

Université de Montréal

**The Psychoanalytical Controversy Over Desire in Shakespeare's
*Hamlet: From Oedipus to Anti-Oedipus***

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Université de Montréal
Faculté des études supérieures

Ce mémoire intitulé :

The Psychoanalytical Controversy Over Desire in Shakespeare's

Hamlet: From Oedipus to Anti-Oedipus

présenté par :

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a été évalué par un jury composé des personnes suivantes :

.....
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To my parents, once again

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Résumé

Mon mémoire de maîtrise, “The Psychoanalytical Controversy Over Desire in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*: From Oedipus to Anti-Oedipus,” retrace les étapes marquantes de l’évolution de la psychanalyse jusqu’à la fin du XXème siècle. Mon mémoire porte sur l’analyse de la pièce de Shakespeare *Hamlet* qui nous servira d’exemple pour cerner les différentes approches de la psychanalyse dans sa lecture du texte littéraire.

Ce mémoire est divisé en trois parties: la première partie sera consacrée à la conception freudienne du désir comme expression d’un fantasme familial. La deuxième partie mettra l’accent sur la structure linguistique de l’inconscient chez Lacan. Dans la troisième partie, il s’agit de questionner autrement les concepts de la psychanalyse à partir d’une nouvelle approche, celle de Deleuze.

Mots Clés: désir ; complexe d’œdipe ; machines désirantes ; scène originaire, Anti-Œdipe ; schizo analyse.

Abstract

This thesis, “The Psychoanalytical Controversy Over Desire in Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*: From Oedipus to Anti-Oedipus,” focuses on the different stages that psychoanalysis has undergone in its history up to the end of the twentieth-century. This study takes Shakespeare’s play *Hamlet* as the basis of its analysis to trace the changes brought to the psychoanalytical practice from the time of Freud to the age of Deleuze. It aims to show the way *Hamlet* has been read by different movements within the psychoanalytical school.

This thesis is divided into three sections: the first examines Freud’s model of desire as it is applied to *Hamlet* showing its deep focus on the family fantasy; the second explores the Lacanian approach to the study of desire in the play—and in psychoanalysis in general—which assumes that the unconscious is structured like language; and the third re-thinks some of Freud’s assumptions, using Deleuze’s Anti-oedipal model which believes that desire is productive rather than representational.

Key Words: desire; primal scene; Oedipus complex; Anti-Oedipus; mourning and melancholia; desiring machines; schizoanalysis.

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Introduction

The link between literature and psychoanalysis dates back to the beginning of the twentieth century. The starting point of the allegedly scientific approach is a therapeutic one since it is supposed to generate a convincing diagnosis of the different psychological cases it studies. It has also “opened up the possibility that one’s misery could be alleviated through professional help” (Fromm 4). However, the kind of help that psychoanalysis suggests has remained very problematic since the days of Freud, the founding father of this school. Freud himself asserts that the neurotic state of every pathological case is the result of a childhood trauma which needs to be traced. Therefore, the past and all its circumstances are the stimuli experienced in the the present. In other words, the present turns into the corollary or the leitmotif of temporally distant events that, although forgotten or repressed, still shape the actual and modify its course. Although trauma is rarely ‘cured’, it is subject to repetition in the present.

Although the primary focus of psychoanalysis is the human psyche and the theorization of the different phenomena emanating from it or affecting it, it finds in literature and literary characters another object of its research. Regarding the link between literature and psychoanalysis, Leonard and Eleanor Manheim argue that the psychoanalyst must be

primarily and at all times a student of literature as an art form, only secondarily an investigator in the craft or science of psychology in any of its branches. It is entirely understandable that the practicing or theorizing psychologist should view a piece of literature as a document for the study of human behaviour, should consider literature as an original record of the results of an experiment or investigation [...] made during or following the event. (4)

Regarding the mutual relationship between literature and psychoanalysis, I will re-investigate this issue using Shoshana Felman’s article ‘To Open the Question.’ In this article, she attacks the supremacy of psychoanalysis over literature and calls for equality between the two disciplines because they are mutually implicated instead of forming a binary opposition. According to Felman,

Although ‘and’ is grammatically defined as a ‘coordinate conjunction’, in the context of the relationship between literature and psychoanalysis it is usually interpreted, paradoxically enough, as implying not so much a relation of coordination as one of *subordination*, in a relation in which literature is submitted to the authority, to the prestige of psychoanalysis. While literature is considered as a body of *language*—to be interpreted—psychoanalysis is considered as a body of *knowledge*, whose competence is called upon to *interpret*. Psychoanalysis, in other words, occupies the place of a *subject*, literature that of an *object*; the relation of interpretation is structured as a relation of master to slave. (Felman 5)

There is a fight for recognition that typifies the relation between the two fields. In literature, psychoanalysis keeps the place of the master and seeks its own satisfaction. Felman tries to deconstruct the very structure of the duality master/slave from within. If literature submits itself to the competence and knowledge of psychoanalysis, in return, the latter falls within the world of logic and rhetoric that literature offers. They are “traversed” by each other and the border separating them remains vulnerable and “in the same way that psychoanalysis points to the unconscious of literature, literature, in its turn, is the unconscious of psychoanalysis” (10).

In this thesis, I shall trace the most significant stages, metamorphoses and revolutions in the history of psychoanalysis, limiting myself to three leading figures who contributed to the groundwork and advances of this school. This theoretical framework will have Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* as its departure point as well as arrival destination because, I believe, this work of art is one of the richest texts that inspired psychoanalysis and accompanied its evolution. My attention will be highly focused on the notion of “desire” in *Hamlet* and the different ways of interpreting the functioning of this mechanism, which is influenced by the play’s contiguous conditions and circumstances that conceal its progress. I shall begin by presenting the Freudian model of desire which has, for years, imprisoned Hamlet’s desire in the “jail” of the family romance, referring it to the oedipal complex, which is characterized by its explanation of every unconscious wish or desire in terms of the primal scene. This concept, in fact, is at the origin of the subject’s most psychological problems and troubles. It is the moment in which the child, at an early age,

witnesses his parents in their sexual encounter. He understands it first as a scene of violence practiced upon the mother and such a traumatic moment remains inflicted upon his unconscious. Then, I will shift from the beginnings of psychoanalysis to the French school—starting in the sixties—and its more structurally-influenced practice. The second chapter will deal with Jacques Lacan's study of desire from a linguistically-oriented perspective that profits chiefly from De Saussure's work on language. This model of desire relies fundamentally on discourse because the unconscious functions exactly like language, according to Lacan. The final chapter will present an anti-Freudian, anti-oedipal and anti-psychoanalytical interpretation of *desire* formed by Gilles Deleuze in cooperation with Félix Guattari. Deleuze's main argument in *Anti-Oedipus* frees desire from the shackles of the family fantasy and tackles Freud's presentative, theatrical and subjective model. He does not deny the role of the family completely, but he suggests a political, historical, social and economic explanation of desire because it cannot be taken separately from its context; desire is a productive factory rather than a presentational theatre. Above all, the aim of this research remains to trace desire in *Hamlet* and to understand Hamlet's desire.

Section 1

The Freudian Model of Desire in *Hamlet*

Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, more than any other of his works or those of his counterparts, has attracted the attention of academia and has been the focus of most of the critical schools of thought: classic, modern and contemporary. It has generated so many interpretations and explorations that T.S.Eliot calls it "The Mona Lisa of literature" (Kastan 156). The play has been of great interest to philosophers since its appearance because they found that it raises different philosophical issues that have to do with man's and woman's daily life, his relations, and his fate. Consequently, a lot of interpretations of *Hamlet* over the last three hundred years came to the fore, initiated primarily by the German writers and critics. The flood of interpretations divides into three broad sections. The first set of criticism deals with the identification the reader constructs with *Hamlet*/Hamlet which brings spectators into a common experience with the hero. "The mystery that Hamlet allows us to encounter is the same that enthralls Narcissus by the water: the self sees itself as other, in the other, as an image," Warner claims (265). The effect of *Hamlet* on us, though very strong and touching, is indeterminate. The reader may feel it but cannot pin it down, because he/she is not certain whether Hamlet shows us the pathos of our desire or our disappointments, whether this character is so heroically principled, inward and spiritual, or he is the emblem of instant wit and wisdom every individual hankers after. The second category tries to criticize Hamlet and to provide a judgement of his behaviour, emphasizing principally his procrastination of revenge. Goethe, for instance, finds Hamlet suffering from "the effects of a great action laid upon a soul unfit for the performance of it" and he is famous for the analogy he coins between the play and an oak-tree to show the discrepancy/inconsistency existing between the play and the subject it treats; "there is an oak-tree planted in a costly jar [...] in its bosom; the roots expand, the jar is shivered" (qtd in Nagele 266-267). Goethe points to the impossibility of solving the dilemma that *Hamlet* raises around the

absence of action and the apprehension of revenge. “Why does Hamlet delay?”; this old critical question remains puzzling, unanswerable and generative of many arguments.

Coleridge was one of the early critics to read *Hamlet* closely and to delve into its mysteries. He identified with the play and its character, and revealed, “I have a smack of Hamlet myself, if I may say so” (Greenberg 3). Coleridge identifies Hamlet’s unresolved crisis as stemming from the struggle between his intellect which resists ordinary beliefs, and his passion, which calls for revenge. He sees Hamlet to be “a man living in meditation, called upon to act by every motive human and divine, but the great object of his life is defeated by continually resolving to do, yet doing nothing but resolve” (Greenberg 9). In his self-division, Hamlet staggers between the side of genius and academic achievements on the one hand, and on the other, the side of will, weakness and hesitation, always procrastinating and avoiding unpleasant duties, and often blaming himself in vain. The failure of Hamlet is attributed to an “‘over-meditative’ mind that fails to sustain a due balance between ‘outward objects’ and ‘inward thoughts’” (Warner 266). This point leads to the third and ultimate type of interpretation which sheds light on the lesson of Hamlet’s case. Most of the critics have read the play as a story of failure and loss. It is summed up by Levin, who puts the argument of Hamlet’s opponents as follows:

vengeance is [tragedy’s] most habitual theme because the revenger is called upon to take into his own hands what might be better left to providence, however we define it; and if the revenge gets out of hand and goes amiss, as it is almost bound to do, if the mistaken purposes fall upon their inventors’ heads, then that reversal is an ironic commentary upon the ways of human destiny. (104)

Coleridge, in fact, reaches the conclusion that *Hamlet* is a text that resists explanation, for “to explain Hamlet would be to pluck out the heart of his mystery, which is to say his tragedy, for his mystery is his tragedy” (Greenberg 44).

Yet, to my mind, psychoanalysis, with its different orientations and diverse backgrounds, seems to be the most ground-breaking approach and the one that best suits *Hamlet*. Philip

Armstrong notes that

at the start of the twentieth century an emergent psychoanalysis took *Hamlet* as its paradigmatic text, the cultural high ground upon which Freud, Rank and Jones could build and extend the Oedipal edifice. [...] And later Lacan would wheel out the play once more as a Trojan horse in his campaign against French psychoanalysis; a device for smuggling in his surrealist version of structuralism in the guise of a return to Freud. (181)

This is the first time, probably, that the reader faces a myriad of interpretations of the same text provided by the same theoretical school. “No work as universally appealing as *Hamlet*, a play in which men of different ages, different philosophies, and different faiths have found personal meaning” (Lidz 192). A lot of critics, as well as readers, identify with Hamlet, a character who raises a large number of philosophical questions that disconcert the mind and hang about inconclusively. It is, in fact, the comprehensiveness of the play that enables its survival over time and its ability to withstand the change of tastes and the exigencies of academia:

The Christian may find the fundamental question the play raises to be “How can man be saved?” The existentialist, “What is man’s essence?” Are not both right? The Freudian may view Hamlet’s problem as one of sexual obsession; the Nietzschean, as a conflict between the Dionysian motive of instinct, the barbarizing principle that leads to chaos, and the Apollonian motive of reconciliation, the civilizing principle that leads to order. (Prosser 251)

Hamlet, indubitably, has been of major interest for Freud and the Freudian school of psychoanalysis. The question that poses itself here is “Why?” *Hamlet* appeals to psychoanalysis and vice versa because of a strong interconnectedness stitching the text to this theory. In *Chance and the Text of Experience: Freud, Nietzsche, and Shakespeare’s Hamlet*, Warner accounts for this mutual linkage and explains that

Psychoanalysis can learn from Hamlet and use him to teach, because Hamlet, in delaying the revenge, and Shakespeare, in representing this delay, and all previous critics of the play, in refusing to understand this delay are assimilated to a universal

psychoanalytic subject which Freud elucidates through his two-part discussion of *Oedipus Rex* and *Hamlet*. (272)

In other words, the universality of *Hamlet*/Hamlet stands for its/his richness within the school of psychoanalysis. The play puts the individual subject at the center of its focus which is approximately the same concern of psychoanalysis: to explain human nature, to account for its pathological cases and to resolve its problems. The play resembles the Freudian project for “psycho-analysis was then first and foremost an art of interpreting” (601). Freud’s interpretation of *Hamlet* touches upon the notion of desire and the way it encompasses the different relations that Hamlet has. Desire in the Freudian approach refers above all to unconscious wishes, bound to indelible infantile signs. In opposition to what is commonly thought, Freud does not identify *need* with *desire*:

Need, which derives from a state of internal tension, achieves satisfaction (*Befriedigung*) through the specific action which procures the adequate object (e.g. food). Wishes on the other hand, are indissolubly bound to ‘memory-traces’, and they are fulfilled through the hallucinatory reproduction of the perceptions which have become the signs of this satisfaction. (Laplanche and Pontalis 482)

To put this differently, desire lurks in the gap of difference between need and demand. Desire is not need because it does not represent a relation to a real object independent of its subject, but a relation to phantasy. It is not demand because it does not impose itself without taking the unconscious of the other into consideration. Unlike need and demand, desire, according to the Freudian model, is unsatisfied and is not directed towards one single object. To explain the mechanism of desire in *Hamlet*, Freud reads the play as a manifestation of the Oedipus Complex and likens Hamlet in many points to Oedipus; this is going to be the focus of my first section. Freud describes the Complex in terms of universality and thinks that “every new arrival in this planet is faced with the task of mastering the Oedipus Complex” (qtd in Laplanche and Pontalis 283). For the boy, it is the desire to possess the mother and to get rid of the father while for the

girl it works the other way round; “to receive a baby from her father as a gift—to bear him a child” (Laplanche and Pontalis 286). In the play, it is Hamlet and Ophelia who represent these two different sides.

