primal identification with Barthes as a loving father and a selfless paternal figure may well have been based on his recognition and validation of her work. As a good-enough mentor, Barthes is represented as one of the most positive experiences of paternal transference, related to letters and language and its celebration with her own father.

"Fatherly Soulmate": Émile Benveniste

The last important relationship with a male figure I want to discuss here is Kristeva's deep intellectual connection with Émile Benveniste. Based on the intellectual attractions of their shared interests in discourse, dialogue, poetic language, subjectivity, and intersubjectivity, Kristeva developed an important relationship with him. Upon arriving in France, Kristeva's extensive training as a linguist, her radical attack on the rigid systems, her fluency in foreign languages such as Russian, and her grounding in structuralism inspired teachers like Benveniste. My goal is to establish the transferential connection of the secret and sacred relational elements in Benveniste's encounter with Kristeva as part of her childhood historical connection to her father's religiosity and language.

As with Barthes and unlike Goldmann, Benveniste is depicted as respecting her singularity and encouraging her to pursue her intellectual pursuit of psychoanalysis. Also, unlike the other male figures of this period, Benveniste is defined as a "fatherly soulmate" who helped her to diversify her theorization of language:

> Intellectually, Kristeva discovered in Benveniste a fatherly soulmate who was able to provide erudite words for the 'life' that she was attuned to in poetic language. Among other things, he helped her to distinguish between the *énoncé* (the statement) and the *énonciation* (the utterance), or more simply put, between the said and the way it is said. This in turn connected with her growing interest in the divided subject (the human subject divided between the conscious and unconscious mind) because it meant that the "I" of the statement is not necessarily the 'I' of the utterance, that the 'I' is always 'other' (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 123–24).

As a symbolic father and an important professor, what is significant is that Benveniste taught Kristeva about subjectivity, which helped her understand divided human subjectivity and intersubjectivity, the conscious and the unconscious mind. The connections between the two helped her to appreciate linguistics as a dialogue. It seems to me that it is precisely through their

intellectual affinities and his helping her to distinguish between “I” and the other that Kristeva internalizes Benveniste as part of primal identification – the desiring father as a symbolic father and the relations between the secret and the sacred. While Jardine draws attention to the contribution that Benveniste helps Kristeva make to psychoanalytic concepts, such as the conscious and unconscious mind, what I would point out is that this lesson builds on the ones Kristeva’s father taught her about the strangeness of the "I" (Az in Bulgarian) in relation to the *bouk,* as outlined in the previous chapter.

Another similarity in the relationship Kristeva developed with Benveniste and the one she had had with her father growing up was that they were profoundly fond of each other and that they were characterized by conversations on language and letters that also became the foundation of her first books. Just as I described Kristeva’s relationship with her father and his interest in her questioning the letters of the alphabet in chapter three, there were many conversations between Kristeva and Benveniste, which were usually about history-making through language. They shared an interest in the signifying process, the symbolic and the semiotic – the one buried that shapes human subjectivity. When Kristeva chose to become a therapist, she first sought Benveniste’s advice. He responded with a compelling question: “Little one, they are all crazy and you’re not – what are you going to do inside of all that?” (Benveniste qtd in Jardine 153). Just as Kristeva’s father encouraged Kristeva’s interest in questions of language (discussed in chapter three), Benveniste’s curiosity about what she is going to do “inside of all that” encouraged Kristeva to interrogate her unconscious motivations to become a psychoanalyst. Benveniste’s deep interest in Kristeva’s life and work can be further seen in the questions he asked about her academic career, especially her meetings with the *Tel Quel* group:

> Benveniste gave Kristeva intellectual permission to pursue her *semanalysis,* gave her an opening toward the unconscious motivations and symbolisms of the literary texts…Kristeva has written of their long conversations at his apartment on rue Monticelli, near the Porte d'Orléans in Paris. She has described how overwhelmed she was by all the books in Benveniste's study and by the way they smelled, how impressed she was by his "sacred" office where all the Indo-European and Iranian secrets of time immemorial seemed to be hidden. And the conversations! He was always asking her intriguing questions out of the blue, such as, "But Madame, don't you think that the future of man is woman?" He was interested in everything: her work, her debates in Eastern Europe (especially about Bakhtin), and the experiments of the group meetings of *Tel Quel*. They discussed Raymond Roussel, Chomsky, and obscure Sanskrit texts (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 124–25).

Given Kristeva's attraction to books, as detailed in chapter one, it is not surprising that Benveniste's study captivated her. Significantly, Jardine describes this study as "sacred," as hiding "all the Indo-European and Iranian secrets of time immemorial." The scent of Benveniste's books is similar to the smell of the flowers in the church, which are part of Kristeva's transferential connection to the father's sacred texts and religiosity.

Kristeva describes Benveniste's quiet radicalism as part of his creative subjectivity, embedded in his understanding of the diversity of language. Benveniste is illustrated in the following statement as someone "who hid in the university from the more dramatic calls for both political and poetic radicalism" (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 126). Similar to the hidden nature of Kristeva's father's secret worshipping and how he took his daughters to communion to avoid being seen, Jardine describes Benveniste hiding papers at a conference he attended with Kristeva:

> On that trip, Kristeva was carrying Artaud's *Letters of Rodez* – a collection of harrowing letters written while Artaud was subjected to electric shock treatments at the Rodez Asylum during World War II – and he asked if he could borrow the volume. She saw him *hide* it between the pages of Plato's *Symposium* and read it with a slight smile on his face whenever the conference proceedings bored him (Jardine 125, italics mine).

Witnessing Benveniste hiding the little book and reading it secretly, Kristeva approached her fatherly soulmate and announced that she was pleased to see his signature on the 1925 manifesto of surrealism:

> 'Monsieur, what a joy to see your name among the signatories of a surrealist manifesto!...['a regrettable coincidence, Madam']. His smile had disappeared, his cold and empty look kneeled me to the floor, and I collapsed with shame in the presence of the conference attendees all around us. A few hours later, with no witnesses around, the professor whispered in my ear, 'of course it's me, but you mustn't say so. You see, now I am at the Collège de France!' (Kristeva qtd in Jardine 125–26)

Just as her father introduced Kristeva to his secret copy of Freud, the symbolic father trusted Kristeva with his hidden secrets.

Alluding to one of Benveniste's last conversations with Kristeva, it seems that Kristeva's intellectual bond with her symbolic father permits her to truly understand the 'double interior' of the speaker, caught within the signifying process of history. As evident in the epigraph, Benveniste left a secret message for Kristeva on her chest as he "slowly and carefully wrote the letters THEO." Kristeva's state dissertation, *Revolution in Poetic Language,* is tied to one of her last encounters with Benveniste:

> Not long after this reminder from her dear friend and mentor, Kristeva formalized, in her 1973 doctoral thesis, *Revolution in Poetic Language*, her best known and most often repeated formulation of the process through which meaning is produced: the interaction between the *semiotic* and *symbolic*. For those who know of these terms and their meanings, the resonance between them and the passage on Benveniste quoted above is striking. To Kristeva's immense sadness, Benveniste died on October 3, 1976 (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 128).

It was precisely after the encounter with Benveniste's mysterious writing of THEO that Kristeva formulated her work on the semiotic and the symbolic. *Revolution in Poetic Language* examines the signifying practices of the inner mechanism of the poetic in social, historical, and political fields. Bringing the concept of intertextuality to the forefront of her writing, Kristeva

understands the diversity of origins and meaning in linguistics, informing theory and signs in *Revolution.* Kristeva's idea of a revolution in poetic language is important in thinking about the dialectical interaction of the symbolic and semiotic, which is also suggested in one of her last encounters with Benveniste. Remembering the secret message of THEO that Benveniste inscribed on her body, in *Revolution* Kristeva sought to understand the mystery in letters, as writers work with letters and language to disrupt their meanings in an intensely political environment. In *Revolution*, Kristeva's theoretical language explores how meaning is produced beyond the given message and moves into the fantasies and imagination towards the psychic mechanism of the human subject, similar to the secret and sacred, the psychic traces in the poetic text.

Part II: The Great Linguist that Hides to Signify

I now turn to "Emile Benveniste, a Linguist who Neither Says nor Hides, but Signifies" from *Passions of Our Time* (2018), which was first published in 2012 in *Last Lectures: Collège de France 1968 and 1969*: *Émile Benveniste*, when Kristeva was invited to write the preface for the collection of Benveniste's final lectures. In this text, Kristeva pays tribute to Benveniste and his significance to her theorizing of the speaking subject and signifying practices. Her lively discussions with her symbolic father gave Kristeva a better understanding of the heterogeneity of language. I will establish here that Kristeva's relations with Benveniste are based on the development of a unique relationship that had to do with either secrecy or sacred transferential connections with her own father. At the same time, her exploration of the concept of significance has to do with origins in Benveniste's writings to distinguish between the statement and the

utterance, mentioned in part I, which she brings to the Freudian unconscious and the splitting of the subject to explore Benveniste's translinguistic messages about archaic forces.

Unlike Jardine's account, which includes minimal information about Benveniste's autobiography, Kristeva provides many important details about his multilingual background and relationship with foreign languages. She relates that Benveniste was born in 1902 in Aleppo, Syria, into a multilingual Jewish family with the birthname Ezra Benveniste. His mother, Maria, taught Hebrew, French, and Russian at the Alliance Israelite in Samokov, Bulgaria. His father, Mathaties, was born in Smyrna and spoke Ladino. Young Benveniste's childhood environment also included Turkish, Arabic, and modern Greek. In 1913 Benveniste arrived in France to study at a rabbinical school, where he became a student of the "minory seminar" (Kristeva, "Emile Benveniste, A Linguist Who Neither Says Nor Hides, But Signifies" 34). He was admitted to the École pratique des hautes études (EPHE) in 1918 and received a degree in literature in 1919 and an *agrégation* in grammar in 1922: "a product of French Republic secular education, he was naturalized as a citizen in 1924 and chose the first name Emile" (Kristeva, "Emile Benveniste, A Linguist Who Neither Says Nor Hides, But Signifies" 35). In 1924, he left for India to work as a tutor, and in 1926, he moved to Morocco to fulfill his military obligations. When he returned to France, he taught at EPHE and became the department head for comparative grammar while having immense influence on his colleagues. In 1937, he entered Collège de France and also there served as the comparative grammar chair.

After providing these autobiographical details, Kristeva moves to her intimate relationship with Benveniste, describing it in similar terms to those that Jardine uses: namely, that it is based on the secret and the sacred:

> As a young Bulgarian student with a grant from the French government, I had the privilege… to be in charge of the scientific secretariat of the 'Semiotic

> Research' publication *Social Science Information* (UNESCO) first, then of the AISS. As I had read with passionate interest volume 1 of *Problems in General Linguistics,* this setting gave me the opportunity to have a unique personal relationship with Benveniste. The meetings were held at his home on rue Monticelli near the Porte d'Orleans. Still today I remember his office as a 'sacred' place (as it appeared to the shy girl I was then), where the great scholar with a smile of keen intelligence… seemed to hold the secrets of the immemorial Indo-European and Iranian worlds. It was a rather dark study where books lined the walls and were piled on the floor, and old library collections whose scent, mingling with the vapor of the tea that accompanied the biscuits we never touched, evoked ancient scrolls for me (Kristeva, "Emile Benveniste, A Linguist Who Neither Says Nor Hides, But Signifies" 52).

What is interesting to me is how Benveniste's and Goldmann's relationship to the biscuits is constructed as the good/bad Kleinian breast. Since he was more interested in learning from ancient texts, Benveniste never touched the biscuits as a good breast; in contrast, the "adorable" Goldmann is constructed as the bad breast who promptly devoured the cakes and cookies at the tea salon. Significantly, Kristeva also associates the sacred texts with biscuits; the books were devoured, and the biscuits remained untouched, reminding her of ancient scrolls. Scrolls were one of the ancient Egyptian civilizations' first record-keeping devices. And yet, biscuits that looked like parts of ancient civilization, archaic forces, couldn't be touched nor eaten by Kristeva or her fatherly soulmate, Benveniste.

Kristeva understands the great linguist in how he historicizes his relationship with foreign and ancient languages. Just as Kristeva's father prayed for the alphabet and sought sacredness and spirituality in language, Benveniste's learning of Sanskrit (found in religions such as Hinduism and Buddhism) is also linked to the element of sacredness:

> These latter reflections, based on listening to ancient Indian poetics from the sacred texts that Sanskritist Benveniste fully mastered, resonated with the late 1960s, where social and generational unrest calling for 'imagination in power' sought the secret and innovative rationales of meaning in existence in the experience of (avant-garde or women's) writing (Kristeva, "Emile Benveniste, A Linguist Who Neither Says Nor Hides, But Signifies" 50).

Kristeva's celebration of Benveniste's relationship with foreign language romanticizes his accomplishments and points to her grief that his work remains unfamiliar and little read today:

> Emile Benveniste was an austere scholar, a very great specialist of ancient languages, an expert in comparative grammar, and a general linguistics authority. He knew Sanskrit, Hittite, Tocharian, Indian, Iranian, Greek, Latin, all the Indo-European languages, and when he was over fifty, plunged into the Amerindian languages, but his work, impressively audacious and yet unpretentious and outwardly modest, remains relatively unknown and little read today (Kristeva, "Emile Benveniste, A Linguist Who Neither Says Nor Hides, But Signifies" 34).

For Kristeva, Benveniste developed an understanding of language that historicized the signifying process of language and writing through foreign tongues. In Kristeva's words:

> *Together,* writing and language constitute *different types of signifying processes*. And since languages understood as enunciation experiences "contain" the referent as well as the subjective experiences of the speakers in their acts and their discursive exchanges (lessons 1-7), these are very different ways of *being in the world* that these types of writing reveal, consolidate and re-create. Thus a quite clear "dividing line" is drawn: in the East (in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and as far as China) "writing civilizations" predominate, characterized by the primacy of writing, where the scribe (the "wise calligrapher" in China) plays a central role in the organization of the society; while in the West, in the Indo-European world, a devaluing, even a certain contempt of writing (in Homer, *grapho* only means "scribble") prevails (lesson 14). (Kristeva, "Emile Benveniste, A Linguist Who Neither Says Nor Hides, But Signifies" 44).

Kristeva writes about linguistics and the history of writing while exploring Benveniste's "double signifyingness of language," which is significant for establishing relations between writing and language. In thinking about types of language, Kristeva notes the Benvenistean typology, the signifying process of both language and writing: while writing is the sign system that semiotizes itself, language is the "subjective experience of the speakers."

As a child, Kristeva's father had encouraged Kristeva to negotiate the problems of subjectivity and language between *Az* (meaning "I" in Bulgarian) and *bouk*, which is parallel to how Kristeva learned from Benveniste's key lessons about subjectivity in language. Kristeva

posed her father spontaneous questions, as discussed in chapter three: "Alphabet' is *Azbouka* in Bulgarian. 'Why *Azbouka*, Papa? Strange… *Az* (meaning "I" in Bulgarian), I get it: it's me. But *bouk*, would it be the book? *Le livre*?'" (Kristeva, "My Alphabet, or How I Am a Letter." 4). Through her lively interaction with her father as a child, Kristeva also learned to recognize, negotiate, and identify herself with books, the "I" in relation to an object. This is connected to how the adult Kristeva asked the great linguist about the significance of the term *senefiance*, where Benveniste's fatherly lessons to his young student brought him to the following questions:

> Closer to home, I think that Jean Paulhan's father used this term (*senefiance*). Do people still read in Bulgaria? And Eastern Europe in general, You know that *citati,* the Slavic root for 'to read,' dates back to the meaning of 'to count,' 'to respect' too' (Benveniste qtd in Kristeva 53, brackets mine).

When Kristeva again notes Benveniste's deep interest in her and his questions, she relates it to the lessons of translation from a sacred Sanskrit text:

> most often, he answered my questions with terse, somewhat provocative, remarks: *'You understand, I'm only interested in little things, the verb 'to be,' for example'* … Or, in guise of a response to my question, he would open the Sanskrit text of the *Rigveda* to translate appropriate passages for me directly into French. Then, after a few semantic or grammatical remarks, he returned to the contents of the 'story' and the 'characters' of this great collection of ancient Indian hymns, always in an elusive tone and a bit ironic… (Kristeva, "Emile Benveniste, A Linguist Who Neither Says Nor Hides, But Signifies" 52–53, italics mine).

His interest "in little things" like the verb 'to be' is like Kristeva's father's, a practicing Orthodox and passionate about letters, who also taught her lessons about the verb "to be":

> '*Az,* A in *azbouka*, designates the first letter, the A, and, as you said, it is clearly 'I' here meaning 'you'. *Bouki*, equal to the letter 6, signifies in old Slavonic 'the letters.; *Vedi,* B (make this B small) or V, our third letter, means 'I know.' *Glagoli*, r for G, is 'the Word'; *Dobro,* д for D, is, as in modern Bulgarian, 'the good'; *Est*, e for the letter E, is simply the very 'to be.'…" (Kristeva, "My Alphabet, or How I Am a Letter." 4)

Kristeva learned from her father early on that to write a letter of the alphabet is to "be," the good that writes itself. It is precisely from her father she learned early on to embody a letter of the

alphabet, that to become an “I” is “to be." And it seems to me that her transferential connection deepened with Benveniste, which is based on the symbolic father’s interest “in little things,” like the verb “to be,” which trained her to inscribe her textual art through the heart.

The Heart as the Centre

Kristeva’s answer to what makes a great linguist is useful in thinking about the diversity of languages and its relationship to the heart as the centre of thought. Ascribing the title of the great linguist to Benveniste, Kristeva writes, “Great linguists can be recognized by the fact that as they know and analyse *languages*, they discover properties of *language* through which they interpret and innovate ‘being in the world’ of speaking subjects” (Kristeva 33, italics original). Kristeva’s appreciation of the “great linguist” can be seen in how she integrates the heart as an important symbol to centralize his work, which is similar to how Benveniste called her to his deathbed and left a secret message on her chest, close to her heart: “It is certainly not a coincidence if, at the heart of this work in progress on the modalities of the specific signifying process of language… within the diversity of sensations and human pleasures” (Kristeva, “Emile Benveniste, A Linguist Who Neither Says Nor Hides, But Signifies” 47). It was also Benveniste who helped Kristeva to move towards the heart of the human condition – the silently latent and its iconization of interior language, which Kristeva located in the anarchic forces of the Freudian unconscious.

The structure of language and its “signifyingness” is related to the experience of transcendence through the centre. It is precisely poetic language, a diversification of interior languages that are composed of human sensations and pleasures. Kristeva urges her readers to pay attention to the exploration of language by once again going toward the heart:

> The tragic conflicts of the twentieth century tend to obscure the fact that it was also a time of exceptional language exploration going to the *heart* of the human condition: as a central activity, language conditions, contains and elucidates all human experience (Kristeva 34, italics mine).

