

COMMUNITY AND MELANCHOLY: LOSS AND IDENTIFICATION

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DAMLA ÖZÇİMEN

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COMMUNITY AND MELANCHOLY: LOSS AND IDENTIFICATION

Damla Özçimen
121679002

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ferda Keskin
İstanbul Bilgi University

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zeynep Talay Turner
İstanbul Bilgi University

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Özge Ejder Johnson
Mimar Sinan Fine Arts University

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Name Surname: Damla Özçimen

Signature:

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the relationship between singularity, community, loss, melancholy, and identification, offering a reimagined framework for understanding community. Drawing on the works of Jean-Luc Nancy, Maurice Blanchot, Giorgio Agamben, Judith Butler, and Sigmund Freud, it examines how communities can form not through fixed identities or immanence but through shared vulnerability, finitude, death and the acknowledgment of loss.

Freud's and Butler's theories of mourning, melancholy, and identification provide key insights into how loss shapes both individual and identities. Melancholy, as an ongoing engagement with absence, reveals how communities can emerge around shared experiences of incompleteness and singularity rather than unity or totality.

The thesis argues that rethinking community through these concepts provides an alternative to totalitarian and individualist paradigms. By embracing insufficiency, difference, and the unrepresentable, it becomes possible to imagine a community that transcends normative conformity while fostering ecstatic relation to the other.

Keywords: Singularity; Community; Melancholy; Loss; Identification

ÖZ

Bu tez, tekillik, topluluk, kayıp, melankoli ve özdeşleşme arasındaki ilişkiyi inceleyerek topluluğu anlamaya yönelik yeniden tasarlanmış bir çerçeve sunmaktadır. Jean-Luc Nancy, Maurice Blanchot, Giorgio Agamben, Judith Butler ve Sigmund Freud'un eserlerinden yararlanarak, toplulukların sabit kimlikler ya da imanens üzerinden değil, paylaşılan kırılma, sonluluk, ölüm ve kaybın kabulü üzerinden nasıl oluşabileceğini tartışır.

Freud ve Butler'ın yas, melankoli ve özdeşleşme teorileri, kaybın hem bireysel hem de toplumsal kimlikleri nasıl şekillendirdiğine dair önemli içgörüler sunar. Melankoli, yoklukla süregelen bir yüzleşme olarak, toplulukların birlik ya da bütünlük yerine eksiklik ve tekillik etrafında nasıl ortaya çıkabileceğini gösterir.

Bu tez, topluluğu bu kavramlar üzerinden yeniden düşünmenin, totaliter ve bireyci paradigmlar için bir alternatif sunduğunu savunur. Yetersizlik, farklılık ve temsil edilemez olanı kucaklayarak, normatif uyumun ötesine geçen ve ötekiyle kendisinin dışında bir ilişkiyi teşvik eden bir topluluk tahayyül etmek mümkün hale gelir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tekillik; Komünite; Melankoli; Kayıp; Özdeşleşme

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INTRODUCTION

If singularity denotes a unique, irreducible mode of being, how does melancholy act as a mode of encountering the limits of this individuality? Does the singular arise from the melancholic inability to fully integrate or resolve loss? How can melancholy, often seen as an isolating experience, illuminate the relational aspects of singularity? Does it act as a bridge that connects singular beings through shared exposure to finitude and fragility?

Melancholy, as a response to loss or the recognition of absence, destabilizes the notion of an immanent self. This opens space for the singular to emerge—not as a self-enclosed entity but as a being exposed to others. Singularity resists totalization, while melancholy embodies the enduring tension of unfulfilled wholeness, making their conjunction critical for exploring vulnerability, relationality, and the incompleteness of existence. Together, they question how we are exposed to each other in a community of finitude and difference. Melancholy could be considered to avoid its pathologization as a mere personal failure by recognizing its origins and implications as extending beyond the individual. Instead of reducing it to an internalized deficit or psychological weakness, melancholy could be understood as a relational condition that arises from the interplay between self, other, and community. This approach allows for the acknowledgment of loss as something that exceeds subjective boundaries, highlighting its capacity to reveal the interconnectedness of beings through shared vulnerability and finitude. Furthermore, the depth of loss could be preserved by resisting its reduction to a generalized or universal condition of death and reconsidered as an encounter with the irreducibility of what is lost. Singularity, as the distinctiveness of each being, deepens this understanding by resisting assimilation into totalizing subjectivity and highlighting the relational dimensions of existence. By engaging with their interplay, we move from viewing melancholy as a failure to resolve loss toward understanding it as an experience of attunement to the singularity of loss, the limits of self-enclosure, and the possibility of community. Melancholy, in its engagement with loss, exposes these limits by showing that the self is profoundly shaped by what it has lost—whether a loved one, or a sense of completeness. This loss disrupts the illusion

of a self-contained identity, revealing instead a singular being that is exposed and relational. Singularity deepens this understanding by emphasizing that each self is unique and irreplaceable, yet this uniqueness arises not from isolation but from the self's embeddedness in a space of encounters. The singular being exists in its openness to others, marked by a vulnerability that resists closure or totalitarian self-definition.

Melancholy can be considered an experience that enables the individual to preserve their singularity while being in relation with others. Each individual possesses a unique mode of existence, yet this singularity is shaped through interactions with other singularities. These encounters allow the individual to define themselves not in opposition to others but through a shared connection with them. In this sense, melancholy helps the individual recognize the limits of their own existence and accept the finite nature of being, fostering empathy and sensitivity toward others. Melancholy triggers a dissolution of the ego boundaries in the process of identifying with a lost object or subject. This dissolution enables the individual's identity to transform, not as a fixed structure but as a dynamic space for engaging with others. What is at stake here is not the reinforcement of the self but the blurring of boundaries, creating an openness that embraces the presence of others. In this way, melancholy confronts the individual with their own limitations while simultaneously expanding to include the presence of others, offering the potential to shape a new form of collective existence. This process allows individuals to remain aware of their singularity while forming connections with others through openness and care.

Being-with must be redefined, not as a relationship constrained by rigid boundaries or fixed essence, but as a dynamic relationality among people. A form of community not rooted in human nature or essentialism but one that embraces change and transformation as inherent possibilities. This indefinable and ambivalent quality should not be seen as a deficiency but as an opportunity. In this sense, a community should not seek harmony based on fixed identities or similarities but should instead be a space where individuals transcend boundaries and engage in critical, active positions.

Given the historically variable nature of the concepts and dynamics that bring communities together, it is impossible to separate togetherness from its political dimension. Being-with others should not rely on mechanisms of political belonging and

domination but instead be based on openness, reciprocity, and relationships free of oppression. Such a form of togetherness should avoid being defined through identities that exclude others or reproduce power structures among similar identities. These forms of togetherness should transcend modern political models that render individuals passive through representatives. Melancholy can be seen as a tool for enabling this potentiality. It has the potential to overcome the despair of an immanency and guide individuals toward creativity and an exposed experience of existence. Melancholy can establish new forms of being with others. Its relationship with death lies in how we confront others with our boundaries and existential solitude. Death is a unique experience, inaccessible to others, which reveals the necessity of forming meaningful connections with others. As a confrontation with such boundaries, melancholy fosters sensitivity to the losses of others, opening the way for a deeper and more empathetic form of being-with-others. Thus, melancholy can guide individuals to recognize differences and embrace others with openness, allowing for the construction of a heterogeneous community that respects singularities while enabling being-with others. It serves as a powerful framework for questioning the structures of modern politics that reduce togetherness to a game of power under the shadow of the state. The potential for a new form of community lies in rethinking how people relate to one another, a possibility that emerges precisely at the moment when individuals open themselves to others. Melancholy, as an experience of loss, highlights the individual's encounter with existential limits, solitude, and fragility, thus bringing singularity to the forefront. At the same time, this experience of loss reveals the need for a shared space, a relationship with others, and the ways in which individuals reshape themselves within these relationships. Singularity refers to the individual's capacity to maintain their uniqueness while forming connections with others. Melancholy intensifies the awareness of these boundaries and solitude while opening a space for singularities to interact. *In The Promise of Politics*, Arendt (2007) points out

the illusion that political power could be controlled by a few through public representation, which led to a situation where politics seemed to exist between people only through structures of power and not through relationships or direct interaction. By reinforcing state authority and the concept of representation, modern politics cultivated the misconception that politics was a domain isolated from interpersonal engagement and mutual understanding. (Arendt, 2007, p.150)

In my thesis, I aim to explore melancholy as a dynamic force that expands individual boundaries, brings people together, and facilitates a form of community where singularities remain intact. This connection is crucial for understanding the heterogeneous nature of communities. I believe melancholy and singularity offer a robust framework for interrogating the intersection of singularity and community.

Death, as the ultimate experience of singularity, is a radical manifestation of singularity that cannot be fully shared. Melancholy, on the other hand, carries the echo of this singularity and loss on both individual and collective levels. I aim to rethink melancholy as a space that establishes the singular being's relationship with the other while simultaneously revealing the limits of this relationship. Modern politics often reduces singular being's to generalized categories. However, singularity carries the potential to resist such bio-political domination. Melancholy enables singular beings to recognize their boundaries and fragility, facilitating the sharing of these boundaries with others.

I will address community as a shared experience arising not from unity or sameness but from a shared experience of loss or absence. In this sense, melancholy is a foundational element of community, prompting individuals to recognize their own singularity while remaining open to others. I will analyze how melancholy, through identification with loss, dissolves individual boundaries and reshapes identity. This provides a psychological foundation for connecting singularity and community. Melancholy, I argue, transforms the internal processes of loss into opportunities for deeper connections with others through empathy.

I will further explore how melancholy enables individuals to discover their singularity while situating this singularity within a community. I view melancholy as a creative force that strengthens the potential for being with others. Additionally, I would consider how melancholy could reconstruct singularity in connection with the process of subjectivization and how melancholy could act as a tool for individuals to move beyond the constraints of norms and power structures.

In the first chapter, I will examine singularity, distinguishing it from subjectivity and discussing its political implications. Within this framework, I will analyze the relationship between singular being and singular community, exploring concepts such as the demand for community, immanence, immanence vs. transcendence, limit, and threshold. I will also discuss death, questioning whether it functions as a work of death or as a principle of insufficiency. This chapter will primarily engage with the works of Jean-Luc Nancy, Maurice Blanchot, and Giorgio Agamben.

In the second chapter, I will focus on melancholy, exploring whether it is a pathology or a creative force. I will discuss Enzo Traverso, Walter Benjamin, and Albrecht Dürer, analyzing how loss is represented and how it shapes both individual and collective experiences. Following this, I will examine identification, drawing on Freud and Butler to explore the role of loss in subject formation and its relation to power and normativity.

In the third and final chapter, the conclusion, I will integrate these discussions by examining historical and political events. In the section Singularity and Loss, I will analyze Hrant Dink's funeral as an example of how loss generates a communal experience. In the section Community and Identification, I will engage with Agamben's Stanzas and discuss the 2010 Türkiye's constitutional referendum as a case study of the relationship between community, loss, and political agency. Through these discussions, I will examine the limits and possibilities of community, questioning whether a form of togetherness can exist without erasing singularity or conforming to totalizing norms.

SINGULARITY

2.1. The Question of Singularity

Singularity is about the being-with, the idea that each being is uniquely itself, but always in relation to others. Singularity refers to how each individual existence is both distinct and tied to the communal, exposed to others but never fully representable or reducible to a larger, homogeneous whole. Singularity is also a state of pure potential, where something or someone exists as irreducible to any particular identity, category, or function but retains the potential for any number of possibilities. Singularity also resists being classified or fully defined by any social, legal, or political norms.

2.1.1. Politics of Singularity

While states' politics are based on identities, the politics of singularity aims to dismantle identity politics that blares out distinctiveness, which enables the implementation of non-essentialist differences. The politics of singularity promotes embracing differences over essential identities and challenges political narratives trying to control them by its discourse. The politics of singularity acknowledges the importance of struggles that identity politics problematize, yet its actions extend beyond the scope of these struggles. While it recognizes the demands of identities, its ultimate goal is to transcend identity altogether by pushing these demands to their limits. Rather than reinforcing identity through power struggles, it seeks to untangle the binary relationships between power and identity. Beyond this binary opposition, it endeavors to embrace a political approach that does not rely on essential identities of resistance. The concept of identity in identity politics often echoes the historical roots of individuality tied to property and inheritance laws. In the 18th century alongside the development of inheritance laws, the category of the individual was established to justify the legal possession and transfer of property by a single person. Just as the category of the individual was shaped to protect and transfer property, identity politics often revolves around protecting and asserting specific

identities as possessions. Identity politics, while empowering in recognizing marginalized identities, risks reinforcing the isolation. By focusing on specific categories of identity, it may inadvertently perpetuate the separation of individuals into distinct groups rather than fostering community across shared vulnerabilities. Identity politics reflects an immanent framework, where identity is seen as self-contained and self-sufficient. This limits the potential for identities to be reimagined relationally or in connection with others. “Identity is regarded as possession and is defended as property” (Hardt and Negri, 2009, p.329). Thus, eliminating identities resolve dominance and control and make room for plurality and change. By rejecting and distancing ourselves from the representations of a given identity and the categories of a given society, we take a chance to stay with others and also a chance to become someone else. With this relationality, we are in a condition of an everlasting challenger and critic of power, representations, categories, ourselves and the remaining others. Identities are definable, confined and thus controllable by the power. When we all come together without any historical imperatives or under any subordinated subjectivity, the power becomes unable to define itself without any opponent. This creates a possibility of disorientation and dissociation in the power.

2.1.2. The Difference Between a Singular Being and a Subject

According to Nancy (1991) a singular being does not emerge against the background of undifferentiated identity of beings or against the background of their unitary assumption or that of will. Moreover, a singular being consistently finds itself through encounters with the other. In each encounter, the singular being is shaped and redefined, as its existence is always exposed to and dependent upon its relation to others. For this possibility, we need to push ourselves to that threshold. This threshold does not date back to the past or defined or pre-given. On the contrary, it is discovered singularly when we expose ourselves to the other. Nancy (1991) emphasizes that a singular being does not emerge against a chaotic or undifferentiated background, nor from any unitary assumption such as a will or a becoming as a process of transformation. Instead, the singular being appears as finitude itself—as an existence limited by its beginning and end. This appearance occurs at the boundaries of existence, through the contact with other

singular beings. He distinguishes between appearance, which is superficial or deceptive, and appearing (*paraître*), which is the true revelation of finitude. Finitude exposes beings as inherently limited, and this exposure is how singular beings appear in the world.

Singular being is differentiated from individuality, that is a subject categorized as free, conscious and protective of his/her rights and responsible for his/her own decisions while at the same time surrounded by the walls of a state. Individuals confirm their individuality by these elements and by this individuality is produced rationally in a system which is closed up and withdrawn in itself. Thus, the possibility of exposing oneself to another is destroyed. Individuality refers to an entity that is closed off from others, self-contained, and detached from the *formless ground* of existence. In contrast, singularity is a form of being that is open, shared, and defined by its relation to others, rather than being a closed-off entity. Nancy (1991) critiques the traditional concept of individuation, which is the process of separating an individual from a formless, undifferentiated background. This idea assumes that individual entities are clearly defined, separate from their surroundings, and derive their being from this separation. However, Nancy (1991) argues that this perspective misses something important that individuals are constituted not by their isolation, but by their communication and relation with others. According to Nancy (1991), only through communication, contagion, or communion do individuals truly come into being. In other words, individuals are not isolated entities that emerge from nothing; they are formed through their relations with others.

Nancy (1991) argues that singularity does not come from a process of singularization which would imply an active process of creation or formation. Instead, singularity is always already there, existing in the finitude of beings. Finitude, or the limitation of being through birth, death, and boundaries, which defines singularity. A singular being does not emerge as a clear form from an abstract ground; rather, its very existence is grounded in the fact that it is finite and relational. This ground of singularity is not a traditional foundation. Instead, it is composed of a network of relations, the interweaving of singularities. Singularity exists only through its relation to alterity that is, through its otherness. This means that singular beings are not defined in isolation, but through their exposure to and sharing with other singularities. Nancy (1991) suggests that this sharing

is not a fixed boundary or limit, but rather a continuous process of exposure and relation. Singularity, therefore, is constituted by its relation to others and by its openness to being transformed through this relation.

Singular beings are non-subjects and their existence is not defined by a fixed essence but by their manner of being—a mode of self-exposure that is neither generic nor purely individual. In this sense, manner represents a whatever singularity. Agamben (1993b) while explaining singularity refers to the term *manner*. Manner alludes to a way of being that arises dynamically instead of being a static universal or a particular individual. It represents something that is exemplary—a singular example that stands for itself but is not reducible to an individual or universal property. Singular beings are inherently in relation to other beings. Agamben (1993b) mentions manner as a process of rising forth. This suggests that being is not defined by external attributes, hidden essences, predetermined categories or identities but by its mode of emergence. In other words, being is the manner in which it comes into being—a continuous and active process, not a fixed state of either essence or accident. This kind of being is not simply existing, but rather is engendering itself continually through its interactions with the other. Manner is what makes each being unique and common at the same time. To understand what is a singular being, we could also review what Patrick Roney remarks

A singular being is founded by a dilemma. Without any ruling substance that is one or common, a singular being is always in relation with others but does not align with what is common. These singular beings must be distinguished carefully from individual or isolated beings. On the contrary, a singular being is not determined by an Idea or a substance. A singular being is precisely that which is not a subject. Without a single substance governing it, the singular being is always already in relation with others but not according to what is common. Rather than being individual, as singular, I am singular on the basis of the withdrawal of substance (such as ego). I am singular to the extent that I come into contact with the non-general, with the other, at the limit

each time it appears (again, never as an object, Idea, or a type of boundary). I am singular insofar as I am in immediate relation with it. (Roney, 2016, p.134, the sentences are translated by me)

When considering dichotomies, my existence as a subject creates a boundary where I cannot coexist with the other. The singular being is oriented outward. Egoity cannot be shared, but when the ego withdraws, I open myself to the other.

Thus, what I take upon myself as mine is not my subjectivity; rather, it is the being-at-the-limit that pluralizes me in the sense that I am already in relation with others. To be at the limit, or toward the limit, is at the same time to be together. What we share is singularity. Singularity is relational rather than individual and autonomous. (Roney, 2016, p.135, the sentences are translated by me)

Giorgio Agamben (1993b) explores the idea of singularity in relation to *whatever being*. Agamben contrasts the common interpretation of whatever as something indifferent, meaning *it does not matter which*, with his deeper philosophical interpretation. For Agamben, whatever being signifies being such that it always matters, meaning that it is not reducible to a common set of properties (like being French or being Muslim) but instead refers to the pure singularity of being itself, stripped of external categories and classifications. Agamben (1993b) challenges the classical distinction between the individual and the universal, offering a way to understand singularity that transcends both. In this view, singularity is not defined by its properties or its relation to a class but by its being-such—its unique mode of existence. Agamben uses the term *quodlibet*, to illustrate this concept, pointing to the desire embedded in the idea of whatever as something inherently valuable or lovable not because of what it is but simply because it is. This approach resonates with Agamben's broader critique of how modern society classifies

and categorizes individuals into rigid identities, reducing them to their properties or roles. In contrast, whatever being is free from such limitations, and its value comes from its pure existence, its singularity. Agamben's (1993b) use of *limbo* serves as a metaphor for a community of singularities who are not defined by belonging to any predetermined category or fate. They exist in a kind of free-floating state, unbound by the usual divisions between salvation and damnation, inclusion and exclusion. They are not tied to identity or purpose but live joyfully in their own *being-such*.