In the first chapter of this project, I intend to read *Hamlet* according to the Freudian model of psychoanalysis, which fixes the problem of desire in *Hamlet*/Hamlet within the “family romance” boundaries. The latter is based on the network created by the different family relationships, particularly in its triangular structure involving the father, the mother and the child (boy or girl). Freud’s theory of the Oedipus Complex, conjured from Sophocles’s drama, will be at the heart of this project since I will try in the sections to come to trace the evolution of this theory. This perspective relies principally on exploring the trauma of the past inflicted upon the subject/analysand and dissects the minute details that may pass unnoticed. Not only does Freud highlight the past, but he also “maintains that he has found the root of *most* psychoneuroses to be a psychosexual trauma” (Jung 34). Thus, he understands sexuality as the clearest neurosis and as the key to its diagnosis. With Freud, everything is sexualized and desire is but a repression of the child’s libidinal forces.

Shakespeare is considered, as is Sophocles, to be a great precursor of psychoanalysis. There is “the supposition that it is illogical to apply the Freudian theory to, let us say, the work of Shakespeare because [he] predated Freud by three hundred years” (Manheim 22). However, I shall begin my analysis by pointing out the distinct resemblance that abides between Shakespeare and Freud on the one hand, and the relationship between them and *Hamlet*/Hamlet. These observations are the result of some biographical work drawn from Philip Armstrong, in particular, and Ernest Jones’s writings about Freud. It is because Hamlet exists in everybody that Freud was highly influenced and affected by this dispossessed man/king who suffers from a desire that can never be achieved. *Hamlet* is the the play where “we like to see Hamlet as a kind

of Everyman. “Since Coleridge we have all found a smack of Hamlet in us”, Dodsworth claims, “if that is, we do not find him so reprehensively odious as to present no possibility of identification at all; and certainly the former attitude is preferable to the latter” (9).

The reader of Shakespeare and Freud cannot neglect the diversity of common points relating them to each other. *Hamlet* turns into the “biographical” work that tells about these two men: Shakespeare through his involvement in the writing of the play and Freud through his interpretation of the text and identification with its principle character. Shakespeare was “a master from whom Freud gained insights and assurance” (Lidz 3). There are many circumstances veiling the production of *Hamlet* which affected Shakespeare’s psyche. Armstrong thus believes that “for Freud, Jones, Rank, Lacan and most other psychoanalytically inclined readers, *Hamlet* provides the key to Shakespeare’s psychic closet” (5). Hamlet is Shakespeare disguised and if we cast a glance at the playwright’s life, we will notice the genuine connection which backs up the idea that a text cannot be studied independently from its author. In this way, Garber stresses the fact that

Hamlet was written immediately after the death of Shakespeare’s father (in 1601), that is under the immediate impact of his bereavement and, we may well assume, while his childhood feelings about his father had been freshly revived. Freud adds that Shakespeare had lost his own son, Hamnet, at an early age, and thus was in double position of bereavement, a son mourning his father and a father mourning a son. (143)

Freud, obsessed with the theory of the “family romance” which is the clearest manifestation of the Oedipus Complex, reads *Hamlet* as “Shakespeare’s autobiography in the same way that he takes Hamlet as his own mask” (Lupton and Kenneth 33). Shakespeare’s loss of his father is in fact the loss of the man with whom to compete for the mother. The death of his son Hamnet, who gives the play its name, marks also the other axis of the complex structure. The ghost in the text tries to explain the phenomenon of death as an ordinary event that befalls every individual; “But you must know, your father lost a father” (Shakespeare I, ii, 89). Freud, on the

other hand, finds 'his own case' in *Hamlet*/Hamlet and avows that the play underwrites him; 'I have found, in my own case too, [the phenomenon] being in love with my mother and jealous of my father, and I now consider it a universal event in early childhood'' (qtd in Armstrong 18-19). Self-observation and auto-analysis provide an overview about Freud's bifold resemblance to Hamlet as a character and to Shakespeare as an author. "It corresponds to his dual role [both] as hero and author of *The Interpretation of Dreams*" (Rudnytsky 84). This book in particular, like Shakespeare's play, becomes "the autobiographical" work of Freud where he starts by interpreting his own dreams and by giving explanations based on personal judgements (which gave the opportunity to his opponents to criticize his methods and strategies of psychoanalysis.). Freud identifies with Shakespeare and with Hamlet, the character, because each one of them has already lost a father. He believes it to be the hardest loss in man's life: "it was, I found a portion of my own self-analysis, my reaction to my father's death, that is to say, to the most important event, the most poignant loss of a man's life" (qtd in Rudnytsky 18). Obviously, the impact of the absence of the male parent from the life of every child (Freud, Shakespeare and Hamlet) is an important point in psychoanalysis due to the fact that the Oedipus Complex, universal, general and widespread as it is, is a crucial stage in the life of the individual which, in normal circumstances, is resolved at an early age. Once the father does not take part in its structure, the child feels the necessity of having someone to fight with over his mother (in *Hamlet* for instance, this supplement—in the Derridian sense: to support and to substitute—is represented by Polonius and Claudius). The male child is always in need of killing the father to be able to possess, imaginatively and metaphorically, his mother. Freud's last comment cited above shows the way the child blames himself and assumes responsibility for his father's death. This is what I shall ponder while discussing Freud's dual model of mourning and melancholia, and distinguishing between them.

The Oedipal Voice in *Hamlet*: The Freudian Interpretation of *Hamlet*

The question that raises itself when it comes to Freud and psychoanalysis is, what is the source of desire and how does it work? The answer to this enigma arises from Freud's interest in the traumatic moments that the subject (whether he is a character, a patient or a reader) has already gone through. In particular, the repression of the sexual desire towards the mother and the competition with the father over the mother generate different symptoms. The neurotic state in which the individual falls is the aftermath of a past traumatic memory that leaves its scars on his present. Therefore, Freud argues that dreams are the royal roads to the unconscious, for they serve to represent its mysteries. It was Freud's discovery of the Oedipus Complex that broke a new ground in psychoanalysis and altered a lot of essentialist understandings of the human psyche and the role of the unconscious, thereby deconstructing the old belief that the human psyche is under the permanent control of the conscious. Freud himself compared his radical discovery to the scientific revolution of Copernicus. He could finally destroy our narcissistic illusions and prove them wrong. Shoshana Felman explains here that

just as Copernicus discovers that it is not the sun that revolves around the earth but the earth that revolves around the sun, so Freud displaces the center of the human world from consciousness to the unconscious. 'Human megalomania', in Freud's terms, thus suffers another 'wounding blow' from the psychoanalytical discovery that 'the ego is not master even of its own house, but must content itself with scanty information of what is going on unconsciously in its mind'. (64)

As a part of the unconscious, the Oedipus Complex occupies a central position. Laplanche and Pontalis cogently define the term in *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, as a desire for the elimination of the rival—the same-sex parent—and a sexual desire for the parent of the opposite sex. For Freud,

the peak period for the experience of the Oedipus Complex lies between the ages of three and five years, that is during the phallic stage; its decline signals entry into the latency period. At puberty the complex is revived and is then surmounted with a

varying degree of success by means of a particular sort of a particular sort of object-choice. (283)

Once again, Freud explores literature to initiate as well as to support his new discoveries. His theory works within the framework of the family “romance,” that is, the child’s competition with the same-sex parent in order to gain the other. Herein, Cathy Caruth revisits the parallelism existing between literature and psychoanalysis to comment,

If Freud turns to literature to describe traumatic experience, it is because literature like psychoanalysis is interested in the complex relation between knowing and not knowing. And it is, indeed at the specific point at which knowing and not knowing intersect that the language of literature and psychoanalytic theory of traumatic experience precisely meet. (3)

The task to accomplish in this part of my argument is to show the way the Oedipus Complex according to the Freudian model is at work in *Hamlet*. It lies behind all Hamlet’s relations with the rest of the characters; it determines his actions and it is the cause of his fall. The Oedipus Complex becomes the general law he cannot escape, in the same way that Oedipus had to answer the riddle set to him by the Sphinx in order to save Thebes. However, it is essential to begin with the myth of king Oedipus as it was dramatized by Sophocles, and later resurrected by Freud, in order to pave the way for my comparisons between Oedipus and Hamlet. For this reason, no better summary or interpretation of this Greek myth and no simpler way of retelling it may be provided than that of Freud himself in *The Interpretation of Dreams*. In this passage, quoted in Ross Pollock’s collection entitled *The Oedipus Papers*, Freud sums up:

Oedipus, son of Laius, king of Thebes, and of Jocasta, was exposed as an infant because an oracle had warned Laius that the still unborn child would be his father’s murderer. The child was rescued, and grew up as a prince in an alien court, until, in doubts as to his origin, he too questioned the oracle and was warned to avoid his home since he was destined to murder his father and take his mother in marriage. On the way leading away from what he believed was his home, he met king Laius and slew him in a sudden quarrel. He came next to Thebes and solved the riddle set him by the Sphinx who barred his way. Out of gratitude, the Thebans made him and gave him Jocasta’s hand in marriage. (4)

At this point the tragedy of king Oedipus reaches its acme. He unconsciously slays his father and meets his mother in wedlock. As soon as he discovers the truth in the wake of a plague that strikes Thebes, “Oedipus blinds himself and forsakes his home” in self-retribution (4). Sophocles’s “tragedy of destiny” is powerful enough to offer psychoanalysis one of its radical theories; not arbitrarily, Heidegger discerns “a dialectical unity between *philosophy and tragedy*” (Rudnytsky 228). Tragedy, since the Greeks’ time and since Aristotle’s *Poetics*, has been a focal point for philosophy to think about and to revise. Psychoanalysis, especially in its Freudian sense, parallels drama in the way both are based on exposition, reenactment and repetition. Freud, for instance, applies this technique to his patients by placing the patient on a couch and by asking him to tell whatever comes to his mind in the hope of reaching a reasonable explanation for his current psyche. The analyst relies on the patient’s repetition of the past and concentrates on the minute details that he may tell, consciously or unconsciously, because every neurotic case is the outcome of folded layers of a past trauma. The Oedipus complex is referred to a primal scene likely happened to the child in the early years of his life, as Rudnytsky says:

a primal scene experience, in which [the child] witnesses or interrupts the sexual relations of his parents. Indeed, he specifically attributes his fantasy on this occasion “to a scene [...] in which the child, probably driven by sexual curiosity, had forced his way into his parents’ bedroom and had been turned out of it by his father’s order.”(72)

This traumatic experience of being exposed to the parents in their sexual intercourse constitutes the primal scene in his interpretation of The Wolf Man’s Dream in “The Wolf Man Case History.” That traumatic moment, itself repressed, has affected his adulthood in a late return to haunt his dreams. In reconstructing, speculatively, the primal scene, Freud writes;

it was a hot summer’s day, if we suppose that his parents had retired, half-naked, half-undressed, for an afternoon *siesta*. When he woke up, he witnessed *a coitus a tergo* [from behind], three times repeated: he was able to see his mother’s genitals as well as his father’s organ; and he understood the process as well as its significance. [...] Perhaps what the child observed was not copulation between his parents but

copulation between animals, which he then displaced on to his parents, as though he had inferred that his parents did things in the same way. (411-424)

These scenes of observing sexual intercourse between parents in childhood (whether they happen in reality or in phantasy) are repressed and stored in the unconscious since “the unconscious has the wider compass: the repressed is a part of the unconscious” (Freud 573).

Watching the man upright with his naked organ and the woman bent down in an animal-like position, the child interprets the scene as an act of violence. He concludes that his mother is the victim of this bestial act because of her submission to the father and because of the exposed wound (her vagina), which he sees as the consequence of the father’s aggression inflicted upon her body. So, Freud realizes that what “the wolf [Man] was afraid of was undoubtedly his father” (413) and he makes up his mind to destroy this enemy in order to be reunited with his mother. Desire for the mother, then, is both driven and arrested by the son’s castration anxiety, has fear and loathing of the father.