The poetic message is about transcendence: "it only transcends the 'given meaning' by the 'activity of the speaker set in the center'" (Kristeva, "Emile Benveniste, A Linguist Who Neither Says Nor Hides, But Signifies" 48). Kristeva writes that the diversity of sensations in the bodily experiences is the heart and soul of the lyrical message in the Benvenistean thought that one speaks through an *emotion*:

> From the outset, Benveniste established what the singularities of this 'translinguistics' were: the poetic message, 'completely contrary to the properties of communication,' 'speaks an *emotion* that language 'transmits' but does not 'describe'. Likewise, the *referent* of poetic language is 'inside the expression' while in ordinary language the object is outside language. It '*proceeds from the body of the poet,'* 'they are muscular impressions," said Benveniste. Poetic, 'sensitive' language 'only addresses entities involved in this new community: the poet's soul, God/nature, the absent/the creature of memories and fiction' (Kristeva 49, italics original).

For Kristeva, this middle point is where poetic language is transmitted as a "translinguistics," a "signifyingness of art," which is the non-convention in poetic text. Language can be understood "from the body of the poet," who can enter the hidden and mysterious through what is "inside the expression." It is writing in a poetic language that one can find a space of freedom, doing away with singular signifying systems and moving towards a sharable area of interpretation and interruption of language itself. Writing can become a poetic experience, which brings us to the poetical message of the "muscular impressions," where a writer like Benveniste can hide within the interior language – the metaphorical character of poetic language. Kristeva associates Benveniste's unique ability to hide and signify while connecting it to the centre of his work as a *Benvenistean* style of thought:

> in the center of all of this abounding diversity to which he was always tuned in… he practiced what must be called a *Benvenistean* style of thought where the morphosyntactic detail *joined* the constant questioning of fundamental linguistic and/or philosophical categories and which was characterized, other than by the refusal to 'say,' by shunning the aestheticism that 'hides'… by the will to 'signify' (to open to thought, to problematize, to question) and to determine how to *signify* is generated in the formal apparatus of language (Kristeva, "Emile Benveniste, A Linguist Who Neither Says Nor Hides, But Signifies" 36).

For Kristeva, the search for language in the Benvenistean style of thought centralizes what he neither says nor hides but signifies, and yet, when we speak, we also signify. Perhaps in his own hiding of the sacred secrets, the great linguist constructs language, as original signs of the universe, which generate discourse that is shareable in relation to other 'sign systems.' In Kristeva's words "Benveniste intended to show how the *formal apparatus* of language allowed it not only to 'name' objects and situations but moreover to 'generate' discourse with original meaning… the language organism… is the only sign system capable of providing an *interpretation*" (Kristeva 38, italics original). When Benveniste called her to his deathbed, as discussed in the epigraph from Jardine, he left a secret message. In his very Benvenistean style of the secret and sacred, Benveniste left Kristeva a message on her chest, a "sign system" as "capable of providing an interpretation" as Kristeva negotiated the conception of his signs. The hidden message was inscribed close to his student's heart, permitting me to identify Kristeva's theoretical interpretation of the mysterious word, Theo.

THEO/ Structural Fathers

When Benveniste communicated the secret message of THEO on Kristeva's chest, he transforms himself into a voiceless poet who is still at the root of his inner touch, even though he was unable to speak after his stroke. When Kristeva describes the circumstances of Benveniste's death in

"Emile Benveniste, A Linguist Who Neither Says Nor Hides, But Signifies," her account differs from Jardine's in that it includes more details of one of their last encounters:

> In the course of one of these meetings… He asked me to come close to his bed, pulled himself up, extended his index finger… and, very timidly, with the same adolescent smile, started to 'write' on my blouse. Surprised, overwhelmed as much as embarrassed, I did not dare move and could not guess what he wanted to write or draw with this strange gesture. I asked him if he wanted something to drink, read, or hear. He shook his head 'No' and again began to draw on my chest these illegible as well as upsetting signs. Finally I gave him a sheet of paper and a pen. And then, with the same writing and block capital letters that he had chosen to dedicate his book to me, he wrote: THEO (Kristeva, "Emile Benveniste, A Linguist Who Neither Says Nor Hides, But Signifies" 56).

By recounting the process of Benveniste's writing on her blouse and then on paper, Jardine's account is slightly different from Kristeva's retelling of this story, which provides more of an emotional connection between the symbolic father and daughter. Unlike Jardine's account, which provides the details of their relationship, Kristeva's biographical details of Benveniste's life are coupled with his writings, which reflect different layers of Benveniste's theoretical ideas.

My reading of Kristeva's last encounter with Benveniste is also indebted to Kristeva's writings about Benveniste's theoretical ideas, particularly how Benveniste's life and writing come to speak to one another by mirroring and repeating each other. Even though Benveniste was paralyzed, he still found a peculiar way to leave his beloved student a hidden message of THEO through the transferred speech, the interior language, pointing to "the creation of the world by the Word." (Kristeva, "Emile Benveniste, A Linguist Who Neither Says Nor Hides, But Signifies" 47) Theo, an ancient Greek word that means "gift of God," consists of secret and sacred letters inscribed on her heart.

By using language and writing to send a message, Benveniste inscribes his poetic melodies on the blank page. Kristeva writes about the experience of hand and speech in Benveniste's writing:

> ‘The hand and speech stand together in the invention of writing,’ wrote Benveniste. The writing/speech relation is equivalent to speech heard/speech uttered. Writing reclaims speech to transmit, communicate, but also to recognize (i.e., the semiotic) and understand (i.e., the semantic). Writing is fully involved in the *inter-pretense* of language. This relay of fixed speech in a sign system remains a system of speech, provided that the letter is understood as a signifying process able to further generate other sign systems, even including digital blogs and Twitter (Kristeva, “Emile Benveniste, A Linguist Who Neither Says Nor Hides, But Signifies” 46–47).

Kristeva’s understanding of the relation between writing/speech draws on through the sign system that Benveniste could transmit and communicate to Kristeva even though the great linguist was verbally paralyzed. She dares to interpret the act of writing THEO concerning his theory of the diversity of languages:

> This ‘THEO’ had a meaning…. I can only hazard a reading. The fates of our respective personal histories had put me on this road so that he could send me a message before dying, a message that he insisted on drawing on a body… *the semantic’ of our discourse* (such as we communicate through dialogues in our temporal existences), *the diversity of our languages and language itself engender this ‘semiotic ability’* (to which the unpronounceable graphics [YHWH] attest, but that the professor had undertaken to analyse with the tools of Greek onto-theology [THEO] and thanks to its scientific developments) *in the encounter of the ‘interior languages’ of our subjectivities* (Kristeva, “Emile Benveniste, A Linguist Who Neither Says Nor Hides, But Signifies” 56–57, italics original).

While Kristeva’s reading of the THEO comes from Benveniste’s drawing on her body, the message serves as a reminder to Kristeva of the “double signifyingness” of each one of us: the semantic is part of the complex signifying process of discourse where we are part of history-making through language: when we speak, we encounter the “interior languages of our subjectivities” as we become part of collective unconscious history.

When Benveniste inscribes the message on Kristeva’s body and then transfers it on paper, he is represented as an important symbolic father since he chose to send his foreign student the mysterious message of Theo, which is both sacred and secret, spiritual and unknown. The

symbolic father's "upsetting signs" on Kristeva's blouse, secret words later to be written on the blank page as THEO, are significant in symbolizing the desiring fathers. In Kristeva's account, the secret and sacred fathers connect to Kristeva's understanding of the Benvenistean style of thought – the "interior languages of our subjectivities." When Benveniste appropriates the symbolic capacity to hide the sublimatory jouissance of THEO to signify partial substitutes, the anxiety related to paternal death is signified.

Kristeva's writings on real and symbolic fathers in her "A Father is Being Beaten to Death" are also helpful in describing the secrets of the sacred, which often encounter the notion of death. The psychical role of structural fathers, both living and dead, underpins the guilt of the daughter, which ties them to the paternal complex modulated through religiosity. Kristeva's understanding of the psychoanalytic listening of the therapist complicates the religious and mystical experiences as critical foundations of individuation. Kristeva's notion of the "dead father" is significant in psychoanalysis: "The 'dead father' is a clinical experience I have often encountered with my analysands in a number of variations that resonate with my countertransference" (Kristeva, "A Father Is Being Beaten to Death" 84). Even though this text begins by describing her emotions surrounding her father's murder, she points out that it is not her biological father she wants to talk about but instead, the transferential and counter-transferential connections she wishes to make to historical, mythical, and spiritual symbolic father figures. Through the loss of symbolic fathers, Kristeva subliminally works through the accounts of her father's death, to be discussed in chapter five – the guilt that overtakes the daughter's psyche from the father's passing and the intense grief initially experienced as melancholia. Kristeva pays attention to her feelings in the text, which are part of her personal work of mourning:

> I mention this story, however, only because the grief and melancholy I felt after my father's death, as well as their working through – sublimation, underlie the analyses that I intend to speak about today, and in which you will clearly hear personal auto-analytical and countertransferential connotations (Kristeva, "A Father Is Being Beaten to Death" 85).

As the father's death is processed through transference and countertransference, the Freudian "dead" father dies on the couch. As he is abjected, he can be reborn in a clinical relationship through sublimation and language.

Analysis and working through transference and countertransference permit one to revive and restore the dead fathers, to take pleasure in killing and resurrecting the figures of paternity. In connecting the "dead father" to figures of paternity, Kristeva describes the relation between symbolic fathers, the Freudian need to know and the desire to believe:

> The Freudian 'dead father,' a condition of existence for the human condition, died on the cross 2000 years ago. The founder of psychoanalysis, who was a man of the Enlightenment, began by putting love on the couch. He went back in time to the love of the father and the mother, taking the gamble (which is not a matter of faith but rather of play between needing to believe and desiring to know) that 'I' can free myself from my genitors, and even for myself and my loves, provided I am an analysis, perpetual dissolution, in transference – countertransference. This supposes that there is not only one dead Father, but figures of paternity and of numerous loves in which I take pleasure, and which I kill and resurrect when I speak, love, and think. Before you, psychoanalysts, I argue that the need to believe is an ensemble of *impassable père-versions* of the speaking being, and that the *mère-versions* themselves – successively discouraged and encouraged by feminism, contraception, and various forms of medically assisted procreation – are no exception to the rule. And finally, that the 'clash of religions' could be clarified, if not elucidated, by our psychoanalytic listening (Kristeva, "A Father Is Being Beaten to Death" 99).

For Kristeva, the "need to believe" is not a call for spiritual revival but an equation with the Freudian repressed – the desire to know can sublimate paternal love on the couch. The Freudian secularization of religion, "the need to believe," is a metaphor for a drive to create meaning and a desire for knowledge. Kristeva's understanding of the need to believe, as located in religion, is translated into a passion for learning – the creative force to give meaning to life. Thus, the

paternal complex and the defence mechanism of guilt can be worked through in analysis. Finding partial and symbolic paternal figures helps to create a new object of substitution and sublimation, as Kristeva did in her early days in France as a graduate student.

For Kristeva, the child who enters individuation can now initiate culture, tolerate frustration, and obey religious prohibition through the loving recognition of the Third. Thus, as part of the primal identification with religious authority, the father becomes the groundwork for psychical development. The Freudian drive is associated with paternal desire and language, taboo and religion. The absolute ideal father, the "father of the individual prehistory," is part of the loving and caring father as a selfless paternal figure whom one associates with sublimatory capacity. The good-enough father's ability to recognize the child as a symbolic object brings forward the conviction of the autonomy of the "I," a sense of dignity, and the profound ability "to be."

Freud introduced the fantasy of a child being beaten in 1919 to provide a psychoanalytical interpretation of desire, speaking individuation, and identity – a critical time of psychosexual development when the speaking subject constitutes their sexual choices (Freud, "A Child Is Being Beaten"). In the primal scene of identification and separation, the child begins to mark out their difference in the triangular relationship of psychosexuality between the mother and father, love and speech in the Oedipal structure. Kristeva talks about the universality of biological fathers in comparison to the structural dead fathers by making the following argument:

> I will argue that the 'father complex' is universal but is nevertheless modulated very differently through the history of the various civilizations and religions; and today, when confronted with the new methods of procreation, we need to take into consideration these different varieties of this complex that concern real fathers in their relationship to the structural figure of the 'dead father,' or rather in the plural, the 'dead fathers' (Kristeva, "A Father Is Being Beaten to Death" 86).

Introjection of the love of the fathers, both dead and alive, provides a space where little girls can maintain an ambivalent desire for the mother – a preverbal experience – an attraction and aversion that falls into guilt and repression. Kristeva elaborates on the notion of repressed love by little girls towards their mother, constructed by the omnipotent presence of the father in the triangular relationship:

> Freud interprets: repression, which follows desire, turns love of the father and for the father into the punishment of another person who is jealously hated. The prototype of this other beaten person can only be the *mother*, the little girl's humiliated rival, even in the best of patriarchal families. And yet the ambivalent love of the little girl for her mother continues to protect the envied matron and looks for other targets to keep the loved/hated maternal object sheltered (Kristeva, "A Father Is Being Beaten to Death" 88, italics original).

Kristeva points to the necessity of suffering for little girls as the displacement of passion for both the real and structural fathers – the desire transformed into guilt, prohibition as abandonment, punishment, and death as passionate suffering.

As a Freudian analyst working with the paternal function within the love-hate transference, Kristeva understands that the death drive is related to paternal symbols that burst into the therapeutic relationship in the clinical space. For Kristeva, it is precisely in the narrative of a father beaten to death where the sublimatory jouissance becomes hidden: "Christianity both admitted and denied the putting to death of the father" (Kristeva, "A Father Is Being Beaten to Death" 95). Hence, the love in transference for Kristeva is part of the process where the father's death is connected to the sadomasochistic desire for the father's law that Christianity both evokes and denies. The repressed drives of aggression associated with the symbolic fathers are found based on the difficulty between desire and suffering, mysterious and sacred, and death and resurrection. The therapeutic bond is about discovering ends and new beginnings where living,

loving, and dying are part of the passionate suffering of desirable fathers and attentive process of the intimate psychoanalytic listening.

Conclusion

By reading the parts in Jardine's intellectual biography about Kristeva's arrival in Paris and the relations she cultivates there with influential men, I have specifically articulated Benveniste's connection to the secret and the sacred to Kristeva's father while elucidating the rewards and success Kristeva received for moving into history, subjectivity, and psychoanalysis. I have explored Jardine's account of Kristeva's relationships with three male figures who were essential to her and offered her intellectual support: Goldmann, Barthes, and Benveniste. I began by establishing the meeting at the tea salon between Goldmann and Kristeva, which formed the basis for their initial supervisory relationship. The young and ambitious Kristeva continued to build her interest in how an individual gets inserted into language and history psychoanalytically rather than via economics. Then, I turned toward Kristeva's relations with Barthes, which had to do with his idealization of Kristeva as a mysterious and fetishized stranger. Kristeva's continual desire to locate new love objects and attachments to paternal figures such as Barthes was a way to discover psychic rebirth in France through paternal relations. Third, I illustrate the mysteriously secretive and sacred elements in Jardine's account of the relationship between Kristeva and Benveniste. Kristeva was particularly interested in bonding with her fatherly soulmate based on his understanding of subjectivity and language. What links these relationships is how these collaborations with masculine entities, particularly Benveniste, are part of the Kristevian childhood necessity to attach to her own father.

Chapter 5: The Maternal Holding Experience: Life and Death, Tears and Blood

> Kristeva has compared what came next to the awful feeling that overtook her when she first arrived in France, as if the kind of *symbolic death* had installed itself inside of her. Something was terribly wrong with David. He was having psychomotor, neuro-muscular problems. He was having tremors soon after birth. And every time he suffered an attack, she felt like it was she who was going to die. There were comas where the infant was literally balanced between life and death. Each time he stabilized, she felt like they were reborn, getting another chance in life (Jardine 159, italics mine).

The last two chapters traced Kristeva's personal relations with her father and symbolic fathers, which are rooted in the theoretical apparatus of the separation and articulation of difference and the logic of individuation and language. In this chapter, I am interested in Kristeva entering the signifying and desiring space of motherhood through psychoanalysis. Jardine reveals Kristeva's joy and anxiety about becoming a mother, making possible a deeper psychoanalytic understanding of Kristeva's writings, which I explore to show that in them, literary mourning happens through tears and blood as symbols of abjection.

Kristeva started her own analysis after her return from China in 1974 and has been grateful for the insights that emerged with her good-enough psychoanalyst. After Kristeva entered the womb of therapy, she explored the heart of the psychoanalytic message and motherhood by giving birth to her son David in 1976. As I argue here, Kristeva's psychoanalytic work with Ilse Barande brought her to the creative matrix to give birth to life and theory, particularly her psychoanalytic theories of abjection. I establish that Kristeva's repressed infantile desire for the mother that was revealed in therapy becomes the missing link that formulates a relationship with her own mother, which translates into her theory of maternal care and her core ideas about abjection.

The first part of this chapter explores Jardine's examination of Kristeva's entrance into analysis with Barande and Kristeva's newfound desire for maternity. As a good-enough psychoanalyst, Barande helps Kristeva discover and reconstruct memories of the young Julia, who denied herself the maternal breast as a child. I also explore the circumstances with Barande that brought Kristeva to her theories of abjection. Then, I shift to analyzing the challenging circumstances around which Kristeva gave birth to her beloved son David. I explore the heart-stopping experiences that Kristeva has had with David, as gestured to in my epigraph from Jardine's biography. I conclude the section by illustrating how after giving birth to David, Kristeva advocates for a very specific discourse on maternity, a new ethics of care that encompasses reproduction and separation, loss and death.

In the second part of this chapter, I move toward Kristeva's writings on abjection in *Powers of Horror* (1980) to explore the internalized barriers of incorporating, splitting, and rejecting the maternal object of love. This text is vital for observing the links between femininity and maternity with abjection in theory – the social and cultural fears that are tied to stereotypes of mothers' bodies. Kristeva's writings on abjection help me establish a foundational experience of psychical development that emanates from the mother's body. The newborn infant is confronted with continuous separation, beginning with the umbilical cord and the uterine container. The abject has no definable object, but the mother's body sets a precedent for later detachments with objects. Thus, I provide insight into Kristeva's theoretical apparatus and how she constructs abjection as a critical process to break with the intimate bond of primary relations, a psychic necessity towards autonomy and independence.

The final part of this chapter examines Kristeva's theoretical undertaking in "Stabat Mater" (1977) and explores the concept of motherhood and the representations of tears in this

text. It was precisely in the year after the birth of her son David that Kristeva wrote this famous essay. It seems that it wasn't just her therapy but also her theorizing about motherhood that brought her the joy and pleasures of maternity. Kristeva develops a relation to the archetypal figure of the Virgin Mary, who embodies maternity as a generative force, life-giver, and sustainer. After tracing how Kristeva represents maternal hope in writing about Mary's tears in "Stabat Mater," I then read Kristevian's "Maternal Eroticism" from *Passions of Our Time*, published in 2018 to see how she analyzes motherhood as a holding container. In this more recent text, Kristeva extends her understanding to a maternal holding space that is also responsible for directing desires and discharging repressed impulses through an ethics of care, work, and love in transference. The connection between "Stabat Mater" and "Maternal Eroticism" is vital for me to establish the ambivalence and conflicts of joys and anxiety related to maternity, caught within the Freudian death drive.