2.2. Community

The question of singularity in relation to community arises from the need to envision a form of togetherness that avoids the extremes of both totalitarianism and individualism. This entails imagining a community that is not the product of immanence—one that does not collapse into self-sufficient unity or absolute self-determination. Instead, the necessity of a community that transcends itself with the help of death, rejecting both the hyper-individualism of liberalism and the totalitarianism of real socialism. Liberalism, with its emphasis on individual autonomy, often leads to an isolated subject disconnected from others. In contrast, real socialism's collectivism, that is, Soviet-style communism tends toward a totalitarian erasure of singularity, subsuming individuals into a monolithic whole. Both approaches, though divergent, share a common flaw that they conceive of community as a product of their own making, as entirely immanent. Against this backdrop, Nancy, Blanchot and Agamben propose a radical reimagining of community—one that is not self-generated but emerges from the relationality and transcendence of its members. This vision seeks to establish a form of togetherness that preserves the singularity of each individual while embracing the shared vulnerability and exposure that characterize human existence. It is not a community built on domination, homogeneity, or the erasure of difference, but one that acknowledges the irreducibility of separation and the impossibility of a complete fusion and insufficiency. In this way, community becomes a dynamic space of being-with, where individuals are not assimilated into a unified whole but come together in their shared finitude and plurality. I would like to explore how such a community can be conceptualized—one that resists the impulse for immanence and

instead draws its strength from the acknowledgment of loss, difference, and the limits of being. Through the insights of Nancy, Blanchot, and Agamben, we will examine how the idea of community can be reclaimed as a site of relational singularities rather than a project of unity or totality.

2.2.1. The Relationship Between a Singular Being and Singular Community

A singular being's unique features are often suppressed when they belong politically to a community. This suppression occurs because communities emphasize artificially constructed commonalities, demanding conformity and loyalty at the expense of singularity. These totalitarian communities tend to outcast the different one in order to confirm and strengthen their subsistence. However, commonalities are indeed artificially produced and fictional burdens that push us to a social imperativeness and to a defined selfness. Singularities are always threatened whether in a state that offers itself one and only political belonging or in parties who defend or offend the state because of the imposed totalitarian identities and because of their closed-up nature. They operate through the idea of *martyrdom*. The concept of martyrdom here refers to the mechanism by which singularities—unique individuals or identities—are absorbed into larger, often totalitarian, systems of belonging or ideology. In such systems, individuals are reduced to symbols or tools to serve a collective cause. Martyrdom operates by transforming individuals into representations of an idealized identity or struggle, erasing their singularity in the process. Whether it is the state demanding ultimate sacrifice for its preservation or opposing parties calling for self-sacrifice to resist the state, the individual's unique identity becomes secondary to the collective purpose. Martyrdom thus exemplifies how singularities are co-opted and diminished within rigid, closed systems of political or ideological belonging.

In totalitarian communities, a common identity is created for us and constitutes standardized and similar individuals. In a totalitarian, rational community, principally there could be no one who is foreign to that community. They all fuse in rational, practical commonality. They are agents of that imposed-mind, discourse and meaning. In these

communities where there is no room for the foreigners, namely the other, community encounters only with itself and only finds itself and in this community individuals are isolated. It prevents the possibility to expose oneself to the other's demands and criticism. On the other hand, a singular community does not demand any commonality which operates singular beings according to their similarities. Their togetherness is not rooted in a consensual or predefined political identity but emerges from their shared willingness to engage with one another. They come together not because they are subject to any law or constitution.

Nancy here refers to the rise of techno-economic imperatives—modern systems driven by technological and economic forces—as inheriting the failed promises of totalitarian attempts at community. These systems continue the drive toward organization and efficiency (making operational), which seeks to unify or organize society in a way that serves these imperatives, but not the true nature of community. According to Nancy, (1991) the efforts to create a community have been based on the notion of *work or operativity*. This means that past attempts to build community have been conceived as projects or operations—activities that involve organizing people into a cohesive, functioning whole for a particular purpose or end. The idea of community, as he sees it, cannot be reduced to a task to be accomplished, a product to be created, or an operation to be carried out. Instead, community has a deeper, more fundamental meaning that is not captured by these frameworks.

Nancy introduces the idea that the true demand or necessity of community is *unheard*—it has not been fully recognized or conceptualized in historical or contemporary thought. The unheard nature of this demand suggests that what the community truly requires has not been adequately addressed by any political, social, or economic projects. This unheard aspect of community is linked to an understanding that community cannot be achieved through conventional means of unification or collective work.

I would like to explain what would be the consequences if we consider community as a project by referring to Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* (1995). If a community operates like a project and members of the community are purged from their singular features and their differences are fused into sameness or into the normal, this would start shaping

individuals as bodies who apply practices of power. For Foucault, practices are the means by which power operates to produce and regulate individuals. Individuals in this sense will be the parts of the working clock, which are purified from their singularities. As he states, "Discipline makes individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as instruments of its exercise" (Foucault, 1995, p.170). This suggests that individuality is not an inherent quality but rather a construct of disciplinary mechanisms that define and regulate subjectivity. In this process, power does not simply constrain individuals but actively produces them by subjecting them to disciplinary practices. As he further explains, "Discipline produces subjected and practiced, 'docile' bodies" (1995, p.138), highlighting how power transforms individuals into obedient subjects who conform to societal norms. This transformation is achieved not solely through external coercion but through the internalization of discipline, leading individuals to regulate their own behavior. In *Discipline and Punish* (1995), Foucault points out that for power to be effectively exercised, a permanent, comprehensive, and ubiquitous instrument of surveillance is required. This surveillance mechanism renders all individuals visible, thereby maintaining control over them, while it remains invisible itself—instilling in individuals the constant awareness of being observed, which in turn leads them to self-discipline. Consequently, individuals regulate themselves without the need for external control. This self-regulation ultimately allows individuals to conform without the need for overt external control. In this way, disciplinary power operates through both external constraints and internalized self-discipline, producing subjects who embody and sustain the very structures of power that shape them. However, with the help of critical awareness which Nancy calls *clear consciousness* and rejects unity with that term, we could understand how disciplinary mechanisms operate and influence behavior, singular beings and communities and could become more aware of the ways in which power is exercised. This awareness can both lead to more informed resistance and the questioning of norms and practices and provide singular beings to realize the separateness and singularity of each person in order to counteract the internalization of rigid norms. By dissolving the fusion or unity that rejects separateness and singularity, we could make disciplinary mechanisms transparent. This dissolution challenges the homogeneity that these mechanisms enforce on individuals. In line with this Foucault contends that

The problem of our days is not to try to liberate the individual from the state and from the state's institutions but to liberate us both from the state and from the type of individualization which is linked to the state. We have to promote new forms of subjectivity through the refusal of this kind of individuality. (1982, p.785)

Foucault challenges the conventional notion of subjectivity, arguing that what is often taken as the natural, inherent subject is, in fact, the product of disciplinary power. This idea is closely related to his discussion in *Discipline and Punish* (1995). According to Foucault (1995), in order to render these invisible mechanisms of power visible, it is first necessary to critically examine the historical construction of disciplinary and surveillance practices, institutions, and discourses. This reveals how disciplinary power practices emerged and how norms and order were legitimized. Consequently, we can demonstrate that the norms and forms of control, which are perceived as natural or innate in social life, are in fact strategic and productive manifestations of power relations. This critical awareness exposes the hidden structures of power, thereby enabling their legitimation and questioning. The uncritical acceptance of normalization poses a significant danger, as it allows the very mechanisms Foucault warns against to reinforce exclusionary and oppressive power structures. When normalization operates without scrutiny, it legitimizes systems of control, marginalization, and the systematic exclusion of those who do not conform to dominant norms. This process not only consolidates existing hierarchies but also naturalizes forms of social regulation that suppress difference and dissent. Critical awareness is essential to preventing the violent consequences of homogenized and exclusionary community formations, where the demand for unity often comes at the cost of erasing singularities and silencing the other.

Community is not merely a structure based on the classification of needs and forces, the fair distribution of authorities, the sharing of goods and tasks, or a rational calculation prioritizing security and interests, nor is it the result of incidental necessity. It is not solely about a shared territory and blood, nor about the creation of pure immanence in an Aryan community. As bitterly experienced in Nazi Germany and similar instances, this only led to a claim of superiority over those excluded from this community and the annihilation of the other, the outsider. (Murat Erşen, 2016, p.154)

Community could not exist without the presence of marginalized groups. It is not a structure that ensures stability, stagnation, or immutability. It does not reinforce the authority of the majority or its discourse. If this is the case, the structure within which an individual builds oneself is not found in partnership, but rather is grounded in the exclusion of the singular characteristics that make them who they are, as belonging to non-participating groups. “An impossible absolute, persistently attempting to establish a disconnection, becomes a barrier that continuously negates the idea of community by the immanence of the inside.” (Murat Erşen, 2016, p.156, the sentence is translated by me) The community will only materialize to the extent that we encounter others. It will manifest by keeping open the boundary of the genuine companion that pluralities and the countless, inexhaustible forms of this plurality can create with all their singularities, allowing diversities and all singularities to enter from this boundary. This partnership is yet to be realized. “Singularities do not belong to a whole; they appear with clinamen, with the swerve that dislocates any totality”. (Nancy, 1991, p.6) The community is the clinamen of being-together, the deviation that brings us into relation without subsuming our singularities. Community, in its inoperativity, is marked by the clinamen of shared existence that resists closure and completion. The clinamen disrupts the myth of a self-sufficient community, reminding us that community is always a being-in-common of what deviates. Nancy states in *The Experience of Freedom* as such

Being-in-common is what presents to me this never: my birth and my death are present to me and are my own only through the births and deaths of others, for whom in turn their births and deaths are neither present nor their own. We share what divides us: the freedom of an incalculable and improbable coming to presence of being, which only brings us into presence as the ones of the others. This is the coming to presence of our freedom, the common experience of the exposure in which the community is founded. but founded only through and for an infinite resistance to every appropriation of the essence, collective or individual, of its sharing, or of its foundation. (1993, p.95)

Blanchot argues that community is an experience of *unworking*. This means that it is not something that can be created or produced, but something that happens as individuals expose themselves to one another in their separateness: "Community exists in the space of this unworking, this withdrawal from production or completion." (Blanchot, 1988, p. 34) This inoperative community draws us together not in a goal-oriented project but in the shared recognition of the impossibility of complete unity. "To be with others is to share in a condition of finitude, a shared fate of mortality and limitation." (The Unworkable Community, 1988, p.26) This shared condition creates the impulse for community, where we acknowledge our separateness yet are bound together by the same existential limits. Blanchot believes that the other is not simply someone different from me, but they are a limit in themselves. The other represents something outside of myself that I cannot control or fully comprehend. This encounter with the unknown or unknowable in the other exposes us to the absolute finitude of our understanding. In *The Infinite Conversation*, he states "The other brings me to a limit that is not mine, exposing me to an exteriority that reminds me of my own finitude." (1993, p. 45). Nancy (1991) introduces the idea of a *clear consciousness* of separation, which means being fully aware of the inescapable separateness and singularity of each person within a community. This consciousness is not about achieving unity or oneness; rather, it is about being acutely aware of the separation that defines communal existence. It's a form of consciousness that is clear

precisely because it recognizes that intimacy or unity (immanence) is impossible. The clear consciousness of community is described as ecstatic consciousness. *Ecstasy* here refers to the experience of standing outside oneself or being beyond oneself (outside-of-self). This type of consciousness is not something that belongs to an individual (never mine) but rather something that arises through the experience of being with others in the community. This communal experience is akin to a shared awareness or a collective sense of existence that is not tied to a singular ego or subject. While Nancy acknowledges that this communal consciousness may resemble what Freud termed the *collective unconscious*, he stresses that it is not the same. The unconscious, according to Freud, involves the hidden, repressed parts of a subject. In contrast, the ecstatic consciousness of community is not about a hidden or unconscious part of the self, nor is it a greater subject that contains all individual subjects. Instead, it is a consciousness that emerges at the limits of individual self-consciousness, where the self is no longer the central reference point. Nancy ultimately frames community as the ecstatic interruption of self-consciousness. In this sense, community is the condition in which self-consciousness is interrupted or suspended, allowing for a form of shared consciousness that exists outside of individual selves. This shared or communal consciousness does not consolidate into a single, unified subject or entity but remains a shared space where individual separations and singularities are recognized and upheld. Nancy is emphasizing that, by referring to Bataille, the essence of community lies not in unity or fusion but in recognizing and embracing the irreducible separation between individuals. Community is experienced as an outside-of-self-consciousness, a state of being that disrupts the self's desire for unity or totality. This conception of community challenges traditional metaphysical ideas and presents a radical vision where community exists as a shared space of ecstatic separation—a place where beings are together in their very apartness. When we are inclined outward, the being withdraws. This withdrawal enables the openness of an existing being, creating space for encounters with others. The rupture and opening within the self (the *I*) will similarly bring about an opening and rupture within the community.

Community is not a work or a project. It is not something produced by us, nor is it an environment in which we culturally or politically manufacture ourselves. Community, like the self (*I*), is unfinished. Community does not pre-exist as an absolute or unified

body or identity, one that embodies a unified essence. This kind of framework would stifle the community. Nancy's notion of community, as elaborated in *The Inoperative Community*, centers on the idea that genuine community is not founded on a common identity or essence but rather on the exposure and *clinamen* of singular beings. Community emerges through the collective acknowledgement of finitude and mortality, resulting in a shared experience of loss. This loss encompasses not only the loss of individuals but also the dissolution of fixed identities defined humanism and stable meanings.

Nancy (1991) explores community by criticizing traditional notions of community formation. He critiques the idea that community is formed through a shared identity or common essence. He emphasizes that a thinking community is not a substance or a fixed entity but rather a dynamic and relational process, which *clinamen* refers to. Nancy strikes an attitude against individualism and real socialism which is totalitarian. Since fundamentally Nancy is opposed to a community based on immanence and an individual who is a work of oneself and those who produce and operate community as a project. Since the only norm becomes a man in those circumstances. This occludes an individual in itself and also this occludes a community for itself. According to Nancy, the true betrayal of real communism lies in its reduction of the human being to a mere workforce, in defining humanity strictly through labor. Concepts such as freedom, speech, happiness, and other promised ideals are transformed into possessions that individuals must safeguard. Reason becomes a tool for society, while the individual is seen as a producer. Labor thus evolves into a means for both self and societal actualization. This concept is closely linked to traditional forms of communism and humanism, which he argues have been subjugated to the goal of achieving a community that produces its own essence as its work. For Nancy, such absolute immanence can be problematic because it leads to a closed, self-referential system that may neglect the singularities.

Nancy (1991), refers to *communism* to create a form of community that transcends social divisions and the subjugation to political control. This implies a longing for a space where people could live all together (live-with) without the constraints imposed by societal hierarchies or governance systems driven by dominant politics. However, real socialism,

although defending the very opposite ideals resulted in the privatization of power within the state apparatus. The collective ideals, such as freedom of speech and happiness were subjugated to the interests of the ruling elite, leading to a form of privatization. Nancy implies that when these fundamental aspects of human life are subjected to the exclusive order of privatization, they are diminished or lost. True community, therefore, should exist beyond the constraints of privatization, allowing for the free expression and enjoyment of these liberties. This sort of loss is the negative way of loss according to Nancy and which brings about the end of an individual and a community.

Nancy (1991) also emphasizes that a singular community is one that can transcend the death of each individual. He suggests that when death is reduced to merely the end of an individual, it loses its significance and becomes a burden. In the contemporary landscape, even our most intimate and singular characteristic—our mortality—is treated within neoliberalism as a quantifiable metric that can be managed through policies and interventions aimed at optimizing health outcomes and controlling costs. Death, therefore, is often framed as a result of personal failure or poor risk management. The neoliberal paradigm links health to personal success and economic status. Those with greater resources are better positioned to manage their health and avoid premature death. This creates a system where health outcomes are closely tied to economic privilege. Namely, death is also privatized by the Power. Neoliberalism controls and manages death through various mechanisms that align with its broader economic and ideological principles. Neoliberalism frames life and death within market logic. This involves evaluating health and mortality based on economic efficiency, productivity, and cost. Decisions around healthcare, insurance, and public health policies are often driven by economic considerations, which can affect the quality and accessibility of care. Life is valued in terms of economic contribution. The worth of an individual is often assessed based on their productivity, potential for economic output, and overall health. This perspective influences healthcare funding and prioritization, often leading to resource allocation based on economic criteria and death is reified, corporatized and reduced to an individual and calculated death in this way. However, in a singular community, death is shared and integrated into the collective praxis, providing a way to cope with and find a space to contest ourselves not in it but on the verge of it to live-with. Nancy envisions a community

where the connections between people transcend individual losses, social divisions, and the alienating forces of privatization and political control, thereby preserving the true essence of liberty, speech, and happiness.

2.2.2. Immanence

Nancy (1991) defines immanence as a state of self-enclosed, self-sufficient wholeness. This concept implies that being remains confined within its own limits rather than transcending them. In immanence, there is no process of internal questioning or re-evaluation of boundaries. It signifies a condition where the beings remain within their own limits, emphasizing self-sufficiency without engaging with or requiring anything external. Immanence is inherently resistant to rethinking, favoring the preservation of the status quo. As a result, it embodies a static structure that rejects exposition to the other and also being-with others. By isolating the individual as a self-contained entity, immanence denies the possibility of rethinking a subjectivity with others and the possibility of a singular community, further reinforcing isolation and stasis. This static structure of immanence reaches its extreme in absolute immanence, where not only individuals but also communities are enclosed within self-sufficiency, rejecting the relational dynamics and openness that Nancy envisions as essential for an inoperative community.

For Jean-Luc Nancy (1991), what immanent man is revolves around the critique of transcendental or metaphysical foundations that have historically underpinned the idea of community and individual existence rather than an inoperative community and singular beings. Nancy emphasizes the presence and interaction of individuals on the verge of the finite world. That is different from absolute immanence which encloses individuals and dynamic communities. "Community is made of what retreats from it: it is made from retreating. Community is not the work of singular beings, nor can it claim them as its works, even though it arises only from them, and only through their return to them." (Nancy, 1991, pp.35-37) The idea that community is made from retreating signifies that it cannot claim full immanence. The retreating of singularities preserves their distinctness,

preventing the community from collapsing into a static, closed system of self-sufficiency. This openness to what is outside—what retreats—makes community a space of shared transcendence rather than a confined immanent structure.