Hamlet, who might have witnessed the scene, defines it as “father and mother is man and wife, /Man and wife is one flesh, and so my mother” (qtd Jones 113). In this sexual collision, it is the female body that Hamlet recognizes because it ‘contains’ the male one. It is like the Sphinx with its two distinctive parts, a female torso and an animal body. The traumatic strangeness of their style, the denial of the child’s access to the stage of the scene and the father’s imposition of his superego authority beget the hatred “little Oedipus” hides and then reveals towards his male parent. The child feels the threat of the father’s retaliation by castration, and to protect himself from being emasculated, he reacts unconsciously by trying to avoid the father, or in other words, “to kill” him in reality or in imagination. “The boy fears castration, which he sees as the carrying out of a paternal threat made in reply to his sexual activities; the result for him is an intense castration anxiety” (Laplanche 56). Stated simply, every child passes through a stage in which he

or she wishes to seize the parent of the opposite sex and to be rid of the parent of the same sex. He fears the reaction of the parent of the same sex basically because of the hostility the child projects onto that parent and the assimilation he establishes with the other; that is, the child attributes to his father, or to her mother, feelings that are reciprocal to his other own. The boy feels some animosity toward his father, as well as anxiety that his mother will withdraw her nurturing and care, and abandon him. He struggles hard to retrieve equilibrium in his life and displaces his wish by having a wife. In contrast, the girl fights with her mother for the father who symbolizes the phallus. Her desire springs from feelings of sexual lack, since Freud argues that woman's sexuality is a lacuna, and the repression of it resonates in her desire to have a male baby. "It is the fate of all of us, perhaps," Freud concludes, "to direct our first sexual impulse towards our mother and our first hatred and our first murderous wish against our father. Our dreams convince us that this is so" (Freud 262). Freud too, was oedipalized and he had lived the experience before he discovered it in Sophocles's play or in his own patients. "The Freud family lived in a single room [during the Frieberg period of Freud's life] and [...] young Sigmund must consequently have been a frequent spectator of his parents' sexual activity" (Rudnytsky 72). It has been agreed upon by Heidegger and Levi Strauss that "these two hundred years might accurately be dubbed the 'age of Oedipus'" (Rudnytsky 96) because he is the hero that shakes and raises humanity to self-consciousness as well as the one who marks a crucial turn in man's understanding of himself. Freud claims that "Oedipus fate moves us because it might have been ours, because the oracle laid the same curse upon us before our birth as upon him" (262).

I have written this historical and an epistemological survey of the Oedipus complex and its founder because it is at the heart of the text at stake in this research. Shakespeare's *Hamlet* has been considered the play of desire *par excellence* and has been read psychoanalytically starting from Freud onwards. First, there are several similarities between Hamlet and Oedipus that bind

these two characters together in a very significant resemblance, although Hamlet's childhood period is a blank space that offers no clues, unlike that of Oedipus. Yet, they orbit around the old theme of mother-son incestual relationship;

The mother-son incest is stringently tabooed in all societies, not only because it undermines family life but also because the strong ties between mother and son must be loosened to permit the son to achieve a masculine identity and, indeed, to enable him to become a discrete and reasonably self-sufficient individual. (Lidz 180)

Freud starts from a general ethically and culturally formed rule that prohibits incest and then provides concrete examples to justify his argumentation. His illustration is drawn either from his case histories or from fictional and mythical characters. Mythology and literature are after all human productions emerging from an urgent need to explain certain conditions and circumstances among which desire ranks high. While, in *Oedipus the King*, Oedipus commits incest unknowingly with his mother Jocasta and then blinds himself in punishment, the situation with Hamlet follows and deviates in a certain number of ways. Hamlet desires to exclude the father figure from Gertrude's bed-room. This may be inferred from the way he addresses her. He is supposed to replace his father but his mother neglected him and chose the company of another man, his uncle. Feelings of disappointment, betrayal and incest aggravate his surrender to his passions and his thirst for revenge. In reality, Hamlet is faced with three father-figures; one is dead (the king), one he has killed (Polonius) and another he wants to kill (Claudius)¹. The first figure haunts his consciousness under the mask of the ghost of his father, who returns to tell him the story of his death and to summon Hamlet to revenge;

So art thou to, revenge, when thou shalt hear.
[...] I could a tale unfold whose lightest word
Would harrow up thy soul, freeze thy young blood,

¹ Like the Medusa, Hamlet is faced with a multiplicity of penises (parents) which covers the fact of lack by foreclosing rather than repressing it. He sees himself through the three figures surrounding him, yet he identifies with none because all they try to do is to castrate him. Surely what is set in motion by this scene is ambivalence: the impulse to reverse in opposition to the freedom from the law of the father.

Make thy two eyes like stars start from their spheres,
 Thy knotted and combined locks to part
 And each particular hair to stand an end
 Like quills upon the fretful perpendine. (Shakespeare I, v, 8-20)

Old Hamlet's defamiliarized and foregrounded murder scene unsettles Hamlet's stability and pushes him to search for truth. This encounter with a paternal figure (the ghost) in the present rekindles the child's feeling of envy and desire to recuperate the mother. In psychoanalytic terms, the ghost and the return of the dead in literature to tell about the real world embody the hidden voice of the unconscious, which reminds Hamlet of the permanent strife between the child and his same sex parent. The reality of the ghost endangers Hamlet's convictions and resurrects his skepticism about his father's death. Claudius vainly tries to convince him of the ordinariness of the phenomenon of death. Rudnytsky argues that "Claudius reminds the grieving Hamlet that nature's 'common theme/is death of fathers', and demands to know why he alone should stubbornly 'persever/in obstinate condolment'" (18), the condolment that will constitute one of the aspects of Hamlet's melancholic behaviour. This opposes the fact that according to the Oedipus Complex, Hamlet should be glad that his father is dead.

The second father figure is represented by Polonius. The latter spies on young Hamlet, in order to ascertain his madness, while he is facing his mother in her chamber. Polonius is accidentally and mistakenly stabbed while hiding behind the curtains. He was taken for Claudius, the usurper; "How now, a rat! Dead for a Ducat, dead" (III, ii 175). In his rash impulse to revenge, Hamlet adds to his tragedy by killing the wrong figure. The third figure, which Hamlet encounters, is typified by his uncle Claudius who commits two inhuman crimes: fratricide by murdering his brother and the legitimate king of Denmark, and incest by marrying his widow. Claudius in his prayer scene confesses his sins and wants to redeem his deeds;

Oh my offence is rank, it smells to heaven;
 It hath the primal eldest sin about it,

A brother's murder.
 [...] What if this cursed hand
 Were thicker than itself with brother's blood,
 Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
 To wash it white as snow? (Shakespeare III, iii, 37-46).

To justify his murder, Claudius endeavours to put forward his reasons: "Of those effects for which I did the murder, /My crown, mine own ambition; and my queen./May one be pardoned and retain the offence" (III, iii, 54-56). Like Abel and Cain, Claudius killed his brother out of jealousy and desire to have ascendancy to the throne of Denmark. Hamlet accuses him of violating the sacredness of the family bonds. He wonders;

Does it not, think thee, stand me now upon-He that hath killed my king, and whored my mother,
 Popped in between th'election and my hopes,
 Thrown out his angle for my proper life,
 And with such cozenage-is't not perfect conscience
 To quit him with this arm? (V, ii, 63-68).

Hamlet, in fact, achieves revenge in a very belated step, towards the end when he is almost dead. Freud explains Hamlet's inability to pass to action in terms of the Oedipal instinctual principles inside him. These feelings have always restrained him from having revenge because the one to be killed is but a father figure whose presence is inevitable for Hamlet to be aware of his being.

Although Diderot expresses the Oedipus Complex in a more striking way, ("if we were left to ourselves and if our bodily strength only came up to that of our phantasy we would wring our fathers' necks and sleep with our mothers" (qtd in Jones 90)), and despite Hamlet's knowledge of the murder and the murderer, he keeps procrastinating his revenge. The constantly deferred action can be referred to Hamlet's ambivalent and ambiguous attitude towards Claudius, who is supposed to constitute the evil intruder whom Hamlet is to fight. Yet, Hamlet lacks the will to perform his task and to fulfil his desire, since Claudius has committed a crime which he himself wanted to do. Claudius spared him of the male parent who represented authority and who

separated him from his mother. A child's death-wish is targeted towards the father in the hope of re-possessing the already distant mother. Fancher observes, "in the child, there is the existence of positive sexual wishes toward his mother and death wishes toward his father, dating from childhood" (142). The genital fixation of the child to his mother was unescapably preceded by a pregenital phase. Freud explains; "a child's first erotic object is the mother's breast that nourishes it [...] By her care of the child's body she becomes its first seducer" (Fromm 74). The pregenital stage represents an affectionate link of great depth, a bond in which the mother stands for warmth, help and protection; in fact, for life itself. On the contrary, the father's presence bothers the durability and the steadiness of this relationship; that is why he becomes the enemy.

Claudius's interference in the triangular structure of the family spared Hamlet the trouble of liquidating the old king, his dead father, in order to replace him. Still, it reshuffled the roles inside the royal family, so that the killer became himself another foil/supplement for the father. Hamlet's tragic dilemma never ends as long as the threat from the father's side exists. He is torn between two desires: a murderous takeover of the kingdom and an urgent revenge.² In fact, through acting and assuming his full responsibility for his father's revenge, Hamlet seeks to follow/take up a certain version of his father, the father as the courageous warrior whose creative act of will (the dual with Fortinbras who wants to invade Denmark) and whose patriotic defense of his kingdom shaped modern Danish history. Revenge, then, is a mimetic act of a father capable of taking action—an act of identification. *In Reading After Freud*, Nagele believes that "the relationship between action and will, and will and identity is fundamentally mimetic: action becomes the representation of the self's identity—the true way one writes oneself in the world" (236).

² This parallels King Oedipus's dilemma of choice when he had to fight his father where the three roads met. They may symbolize the father's barring of the son's way to the mother's pubic triangle or the area where her legs and her trunk meet. In the same way, Claudius blocks Hamlet's way to Gertrude by sending him to his death.

In his best known soliloquy “To be, or not to be,” Hamlet considers the duties that await him and his inability to conduct them. He ponders, “To be or not to be, that is the question- /whether ‘tis nobler in the mind to suffer/The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, /Or to take arms against a sea of troubles” (III, I, 56-59). This passage turns into an existentialist question transcending the ability of language to answer its puzzles. In other words, as Philip Edwards explains in his introduction to *Hamlet*, the question is

which of two courses is the nobler! The first alternative is ‘to be’, to go on living, and this is a matter of endurance, of contriving to accept the continuous punishing hostility of life. The second alternative is ‘not to be’, to take one’s life, and this is described as ending a sea of troubles by taking arms against it. (Shakespeare 48)

Hamlet’s panic generates his delay of action, so he finds himself under the obligation of repressing his animosity, hatred and thirst for revenge, and he yields to the annihilating powers of incest affecting his psyche. What Oedipus *does* (kills his father, marries his mother), Hamlet only *fantasizes* but *represses* so that “we only learn of [this fantasy’s] existence from its inhibiting consequences” (Garber 168) such as his encounter with his mother in her chamber or during the play-within-the-play. In these two moments, Hamlet loses control over his fantasy and becomes enslaved by his instinctual feelings. His super-ego (we know that the super-ego, according to Freud, is the result of the decline of the Oedipus Complex and its function in relation to the ego may be likened to that of a judge or a censor, or The Law of the Father) forbids the complete enjoyment of his desires. His neurosis is the aftermath of frustration on the one hand and the conflict between his ego and his libido, on the other hand³. To put it differently, Freud compares Oedipus and Hamlet and argues that “[in the former] the child’s wishful phantasy that underlies it is brought into the open and realized as it would be in a dream. [In the latter], it remains

³ The libidinal sexual desires and instinct of self-preservation contain the ideals of the character.

repressed” (qtd in Rudnytsky 271). Unlike Oedipus, Hamlet did not kill his father and marry his mother literally; things happened only in his imagination.

Based on Freud’s less famous yet important essay, “The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex,” published in 1924, one clearly detects that the Oedipus Complex in *Hamlet* is not dissolved. Freud broods over this phenomenon that should take place in the early stages of the child’s growth:

to an ever-increasing extent, the Oedipus Complex reveals its importance as the central phenomenon of the sexual period of early childhood. After that, its dissolution takes place; it succumbs to repression, as we say, and is followed by the latency period. It has not yet become clear, however, what it is the experience of painful disappointments [...] The Oedipus Complex *must* collapse because the time has come for its disintegration, just as the milk-teeth fall out when the permanent ones begin to grow. (662)

Naturally, the analogy between the milk-teeth and the Oedipus Complex is quite telling. Hamlet’s case departs from the normal course of the Oedipus Complex cycle in the way he represses it and in the point at which it emerges later when he is supposed to have passed safely from one phase to another. On the contrary, Hamlet’s passage fails and Freud must have had him in mind while writing, “If the ego has in fact not achieved much more than a *repression* of the complex, the latter persists in an unconscious state in the id and *will later manifest its pathogenic effect*” (664) [My Italics].