Part I: Ilse Barande: Psychoanalysis and the Womb of Therapy

Once she began writing theoretical essays, speaking, and thinking about linguistics and semiotics, Kristeva entered the womb of therapy to experience the inner core of the psychoanalytic message. On the advice of her friend Iván Fónagy, she entered analysis with Ilse Barande (maiden name, Rothschild). Barande was a renowned expert on Ferenczi, who worked on the maternal and was a translator of Karl Abraham. Jardine includes a small biography of Barande that explains how Barande came to find her work on motherhood (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 132). Born in Mannheim, Germany, in 1928, Barand's family left her birth country in 1935 for Paris to escape Nazism. In the summer of 1942, Barande's mother was captured during the Vel d'Hiv roundup in Paris and was never

seen again. In Paris, Barande studied medicine and psychology and became a neuropsychiatrist. In 1953, she pursued training in psychoanalysis with the Psychoanalytic Society of Paris (SPP). The SPP is closest to Freud's teaching, and as I discus in the following chapter, it is what Kristeva aligned herself with when she decided to train as a psychoanalyst.

As someone who experienced the tragic loss of her mother, it seems that Barande understood the importance of bringing maternal loss and separation to the forefront of therapeutic relations. Kristeva may also have decided to choose a woman therapist since she had unconsciously recognized that the survival of psychical life coupled with intimacy depends upon returning to a female object. The first session between analyst and analysand did not last very long. Barande discussed with Kristeva her intentions for entering analysis. Kristeva continued to repeat that she did not have any "problems" and that she wanted to do therapy as a way "to move beyond the purely linguistic approach to language" (Jardine 131). As Jardine recounts, Barande helped Kristeva to discover how the young Julia had difficulty being able to "touch" her mother:

> it just so happened that that very day, my mother and I think maybe my father too were visiting from Sofia. They didn't come often, but I was still afraid at that time to go to Bulgaria to see them because of my fear that I wouldn't be allowed to return to France. Things went a little better later on once I had my French citizenship, became a mother, etc., and David and I were able to fly to Sofia… But that time, my mother was in Paris. I explained to Barande that my mother and I were very close, except that I had the impression that I had never really touched her except perhaps like a ball that touches the floor and then rebounds… And I would like to stay a bit on the floor… 'Is that all?' she asked. 'We can start whenever you're ready.' (Kristeva qtd in Jardine 131–32).

Kristeva's use of the metaphor of the ball to describe her relationship of loss with Kristina, as not really being able to "touch" her, echoes the "running away story" discussed in chapter two: "Kristeva would touch her mother's cheek and say 'Don't cry, Mama, I will take care of you…'" (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 46). Both anecdotes are about a disconnection from the maternal source – a denial of her mother while holding

memories of guilt and loss. Kristeva seems to have discovered her estrangement in France. Living life as a foreigner, she was able to work through maternal loss with her therapist. Unlike the young Julia, the adult Kristeva became capable of articulating her fear in psychoanalysis. Her longing to be close to Kristina is echoed by her desire to "touch" her – an internalized repression of the intense desire to hold onto her.

Kristeva disavows identification with her mother in the dollhouse and the running stories discussed in the first two chapters. Particularly in chapter two, I discuss that Kristeva as a child disavows and rejects the maternal archetypes without shedding a tear as she escapes into flowers and roses to diffuse maternal dimensions in the early years. It seems that Kristeva neither relates to nor identifies with the maternal model in her early years. But when Kristeva moves from reading to the couch, her ability to swim through thoughts and work therapeutically with Barande helped her to recognize a feeling of lack that has to do with her mother, which led to her own desire for maternity.

Kristeva's deep wishes and desires remained suppressed and are based on maternal deficiency, reconstructed through Kristina's limited presence and silence, discussed in chapter one. Kristeva seems to have entered the womb of therapy to explore her fears of maternal loss, salient and hidden behind her unconscious thoughts of the mother. While working with Barande on the couch, Kristeva moved towards "maternity":

> It also led to maternity. Kristeva had thought a bit about becoming a mother, but not seriously. In hindsight, she has realized that there had been for a long time a kind of 'insufficiency' in her life that had to do with her relationship with her mother. She had always been daddy's little girl. This shows clearly in the photos from Kristeva's childhood: she's almost always pictured with her father, often at the market holding giant melons! In her childhood, her mother was in the background (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 132).

Kristeva's recognition of her father's intense love for her is coupled with the realization of the "insufficiency" and the screen memory of her mother "in the background," which points to a maternal silence. Kristeva's analyst provides a psychological holding space for her client to come together in wholeness. Her psychoanalysis with Barande is based on a transferential relationship, which is a maternal link in therapy. Kristeva was able to mourn the loss of her relations with the mother while constructing a passion for motherhood, formulated through therapeutic relations with Barande.

When Kristeva entered psychoanalysis, she began to realize that it wasn't enough to simply read, listen, and think about language and human subjectivity. She also needed to experience her mysterious past, locked up in her mother tongue. It seems that Kristeva's good-enough analyst was sensitive to this need, living between languages herself. When Kristeva would get stuck explaining her dreams in French, Barande would encourage her to re-explain the scene by thinking it through in her mother tongue, Bulgarian: "Sometimes, when she entered into the twists and turns of a *complicated dream in French*, Barande asked her to say the same thing in Bulgarian. This led to various wordplays that served as keys to bits of her past locked up in her native language" (Jardine 132, italics mine). The difference between the two languages, Bulgarian and French, echoes the language of dreaming, which illustrates the dilemma of living between languages. Speaking her mother tongue in therapy was a significant way to translate a "complicated dream" while making sense of her childhood to discover loss.

In analysis with Barande, both French and food provide an ever-strong foundation for identification, attachment, and recognition of the maternal object. Speaking with Barande in therapy, Kristeva associates the language they are speaking in, French, with the sensation of food: "Speaking French with Barande, while talking about her childhood… It was also a way

into sensations, such as the taste of food" (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 132). The infant's primary relationship to the maternal breast and the mother's willingness to nurture the child through milk become the foundation for all the love substitutes later in life. Living as a foreigner in France and speaking French has also permitted Kristeva to re-access relations that are tied to languages. French is connected here with food, which is a way to enter the oral stage of her relationship with her mother. If the connection to maternal milk was through love, pleasure, and a sense of security, then it could be easily substituted with new objects of passion and interest. The Kristevian contradiction of fear of dependence and the desire to attach to the maternal object is displaced through transference and attachment to the French letters in analysis.

It is not her mother tongue but rather French that has permitted Kristeva to live as a thinker and a writer. In the following scene, Kristeva discusses the intimacy with the French language in analysis:

> I find that I speak today a very stereotypical Bulgarian at this point in my life. I continue to dream in Bulgarian; I can rediscover my childhood and other important events of my young life in Bulgaria. But I can't think in Bulgarian. During these past 40 years, I've done everything in French. The fact of having learned French at a young age, having done an analysis in French, raised a child in French, written novels in French – that has given me the possibility to live inside of French as a constant creation, a constant invention (Jardine 136,).

What is noteworthy for me is that Kristeva dreams and is able to discover her childhood in her mother tongue but is unable to think in Bulgarian. Thus, French becomes a space of constant creation, a holding space as she engages in psychoanalysis with Barande in a foreign tongue. Kristeva rediscovered her connection to the mother tongue in analysis as part of the wish for reparation through creation, an appropriation of the maternal body. Klein's account reminds us that children need a capacity for reparation and creation of

maternal relations to successfully mourn their depressive position. Drawing on Klein's object relations, Kristeva has suggested that one's ability to think emerges by first losing the mother. Kristeva represents the French language as a maternal holding container, which is demonstrated with: "to live inside of French as a constant creation." Thus, having done her analysis in French is essential since that foreign language is represented as a Winnicottian holding space, which is the sensational-based experience that forms the continuity of being wrapped and gently held in the mother's arms. The core of holding becomes a necessary experience throughout Kristeva's life in France, and speaking French to maintain the continuity of this experience remains a "constant invention."

Kristeva's therapy with Barande, speaking French, and her life as a foreigner all provided her with keys to the "mysterious inside." Psychoanalysis with Barande also provided "the key to the door":

> she links her still at that point fleeting access to the "alchemy of the world," her sensitivity to the sensations and sonorities of literary language, to her foreignness. For Kristeva, there is no doubt that it was *her life as a foreigner living with a foreign language* that finally truly *opened the door to the mysterious "inside"* of otherwise superficial, banal, syntax-produced, communicative meaning, ultimately allowing a *resurrection* of meaning and self. And (her) psychoanalysis provided the key to that door (Jardine 137, first two italics mine).

As I argued in chapter one, the doll's hole is a repressed desire to keep her mother w/hole as a child, which is connected to her childhood transitional objects being figured as secretive and mysterious, strange and unknown. In this chapter, we see how undergoing psychoanalysis helps her to discover the "mysterious insides" as part of a primal regression through constructive identification that had once been in destroyed in phantasy as a child. As I demonstrate here,

Kristeva's psychoanalysis with Barande was significant in helping her to reconstruct her relationship with the mysterious insides of the doll's hole, which enabled her to renew and sublimate the ever-strong foundation for attachment and identification with Kristina.

While Kristeva's analysis in French was useful to repair her primary loss, it also opened space for Kristeva to find autonomy and confidence. Kristeva moves toward the French poetic tradition and longing for symbolic recognition as she transitions away from the Bulgarian language. Therefore, it is compelling to see that as Kristeva leaves behind her mother's tongue, she searches for lost time with Barande, which helps her to find her "voice":

> while exploring baby talk on the couch, in the library she pursued with incredible focus her research and writing toward her doctorate, bringing psychoanalysis, semiotics, and her ruminations on foreignness, strangeness, and the uncanny into dialogue with each other. One could almost say that it was during those first four years of pursuing an analysis in French *in between* her intensive research into the poetic process in French literature that the Kristevian voice most familiar today to her followers began to emerge with confidence (Jardine 135, italics original).

As we also saw in chapter two, the French language is here again constructed here as a source of freedom, providing Kristeva the opportunity to grow and think as a writer.

Since entering analysis with her good-enough psychoanalyst, Kristeva has acknowledged her growth both privately and intellectually. But in one crucial instance, she forgot to credit her – during a conference on the maternal:

> Ilse Barande is not well known enough by the Psychoanalytic Society of Paris. Her writings on primary greediness, perversion, "mother-version,' and *Le Maternal singlier* [*Singular Maternity*] are completely ignored. Even I, at a conference on 'the maternal,' had planned to quote her. I saw her sitting in the front row, but pressed for time, I did not once pronounce her name. I found her in the hallway later and apologized. But it was too late. I felt complicit with what seemed to me to be a forgetting, if not a censoring on the part of our society. Ilse Barande died not long ago after that [in July 2012] and I never saw her again (Kristeva qtd in Jardine 134).

I read Kristeva's forgetting of Barande as part of the maternal link in transference, which echoes her experiencing of her mother in the "background." Freudian repetition compulsion is a key component of mental life where individuals act out and repeat distressed old patterns of behaviour. Though Kristeva saw Barande sitting in the front row, her failure to remember is part of the Freudian repetition compulsion to see the substitute mother in the background, just as she had done psychically as a child with her own mother. And yet, Barande, as the mother substitute becomes part of "the forgetting," similar to the ways in which Kristeva carefully put her doll and dollhouse away in the cupboard.

David Joyaux: The Joys and Miseries of Maternity

Kristeva realized motherhood was a necessary experience for her to embody what she was missing in life – perhaps as a way to repair her relationship with her own mother. As we saw in the previous section, by uncovering her relationship with her mother in analysis with Barande, Kristeva began to find a compatibility between intellectuality and maternity: it was precisely after her psychoanalysis with Barande in 1975 that she became pregnant. Kristeva's journey of motherhood – her discovery of pure bliss and maternal anxiety – is essential for establishing her relations to the maternal realm as a holding container, specifically when she became a mother to her son, David Joyaux.

Pregnancy for Kristeva was life-altering. According to Jardine, Kristeva's husband Philippe Sollers was initially not interested in having a baby, but this changed when David was born (on December 16, 1975). The new father showered love on his newborn:

> Philippe had chosen without hesitation the first name David – which enchanted me! David Joyaux, the name of his paternal family, son of Philippe Joyaux alias Sollers and of Julia Kristeva wife Joyaux. Without forcing himself, totally spontaneously, the new Papa showed himself to be attentive, holding, of an

> exceptional tenderness. I can still see him now, holding David against his heart, all swaddled, singing to him… (Kristeva qtd in Jardine 159).

Sollers is described here as taking on the holding and handling of the newborn as he maintained and facilitate a maternal provision of care. In Winnicott's understanding, a holding environment is a provision that occurs when the baby is held and handled satisfactorily. And yet, immediately after his birth, the newborn began to experience tremors. Watching her baby son having psychomotor and neuro-muscular problems, Kristeva experienced feelings of symbolic death: "she felt like it was she who was going to die" (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 159). The new parents' immense joy suddenly turned into intense fear as they dreaded losing their newborn. David survived the episode and was diagnosed with an orphan disease, a rare disability for which there is no known treatment.

As an infant, David required extensive care and had to be looked after every minute. Kristeva describes how her anxiety was constantly heightened since they were regularly in and out of hospitals. As a young mother, Kristeva wanted to be near her newborn baby every minute so that she could sing and engage in "baby talk" (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 160). Jardine identifies that Kristeva wanted to use her early experiences with David and devoted her time to developing closeness with him. But Kristeva experienced persistent anxiety under "the threat of death" as a new mother as she watched her baby son struggle with life and living while thinking about his relationship to language and socializing:

> Kristeva compares how she was feeling at the time to a Picasso painting. She was out of joint, with her head cut off, suffering a kind of castration, feeling constantly under the *threat of death*: 'It is a fatal blow for a mother to be confronted with the mortality of her child constantly, to think of nothing else but how to do everything possible so that he can live, and live his life in the best possible conditions… have a relationship to language, be socialized.'

> Giving Kristeva's intense relationship to language, one can only imagine the weightiness of the situation (Jardine 160–61, italics mine).

The experience of symbolic death and the Kristevian move towards writing and thinking constitute a passionate art that becomes a maternal holding container for the transformation of life and death, birth and text. Hence, the living and thinking body turns towards sublimation to produce a new language based on primary identification, which is to formulate the pain of symbolic death and trauma.

In the epigraph of this chapter, Kristeva describes how frantic she felt watching David balance between life and death and how afterwards she felt like they were being reborn together as survivors. David has thrived and has focused his energy on painting, music, boxing, and writing poetry. Kristeva's understanding of David's experiences of his disability is as follows: "David is very lucid about his situation, but never complains. Perhaps only once in a while when he has trouble finding words to name the experience of coma, or other limits. He writes of his suffering in laconic, tightly wound poems" (Kristeva qtd Jardine 163). Similar to David's desire for writing, Kristeva comes to terms with her own maternal drive as a writer, becoming attached to the ethics of care and love in the transference with David. The Kristevian understanding of maternal passion is a modulation of reliance and ethics for care, which she once again ties to her beloved son:

> *David's gift to his mother was the experience of reliance*, an ethic of care, an understanding of the singular bond that we call love… Reliance is the heart of motherhood, the enactment of care, in the creation of a true connection. Motherhood, in turn, is a source of optimism in an otherwise uncaring world (Jardine 166, italics mine).

Kristeva's transferential love as David's mother establishes a "true connection," a lifetime bond between the dyad. Unlike the gift of a doll and dollhouse that were thrust upon her and

disappointed the young Julia as a child, to the adult Kristeva her baby boy has been a delightful gift of care and reliance.

Winnicott's concept of the holding metaphor and his conception of the mother (or the analyst's role) becomes the Kristevian provision of holding and handling David by safeguarding the continuity of the emotional experience of maturation of subjectivity. Kristeva's desire to live in her universe as a multiverse, her living and thinking through multiversalisms, is part of her ability to take the risk to think, write, theorize, and philosophize while passionately living her life as a good-enough mother. Kristeva credits David for affording her the necessary intensity and boundless energy:

> Since David's birth, Kristeva's writing has never been the same. *All of her writing is grounded in her personal experience, and motherhood is no exception…* More generally speaking, she explains: 'My life as a mother, I live it with the gravity [it deserves], certainly as a result of psychoanalysis, it is integrated into [all of] my work. My readings, my writings, my patients themselves are clarified in new ways by what I live with David. He helped me understand words that were opaque or closed to me before his birth' (Jardine 167, italics mine).

As a good-enough mother, Kristeva began to compartmentalize her life so that she could look after David's needs as a mother while also writing, teaching, and seeing her patients as a psychoanalyst. Though this was initially difficult, she has learned to balance the art of maternity over the years. Through her love, care, and intimate connection with David, Kristeva, as a mother, writes about maternal reliance as an emotional and passionate state, locating feminine discourse in subversion and marginality, coming through the semiotic.

Over the years, the Kristevian tears of exile have found ways to dry up the eyes in which strangeness and sadness become an art of loving and living as a mother. In chapter two, I established how maternal tears represent the final separation and abjection of the infant from her body. Since her early childhood years, Kristeva learned to subliminally grieve the loss of the

intimate relationship through literature. While David's disability has been a life-altering event for his mother, here I suggest that Kristeva's relationship with tears is also worked through literature. For instance, Jardine illustrated a specific intense period in 2013, when David fell into a coma and Kristeva worked through her anxiety in her fiction:

> There was one difficult period in 2013 when he fell into an extended coma and was hospitalized for quite some time. Kristeva was frantic, especially because his care and hospital was subpar… Kristeva's heart-stopping experiences with these horrors are vividly captured in a line in her 2015 novel *The Enchanted Clock*. In the midst of hallucinations and meditations upon death – not to mention upon the less than admirable practices of the Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris – Nivi the character taking on Kristeva's voice, notices that her best friend, a new mother, does not cry in front of her baby in an effort to protect it from distress. Nivi notes, '*She learns to cry from the inside; she learns to be a mom*.' David did finally recover and he and his parents have worked hard to put this particularly traumatic medical episode behind them. They have more or less succeeded, always beginning again (Jardine 295, italics mine).

Mourning and grieving is a transferential technique of abjection and displacement, where Kristeva uses her desire for language to work through and theorize her pain. Rather than crying or falling silent, the mother who "learns to cry from the inside" is the one able to find sublimatory solutions. In the introductory quote to this epigraph, Kristeva compares the experience of watching her son fighting for life and death in his infancy to how she felt when she first landed in Paris. These experiences are equated with a symbolic death, installed within her (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 159). As a foreigner, Kristeva found strangeness that she reconstituted through the imaginative richness of the maternal holding experience, the memories that are formed in relation to tears. Her theorization is based on an understanding that is based on her own lived experience, which is a suppressed relation to the maternal body.

During analysis, Barande helped Kristeva give birth to her theory of abjection as Kristeva discussed the anxiety about motherhood. As Kristeva related to Jardine, the concept came in a dream:

> When on Ilse Barande's couch, I spoke of the joys and miseries of maternity: Am I subject or object? Empathy or rejection? Dependent and/or autonomous? On my couch, one of my patients confided that she had dreamed about a scene in Céline *Le Pont de Londres* [London Bridge]: violent pitching, horrible 'seasickness' [*mal de mer*], mother and son clinging to each other, vomiting. I awoke with this word: *abjection*. 'It is what you are living as well, in a way,' my analyst commented (Kristeva qtd in Jardine 195–96).