2.2.3. Immanence vs. Transcendence

Nancy contrasts absolute immanence with transcendence. Traditional metaphysical or religious frameworks often rely on transcendent principles such as God, universal reason, or an overarching idea of humanity and ideals to define community and individual existence. Indeed, this refers to the two fundamental thoughts in the West when we think about collectivity. One is totality precedes parts and the other is parts precede totality. What is problematic in them? The first one means becoming a part of an essence. In order to carry out one absolute good life, you become the same with the others and abandon yourself in order to be a part of a superior or a greater being. Here, the real being is totality and should not be ruptured. Totality exists and every particular in it gains their meanings from the whole or totality. In the other one, individuals found a community and then a state through socialization and consensus.

Consensus tends to suppress the singularity of individuals by prioritizing a common agreement over individual differences. Consensus could lead to the erasure of these singularities, reducing individuals to mere components of a collective identity.

It could create an illusion of unity that masks underlying differences and conflicts. A singular community is not about achieving a homogeneous unity but about embracing and engaging with the multiplicity and heterogeneity of its members. A forced consensus can conceal the real tensions and divergences that are essential for a vibrant and dynamic community. When consensus is imposed, community risks becoming instrumentalized, serving specific goals or agendas rather than being an end in itself. In contrast, the concept of the *inoperative community* proposes a form of togetherness that resists instrumentalization, allowing the community to exist as a valuable entity in itself and a space of spontaneous existence rather than being reduced to a means to an external end. Consensus-driven communities can become functional and utilitarian. It often involves

the marginalization or exclusion of dissenting voices to achieve agreement. However, a singular community thrives on the exposure and engagement with difference. A community founded on consensus may fail to fully incorporate and address the diverse perspectives and experiences of all its members. Therefore, it leads to a static and closed community, where the established agreement becomes a fixed point that resists change. However, the inoperative community is dynamic and open-ended, constantly evolving through the interactions and exchanges of its members. Consensus tends to focus on commonalities and shared goals, often overlooking the most singular asset of us which is finitude. This can result in a shallow and superficial sense of community. Nancy (1991) critiques forms of political and social organization that impose a totalizing identity or purpose on individuals.

The individual nature of a being derives not from being *common* but from *in*. It is the *in* that establishes the relation. Collectivity, by contrast, erases the individual, sustaining itself as a unified whole. It suppresses the singular, bringing all into one place. The problem lies in thinking of death as a Hegelian sublation. Within the community, the death of workers, who attain martyrdom and thereby acquire new meaning, entails that others witness these deaths and anticipate a similar fate in the future. This act of witnessing and replication serves to consolidate the community into a single body, demanding that everyone be sacrificed to this body. Here, the individual merges with others in substance, resulting in the substantiation of the individual and the aggregation of parts within a whole. However, such deaths alienate us from the community; fusion is becoming estranged from society. Modern eras could justify death under the premises of salvation and sublation. For Nancy (1991), however, being-with is not collective fusion, nor is it simply sociality or intersubjectivity. These ideologies are limited or flawed because they rely on a notion of absolute immanence. They are based on an ideal of complete self-sufficiency and unity, which Nancy sees as problematic and states in *The Inoperative Community*

The community that becomes a single thing (body, mind, fatherland, Leader...) necessarily loses the “in” of “being-in-common”. Or rather, it loses the with, the together, the mutual, and even the reciprocal; instead, it gains a common substance. But communion is not a common substance. (1991, p.31)

Nancy (1991) reminds us that fascism represents a grotesque resurgence of the obsession with communal fusion or immanent unity, which had been lost or idealized. This obsession stems from Christianity and its notions of communion and collective identity. Fascism, in this view, is a convulsion of Christianity—a distortion that ends up captivating modern Christianity by embodying its extreme desire for communal unity. This longing for immanence mirrors similar dynamics in other ideological contexts, such as Soviet imagery.

In his work *The Melancholy of the Left*, Enzo Traverso (2016) describes how Soviet imagery was shaped, stating

Throughout the 1920s, Soviet propaganda depicted Lenin as a confident guide, one arm outstretched toward the future, amidst a world of industry, chemical factories, and machinery, where numerous workers were fervently engaged in building a new society. These depictions of Lenin, in posters and statues, resembled a sectarian version of the ancient religious iconography showing Moses descending from Mount Sinai with his finger raised to the heavens, holding the stone tablets inscribed with the Ten Commandments. This striking similarity between socialist and religious iconographies reveals that, despite theoretical denials within the communist tradition, a religious impetus continues to coexist visually with the dominant element of communism: atheism. Marx inherited the opposition to clericalism from the radical Enlightenment, and his followers

transformed it into the official doctrine of Marxism. However, as this ideology became part of left culture—namely, social and political mass movements—the hopes, dreams, and expectations that had been cloaked in religious forms for centuries became intertwined with it. In other words, atheism and secularized religious tendencies became interwoven in the famous definition of religion as the ‘opiate of the masses,’ expressing both alienation and a desire for liberation. (p.106-110)

Nancy (1991) argues that any nostalgia for the religious or royal communities of the past is misguided. The grand communal efforts of history, such as those symbolized by religious or royal sovereignty, were ultimately *immense failures*. Rather than longing to return to these past forms of community, Nancy, following Bataille, suggests that we must move forward, recognizing that these structures failed to achieve true communal being. Nancy’s inoperative community which is against transcendental ideals focuses on the here and now, on the lived reality of human beings without appealing to an external, higher and ideal realm. According to Nancy (1991), a singular community is based on death, being finite and excess. Nancy (1991) uses the concept of excess to illustrate that neither beings nor communities can exist as self-enclosed or completed wholes. Excess highlights the inherent insufficiency of self-sufficiency, revealing that both are always shaped by a surplus or an other. It represents the perpetual state of surpassing one’s own boundaries, remaining inherently open and incomplete. Nancy defines excess as an uncontrollable surplus of meaning or existence, where neither meaning nor community can be fully assimilated or possessed. This openness resists totality, affirming that communities and meanings are fundamentally incomplete and continuously shaped by what lies beyond their limits.

“The relation (the community) is, if it is, nothing other than what undoes, in its very principle—and at its closure or on its limit—the autarchy of absolute immanence”. (Nancy, 1991, p.4) and in *The Creation of the World or Globalization* Nancy adds "Excess

does not merely add itself to the totality of beings as a supplement: it is what makes beings be." (2007, p.32)

Community arises from the excess and retreat of singular beings rather than their amalgamation into a unified whole. According to Nancy (1991) This retreat does not signify withdrawal but rather an openness to the singularity and mortality of others. By embracing finitude, singular beings engage in meaningful interactions without seeking to subsume one another into a totality or transcendental ideal. It calls for a care for the other's singularity and mortality. Singularity is coupled with finitude, the recognition that human existence is limited and mortal. A singular being acknowledges and lives within finitude without seeking to overcome them through transcendental ideals. Community is based on the coexistence of singular beings. It is not about a fusion of identities or a collective essence but about the sharing of finite existence. Community is not something imposed or derived from an external source but rather as an inherent part of human existence. In *The Inoperative Community*, Nancy (1991) discusses the concept of *excess*, drawing on references to Bataille. Bataille's concept of *sovereignty* depends on the idea that *sovereignty is nothing*, meaning that true sovereignty involves an exposure to an excess or transcendence that cannot be captured, represented, or appropriated. This excess is not something that can be possessed; rather, it is something to which beings are abandoned. This exposure to nothing contrasts with the idea of a subject or a communal entity trying to reach or master nothingness. Instead of mastering nothingness, the sovereign being or in Nancy's (1991) words singular being is exposed to an exteriority (an outside) that it cannot relate to in a conventional, subjective sense. This exteriority is not something the being can internalize or control; it exists in a state of irretrievable relation to the outside. Community, in Bataille's view as interpreted by Nancy, (1991) is the space that allows for this relation to an incommensurable outside. It is not a space of immanent unity or fusion but rather a space where beings are exposed to the limits of their existence—an exposure to what cannot be assimilated or domesticated within immanence. The *inner experience* Bataille speaks of is thus not an internal, subjective experience but an experience of this exterior relation, of being exposed to what lies beyond the self, beyond the subject. Nancy (1991) explains that Bataille understood the connection between ecstasy (a state of being outside oneself or beyond the limits of individual consciousness)

and community (a space or condition where individuals come together). For Bataille, these two concepts are not simply related but mutually constitutive: each gives rise to the other and defines the space (or "areality") where the other exists. However, this connection is not straightforward or totalizing. While ecstasy and community are interrelated, they also limit each other. This limitation creates what Nancy calls a *double arealization*, meaning that each concept shapes and constrains the other, preventing a total fusion or a single, cohesive realization of either concept.

Agamben in *The Coming Community* (1993b) states that whatever singularity is determined not by being part of a specific concept or identity but through its relation to the totality of all possible concepts or identities. This brings it to the border of all possibilities. This border is not a limit which would imply a closure, but a threshold or a cycle or a transition, meaning it remains open to the external, the outside. The threshold is where singularity touches the outside, meaning it engages with exteriority but remains open and undefined by it. The threshold signifies that whatever singularity exists in contact with an external space that remains empty. Whatever singularity is a pure exteriority, and this combination of singularity and emptiness represents an event of the outside—the event of being exposed, open to the outside, rather than closed off within a determinate identity. It represents the outside not as a remote, unreachable space but as something accessible. Agamben describes the threshold as a form of ek-stasis, being outside oneself that a singularity experiences. This condition is what Agamben calls whatever, a singularity that is exposed, finite, and yet indeterminable by any fixed concept or identity. The interplay between ecstasy and community involves a suspension of immanence. Immanence, in philosophical terms, often refers to the state of being inherent or existing within. By suspending immanence, Nancy (1991) suggests that the relationship between ecstasy and community resists any attempt to fully internalize or integrate the other. This resistance prevents a total fusion of identities or beings into a single, unified community or a collective ecstasy. This resistance to fusion is crucial for Nancy (1991). He argues that without it, a community would quickly dissolve into a unique and total being, a totalitarian or homogenizing entity where individual singularities are lost. Instead, the dynamic between ecstasy and community allows for a

being-in-common that maintains both the individuality of its members and their collective existence.

Nancy (1991, p.29) offers a formula in *The Inoperative Community*: "You shares me". This phrase suggests that in the very act of encountering another singularity, there is a sharing or exposure that goes beyond individual separateness. The you and I are not merely distinct entities; they are co-constituted through the exposure of their finitude to one another. In this framework, a singular being is at once detached and communitarian. The detachment refers to the way each singularity is distinct and finite, not dissolved into a collective whole. However, this distinction is not a form of individualism but a form of finitude *compearing*—a shared exposure to others that defines the very essence of community. Community, therefore, is not about merging or uniting individuals into a single entity. It is about the presentation of detachment, where each singular being remains distinct but is nonetheless exposed to the existence of others. This mutual exposure is what creates the conditions for community, not the formation of a common bond or totality. Nancy (1991) critiques the traditional metaphor of the communal bond, which suggests that individuals (or subjects) are connected by some external link or bond. This bond is often framed in terms of economic relationships, recognition, or other forms of intersubjective connection. For Nancy, this concept is insufficient because it treats subjects as pre-existing objects that are somehow attached to one another through a secondary bond. Instead, Nancy proposes that compearance is more fundamental than any communal bond. It does not establish a relationship between already-formed subjects; rather, it is the appearance of the *between* itself. The relationship is not an additional factor but the very structure of existence: you and I are exposed to each other, not as separate entities, but in a way that reveals our mutual finitude. In this way, mutual insufficiency transcends the confines of individuality.

Agamben in *The Coming Community* (1993b) explains *exposing oneself to the other* in the perspective of *ease*, which he connects to the experience of an unrepresentable space. He mentions how ease designates the empty space where each can move freely. This notion of ease symbolizes a space where singular beings coexist without constraints or boundaries—an open, empty space where people can experience freedom in relation to

one another. This means welcoming the other's being without attempting to change it. The other's *taking-place* (their existence or situation) becomes a space for radical *hospitality*, which Agamben associates with Christ-like hospitality.

Agamben (1993b) also mentions an unrepresentable community—a community that cannot be described through traditional markers like identity, representation, or shared characteristics. It is a community based on unconditional substitutability and irreducible singularity. There are no categories or roles that define this community; it is simply a shared space of being, where each person welcomes the other without imposing identity on them. It is not about improving or completing the other, but rather about exiling oneself into the other person's experience and accepting them as they are. The idea of *belonging to belonging itself* represents a model of community that is not defined by any identity or essence but instead by individuals simply being together in their existence. This concept aligns with Nancy's notion of the inoperative community and parallels Blanchot's idea of the unshareable share. Agamben (1993b) argues that belonging to belonging itself means that a community is formed not through specific characteristics or attributes of individuals but through their sheer existence. This represents a departure from the notions of belonging imposed by totalitarian regimes and liberal individualism. The concept of whatever being resolves the tension between singularity and community. It suggests a model of community that transcends identity or categorization. Agamben's approach demonstrates that individuals can coexist without being subjected to imposed norms or predefined categories.

The limit functions as the marker of finitude. Transcendence begins with the acknowledgment of finitude, not as endpoints but as opening to a possibility. Singularity is shaped not by overcoming or erasing these limits, but by existing through and with them. Transcendence, in this sense, is not an escape but a reorientation that engages with the limit. The limit becomes the site where beings encounter one another in their singularity, fostering a form of transcendence that is relational and communal. Transcendence opposes immanence's tendency toward totality and self-enclosure. Limits highlight the insufficiency of immanence and open the space for questioning, rethinking, and surpassing totalizing systems.

If community is not a fixed, self-enclosed totality but rather an ongoing exposure, then its very possibility is conditioned by its impossibility. This tension as explored by Blanchot and Nancy reveals how community can only emerge in its impossibility, never as a fully realized unity.

2.2.4. Community and Its Impossibility

What it means to be in a community demands a deeper understanding and paradox for Blanchot. He suggests that this exigency is often renounced or suppressed within traditional communities. In other words, while we create and sustain communities, they often fail to address the profound, perhaps existential, call for being-with. Community belongs to everyone but also to no one in particular. He highlights that true community emerges spontaneously, without a clear agenda or deliberate orchestration. This lack of premeditated structure allowed for a unique form of being-with. This being-with is marked by a happy meeting, a breaking of norms where people of all classes, ages, genders, and cultures mingled freely. This being-with is not based on pre-existing hierarchies or roles but on a shared openness and spontaneity. Blanchot calls it unknown-familiar, where strangers are experienced as already loved or intimately known. This paradoxical phrase captures a deep truth about community that true connection often involves a recognition of the other as both foreign and profoundly close. However, these moments of being-with are inherently fragile because they resist institutionalization or normalization. The openness and equality that define such a community are difficult to sustain. Once a community attempts to formalize itself through rules, structures, or defined identities, it risks losing the spontaneity and openness that made it transformative in the first place. Transience of these moments of being-with highlights the paradox of community that its most authentic forms are also its most ephemeral, arising in rare, almost utopian moments that cannot be fully captured or repeated. Being-with is about creating a space where the possibility of being together in a new way could manifest itself—a moment of collective experience untethered from utilitarian objectives or ideological claims. Blanchot (1988) describes a being-together that restored equality and fraternity to everyone through an openness to freedom of speech and expression. What is

said matters less than the act of saying itself. The walls covered in graffiti and poetry symbolizes this collective effervescence, where communication becomes an end in itself, rather than a means to achieve something specific. By poetry, he means a form of expression that is free, creative, and unconstrained by practical concerns. Traditional revolutionary acts aim to seize power and replace it with a new regime but in this sort of coming together, Power is not overthrown but simply neglected, rendered irrelevant in the face of this spontaneous communal energy. This leads to what Blanchot calls a sort of communism that was entirely new—uncaptured and unclaimed by any ideology. It is not about reforming society in the traditional sense but about inhabiting a moment of innocent, uncanny presence. For those in power, this event was deeply unsettling because it eluded traditional political and sociological analyses. Blanchot describes this experience as a form of communism that defies previous notions of the term. It is neither a Soviet doctrine nor a structured political ideology but a lived moment of collective equality, freedom, and creativity. It resists being grasped, measured, or controlled. It simultaneously dissolves the social order through its refusal to be structured and reinvents it by manifesting a sovereignty beyond the law's reach. The communal presence embraces the impossible as its challenge, rejecting conventional political action or defined objectives. Instead, it existed in a state of radical possibility, focused on being together in an immediate and universal way. However, this absence of structured political reaction left it vulnerable to formal institutions and external forces. Its refusal to define an enemy or react against opposition became a source of vitality but also accelerated its dissolution. Blanchot describes a silent crowd gathered for the dead of Charonne as embodying a form of limitless power not through action or protest in the traditional sense, but through its very refusal to act in a utilitarian or goal-oriented manner. This power comes from doing nothing, yet being fully present. It is not a closed totality or a quantifiable entity. Instead, it exists as an infinite extension of the finite, embodying those who are no longer there (the dead) and responding to their absence. Finitude (the dead) calls forth the collective presence, which in turn sustains and opposes the limits of mortality. The crowd embodies those who are absent (the dead) and extends their presence in the world. The gathering itself exists as a momentary, liminal state where presence and absence exchange places, creating a form of being that transcends both.

Blanchot, Nancy, and Agamben reject the traditional notion of an essentialist or closed community, instead conceptualizing it as inherently incomplete, transient, and fundamentally based on relationality, where beings engage with death and loss. For Blanchot, community is not a stable, self-sustaining structure but rather an experience that emerges spontaneously and sustains itself only within this openness. Similarly, Nancy asserts that community is without essence, framing it as a space where beings come together not through a shared identity or belonging but through their singularities. Agamben, through his concept of *whatever singularity*, proposes that community should not be defined by any specific characteristic or form of belonging but rather as a potential space where each being can participate simply as *whatever or as such*. For all these philosophers, community is not a permanent or static form or a self-sufficient unity but a transient formation in which beings continually engage in relationality, preserving their differences and otherness while being-with. In this sense, community never constitutes a complete or self-realized totality; rather, it remains perpetually incomplete, renewing, and reconstructing itself. This transient and fragmentary nature of community also defines its relation to otherness. For Blanchot, community is a space where beings acknowledge and inhabit their singularity and relationship to loss. Nancy's notion of openness to the other similarly emphasizes that community is a field of relationality where singular beings expose one another yet never fully merge. Agamben, in turn, suggests that a community not founded on identity or belonging offers a space where beings can exist together without being confined to a fixed identity, defined solely by their existence.

If community is always marked by its own incompleteness, this raises a crucial question. Is this incompleteness, a closure that forecloses community or an opening that makes community possible in its very failure. Understanding the relationship between limit and threshold allows us to refine this distinction.