Furthermore, *Hamlet* is the play that Freud uses, not only to apply his new discoveries and psychoanalytical observations, but also to epitomize the “family romance.” In Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, the family tragedy—standing as a category—is emphasized. It is at the origin of all revolutions. Hamlet is too introspective “not to feel the personal and family motive behind the general political understanding” (Jones 45). The Oedipal Complex is the result of internal conflicts, exchanges and confrontations between members who are ensnared inside the maze of a network called “the family.” In broad cultural terms, the Freudian family romance began in 1924

and evolved into the traditional family that started unraveling in the early 1950's. The familial model Freud idealizes is the nuclear family arrangement whose importance is due to the care and well-being that the child receives. "For a small child, his parents are at first the only authority and the source of all belief. The child's most intense and most momentous wish during these early years is to be like his parents and to be big like his father and mother" (Freud 298). In their definition of the family romance, Pontalis and Laplanche state that "the term [was] coined by Freud as a name for phantasies whereby the subject imagines that his relationship to his parents has been modified. [...] such phantasies are grounded in the Oedipus Complex" (160). Freud starts from the first anatomy of society and the closest institution to the child upon the beginning of his growth. He has been reproached for this limited and narrow perspective by Deleuze, who believes that Freud has overlooked other aspects and manifestations of the Oedipus Complex other than the family boundaries. It has been claimed that

Psychoanalytic theory cannot continue virtually to ignore the family setting in which the child grows up, and psychoanalytic theorists should not consider that those who seek to examine the influence of the interpersonal environment are diluting psychoanalysis. [...] Much human unhappiness and intrapsychic conflict relate to parental and societal inability to provide a state and secure family setting in which to raise children. (Lidz 221-223)

As for Hamlet, he is born into a royal family. This fact alone preconditions and orients the flow of his life. The expectations we have as readers or audience to see him take up his father's crown and sit on his throne fall apart when we examine the corruption inside his family. Two phenomena, broadly speaking, pave the way for Hamlet's tragedy and exclusion, first as a mad man and secondly as a source of threat for Claudius, which are *fratricide* and *incest* with the mother. These two ethical crimes go against the objectives set by the culture of the family: to instruct and to supervise. For instance, Polonius and his son Laertes insist upon the importance that Ophelia follow their directives. They call upon her to abide by the system she is part of and

reject Hamlet's love; "Fear it Ophelia, fear it my dear sister, /And keep you in the rear of your affection, /Out of the shot and danger of desire" (I, iii, 33-35). Likewise, Polonius addresses her too, in the same instructive tone, to obey the external value system of honour that rules her; "to 'understand yourself' is equivalent of 'to know one's place'" (Lee 160). Because Hamlet is the central protagonist in all the intrafamilial conflicts, and since the Oedipus Complex is, as D.H.Lawrence observed in 1923, "a household word [...] a common-place of tea table chat" (Cioffi 3), one may pin down four aspects of these confrontations: Hamlet facing his mother and his uncle, the conflict between the two brothers and Gertrude, Hamlet against Ophelia and her father, and last but not least, Hamlet opposing Ophelia. Each of these confrontations *replays* the unresolved Oedipal Complex.

The first opposition puts Hamlet face to face against the alliance formed by his mother, Gertrude, with his uncle, Claudius. The substitution of a stepfather for a biological father in the family triangle conceals patricide. It seems to me that this represents a displacement of the original conflict and that Claudius is only the substitute for the father-figure whom the child fears. Hamlet could have directed the same feeling of hatred at his real father, but this of course is not represented within the boundaries of the dramatic action. Instead, we see the hidden and *belated* Oedipus Complex. Death, generally speaking, is the stimulus that shakes the unconscious and destabilizes its rest. The second conflict unites two brothers (king Hamlet and Claudius) and a woman/wife (Gertrude). It culminates in the original sins that launch the dramatic action. Despite Hamlet's castigation of the father for his attachment to the mother, he remains faithful to him after his death, since there is no harm coming from a dead father. By contrast, his hatred and caution are displaced upon his uncle, the living copy of the father figure.

Much more sophisticated is the third type of family encounter involving Hamlet on the one hand and a parent-child relationship on the other hand (Polonius and Ophelia). Hamlet is an

intruder in this heightened relationship because Ophelia's mother is dead. So, like Hamlet, Ophelia escapes the threat of the same sex-parent. As she desires Polonius, her father, the intrusion of her suitor represents the real menace for her and challenges her with the necessity to choose between two men: the father she can never possess, or Hamlet, his substitute. The female version of the Oedipus Complex, in this case, is called 'The Elektra Complex', after a different Greek tragedy. It was used first by Jung as a synonym for the feminine Oedipus Complex in order to prove the existence of a parallel [*mutatis mutandis*], in the attitudes of the two sexes vis-à-vis their parents. Freud declared his opposition to this term because he did not see its usefulness and because it is only in the male that there is a combination of love for a parent and simultaneous hatred for the other. Laplanche and Pontalis note that;

Freud's rejection of this term, which assumes an analogy between the girl's and the boy's positions vis-à-vis their parents, is justified by his findings on the differing effects of the castration complex in the two sexes, on the importance for the girl of the preoedipal attachment to the mother, and on the predominance of the phallus in both sexes. (152)

Ultimately, the supposedly future husband and wife/father and mother, Hamlet and Ophelia, form the last conflict. They seem to enjoy a balanced relationship (a motherless girl and a fatherless boy). Yet, their unity collapses because they could not reconcile with each other. While Hamlet neglected Ophelia and pursued his illusive quest for revenge, she succumbed to madness, ending with her suicide. She found herself relinquished by all the male figures in the play in the absence of a protective female figure. Although the mother/daughter-in-law contact is absent, Gertrude regrets Ophelia's death and mourns her son's lover. Shakespeare genuinely invents the family with all its relations and contradictions to highlight the individual's position in this large and complicated network. Hamlet's heroism and tragedy, his madness and wisdom, his panic and bravery, his ups and downs, are traced through his reactions to his environment as well as through what the others make of him. The individual cannot be studied as a separate entity, but

only as an interactional field. His/her psyche cannot be understood as an autonomous structure because the person is comprehended only within a tapestry of inter-subjective connections, past or present.

Because the past of the subject, especially childhood, is essential to Freud's theory, the theory must be viewed as highly referential, always digging for the roots of things and referring them back to an original moment in time/history. The layer that separates the past from the present in psychoanalysis is very fragile and easy to break because of their intertwined connection. The past returns to engulf the present, while the present is staged by a past that forces itself into existence once again. If Freud is famous for initiating psychoanalysis and for developing new understandings about the human psychology, there are other critics and psychoanalysts who contributed to a revision of psychoanalysis. "Freud had allegedly discovered all the secrets of life," Fromm states in his book *The Crisis of Psychoanalysis*, "the unconscious, the Oedipus Complex, the repetition of childhood experience in the present; and once one understood these concepts, nothing remained mysterious or doubtful" (2). It would be useful to turn to Freud's followers and to consider their contributions to the study of desire in *Hamlet*. Resemblances and departures are to be highlighted in the following section.

Freud's Followers: Resemblances and Departures

Studying *Hamlet* was not limited to Freud only. A lot of his followers revisited the text, re-read its lines and scrutinized its enigmas. The limited space of this study does not permit me to cite all the names; however, there are some that impose themselves because they left their mark on the Freudian school. My selection will cover critics and theorists such as Ernest Jones, Otto Rank and T. S. Eliot for their prominent contributions to the play and their relevance to my

project. Names like Harold Bloom⁴, Dover Wilson⁵, Sandor Ferenczi⁶ and Karl Werden⁷ help to understand *Hamlet* and its position in literature; however, due to restraints of space, I will focus on the first set of critics.

To start with, the name of Ernest Jones is associated with that of Freud. The former's reputation is due to his biographical work about Freud and to his reading of *Hamlet* in different papers he gathered finally in *Hamlet and Oedipus*. Jones looks at the Oedipal Complex in *Hamlet* from the same sexual intrafamilial perspective as Freud. He relates Hamlet to Oedipus because of his preoccupation with his mother's sexual life as a motive for killing his father's murderer. His inability to act/react and the paralysis that impairs any possible achievement of his desire are explained in terms of the absence of will. Jacqueline Rose observes that

Jones sees Hamlet as a little Oedipus who cannot bring himself to kill Claudius because he stands in the place of his own desire, having murdered Hamlet's father and married his mother. The difference between Oedipus and Hamlet is that Oedipus unknowingly acts out this fantasy, whereas for Hamlet it is repressed into the unconscious revealing itself in the form of that inhibition or inability to act which has baffled so many critics of the play [...] It is this repression of the oedipal drama [...] which leads Freud to say of Hamlet, comparing it with Sophocles's drama, that it demonstrates the secular advance of repression in the emotional life of mankind. (163)

The absence of will and the hesitation to avenge the father's murder has been called "the Sphinx of modern literature" (Griffin 26) and has been the point of debate for many years now.

According to Rose, Jones makes it clear that Hamlet's problem is personal. Before engaging in any kind of conflict with his uncle, he has to fight with himself, and this point marks Jones'

⁴ Bloom's *The Anxiety of Influence* was based principally on the Oedipus Complex theory. He believes that the intellectual and the literary history were structured by this complex. He attacks any objections about the employment of psychoanalysis to Shakespeare because of unjustified chronological reasons.

⁵ Wilson is known for his interpretation of Hamlet as a man who delights in acting and in fooling his enemies, who behaves in a deranged fashion, yet is ever conscious of it, who can convince himself but not us by his words in the prayer-scene, who in "How all occasions" achieves an unconsciously ironic conclusion of his situation.

⁶ Ferenczi sheds light on the problematics of desire in *Hamlet*. He thinks that Gertrude is Shakespeare's Jocasta. Both women ask their sons not to inquire any further about reality. The mother figure in both cases is the metaphor of the pleasure principle.

⁷ Werden saw Hamlet as an active person charged not only with killing Claudius for revenge but with showing to Denmark the plainness of his guilt.

departure from Freud. The latter has referred to Hamlet's problem as a struggle with the others in his different relationships. His delay of action is the consequence of his ambivalence about death and his attraction to suicide. Jones sums up the already set debate by claiming that "Hamlet's advocates say he cannot do his duty, his detractors say he will not, whereas the truth is that *he cannot will*" (59). When desire is absent, hesitation, fear and doubt obstruct the way to action.

Similarly, Jones adds that Hamlet's procrastination arises

not from physical or moral cowardice, but from that intellectual cowardice (knowing that Hamlet is an intellectual), that reluctance to dare the exploration of his inmost soul, which Hamlet shares with the rest of the human race. Thus "conscience does make cowards of us all". [...] A failure in "the will *to read*—more particularly to read his own interior." (qtd in Armstrong 27)

Like the Dionysian man, Hamlet's knowledge impedes his action. He feels it ridiculous to set right a world that is 'out of joint'. "Knowledge kills action; action requires the veils of illusion: that is the doctrine of Hamlet (Warner 216). In the long run, Jones and Otto Rank, leaning on Freud's legacy, articulate the various kinds of fictional machinery that the Shakespearean text shares with the operation of the unconscious: *Projection; Displacement, Condensation; Decomposition; Introjection and superego; Doubling and Identification*. The two critics agree with Freud's suggestion that the work of the creative writer combines that of analyst and analysand in one. The first mechanism they underline is *Projection*, since all the characters in *Hamlet* "can be read as personifications, or 'projections', to use the psychoanalytic term, of various aspects of the author's unconscious" (Salkeld 30). It is the displacement of psychic emotions or attributes from the unconscious on to others, as I have shown in constructing a link between Shakespeare and Hamlet: Hamlet is a version of Shakespeare in reality and Shakespeare is Hamlet in fiction. Their interests and their preoccupations intertwine and mingle together. The main male characters, Hamlet included, are projections of "the father complex" of the play's protagonist and of its author in the first place.

Moreover, Jones and his partner describe two other models of *displacement* known as *decomposition and condensation*. The most important example of decomposition in *Hamlet* is epitomized by the splitting, division or duplication of the father figure who provides the hero with two fantasized fathers rather than a real one: “the pious respect and love towards the memory of his father, and the hatred, contempt and rebellion towards the father-substitutes, Claudius and Polonius” (Armstrong 32). Likewise, the role of the son splits into two since the role of Laertes acquires a major relevance to the plot and becomes the counterpart of Hamlet. The difference between the two sons is that Laertes is aware of the necessity of avenging his father’s death, unlike, Hamlet who is the prisoner of his fantasy. Condensation, which operates in precisely the opposite direction, is epitomized by Claudius who plays a twofold-role: the father figure and the enemy. The perspective from which Hamlet observes his uncle is ambivalent because Claudius gathers oppositions in himself. He is the expected substitute to take care of Hamlet upon his father’s death, but at the same time, he is the cause of that death and all tribulations brought to Denmark.

Then, in response to the first theory of projection, Jones and Rank raise the *Introjection* theory. “[It] was initially brought out by Freud in his analysis of melancholia but then it was acknowledged to be a more general process” (Laplanche and Pontalis 230). The reversal of projection, introjection is the assimilation of features perceived and found in others. Eventually, *Doubling* and *Identification* stand for the final psychic mechanism at work in the play. Jones foregrounds “the duplication of the son, so that Laertes becomes a rival to Hamlet” (Armstrong 36). Identification is the process through which the individual tries to match up to and reach the image seen as a better self, the ego-ideal in other words. That is exactly what Hamlet wants to convey when he tells Horatio in the last scene; “Horatio, I am dead, / Thou livest; report me and my cause aright/to the unsatisfied” (Shakespeare V, ii, 317-319). It is only in the end when it is

too late that Hamlet puts on the hero's attire and retrieves the courage and willingness he highly needed before.

