

The Undertow of Parting: Mourning, Memory and Alienation in *Manchester by the Sea*

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ABSTRACT

Manchester by the Sea (2016) by Kenneth Lonergan, presents grief not as a transient emotional response but as a permanent psychological condition that serves the self from its past, its relationships, and its sense of belonging. This paper examines how parting in its many forms functions as a foundational experience of grief in the human psyche, arguing that every significant separation constitutes a kind of mourning. Drawing on Sigmund Freud's theorization of mourning and melancholia, Julia Kristeva's Conceptualization of melancholia as a collapse of self-hood and failure of language in *Black Sun: Depression and Melancholia* (1989) and Judith Butler's Conception of Ungrievable Loss, this paper reads Lee Chandler as a figure of permanent psychological exile. In his psyche grief, nostalgia and alienation do not operate as separate, distinguishable wave of feeling, where a street, a face, or the sound of the ocean collapses past and present into one unbearable moment. Through cinematic and narrative analysis, *Manchester by the Sea* captures a universal psychological truth that human existence is punctuated by parting, and that grief is not an exception to life but it's quiet, persistent undertow.

Keywords: Grief, Nostalgia, Alienation, Melancholia, Parting.