2.2.5. The Relationship Between Limit and Threshold

Both *limit* and *threshold* relate to the idea of exteriority—the relationship between the self and what lies beyond it. For Nancy, the limit is where singularity meets the outside,

forming a point of contact between the self and the other or the world, without fusing into it. Similarly, for Agamben, the threshold is a border that touches the external, a passage from one space, the internal to another, the external. Both thinkers emphasize openness. Nancy's limit is a point of exposure to the other, a space where singularities meet and engage with one another. Agamben's threshold similarly suggests openness—a point of contact with an external space that remains undefined, allowing for potentiality rather than closure. Neither the limit nor the threshold suggests a final, closed-off boundary. Nancy's limit does not enclose or totalize, and for Agamben, the threshold is not a firm boundary, but a passage—a space of transition. Both concepts resist the idea of confinement and instead favor a dynamic relationship with the outside. Both terms are means and experience to expose oneself to the other and outside. While Nancy's limit plays a primary model with the help of consciousness for our being with others, with Agamben's threshold we realize potentiality. This potentiality paves way to understand the constitution of limits—both in terms of how they are imposed by systems of power and knowledge, and how they can be transgressed and the way discourses and institutions create norms that define what is acceptable or true within a given system. These limits are not just boundaries but also places of control and regulation. We also understand how discursive practices define the limits of individuality and community and with the help of this potentiality we could investigate the technologies or institutions that produce the conditions for singularities to interact and limit their potential expressions—whether through the law, medicine, or other forms of biopolitical power. Thus, questioning limits gains an importance, which exposes the arbitrary and contingent nature of boundaries imposed by power. This resonates with Nancy's notion of exposure at the limit, where singularities do not fuse but remain distinct. Moreover, we recognize that thresholds at the same time could represent moments of transition in systems of power. It gives a chance to see how punishment and control shift from public spectacle to internalized discipline. Since the threshold could at the same time be a liminal space where the rules and norms of a society are transformed because it is a pure potentiality where the subject is constituted or reconstituted by shifting power structures. We could also grasp how power over life and death is exercised by modern states and biopolitical power is exerted, turning life into a site of control and exposure. This potentiality is also a space to see how

new forms of knowledge and subjectivity emerge. Since it is a point where we contact the other, the unknown and where we contact and encounter with exteriority. While this space is a moment of uncertainty or a gap, we could recognize all of the possibilities in this space or moment. True community is not an escape from finitude but an acknowledgment of it, where individuals confront their limits and relate to one another not by transcending these limits but by recognizing them. As Blanchot (1988, p.28) states "Community is the recognition that we are each finite and that this finitude is what binds us together, rather than any collective identity or goal." (Blanchot, 1988, p.28). This recognition of finitude is incomplete without others because it is only in relation to others that we truly understand the nature of our limits. When we encounter another person, we are confronted with their vulnerability and mortality, which serves as a mirror to our own. Blanchot argues that we see the limits of our own being most clearly when we are exposed to the other. In *The Unavowable Community*, he writes: "The presence of the other, their inevitable death, is a reminder of my own finitude, and this recognition brings a deeper awareness of my own boundaries." (1988, p.19). Unlike a totalizing fusion of individuals, community exists in the constant recognition of difference, the impossibility of absolute unity. The paradox of community lies in its being formed through separation rather than identity. This aligns with the idea of a singular community—one where individuals do not subsume their identities to a collective ideal but rather engage with each other through a shared vulnerability or finitude. Blanchot's community is not stable or permanent. It does not last or exist in a communitarian form as something tangible or recognizable,—the idea that community always exists in its failure or in its incompleteness. Blanchot's views present community as a constantly unstable phenomenon, where individuals are united in their separateness, creating a profound tension between the need for togetherness (community) and the reality of isolation (finitude and death).

Nancy (1991) distinguishes between *communicating* and *communing*. *Communing* implies a deep, intimate merging or fusion into a single identity or experience. Nancy rejects this idea in favor of communication that respects the dislocation and difference between beings. The communication he refers to is a form of relationality that does not seek to erase differences or create a unified identity. Instead, it acknowledges and even emphasizes the dislocation between beings—their separateness and irreducibility. For

Nancy, the communication of sharing is defined by dislocation. This means that the act of sharing in a community does not lead to a seamless unity but rather exposes the spaces and differences between beings. Dislocation here is positive; it is the recognition of separation, difference, and the unique position of each being within the community. It is through this dislocation that true communication happens—not a communication that seeks to unify or homogenize but one that respects and maintains the distinctiveness of each being.

In Blanchot's view in *The Unavowable Community* (1988), the other person's existence calls to us, and even though we can never fully bridge the gap between us, this encounter with otherness is what makes community possible. In *The Infinite Conversation*, Blanchot explores this idea of relating through separation: "The other is infinitely distant, but this very distance is what compels us to respond and to engage." (1993, p.85)

Nancy (1991) asserts that communication is not a *bond* between individuals but a sharing and exposure of finitude. This communication occurs through compearance, which refers to the way beings appear or exist together. Finitude—the fact of being finite, limited, mortal—compears or is exposed in the encounter between singular beings. This exposure is constitutive of being-in-common, meaning that beings are fundamentally connected not through any essence or shared substance but through the exposure of their finitude to each other. The idea of compearance is prior to any form of address or communication through language. The mutual exposure of singularities happens before any verbal exchange; it is a fundamental condition of existence. The appearance of finitude—the recognition of the limits of existence—is what creates the possibility of language and communication, but it is not reducible to language. Blanchot often highlights the failure of communication as central to our relationships with others. In this failure, we confront the limits of our ability to fully understand or relate to another person, and it is in this failure that we see our finitude. In *The Space of Literature*, he writes "Speech and communication are always incomplete; it is through this incompleteness that we are drawn to connect, to see the limits of our own solitude." (1982, p.61).

All these concepts emphasize the recognition of limits as essential to our singularity and our relations with others. Yet, these frameworks point to a deeper truth: the ultimate limit,

the most profound marker of finitude, is death. Death is not merely the end of individual existence but the event that renders our singularity irrevocably distinct and simultaneously shared. It exposes the boundaries of subjectivity and opens a space for community that is not based on transcendental ideals or immanent unity but on the shared vulnerability of mortality.

2.3. Death

If community finds its foundation in the shared recognition of limits and singularities, then death becomes the ultimate boundary through which transcendence manifests itself. It is through death that individuals confront the impossibility of immanence and open themselves to the other. While immanence signifies a state in which everything is self-contained and continuous, death disrupts this continuity. Death is the site where the true unity of community is formed, but this unity is not an immanent fusion; instead, it unfolds through an infinite process of difference. Immanence supports the idea of individuals or communities as self-sufficient and closed systems. However, it is only through a boundary experience like death that a community can open itself. Death is in the acknowledgment of this insufficiency that transcendence becomes possible, opening the space for a true community. Death, as the ultimate boundary of human existence, profoundly shapes our understanding of individuality and community. It is singular in the sense that each individual encounters it uniquely, as their own, yet it is a shared reality that binds all living beings together. Death is not merely the cessation of life but a profound marker of our finitude, revealing the limits of subjectivity and the impossibility of complete immanence. Jean-Luc Nancy and Maurice Blanchot argue that death is not only a personal experience but also a communal one, as it exposes the relational nature of our being. This chapter explores death as an excess that cannot be assimilated into subjectivity, yet it serves as the foundation for community by revealing the shared vulnerability and singularity of mortal beings. I will examine how death challenges traditional metaphysical notions of unity and provides a space for rethinking community as a dynamic interplay of loss, separation, and finitude.

If the thing that is most inherent to me, the most singular aspect of my being, is my death, but I disappear with death, then "I" is not a subject; rather, we have accepted it as a subject by reaching a consensus. I exist for death. Although I know I will die, I cannot experience it. If death is what completes my existence, yet I could not say "I am dead" when I die, then "I" is not a subject. (Nancy, 1991, p.14)

He critiques the metaphysics of the subject, which fails to adequately account for the singularity and irreducibility of death. Nancy notes the impossibility for the *I* to claim *I am dead* since death signifies the ultimate dissolution of the subject. This idea aligns with Heidegger's (1962) exploration of *being-toward-death*, which attempts to articulate that the 'I' is not a conventional subject but something fundamentally different and singular. This paradox highlights that the *I* is not a stable or self-sufficient entity but is instead defined by its inherent finitude and incompleteness. Moreover, death is not an experience that can be fully grasped or represented on a conscious level; instead, it remains an unexperienced certainty. Thus, death's dual nature as a singular and subconscious experience redefines our understanding of subjectivity and relationality in a community. It serves as both a boundary that dissolves the individual subject and a bridge that creates space for coexistence and community grounded in shared vulnerability. My death is also an excess for me. It is something I could not renounce, yet at the same time, I could not represent it in my consciousness. Although my death belongs to me, I cannot conceptualize or experience it. As a subject, it is excessive for me; while it belongs to me, it does not belong to me as a subject. Nancy describes death as an unmasterable excess of finitude that cannot be fully integrated into communal life. This excess is what maintains the distinctiveness of each individual within the community. Blanchot points out

the basis of communication is not necessarily speech, or even the silence that is its foundation and punctuation, but the exposure to death, no longer my own exposure, but someone else's, whose living and closest presence is already the eternal and unbearable absence, an absence that the travail of deepest mourning does not diminish. And it is in life itself that that absence of someone else has to be met. It is with that absence — its uncanny presence, always under the prior threat of a disappearance — that friendship is brought into play and lost at each moment, a relation without relation or without relation other than the incommensurable. (1988, p.25)

If death both destabilizes subjectivity and opens the space for communal existence, then it also structures the very conditions of communication. This is not communication as an exchange of meaning or recognition, but as an exposure to the irreducible absence of the other—a presence that withdraws even as it appears. It is not enough to reflect on our own mortality; it is through others that we are reminded of the fragility and impermanence of life. "Others are not the same as or identical to me in a shared essence or form of subjectivity. In other words, in my outwardly inclined (ecstatic) being-toward-death, I am already with others; we manifest or appear together in our being." (Roney, 2016, p.136)

A community rooted in consciousness often disregards the singularity of individuals, reducing them to predefined identities, norms, or ideological frameworks. Such a society seeks to homogenize differences and otherness, striving for a unity or immanence that creates a system of assimilation. This pursuit can pave the way for either liberal individualism or totalitarian collectivism. That's why Nancy seeks a third option surrounding death for the concept of being together. We can utilize the notion of death to escape the thinking of *part to whole and whole to part*. Death annihilates both subjectivity and intersubjectivity. My death does not belong to the community. However, when you justify your death under the guise of salvation or when you sacrifice your singularity that belongs to you for a purpose, you alienate yourself from your own death. In death, I do not join the community of others. The community occupies a singular place like death.

Death is not a fusion or a project, akin to a community. It is not the place where egos and souls converge. In death, the community itself manifests. Death should not be manifested within the community or death should not establish a community. "Our individual and collective orientation of being towards death is mine in every circumstance" (Roney, 2016, p. 142). This does not imply that I must experience the death of another in order to recognize myself. Rather, this again gives rise to the dichotomy of the *subject-I* and the *other*, which is not me. "The singularity of each one of us is exposed in death, and this exposure is what constitutes the community". (Nancy, 1991, p.14) "Death is the very impossibility of experiencing one's own death, which opens up the space for community". (Blanchot, 1988, p.13) For Blanchot, death is a crucial aspect of why we seek others. In death, we encounter the ultimate limit of our being, and it is through the death of others that we come face-to-face with the reality of finitude. In *The Space of Literature*, he writes: "Death, which isolates us completely, is also what binds us to others because it is the shared fate of all beings." (1982, p.94). We are drawn to others because we all share this common fate of mortality, even though we must each experience it in isolation. According to Nancy, (1991) death occurs for others and through others. You cannot know your own death. In death, there is no subject or consciousness. There is no representation of death. Death is something that arises from the coming together of non-subject bodies, where egos and identities do not converge. In death, I become part of the community of others. It is the death of others that establishes this community. In fact, death facilitates my orientation toward the other. Community does not utilize death as a *work* to establish a communal intimacy, fusion, or project. Community is the manifestation of the truth of mortality for its members. The only entity that can show me my death is the community. I can only experience death in the other, and this is what is common to all of us. This commonality unites us and creates space for us. In this space, we exist dynamically together with our singular characteristics. A community can only continue within the intensity of death. This community is also where my insufficiency lies and where I must question myself. Community exists for the other and within the other. Within this community, you contest and test yourself in relation to the other. Together, we are tested and put to the trial. You must first recognize and question your own insufficiency. However, the goal is not to complete oneself by seeing one's own shortcomings in the

other. Rather, it is to be together while preserving this inadequacy. This inadequacy is, in fact, a refuge.

2.3.1. Death as Work of Death or Death as Principle of Insufficiency

Depending on the ideas of Georges Bataille and Jean-Luc Nancy in *The Inoperative Community*, that sort of death or the *work of death* refers to the inherent violence, domination, and exploitation embedded within socio-political systems that attempt to impose a false sense of unity, transcendence, or communal fusion. Bataille and Nancy (1991) critique these systems for their inherent drive toward an immanence that ultimately eventuates in destruction and death. Bataille came to understand that the truth of sacrifice might ultimately require the sacrificer to commit suicide, thus fully participating in the death they are inflicting. This extreme idea suggests that true communal being might only be achieved through the sacrificer's own death, merging completely with the victim in a kind of divine, immanent truth. However, Nancy explains that Bataille realized this truth—of death as the ultimate communal act—leads not to a true community of finite beings but rather to an infinite, immanent fusion that obliterates individuality and meaning. It is an *absurdity* beyond horror, where the work of death becomes an irrational and meaningless pursuit. For Nancy (1991) that the work of death manifests in forms like domination, oppression, extermination, and exploitation, which are inherent in all socio-political systems. These systems claim to achieve or represent a form of transcendence within immanence (the immediate, lived experience) but ultimately fail because they distort sovereignty into tools of power and control. For instance, extremes often give rise to their opposites. Real socialism, with its collectivist framework, has inadvertently given rise to liberalism. In liberalism, individuality is defined by consumption; the more you consume, the more of an individual you are perceived to be. However, this individuality comes at the cost of depoliticization, as the market replaces the political sphere. Consequently, the possibility of collective social engagement is entirely eroded, and society as a cohesive entity disintegrates. With neoliberalism, the excessive financialization of all aspects of life has, in turn, necessitated the emergence of authoritarian regimes. Such regimes are required to control markets and manipulate

perceived realities, effectively fragmenting society. This authoritarian control becomes a means to maintain the dominance of market logic, reinforcing separation and undermining being-with. However, for Nancy (1991) sovereignty refers to something else which opposes power and control. Sovereignty is something that emerges in the act of sharing itself, where singular beings are not sovereign in isolation but are defined in relation to others. The sovereignty being shared is not a subject or an entity that can be possessed; it is the experience of being with others without reducing them to a common substance or identity. It could be more explicit, if we look at Nazi Germany, Stalinist Soviet Union, The French Revolution and the Reign of Terror, Colonialism and the Genocide of Indigenous Peoples, the Crusades, Fascist Italy under Mussolini and Japanese Imperialism during WWII. The Nazi regime exemplifies the work of death through its obsession with creating a pure, homogeneous community (*Volksgemeinschaft*) based on racial purity and the concept of *blood and soil*. This ideology led to the systemic extermination of millions, including Jews, Romani people, disabled individuals, and others deemed *life unworthy of life*. The Holocaust is a stark example of how a political project centered on absolute immanence and communal fusion can lead to extreme violence and the annihilation of those who do not conform to its ideals. Under Stalin, the Soviet Union pursued a similar logic of immanence, focused on building a perfect communist society. The purges, forced collectivization, and mass executions during the Great Terror reflect a totalitarian drive toward an ideological purity that resulted in millions of deaths. The work of death in this context is seen in the elimination of perceived enemies of the state—intellectuals, political dissidents, and even ordinary citizens—who were sacrificed to maintain the illusion of a unified, homogeneous communist community. During the French Revolution, particularly in the period known as the Reign of Terror, the revolutionary government sought to create a new form of communal life based on the principles of liberty, equality, and fraternity. However, this pursuit of an ideal community led to extreme violence, including mass executions by guillotine of those deemed enemies of the revolution. The revolutionary leaders' attempt to establish a pure and immanent community resulted in a cycle of terror and death. The history of colonialism, particularly in the Americas, Australia, and Africa, is marked by the work of death in the systematic extermination, displacement, and cultural erasure of indigenous

populations. European colonial powers often viewed their mission as a civilizing one, creating a new communal order that required the suppression or elimination of indigenous ways of life. The Crusaders sought to create a Christian community in the Holy Land, which involved the mass killing of Muslims, Jews, and even other Christians who did not conform to their vision. The religious fervor and desire for a homogenous Christian community led to centuries of conflict and bloodshed, showcasing the destructive outcomes of communal projects that depend on exclusion and elimination. Fascist Italy under Mussolini also pursued a project of national regeneration based on a mythic ideal of Roman heritage and racial purity. This led to the suppression of political dissent, the promotion of militarism, and the invasion of Ethiopia, resulting in widespread atrocities and deaths. The work of death in this context was directed both internally, against political enemies and dissenters, and externally, in imperial ambitions that sought to impose a new communal order through conquest and violence. The pursuit of a Greater East Asia Co-Prosperty Sphere, which was presented as a project of communal unity among Asian nations under Japanese leadership, resulted in significant atrocities, such as the Nanking Massacre, forced labor, and medical experimentation on prisoners of war. This expansionist ideology involved the suppression and destruction of other communities to establish a supposed new communal order under Japanese domination, reflecting the work of death.

Jean-Luc Nancy (1991) critiques the concept of absolute immanence in political and collective enterprises. He argues that the pursuit of total unity and self-sufficiency leads to self-destruction. Using Nazi Germany as an example, Nancy illustrates how the regime's quest for racial purity not only resulted in the extermination of those deemed *other* but also internally sacrificed members of the *Aryan* community who did not meet strict criteria. This pursuit of purity ultimately led to the spiritual self-destruction of the nation. He extends this logic to the Hegelian State, which is based on the principle of immanence where each member's existence is subsumed in the State. The ultimate expression of this immanence is when members sacrifice their lives in wars decided by the monarch. Nancy (1991) critiques the notion that communities or states can achieve perfect unity without leading to self-destruction. He emphasizes that true community involves acknowledging and dealing with difference and loss, rather than eradicating

them in the pursuit of an unattainable purity or total unity. In this way, death is perceived as the ultimate fulfillment of an immanent life, meaning it is integrated into the continuous, self-sufficient life of the community. This converts death into a manageable, self-contained process. Nancy criticizes the tendency of certain ideologies to domesticate death, turning it into an extension of life's immanence and turning it into a sort of work of death rather than recognizing it as a limit and rupture. "It is in the end that the resorption of death as though devouring its own transcendence, has come to minister to itself in the guise of a supreme work". (1991, p.13) Jean-Luc Nancy challenges the idea that death can be assimilated or sublated (transcended and integrated) into a community in a way that leads to a form of communion or unity. Death cannot be postponed or deferred as something that will eventually lead to a future communal harmony. Indeed, death is an individual, singular event that always occurs in the present, marking the finitude and unique existence of each person. Death occurs within the context of community, but it does not transform into a collective or communal experience. Moreover, Nancy addresses the justification of deaths in the context of revolts and insurrections. He notes that the deaths of individuals who die fighting against various forms of oppression are often seen as justified responses to intolerable conditions. However, he insists that these deaths, as well, cannot be sublated or absorbed into a broader communal narrative. Each death remains a singular, irreducible event that cannot be fully integrated into a collective meaning. It is crucial to point out that death cannot be fully grasped outside the context of community. Death and community are intrinsically linked with each revealing the other. The community reveals itself through death. The experience of loss and the collective response to it bring to light the communal bonds that tie individuals together. It is in the face of death that the true nature of the community becomes apparent. The inoperative community is not formed by immortal or superior bonds between subjects, nor is it based on the inferior bonds of blood, kinship, or mere association of needs.