Now, in addition to Jones's and Rank's readings, and attempting to clarify what Freud might have kept silent or ambiguous, T.S. Eliot seems to be suspicious of the success of the play. He thought *Hamlet* to be "most certainly an artistic failure" (Kastan 1). In his likening of the play to the Mona Lisa, he assumes that what characterizes the two pieces of art is the enigma they raise and the undecipherability of their codes. The enigma Eliot underlines in *Hamlet* is what he calls "the enigma of femininity." His aesthetic theories move within the arena of sexuality and family interrelationships. Eliot blames Shakespeare for the inadequacy of Gertrude as a character who does not fit in the grid;

She is not good enough aesthetically, that is, bad enough psychologically, which means that in relationship to the effect which she generates by her behaviour in the chief character of the drama—Hamlet himself—Gertrude is not deemed a sufficient *cause*. (Kastan 156)

Following Eliot, we notice that Gertrude, in spite of her belittled role in the dramatic plot, is at the core of "the family romance" and occupies the centre of the Oedipus Complex structure. All the conflicts turn around her as she plays the double role of a mother and a wife, and she lies behind Hamlet's pains because of her incestuous marriage to Claudius. He addresses her as if he does not know who she is; "How is it with you lady! [...] Good night-but go not to my uncle's bed" (Shakespeare III, iv, 160).

Hamlet's utterance criticizes the kind of marriage that binds his mother and his uncle. It is not a love relationship between a wife and a husband but an incestuous, bestial, sexual one. The allusion to the bed stands as an accusation of his mother's sin since she profaned his dead father's memory in the same way that she profaned the throne of his kingdom and paved the way for Claudius. Gertrude therefore, together with Claudius, constitutes the backbone of Hamlet's

primal scene which endeavours to investigate and sort out its riddles. His sage mind leads him to set his uncle and his mother to a test in order to unveil the truth. I am concerned in the following section about the relevance of the play-within-the-play in telling about Hamlet's primal scene.

The Play-Within-The Play: Hamlet's Primal Scene

As far as the primal scene is concerned, it is worth-mentioning that in psychoanalysis, there is indeterminacy about its historical veracity. What may be considered a primal scene? What is at the origin of the patient's trauma? The German term for the primal scene "Urszene" appeared for the first time in manuscript of Freud's dating from 1897. Freud, at this stage, gives no consideration to the type of scene involving the two parents. It is only in his account of the case of the "Wolf Man" that the observation of the parental intercourse is called "the primal scene." According to Laplanche and Pontalis, Freud bases himself on this case to bring out three important aspects:

First, the act of *coitus* is understood by the child as an aggression of the father in a sado-masochistic relationship; secondly, the scene gives rise to sexual excitation in the child while at the same time providing a basis for castration anxiety; thirdly, the child interprets what is going on, within the framework of an infantile sexual theory, as anal coitus. (335)

In his discussion of the reality of the primal scene, Freud argues that this scene belongs to the past of the individual and that it constitutes a happening which may be of the order of myth but which is already given prior to any meaning which is attributed to it after the fact.

Cathy Caruth explains the etymology of 'trauma' in her book *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History*, which is a comprehensive study of trauma and its manifestations. Although trauma originally signified, in the Greek, a wound inflicted upon the body, it turns with Freud to signify a 'wound' inflicted upon the psyche which aggravates its effects and complicates the process of its treatment. The cause of trauma is often repressed, unavailable to narrative explanation or catharsis. She continues:

Trauma seems to be more than a pathology, or the simple illness of a wounded psyche: it is always the story of a wound that cries out, that addresses us in the attempt to tell us of a reality or truth that is not otherwise available. This truth, in its delayed appearance and its belated address, cannot be linked only to what is known, but also to what remains unknown in our very actions and our language. (4)

Here, I am not using the concept of the primal scene in the Freudian sense of the term; rather I point to a traumatic event (the killing of Hamlet's Father by Claudius) that is 'primal' in dramatic and narrative terms only setting the action in motion. However, the Ur-primal scene which lies behind all other scenes, is the scene of parental copulation, which of course launches the Oedipal dilemma. The experience of trauma, according to Caruth's analysis, is characterized by latency, yet this does not imply the successful repression of a reality that has already existed and forms the context of the neurotic's pathology. The return of the past and the haunting in the present by a prior event that brings "the patient back into the situation of the accident he could survive" (Caruth 64) is enacted mainly by dreams. Cioffi points out that "there is of course the difficulty of determining what scene is the primal scene whether it is the one whose recollection affects the cure" (86). If, in the case of Oedipus, it is fixed to be the scene in which the child kills his father and joins his mother in marriage, then with Hamlet it is the scene of murder narrated to him by the ghost in the scene where he is asked to gird his loins and prepare himself for revenge. The Ghost's terrifying and moving description of the crime scene is meant to raise Hamlet's consciousness and to inflict the law of the superego on him once again. I would argue that the ghost *hovers* between the superego (the Law of the Father) and the unconscious: the ghost awakens the other 'ghosts' of repressed desire (the unresolved Oedipal desires). The unconscious alone could not recognize it before. He needed a stimulating factor to entice and fuel his envy.

Leonard and Eleanor Manheim remind us of

The classic metaphoric representation of the psyche, first offered by Freud in *The Ego and The Id* (1923). It is roughly like an egg standing on its small end. The upper surface represents the region of contact with the outer world, and upper part of the

area of the psyche is uncolored, representing the area consciousness. Below that there is a lightly shaded area which may be taken to represent the preconscious, and below that the large dark area (the underside of the iceberg in another metaphor) representing the unconscious. (7)

The superego, then, in this metaphor is in a constant movement back and forth, up and down. It is like a wedge driven along the side of the egg, touching the area of consciousness and going deep into the unconscious. I use this metaphor because it mirrors the psychological mechanism that drives Hamlet. Consequently, he prepares a genuinely-constructed play, drawing upon his literary knowledge, to be performed before the King and the Queen so that he might observe their reactions and look for truth. He contrives the play-within-the-play to ascertain that Claudius is a murderer and that his mother took part in the crime. Hamlet declares: "The play is the thing/Wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king" (III, i, 556-557). The embedded play aims to repeat the primal scene and consequently to provoke the King's and the Queen's feelings of guilt. Hamlet wants to unmask the two people he condemns, his uncle and his mother. *The Murder of Gonzago* or *The Mousetrap Plot*, as Hamlet chooses to call his conspiracy, seems to mirror Claudius's deed, and to cause him to reveal his guilt; in addition, it provides an account of the nature of that murder, which is also reflected in the Ghost's speech as well as in the First Player's words on the "hellish Pyrrhus" (Muir and Wells 37);

Sleeping with my orchard,
 My custom always of the afternoon,
 Upon my secure hour thy uncle stole,
 With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,
 And in the porches of my ears did pour
 The leperous distilment, whose effect
 Holds such an enmity with blood of man
 That swift as quick silver it courses through
 The natural gates and alleys of the body
 And with a sudden vigour it doth passet
 And curd, like eager droppings into milk,
 The thin and wholesome blood. (I, v, 59-70)

The horrific impact of the crime committed in the primal scene of tragedy upon Hamlet convinced him to copy it faithfully as dictated by the ghost to reach an authentic effect. He believes in the historical veracity of this origin, this “primal” scene. He also reverses the conspiracy of his uncle who, in his desire to control Hamlet’s psychological state and to contain his fury, had used Polonius to spy, Ophelia and Gertrude as a bait, and later Rosencrantz and Guildenstern as secret murderers. His mother, too, was overcome by hysteria and collapsed upon the Player Queen’s revelation “A second time I kill my husband dead/When second husband kills me in bed” (III, ii, 165-166). The success of the play-within-the-play owes everything to the techniques of repetition and retroaction. Hamlet re-invests the memory of his father and rehearses the past to re-write the future. Claudius was exulted by his nephew’s invitation to the play and he thought him to be relieved of his madness, only to be infuriated by the blinding truth that had found its way to Hamlet’s consciousness and consequently to public disclosure.

Repetition in *Hamlet* is not arbitrary. It has a clear goal and brings something new out of the already experienced. It is what Heraclitus claimed; “you cannot step twice into the same river; for other waters are ever flowing on to you” (Everett 127). The repetition of the primal scene, to end with, implies that the psychoanalytical experience and vocabulary remains that of the stage since analysis is concerned with a subject whose trauma (drama) emerges from being an audience to the primal scene.

Aspects of Neurosis in *Hamlet*: Mourning and Melancholia/Madness and Hysteria

The title of this section is inspired by Freud’s essay “Mourning and Melancholia” of 1915, where he differentiates between the two concepts and thinks of Hamlet as the most convenient character to represent the vicissitudes of this duality. Still, the question that could not be sorted out is whether Hamlet is mournful or melancholic. To put it differently, is Hamlet’s mourning of his father a temporary or a permanent pathological case? It is the principle concern

of this part to revise this knotty confusion. First of all, Freud believes that Hamlet's psychological problem and the object of his mourning/melancholia is not principally the death of his father as much as it is his narcissistic blow and loss of self-esteem resulting from his mother's behaviour. He blames her fundamentally for hastily marrying his uncle despite the recent death of her husband; as he tells Ophelia; "what should a man do but be merry! For look you, how cheerfully my mother looks, and my father died within two hours" (Shakespeare III, ii). He is complaining about his mother's failure to mourn her husband/his father. Warner presumes that "Hamlet compares his mother to Niobe—who mourned so intensely for her dead children that she was turned to a stone which continually dropped tears" (236). Faced with this reality of incest and the fantasy of revenge, Hamlet has no other choice but "to be" or "not to be," to revenge or not to revenge. So, he gives his thoughts free reins, his fears, his desires and his doubts in long soliloquies that reflect his psychological state of mind, which is characterized by loss and hesitation. The elaborate soliloquies are read as Hamlet's diaries in his fight with himself. Whenever he falls to weakness, he soliloquizes to cheer himself up. He is prey to hesitation and is unable to make up his mind about anything, as Jones says:

one moment [Hamlet] pretends he is too cowardly to perform the deed, at another he questions the truthfulness of the ghost, at another—when the opportunity presents itself in its naked form—he thinks the time is unsuited, it would be better to wait till the king was at some evil act and then to kill him, and so on. (61)

Hamlet gathers in himself nature and reason. It is the instinctive nature of every victim to want to act, yet, it is his reason that restrains him from choosing the right way in order "to be." He is roaming in the interval between mourning and melancholia, belonging to none, but still carrying both symptoms. To begin with mourning, it is clear that from the beginning of the play, Hamlet laments the death of his father and cannot accept his mother's carelessness and indifference. He has not cast off his mourning colors and remained in deep mourning, a son

mourning his father. In distinguishing between mourning and melancholia, Freud claims that the effect of the former diminishes with time and the subject regains equilibrium. It is not a pathological case, like the latter, but only a temporary perturbation of the psyche (Lidz 197). The mourner feels responsible for the death of the other and in Hamlet's case, he reprimands himself for the death wishes he had for his father as part of the Oedipus Complex. In this case, the mourner becomes melancholic because

[He] unconsciously attempts to keep the deceased into his own self. Insofar as the mourner fails to live up to the idealized model of the mourned person, he punishes himself by self-derogation. The mourner also unconsciously blames and punishes himself for any hatred that may have been mixed with his love for the deceased; and as most, if not all, children have sometimes had death wishes toward a parent, guilt over such wishes can become intense when the parent dies. (Lidz 48)

Hamlet's mother and step father are perplexed and disturbed because he seems unable to complete the task/work of mourning. He sticks to the first phase of mourning, which is characterized by a depressive mood pervading his orientation to life, his relationship to others, and his capacity to act. Freud, in this context, concludes that "in mourning, time is needed for the command of reality-testing to be carried out in detail, and that when this work has been accomplished the ego will have succeeded in freeing its libido from the lost object" (589).

Hamlet escapes conscience to fantasy because "conscience does make cowards of us all" (Prosser 167). Although he is aware of what happens around him, of the inevitability of revenge and of the blinding truth (the murder of his father), he joins the world of fantasy in order to procrastinate his action. If one is to describe *Hamlet*, he/she may not find a better expression than qualifying it as a failed tragedy of revenge. At the end of the play, Hamlet kills his uncle but not for the sake of revenge. In fact, retribution in the last scene is rather inflicted upon the self in self-punishment (Hamlet revenged only himself). It is when a desired person or object dies or disappears, the libido that had been attached to the object is rediverted to the ego. This process of reabsorption is

a painful one. The ego tries to resist this return flow of the libido and seeks helplessly to preserve its former attachments.