The abjection of Céline's antisemitism is like the good/bad Kleinian mother, who is desired only to become undesirable and filthy. Céline's understanding of Jews is represented as objects who are culturally constructed as abjects, a fascinating horror. Kristeva realized that the mother was being figured in a similar way to a racialized stranger that must be ejected forcefully, as undesirable and filthy. It was in analysis that Kristeva came to realize her understanding of motherhood as an unconsciously desired object but one that is transformed into an abject, where the maternal object forcefully becomes an Other so that the psychical process and development of separation can emerge.

It was precisely by becoming a good-enough mother to David that allowed Kristeva to develop her concept of abjection – mothers as objects of essential separation. Kristeva discovered the concept of abjection in analysis with Barande during a critical moment when David was cutting teeth and her mother was visiting:

> I remember that my mother was in France, taking care of David who was cutting teeth and not sleeping at night – nor was I of course. I'm on Ilse Barande's couch: 'I just don't know how I'm going to manage all of it – the baby, my mother, and this Céline with his *Voyage au bout de la nuit* – unbelievable!… Nothing but massacres, horror, abjection!' My analyst says, 'That's the word' (Kristeva qtd in Jardine 196).

What becomes critical is how when her mother visits her in France to help care for David, Kristeva begins to discover the process of psychic abjection. The fusion and fragility of subjects and objects is a key discussion with Barande on the couch, precisely when the adult Kristeva is now confronted with her own mother's body as a grandmother concerning her son's psychic development of cutting teeth.

Abjection is also demonstrated in Jardine's "running away" story of Kristeva and Kristina in the introductory narrative of chapter two. This is also a critical moment of psychic abjection, exemplified when Kristeva's mother asks the young Julia to stop running to the Park of Roses: "Please stop! Your knees are all bloody!" (Kristeva qtd in Jardine 46). Kristeva's traces of bloody knees from chapter two and her son's cutting teeth with her mother in this chapter are both instances of maternal desire, the stains of blood related to the concept of abjection and forceful separation to the necessity of psychical development. And yet, as a child Kristeva abjects her mother only to remain connected to flowers in chapter two, reflecting her understanding of her desire for the maternal to break the bond through bloody knees. My coupling of Kristeva's childhood story of bleeding knees with that of her son cutting teeth is to build on the importance of moving to the symbolic by maintaining the pre-objectal relationship. While for Kristeva, the bloody knees stand to breaking and separating from infantile dependency on Kristina, her psychical separation from David is based on her theories of abjection, which re-emerges through semiotic qualities, the realization and recognition of the dependence of the maternal ethics and care.

The bloodline, from Grandmother Nevena to Kristina and Kristeva to David, is a marker of a relation to a maternal identity that comes from without as a child's ego becomes threatened by its outside. In a 2020 interview with Martin Legros, Kristeva comes back to the generational

connection between David and blood, remembering her grandmother's trees where she occupied herself with French literature:

> Very early on, in addition to Russian, later English, I went to French nursery school, then to Alliance Française where I immersed myself in the French language through literature. I remember that I climbed in the plum trees of my grandmother declaiming the verses of Victor Hugo: 'On a barricade, in the middle of the paving stones / Soiled with *guilty blood* and *pure blood* washed, / A child of twelve years is taken with men. / Are you one of them, you?/ The child said: We are in it./ All right, said the officer, we are going to shoot you… Stupid death was ashamed, and the officer gave mercy.' One of the first poems I taught my son David (Legros, italics mine).

This passage establishes excellent literary and generational connections, conclusively linking Kristeva's grandmother's garden to her son's David learning of the verses of Victor Hugo. Thus, living and loving, life and death are processes marked with blood. For Kristeva, abjection maintains the pre-Oedipal relationship (pre-objectal relationship), and the violence of forceful separation, from one bloody body to another, is critical for psychic abjection. Since Kristeva's own body as a mother is not-yet-one, the child imagines it as a "receptacle," signified by blood, which generates a generational connection to archaic relationships. Unity is crumbled and recreated through the maternal space, where Kristevian subjectivity is initially contained. The aptitude for reparation is formulated, coupled with the anxiety of guilt that underlies our repressed drives, desires, pain, and pleasure. The Kleinian depressive position follows the schizoid-paranoid state, which the child overcomes by successfully entering poetic language.

The Oedipal model devalues the mother while drawing plenty of sustenance from her body, which is based on the repressed desire to keep her imprisoned but also strong enough to continue her work of care as a breast-giver. Kristeva's understanding of motherhood in the midst of patriarchy and "misplaced abjection" is helpful to illustrate this point:

> she sees the oppression of woman in patriarchy as "misplaced abjection" – that is, as a result of a historically impossible, largely un-thought relationship to the

> mother. Kristeva has often stated that it is a symptom of this problem that it is difficult to talk about maternity in a feminist context without sounding (or being accused of being) reactionary (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 152).

Kristeva provides a valuable discourse on maternal love, which she claims can be destroyed because of masculine separation and repudiation of femininity – mothers are equated with infantile ideals as part of domination.

It was finding her voice through her theories of abjection that Kristeva began to challenge the feminist movement and its discourse on motherhood. In particular, she pointed to the images of motherhood as vomit-inducing in Beauvoir:

> In Beauvoir's writing, there are horrible images of maternity as a polyp that eats you… that makes you vomit. In my book dedicated to her, I tried to pay her the homage she is due but also illuminate the texts where she speaks of maternity in such a negative way… I was of the generation that had more rights, for whom maternity didn't necessarily mean slavery. I didn't quite know how I was going to do it, but as usual, I didn't ask myself too many questions. I wanted to do it, so I did (Kristeva qtd in Jardine 133–34).

Beauvoir equates pregnancy with a digestive illness. In her writing, the inability to eat food during pregnancy for most women is coupled with feelings of disgust, which are represented as the mother's repressed inner desire to refuse the infant. Unlike Beauvoir's understanding of pregnancy and maternity, Kristeva has never seen her relations to David as a burden. While Beauvoir's writing equates maternity with the repressed wish to destroy the embryo, Kristeva's concept of maternal abjection is also theorized through the analogy of vomiting, but one that does not destroy the embryo. For Kristeva, the concept of abject is where the subject learns to differentiate itself from the object, by separating and expelling it like a vomit, realizing its own omnipotence and externality as part of psychical development. Unlike Beauvior's relating maternity to polyps and vomit, Kristeva's abjection tied to maternal objects is a process that is based on the reproduction and preservation of life through the mother's enactment of care.

For Kristeva, maternal reliance and ethics are in crisis in our contemporary times. Beauvoir is challenged once again in the intellectual biography for lacking an ethics of the maternal:

> [Kristeva] believes that another possible discourse on maternity – a feminist one – has *been weighed down by negative, even murderous*, visions of motherhood. She hopes that this can change. More specifically, Kristeva hopes that besides working to make the lives of mothers more possible with adequate childcare, parental leaves…. feminist intellectuals will take the lead in rethinking maternity symbolically. This is important because she is convinced that there can be no freedom for woman until there is a *maternal ethics*, a discourse and *practice of reliance*: 'The free woman is just being born,' wrote Simone de Beauvoir in the *Second Sex* (1949). There will not be a free woman as long as we lack an ethics of the maternal. But this ethics is just being born; it will be a herethics of reliance (Jardine 166–67, italics mine).

For Kristeva, the diminishing of motherhood and her loss is a regression to gendered polarities since mother's work functions as an important task for rearing and bearing children, critical for object relations. Insisting on the maternal over the material, the semiotic over the symbolic, Kristeva understands the speaking subject in history, as she becomes critical of feminist intellectuals who disregard a maternal ethics of reliance. Unlike Beauvoir's distorted relations to maternity, when Kristeva entered motherhood, she could examine the theoretical world and the intellectual space of the semiotic and *chora* closely, and the questions of maternity and motherhood moved to the forefront of her writing.

Part II: Bloody Abjection

Kristeva cannot think about living without thinking about loving her beloved son, David. In part I, I followed Jardine's narratives of Kristeva that focus on the joys and anxiety of motherhood, which help me to build on Kristeva's theoretical work in this part. It is noteworthy that Kristeva published *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* in 1980, five years after she initially

encountered a symbolic death-like experience with David's birth. It was precisely after David's birth that Kristeva moved to focus on the serious crisis of abjection, which she had also begun to analyze in her own patients. Kristeva's concept of abjection is important since the internalized mother is expelled out of the child's body, further moving towards healing and sublimation. Kristeva's understanding of the splitting of motherhood is tied to anxiety, which permeates the joys and miseries, fascination and repulsion of her body.

As Kristeva entered motherhood, abjection became an important insight into psychological states. For Kristeva, the initial psychical state of abjection is critical for forming a physical boundary between subjects and objects. The child in the anal stage is drawn towards purity and identity, and develops a heightened awareness of guilt and shame, the impure and the foreign, the self and the other. The structuring of the individual is what brings about the fusion and separation with the maternal before the self is stabilized.

Kristeva's examination of the role of the female in the symbolic order emphasizes the maternal rhythm in the semiotic as a site of the pre-Oedipal relationship to language. Abjection is important for constituting barriers of incorporating the primary site of love: "Abjection of others, of the other ('I feel like vomiting the mother'), of the analyst, the only violent link to the world. A rape of anality, a stifled aspiration towards an other as prohibited as it is desired – abject" (Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* 47). The act of puking the mother is associated with matricide, which is the process of individuation in the Kleinian phantasy. Separation from the primary origin appears as death, and the internalized fear of the mother is the anxiety of her annihilation and generative power. As the speaking subject enters language, s/he murders the mother: "phallic idealization is built upon the pedestal of a putting-to-death of the feminine body" (Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* 357). The exclusion of the feminine, the constituting barrier between the

subject and object, is built upon symbolic recognition and idealization, a natural process to do away with the maternal body.

As discussed in chapter one, Kristeva's concept of the *chora* is the condition before the symbolic, which is the space of the semiotic and associated with the maternal – a space gendered feminine. While the first chapter focused on how the semiotic has to do with a very particular relationship between the infant and the mother, this chapter establishes that this process is not just about fusion but about how maternal separation is lived through bloody abjection. The semiotic begins with the primary object who provides language by recognizing infant's babbling and engaging in baby talk. As the infant enters the state between fusion and subjectivity, fascination and horror, it learns that it can survive through maternal dependence, even though it is without language. What is critical about the semiotic is its inherent ability to create a space of separation and abjection, identity and subjectivity. It is precisely in the process of maternal dependence and containment that the infant comes to recognize its ability to become a subject, by expelling the mother's body into a deep mysterious hole.

Kristevian's abjection is aligned with Kleinian matricide: the child depends on the 'Thing,' prepares to abject the mother, and enters into an immature defense, moving back into a depression or repressive reparation for melancholic *jouissance*. As an object that has been abjected, the mother becomes the rejected one who is expelled through a Kleinian matricide of splitting. On Barande's couch, Kristeva spoke about the joys and miseries of maternity through a dream about a scene in Céline's *Le pont de Londres*. In *Powers of Horror*, Kristeva returns to Céline and the ultimate abjection through the representation of the mother's body:

> Giving life – snatching life away: the Célinian mother is Janus-faced, she married beauty and death. She is a condition of writing, for life given without infinity aspires to find its supplement of lacework within words: she is also the black power who points to the ephemeral nature of sublimation and the

> unrelenting end of life, the death of man. The paranoid woman, another Célinian character, is perhaps a projection of the danger of death prompted within the speaking being by his perception of that part of himself he fantasies as maternal and feminine. Let me point out that the double aspect of the mother in Céline's writing defines it as scription of death on the one hand, and as revenge on the other… For everyday reasoning, things seem reversed; but in Céline's text, it is she who wants him dead, he who causes her to live (Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* 161).

Céline's psychical confrontation of the two-faced mother –beauty and death, fascination and repulsion, attraction and defensiveness – points out the double aspect of motherhood, which is an indefinite catharsis and discharge that emphasizes the horror of being. Céline's writing emerges in and out of abjection and points to the powers of horror through birth and bloody abjection:

> When Céline locates the ultimate of abjection – and thus the supreme and sole interest of literature – in the birth-giving scene, he makes amply clear which fantasy is involved; something *horrible to see* at the impossible doors of the invisible – the mother's body, the scene of scenes is here not the so-called primal scene but the one of giving birth, incest turned inside out, flayed identity. *Giving birth*: the height of *bloodshed* and life, scorching moment of hesitation (between inside and outside, ego and other, life and death)… (Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* 155, last two italics mine).

The image of the birthing scene related to the maternal flesh is about the primal fear of solitude and separation. The maternal element in the figure of defilement is tied to an aesthetic experience of the birth-giving scene, which is imagined as "horrible to see." The bloodshed itself stands as the repressed desire of the unification with the missing links to our materialized identities, lost once upon a time, from the inner inside towards the outer manifestation.

Death associated with femininity is part of the Kristevian understanding of abjection as the separation anxiety that children learn to deal with resistance and repression in adaptive ways. Writing about animals as objects of divine taboo, Kristeva also links the impurity of blood with death, femininity, and the religious desire for purification:

> blood, indicating the impure, takes on the 'animal' seme of the previous opposition and inherits the propensity for murder of which man must cleanse

> himself. But blood, as a vital element, also refers to women, fertility, and the assurance of fecundation. It thus becomes a fascinating semantic crossroads, the propitious place for abjection where *death* and *femininity*, *murder* and *procreation,* cessation of *life* and *vitality* all come together. 'But flesh with the life thereof, which is the *blood* thereof, shall ye not eat' (Genesis 9:4)" (Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* 96, last italics mine).

Like the religious element present in Kristeva's writings on maternal passions and the religious figure Mary in "Stabat Mater," Kristeva quotes Genesis here to equate abjection with blood that shall not be eaten. Kristeva's concept of abjection involves forbidden blood and is part of resisting (from) the maternal object, a natural way to break down the defenses and conflicts of the oral and anal drives. The sacred desire for purification and elimination of the forbidden bloody substance is part of seeing the impure as the maternal, whose blood-stained body is connected to menstruation and gestation. Since the archaic relationship with her body is unstable, purification is recommended when two elements or identities are blurred. The maternal is represented through borders that are never really clear or absolute, which constitutes the evacuation of the maternal container.

Children's unconscious need for and understanding of abjection allows them to build mature egos and to resolve the conflict of abjection. Mothers then are related to the abject since their bodies and bodily fluids serve as a reminder of the state before the subject gives up the abject – separates from it, even as the loss is mourned. At this point in psychical development, the speaking subject is neither conscious nor transcendental, whereas the abject is the improper, unclean, immoral – support for the symbolic that banishes and excludes the maternal object. Kristeva reminds us that the child must separate from the non-object and splits to become "one," as the mother becomes the other. This transferential love establishes itself first and foremost in the maternal body, and the Kristevian desire for a new ethics emerges from motherhood, understood as a form of reliance.

Kristeva's understanding of abjection is part of her own historical reflection, written through a Freudian analysis of the state of the mother-child relationship. Kristeva's childhood stories from chapter two, as collected by Jardine, reveal that she was in a state between fusion and subjectivity, but also repeated a denial of symbiosis with the mother and mastered a good-enough recipe for separation as a young child as she repressed the drive and escaped into defense mechanisms (particularly the secondary defenses of sublimation through flowers and literature).

The desire for abjection and matricide is a drive that comes from the body and the psyche, and for Kristeva, this desire moves from pain to the pleasure of repressed instinctual energy. The young Kristeva's drive and energy needed to be expressed; the discharge of aggression through maternal abjection is what allowed the young Kristeva to receive temporary satisfaction through the pleasure principle. As Kristeva discovers creativity to relocate maternal subjectivity, she uses the discourse of maternal ethics to reframe her primary relations. Even as Kristeva works with the pain of loss and separation of her relations, she marks the space by finding her voice – abjection in analysis. The instinctual drives of the abject are what create separation between object/subject; it is in the splitting that Kristina is created by Kristeva as both a good/bad object. Kristeva's own dependence for drive and pleasure is unconsciously negated, but also begins the process of mourning in sublimation through maternal reparation and her deep work in psychoanalysis.

She Holds: Mary's Tears and Maternal Reliance

Negating her relationship to tears as a child in chapter two, and disavowing tears as an adult, Kristeva theorizes Mary's tears in "Stabat Mater" (original French title "*Hérethique de l'amour*") in 1977 two years after David's birth. "Stabat Mater" helps us understand Kristeva's own entry

into motherhood, discovering the pure bliss and *jouissance* of the maternal holding container, coupled with the pain and anxiety of becoming a mother to her baby son (Kristeva, "Stabat Mater"). Winnicott's metaphor of the holding container provides an image of a mother tenderly cradling her babe in her arms when he/she is under stress, tightly being held against the chest. Therefore, the quality of the holding experience before the infant becomes a subject is part of the maternal holding and containing as an emotional experience, symbolized by the Christian tradition of the Virgin Mary.

The title "Stabat Mater" is a reference to a Latin hymn that describes the suffering of the Virgin Mary, who was full of grief as she experienced the agony of her son's crucifixion. This text challenges conventional writing on motherhood and maternal paranoia, pointing to Kristeva's revisiting and revaluing of motherhood. It signifies the fragmentation of motherhood as Kristeva breaks the text in two columns – the one side engages with Virgin Mary's historical development while her own bodily and psychic experiences of maternity, printed in bold, sit in the borders. Kristeva's celebration of motherhood is split in two columns, which represent the joys and miseries of maternity. Thus, the writing is a rupture of linear narratives as motherhood is structured as a sign of pleasure and repression. It highlights the maternal container as disruptive while holding possibilities for *jouissance*.

In seeking the lost pleasure of motherhood, Kristeva's experimental essay refuses to designate the positive/negative of motherhood, situating the text outside of linear time as she equates the cult of the Virgin Mary with her own story of motherhood. Using the example of maternity, Kristeva claims that we must neither refuse linguistic order nor accept the versions of femininity that the symbolic order prescribes. The archetype of the Virgin Mary embodies

maternity as a generative force, a life giver and sustainer. Unpacking and contemporary discourses on maternity, Kristeva revolutionizes the maternal as a transhistorical archetype.

In “Stabat Mater,” Freud contributes to the problems of a maternal discourse, providing a masculine appropriation of the maternal as a suppressed fantasy. For Freud, the maternal discourse is caught in primary narcissism, which is tied to the Freudian oral drives of infantilization. In “Maternal Eroticism," Kristeva extends her understanding of Stabat Mater as a holding container while coupling it with abjection. She explores abjection through the Freudian notion of Thanatos to explain how maternal eroticism is caught in the splitting of the love and death drives: when love emerges from Eros, the energy for Thanatos rebounds to bring and serve life towards an ethics of care, which is a larger part of maternal reliance of life and death. The mother is a holding object that is in the process of being taken over by the child’s primal needs of independence and separation. The mental representation of the mother as an object becomes an abject as part of an internal holding environment. The physical and emotional strain on the mother is based on the handling and feeding situation, which is her capacity to do the work of love and care. Thus, the mother’s ability to hold the Winnicottian environmental provision and the Kristevian maternal passion permits the child to enter into subjectivity.