The death upon which community is calibrated does not operate the dead being's passage into some communal intimacy, nor does community, for its part, operate the transfiguration of its dead into some substance or subject-be these homeland, native soil or blood, nation, a delivered or fulfilled humanity, absolute phalanstery, family, or mystical body. (Nancy, 1991, pp.14-15)

Death itself is the true community of these *I*'s. It establishes a kind of communion, but this communion is marked by impossibility. It is not about fusing individuals into a collective identity but about recognizing the impossibility of such fusion. Death reveals the limits of community, showing that it cannot be fully realized as a unified or immanent entity. *Mors certa vita incerta*. Namely, death is absolute while life is uncertain. A community can only endure when it operates at the intensity of death. This means that for a community to truly exist and persist, it must engage with the profound and existential reality of death. For Nancy, death symbolizes “the ultimate risk, danger, and the unappeasable aspect of existence that cannot be fully controlled or avoided.” (Nancy, 1991, p.16) By confronting these aspects, the community engages with the deeper, more intense dimensions of being-with.

MELANCHOLY

Death and melancholy are not merely personal experiences; they resonate deeply within the cultural and historical frameworks that shape how individuals and communities confront loss and finitude. Death, as the ultimate marker of singularity, isolates each individual, yet it also reveals the shared vulnerability and mortality that bind us together. It is in this tension—between isolation and being with others—that the transformative potential of melancholy emerges. Melancholy is a reaction to death. Singular beings come together in a state of lack or incompleteness, emphasizing how loss and absence can form the basis of community. In this sense, melancholy is not just an individual but a communal experience that fosters community. It highlights that community is not about fulfilling shared ideals or erasing differences but about embracing the vulnerability and finitude that unite us.

Dürer's *Melencolia I* captures this duality, depicting a figure that embodies both the creative power and existential weight of melancholy. The tools scattered around the melancholic figure symbolize humanity's capacity to build and reshape the world, while the unfinished staircase and overshadowing despair reflect the limitations imposed by mortality. Traverso's analysis of melancholy further emphasizes this transformative potential, framing it as a mode of historical reflection and critical engagement. For Traverso, melancholy does not paralyze but provokes, urging us to reexamine the fractures of history and envision alternative futures.

By transitioning from the existential realities of death to the creative and reflective dimensions of melancholy, I would like to explain how loss becomes a site of possibility. It demonstrates that while death isolates in its singularity, melancholy bridges this isolation by offering a lens through which individuals and communities can confront and transform the shared experience of finitude.

3.1. Melancholy: Pathology or Creative Force

In medicine, melancholy was historically seen as a mental illness with symptoms like delusions, lethargy, fear, sorrow, and physical discomfort, often attributed to black bile. Ancient treatments focused on psychological relief, such as light diets, physical activity, and music therapy. “Robert Burton’s *The Anatomy of Melancholy* described three types: mental, bodily (linked to black bile), and hypochondriacal melancholy. Today, melancholy is often equated with depression, with its causes linked to biochemical, genetic, psychological, and environmental factors, depending on the type.” (Binkert, 2014, p.149, the sentences are translated by me) When melancholy is classified as a pathological condition, it ceases to be recognized as a natural or existential experience of loss or reflection, instead becoming something to be diagnosed, managed, or treated. Totalitarian regimes exploit this medicalization to assert control over individuals by labeling certain emotional states as deviant or unproductive, thereby defining what constitutes normal psychological behavior. This normalization of conformity establishes a baseline for acceptable conduct, positioning those who display signs of melancholy or other non-conforming emotions as threats to social order, justifying their surveillance, institutionalization, or exclusion. However, melancholy also poses a unique challenge to totalitarian ideologies. As a reflective state that often involves mourning or questioning, it inherently resists the suppression of individual singularity and dissent upon which such regimes rely. The introspective nature of melancholy fosters critical thought, making it a potential site of resistance. To neutralize this threat, regimes may stigmatize melancholy as a sign of weakness, lack of loyalty, or failure to embrace collective identity, transforming it from a personal or philosophical experience into a political liability. While melancholy was understood in medical terms, tied to the imbalance of humors and characterized by physical and mental symptoms, its meaning changed over time. By the Renaissance, melancholy transcended its strictly medical definition and became associated with creativity, intellectual depth, and the ambivalent nature of the human condition. This shift reflects a broader cultural transformation, where melancholy was no longer seen merely as a pathological state but also as a hallmark of the *troubled genius*.

Dürer's *Melencolia I* stands as a testament to this reimagining of melancholy, symbolizing its dual nature as both a burden and a source of insight.

During the Renaissance, melancholy was closely linked to the concept of the troubled genius. Dürer's *Melencolia I* embodies the notion, presenting Melancholy as a figure of both deep introspection and intellectual endeavor, embodying the dual nature of the melancholic state. This engraving brings together two different perspectives on melancholy. On the right side of the image stands a building with clear contours, while on the left is a natural landscape. Here, we find the sea, sky, a rainbow, a comet, and a fantastic figure of a bat with wings spread, facing us. To the right of the sea is a partially submerged settlement, which, along with the rainbow, creates the impression of a recent storm. The staircase on the right side has no visible beginning or end. Atop the building sits an hourglass, a scale, a bell, and a magic square. In front of the building sits the figure of Melancholia—an imposing woman. She is dressed in a loose garment, is winged, and has a ring of keys and a purse hanging from her side. Beside her sits a dog, while various carpenter's tools, a perfectly sculpted stone sphere, and a polyhedron carved in stone, upon which a figure of death rests, are arranged around her. In the left background stands a gas stove, and in the foreground, an inkwell; beneath her skirt is the tip of a bellows. At the very center of the image, like the Melancholia figure, sits a winged child holding a tablet, seated on a millstone. The figure of Melancholia holds a book and an unused compass but directs her attention to the landscape on the left. These are the elements that first catch the eye. If we consider melancholy as a pathology, the duality in the image can represent inertia, despair, and perhaps fear. Alternatively, it can symbolize the extraordinary intelligence and abilities that allow melancholy to influence the world. Humanity's invention of these tools to measure, assess, and control nature may evoke the idea of ascending to an angelic level within the medieval hierarchy, while still remaining bound to earth and representing the scientific individual of the Renaissance. We can interpret this as reaching the highest point of possibility, only to experience emptiness and dissatisfaction afterward. On one hand, there is creative power and the intellectual capacities that enable it; on the other, melancholy reaches its own limits, leading to a sense of helplessness, fear, despair, and inertia. This melancholic figure has reached the peak possible through science and art, but has now encountered its own boundaries.

Recognizing these limits induces inertia, yet the figure has overcome all inner darkness—madness, fear, anger, and despair. This image of melancholy, though depicting intellectual prowess, also conveys a profound helplessness. It is an unsettling image that keeps us alert rather than at ease.

According to Klibansky, Panofsky, and Saxl (1964), the figure's wings signify that she represents geometry. She gazes far off into the sky, a reminder that comet trajectories remained uncharted at that time. Thus, despite her scientific and artistic brilliance, her journey has led her to the edge of knowledge, leaving her in a state of despair. Drawing on Renaissance thinker Agrippa's distinction, the authors note that the human soul has three parts: imagination at the base, reason used for science above it, and at the top, the level enabling truth perception. The Roman numeral *I* on the figure's wing corresponds to this first stage, representing a point where humans, through specific methods, begin to comprehend the universe but have not yet transcended this stage. This despair relates to the limitations of this first level. The second level concerns truths perceived by those closer to God, and the final level belongs exclusively to the divine. The winged figure embodies the despair of humanity's realization that divine knowledge is forever beyond reach. Karl Jaspers (1961), however, argues that this winged figure symbolizes astronomy rather than geometry, with astronomy being the highest of the mathematical sciences. He suggests that the engraving is divided into two halves: on the right is a precisely contoured building adorned with elements that signify the fleeting nature of the world, such as time, the hourglass, scales, and a bell. On the left, a recent storm is depicted with a rainbow, a comet, a fantastic creature, a polyhedron bearing the figure of death, and a perfectly sculpted stone sphere that cannot maintain balance. Carpenter's tools, a gas stove, and an inkwell are also present. Jaspers links these elements to the opposition between *virtus* (virtue) and *fortuna* (fortune): *virtus* represents virtue, while *fortuna* represents the uncontrollable aspect of the world—unpredictable events beyond human control. This engraving thus presents a dual world. At its center, the figure has pushed the limits of her era's science to the utmost point, realizing that divine knowledge will forever remain inaccessible. Humanity creates a concept of God modeled on its own thoughts, but it remains up to humanity to realize itself. Humans can progress in science and art through God-given talents but can also act on animal instincts, leading to a more primal existence.

This dynamic serves as a cautionary reminder as well as a source of reassurance. The melancholic figure has reached the highest point possible but is also aware of the knowledge she cannot attain. Her desire to be one with God remains unfulfilled, yet she achieves peace with this realization and accepts her position. This choice—between striving for unity with God and accepting one’s limits—is ours to make. The small winged figure in the image represents this choice, as it has not yet embarked on a journey and seems poised for self-realization. I believe this visual representation of the duality and human condition within melancholy is crucial. Moreover, I would like to use it as a primary image in this thesis to reflect on the ideas examined. In *Melankoli Kadındır*, Dörthe Binkert (2014) differentiates melancholy from depression and all its pathological connotations, describing melancholy as a way of life, referencing Dürer’s work.

Melancholy is both winged and weighty, embodying transformation and mediating between sorrow and renewal, sadness and knowledge. Unlike depression, which operates in an 'either-or' mode and lacks psychic activity, melancholy centers on change and impermanence. Freud viewed melancholy as a manifestation of the death drive, which seeks to return to an inanimate origin. However, rather than lifelessness, melancholy involves continuous transformation—a dynamic tension between being and non-being. Depression, by contrast, is marked by paralysis and emotional numbness, devoid of the transformative awareness that defines melancholy. (pp. 147–152, the sentences are translated by me)

As a result of the civilizing of death, life and death become separate, and death, a part of life, is repressed. In this, we find a primal image of the many dualisms that ultimately undermine the concept of community.

If melancholy is not misinterpreted as a state of paralysis and inactivity (as it is in depression) but rather understood as an intermediary state, a form of introspection, then depression in many cases becomes unnecessary. The hidden issue behind depression is often the inability to experience farewell and thus make room for the new. Those who can surrender to the magic of melancholy may feel the wings Dürer bestowed upon it in his painting. However, to use melancholy creatively, one must recognize that the sources of growth are found in emotions marked by sadness, pain, loss, and the fear of loss. Only those who dive deeply, even hitting rock bottom, gain the momentum to rise again, regaining light and air. (Binkert, 2014, pp. 153–154, the sentences are translated by me)

Benjamin interprets this artwork in a way that deepens the subject, bringing it closer to the perspective I aim to convey. Rather than viewing melancholy as a dark, dry, cold, and withdrawn state of mind—characterized by a sense of loss, emptiness, and overwhelming sadness—Benjamin aligns melancholy with the Romantic period's concept of genius. For him, melancholy becomes not just a reaction to loss but a potential source of creative inspiration. Similarly, Nancy (1991, p.23), while rethinking subjectivity defines "oneself is not the subject isolating itself from the world, but a place of communication, of fusion of the subject and the object." It is a site of interaction and communication where the distinction between self and other becomes blurred.

Benjamin critiques *acedia*, often seen as a sin linked to submission and laziness, distinguishing it from melancholy. In *The Origin of German Tragic Drama*, he reframes melancholy as an epistemological paradigm, proposing that an empathetic and mournful gaze toward a ruined world offers new vision. Krausser interprets this as a revolutionary act of remembrance, likening it to a collector gathering forgotten remnants, dissatisfied yet preserving them as seeds for

renewal. Benjamin rejects apathy and cynicism, favoring an engaged melancholy, historically and socially attuned, which clings to fragments of the past to inspire action in the present. As Flatley notes, this 'politicizing melancholy' embodies historical consciousness, turning grief into a force for engagement and transformation.(Traverso, 2016, pp. 82–84)

This aligns with Aristotle's assertion in *Nicomachean Ethics* (2002) that the well-being of a political community is intertwined with that of its citizens, who must engage actively in politics to attain happiness and virtue. Through melancholy, if we reexamine the past and understand the fractures that emerged at specific historical moments and how these shifted over time, only then could we become the politically active individuals Aristotle envisions. In doing so, we recognize that nothing imposed on us or with which we are dissatisfied is necessarily inevitable; instead, we could coexist at the limit of these understandings. This is akin to the figure of Melancholy in Benjamin's interpretation: reflecting back on the past, laying it out before us to understand, critique, and question it, and realizing that no power is inherently imperative. This grants us a sphere of movement and potential—one that melancholy itself makes possible.

Agamben extends this framework, viewing melancholy as an embrace of human potentiality. He critiques the tendency to repress potential by fixing identities or clinging to static norms. Instead, melancholy reflects an openness to the ambiguity and fluidity of existence, enabling individuals and communities to continually redefine themselves. For Agamben, (1993b) ethics is about embracing one's own potentiality and amorphousness—accepting the fact that humans are always in the process of becoming, never fully determined. To live ethically means to exist as a possibility, not to cling to any static identity or essence. Agamben's definition of evil is the decision to deny one's own potentiality. This happens when humans try to turn their potentiality into a fixed substance or foundation, repressing their open-ended nature. Morality, in Agamben's view, transforms potentiality into a fault—something to be avoided or repressed—when it should instead be embraced. A melancholic demand does not reflect a mourning process

where loss is accepted but rather a state where loss is denied. Melancholic existence suggests that the subject does not sever ties with loss; instead, loss still represents a form of relationship, indicating a desire to build life upon the ruins of loss rather than experience it in a way that nullifies its impact. When we consider Dürer's figure or any singular being who has lost an object, ideal, or revolution, we see an individual who has entered a state of ambivalence, oscillating between hope and despair, withdrawing into oneself. Freud's description of melancholy involved three stages: "the loss of the object, ambivalence, and the withdrawal of the libido into the self". (1917, p.244). This experience does not lead to a complete relinquishment of the object nor to a self-condemning subject through self-investment. Instead, it serves as a moment to pause and re-evaluate oneself. The critical point here is for the *I* to re-recognize itself to the extent that it exposes itself to all and in all. This potential for movement lies within the retraction of the libido. Therefore, as seen in *Acedia*, in Roman belief, the withdrawal of libido into the self does not equate to a retreat from the public or to isolation. Change can only be enacted by those who have lost their objects. Benjamin's emphasis is on this moment before action, which does not signify an inability to move beyond the ruins of the past or a blind adherence to nostalgia, nor a focus on impossibilities rather than potential. Instead, recalling the interpretation of Dürer's engraving, it involves gathering the necessary tools for political action from the fragments of what has been lost in history.

Melancholy, rather than paralyzing mourning, precedes it and makes it possible, thereby aiding the reactivation of the singular being. In Butler's terms, it is an experience of renunciation, a withdrawal that subsequently enables speech. The singular being can only make up for its loss through a retrospective re-evaluation. (Traverso, 2016, pp.78-80)

As a result of mourning, the melancholic bond with the lost object is obsessively maintained. However, instead of resetting its relationship with the past or viewing what

is lost as mere wreckage, it continues to draw support from it. This differs from nostalgia. In fact, melancholy reintroduces overlooked or misinterpreted possibilities of the past into circulation, using them to break through the inertia that hinders us in the present. Melancholy shows us how far we have grown apart from the ideal, which is why it is significant. We rethink existing conditions, resting/sleeping to begin anew.

For not reaching is precisely arriving. A creature of the water does not see the water. Those who live on the Moon cannot see its light and color. Distance and friendship are our story. Where emotions are laid bare, the birds' choice is the cage. One must see the narrow breadth of freedom through the eyes of the captive. Mountains are within mountains; one must see the mountain in the desert. Even if my garden is treeless, I hold the thought of planting in my mind. I live poetry, love, all of it, without possessing. ("Anonymous Poem", n.d.)

The potential of melancholy does not signify an acceptance of the status quo; on the contrary, it reactivates the singular being by equipping it with new tools. This provides the opportunity to formulate new strategies, reorganize oneself as a subject in the form of a singular being, expose oneself in this renewed state, and rewrite from scratch the techniques and rules that power uses to control and discipline the population. The norms established by power through discourse, institutions of normalization, surveillance, architecture, and even through bodies and relationships are reconsidered and questioned. This is because power requires subjects to engage in its game, and when the subject, through melancholy, distances itself and turns inward, the system built upon those rules collapses. Yet, this turning inward is not a state of isolation or disconnection. Additionally, the act of exposure is not aimed at forming relationships determined by sovereign power, such as those of consumer, entrepreneur, or predefined groups. All of these constructs generate dichotomies—inside/outside, self/other—that foster non-belonging and hostility.

Levinas viewed the State of Israel as a necessary safeguard for Jewish existence in the aftermath of the Holocaust, yet his ethical philosophy, which emphasizes infinite responsibility toward the Other, raises questions about the ethical implications of political sovereignty. While he sometimes defended Israel's right to self-preservation, his commitment to the ethics of alterity creates tensions when considering the state's treatment of the Palestinian Other. If we think independently of the relationship between the Holocaust and the State of Israel, Emmanuel Levinas suggests that the one to whom we expose ourselves—the other—is: “neither an enemy nor a complement, but rather an existence that creates new openings within the subject, allows it to discover new resources within itself, and empties it of itself.” (2003, p.136, the sentences are translated by me). The other visits us, and we, in turn, visit the other. “The visit will overturn the selfishness of the ‘I’ and expel it from the place where it is resting” (Levinas, 2003, p.137, the sentence is translated by me). “Levinas sees a kind of solidarity in suffering” (Türk, 2013, p.57, the sentence is translated by me). Judith Butler similarly notes that “each of us is constituted politically in part by virtue of the social vulnerability of our bodies”. (Butler, 2004a, p.22) This vulnerability equalizes us with the other and creates a direct, shared bond between us and them. Aristotle (2002) highlights the importance of the concept of *philotes isotes* for a well-ordered and ethical society. He emphasizes the necessity of equality and love for the establishment of a bond of friendship. The point at which we are equal is in our vulnerability and mortality. Our vulnerability disrupts the rules of games of power and pressures them for reconstitution.