Nevertheless, Freud and most of his followers do believe melancholia to be one of the most dominant reasons behind Hamlet's procrastination and fear of revenge. Freud observes that

melancholia, therefore, borrows some of its features from mourning, and the others from the process of regression from narcissistic object-choice to narcissism. It is on the one hand, like mourning, a reaction to the real loss of a loved object; but over and above this, it is marked by a determinant which is absent in normal mourning or which, if it is present, transforms the latter into pathological mourning. (587)

There is a claim that Shakespeare himself "when writing *Hamlet* [...] was specifically concerned with melancholia—a diagnosis that encompassed a wider range of disorders in his day than at present—and that he used the play to convey some of his own insights into the nature and etiology of madness" (Lidz 34). Dowden thinks it probable that Shakespeare had made use of an important study of melancholia by Timothy Bright in his *A Treatise of Melancholia* (75). Freud, in his belated study of the phenomenon of melancholia, deduces that Hamlet is *ill* because "*we do not regard mourning as a morbid condition and hand the mourner over to medical treatment*" (Freud 589) [my Italics]. It is melancholy rather than mourning that makes a man dangerously susceptible to abuse by a demonic apparition under the guise of a dead loved one. The ghost's intrusion in Hamlet's life is the first crux in the play and brings forward the first consequences of his melancholy. In *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, Robert Burton explains the idea that melancholy people are especially liable to "diabolical temptations and illusions" (200). Hamlet finds himself in a questionable relationship to the ghost because his intellectual mind could not accept superstitions, witchcraft and magic, avowing consequently that "the devil could be taking advantage of *my weakness and my melancholy*" (Dodsworth 87). The spirit's craving for revenge and Hamlet's promise to "remember" aggravate the Prince's situation. His soliloquies turn over the imperative to avenge to the point that it turns into a desire for *suicide*. The melancholic, in his

desire of “killing death” (Laplanche and Pontalis 486), considers suicide in the absence of any other way to punish himself. “The ego can kill itself only if, owing to the return of the object-cathexis, it can treat itself as an object and which represents the ego’s original reaction to objects in the external world” (Freud 588). In the “to be or not to be” soliloquy, for example, Hamlet admits that we prefer the heartache and calamity of staying alive to the dread of something after death, revealing thus a panic of the horrors of an afterlife, and as Harry Levin comments, “Shakespeare has spoken much about death in this play and elsewhere, but always about our apprehension of life” (98).

The second aspect of pathology distinguished in the play by Freud and the psychoanalysts is madness that develops into hysteria. Madness has been a recurrent theme in Western literature from its beginnings to the present time. Human beings were interested in forms of mental and psychic experiences a long time before they recorded them in Art. Bizarre thoughts and aspects of eccentric behaviour like delusions and mania appeared in myths and legends starting from Homer, the Bible and amply filling ancient Greek drama. The latter represented madness as the punishment and the curse inflicted upon the humans who tried to defy the divine powers. Literature, in its treatment of madness, portrays human indeterminacy *vis-à-vis* the mind itself which is replete with irrational fears and strange desires hidden from the world for fear of their impact. In this way, Lillian Feder in her *Madness in Literature* reveals that “in literature, as in daily life, madness is the perpetual amorphous threat within and the extreme of the unknown in fellow human beings” (4). In other words, in fiction as well as in reality, madness is the representative of the “other” side of the individual, which is fearful because it discloses the concealed layers of psychic reality. With the development of psychiatry, a lot of other diseases were included under the cover of the umbrella word “madness” such as epilepsy, excitement, paranoia and, of course, melancholia, which is my interest here.

It was not new for Shakespeare to present his audience with examples of insanity. In *Hamlet*, madness is a focal theme and it is twofold, encompassing two characters with an intimate relationship: Hamlet and Ophelia. Stylistically, words like “Madness” and “Mad” appear at least forty times under different synonyms and connotative labels; ecstasy (4 times), lunacy and distemper (3 times), distracted (2 times). However, between Hamlet’s and Ophelia’s madness, there is a vast ground to cross and a lot of differences to point out. Hamlet, on the one hand, purposely feigns madness. He wants to discover the truth of his father’s death and thus he chooses madness as a means because he believes that “a harmless madman will have a better opportunity of trapping his victim unprotected; he knows that people speak unguardedly in the presence of madmen and children and hopes that Claudius may reveal himself” (Garber 149).

Similarly, Freud assumes that,

the prince in the play, who had to disguise himself as a madman was behaving just as dreams do in reality; so that we can say of dreams what Hamlet says of himself, concealing the true circumstances under a cloak of wit and unintelligibility: “I am but mad north-north-west.” (Garber 127)

As readers of the play, we sway from an explanation to another, at one moment thinking Hamlet to be melancholic and mad, but at the next suspecting him of reason, wisdom, cunning and wit. His madness is in fact an amalgamation of special knowledge with aberrant thinking and behaviour. A proof of his artificial feigned madness is his intelligence and his intellectual mind. The crucial evidence of his powers as philosopher, different from the layman, is his soliloquy “to be or not to be.” These words could neither be uttered by a lunatic nor be grasped by an ordinary listener. They transcend the faculty of logic and embrace the level of metaphysics and abstraction. Hamlet, then, loaded with rage and hatred and burdened with his thirst for revenge, gives free reins to the thoughts imbibed in his head and the privileged education he had at Wittenberg.

Hamlet's madness, whether feigned or not, is his first rival. He is engaged in a conflict with himself rather than with the world around him, diverting thus from the general literary representations of madness which

go further in their depiction of the processes of restriction, revealing the ways in which the mad distort reality in accordance with their unique psychic deprivations and requirements, yet, in so doing, create an emotional environment for the reconstruction of the self image. (Feder 27)

His meticulous meditations about life and death, about being/avenging or not being/surrendering unravel his trouble of mind which is his real tragedy. This trouble frightens the others and isolates Hamlet from his relatives. For instance, while Gertrude describes his madness as "mad as the sea and wind when both contend which is mightier", (Shakespeare IV, ii), Laertes apprehends its effects and addresses his sister, "fear it Ophelia, fear it my dear sister/And keep you in the rear of your affections" (Shakespeare I, iii, 33-35). Perplexing enough, madness in Shakespeare's play is a means of personal survival as well as of social exclusion and failure. It is a habit that we tend to define things by their opposites. "For Derrida, madness is the excluded 'other' of reason, the difference that gives rise to the very possibility of reason. Reason articulates and exerts itself against its other, madness" (Salkeld 41). Reason in madness and madness within reason are dualities that hold the play from the beginning until the end and characterize its principal protagonist; in the moment of his extreme madness, Hamlet appears as a wise man whose eternal words still resonate in our ears, and vice versa.

In the end, *Hamlet* read through the Freudian model of desire remains imprisoned within the limits of the Oedipus complex which has the family romance as the stage for its action. I have attempted to show the way this concept has dominated psychoanalysis for a long time and at the same time I have tried to delineate what differentiates Hamlet from Oedipus. The main difference has been fixed in the dissolution of the complex with Hamlet, because it returns in his adulthood

instead of being solved at an early age. In the following section, I would like to shift my attention to the Lacanian dialectic of desire with a certain emphasis on Hamlet which has fascinated Lacan for a long time. Lacan's linguistic approach in his reading of the play clearly marks the effect of structuralism and De Saussure's linguistics on psychoanalysis.

Section 2

Lacan On *Hamlet* : The Dialectic of Desire

“The tragedy of *Hamlet* is the tragedy of desire”

Jacques Lacan

Since the fifties, the French school of psychoanalysis has left its prints on the whole discipline and has broadened its scope of work. Another of Freud’s disciples, Jacques Lacan, contributed to the progress of psychoanalysis in the seminars he presented in 1958 and 1959 on *Hamlet*, in particular. Because of its oral delivery, Lacan’s theory attracted a large audience; he did not want to publish his seminars in the beginning. He preferred the way Greek philosophy had been taught and chose to follow its strategies, remaining always suspicious of publishing his work. Towards the end of his career, precisely in seminar XX, he would describe his *Écrits* as “*poubellication*”, a pun that combines *poubelle* (a waste bin) and *publication*” (Homer 9).

Tamise Van Pelt acknowledges that “Lacanian analysis simply tells me with which ear to listen. This is its genius” (xxi). Among psychoanalytic theorists, Lacan has gone furthest in his writing to distinguish psychoanalysis from a medical or psychiatric method centered on a notion of cure or adaptation and to bring it into a clearer focus as a process that seeks knowledge above all.

Genesko claims that Lacan has criticized the radical theories of the ego⁸ and that for him

Psychoanalysis is a calling, a process of growth and discovery that has nothing to do with belonging to the bureaucracy of an analytic institute, achieving a certain kind of academic degree following a series of set rules about how to conduct analytic sessions. (514)

In fact, the reader of Lacan always has a hard time reading his crooked texts and endeavouring to grapple with his slippery style, simply because Lacan himself is a reader of literary texts rather than a ‘user’ of them. In every text, he looks for the hole created by the signifier that discloses the

⁸ Lacan’s view of the decentered subject opposes that of both the existentialists and that of ego psychologists, as the former focus on the cogito and on man’s freedom, while the latter tend to consider the ego as an active, autonomous unity.

undecipherability of signification. Additionally, the primordial malfunctionings of the human psyche are demonstrated through Lacan's topological models; these innovative strategies in his analysis of neurosis depart from simple diagnoses: Hieroglyphics of hysteria, blazons of phobia, labyrinths of the *Zwangsneurose*⁹—charms of impotence, enigmas of inhibition, oracles of anxiety—armorial bearings of character, seals of self-punishment, disguises of perversion (Jameson 367).

Lacan, generally speaking, is reputed for three things. First, he is known for his construction of a phenomenological theory of the Imaginary, which avoids the biological notion of stages that Freud had already established. Second, he shows that madness cannot be apprehended because it has its own logic relating it to the Cogito. Eventually, he went beyond the theory of the Cogito to invent a theory of the subject. Finally, in his new theory of desire in psychoanalysis, he uses mathematical and logical formulations which I shall consider in the following sections. Lacan posits "Jouissance" as the counterpart and the opposite pole of "desire". Though "desire" is central to both Freud (*Wunsch*) whose Cogito, according to Charles Shepherdson is "*desidero*" (I desire) (127), and to Lacan (*desire is lack of being*), it is to be repositioned to leave enough space for this newcomer 'Jouissance'. While desire implies lack and the need to satisfy it, Jouissance—the Lacanian doxa—is a mass of positivity fusing enjoyment and lust¹⁰ together. It does not point to lacuna but, on the contrary, it is synonymous with excess and satisfaction. In the same way, he shows in his graph of the dialectic of desire the inadequacy of the family triangle to account for the Oedipus Complex. He offers instead the subject's entry into language, which marks his point of departure from Freud. In familial

⁹ It is identified by Freud as one of the major frames of reference of psycho-analytic clinical practice. Although it is not the exact one, its approximate equivalent in English is "obsessional neurosis". 'Zwang' can refer not only to compulsive thoughts or obsessions but also to compulsive acts and emotions.

¹⁰ That would resonate with Freud's "Beyond the Pleasure Principle".

relations, Lacan highlights the mother's position as the source of desire, while Freud put the child at the heart of the complex. For Lacan, the mother's presence in the triangular relationship is inevitable and crucial because she represents the stimulus for the child as well as for the father/husband to 'fight'. In all this conflict, she stands as the real heroine and she gets her importance from that. To illustrate his theory with literary examples, Lacan finds his object in *Hamlet*, which he describes as the tragedy of desire *par excellence*. His fascination with the play arises from its complex structure. It is a writing maze driven by the recurrent questions; 'What is the main spring of its writing?', and 'how does the reader get safely out of this maze?' Lacan has drawn attention to the fact that *Hamlet* defines what is involved in any modern reenactment of the Oedipus myth because the image it gives of this psychoanalytical phenomenon is supposed to be universal, according to Freud and his followers. Hamlet's "'sense cannot save him and nonsense (feigned madness) does not protect him (Felman 87). He is always penetrable, vulnerable and unable to read the book of himself. Lacan's interpretation of the play parallels, approximately, that of Eliot arguing that "*Hamlet* fails as a work of art because Shakespeare wanted to do too many things at once"' (165). This emotional excess led to artistic failure. In his approach to the play, Lacan wants to learn more than merely try to interpret its mysteries because *Hamlet* teaches something about human desire above all.

Lacan reidentifies Hamlet's crisis as the result of inexorable loss. In *Hamlet*, we talk about an impasse of desire and it can be condensed in Lacan's phrase; "'give me my desire back"' (Rabaté 58), epitomizing the tragedy of a man who could not make up his mind. The play, according to him, is about mourning and Lacan claims, "I know of no commentator who has ever taken the trouble to think this remark [...] from one end of *Hamlet* to the other, all anyone talks about is mourning"' (25-371). Yet, this type of mourning differs from that of Freud's, which consists in constantly blaming oneself and feeling responsible for the death of the other. For Lacan, it is the

mourning of an absent desire, or the mourning of the unattainable desire. ‘‘Lacanian psychoanalysis aims to discover the self’s radical ex-centricity to itself’’ (Armstrong 58) through an examination of the way desire circulates in the text. In the same way, Armstrong claims that ‘‘Lacan uses the play to redraw psychoanalysis as a topology or graph of desire mapped out on stage, a drama played out in the relationships between changing positions’’ (77). In other words, it is like a condensed mathematical equation or geometric schema that is amply demonstrated on stage. The whole demonstration attempts in the end to clarify those few signs of the hypothesis. In his categorization of desire, Kojève explains that

For man to be truly human [...], his human Desire must actually win out over his animal Desire... All the Desires of an animal are in the final analysis of a function of its desire to preserve its life. Human Desire, therefore must win out over this desire for preservation... Man will risk his biological *life* to satisfy his nonbiological desire. (qtd in Casey and Woody 94)

Like Kojève, Lacan’s notion of Desire transcends the animal, biological needs. Desire is dialectic in its new appearance with Lacan, who agrees with Cosey and Woody’s argument that ‘‘desire belongs *neither* to the natural nor to the symbolic order. It is situated at the intersection of the natural and the signifying, but neither the natural nor the signifying is left uninfected by the encounter’’ (106). Desire resides, then, in the circumlocution intertwining the natural and the signifying; it takes from both, mingles with both, but belongs to neither.