For Kristeva, the modern understanding of motherhood remains without an understanding of reliance. She brings a new language of maternal ethics in flesh, which is that of *jouissance*. For her, the maternal object acquires pleasure in bringing the child into language, which she connects to the mother’s body as a holding space: “maternal eroticism to accompany the living through the threat of mortality and even death seems to me an integral part of it. She holds: *Stabat Mater*” (Kristeva, “Maternal Eroticism” 108). In "Maternal Eroticism," Kristeva extends her position to illustrate how mothers produce a capacity for meaning that signifies repressed

desires. As the mother becomes a holding container, it is also equated with the psychical responsibility of discharging the baby through abjection. It seems to me that the maternal emotional state is based on Winnicott's primary maternal preoccupation, where the mother's holding and her adaptation to her baby's primary needs based on the handling of its environment provides a beginning to come together as a self. By holding the space for the infant, the mother takes care of the infant's physical and psychological rhythms, taking on the role of good-enough mothering.

For Kristeva, the good-enough mother becomes connected and attached to an ethics of care and reliance as she initiates the process of abjection and its drive. Thus, maternal reliance and passion are a time for birth and death, a movement towards a new beginning – the plurality that fertilizes and multiplies, giving birth from the inner-inside. Pregnancy is a transformative period, and the process of labour is important for creating multiplicity and plurality. Yet, pregnancy is also a period of maternal reliance and a time for blood and death, a new beginning – the self that multiplies: "anxious annihilation that literally put me outside myself – and, without annihilating me, multiply me" (Kristeva, "Maternal Eroticism" 104). The bio-psychic events of pregnancy, labour, gestation, and nursing of the infant are all functions of maternal reliance. Thus, labour and birth are also passionate times. The mother becomes an other through fragility and fusion, a critical process for later multiplication. Kristeva writes about the psychical development of children through the multiverse:

> Like the 'dark energy' in modern astrophysical theories of cosmos that break up the Universe into Multiverse, maternal reliance *naturally contains the void, as well as the collapse of passion*. The 'I' created in maternal passion from then on becomes the 'multiverse' (Kristeva, "Maternal Eroticism" 104, italics original).

In this psychical process of the multiverse, the maternal also becomes the new "I" as she abjects the baby. She also becomes a void – a dark hole that conjures up the doll's hole that fascinated Kristeva as a child. When the mother sacrifices her body psychically for the child, she becomes a vital missing link. Attached to Thanatos in the hybridity of abjection, the Kristevian mother also practices a maternal ethics of care. This is one of the first moments when the drives of the erogenous zones contribute to the creation of phonemes; the baby's crying (mmm) out of hunger and pain stands for the mother's breast. Hence, the search for her soothing milk becomes the word mama.

The process of maternal reliance enables the infant to psychically attach and separate from love objects. In the hybridity of neither self nor other, the child rejects the mother and moves towards primary identification with the father. The triangular relationship creates an idealization of the father, whom even the mother enviously admires. In Kristeva's words: "maternal eroticism here *elects* the father of *election*" (Kristeva, "Maternal Eroticism" 107, italics original). As the mother brings a child to the father, her aptitude for abjection is also an election of paternity. To elect a Third for the child in a triangular relationship of love is part of maternal reliance for the psychical survival of the child. Kristeva explains this psychical developmental process: "the child frees the death drive (unbinding) itself and gains its libidinal satisfaction only by relinking this drive-based disunification with the pleasure of vital care and the sublimatory cycle" (Kristeva, "Maternal Eroticism" 112). The ethics of reliance is the establishment on intersubjective relations where the child frees itself from the drive energy towards sublimatory creations and significations to disavow the death drive.

Reliance is constructed as the work of negation in the feminist discourse on maternity because it is often about de-subjugating the subject, a process of fascination with, and eventual

repulsion of, the object. The necessity to construct a new maternal discourse also has to do with freeing the child from the death drive, moving towards the "sublimatory cycle." As the holding container, the realm of reliance is important since the mother risks her own psychic integrity. Kristeva writes about how maternal reliance is repulsed and abjected:

> This always biopsychic and drive-based violence perpetuates itself in the destiny of the death drive that I call *ab-jection*: the inevitable process of fascination-repulsion, where there is not yet either a subject or an object… The child 'loses' me ('kills me') in order to leave me…From my side, in order to separate myself from the child and rebecoming 'I,' I leave him by 'abjecting' him, and at the same time, I abject the Thing in which we were fused, the biopsychical *continuum* I had also become. For psychization to become finalized… maternal eroticism lets go of the death drive in the vital process, while connecting itself to it: the maternal transforms the *abjects*, rejected by the death drive, into the not-yet mother-*infans* space, into objects of care, survival, and life (Kristeva, "Maternal Eroticism" 106–07, italics original).

The force of abjection, perpetuated by psychical violence and separation, must come from a dependence on the good-enough mother's reliance. Sustaining itself through the capacity for dependence, the experience of maternal reliance permits the infants to enjoy a melancholic *jouissance* for their repression. Both children and mother are neither subject nor object but become abjects. During matricide, the maternal also becomes the "I" as she abjects while becoming a vital link to reject the drive. As she becomes attached to the death drive, she becomes attached to maternal care. The maternal support that makes a possession out of her children can only be accomplished with the actual death of the mother, freeing the child from obsessiveness compulsiveness of maternal reliance. Thus, Kristevian discourse is calling upon the balanced need for maternal discourse. To maintain her own cathexis, the mother needs to create her own transitional objects, which is to sublimate the art of loss as she seductively maintains the urgency of love and life, passion and care.

Conclusion

The Kristevian search for motherhood begins on the couch in analysis. Becoming a mother to David, Kristeva understands her newfound desire for motherhood as a space for transformation and rebirth that provides substance for her notion of maternal ethics and reliance. Kristeva's desire for a new ethics is part of her understanding of her motherhood journey that comes from David's dependence and enactment of care. Kristeva clarifies that the psychical life of the infant is based on creating a bloody separation from the mother's body, splitting her into two psychical parts as the Kleinian good and bad object. At the same time, she becomes the loved and the hated object because of the bodily need for dependence, coupled with the necessity of future autonomy. The necessity for a new discourse on motherhood based on transferential relations with the mother is based on my understanding of Kristeva's insights into the psychological development of fusion and subjectivity, fragility and loss, love and abjection.

Jardine's collection of Kristeva's stories identifies Kristeva's *jouissance* but also the anxiety of the maternal holding experience. While motherhood for Kristeva is a container for grief and passion, anxiety and joy, love and care, its ethical conditions are situated in the mother's sacrifice, marked by tears and blood as the mother directs and grieves the primary loss of separation. As a holding space, the Kristevian maternal subject is caught up in mourning the process of symbolic death. My reading of the textual, coupled with the personal stories of motherhood illustrate the theoretical analysis of abjection and insights into the semiotic. The Kristevian semiotic exposes its social arrangements, which permits me to pay critical attention to her understanding of the psychic mechanism in human subjectivity, particularly her theory of abjection and maternal reliance.

Chapter 6: Psychoanalysis: Poetic Listening and the Maternal Tongue

> For her, the unconscious is where the social subject is decentered, much like meaning is decentered in a poetic text, and most acutely in modern literary texts. The unconscious and the poetic text are about the articulation of desire, love, and hate, but without ready-made words or conventional moral codes; they are about what is too much for words, a dive into the unnameable, into strangeness, at the borders of the communicable. Analysis, for Kristeva, is a form of poetic listening – she has a sculpture of a large human ear on her desk – with the analyst facilitating an interpretation that neither an analysand nor a poetic text can generate on their own. From the beginning, she has wanted each analytic session to operate like a poem – or a dream. After all, to analyze literature is to interpret a culture's dreams, as she learned directly from Freud's book hidden in her Sofia home (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 155–56).

Kristeva has been a practicing psychoanalyst for over forty years. She began her training in 1974 and by 1979 had become fully licensed to practice. The previous chapter described how Kristeva entered the womb of therapy, experiencing the mother in the "background" while learning to take the pleasures of her loss. This chapter argues that Kristeva's desire for the mother through psychoanalysis is also based on how she repaired her primary relations to the mysterious insides of the doll's hole, discussed in chapter one. Kristeva's bold decision to become a psychoanalyst was coupled with her desire for motherhood, both of which began after she returned from China in 1974. I establish that Kristeva's move from becoming a good-enough mother to David to becoming a good-enough psychoanalyst creates a maternal transference of the semiotic, which initiates a mother-son substituted link in therapy.

In chapter four, I established the significance of Kristeva successfully encountering and building deep personal relationships with male mentors in Paris. In this chapter, I locate her independence of thought in her rejection of Jacques Lacan's offer to supervise her training as an analyst, choosing André Green instead. The first part of this chapter analyzes the circumstances Jardine includes in her intellectual biography that led Kristeva to become a therapist. My

interpretation of Jardine's stories of Kristeva and Lacan is that Lacan attempted to become a symbolic father for the young Bulgarian. The way Lacan is depicted in these scenarios is significant for the Kristevian-speaking body through which the memory of Lacanian theory translates into the Symbolic as a structure of gendered Oedipal triangular relations.

As Kristeva recognizes *holes* within Oedipal triangular relations, she moves towards *wholeness* by choosing to be clinically supervised by André Green. I establish that it is Kristeva's movement away from Lacan and to Green that also permitted her to develop her own form of psychoanalysis. Kristeva admired Green as a good-enough supervisor because of his insistence on giving precedence to the affects and drives in psychoanalysis, his careful reading of Winnicott and Klein, and his independence of thought. Jardine identifies a theoretical bond between Kristeva and Green, which enables me to analyze the textual relations in *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* (1987) and read them alongside Green's notion of the psychical dead mother complex from *Narcissime de vie, narcissisme de mort* (1982), which was gathered for the English reader in Green's *On Private Madness* (1983). My reading of the two texts in part II helps establish a theoretical and symbiotic relationship between Green and Kristeva. I suggest that Kristeva's psychoanalytic training with Green may have fulfilled her desire for, and idealization of, the mysterious insides of unconscious "psychical holes." Green's concept of "psychical holes" is related to her own early interest in the doll's hole, the presence and absence of the maternal transitional object analyzed in chapter one.

The second part of this chapter also reads two essential interviews with Kristeva from *Passions of Our Time* (2018). The first, "The Lacan Event," traces the personal details of the relationship Kristeva developed with Lacan after arriving in France as a graduate student. Unlike Jardine's intellectual biography, which offers very limited details of their relations, this interview

is useful for establishing that while Kristeva rejected Lacan's offer, she continued to develop his thoughts on psychoanalytic poetic listening to understand the translation of trauma through our mother tongue. Though Kristeva is interested in subjectivity and its relation to language, she diverges from Lacanian psychoanalysis as she emphasizes the instinctual and pre-linguistic importance of the mother tongue in forming both subjectivity and signification.

The final part of this chapter is a reading of Kristeva's analysis of her suicidal and schizophrenic client Patient B, from "The Contemporary Contribution of Psychoanalysis" in *Passions of Our Time* (2018). My interest in this psychoanalytic scene is based on how Kristeva forms a therapeutic relationship with her analysand. Patient B's inability to abject his mother's body manifested as an illness and desire for suicide. As his psychoanalyst, Kristeva locates the trauma of her patient's internalized somatic pain in his inability to "digest" the maternal object. The clinical example of Patient B is helpful since Kristeva explores his relations to his native language (French) and then abjects it through a foreign tongue (English). Kristeva gives importance to language in analysis by connecting maternal history to individual psychic experiences to trace the source of oppression and psychical pain from an attachment to the mother tongue. I establish that Kristeva's psychoanalysis with Patient B is vital for demonstrating the significance of Kristeva's intimate work on the couch as a "playground." Kristeva's unique and expanded form of psychoanalysis and her theoretical undertaking of matricide, related to the mother tongue, are brought to life on the couch.

Part I: Rejecting Lacanian Triangular Relations

As we know, before coming to France Kristeva had not acquired any knowledge of the psychoanalytic field except what was in her father's hidden copy of Freud's *Introductory*

Lectures on Psychoanalysis. In these lectures, Freud introduces general concepts of psychoanalysis and illustrates how nervous and neurotic patients can be treated through psychoanalytic treatments (Freud, *Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis*). As a new graduate student in France, Kristeva dove into psychoanalysis, reading Freud and Lacan at the same time. Kristeva's turn towards Freud's psychical human development and reading it simultaneously with Lacan's theories on bodily drives seems to be critical for drawing her own theory of linguistics and subjectivity. Kristeva seems to be deriving her notion of the speaking subject from a Lacanian understanding of the Freudian unconscious, while paying attention to the psychical forces that constrain the speaking subject.

Kristeva builds on Lacan's theory of the psychical elements of language and eventually finds her own voice by shifting her focus from his phallic system to her semiotic one, reconnecting the subject to the bodily instinctual forces of the mother and affects to the emotional and sensual related to the primary love objects. Jardine describes Lacan's legendary seminars in terms that evoke Kristeva's nostalgic memories of her father:

> She had also been attending Lacan's seminars where the church-like mood of those present, hanging on Lacan's every word as sacred, had deeply impacted her. As she read and listened, she began to perceive that she did not yet have access to the experiential core of the psychoanalytic message (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 129).

As I explore below, Kristeva's relationship with the famous psychoanalyst changed over time, prompting her to move away from him when he attempted to take the place of a symbolic father for the young Bulgarian.

Along with Lacan and other *Tel Quel* compatriots, Kristeva was set to leave for China on April 11, 1974 (with a return date of May 4, 1974). Her primary interest in China was cultural, as was Lacan's, who had learned Chinese at the School of Oriental Languages in Paris, and like

Kristeva, had worked with the sinologist, François Cheng. Jardine's intellectual biography includes important details about why Lacan never left with the *Tel Quel* compatriots for China: "The story of why Lacan ended up not going was never widely told for a long time, most likely in deference to the wishes of Lacan's family. But Kristeva tells it willingly now, with a smile" (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 147). Given Kristeva's permission, Jardine describes how the evening before their flight, Kristeva and Sollers had been scheduled to have dinner with Lacan and Thérèse Parisot (Lacan's mistress, designated as his "secretary") to finalize their plans. However, Parisot never showed up at the restaurant (*La Calèche),* and everyone began to panic and went to Parisot's apartment.

In telling this story to Jardine, Kristeva opens up the scene at Lacan's apartment to being read as a symptom of an Oedipal conflict. When travelling to Parisot's apartment with Sollers and Kristeva, Lacan claimed to be distraught because he was afraid of a patient who had been haunting him, known as "the recorder man." Jardine's recounting of the story includes the following:

> Everyone was beginning to panic, so they drove to her apartment. There was no answer when he rang the bell, so Lacan decided to use his key, but the lock was blocked on the inside by a key sitting in the lock. They went downstairs to talk to the concierge. When they turned the lights on in the courtyard, Kristeva saw the shadow of a man in Parisot's window and – completely naively – shouted 'A man!' Lacan screamed 'Assassin!' Sollers said to Kristeva, 'I think we should leave.' But instead, they went back upstairs and there was Thérèse Parisot with Moustapha Safouan, a well-known Lacanian analyst.[7] They tried to make up a story about a train strike… Lacan and Safouan started to yell… so Kristeva and Sollers left. Lacan and Parisot did not leave with them for China the next day. And Kristeva never again attended Lacan's seminar

[7] Moustapha Safouan was an Egyptian psychoanalyst, who underwent training with Lacan in 1949 and worked closely with Lacan until his death in 1981. He was the first to translate Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* into Arabic.

> (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 148).

Kristeva's memory of Lacan at the apartment with Parisot and Safouan can be read as an allegory for psychoanalysis, where Lacan's key, unable to open the door, becomes a symbol of unconscious repressed desires. Consequently, "the key sitting in the lock" helps block the contents of the Oedipal conflict. The mirroring of the key, the one "inside," signifies the secret messages being safeguarded from the "outside" since the potential Oedipal scene is repressed because of its dangerous contents.

The Lacanian scene of triangular relations, as repressed returns through displacement and substitution, makes another appearance in Jardine's intellectual biography after Kristeva's return from China. Kristeva first went to see Lacan so that he could advise her on a suitable analyst:

> Kristeva continued her search for a personal analyst and also initiated a search for a training sponsor. Immediately upon returning from China, she went to see Lacan to ask him who he thought would be the best analyst for her. Lacan said: 'Safouan.' Kristeva was so completely flabbergasted that she left in a rush, forgetting her umbrella. She never saw Lacan again. Had he lost it? Or had he merely forgotten the embarrassing incident with Parisot and Safouan just before the trip to China? Or was there something more 'sleazy' going on? (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 154)

The second scene (Lacan/Kristeva/Safouan) echoes the memory of the first one at the apartment (Safouan/Parisot/Lacan). Lacanian psychoanalysis is the repetition compulsion of positions in triangular structures, where the Oedipal structure repeats itself through its very sameness and difference.

While the two Lacanian scenes mirror each other based on their triangular relationships, the gendered position of each person returns in the symbolic structure of the Freudian repetition compulsion (that Lacan refers to as repetition automatism). Lacan's understanding of the importance of the Oedipal conflict, particularly the narcissistic infant, is that it is the one who

moves away from the self-absorbed grandiose stage of primary narcissism towards a gendered triangular relationship. For Lacan, the child's recognition of maternal castration and later identification with the father's prohibition in the patriarchal order is reinforced by the triangular structures of the id, ego, and superego – the repression of desires formulates a link between the structures of language and the unconscious mind. I suggest that while Lacan attempted to infantilize Kristeva by tying her into Oedipal relations, Kristeva's narratives of Lacan represent him as a symbolic threat, the paternal gaze. It seems that as Lacan propelled Kristeva to take the position of the child, he acquired the position for her of the father. Kristeva's refusal to be caught in triangular relations and her rejection of his seminar and his recommended sponsor reflect her desire for her independence of thought.

Kristeva's rejection of Lacan's proposal can be read as a repudiation of any dependence she might have on him. As in the Lacanian mirror stage, Kristeva recognized that she is a separate entity, which allowed her to separate from Lacan and turn towards her theoretical work on the semiotic. Kristeva's refusal of the infantile and gendered position is also linked to her early rejection of the dollhouse in favour of books. Kristeva's movement in both theoretical and personal stories helps her to find "holes" in Lacan's theories, and breaking away from the Lacanian mirror leads her towards an image of dis-identification and separation. Kristeva has challenged the Lacanian concept of desire in relation to gender and language, where subjectivity is not foreclosed by lack but rather can be worked through in poetic language.

While Lacan's theories of psychoanalysis offered Kristeva an important context in drawing on his accounts of subjectivity, she radically challenges his accounts of symbolic difference through her emphasis on the semiotic. For Kristeva, it is precisely before the Lacanian mirror stage that semiotic energies begin to prepare the child for language through the mother-

child relationship. While Lacan's mirror image functions as a space of alienation, Kristeva's own independence of thought comes through her understanding of the semiotic as the semiotic energies prepare the child for language. Kristeva conceptualizes her own agency and independence by resignifying the psychical process of identification in linguistic terms. When she glanced in the Lacanian mirror as an adult (i.e. based on the use of the mirror towards ego development and creating a sense of the "specular I"), she recognized alienation. Rejecting Lacan was a way to find herself as a "whole" object. Declining his offer and refusing to be caught in gendered triangular relations with the renowned psychoanalyst, Kristeva made the bold decision to undergo supervision with André Green.