Melancholy is associated with an acute awareness of what is absent or lost. Melancholy enables the individual to connect not only with the lost object but also with their own sense of lack and the deficiencies of others. It involves a deep, reflective sadness or longing for something unattainable, a condition that arises from the recognition of an irreparable separation or a fundamental lack. This sense of loss or absence can be tied to the impossibility of achieving complete unity, intimacy, or immanence within a community. Nancy's idea of a *clear consciousness* of separation is fundamentally melancholic. Since it entails a constant recognition of the impossibility of unity. The community, for Nancy and Bataille, is defined by a space where individuals are always outside-of-self, aware of their singularity and separation from others. This is not a

negative condition but rather the very essence of community. In this sense, the community becomes a site of melancholic awareness—it knows it cannot achieve the intimacy or fusion that traditional metaphysics might seek. For Nancy and Blanchot, melancholy on the basis of singular community is awareness of finitude and separateness and distinction. According to Blanchot, there is tension and ambivalence between individuality and collective existence. While this ambivalence refers to the crucial element of melancholy, which Binkert and Walter Benjamin highlighted, these tension and ambivalence are also a way to a true community for Blanchot. This means that being together does not erase solitude but rather, paradoxically, is founded on it.

Melancholy arises in the encounter with the limit as a confrontation with the impossibility of total unity or fusion. It's the effect that arises from realizing that no being can fully coincide with another, that there is always a remainder, a dislocation, or a gap between singularities. Even in exposure, one remains irreducibly alone in one's singularity. The limit, as a space where beings encounter each other but never fully merge, produces a kind of melancholic awareness of the insufficiency of human connection, the inevitability of separation even within intimacy. Melancholy might emerge as a response to the indeterminacy that the threshold represents. Melancholy could also be connected with the idea of potentiality—particularly the potential to not-be. Melancholy, in this context, is the effect that arises when one confronts pure potentiality and realizes that not all possibilities can be realized and some of them could be realized at the same time. In both cases, melancholy emerges as a means to the recognition of what has happened is contingent, the impossibility of the wholeness of human connection and not a full actualization of possibilities but a possibility of some potentialities. Melancholy is tied to the vulnerability that comes with this exposure—the inability to control one's relation to the world, the other, or even oneself but a possibility to understand and question subjectivity and community. If melancholy is not approached as a closed off boundary but a possibility, it turns out to be an experience. Melancholy arises as a response to the limits of human experience—the limit between singularities, the threshold between potential and actual, the gap between what is and what could be. Melancholy is the effect of openness, the experience of standing on the edge of something unknowable, or unattainable. It is an experience that accompanies our exposure to the outside, the

acknowledgment that we are always on the threshold and in the cycle of what we are and what we could become but this becoming is not finite but an active one where you expose yourself to the other.

3.2. Loss

Death and melancholy are deeply intertwined, as both confront the limits of existence and the impossibility of total presence. Death represents the ultimate loss—a boundary that isolates each individual in their singularity while simultaneously reminding us of our shared finitude. It is through death that the irreducible nature of loss is revealed, shaping not only individual identity but also our relational existence within a community. Melancholy, in turn, emerges as a response to this loss. It is not merely a mourning of what is gone but an unconscious process that binds the self to what has been lost. As Freud notes, identification with the lost object occurs at the level of the unconscious, creating a union that defies the boundaries of subjective or intersubjective experience. Melancholy reflects the tension between presence and absence, self and other, and it reveals the impossibility of fully grasping or representing what is lost. By transitioning from the singular and communal aspects of death to the psychic and relational dimensions of melancholy, this chapter explores how the loss inherent in death resonates within the unconscious, shaping the ways we navigate identity, community, and existence itself.

Loss is an inescapable aspect of human existence, shaping not only identities but also the way communities are formed and understood. While it often evokes sorrow or mourning. Loss also opens a space for questioning the construction of meaning, identity, and community. It allows us to critically examine how we have produced meaning through language, institutions, and cultural practices, and how these processes shape subjects. The loss and deficiency experienced can open up a melancholic possibility for us. This possibility enables us to question how meaning has been constructed in history and how we have built our identity and community around that meaning. It allows us to critically examine how we have produced meanings through institutions and language, and how we have become the productive subjects of these meanings. This critical examination of loss

connects to the idea of melancholic awareness, which shapes both individual and community. Community is where shared melancholy—the shared awareness of separation and singularity—becomes evident. It is not a space of comfort or unity but one of exposure and vulnerability to the reality of being finite beings among other finite beings.

Nancy (1991) emphasizes that the community is not about achieving fusion or a higher unity. Instead, it is about recognizing and maintaining the irreducible separation between individuals. This recognition of separation, which is a core component of Nancy's idea of community, has a melancholic character. It suggests a perpetual awareness of the impossibility of complete unity or togetherness, an awareness that can evoke a sense of longing or mourning for a state of being that is forever out of reach and lost. This aligns with a philosophical interpretation of melancholy as an experience of lacking or missing something that one cannot have—be it unity, totality, or complete self-presence. For Nancy, this lack is not a deficiency but the very condition of the community. Thus, the community is melancholic because it embodies the awareness of its own impossibility—it is a space where individuals come together precisely in their recognition of their fundamental separateness.

The idea of constructing a community, in Nancy's sense, involves acknowledging this melancholic awareness of separation as the foundation of communal life. Instead of striving for an impossible unity or intimacy, a community constructed on this basis would recognize and affirm the singularities and separations of its members. Such a community would be built not on the fantasy of a lost golden age or a utopian future where all differences are reconciled, but on the acceptance of finitude and the limits of human existence. This is a community that understands its essence as being shaped by a shared experience of exposure to the outside—to what is beyond the self and beyond any single, unified subjectivity.

According to Nancy (1991), the sense of loss is both intrinsic to what a community actually is and a foundational aspect of what it means to be in a community. The impossibility of achieving immanence or the loss of immanence is what makes community possible. If true immanence were achieved, it would suppress the very

possibility of community because community relies on the interaction and communication between distinct beings. However, individuals are not complete in themselves and must engage with others in their shared finitude. Death exemplifies loss, representing the ultimate boundary and the end of an individual's existence. Yet, death also underlines the singularity of each person, as every death is unique and resists assimilation into a universal cycle of life and death. This irreducible singularity indicates that each community member is characterized by loss and their unique, irreplaceable existence. Therefore, community becomes a collective of beings who remain distinct in their individuality while sharing finitude and mortality.

It is not a loss: on the contrary, immanence, if it were to come about, would instantly suppress community, or communication, as such. Death is not only an example of this, it is its truth. In death, at least if one considers in it what brings about immanence (decomposition leading back to nature- "everything returns to the ground and becomes part of the cycle" or else the paradisaic versions of the same "cycle") and if one forgets what makes it always irreducibly singular, there is no longer any community or communication: there is only the continuous identity of atoms. (1991, *Inoperative Community* p.12)

The shared acknowledgment of each other's finitude and mortality forms a basis for community. The inoperative community is not a functional entity with a specific purpose or goal but a space where the singularity of each individual, especially their death, is acknowledged. Community cannot be fully realized or completed in the form of a single, unified subject or entity. Community is not about production or operation but about recognizing the impossibility and loss of such a project.

The inability to represent is a natural outcome of loss, as the lost object or subject becomes inaccessible not only materially but also symbolically. In Freud's concept of melancholy, even though the lost object is internalized by the ego, it can never be fully replaced. This

creates a rupture and deficiency in representation. He illustrates how the lost object is internalized, not to replace its absence but to sustain a relationship with what cannot be fully possessed or recovered. Similarly, death as the ultimate loss is not something we can fully own or master—it resists assimilation into the self. Instead, loss creates a shared but unshareable space, much like a community, where individuals come together through their mutual recognition of what cannot be shared, represented or communicated. Loss is the generative force that sustains community. Whether it is the loss of an object, an ideal, or the encounter with death, it reveals the limits of representation and the insufficiency of the self.

In Freud's analysis of melancholy, death signifies more than a literal loss; it embodies an absence that is internalized within the ego. The subject unconsciously identifies with the lost object, creating a paradox where the self becomes entangled with what is absent. This process reshapes identity, as the ego absorbs the void left by loss, allowing the individual to redefine themselves in relation to what cannot be possessed or fully comprehended. This internalization demonstrates how the unconscious navigates death not as an endpoint but as an ongoing influence on how we perceive ourselves and others. The resonance of loss within the unconscious challenges traditional frameworks of identity and community by introducing the idea of incompleteness as foundational. Death and the loss it entails are not merely disruptions but sources of potentiality, reshaping how we connect with ourselves and others. By confronting the limits imposed by loss, we uncover new ways of understanding identity and belonging, rooted not in totality but in the shared acknowledgment of absence and finitude. This perspective invites us to reimagine existence itself as a process of continuous engagement with what cannot be fully possessed or resolved.

3.3. Identification

Identification is a fundamental mechanism through which individuals construct their sense of self in relation to others. This process operates through unconscious level, societal norms, and the experience of loss. It not only shapes how individuals perceive

themselves but also determines how they connect with others and integrate into social structures. For Freud, identification arises as an unconscious bond with a lost object, where the individual internalizes what has been lost. Butler extends this framework by arguing that all identities are performatively produced through the experience of loss. In this sense, identification becomes a key process in both identity and community formation. Freud conceptualizes identification as the internalization of a lost object at the unconscious level, a process that shapes the individual's ego. However, this creates an immanent community which is opposed to a singular community that could not be represented on a conscious level. The inoperative community is both beyond the subject and non-subjective. In this context, if a community is formed through identification and this process occurs at the unconscious level, Freud's concept of melancholy plays a crucial role in understanding how this operates. Identification emerges not as a conscious choice but as the result of loss. Aligned with Nancy's opposition to the idea of *immanence*, such a community is not confined to conscious representation or categorical definitions. Instead, unconscious identification enables the formation of a community without requiring a specific form or explicit recognition.

Butler, on the other hand, situates this mechanism within the framework of societal norms, emphasizing how norms regulate identity through performative acts. Together, these perspectives offer a complementary framework for understanding identification as both a psychological and a social process. Identification plays a pivotal role in mediating the tension between singularity and relationality. It enables individuals to maintain their uniqueness while forming connections with others. However, because identification operates at an unconscious level and is shaped by normative frameworks, it embodies a dynamic of both resistance and submission. In this chapter, I would like to examine how Freud and Butler's theories illuminate the intersections of identification, melancholy, loss, and relations in a community.

Freud is telling us that melancholia is a psychological state where unresolved ambivalence, narcissistic identification with the lost object, and sadism combine, leading to self-destructive behaviors like suicide. The ego, now identified with the lost object, directs the aggression originally meant for the object back onto itself. Freud defines

melancholy as a pathology and melancholic person as a patient. Freud in *Mourning and Melancholia* (1917, p.245) describes melancholy as such: “the patient is aware of the loss which has given rise to his melancholia, but only in the sense that he knows whom he has lost but not what he has lost in him” and he differ melancholy from mourning. According to him, in mourning, you're sorrowful because you've lost someone or something in the real world, and your mind is busy processing that. In mourning, the loss is more clearly understood and processed by the individual. However, in melancholia, Freud says the loss is more mysterious—it's not just about losing someone but losing something deeper within, like part of the self. You might know who you've lost, but you don't know what exactly you've lost in them. It's as if the melancholic person has this internal conflict they can't consciously see. Freud (1917) points out that unlike mourning, where it's the world that feels empty, in melancholia, the person's ego—their sense of self—becomes impoverished. The melancholic person turns inward, blaming and devaluing themselves, feeling worthless, expecting punishment. It's not just sadness about the external world, but a deep, almost self-destructive feeling. Freud (1917) delves into the nature of melancholia, particularly focusing on the patient's intense self-criticism and feelings of moral inferiority. The melancholic patient does not merely believe they have become worse but insists they have always been inadequate or morally deficient. This self-reproach often extends to feelings of worthlessness, guilt, and self-loathing, which Freud views as exaggerated yet revealing. The patient's critical view of themselves may contain elements of truth, especially when they describe themselves as selfish, dishonest, or weak. Most importantly, the patient indeed confronts deeper, hidden aspects of their personality. Since melancholy is actually about inner loss and thus inner work. It does not completely deal with external loss. In mourning, the grief is directed toward the loss of a loved object, whereas, in melancholia, the ego itself becomes the object of criticism and aggression. The melancholic's sense of worthlessness and their inability to engage in normal activities are secondary effects of the internal work that is consuming the ego. This work, akin to mourning, remains largely unconscious, but it manifests in the outward symptoms of depression, such as sleeplessness and a lack of appetite. Freud (1917) discusses the patient's intense and disproportionate self-criticism, which does not necessarily align with reality or the opinions of others. This inconsistency suggests that the self-reproach in

melancholia is not grounded in actual faults but rather in the internal workings of the melancholic's psyche. Freud contrasts the melancholic's self-criticism with ordinary feelings of guilt or remorse, which are often accompanied by shame in front of others. However, melancholic individuals tend to lack this sense of social shame and, instead, show an *insistent communicativeness* where they openly expose their perceived flaws. Actually here, we could say that they are inclined to expose their vulnerability toward others. In melancholia, the ego appears to be divided: one part of the ego turns against and judges another part of itself. Freud refers to this as the activity of the *critical agency* or conscience. This split within the ego leads to harsh self-criticism, and Freud (1917) suggests that this critical agency can become pathological, detaching itself from the rest of the ego. Freud identifies a narcissistic dimension in this process, arguing that object-choice (the loved person) is based on a narcissistic foundation—where the loved person functions as an extension or reflection of the ego. When the relationship with the object fails, identification with the lost object allows the melancholic to maintain the love relation internally. This prevents a total withdrawal of affection but simultaneously redirects the unresolved conflict inward. Instead of mourning the lost object externally, the melancholic internalizes both the loss and the associated criticisms, turning them into self-reproach and severe self-criticism. This process mirrors the structure of immanence, in which the subject remains enclosed within itself rather than transcending its limits through an outward engagement with loss. In melancholia, the inability to externalize grief results in a self-enclosed dynamic where the subject is trapped within an internal repetition of suffering. Freud's model suggests that the melancholic's refusal to relinquish the lost object confines them to an immanent space of self-referential suffering, reinforcing the internal split within the ego. Rather than a process of mourning that would allow for the possibility of transcendence, self-reproach functions as a mechanism of fixation, wherein the lost object remains embedded within the ego. Thus, self-reproach is not merely an affective response but a structural mode of subjectivation bound by immanence, limiting the subject's capacity to move beyond its internalized loss.

Freud (1917) also touches upon how melancholy intertwines with ambivalence, narcissism, and sadism. He suggests that melancholia stems from unresolved ambivalence toward a lost love-object. When the object is lost, the love for it is maintained through

narcissistic identification, but this also allows the hatred towards the object to be directed inward, toward the ego. As the ego identifies with the lost object, the subject's aggression or hate—which would have been directed outward toward the object—becomes redirected inward, resulting in self-reproach and self-punishment. Freud argues that this leads to a sadistic enjoyment in the ego's own suffering, transforming the melancholic into both the punisher and the punished. The sadistic component of melancholia explains its connection to suicidal tendencies. Freud suggests that suicide arises because the ego, having identified with the lost object, can treat itself as if it were the object and thus direct its destructive urges inward. In this way, the ego can act out its aggression by destroying itself. Despite the fact that the object has been lost, it continues to exert a strong influence over the ego. In both intense love and suicidal tendencies, the ego is overwhelmed by the object, either by passionately embracing it in love or by destroying itself in melancholia. Freud adds that melancholia can transform into mania.

Freud's definition of melancholia paints a picture of a subject who has become one with their inner world, creating a reality where no room remains for the other. In this world, where the individual is fused with their environment, there is no external point of reference, leading to a state where the subject cannot engage with or empathize with the other's suffering. This condition fosters a form of communal depression where individuals become incapable of altruism or empathic connection. The lack of space for the other signals a breakdown in interpersonal and communal relationships, thereby disrupting the communal foundation. In a community, criteria for a healthy and happy life are established, and anyone who does not conform to these standards is pathologized and labeled as maladjusted. This results in a stigmatization process that not only marginalizes individuals but also supports a system where the pharmaceutical industry is prioritized. The construction of mental illness, along with the professionals, schools, and hospitals that diagnose and treat it, thus becomes part of a broader socio-economic system designed to manage society.

Melancholia is often seen as a more severe form of depression. However, in contemporary discourse, the definition of depression has expanded to include a wide range of everyday problems, making it more inclusive but also more diffuse. Today, depression is frequently

defined in terms of the symptoms that can be alleviated by antidepressants, thereby shifting its conceptualization from a purely psychological or existential condition to one that is managed through pharmacological intervention. This shift reflects a tendency to prioritize biological solutions over deeper societal and existential inquiries into the nature of suffering.

Freud's lack of consideration of the external social structures and gendered expectations may perpetuate a view of melancholy as primarily an individual, pathological condition, rather than as something influenced by cultural and societal forces. Freud focuses on the psyche risks isolating melancholy from the communal and shared aspects of existence. Melancholy is also an experience of the dislocation of community and the existential challenge of being singular within a shared world. Freud's explanation remains within the confines of individual psychic dynamics and doesn't address the broader philosophical dimensions of loss — the collapse of symbolic and representational orders. Freud misses the way melancholy signifies a crisis of meaning and language itself. Freud's notion of melancholia assumes that loss is an identifiable object that can be mourned or internalized. Loss is inherently unrepresentable, and melancholy signifies an encounter with this irreducibility, which Freud's theory does not adequately address. Freud's melancholic subject, who is at war with themselves and withdrawn, can be likened to the entrepreneurial subject in a neoliberal order. This subject is also closed off, both master and slave to themselves, consuming and exploiting their own being. Byung-Chul Han states "This is the solitude of the isolated, self-fighting entrepreneur who voluntarily exploits themselves" and "as a result of the isolation of the self-exploiting performance subject, we cannot become a political 'we' capable of engaging in collective action" (Han, 2019, p.15-16, the sentence is translated by me). In a society that has withdrawn into itself and entered into depression, we become unable to establish a shared equality that includes us all.

Freud's analysis of the melancholic subject, caught in a self-destructive struggle and retreating into themselves, offers a foundational framework for understanding how subjectivity forms through identification with loss. In melancholia, the subject internalizes the lost object, erasing the boundary between self and other. This mechanism

reveals how identities are shaped not only by presence but also by absence and lack. Freud's insight provides a starting point for exploring how subjectivity emerges through an interplay of internalized relationships with what is unattainable.

Expanding this view, Butler's theory of gender as a performative construct shaped by the loss of the idealized mother or father demonstrates how identification with the lost object extends beyond the individual to cultural productions. For Butler, melancholy underscores how gender is a performative repetition born from the loss of an unattainable ideal, suggesting that all identities, not just gender, are similarly performative constructions rooted in loss. Nancy's notion of *being outside of the self* further deepens this analysis. Nancy emphasizes that subjectivity is not confined to an isolated ego but exists in relational exposure to others. This dynamic of *being-with* resonates with Freud's and Butler's ideas by highlighting how the self is always constituted in relation to the other, whether through the internalization of loss or through the performative negotiation of identity. Incorporating Nancy's framework into this discussion I would like to emphasize that subjectivity is neither fully autonomous nor self-sufficient but is always shaped by its finitude and exposure to the outside.