It is the aim of this chapter to present a study of the Lacanian theory and the way *Hamlet* provided a ground for Lacan in which to map out his concept of desire as a dialectic phenomenon that combines many concepts and crosses various fields. Bowie sums up Lacan’s obsession with this issue, saying that ‘‘desire will always spill out from his sentences, diagrams or equations’’ (1). It will be worthwhile in the beginning to present Lacan and Freud face to face through an examination of Lacan’s return to the ‘‘father.’’ Next, I will focus on the important position Lacan gives to the role that Ophelia plays in the development of the plot as well as in the

psychology of Hamlet. Prior to Lacan, Ophelia was marginalized in most of the studies and was seen as a minor character whose role is diminished by her suicide. Lacan resurrects this name that has been consigned to oblivion and highlights Ophelia's function as an *objet petit a* lurking behind Hamlet's desire. In the third part, I will try to place Hamlet's desire within Lacan's three registers (The Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real). Finally, I will wrap up this chapter by analyzing Hamlet's desire in relation to the Other, and more particularly to the mother.

Lacan's Return to Freud

Lacan's school, in broad terms, is a return to Freud which purges normative, psychiatric values out of psychoanalysis. This return is to psychoanalysis as the science of the unconscious whose aim is the awareness of a level of authenticity, or what Lacan himself calls 'the truth of the subject', which is never mixed up with a submission to social terms. Shoshana Felman argues that "Lacan's originality is, paradoxically enough, nothing other than the originality of repetition: the originality of a return...to Freud" (53). She sees that Lacan is still working within the boundaries that Freud had set up for psychoanalysis, and his return, repetition, or revisiting of the Freudian original boils down to the anxiety of influence.¹¹ Yet, the question is whether Lacan is rewriting or restoring his predecessor. Shepherdson affirms that in the history of psychoanalysis, "no writer [...] has done more to bring Freudian theory into dialogue with the philosophical tradition than Jacques Lacan" (116). Lacan reads Freud in a different way from other schools which continue to insist upon Freud's equation of the penis and the phallus. He continues to turn around Freud's oedipal fantasy, but he does not stop there for that is the aim of his return to the original. In other words, the repetition of the old retains some points but, at the same time, moves

¹¹ The anxiety of influence is a concept introduced for the first time by Harold Bloom to designate the way a writer is obviously the product of his ancestors. A writer cannot live independently from the literary heritage left by his counterparts throughout the centuries. His only favor is to repete it differently. The anxiety of influence resonates also with other terms like "Apprenticeship" or what Derrida calls "re-wiring".

beyond their limits. While Freud's arena is 'the family', which offers psychoanalysis a broad field of study, Lacan continues to live in his predecessor's 'legacy', but focalizes in an unprecedented way the role played by language in the production of desire. He opens up the horizons for psychoanalysis to be interdisciplinary through an encounter with linguistics.

Lacan is said to be an Orthodox Freudian, a radical psychoanalyst/follower who endeavours to liberate psychoanalysis from its stereotypical axioms. In a sense, he wages a revolution over the "father" of psychoanalysis. However, some critics and philosophers object to Lacan's approach because they see it as discarding Freud. Paul Ricoeur, for instance, is not satisfied with Lacan's interpretation of Freud because it overlooks many concepts of essential value and relevance in favour of *linguistics* and *semiotics*. The newly-adopted method, although it enriches psychoanalysis, neglects the biological dimension of Freud's theory of the unconscious and his economics of the libido. The Freudian model of psychoanalysis is criticized¹² for its attempts to refer everything human to a biological substrate of the instincts and the drives, standing as a very reductionist theory limited to a one-dimensional view point. Lacan thus would substitute linguistics for biology, thus giving psychoanalysis a more contemporary scientific aspect to ensure that the human would be read in terms of the human, since language is uniquely human.

Although they agree on the broad lines of the Oedipus structure, Freud and Lacan diverge in a certain number of ways. The former saw castration anxiety as the outcome of the universal rivalry between the same-sex parent and the child, representing the father's menacing of the intense love the male child feels for his mother. Lacan's structuralist translation of this Oedipal bargain—consisting in the entry into language and the concomitant constitution of subjectivity as

¹² By Lacan, as I prove in this chapter and mainly by Gilles Deleuze, which will be the focus of the third chapter.

such—is a transitory phase in psychoanalysis¹³. The Freudian method would be later described by Lacan as Cartesian, for, according to him, the cogito is; “I am not sure, I doubt”. Hamlet comes into existence in this difference between signifiers. Had not he had his own doubts about his father’s death and had not he pursued his plot till the end, he would not have discovered the truth. Hamlet, in fact, acts within the interval between *illusion* and *truth*, starting with skepticism and ending up with certainty. Outside of these two signifiers, Hamlet’s identity is merely nothing. As a subject, Hamlet is split in the same way that a bar splits the sign into signifier and signified (S/s). The signifier produces and precedes the signified, thus revising Saussure’s initial suggestion that the signified has ascendancy over the signifier in the binary structure. It is only through the differences offered by language and carried by the signifiers that the signifieds have value. So Lacan imposes his “algorithm” (S/s) as the basic foundation of all language. It is an illusion to believe that the signifier serves to represent the signified while the latter, on the contrary, gets its identity from the signifier, simply because language is an internally determined system with the meaning of every signifier depending on the difference it has from any other signifier, not an intrinsically ‘referential’ system. Consequently, there are no two similar signifiers in language; there are only differences. Hamlet, by means of language play, wavers between wisdom and madness, moving from a state of mind to another, voluntarily in the majority of the cases. He is the wise man and the intellectual while addressing his mother and berating her for relinquishing her duties towards her dead husband, but very soon he turns into a moody being who falls prey to his emotions when he faces Laertes in the grave scene. He is the ‘puppeteer’ who knows how to handle things skillfully when he escapes death and sends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to their demise. Still, he is irrational and scared when he makes miscalculations and misses the right moment to have revenge. Throughout his ambivalent process

¹³ Lacan insists on a structural understanding of Oedipus.

of continuous changes, Hamlet either abuses language or is abused by it. He addresses Polonius, answering his question “What do you read my lord?”: *Words, words, words* (Shakespeare II, ii, 190) [my italics]. He hints at the importance of discourse and alludes to his plot that will rely principally on language to warrant its success.

“Lacan often displays his debt to Saussure—at one point, using the most famous of all Shakespearean speeches to rehearse the structuralist theory of the sign: ‘This to be or not to be’ is an entirely verbal story” (Armstrong 59). Jameson, on the other hand, writes that

the very cornerstone of Freud’s conception of the psyche, the Oedipus Complex, is transliterated by Lacan into a linguistic phenomenon which he designates as the discovery of the subject of the Name-of-the-Father, and which consists in other words, in the transformation of an imaginary relationship to that particular imago which is the physical parent into the new and menacing abstraction of the paternal role as the possessor of the mother and the place of the Law. (359)

Lacan rereads Freud’s rereading of the play, enacting a structuralist revision that corresponds in all its major points to his famous analysis of “The Purloined Letter”¹⁴. While Freud highlights the super-ego, which is the largely unconscious body of regulatory, guilt-based constraints the individual takes in from the external world in the place of the commandments imposed by the father during childhood, Lacan coins the *nom-du-pere* [the Name-of-the-Father]. This word involves a pun in French with *non-du-pere*, the “no” [prohibition] of the father. Yet, to construct the super-ego [Name-of-the-father], the subject simply needs a father in the symbolic order, not necessarily his own father, but A father. The Name-of-the-Father, then, is the pervasive law structuring human existence and the first legislative power the individual submits to. It represents

¹⁴ The major argument of Lacan’s seminar on “The Purloined Letter” is that the subject is formed by the past of the signifier. Lacan’s argument in his seminar centers on the role of the signifier in the act of repetition. A signifier, for him, is a symbol only of absence. The signifier represents for us something else, something not immediately present; as such, the signifier is not important in itself: it is valuable only for what it repeats. Words are signifiers, and words are composed of letters, and Poe’s “The Purloined Letter” is about a letter.

the socializing experience of the child, his/her acquisition of language, law and culture. It is his attempt and eagerness to become human.

Lacan's definition of the unconscious, in addition, re-invites the Name-of-the-father necessarily. The Lacanian Unconscious is the discourse of the Other, which is one of his groundbreaking discoveries/rectifications. The unconscious, this time, is not the Freudian discovery which claims its contents to be representatives of the instincts. Dreams, as it is well-known, provided Freud with his 'royal road' to the unconscious, reading the dream as a full system with remarkable characteristics: primary process; absence of negation, of doubt, of degrees of certitude; indifference to reality and a subordination to the principle of pleasure and unpleasure. Unlike Freud, who places the unconscious within the self (since it is the expression of repressed things within the subject), Lacan thinks it is the effect of the Other and he relates it to the Symbolic order, the system of signification or language. This redefinition, indeed, has been challenging for those who still cling to the Freudian image of the unconscious as a cauldron of hidden instincts and repressed desires. The unconscious now is structured *by* language; that is why it is structured *like* language.

This is shown through the actual speech that is used. The unconscious reveals its presence through the lapses and the play of signification that exist within the different layers of discourse. It can be considered in terms of a series of displacements or repetitions, and therefore Lacan distinguishes Oedipus as a symbolic structure from the phantasies of incestuous desires lived by neurotics. This structure is manifested in two ways: its contents consist in elements of language (signifiers) on the one hand, which are transformed according to the laws of language (metaphoric/metonymic axes as classified by Jakobson) on the other hand. In short, psychoanalysis is not a question of 'meaning', but rather one of structure, and for this reason, Lacan peruses literary texts like *Hamlet* to highlight this structure. He openly declares, "the

unconscious is not Freud's; it is Lacan's" (Vergote 193). He believes that Freud was unable to formulate his theory of the unconscious because, at his time, he did not have the linguistics of Saussure and Jakobson, while Lacan had them at his disposal. Jean-Michel Rabaté writes that

In the 1950s, Lacan's fascination with Saussure is often alluded to as an example of a creative distortion of basic concepts. This is the domain of what Lacan calls his *linguisterie*, not just linguistics but a systematic distortion of Saussurean dichotomies, focusing on the signifier/signified couple. (15)

Dany Nobus comments that in the long run "what is needed, [...] is the science of linguistics which takes account of the process of saying and its relation (to the subject of the) unconscious" (63). He stresses the fact that the linguistic science and psychoanalysis are interchangeable, intertwined and traversed by each other in an interdisciplinary approach. In addition to linguistics, which belongs to the humanities despite its scientific attributes, Lacan resorts to a thoroughly scientific, arithmetic and logical field to strengthen his psychoanalytical observations. He borrows topology from mathematics in order to draw his schemas that cannot be deciphered unless Lacan simplifies them by means of writing. Nobus defines topology as "a branch of mathematics which came to prominence towards the end of the nineteenth century and deals with those aspects of geometrical figures that remain invariant when they are being transformed" (63)¹⁵. Lacan gives priority to psychoanalysis over philosophy (supposed to be the emblem of logic and rationality). He argues that psychoanalysis finds its modes of exposition in mathematics; thus he combines the science of the sign with the power and precision of mathematics. He also coins words which have no definitions other than his own and then tends to define them only contextually. His invention emanates from a strong belief that "a science unsupported by mathematics leads 'strictly to nothing, and any such science is unable', he claimed, 'to exit the field of the imaginary', and approach the real" (Burgoyne 81). Rabaté

¹⁵ While Freud's model is *economic*, Lacan's is *topological*.

considers the fact that Lacan wanted to be a philosopher of psychoanalysis, but he was short of means for that task. “To philosophers he brought the guarantee of the master who is supposed to know what Freud thought. To psychoanalysts he brought the guarantee [of the one] who is supposed to know what thinking philosophically means” (20).

Lacan sheds light on three crucial moments in *Hamlet*: the trick of sending Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to die in Hamlet’s place; the fight over Ophelia’s grave; and the relation between Hamlet and Ophelia, which will be the focus of the following section. These instances provoke many psychoanalytical problematics such as sexuality, femininity and the maternal; repetition; mourning and melancholia. Central to all this is Lacan’s designation of Ophelia as an *objet petit a* in the whole game of desire.

The Highlighted Role of Ophelia *objet a*

Ophelia is an essential character in the structure of the play, the flow of the events and the development of Hamlet’s psychology. Therefore, she has been linked for centuries to him, presented first as the cause of Hamlet’s “feigned” madness, and secondly in the context of a psychiatric observation. Hamlet does not treat her as an ordinary woman, a lover or a maid, but as the bearer of every sin and the source of all catastrophies. The act of conception becomes very critical in Hamlet’s opinion and he advises Polonius to keep an eye on his daughter; “let her not walk in th’sun. Conception is a blessing, but as your daughter may conceive—Friend, look to ‘t.’” (Shakespeare II, ii, 182-183). The use of the word “nunnery” in Shakespeare’s days could have indicated a “brothel”, and it strengthens Hamlet’s fear of Ophelia and his retreat from women in general: “Get thee to a nunnery, go. Farewell. Or if thou wilt needs/ marry, marry a fool, for wise men know well enough what monsters/ you make of them. To a nunnery go, and quickly too” (Shakespeare III, i, 133-135). This position is the aftermath of his mother’s betrayal of his father and quick marriage upon his death;

Let me not think on't; frailty, thy name is woman-
 A little month, or ere those shoes were old
 With which she followed my poor father's body
 Like Niobe, all tears, why she, even she-
 O God, a beast that wants discourse of reason
 Would have mourned longer—married with my uncle,
 My father's brother, but no more like my father
 Than I to Hercules—within a month,
 Ere yet the salt of most unrighteous tears
 Had left the flushing in her galled eyes,
 She married. Oh most wicked speed, to post
 With such dexterity to incestuous sheets.
 It is not, nor it cannot come to good.
 But break, my heart, for I must hold my tongue. (Shakespeare I, ii, 146-157)

Ophelia plays the role of the bait on the hook, the snare to catch Hamlet and tame his wild desires. The encounter between Hamlet and Ophelia in her closet shows the ego's captivation within an imaginary fantasy. Lacan, in his seminars on *Hamlet*, identifies this *objet petit a* not as the object of desire but rather as the object in desire as a signifier in a series not as an ultimate "content". Cast away from the imaginary, it now comes to act within the limits of the symbolic only in a negative sense. "By *a*, not *the object of desire* but the object in desire [*l'objet dans le désir*]. This is our starting point: through his relationship to the signifier, the subject is deprived of something of himself, of his very life, which has assumed the value of that which binds him to the signifier" (Lacan qtd in Reinhard Lupton and Reinhard 68). In other words, to show how the object can be *in* desire, there are two alternatives. First, it can be an interchangeable element emanating from metonymic associations (displacement of the signifier) constituting the object of desire as the desire for something else. Second, it may be an opaque blockage through different metaphors fixing the maternal body in the melodrama of fantasy. In *Hamlet*, the two alternatives meet and converge.