André Green and Clinical Training

When Kristeva decided to become a psychoanalyst, she chose to align with the Psychoanalytic Society of Paris (SPP), which was closest to Freud's teaching. Kristeva moved towards taking on a therapeutic position – a new beginning, but this time as an analyst to hear the psychological mystery in letters:

> Kristeva felt that she had found her calling. Her sadness and loneliness began to lift even though her parents had just been denied a visa to come visit her in Paris. Her youthful enthusiasm returned to her 'when [she] was able to fully assume the therapeutic position, the one which allows the deceptions and dramas of those who have placed their faith in us to reverse themselves into possible new beginnings. It's another relationship to time. For the analysand and myself. That whole period was sparsely punctuated by moments of discouragement, solitude, and disillusionment, but not really any depression. It was punctuated by rebirths that carried me through, supported by 'a marriage considered as one of the fine arts.' That's fundamental. [I was] recognized and encouraged by Sollers, Barthes, Green. And Émile Benveniste who I'm not forgetting' (Kristeva qtd in Jardine 154–55).

One notes that in listing the male figures in her life that supported her through her solitude and isolation, Kristeva includes Green and not Lacan.

Green (1927-2012) was an Egyptian-born French psychoanalyst and is considered by Kristeva as one of the most influential minds of the twentieth century in the field of psychoanalysis. He travelled to Paris in 1946 to study medicine and completed his psychiatry exams in 1953. While in Paris, Green was able to establish links with St Anne's Hospital, which was a unique center at that time, specializing in psychiatry, psychology, and anthropology. Green began his personal analysis in 1956 with Maurice Bouvet, and when Bouvet passed away in 1960, Green continued with Jean Mallet and Catherine Prat, completing his psychoanalytic training in 1965. He became a member of the SPP and served as its president from 1986 to 1989.

Green's approach to psychoanalysis rests on the personal meaning of existence. His major contribution has been the concept of the dead mother complex, originally published in his 1983 *Narcissime de vie, narcissisme de mort* (*On Private Madness*), which I will read comparatively with Kristeva's *Black Sun* in part II. Green was a Freudian who attended Lacan's seminars between 1961-1967 but eventually moved away from Lacan, criticizing his neglect of affect and intellectual dishonesty: "[He] cheated everybody… the return to Freud was an excuse, it just meant going to Lacan" (Green qtd in Stimmel 48). It seems likely to me that Kristeva's bold choice of Green as her clinical supervisor may have been because of his critiques of Lacan. Green's recognition of Lacan's dishonesty may have reminded her of when he suggested Safouan as her clinical supervisor.

Unlike Lacan, Green appears as a good-enough supervisor in Jardine's account. It is noteworthy that Kristeva appreciated Green's insistence on the inclusion of affects and drives in psychoanalysis both theoretically and clinically. Green's theory of language and thinking, which emerges from the psychical absence of the mother, also seems to be significant for Kristeva. Green discusses the primary identification with the dead mother complex in *On Private Madness*

in terms of psychoanalytic transference, paying particular attention to the loss of the maternal object and the depressive position. Winnicott's not-me transitional object is parallel to Green's work on negative transference, which has to do with lack: the absence of a primary love object in a child's world. For Green, emptiness and non-being are not really a void but become a reality through the dead mother's complex in relation to transference (Green, "The Dead Mother" 148). According to his approach, the symptoms of depressives have to do with object loss and the depressive position of the mother. The dead mother's depresssive position is significant during the early process of psychical development of the child, providing the *key* to conflict and neurotic symptoms. This is unlike the earlier representation of the Lacanian key, which reveals the conflicts of the Oedipal phase.

Kristeva is also interested in the search for the absence, void, and loss of the "dead mother" within the psyche. Jardine recognises how Kristeva formed an intellectual bond with Green:

> Kristeva does not hesitate to acknowledge that it was Green who taught her psychoanalysis. Part of the bond between Green and Kristeva was that they shared a theoretical and literary corpus from Freud, Hegel, and Saussure to Proust, Conrad, and James. Like Kristeva, Green was fascinated by affect and the drives and, also like Kristeva, he was a serious reader of Klein and Winnicott: 'Through his example as an impenitent clinician who innovated by teaching and by writing, Green taught us that psychoanalysis is a political art that requires as much an affinity with madness as with respect for the general interest' (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 154).

It seems to me that through her clinical supervision with Green, and seeing her own analysands, Kristeva begins to identify a semiotic of madness, the poetic of psychotics, which can have its destructive side. And yet, "it was Green who taught her psychoanalysis."

It is significant for me that it was precisely after working with Green that Kristeva's ability to bring about a poetics of psychoanalysis emerges both in her theory and clinical work

with her clients. She begins to pay particular attention to depression and melancholy related to maternal loss both in her client's lived experiences and in the textual realm. Jardine identifies what Kristeva's relationship to poetry and literary texts has to do with her working as an analyst:

> Kristeva is at her most poetic when she describes why and how her work as an analyst with an analysand coincides with and intersects with her work as a critic with the literary text. She searches across practices – on the couch, in literature and art, in religious and especially mystical expression (she is often said that psychoanalysis could never have existed without the mystics) – for a freedom that is, above all else, creative as well as an encounter with otherness that breaks the chain of cause and effect, that revolts against adaptation to any pre-ordained plot (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 155).

For Kristeva, the starting point for a creative act is a wound; the artist or poet changes the cliches of language, using language to transcend their present situation of disappointment or betrayal, thus identifying the relationship between aesthetics and sublimation, mourning and melancholia.

Kristeva finished her analyst training in 1979. After working with Green and beginning to see patients privately, her writings in the 1980s and 1990s shifted to the crisis of the abject, the breakdown of love, melancholia and depression. One can see the influence of Kristeva's psychoanalytic training and her deep work on the couch in *Powers of Horror* (*Pouvoirs de l'horreur*, 1980), *Tales of Love* (*Histoires d'amour*, 1983), and *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* (*Soleil noir: dépression et mélancolie*, 1987). In her psychoanalytic trilogy, the lyrical power of Kristevian language and the connection of poetics and psychotics emerge. She also began to approach what she refers to as "maladies of the soul," where her clinical practice often mirrored her own writing. In 1993, Kristeva published *New Maladies of the Soul* (*Les nouvelles maladies de l'âme*), which looks at the psychic death of her clients and focuses on the necessity of psychoanalysis for thinking the social – a "permanent crisis" that Kristeva likens to another modern process, namely, the development of film:

> Held back by his aloofness, modern man is a narcissist – a narcissist who may suffer, but who feels no remorse. He manifests his suffering in his body and is afflicted with somatic symptoms… When he is not depressed, he becomes swept away by insignificant and valueless objects that offer a perverse pleasure, but no satisfaction… Modern man is losing his soul, but he does not know it, for the psychic apparatus is what registers representations and their meaningful values for the subject. Unfortunately, that dark room needs repair (Kristeva, *New Maladies of the Soul* 7–8).

While psychic space is being crushed, Kristeva as the good-enough psychoanalyst offers ideas about how to repair the dark room, representing the couch as holding a possibility to resist against totalitarianism and the automatization of the human spirit.

Part II: Maternal Loss: "Psychical Holes" and the "Thing"

I am intrigued by Jardine's representation of Kristeva and Green sharing a theoretical bond, which permits me in part II to read Kristeva's *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* (1987) together with Green's *On Private Madness* (1983). I suggest that Green's teachings may have left a long-lasting effect on Kristeva's psychoanalytic practice. Thus, my aim is to read the loss of a maternal heritage in both texts to trace the possibility of an intellectual and theoretical bond. Between Green's understanding of "psychical holes" and Kristeva's notion of the "Thing," I will establish how Kristeva forms subliminal relations that relate back to the doll's hole from chapter one.

Kristeva's theoretical writing in her *Black Sun* is about depression, a hidden phase of narcissism – where the depressive admires herself in an image, towards dying and death giving meaning to despair. In *Black Sun*, Kristeva traces transference depression in the infantile period and ties it to depressed feminine speech, embodied in tearless silence. For Kristeva, the discourse of the depressive is part of the mourning for the archaic "Thing" and a larger part of what she calls the "psychic representation of energy replacement" (Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and*

Melancholia 21). Kristeva writes about the depressive artist: "the artist consumed by melancholia is at the same time the most relentless in his struggle against the symbolic abdication that blankets him… Until death strikes or suicide becomes imperative for those who view it as a final triumph over the void of the lost object…" (Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* 9). When the depressed becomes a slave to her moods during the neurotic phase, she fears annihilation and dreads being devoured by the all-powerful mother. As she fails to move onto symbolizing, she is also unable to conceal aggressiveness towards the lost object. Putting herself to death is a dreadful disguise for massacring an other.

Green discusses the importance of the defense mechanism in children who take vengeance on the mother through a sadistic fantasy. However, the decathxis from the mother by the child is a murder without hatred for her. The loss of the breast or her abandonment bears the colours of mourning. What is noteworthy for me is that Kristeva's metaphor of the black sun echoes Green's association of black and depression: "Black as in severe depression, or blank as in states of emptiness to which one now pays justified attention" (Green, "The Dead Mother" 146). Green associates black with the hatred of the mother through depression, and blank is experienced as a narcissistic identification with mourning and loss. Unlike the black that relates to depression, blank mourning for Green is a negative hallucination, which can be worked through clinically, as the patient exhibits symptoms of emptiness and a desire for suicide.

When Kristeva traces the poetics of silence, she is merely interested in the hidden language of feminine depression. In Kristeva's illustration of feminine depression, the melancholic has a seductive voice behind the words she is incapable of articulating as she fails to signify. For Kristeva, the splitting of the love/hate object is buried into an empty space of the blank page, concealed behind an inability to vocalize the hatred within transference. Green's

blank emptiness is similar to Kristeva's semiology of melancholia, which is tied to the void of a lost object. Loss is an extended bereavement of grief, the "Thing" which bears no name. The inability to grieve the mother, or what Kristeva refers to as feminine depression, disavows the loss of love-object. Kristeva effectively illustrates the process of depression: "they [the depressed] cancel it out, suspend it, and nostalgically *fall* back on the real object (the Thing) of their loss, which is just what they do not manage to lose, to which they remain painfully riveted" (Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* 43, italics mine). The depressed may seek the mystery of the hole and mastery over the maternal object but finds empty signifiers as a coping mechanism. Unable to split or abject the primary object, the depressed becomes locked up in a psychical power struggle with the phallic mother.

Kristeva's understanding of depressed individuals is significant since she disavows the signifier and moves towards the no-Thing, denying a creative mourning of the lost object. For Green, the sudden change in the maternal universe is a process where the child initially experiences a happy and rich relationship, which is disrupted by the mother's bereavement, distress, and abandonment. The dead mother complex is not about the real death of the mother but rather, in Green's words: "the essential characteristic of this depression is that it takes place in the presence of the object, which is itself absorbed by a bereavement" (Green 149, italics original). For Green, the child is forced to move towards defense and decathexis, absorbed by the mother's bereavement, while unconsciously identifying with the grieving mother, who is imagined as deceased. Green writes that "being at the center of the maternal universe, it is clear that he interprets this deception as the consequence of his drives towards the object" (Green, "The Dead Mother" 150). Kristeva also writes in *Black Sun* about depression and objects as the inability to reference: "The depressed speak of nothing, they have nothing to speak of: glued to

the Thing (*Res*), they are without objects. That total and unsignifiable Thing is insignificant—it is a mere Nothing, their Nothing, Death" (Kristeva, *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* 51). Both Green and Kristeva represent the depressed as unable to establish transference with signifiable objects; they have nothing to reference, and so maternal hatred is internalized rather than symbolized as a “Thing.”

For Kristeva, as depressed persons speak a dead language through their inability to speak, they are foreigners to their mother tongues. Green’s forming of the dead mother is comparable to Kristeva’s understanding of the mother tongue, which is a dead language – the speech of silence that holds the depressed hostage in her own body, a detained stranger in a foreign land. Reading *Black Sun* with Green’s transference of the dead mother complex permits me to also draw on the constitution of holes from chapter one. My reading of Green’s “psychical holes" with Kristeva’s "Thing" is to establish how negative identification with the mother means repeating the unconscious traces of the primary trauma of separation and reunification with the dead mother, composed through the dark "hole."

Kristeva’s concept of abjection of the mother in the symbolic phase and the maternal “Thing” of mourning and melancholia is comparable to the “psychical holes” in Green’s dead mother complex. For Green, the mother’s depression and her lessening interest in her child leaves a narcissistic wound on the child that take the form of “psychical holes,” a blank anxiety when love suddenly disappears. Found in primary repression, Green articulates that depression “leaves traces in the unconscious in the form of psychical holes" (Green, “The Dead Mother” 146). The hole transforms the psyche of the child, where the loss of the love object becomes a loss of meaning. The quest to find meaning follows the decathexis of the distant mother, which directs the child to unconsciously identify with her depression.

The maternal depression and the emptiness experienced by the child is filled with new objects as the dead mother becomes a hallucination. Green establishes that when the mother is psychically murdered without hatred, the transference of depression becomes "the constitution of a hole":

> No instinctual destructiveness is to be inferred from this operation of decathexis of the maternal image. Its result is the constitution of a hole in the texture of object-relations with the mother, which does not prevent the surrounding cathexes from being maintained… she continues to love just as she continues to take care of him. However, as one says, 'her heart is not in it' (Green, "The Dead Mother" 151).

Resembling young Julia's desire for the doll's hole, Green's notion of the hole is an identification with the maternal object that the child cannot possess (because the mother is absorbed in her bereavement). To not be like her, the child transitions to become the object itself, either a Thing in Kristevian terms or a hole in Green's understanding of distancing itself from the mother's grief. Since the child fails to perform decathexis (to detach from her), s/he unconsciously becomes identified with her through the hole. This painful psychical process leaves the child alienated; reunification with the mother means identifying with the depressed mother and repeating the primary trauma and the "constitution of a hole."

For Green, the loss of the dead mother leaves behind the repressed memory of the wound and narcissistic identification with the hole itself. As Green writes, "She had been buried alive, but her tomb itself had disappeared. The *hole* that gaped in its place made solitude dreadful, as though the subject ran the risk of being sunk in it, body and possessions." (Green, "The Dead Mother" 154–55, italics mine). The memory of the maternal object is lost, and one is left with the psychic hole – the primary identification with the depressed mother. Positive identification is now turned into negative identification – "identification with the hole left by decathexis" (Green, "The Dead Mother" 155). Green suggests that when the child is unable to reconstruct relations

with the mother object, s/he is unable to divert aggressive impulses towards her. As the psychical process of projection is masked by the hole, Green claims the following: "the preservation of a capacity to surmount dismay over the loss of breast, by the creation of the patched breast, a piece of cognitive fabric which is destined to mask the hole left by the decathexis…" (Green, "The Dead Mother" 152). It is precisely projection into "highly productive intellectualization" or artistic creation that comes from the idealized ego that has left a "hole":

> This compromised unity of the ego which has a hole in it from now on, realizes itself either on the level of fantasy, which gives open expression to artistic creation, or on the level of knowledge, which is at the origin of highly productive intellectualization (Green, "The Dead Mother" 153).

Reading Green's understanding of the "hole," I am interested in analyzing Kristeva's disavowal of the dollhouse and her desire for the doll's hole from chapter one, which becomes a pre-condition for maternal separation and reparation. Kristeva's "productive intellectualization" since her childhood and her movement to become a psychoanalyst were to seek the "mysterious insides" of the unconscious hole. As the adult Kristeva becomes interested in the process of the psyche and writes about depression, she understands the poetics and psychotics as part of being locked within the hidden desires of the maternal realm. Kristeva's desire for holes since childhood becomes the idealized sublimations as Kristeva moves to work with her clients on the couch. While Kristeva goes to Green to bring the maternal element of "psychical holes," she develops a concept of subjectivity through poetic listening, which also becomes a basis for Kristeva's own psychoanalytic practice.

From the Lacanian Symbolic Father to the Mother Tongue

I now turn to an interview with Kristeva in "The Lacan Event" from *Passions of Our Time* (2018) to elaborate on relations between Kristeva and Lacan, whose seminar she attended at

École Normale. Similar to the intellectual biography from part I, Kristeva rejected Lacan's recommendation for an analyst but unlike it, she tells readers that she continued to value his thoughts on psychoanalytic listening based on the mother tongue. Unlike in Jardine's intellectual biography, we learn in this interview that Kristeva's first personal meeting with Lacan was based on an interview she had planned to conduct with him for a semiology journal. Kristeva tells her interviewer in "The Lacan Event" that a very strong bond founded on mutual respect developed in their first meeting – a dinner at La Caleche. Kristeva reveals that as the two were exiting the restaurant, Lacan inquired about her father's name:

> Coming out of the restaurant, Lacan asked me my father's first name. I told him his name was Stoyan (the Bulgarian version of Stephen), a 'signifier' whose etymology my father playfully traced to the Latin root *stostare:* 'he holds.' Lacan stopped and looked at the moon for some long minutes and then finally said to me: 'I see that it holds true.' I will always remember his expression, keen, enveloping, and very respectful. In the end, I never did the interview, but the exchanges went on (Kristeva, "The Lacan Event" 143).

Lacan understood that to become functioning adults, the child's needs and desires need to be directed from the maternal to the father's law. He believed that the father's intervention in the triangular relations is that he symbolizes the Name-of-the-Father. In responding to the meaning of Kristeva's father's name, a signifier that "holds true," Lacan forecloses maternal desire by placing the Name-of the-Father as a truth to be contained within the unconscious Oedipal structure. It seems that Lacan tried to take the position of the symbolic father in their first personal meeting, inquiring about the name of Kristeva's father, saying that "it holds true." And yet, Kristeva seems to be placing him in the position of the lack, which is my reading based on her recounting of the interview she never did.

Lacan introduced the key terms of the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real as a way to uncover the complex unconscious process of language. It was also a way to rewrite the Freudian

Oedipus phase, a counter-structure to Freud's division of the psyche into id, ego, and super-ego. The prohibitions, introduced by the Name-of-the Father, interrupt the symbiosis, and the child experiences the loss of the maternal object as s/he enters into the symbolic and represses the desire of the mother. The infant has no clear distinction between self and object, s/he recognizes castration – entrance into the acquisition of language leads to separation from the maternal body. What Kristeva adds to Lacan is an extension of his linguistic model to include a pre-Oedipal semiotic. While maternal desire is driven by lack for Lacan, for Kristeva language becomes critical as the child transitions into the symbolic – the "I" referring to a predetermined space. Unlike the alienated individual in Lacanian psychoanalysis, the Kristevian ego is capable of creating, displacing and sublimating the loss of the mother.

For Kristeva, Lacan's exploration of the Freudian unconscious and the role of language fails to pay critical attention to how the child depends on the mother for its bodily needs. Similar to Green's critiques of the intellectual dishonesty of Lacan in part I, Kristeva claims that "his theory of the unconscious 'structured like language' seemed to contradict the Freudian unconscious understood as a reservoir of drives…" (Kristeva, "The Lacan Event" 143). For Kristeva, it is a maternal ethics that enables the heterogeneous Freudian drives without prohibition or intervention. The child's first few words and his/her relations to language, such as the baby's cry for the mother is expressed through the maternal realm of the semiotic. And yet, it is the maternal object that painfully abjects the child by forcefully leading her/him towards independence and subjectivity. The echolalia becomes a primer of refusing distinction from the mother, which is the disordered state of *chora* that allows for no separation between the symbolic and the imaginary.