By integrating Freud's foundational insights, Butler's expansion of melancholy into cultural production, and Nancy's relational subjectivity, my thesis underscores how identity formation is inextricably linked to loss, relationality, and the interplay of absence and presence. These perspectives illuminate the ways in which we construct and inhabit identities within a community.

According to Butler, gender is a performance that is shaped by the loss of our phantasm of father and mother. In melancholy, we identify ourselves with the lost object. Thus, gender is a sort of cultural production based on the loss of the idealized one. I would like to carry her words one step forward and add that whole identities are indeed performances and cultural production.

As Heidegger remarks that "We are thrown into the world with others" (1962, pp.149-155). It means that we are with others and in a relationship with others in a community. However, these relations in a community are tied with power relations as Foucault

defends. Turning back to Butler in order to grasp the ambivalence of the subject, power is not in a position external to the subject within this relationship. More precisely, although it is external, it is the space of the subject. Namely, the subject both is exposed to the dominance of the power and also the one who submits to it. However, this subordination leads to an agency of the subject. "The subject is itself a site of this ambivalence in which the subject emerges both as the effect of a prior power and as the condition of possibility for a radically conditioned form of agency". (Butler, 1997, pp.14-15; Foucault, 2010, p.73) Community operates via this ambivalence. Sexuality, family, etc. in society is subject to constant regulation. The reason for the existence of these arrangements is not to reproduce itself, but to abound, add, invent, to be inserted into bodies in a way that encompasses ever finer details, and to control populations more and more holistically. Foucault (2010, pp.145-146) stated in the History of Sexuality "sex became a political issue at the intersection of bodily discipline and population regulation, functioning within medical, psychological, and administrative mechanisms. It produced micro-powers that enforced surveillance, spatial order, and examinations, combining individual discipline with population management". This dynamic illustrates how power not only disciplines bodies but also extends its regulatory reach. While Foucault analyzes the proliferation of control mechanisms, Butler further underscores how these mechanisms sustain subjection by simultaneously constraining and enabling the subject's field of action. "In Foucault, the suppression of the body not only requires and produces the very body it seeks to suppress, it goes further by extending the bodily domain to be regulated, proliferating sites of control, discipline, and suppression". (Butler, 1997, p.59) According to Butler, "for the boundary that divides the outside from the inside is in the process of being installed, precisely through the regulation of the subject". (1997, pp.66-67) This is indeed a regulatory and disciplinary Power and the power maintains its potency by enforcing norms and normativity. Butler divides norm into two:

Although norms are necessary for living and shaping our social world, they also constrain us and can be a source of violence that must be resisted for the sake of social justice. This creates a paradox, as opposition to violence is often framed through norms—such as nonviolence, respect, or the value of life itself. Normativity carries a dual function: it both guides our actions and aspirations, orienting us within society, and normalizes, enforcing coercive standards that define what is considered “real” or “intelligible” life. When individuals defy these norms, their existence, value, and even the reality of their gender can be called into question. (Butler, 2004b, p.206)

In this way, if you would be perceivable within the boundaries of this frontier, you could be counted as a subject who lost its singular features and differences and who created its other by excluding all the differences and singularities that are commanded by the power.

The repressive regime, as Foucault calls it, requires its own self-augmentation and proliferation. As such, this regime requires the field of bodily impulse to expand and proliferate as a moralized domain, such that it will continually have fresh material through which to articulate its own power. Hence, repression produces a field of infinitely moralizable bodily phenomena in order to facilitate and rationalize its own proliferation. In Foucault, the suppression of the body not only requires and produces the very body it seeks to suppress, it goes further by extending the bodily domain to be regulated, proliferating sites of control, discipline, and suppression. (Butler, 1997, pp.58-59)

Thus, the subject is not only repressed by these regulatory mechanisms but also acts as a channel in order to expand domains of control, discipline, and repression. This is because

the medium of the subject upon which these mechanisms act has actually expanded beyond the existing regulations. This situation can be imagined as each newly created boundary being continually surpassed, necessitating a new boundary. This is due to the subject's drives, potentialities or what makes it different and singular that transcend the boundary, escape from the order, or resist regulation. Plus, the same boundary has already defined the things as nonexistent which the power regarded as an excess.

The body's boundary and the distinction between internal and external arise through the expulsion of something once integral to identity, rendering it defiling otherness. Sexism, homophobia, and racism operate through expulsion and repulsion, consolidating hegemonic identities by defining the Other. This exclusion constructs the subject's "inner" and "outer" worlds, yet the boundary remains unstable. The body's excretory function metaphorically illustrates how identity differentiation occurs—where the inner becomes outer, making the Other abject. A rigid boundary is impossible, as it is always disrupted by what it seeks to expel. Though "inner" and "outer" appear spatially distinct, they are linguistic constructs shaped by cultural norms that regulate subject formation. Stability depends on a mediating boundary, yet this distinction remains inherently fragile, exposing mechanisms of social regulation. (Butler, 1999, p.170)

“The outside is actually within because when you have never identified with something, you could not exclude it. It has been excluded from the domain of definition by the dominant/hegemonic” (Butler, 2005, p.148). These exclusions continually cause existing norms and boundaries to combat. Societies operating through boundaries and dichotomies bring about the ambivalence of a subject who is object of the power and at the same time who defines its being a subject by resisting it. Butler argues that

the subject's ambivalence and the process of becoming a subject are actually melancholic. The subject is both formed and subordinated, as subjection not only restricts but also constitutes identity. Autonomy is conditioned by subordination, which is repressed yet foundational to the subject's emergence. This dependency, rooted in passionate attachment—whether positive or negative—renders the subject vulnerable to domination. Primary dependency shapes both psychic life and political regulation, making subordination central to subject formation. The desire to survive becomes an exploitable mechanism of power. I would rather exist in subordination than not exist at all. (Butler, 1997, pp. 6-7).

Plus, power or normativity relies on repetition; it only exists through continuous reiteration. It achieves its current status by reversing and negating its previous positions. Operating in this repetitive manner, power “not only temporalizes the conditions of subordination but shows these conditions to be, not static structures, but temporalized—active and productive” (Butler, 1997, p.16) They are contingent. In other words, the law ultimately turns against itself. It generates the subjects and the conditions for the deconstructing of subjects that will undermine the boundaries it has established. At this point, it is possible to see the ambivalence inherent in subject formation. The law, by attempting to prohibit a situation, also creates the possibility for its boundaries to change. This is because power is productive. It achieves this by limiting, circulating, and differentiating them. Similarly, any essentialist category or totality that claims to encompass and regulate everything ultimately fails. The prominent repetitions indicate that the regulated subjects are not as fixed as assumed and identities shown for them are not imperative and the subject can transcend the norm. Identification with the lost object, this melancholic stage suggests a way to escape the impositions of social reality by dragging subjects to the margins of that same reality. The laws underpinning social regulations delineate the boundary between inside and outside based on defined parameters. Boundaries are exclusionary, thus social regulations continually inscribe

losses onto subjects through the law. Consequently, social regulations inherently rely on the production of melancholy. This indicates that melancholy is not merely a psychic element but a possibility to understand the loss and crisis in the history that affirm boundaries for its subjects. Thus, recognizing the denial at the origin of constructed positions enables us to see possibilities beyond these positions. It is through the incorporation of loss that the ego becomes recognizable as a site of conflict and representation. The withdrawal of libido does not just produce a loss; it creates a new psychic structure. This very withdrawal makes melancholia conscious. According to Butler, (1997) melancholia enables the conscious representation of an otherwise unrepresentable ambivalence by staging a psychic conflict within the ego. The withdrawal or regression of libido does not mark a failure of articulation but rather becomes the condition for melancholia to take on a conscious form. This withdrawal is represented as a division within the ego, which in turn makes the ego itself available for representation. The distinction between the ego and super-ego, then, is not pre-given but emerges through the melancholic process, making melancholia foundational for the representation of psychic life. The process of withdrawal, which appears to describe a pre-existing psychic reality, is instead the retrospective product of melancholic representation itself that both cancels and preserves loss within the framework of psychic articulation. Melancholia not only structures psychic life through the withdrawal of libido and the internal division of the ego but also extends beyond the individual psyche to shape subject formation within social and regulatory frameworks. Just as melancholia constitutes the self by transforming loss into a site of conflict and representation, it also operates at the level of social norms, where loss becomes the mechanism through which identity is constructed and regulated. This link between melancholy and the production of the self suggests that individual loss is never merely personal; rather, it is mediated by the exclusions and prohibitions imposed by the social order. Therefore, to fully grasp the role of melancholia, one must examine how loss is not only internalized psychically but also inscribed onto subjects through legal and normative structures, reinforcing the very boundaries that define identity and difference.

Melancholy is the process of turning from the object to the self. The loss of the object leads to the production of the self. Loss constructs the self. To understand the connection

between melancholy and social regulations, one must consider loss. For melancholy to form, there must first be an experience of loss. At this point, the social order and boundaries established through norms come into play again. The laws underlying social regulations draw the boundary between the inside and the outside based on what is defined. Boundaries are exclusionary; therefore, social regulations continually inscribe losses onto subjects through the law. A specific regime of identity is established through norms, which is based on commonalities. However, every identification constitutes us and deprives us. This deprivation is the spark that initiates to question our subjecthood.

Lives defined as *valuable and intelligible* within the boundaries of the norm gain their being precisely through the devaluation of certain things and the inscription of losses onto the subject. On the other hand, none of us choose these lives or the norms that define them; we are born into them. The condition known as subject formation occurs as a result of our exposure to these norms, which we did not choose. In this scenario, while we secure a place within the social order defined by these norms by accepting the roles they assign to us, we simultaneously have a chance to realize our non-normative selves thanks to melancholic reflection. In *The Subject and Power* (1982), Foucault suggests a critical investigation into the thematic dimensions of power. Foucault is urging us to move beyond one-dimensional explanations and to explore the complex dynamics, processes, and struggles through which power operates. With the help of melancholic reflection, questioning and critiquing the established norms and practices could help uncover the ways in which power is normalized and internalized. This involves challenging accepted standards and practices to reveal how they function to exert control.

Melancholy transforms the individual's relationship with themselves through the experience of loss. As Freud explains, in melancholy, the lost object is internalized, and the ego identifies with this loss. Through this process, individuals align with norms to be deemed valuable and acceptable. However, melancholy also provides a means to step outside these norms, discover one's singularity, and confront the imposed social order. Thus, melancholy emerges as both a mechanism for conforming to norms and a tool for deviating from them. Here we understand how the subject is constituted, the role of melancholy in this formation, and the influence of the social order in this process. The

subject is both a product of norms and a being with the potential to resist them. This dual structure necessitates a continuous interrogation of both our identities and the systems that govern them. In Nancy's philosophy, to be *outside of the self* is to recognize that one's identity is not self-contained but fundamentally relational and exposed to others. This idea challenges traditional notions of identification, which often presuppose a fixed or internalized sense of self that aligns with external categories or norms. Identification, as seen in Freud's and Butler's analyses, involves a process of internalization, often tied to loss or the unattainability of the object of desire. Nancy reconfigures this by suggesting that identity is never fully internal; instead, it is always outwardly inclined. In being outside of the self, the subject acknowledges its exposure to others and the impossibility of self-completion within a closed system. This relational openness reframes identification not as a process of assimilation into a predefined norm but as a continuous interaction with what exceeds and escapes the self.

REIMAGINING BEING-WITH

4.1. Singularity and Loss

A funeral is a moment that underscores the singularity of each individual through death. However, this singularity does not remain merely a personal experience; it transforms into a shared process of meaning and mourning within a community. Singularity is not about an individual existing solely within their own boundaries but about sustaining their existence through connections with others. Funerals bring this relationality to the forefront. Funerals mark a moment when death transcends the individual's boundaries, yet it remains something that cannot be fully shared with others. Beyond mourning a lost person or object, the funeral also points to an unconscious process of bonding with what has been lost. It reveals a collective sense of absence, where the experience of loss becomes the foundation for both individual and communal connections. Hrant Dink's funeral exemplifies how death and the rituals surrounding it highlight both the irreplaceable singularity of an individual and the communal experience forged through shared absence. Drawing on the philosophies of Nancy, Agamben, and Blanchot, I would examine how the concepts of singularity and loss converge in moments of collective mourning, challenging normative frameworks of identification and community.

4.1.1. Hrant Dink's Funeral As a Metaphor of Unavowable Inoperative Melancholic and Whatever Community

Basically, the funeral dissolves individual boundaries, emphasizing the transience and mutability of all things—an idea that can resonate with melancholy, as it acknowledges the passing of time and the impermanence of human life. The time-bound nature of human life, with its beginning and end, could lead to a heightened awareness of finitude—which in turn creates the conditions for the formation of community. The recognition of these temporal limits might generate a melancholic awareness that unites individuals in their shared confrontation with time. This awareness also reinforces the idea that no one is fully

self-sufficient or immune to passage of time. The funeral emphasizes a kind of melancholic realization that community cannot be permanently sustained in this boundary-less form. The return to everyday life reaffirms the limits of existence and the inevitability of separation. Moreover, melancholy is fundamentally about limits and separation. How Hrant Dink's funeral encapsulates all of these views?

Blanchot's idea of finitude revolves around the acknowledgment of human mortality and the inescapable limit that death imposes on all beings. In this sense, the ceremony following Hrant Dink's assassination can be seen as a collective recognition of human vulnerability. Dink, an Armenian journalist advocating for peace and understanding between Türks and Armenians, was murdered precisely for his commitment to this cause, symbolizing the finitude not only of his life but of all lives caught in the historical and political tensions he tried to bridge. At his funeral, tens of thousands of people walked in silence, many holding signs that said, *We are all Armenians, we are all Hrant Dink*. This is a powerful gesture of communal acknowledgment of both separateness (as the Türk and Armenian identities are historically distinct) and finitude (as it reminded people of the fragility of life, particularly in politically volatile contexts). The collective mourning embodied Blanchot's idea of a community bound by death—not by identity, but by the shared, inevitable reality of finitude. For Blanchot, true community is formed not by unifying individuals under a common identity, but through the acknowledgment of each person's radical separateness and finitude. This separateness does not dissolve in the communal experience; instead, it becomes the very condition for being-together. The silence of Dink's funeral procession echoes this. It wasn't about creating unity in a political or ideological sense but about sharing in the awareness of loss—the loss of Dink, but also the loss that every individual carries as part of their finite, separate existence. The ritualized mourning for Dink, with people from different backgrounds standing together, reflects a community of singularities, where no one is asked to give up their identity (Türk, Armenian etc.), but all are drawn together through the shared recognition of death and loss. Blanchot often explores the idea that speech fails in the face of death, and that true communion occurs in the silence that follows the breakdown of language. The silence that permeated Dink's funeral procession reflects this. The absence of slogans or speeches gave space for an unspeakable connection between the mourners, rooted in the

untranslatable experience of grief and loss. This mirrors Blanchot's thought on how death confronts us with a void that language cannot fill, yet it is in this void that community forms. Silence, in this context, emphasizes the pure existence and singularity of the individual by avoiding their death becoming a *representation*. It underscores the pure existence and singularity of the individual, reflecting the concept of "belonging to belonging itself. It reflects an effort to preserve this singularity from being subsumed into political or ideological narratives. A community can only exist in a context where the singularity of individuals is recognized rather than erased. In this case, the loss is not compensated for through slogans or political intervention; instead, the creative role of absence in generating a pluralistic space is acknowledged. Silence also highlights the depth and incommunicable nature of the loss. In political or ideological funerals, the individual is often transformed into a symbol, violating the boundaries of their existence. Here, however, silence creates a space where the individual's existence is preserved as entirely their own. Dürer's *Melencolia I* figure represents an individual aware of their boundaries, confronting absence and the search for meaning. Similarly, the singularity of Hrant Dink is recognized within silence and protected from the imposition of any additional meaning or category. His singularity embodies the idea of belonging to belonging itself, existing beyond predefined identities or roles. Hrant Dink's identity and legacy cannot be confined to labels such as *Armenian identity or journalist*. His singularity, after his death, expands into a collective mourning experience that unites individuals from diverse identities and backgrounds. This demonstrates that individuals can coexist beyond fixed identities. Mourning functions as a process of accepting loss and serves as a unifying element for the community, while melancholy involves the internalization of loss and the redefinition of the self through identification. The loss of Hrant Dink bridges these two processes. Community can only be rebuilt through a boundary experience such as death. Dink's death creates a space for a community where individuals come together in a collective field of transcendence while preserving their singularities. This shows that a community can be formed not solely around a shared ideology or identity but through the common absence created by death. Dink's assassination, like the deaths Blanchot reflects on, demands witnessing—an ethical imperative to not turn away from the finitude and separateness of the other. Blanchot's

work often suggests that the experience of witnessing someone's death can provoke a profound ethical reflection on our own mortality and responsibility toward others. The outpouring of support at Dink's funeral, with people taking to the streets despite potential political repercussions, reflects this witnessing of finitude in a public, communal way. For Blanchot (1988), *The Unavowable Community* refers to a form of togetherness that cannot be fully articulated or institutionalized, formed not through any shared objective or identity but through a shared experience of loss, absence, and separation. It is grounded in the recognition of finitude—the fact that all individuals are separated by their own mortality. The community arises from this shared acknowledgment of death and limitation but remains *unavowable* because it cannot be structured, claimed, or fully defined. In the case of Hrant Dink's funeral, the gathering of thousands of people was not a community formed by a common ideology, nationality, or organized cause, but by the shared grief and acknowledgment of Dink's death. The people at the funeral did not need to vocalize or formalize their connection; their collective silence and mourning formed an unspoken bond, a community of loss that could not be fully articulated. Blanchot's concept applies here as the community at Dink's funeral was rooted in the acknowledgment of death and separation, not in any shared political or cultural project.

The participants in the funeral formed a community at the very moment they gathered, yet this community neither became permanent nor institutionalized. As Blanchot (1988) emphasizes, such communities cannot sustain themselves by transforming into a structured organization; their power lies precisely in their transience and spontaneous nature. According to Blanchot (1988), death plays a central role in the emergence of community. In the case of Hrant Dink's funeral, death became the fundamental unifying element of the community. The participants, gathering around the loss of an individual, experienced what Blanchot terms a community exposed to death. Hrant Dink's death, as Blanchot articulates, confronted beings with their own mortality and directed them towards establishing a relationality centered on loss—one that involved both setting aside differences and acknowledging them in an openness to the other. This relationality was not constructed through a shared identity or ideology but rather through a communal sense of melancholy and being-with. The silent march at Hrant Dink's funeral echoes Blanchot's idea that the act of speaking is more significant than what is said. The funeral

itself, in a sense, resembles *poetry*—as Blanchot (1988) defines it, poetry is a space where essence is absent, and meaning is continuously reconstituted. This community, by carrying Dink's memory, created new meaning through his loss. Blanchot argues that communities should not be permanent because permanence confines communities within a fixed ideology or identity. Hrant Dink's funeral did not evolve into a lasting structure; rather, as Blanchot (1988) describes, the community dissolved without leaving behind a sense of lack or nostalgia. Blanchot (1988) further asserts that communities should not define themselves through opposition or enmity. Although Hrant Dink's funeral may have appeared as an act of anger and protest, its primary aim was not to establish an adversarial stance but to create a space for melancholy and community around loss. This community emerged without a predetermined identity, ideological alignment, or defined objective, existing only temporarily around death and loss. At the same time, its very existence affirms Blanchot's notion of the impossibility of community that once such communities seek permanence, they lose their characters without an essence.