For Kristeva, the primary relations with the maternal body during the oral and anal phases escape the Oedipal crisis. Unlike the importance Lacan grants to the symbolic father in the Oedipal triangular relations, Kristeva's poetic force related to the maternal takes us back to the origin before separation – between the self and the mother in order to re-experience the division before the symbolic. Thus, the Lacanian framework sees the prelinguistic energy as emerging from the symbolic, but Kristeva articulates the poetic force of the semiotic as tied to the maternal object. Noting that Kristeva challenges Lacan's psychoanalytic interpretations as ignoring affects and drives, the interviewer asks Kristeva an important, bold question that has to do with comparing her work with Lacan: "So in the end you have gone further than Lacan in analyzing language?" (Kristeva, "The Lacan Event" 145). Kristeva doesn't directly answer this question but defines her notion of the semiotic, which she claims that she has studied through object relations theorists, paying particular attention to her supervisor Green:

> Research in psychoanalysis exists, despite its detractors, including in the copresence of sexuality and thought in language. After Melanie Klein, Winnicott and Bion in England, Piera Aulagnier's work in France, and especially André Green's work on the heterogeneity of the signifying process oriented my own work as a semiotician and psychoanalyst attentive to Lacan. I am particularly interested in this dimension of meaning, what I call 'semiotic' and which is in the nature of prelanguage, melodies and intonations, and where the affects and sensations proper to early mother/child drive-based relations are imprinted (Kristeva, "The Lacan Event" 145).

It seems that Kristeva moves away from Lacanian psychoanalysis by paying especial tribute to Green in this interview. Rather than through Lacan's understanding of the unconscious, it is through Green that Kristeva understands the primary drive energies of the bond between the mother and the child, which is articulated through gesture and rhythms – the semiotic structure that can be remembered and forgotten, repeated and acted out in the symbolic. While being "attentive" to the Lacanian psychoanalytic framework, Kristeva emphasizes her own position of

the pre-linguistic in constituting subjectivity and signification in the structures of language, where she pays critical attention to the psychical framework of the mother/child drive-based relations.

It is also revealed that Kristeva approached Lacan to advise him on an analyst. In this instance, however, Kristeva provides no mention of Safouan (as she had done in the intellectual biography with Jardine) but claims the following:

> A: We knew each other too well for him to be my analyst. Back from our trip to China — a trip he canceled at the last minute for personal reasons — I went to see him nonetheless, asking him to advise someone from his school for me. And the name he suggested was an intimate friend — of his intimate woman friend at the time (Kristeva, "The Lacan Event" 143).

Being mindful of integrity and ethics in therapy, Kristeva informs her interviewer why she never hired him to be her therapist. What is noteworthy is that when the interviewer asked Kristeva why she thinks Lacan may have made this bold move, she comes back to triangular relations:

> maybe because he wanted me to be in his clan, his erotic circle, as if adherence to his thought passed through a kind of incest, or maybe he considered that it had no importance at and that, after all, an analysis should take the passion out of all that to get to the truth… (Kristeva, "The Lacan Event" 143–44).

Kristeva's rejection of Lacan is part of a repetition compulsion, echoed in both the interview and the intellectual biography, which she claims was based on her refusal to affiliate with any given community. Over the years, Kristeva has enjoyed the freedom to preserve her independence of thought, which she tells readers that Lacan respected:

> I was all the freer in so far as I belonged to no community, neither the *Normaliens, the agrégés*, nor militants of any kind. It seemed to me that Lacan respected this state of freedom. In a certain way, he even encouraged me to preserve my independence (Kristeva, "The Lacan Event" 144).

It seems to me that when Kristeva breaks the triangular relationship that Lacan attempts to create with her, she moves towards wholeness, which Lacan seems to have appreciated. As she distinguishes between semiotic and symbolic – similar to his symbolic – she constitutes a

dialectical view of subjectivity. Unlike Lacan, she forcefully maintains the notion of autonomy by insisting that once the subject enters into the symbolic, the semiotic impulses are repressed. And yet, it seems that Kristeva attempts to maintain theoretical connection with the famous psychoanalyst when she represents the preverbal and the symbolic as crossing each other; her paternal symbolic includes the un-representable maternal semiotic, which dominates the unconscious structures in the signifying practices.

The interview moves towards an important aspect, which is based on asking Kristeva about Lacan's influence in her analytical practice. Drawing on Lacanian psychoanalysis, Kristeva's own approach to psychoanalysis emerges out of a passionate attachment to the mother as a symptom of an "old object," which illustrates the trauma of our mother tongue. Kristeva claims that along with long sessions and Freudian style interpretations, Lacan's influence on her own process of psychoanalytical listening is through the mother tongue:

> Lacan put great value on this power of language to lock – and also unlock – inhibition, symptom, and anxiety by claiming that it was a simple 'return to Freud.' Rhetorical modesty or protective deviation? I especially saw in it the extreme attention given to the mother tongue, French in this case, that Lacan placed at the heart of psychoanalytical listening. He asserted, in essence, that the mother tongue is the supreme way to understand the singularity of each analysand. And to make each treatment a 'Poïesis' experience that brings out the incommensurability of each speaking being (Kristeva, "The Lacan Event" 144–45).

It seems from the interview that Kristeva extends Lacan's valuing of language in analysis to include pre-language, which is based on the early imprints of the mother/child relationship related to the mother tongue. The term Poïesis come from Ancient Greek, in which it means "to make" or bring about something that did not exist before. Through the essence of the mother tongue, Kristeva establishes the clinical significance of Poïesis philosophy in Lacanian analysis.

The unique capability and the self-making capacity in the analytical relation is that it can bring about a process that transforms one's inner world through a reconciliation of thought and matter towards the w/holeness, which is the Lacanian sinthome, a term that comes from the spelling of the Greek origin of the French word for symptôme (symptom). The Kristevian extension of Lacanian psychoanalysis is that the repressed symptoms of the mother as related to the mother tongue, and her loss and language, are part of the psychoanalytic understanding of subjectivity. And yet, it seems to me that Kristeva's own "unlocking" and reading of the Lacanian psychoanalytic key emerges from the mother tongue, which is part of the psychical symptom in analysis. The mother tongue is also part of the Kristevian semiotic; as the first language one acquires from one's surroundings, the mother tongue represents the primary relations with the mother, riddled with loss and pain, mourning and nostalgia.

For Kristeva, analysis, like poetry, is clinically significant when the analysand reveals their unconscious in the form of slippages or tropes. If trauma is hidden in the mother tongue because of our complex relationship with infantile speech, it is important to pass through one's native language towards multilingualism to trace the screen memories of hidden and displaced suffering. Towards the end of the interview, Kristeva is asked a very important question: "what is left of Lacan today from a theoretical point of view?" (Kristeva, "The Lacan Event" 145). Kristeva comes back to the importance of Lacanian psychoanalysis and his contribution to infantile speech based on its relations to multiculturalism: "the truth about our trivialized and globalized bodies passes through the native language; it is there that the singular trace of every speaking subject is inscribed. And so it is through multilingualism that it can develop unexpected creativities" (Kristeva, "The Lacan Event" 146). Kristeva's relationship to French as a foreign fetish-object is different from Lacan's relation to French as the flesh of his native language. As a

multiverse, Kristeva's re-reading of Lacan helps her to move towards the native language and multilingualism to make sense of fragmentation, alienation, and creativity. Building on Lacanian thought, Kristeva develops her own form of psychoanalysis, which is based on another language, a foreign language that comes from sublimation. The psychic traces of memory, related to the mother tongue, is useful for recognizing the defence and resistance of the ego – the unconscious wish to know and not know love-objects.

Patient B: From the Mother Tongue to the Foreign Language

The psychic development Kristeva theorizes is based on a specific approach to language, which she understands as in the first instance foreign since we are strangers to ourselves. The relation between languages has to do with the primary process of orality with the maternal object – the semiotic of her rhythms, tunes and lullabies. In her interview with Alain Braconnier, "The Contemporary Contribution of Psychoanalysis," in *Passions of Our Time* (2018), Kristeva describes the importance of the psychical process of matricide. Through her clinical work with Patient B, Kristeva describes the psychical process of intolerance for the love object, based on an inability to break and separate from the maternal bond. This text is critical in bringing together Kristeva's understanding of melancholia, the horrors and abjection in life and writing – the madness of the semiotic in therapy. In this interview Kristeva defines the necessity of her earlier work that is based on the separation between the semiotic and symbolic, but this time she builds it through the mother tongue.

In this therapy, Kristeva identifies Patient B's failure to adequately enter the symbolic in his early childhood. Patient B is identified by Kristeva as a schizophrenic and suicidal patient at Sainte-Anne Hospital. What is significant is that Kristeva as a good-enough analyst assisted

Patient B to express himself, which he did by incorporating and appropriating the image of his mother:

> SHE sacrificed HER own body, SHE attempted suicide, SHE complained about being 'the black sheep' of the family in her childhood, SHE demanded that her son 'monitor' her, which B confessed he could not 'digest' because invisible forces he could not oppose 'directed' him. He also tried to interpret his state of fusion with the 'black sheep' emphasizing his father's absence, his sibling conflicts, and his mother's intrusiveness (Kristeva, "The Contemporary Contribution of Psychoanalysis" 75–76).

Patient B was incapable of tolerating himself since the mother has been internalized, which Kristeva refers to as the "Thing" in *Black Sun*. Patient B is unable to digest his mother and consequently, she returns as an invisible force of anger and hate that directs him towards death and suicide. Kristeva constructs a maternal transference in the clinical space: as a good-enough psychoanalyst, she achieves a semiotic communion with the patient by speaking his native language, in this case, French.

The splitting of love/hate for the mother is part of the paranoid-schizoid position, necessary for psychic autonomy to resolve conflicts of ambivalence. Unable to digest his phallic mother, Patient B as an infant may have swallowed the mother's breasts whole (rather than bite them into pieces) in his cannibalistic desire to internalize her body. The mother becomes the fetishized object as part of the obsessive-compulsive primal need to continually depend upon her for his bodily needs. Thus, Patient B failed to develop the capacity to engage in an imaginary cathexis of her body through abjection. The unconscious logic of maternal abjection is a phantasy of her body as inassimilable. Klein's position illustrates the infantile anxiety of the mother, coupled with pleasure. Patient B constructs the mother as the intrusive "black sheep" with the internalized childhood excitement and fear of her eating him alive.

During the clinical conversation, Kristeva noticed that Patient B was also familiar with a foreign tongue, which in this case was English, having spent years studying abroad in England, and she also discovered that he had an English nickname. Kristeva attempted her therapeutic technique of switching between languages and met with success: "I decided to continue our conversation in English. And it was a renaissance" (Kristeva, "The Contemporary Contribution of Psychoanalysis" 76). Kristeva's transition to Patient B's foreign language brightened the patient, who also began to trust his analyst with details and conflicts of his early relationships related to his mother. This therapeutic technique permitted Patient B to "digest" his overbearing mother, whom he desired and hated – his suicide would mean her destruction.

English as a foreign tongue provided a space for the possibility of matricide for Patient B through a solid semiotic base, and Kristeva's joining in the process with her client is part of the psychical encoding, doing away with the mother tongue. For Patient B, the new maternal bond constructed by Kristeva in therapy is unconsciously desired as the dyad play with languages. Kristeva's linking Patient B to a foreign language helped the client to construct bodily boundaries between himself and his transferential mother through abjection, learning to exist outside of his mother's body and detaching from her intrusiveness.

Kristeva reminds us how the move to a foreign language as a transferential technique in psychoanalysis can help to escape from the mother tongue and to abject the maternal object. In writing about the experience on the couch with Patient B, Kristeva explains the importance of distancing from the native language:

> English, the foreign language, was his way of 'distancing' himself from the 'black sheep' that she was and he was: a playground finally at hand – with me, escaping from the mother tongue – that had become available to his thinking process in our own duo. A translanguage of hope in which he could allow himself to relearn to speak and think with *another mother*, to provoke me, to work out his projects of 'absolute good' and even to suggest how difficult the

> reparative hope was: his smile implied that he might have told me about the 'ridiculousness' of this repair, if the interview had been longer (Kristeva, "The Contemporary Contribution of Psychoanalysis" 76, italics original).

Kristeva as the substitute mother describes her couch as a children's "playground" as she plays with Patient B, while engaging in the analytic work of repairing the rupture of primary relations. The Kristevian psychoanalysis seems to function by provoking unnameable destructive desire, spoken through the transitional semiotic link of languages. The conversation in English, a foreign tongue, provided Patient B access to a space of matricide through "a solid semiotic base" (Kristeva, "The Contemporary Contribution of Psychoanalysis" 77). The constitution of the semiotic is part of the encoding through our mother tongue, prior to the Lacanian mirror stage, where the mother/infant experience co-excitation. This is what Kristeva refers to as creating "meaning without *signification*" (Kristeva, "The Contemporary Contribution of Psychoanalysis" 75, italics original). Thus, Kristeva represents herself as the good-enough psychoanalyst by supporting Patient B to move away from his mother tongue, initiating a mother-son substituted link.

The clinical technique of abjection by the good-enough psychoanalyst is connected to the process of translation as Patient B negotiates temporality through maternal splitting of introjection and projection, transformation and self-creation. The Kristevian translation is part of a transformation, which involves the sublimation of aggressivity into a linguistic symbol. To translate our strangeness is to re-define the mother, which is one of the very early attempts to displace her in letters and language as discussed in chapter three. Kristeva describes the process of translation through the pleasures of the instinctual drives:

> We are dealing here with an uttering that is able to transmute the feverish sensation of a passion in fugues composed of pleasures of the mouth, of the ear and of the senses – pleasures where the urgency of the drive and of

> signification is appeased by incarnating in the words of the mother tongue (Kristeva, "The Impudence of Uttering: Mother Tongue" 681).

The complexity of our mother tongue, specifically through the "sensation of a passion," related to the "pleasures of the mouth," are transmuted in the semiotic and biology. Similarly, Kristeva's clinical work with Patient B is also encoded through a bodily experience: "The speaking being is subjected to the influence of the family linguistic code, and every mother tongue imprints itself on the organization of the 'own,' including one's own body" (Kristeva, "The Contemporary Contribution of Psychoanalysis" 74). The bodily experience of the mother, as imprinted on the mother tongue, is a figuration of translating the primary experience of the mother's utterance and the trauma of separation. When Patient B speaks through the mother, he stands in the influence of his family linguistic code. The semiotic ties him to the encoding of his native language, structured and repressed in his adult memory as Kristeva brings Patient B's biological mother to become an abject.

The critical importance of listening in Kristevian analysis brings Patient B to the object relations phase – the topographies of the Kleinian paranoid-schizoid splitting, where Patient B unconsciously also constructs his analyst as neither subject nor object but an abject. Kristeva's understanding of the semiotic comes through the unconscious heterogeneous experience of language through one's relation to the native language:

> The semiotic is a first encoding of drives under the influence of the mother tongue, in rhythms, melodies, and intensities, then in echolalia of pseudoconsonants and pseudovowels; prior to the mirror stage and translinguistic rather than prelinguistic, the semiotic experience (as Racamier would have said) the mother-*infans* coexcitation (Kristeva, "The Contemporary Contribution of Psychoanalysis" 75).

In analysis with Kristeva, Patient B re-learns to navigate the maternal realm of attraction and rejection simultaneously through English – his foreign tongue. Patient B represents his mother

through the Oedipus complex; as she is the demanding phallic mother, she brings forth repressed desires of abjection, which the patient subconsciously recognizes as the significant psychological process to construct his own subjectivity. Kristeva describes the important process of separation and subjectivity based on the link of transference in therapy with the analyst: "for, as of the 'archaic' stage of his unmet needs, the analysand is listened to and interpreted in the ambivalence of the early objectal link in the process of constitution and rejection" (Kristeva, "The Contemporary Contribution of Psychoanalysis" 73). Kristeva as the good-enough psychoanalyst listens to her analysand, which brings the dyad back to the object relations phase, related to his unmet needs for love and care.

In the infantile psyche, the maternal object becomes a horrified external object to the subject-in-process that is ready to abject, allowing for hatred to occur in the clinical process for the 'Thing.' In therapy, Kristeva evokes the position of the analysand that can learn boundary between outside/inside, inner/outer – the splitting of the mother tongue that becomes the organizing principle of the psyche, which are the later foundation for creative acts. The counter-transferential relations are repeated in the therapeutic scene when loss of love from childhood leaves behind a narcissistic scar; the developmental stages are part of the frustration of early childhood dependence. Therefore, the analytic processes of the Kristevian psychoanalysis are about insights that are lost and discovered, gained and regained through transference and resistance, as the therapist and client relationally work through their own long-standing conflicts in transference and countertransference.

Kristeva's notion of matricide is critical to understand mourning as a transferential technique of abjection and displacement. As a child, Kristeva masters the process of matricide when she enters the flesh of the French language, which is part of the Kristevian inner desire to

do away with the mother – only to re-locate her in foreign spaces. Kristeva writes about the critical importance of obtaining a language that is foreign to one's mother:

> What a sacred mother! It is only thus that she allows the infant to create its language, a language of its own, which is tantamount to choosing a language that is foreign to that of the mother, that is, simply, a foreign language. While the mother, who is necessarily Orestian and, precisely because of that necessarily sublime, takes pleasure [*jouit*] from this symbolic matricide, she becomes a sufficiently good mother who carries out with her child the dynamics of the joke (Kristeva, "The Impudence of Uttering: Mother Tongue" 693).

The good-enough mother (like the good-enough analyst) is illustrated here through the image of a sacred mother. It is she who helps the child to enter the inscription of the Third, which is to choose a tongue that is foreign to the mother herself.

The Kristevian understanding of Klein is that sadistic phantasies are aimed at the mother's body – relations with people and objects constitute the primary relationship. For psychoanalytic transference to take place with Patient B, Kristeva was able to activate in therapy language of maternal separation and loss, which was both a pleasurable and horrifying, murderous and creative union. In speaking about the place of language, Kristeva states that "it is through language that sublimation is intrinsically and inevitably cultural in the sense that it carries creativity…" (Kristeva, "The Impudence of Uttering: Mother Tongue" 680). For Kristeva, it is language that creates space for the semiotic and the sublimation of drives, the pleasure and pain that one finds itself in a dependent relationship with the new object. Kristeva represents language as the third dimension:

> an utterance that, even in its most modest instances that will never be 'sublimations of exception,' transforms even psychic accidents into the pleasure [*jouissance*] of searching for oneself by means of a third dimension: Between the Ego and its erotic-thanatic object, semiosis and language are an indefinitely constructible object. They are, all in all, the only object that matters; language itself open to its heterogeneous substratum of drives thus

> becomes the Principal Object of the Subject of culture (Kristeva, "The Impudence of Uttering: Mother Tongue" 684).