Jean-Luc Nancy's concept of the inoperative community also applies. For Nancy, community is not something that can be produced or established; rather, it happens when individuals expose themselves to their own finitude and that of others, recognizing that existence is singular yet inherently relational. The community, for Nancy, is always a sharing of finitude, and it is *inoperative* because it cannot be harnessed for any productive or utilitarian end. At Dink's funeral, the gathering of diverse individuals did not result in any formal political action, yet it was an authentic experience of being-with-others in the face of death. The crowd did not need to unify into a single identity or purpose; instead, their presence in the moment of grief was enough to form a community. The inoperative nature of this community lies in the fact that it was not intended to achieve anything specific—it was not *productive* in the traditional sense. It was simply an event of being-together, where the recognition of mortality and vulnerability united people without erasing their individual identities.

At Dink's funeral, the community was neither a *single thing* nor a utilitarian structure, but rather a plurality of individuals connected through the shared experience of mourning. This moment of collective exposure to the finitude of existence created a community that

could not be institutionalized or fully expressed but existed as a singular, inoperative gathering. This funeral, therefore, encapsulates the essence of community as a shared exposure to finitude, a communication through silence and loss, rather than any productive or ideological project.

For Agamben, the whatever being is a singularity that is not defined by belonging to any particular group or identity, but simply by being as it is. Dink's funeral brought together individuals who did not share a common identity or cause but were there in recognition of his singularity and finitude. The crowd at Dink's funeral represents the idea of whatever singularity—people came together not because they belonged to the same political, national, or religious group but because they shared the experience of mourning the singularity of a human life. Hrant Dink's funeral embodies these concepts by being a community of loss, absence, and finitude. The funeral brought together diverse individuals who shared a moment of exposure to death, forming a community that could not be fully named or institutionalized. The gathering was not based on political or social objectives but on a shared recognition of the fragility of life, making it unavowable, and rooted in singularity. This community was unavowable in the sense that it could not be fully defined or claimed—it existed only in the moment of grief and mourning, without being reducible to a fixed identity. It was also inoperative because it did not aim to produce any lasting institutional outcome but was a collective event of being-together, shaped by the finite nature of existence.

Hrant Dink's funeral can be seen as an example of *unavowable, inoperative and whatever community* where individuals gathered in the recognition of shared mortality and singularity, forming a temporary, unknowable community bound by loss rather than any formalized unity.

4.2. Community and Identification

Agamben's understanding of melancholy provides a significant framework for questioning the nature of identification. As in Freud's theory of melancholy, identification with a lost object is a melancholic process; the subject identifies with the object not

because it has been lost but because it was never fully possessed. Agamben views this mechanism as a melancholic potential.

Agamben uses *acedia* to illustrate a broader philosophical point about how humans engage with what they cannot attain. The melancholic person, in their detachment from the object, is nevertheless bound to it, and their flight from the object is simultaneously a testimony of their connection to it. This creates a dialectical movement where absence becomes a form of presence, and lack is transformed into a form of possession. This *dialectical* nature of *acedia* means that the very experience of loss or privation opens up the possibility for a deeper form of connection to the unattainable. In essence, Agamben (1993) is pointing out that *acedia* and melancholy, rather than being purely destructive or empty states, create a space for desire to be fulfilled in its very unfulfillment. This transforms the melancholic's relationship to the object from one of simple lack to one of profound, if paradoxical, engagement.

Agamben (1993a) interprets Freud's analysis of melancholia, emphasizing the paradoxical nature of melancholic mourning. While mourning typically follows an actual loss, Freud notes that in melancholia, it is not always clear what object has been lost—sometimes the loss is unknown or even non-existent. Agamben focuses on this ambiguity to explore melancholia's unique mechanism that it is not simply a reaction to a real loss but rather an anticipation or preemptive response to a potential or imagined loss. Binkert adds as such

when the melancholic individual envisions in their mind something absent with sorrow, they simultaneously accept that what they are recalling or imagining is not real. At this very moment, a new experience emerges. By completing what is absent within the realm of fantasy, an inner healing takes place. (2014, p.146, the sentences are translated by me)

Freud's concept of *the triumph of the object over the ego* highlights this paradox. While the ego may attempt to suppress the object, the object asserts its dominance, conquering the ego through this act of self-suppression. Thus, the melancholic subject's destruction of the object paradoxically demonstrates their fidelity to it. Agamben connects this idea to the church fathers' conception of *acedia*, where withdrawal occurs not due to an actual defect or loss, but from an intensification of desire that renders the desired object inaccessible. In melancholia, the libido behaves as if a loss has occurred, even though nothing has been truly lost. This reflects a deeper imaginative capacity in melancholia, where an object that was never truly possessed can appear as if it were lost. In this way, melancholia stages a simulation where the unattainable is imagined to have been lost, allowing for a kind of possession in its absence.

Agamben ultimately suggests that melancholia allows for the creation of a *phantasmagorical reality* of loss, opening up a space where the ego can relate to an unreal object. This strategy grants melancholia a unique power that it can appropriate what has never been possessed by staging a scene of loss, creating a form of possession that cannot be rivaled by other forms of attachment, nor threatened by actual loss.

For Agamben (1993a), melancholy is the result of a loss that can no longer be symbolized or represented. The loss of melancholy is not a loss that has to do with the external world; rather, it is a loss that concerns the symbolic order itself. It is a loss of the possibility of representation, and thus, of the possibility of distinguishing between reality and its simulation. Agamben suggests that melancholy arises from a profound loss that cannot be symbolized or represented. This kind of loss transcends the external or the material loss; it is actually about the breakdown of symbolic order. When the ability to represent or symbolize reality is compromised, melancholy ensues because the mechanisms through which we understand and make sense of the world are disrupted. The loss is related to the indistinguishability between reality and its simulation. In other words, when the distinction between real and what is simulated becomes blurred or lost, it leads to a melancholic state. This reflects a concern where authenticity of experiences and representations is questioned. Melancholy in this way is tied to the failure of symbolic systems that mediate our understanding of reality. The inability to effectively symbolize

or represent experiences leads to a sense of loss and disorientation but also, we could realize how shifts in our capacity to represent and understand ourselves and the world take place. This realization is important because different historical and contingent epochs have different discursive formations that define what is considered true or normal.

Each society has its regime of truth, its general politics of truth: that is, the types of discourse it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances that enable one to distinguish true and false statements; the means by which each is sanctioned. (Foucault, 1980, p.131)

The symbolic order is shaped by these discourses, which determine how we interpret and categorize ourselves and the world. Power relations as well influence the symbolic order. Knowledge and power are intertwined, and what is considered knowledge is often a product of power dynamics. The symbolic order is thus not neutral but a site where power operates through discursive practices, shaping how individuals and societies understand and represent reality. Episteme acts as a symbolic order that governs how knowledge is produced and interpreted, affecting everything from scientific knowledge to social norms.

In *Discipline and Punish* (1995), Foucault argues that the production of knowledge is not primarily the result of the isolated activity of a knowing subject. Instead, knowledge emerges from "power-knowledge"—that is, from the intertwined processes and struggles inherent in power relations. These power-knowledge dynamics determine the forms, frameworks, and legitimate domains of knowledge. Essentially, what is considered valid or useful knowledge is shaped by the specific power structures and conflicts in which it is embedded, rather than by a neutral, autonomous intellectual activity. Furthermore, in *The Subject and Power* (1982), Foucault argues for a method of analysis that does not rely on a static, objectified theory of power. Instead, it calls for a continually critical and historically grounded process of conceptualization, one that allows us to more deeply understand the dynamic interplay between power and the subject, and to reveal the

underlying mechanisms shaping contemporary social structures. While Foucault's analysis reveals that knowledge and subjectivity are constructed through historically contingent power-knowledge dynamics, Agamben extends this critique by demonstrating that identification—and thus community formation—is not fixed, but emerges from an unconscious attachment to unattainable ideals and a shared sense of lack.

According to Freud, melancholy arises when an individual unconsciously identifies with a lost object. However, Agamben expands this idea by arguing that melancholy does not represent a loss but rather an object that was never fully possessed. This perspective suggests that identification is not only connected to a past loss but also to an unattainable ideal or object of desire. Identification with an unattainable object operates outside the normative framework. While an individual's desires may be shaped by norms, this process also produces an unconscious attachment that transcends those norms. This allows us to reconceptualize identification not merely as a process of conforming to social norms but also as a space where individuals can move beyond these norms. Agamben's understanding of melancholy proposes that community is not formed around a fixed identity or shared purpose but instead is shaped by lack and desire. Melancholy demonstrates how individuals can be connected at an unconscious level through a shared sense of lack or an unattainable object. This suggests that a community can exist without seeking completion or absolute unity.

The symbolic order places individuals within specific norms, categories, and identities. However, in *Stanzas*, Agamben (1993a) argues that this order can never fully satisfy the individual's desires, as desire is centered around a void or an unattainable object. Melancholy provides a space of resistance to this normative order by revealing the individual's unconscious desires and sense of lack. This, in turn, enables a conception of identification and community that extends beyond the boundaries of norms. Agamben's understanding of melancholy and Freud's analysis of the unconscious dynamics of loss reveal a profound rethinking of identification and community. While the symbolic order attempts to situate individuals within fixed categories and norms, melancholy exposes the insufficiency of these structures. By highlighting the unattainable nature of the desired object and the void at the center of desire, melancholy resists the closure imposed by

normative frameworks. This resistance opens up the possibility for a community that is not built around shared identities, purposes, or completions but instead emerges from the shared recognition of absence and lack. Identification, in this sense, becomes a dynamic process that extends beyond conformity to norms, allowing individuals to relate to one another through their singularities and their shared awareness of what cannot be fully possessed or represented. Thus, melancholy transforms loss into a creative and connective force, challenging the symbolic order's claim to totality and offering a new vision of community—one that embraces incompleteness and the potential for continuous redefinition. By rooting community in absence rather than presence, Agamben offers a model that transcends both totalitarian and individualistic paradigms, opening up a space for relationality that preserves singularity without erasing difference.

The ultimate aim is not to abandon identity or the symbolic order but to internalize them in a different way. Realizing that identities are not fixed provides an opportunity to rethink them rather than abandon them entirely. Completely rejecting identity could leave individuals vulnerable to new forms of power mechanisms, as identity also serves as a tool through which individuals can identify oppressive norms and strategically act against them. Individuals and communities could only develop a singular subjectivity and community by questioning and rethinking the identities and symbolic order that is mechanized and reduced into manageable and consumable means by totalitarian regimes. This rethinking could be possible through melancholic introspection, which enables individuals to establish a relationship with their past and their sense of loss. Melancholic introspection allows the individual to critically examine and reframe their own history, serving as a foundation for reimagining community, identity and the symbolic order. As previously discussed, melancholic introspection involves the unconscious identification of the individual with the lost object, blurring the boundaries between the ego and what has been lost. However, this is not merely a retreat or closure; it is also a process of internal inquiry and reinterpretation. Melancholy is not solely an individual experience of loss but also a tool for questioning social norms. It facilitates a critical reassessment of normative structures, enabling individuals to form new relationships with themselves and their communities. By externalizing the results of their introspection, individuals can contribute to a formation of a collective subjectivity that does not homogenize

singularities and that is grounded in the preservation of difference. This process fosters more open and critical relationships among individuals, transforming the mechanized communal structures. Because singular subjectivity becomes possible only in relation to communal subjectivity.

CONCLUSION

Traumatic events in Türkiye, such as the September 12 coup and the assassination of Hrant Dink, have profoundly affected communal memory. However, efforts to confront these traumas have either remained incomplete or have been suppressed under the control of repressive regimes. In Nancy's conception of the limit, a boundary does not create separation between individuals but rather serves as a space of being-with that fosters difference and exposure to the other. However, the boundary experiences in Türkiye have led to deep fractures instead of strengthening sharing. These experiences have prevented differences from becoming a resource for a community that would enable *compearing*. These spontaneous communities could not achieve togetherness. As spontaneous communities gather around a specific event, and once that event concludes, it becomes difficult for the community to take on an organizational or permanent form. According to Nancy, such communities do not establish their existence based on a specific norm or goal, including an organization or a project but rather through the mere experience of being together. However, in Türkiye, the exposure of finitude or sharing necessary to sustain such togetherness has been lacking. Differences are perceived not as a richness but as a threat, making it difficult to establish a space where singularities are exposed both at the subjective and communal levels. Nancy's concepts of difference and openness break down in this context, as communities, rather than accepting the singularity of individuals, seek to either homogenize or marginalize them in Türkiye. The diverse communities and singular beings who came together at Hrant Dink's funeral experienced being-with despite their differences. However, there were significant political and communal deficiencies preventing the continuity of this experience. In Türkiye, communities gain strength in moments of spontaneous togetherness, yet the trust and acceptance of singularities necessary to sustain this being-with when encountering another boundary experience has gradually eroded. This growing lack of trust hinders singular beings and communities from developing the sense of being-with. According to Nancy's idea that *community is always reconstituted*, the experience of being together requires continuity of being exposed to the other. However, the historical and political

dynamics in Türkiye disrupt this continuity and repeatedly suppress each spontaneous experience. To overcome these challenges, drawing on Blanchot's concept of the *community exposed to death*, it is crucial to confront past losses, share traumas, and create a space of being-with through this shared experience. Addressing past injustices and reckoning with historical truth are fundamental steps toward building trust. For instance, events such as the September 12 coup or the assassination of Hrant Dink must be addressed in a just and transparent manner. Mechanisms should be established that allow singular beings to participate directly in decision-making processes. This ensures that singular beings feel secure within the community. Nancy's concept of singularity requires singular beings to acknowledge their own differences and contribute to the community. This process begins with subjective awareness and reflection and self-critique. An example of this dynamic in Türkiye is the 2010 constitutional referendum, where some voted *yes* to address past injustices, only to later continue protesting in the streets against the authoritarian regime that had initiated the referendum. The 2010 Türkiye's constitutional referendum took place on September 12, 2010, proposing 26 amendments to the 1982 Constitution, which was drafted under military rule following the 1980 coup. The ruling AK Party (AKP) framed the reforms as democratizing measures aimed at limiting military influence, strengthening judicial independence, and expanding individual rights. However, critics argued that the changes would increase executive control over the judiciary, undermining the separation of powers. The referendum passed with 57.88% in favor and 42.12% against.

Casting a *yes* vote in the referendum as a response to a past injustice—recalling historical struggles for justice, reconstructing collective memory, and bringing back to public consciousness the traumas and injustices that the regime seeks to suppress, particularly the issue of prosecuting the perpetrators of the September 12 coup—while simultaneously defining this decision as a melancholic reflection, a confrontation with the past, and an identification with the lost, and then continuing to protest against the oppressive regime in the streets the following day, is not merely an subjective decision but a manifestation and demand of community and a sense of responsibility toward the past. Such a relationship with community or the past is not possible within liberal individualism. At the same time, this decision does not conform to the homogeneous demands of a

collective, as in real socialism; on the contrary, it attempts to reconstruct communal memory through an individual intervention in the past. This reveals the tension between singularity and community. Continuing to protest against an oppressive regime in the streets represents not only a singular being's confrontation with the past but also its transition into action and solidarity with the community in the public sphere. This demonstrates that action can create a space for communal transformation beyond subjective awareness. Protesting in the streets, much like Nancy's concept of the limit, becomes a point of contact with the other and pushes the individual into relationality with the community. This act of engagement is a boundary through which we expose ourselves to the other. Authoritarian regimes seek to establish control over communities. Spontaneous actions such as street protests create uncontrollable dynamics that disrupt these regimes' understanding of order. The streets serve as spaces where the singular beings can directly voice their demands, thereby weakening the regime's monopoly over discourse. In street politics, society can recall past struggles for rights, strengthening communal memory. This, in turn, can bring back to the public sphere the traumas and injustices that the regime seeks to erase. Power is not only repressive but also productive. As people come together, they generate their own means of resistance and solidarity practices. This reveals that the regime's power is not absolute and instills courage among the people. The continuity of authoritarian regimes largely depends on the fear they impose on a community. Street protests create moments in which this fear is broken. When individuals act together, they move beyond the sense of helplessness and realize their potential to become a real force against the regime. The normative order, which sustains itself through repetition, can be disrupted through street politics. When people become visible and exposed in the streets, the norms and ideologies imposed by the regime begin to be questioned. For these reasons, authoritarian regimes often suppress togetherness and street politics. This repression reflects the regime's vulnerabilities and its crisis of legitimacy. The street is one of the most liberated spaces where people can express their demands and grievances, making it a space that is difficult to control and inherently threatening to authoritarian rule. Identification with the lost, confrontation with the past, and action in solidarity carry both the individual and the community toward a new relational framework. This enables the possibility of imagining a new form of

community, one that is formed through a relationship with loss on both a subjective and communal level. This decision is not about belonging to a particular identity or ideology; rather, it allows the individual to express their singularity by forming a bond with the past and transforming this bond into communal action. In this way, we can rethink a relational model that both preserves singularity and sustains connections with the community. Singularity, in this sense, becomes an opportunity to understand how an individual stance can contribute to communal transformation. Oppressive regimes, as Nancy emphasizes, seek to control differences and construct a homogeneous community. This is achieved through the suppression of differences at the communal level. What occurred during the September 12 coup was precisely a result of this logic. The decision to vote yes in the referendum represents an attempt to confront the injustices suffered by those persecuted for their differences and singularities in the past—an effort to recognize and reintroduce these differences. Such an approach can create a space of solidarity that acknowledges not only the past but also the relationality with the other through difference. In Nancy's terms, difference is not about beings' becoming identical but about their being-with while maintaining their boundaries. These differences are vital to the community. Communities are not formed solely through shared commonalities but also through the shared experience of differences and losses. The concepts of identity and community are not confined within fixed and normative frameworks; rather, they can be understood more dynamically, relationally, and transformatively through notions such as loss, melancholy, and singularity. At both the subjective and communal levels, identities possess the potential for both resistance and transformation. Here, melancholy can be redefined not merely as a subjective affective state but as an experience for confronting the past, resisting norms, and reimagining community. It can thus be reconsidered as a means of questioning the limits of normative order, exposing the impossibility of a fully constituted community and unveiling the fragility of community.

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