The sacrificial violence of matricide becomes a thought through vocalization before the subject moves towards investing in a new object through a "third dimension" of language. Therefore, language depends on creativity and sublimation: "There is no language without creativity because there is no language without sublimation: it is enough to hear it for It [*Ça*] to come into existence, even in the most handicapped speaking subject" (Kristeva, "The Impudence of Uttering: Mother Tongue" 685). Kristeva points to silence as a language of sublimation when one splits off from the maternal source of words. The imaginary matricide takes place through a foreign language, which symbolizes the difficulty of psychically murdering and incorporating the mother. Pleasure and death, resistance and dissidents, the artist in revolution produces new language, without having to name the void, such as the dark hole.

The therapeutic position Kristeva reserves for her analysand provides the dyad the capacity for their own new beginnings to be formed together. However, one cannot deal with everyday trauma in psychoanalysis without language. Kristeva describes the critical process of working through psychical distress in the clinical scene: "if trauma can be understood as a psychical form of exclusion, it will be undone by analysis" (Kristeva, *The Sense and Non-Sense of Revolt: The Powers and Limits of Psychoanalysis* 29). As the therapist-client engage in conversations, language becomes implicated in the creation of human intersubjectivity and working through of trauma. Thus, Kristevian psychoanalysis reinforces the relationship to the mother tongue as part of the trajectory of the psychical form of exclusion and loss, which becomes the central core of the subject's identity.

As a good-enough analyst, Kristeva takes an approach of empathy, but also exercises closeness and distance with her patients so that she can interpret and maintain her frame as an

analyst. The Kristevian good-enough therapeutic sessions are processes of poetic listening, the politics and poetics of the mother's mystery and traumatic history related to the native language. For Kristeva, the process of being one with her analysand in the present moment allows her to maintain healthy boundaries. While moving back and forth, Kristeva empathically turns towards her patient but also maintains a sense of distance:

> *Les cas*, for example, the psychoanalytic cases, presuppose simultaneously a lot of empathy towards, or an osmosis with the patient, and a distance. Thus I project myself in each case, I 'become' Pierre, Marie, or Jeanne, I 'become' the people who speak to me, I put myself in their place. I move from one place to another. And at the same time, in order to understand and interpret their actions, I disengage and return to my own position. So, all the time there is this movement back and forth, and it is true that this is a mental journey (Kristeva qtd in Midttun 170).

Kristeva practices the art of compassion in her therapeutic relationship with her clients. It is her ability to engage in movement, the "back and forth" that permits her to develop empathy as an analyst. For Kristeva, seeing her patients is just as important as writing books. By psychoanalyzing, Kristeva has identified the need for knowing the psychic space as that which keeps us alive and allows us to begin anew, where thoughts and thinking, living and loving are part of coexistence. The deep work she does on the couch with her clients as a mother substitute relates to her own theoretical undertaking, which points to the importance of knowing the unconscious space through the history and time of the screen memories related to the maternal object.

Conclusion

Kristeva discovered new beginnings and her own form of psychoanalysis while working with her clients. I have established in this chapter that Kristeva forms her independence of thought by refusing to be caught in the Freudian Oedipal phase. Moreover, she personally declines the offer

of becoming a Lacanian baby enclosed in the mirror stage. Kristeva appreciated Green as a supervisor because of his interest in the maternal object, his serious reading of Klein and Winnicott, and his independence of thought. Green paid particular attention to the role of the affects, drives, negation, maternal absence, and the importance of object relations, which Kristeva incorporates into her clinical practice and writing.

Over the decades, Kristeva has learned to live a meaningful life, as an influential psychoanalyst and an integrated foreigner. Reflecting on her own strangeness in France, Kristeva began to consider exile as a permanent condition – the necessity to distance oneself from one's origin and mother tongue as one reconstructs oneself in foreign spaces, which becomes the basis for Kristevian psychoanalysis. Both in her clinical practice and in her writing, Kristeva began to identify horrors and abjection, the fascination and repulsion of the maternal object. Kristeva's form of psychoanalysis is unique since it is a practice that recognizes the semiotic and poetic, creation and destruction, choosing life over death. For the good-enough analyst, the goal of the psychoanalytic space is to engage in cycles of rupture and repair, where each body on the couch become an "old object" through the mother tongue. Through the process of transference in a well-seasoned psychoanalytic scene with Patient B, Kristeva becomes a maternal substitute to facilitate trust, becoming a "new object." For Kristeva, analysis provides a possibility for a new emotionally charged relational experience, working through traumatic relations tied to the mother tongue.

Conclusion: The Kristevian Moments and Movement

> what really gets Kristeva's energy moving is writing. She says that writing actively puts her energy 'into movement.' But not just any writing has this effect: it must be *writing* related to her *thinking* about what she is *living* at any given moment (Jardine 164, italics original).

My dissertation has read Jardine's intellectual biography as an attempt to present Kristeva's textual and personal stories through her own theories. As Jardine chooses significant historical moments about the young Julia and her primary relations to narrate, she unconsciously supports the elder Kristeva's archiving of her stories and tracing of maternal genealogies, which are now entering the public realm. Writing in French enabled Kristeva to travel through herself to mourn the loss of maternal genealogies. For Kristeva, speaking a foreign language has enabled her to feel alive as she was able to rebirth parts of herself in translation while also helping others via her approach to therapy and understanding of language. Even though Kristeva abandoned her mother tongue and distanced herself from her native Bulgarian, only to "cling" to a foreign language, she is still unconsciously connected to the maternal objects, even if she does away with the primary link. Moving towards the flesh of French literature permitted Kristeva to signify the missing links to her mother, lost once upon a time, from the inner inside towards the outer manifestation of object relations.

My dissertation establishes that, both in her own personal experience and psychoanalytic theorization, Kristeva has sought symbolic recognition and subjectivity. Her search has led to her theoretical contribution of a new model of subjectivity, namely the subject-in-process/on trial. Kristeva learned from her early experience that setting up symbolic signification via letters was a way to enter and assume a subject position in the patriarchal system and its operations. Kristeva's working through of her own screen memories shows the complexity of staying within

the maternal container. Jardine's intellectual biography has effectively demonstrated for me that Kristeva faces the difficult task of embodying maternal time as she carves out the complex relations of her mother and father in childhood. As a child, she generates an optimal recipe for separation and as an adult, she constructs a theoretical understanding of this process. Kristeva points to the necessity of a relationship with objectal relations as a condition for initiating subjectivity and autonomy – the necessary task of becoming an autonomous subject.

My exploration of Kristevian discourse suggests that she is absorbed in her own theories and only able to discuss her primary relations indirectly, through the "hole" of the semiotic. My work has demonstrated how Kristeva works through her theory of language and psychoanalysis to initiate the potentiality of revolution, emerging from a repressed maternal container. The essence of psychoanalysis enables subjects to learn to access the unconscious realm by working through personal stories. The Kristevian revolution is part of a process of transformation, where the subject (through the semiotic) is occupied with movement and change, as a refusal of stasis through rebirth. Kristeva's relation to movement is related to her desire to remain in a symbolic exile, and traveling is part of individuation and progression towards new beginnings.

Upon arriving in France, Kristeva satisfied her ambition of becoming an influential intellectual with the goal of revolt by constructing and maintaining profound relationships with men. Her doctoral work in France recognized that humans are shaped by drives and language rather than economics. Living a bourgeois life in France afforded Kristeva the opportunity to write in French and take pleasure in her newfound silence and solitude. In Jardine's words: "Kristeva decided to resurrect herself, to reincarnate herself in French" (Jardine, *At the Risk of Thinking. An Intellectual Biography of Julia Kristeva* 97). As she swam through life as a stranger

in France, Kristeva eventually realized that her desire for revolt would be an intimate one, a psychic battle, which she located in her passion for maternity and psychoanalysis.

Kristeva's love of thinking concerns her own life, work, and primary relations, which reflects a profound curiosity about caring for others. The process of identification and reparation permits me to represent Kristeva's references to maternal passion as her own mother's time; the desire for the doll's hole becomes a potential path to freedom into wholeness, which is not based on transgression but rather on the capacity of a new beginning, the opening of the birth canal as a plural beginning – a time of separation and loss, ends and new beginnings. Rather than become disappointed by the link with the mother, the young Kristeva moved toward maternal passions through the French literary imagination, which held a possibility for her subjectivity by linking back with the maternal "Thing" through an ethics of love and care.

I have established that Kristeva's existence in France as a foreigner is held together by the love of a foreign language and is deployed with her clients on the couch as a therapeutic technique. Kristeva learned to locate the maternal through the poetics of psychoanalysis and the mother's tongue, even though she suggests that one's calling to write is unrelated to any literature. Kristeva's own lack of recognition of the maternal shadow shows up in her feelings of estrangement in the early years in France, where she has continued to live in exile. As a foreigner and therapist, Kristeva has developed meaningful strategies to translate the mother. For instance, as she came to terms with her own strangeness in a foreign land, Kristeva rediscovered her new beginnings while working as a psychoanalyst. Still, Kristeva's Bulgarian self is connected to the memories of her motherland, which are associated with the unconscious presence of the mother herself. Running away from the maternal, moving away from Bulgaria, produced the experience of dying, marked with bloody ink in a dead language.

Kristeva's understanding of the semiotic is an aspect of speech that cannot be known unless it breaks through the symbolic, originating from pre-Oedipal bodily drives connected to the maternal body. The semiotic lends itself to desire in language, and thus, I have used Kristeva's personal stories through Jardine's intellectual biography as a direct basis for her theoretical contribution. Similar to a traditional history, the biography is linear, which sets the terms for its origins by discussing Kristeva's childhood identity through her life stories in Bulgaria. As I have demonstrated, Kristeva's understanding of maternal separation has to do with the logic of individuation and identification. Kristeva's understanding of the social codes of separation and rejection of the maternal is critical for individuation to formulate adherence towards the paternal functions to escape psychoses. My illustration of the objectal sequence of moments and movements in Kristeva's life and work has been to understand the psycho-symbolic structures and socio-symbolic contracts, both of which are the foundation of pre-Oedipal language.

Movement in Chapters

My work in each chapter about Kristeva's stories has not been a linear understanding of her work, but instead reconstitutes, through the complexity of Freudian screen memories, the temporality of paternal time and maternal space. I have been writing about the personal and textual presence of a transferential connection with movements but also moments and memories of Kristeva's mother and substitutes. The chapters in this dissertation have focused on Jardine's writings of Kristeva's memories, from childhood and adulthood, of her relationships, as constituted via psychoanalytic transference. Kristeva has lived her life book through her own theories, subliminally narrating theory with life stories as monumental time occurs between

primary relations. By reading Jardine's stories about Kristeva's emotional identification with love objects, I have explored how Kristeva moves in and out of time to mark her own difference and authority between primary and symbolic relations. As she moved between complex primary relations in her early days in France, she returned to symbolic fathers, demonstrating the complexity of locating the maternal framework.

Kristeva's love of books developed from a very young age, when she read and destroyed them as a transitional object. Chapter one focused on Kristeva's dollhouse, which is "still pretty much all in one piece." I began with this chapter since it is an essential step in childhood psychical development: the polarization of primary drives, known as splitting. The psychical process of separating the dollhouse from the cupboard and her books to the drawer helps to resolve ambivalence, which represents a denial to fall into pieces from the loss of mourning the primary loss of a love-object. I established how Kristeva's splitting of objects and her early desire to turn toward books as a semiological representation is to battle with the temporary collapse of the relations with the mother, which is a move towards a therapeutic/cathexis through linguistic expression. To relate to the w/hole objects, Klein believed that the circumstances of the splitting of love and hate, destruction and frustration, and phantasmic reparation could deepen the psychic ability to restore the damage. The young Kristeva's splitting of the transitional objects of the doll and books was to form a relationship with the w/hole objects through creation and destruction, care, and comfort by dividing her childhood items. Kristeva's actual attention to the doll's hole, and her desire to peek inside, was a creative expression and repression of the maternal object, neither forgotten nor mourned, but an act of a childhood curiosity that later permitted her to move towards literary creation and procreation. Her interest in the doll's hole

was the desire to create a link with the mother's womb, opening one of the first possibilities of mourning the loss of a primary and uterine relationship with the mother.

My establishment of Kristeva's desire for movement and her understanding of the childhood memories helped me to read the mother as a source of psychanalysis, where Kristeva's running story finds the mother in flowery sublimation. The second chapter examined how Kristeva identifies with flowers to separate from her mother, since separation is the next critical phase of psychological development. I showed that her identity emerges through differentiating herself from her mother, from whom she separates through the *thetic* phase and finds love for her grandmother's garden and literary imagination. Kristeva lives her theory of the contradiction between the semiotic and symbolic, which I unpacked from Jardine's writing of Kristeva's "running story," a clear example of maternal rejection and its gendered ethos of caring and crying. As she engages in a repetitive cycle of movement and separation from Kristina, her wounded knees bleeding into print become a marker of matricide. The grieving of the archetypal mother and the narcissistic identification with maternal substitutes happen through the symbols of flowers and French, which I connected in the second half of the chapter to Kristeva's work on maternal passion as a regressive desire. Kristeva's relationship with the pre-Oedipal realm and her emotional identification with reading Colette in the grandmother's space support her psychic development as she finds herself running free in her garden.

Moving from mother and mother substitutes, chapter three explored Kristeva's relationship with her father and her learning of languages. I theorized her relations with the father to explore a critical phase of psychological development: namely, individuation – a critical concept in Kristeva's childhood, where she develops an understanding of the self, autonomy, and sense of individuality as a child through her relations with her father. I explored how Kristeva's

relation with her father was one of her critical experiences with understanding the language of "I" during the celebration of Alphabet Day. Seeing the young Julia move and march as a letter of the alphabet at the age of six or maybe seven, I explored how the young Kristevian subjectivity strove to constitute unitary agency with the father. The logic of individuation emerges through the relationship with the father, moving into a language that includes signs and syntax. The young Julia inserts herself into the order of language, the symbolic, with her father. When her father brings her to the letters and to the notion of "I," Kristeva was able to understand the joys of the written word. The Kristevian acquisition of speech and the trauma of loss is the foundation of the human identity of the self, the "I" as related to translating and retranslating our mother tongue. Thus, I conclude with how maternity is negated and repressed in Kristeva's experience of *Azbouka.* Still, it is a model of love, similar to the passion for paternal transference.

As she abandons her connection to the motherland, chapter four looks at how Kristeva represents herself as going into exile and becoming a foreigner in France, translating the loss of maternal heritage through masculine relationships. Within a few years of arriving in France, Kristeva had established herself with structuralist and poststructuralist theorists even though she was in extreme solitude and suffering as a foreigner. In this chapter, I continue my exploration of the logic of individuation by shifting my discussion from her father to the symbolic paternal relations in France: Lucien Goldmann, Roland Barthes, and, most importantly, Émile Benveniste, who inspired Kristeva to pursue her writings on the semiotic. Here I focus on how Kristeva continues to insert herself into language, and how her travels and relations with male intellectuals in France further helped her to develop as a critical thinker and an influential academic. Jardine suggests that Kristeva's rapid inclusion in male avant-garde circles as a foreigner in France had to do with the intellectual circles she left behind in Sofia. Instead, I

emphasize that Kristeva's desire for attachment with male figures is based on the secret and/or sacred transferential connection with her own father. I establish that Kristeva's turn to individuation to form identification with masculine symbolic relationships in France is part of a form of maternal sacrifice but towards a phantasy of totality – an identification based on narcissistic completeness.

In chapter five, I shift from fathers and father figures to the psychological understanding of identification, particularly Kristeva's relationship with her therapist Ilse Barande and her son, David Sollers. What the adult Kristeva finds in analysis is that her mother was in the "background" and that she has been starved of maternal identification since childhood. As I demonstrate, Kristeva began to think deeply about maternity on the couch and moved into motherhood as a way to repair her relationship with her mother. I also establish that Kristeva's own experience in analysis with Barande was critical for her to be able to do so. When Kristeva entered maternity, she began to examine the theoretical world and the intellectual space of the semiotic and the *chora* very closely, while the subjects of ethics, abjection, psychoanalysis, and motherhood moved to the forefront of her writing. Kristeva's analytic situation and theoretical orientation demonstrate that the maternal container is the central referent in the operative process of separation. Thus, abjecting maternal desire constitutes subjectivity, which calls into question the theoretical apparatus of maternal reliance, ethics and care.

In chapter six, I further elaborate on the psychical concept of identification during the analytic situation. After finishing her analysis, Kristeva became a therapist under the supervision of André Green (by rejecting Lacan) to signify the space of motherhood. I use the example of her work in analysis with Patient B to highlight the importance of theory and language in Kristeva's analytic practice. In her approach to therapy, the maternal container is the major referent in the

operative process of separation and recognition of desire and identification with a foreign object to constitute subjectivity. Kristeva understood that Patient B needed help with the abandonment of his maternal tongue so that he could heal from maternal-related traumas. I then compare this distancing from primary relations to Kristeva's own meaningful separation of literary and textual mothering through her understanding of abjection. As such, Kristeva's problematization of the inability to abject understands it as a defense mechanism to internalize and control the maternal object. Kristeva claims space for herself and others by crossing borders to master her object, successfully moving into the symbolic terrains of foreign tongues.

My understanding of Jardine's intellectual biography of Kristeva recreates a relationship towards time based on reconstitution and reconstruction of the screen memories. In theoretical writing, Kristeva's concept of time ties female subjectivity to the cycles of maternal bodies that define her primary relationship with Kristina. I have aimed to read Kristeva's narratives about her mother and substitutes as conveyed to Jardine and as they figure in her own writing. Thus, I have explored the psychoanalytic understanding of Kristeva's separation and reparative relationships with her primary relations, in the first instance with Kristina. Kristeva's writings remind us that our psychic life is part of our maternal genealogy – the matricide of the mother is to hate and desire, separate from and assimilate with her at once. Kristeva performs this psychical matricide as Bulgarian becomes a dead language, a form of the hidden mother.

Jardine and Kristeva's conversations are a working through of the unconscious organizations of experience, similar to the analytic situation. As her good-enough biographer, Jardine listens to Kristeva's stories of distance and movement from her primary relations with attentiveness and curiosity. She produces an intellectual biography of Kristeva, deliberately leaving it to her readers to further analyze Kristevian textual and personal life. Kristeva learned

to convey maternal silence, sadness, and depression in her theoretical writing, and I have demonstrated how she moves towards identification with transitional objects rather than remaining in the space of depressives who struggle with signs of melancholic *jouissance*. As a believer in intimate revolt, the young Julia only counted on herself to move forward, and has since childhood in Sofia, denying her dependency on her mother by rejecting her doll and dollhouse and running away from her in the Park of Roses.

Kristeva's own learning to do away with maternal desire is represented unconsciously yet powerfully throughout Jardine's biography. I have analyzed Kristeva's relationship with her mother, and substitutes, to trace maternity and connect them to the Freudian screen memories of a monumental time. The Kristevian life and theory take the risk to live and think by moving towards a maternal genealogy, marked with the bloody ink of matricide. Kristeva's theories demonstrate the valuable psychical processes of attachment and detachment, abjection and separation, movement and freedom. For Kristeva, the semiotic base is part of the mother tongue, which can also be negated, as the good-enough mother lets go of the instinctual drives. One can connect to another language through matricide to construct a solid semiotic base, as Kristeva did therapeutically with Patient B. Yet, the Kristevian semiotic base attaches itself to the flesh of French mentality, as the sublimated alphabet and letters of the maternal object.

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