Ophelia replaces what the subject is—symbolically—deprived of: the phallus¹⁶. In the absence of a father-figure to compete with, and in the loss of a mother-figure to compete for (Gertrude is present physically but she is symbolically lost), Hamlet aligns with Ophelia, who turns into the object of desire—his object of desire in fact—and becomes a signifier for a transcendental signified. The phallus is neither a symbol nor an image. This part of the body is now called a *signifier*. It is not the physical organ, the penis or clitoris, but the symbolic object whose unveiling was the subject matter of various mysteries. She is also Hamlet's *objet d'une jouissance* coming to embody for him the flagrant grossness of the phallus as the *objet d'une jouissance* ("O phallus"). Inevitably, the phallus has been associated with the subject's sense of lack and the desire to fill that lack. In the case of female sexuality, Freud showed that the wish of the girl to receive her father's phallus is transformed into the wish to have a child by him. Yet, Laplanche and Pontalis note that

In France, Jacques Lacan has attempted a reorientation of psycho-analytic theory around the idea of the phallus as the 'signifier of desire'. The Oedipus complex, in Lacan's reformulation of it, consists in a dialectic whose major alternatives are to be or not to be the phallus, and to have it or not to have it; the three moments of this dialectic are centered on *the respective positions occupied by the phallus in the desires of the three protagonists*. (314)

Lacan questions the fact that no one of the psychoanalysts or the literary critics who preceded him could notice that "Ophelia"—the name—resonates with "O phallus", the lost object of desire. In the use of the apostrophe "O", the subject is mournful of the unfulfilled desire. She performed her role of an impossible object of desire and finished it when she died. Upon her death, she coincides with the lost phallus, and Hamlet's excessive gesture of jumping in her grave

¹⁶ In psychoanalysis, the use of the term 'phallus' underlines the symbolic function taken on by the penis in the intra- and inter-subjective dialectic, the term 'penis' tending to be reserved for the organ thought of in its anatomical reality. This term is used mainly in its adjectival form with Freud (The phallic stage) in contemporary psychoanalytical studies of literature, the 'penis' is used to designate the male organ in its physical reality, while the term 'phallus' stresses the symbolic value of the penis. (Laplanche and Pontalis)

is but a mourning for the phallus, whose absence means the loss of Hamlet. In this fragment of his speech, he addresses Laertes;

‘Swounds, show me what thou’ t do.
 Woo’ t drink up eisel, eat a crocodile?
 I’ ll do’ t. Dost thou come here to whine,
 To outface me with leaping in her grave?
 Be buried quick with her, and so will I.
 And if thou prate of mountains, let them throw
 Millions of acres on us, till our ground,
 Singeing his pate against the burning zone,
 Make Ossa like a wart. Nay, and thou’ lt mouth,
 I’ ll rant as well as thou. (Shakespeare V, i, 241-251)

Homer explains that this loss is not material; rather, it is imaginary: “the *objet a* is not, therefore, an object we have lost, because then we would be able to find it and satisfy our desire. It is rather the constant sense we have as subjects that something is lacking or missing from our lives” (87). So, in order for the object to be retrieved as an object “in” desire, it must be absented and mourned. It is always placed in relation to the subject, since it cannot stand on its own. Hamlet says to his mother in the presence of Ophelia, “Here’s metal more attractive”, and tries to place his head between her legs in a direct allusion to his search for something lost.¹⁷

¹⁷ Lacan turns our attention to an important point when he instructs us to “replace the word ‘king’ with the word ‘phallus’, and [we]’ ll see that that’s exactly the point—the body is bound up [engagé] in this matter of the phallus—and how—but the phallus, on the contrary, is bound to nothing: it always slips through your fingers. [...]: *The king is a thing*” (52) [my italics]. The phallus has the potential of becoming a symbol. Turning into a symbol, in fact, implies that the phallus, “even the real phallus is a ghost” (Lacan 50). The common theme of death that Claudius mentions to Hamlet is the “death of fathers”: “your father lost a father, /That father lost, lost *his*”. The use of ellipsis is not arbitrary here. It serves a purpose. What did he lose if not the phallus? Real death, then, is not a biological one with the body ending in the eternal confinement of the grave. It is the loss of the phallus. The subject’s loss of the phallus requires a ‘supplement’ to substitute for the lost object and to ensure its recuperation. The graveyard scene justifies this situation as Laertes jumps into the tomb to embrace the object which is at the heart of Hamlet’s loss of desire:

Oh treble woe
 Fall ten times treble on that cursed head
 Whose wicked deed thy most ingenious sense
 Deprived thee of. Hold off the earth awhile
 Till I have caught her once more in mine arms. (Shakespeare V, I, 214-217)

In the absence of the phallus (the term chosen to stand for the male subjectivity), a particular object, which is Ophelia (objet petit a), stands for it. In certain cases, the subject, designated by Lacan as “S”, has to be eclipsed/erased (represented by a barred “S”) in order for the *objet petit a* to acquire a greater value. Mourning then is the effect of a hole in the real. This contradicts Freud’s claim that mourning is the subject’s voice accusing it of the death of the other. Still, Hamlet is mourning the insufficiency of mourning and its secret performance, if ever it existed. “The phallus thus embodies the subject’s desire, that is, in Lacanian terms, ‘the desire of the Other’—mastery over the symbolic order, over meaning, over the unconscious” (Armstrong 68). In Hamlet’s tragedy, unlike that of Oedipus, the death of the father does not put an end to the existence of the phallus. It is always there. From the phallus, desire is constituted with the fantasy as its referent. It will be important, then, in the following section, to shed light on Lacan’s theory of the three registers (The Real, the Imaginary and the Symbolic) to show the way Hamlet’s desire is working within their limits.

Hamlet’s Desire Caught within Lacan’s Three Registers

Lacan’s ternary structure—his triangular formulation of the Real, the Imaginary, the Symbolic—is a structuralist reinvention of the Freudian Oedipal schema: the relation to the mother (Real) gives way to narcissistic fantasy (Imaginary), which, in its turn, gives way to the Oedipal complex and its resolution in the castration anxiety (Symbolic). Likewise, William Kerrigan characterizes the *Hamlet* seminars as “Lacan’s own ‘revenge play in the theatre of psychoanalytic thought’” (90). To start with, the Imaginary forms one of the crucial stages¹⁸ in the formation of the subject’s personality and the development of his character. According to James, “[The] Imaginary surely derives from the experience of the image” (351). It is characterised by

¹⁸ As Lacan has indicated himself, the word ‘phase’ is no doubt better adapted here than ‘stage’ (stade), because it suggests a turning point rather than a period in the process of psycho-biological maturation.

the prevalence of the relation to the image of the counterpart (*mon semblable*). For Lacan, a counterpart (another who is me) can only exist by virtue of the fact that the ego is originally another (different from me), formed by the specular relations of the mirror stage. ‘‘Lacan insists on the difference, and the opposition, between the Imaginary and the Symbolic, showing that intersubjectivity cannot be reduced to the group of relations that he classes as imaginary; it is particularly important, in his view, that the two ‘orders’ should not be confused in the course of analytic treatment’’ (Laplanche and Pontalis 210). The Mirror Stage shapes of the Imaginary as the child looks at his image in the mirror and identifies with it. ‘‘The fascination, even captivation, of the eight-month-old by his image in a mirror,’’ Joseph H. Smith explains, ‘‘or by some semblance of wholeness or integrity reflected to him as more than he is in the mother’s caretaking’’ (260). The mirror phase¹⁹ is formative of the function of the eye; thus Lacan claims that the infant’s jubilant recognition of its image in the mirror differentiates it from the chimpanzee, which is inclined to look for the source of the thing behind the mirror to understand what happens (Van Pelt 34). In other terms Genosko explains;

[...] The person first sees himself in another, mother or mirror, and the primary identification of self is not a recognition, but a misrecognition which constrains all later construction of the self to a state of alienation: the self is always like another. ‘the mirror identification situates the existence of the ego, before its social determination, in a fictional direction, which will always remain irreducible for the individual alone. (515)

Despite the fact that the mirror stage is the phase of a narcissistic behaviour as the ‘‘I’’ starts to establish itself and to be fascinated with its reflected image, it is preceded by the symbolic and will be succeeded by it again as the speech that characterizes the human subject. Hence the ‘‘fall’’ into language, law, the patriarchal order, and the Symbolic. In a few words, it is the first

¹⁹ According to Lacan, it is a phase in the constitution of the human individual located between the ages of six and eighteen months. Although it is still a state of weakness and dependence, the child anticipates the apprehension and mastery of its bodily unity. It forms the matrix of what becomes the ego later.

form of identification and a very important transitory phase because it marks the beginning of an independently structured image of the subject about him/herself. The Imaginary is the realm of the ego, a pre-linguistic realm of sense perception, identification and an illusory sense of unity: a relation with one's own body. In the text of *Hamlet*, the main character reaches this moment²⁰ of awareness of his independence and self-identification during the grave scene, once again. It marks the first time Hamlet reveals his identity and speaks out his internalized subjectivity;

[*Advancing*] what is he whose grief
 bears such an emphasis? Whose phrase of sorrow
 conjures the wandering stars, and makes them stand
 like wonder-wounded hearers! *This is I,*
Hamlet the Dane. (Shakespeare V, I, 222-226) [my italics]

The Oedipus Complex, in this context, marks the changeover from the Imaginary to the Symbolic. This movement, in fact, marks the development in Hamlet's personality and the beginning of his awareness of his independent identity. It is only in this instance that he gets liberated from the mother's world that has chained his for a long time to enter the phallic/Symbolic world represented by the father. He is able finally to say who he is.

The second register in the Lacanian list is the Symbolic²¹. This stage covers the phenomena with which psychoanalysis deals and which are structured like a language²². The efficiency of the cure relies deeply on the constitutive nature of the word (*le caractere fondateur de la parole*). In fact, Laplanche and Pontalis in their *The Language of Psychoanalysis* distinguish between Freud's 'die Symbolik' and Lacan's 'le Symbolique'. While Freud

²⁰ In fact, it seems to be a deferred rather than a repeated version of the mirror stage. Hamlet had never the courage to speak out who he is. It is only during the grave scene and what it represents (death, loss, trouble) that he becomes aware of his independent ego. The grave scene is a transitory instance exactly as the mirror stage is. In other words, it is a *literal parody of the metaphorical mirror stage*.

²¹ For Lacan, Oedipus is not about a moment in the family drama or about forming a new psychical entity. It is about the child's development of a new capacity for using symbols as signifiers, what Lacan refers to as entering the Symbolic dimension.

²² As one enters the Symbolic, he becomes subject to all its laws of signification, indeed, he becomes inhabited by them. This is what Lacan means when he says that "the unconscious is structured like a language", that man is decentered. Like Levi-Stauss, Lacan believes that man is the object of a law which transcends him.

emphasizes the complex connections uniting the Symbol and what it may stand for, Lacan concentrates on the structure of the symbolic system, particularly considering the Freudian links as imaginary and the aftermath of the Imaginary. Lacan's use of the Symbolic in psychoanalysis has two aims: to compare the structure of the Symbolic to that of language, but also "to show how the human subject is inserted into a pre-established order which is itself symbolic in nature in Lacan's sense" (439-440). Lacan uses this order to refer to a certain law on which it is dependent. When he speaks of the Symbolic father [the Name-of-the-Father], he refers to an agency that reinforces that law and differs from the real or the imaginary father. Whatever is rejected or repressed from this order reappears later in the real. According to Lacan, the passage into the Symbolic dimension does involve an interdiction (the father denies the child access to the mother), but the interdiction is not to be understood on a literal level. We do injustice to Lacan's notion of the 'father' if we just think of him in terms of his biological incarnation. His crucial level is played on the level of sign, just as Lacan stresses that the meaning of the phallus relates to its symbolic role, from a psychoanalytical perspective, rather than its biological substance. In this way, the triangle in Oedipus is to be taken in a very generalized sense; its participants are not people but symbolic functions. Man becomes human the moment he enters the symbolic and acquires language, the faculty of speech. This passage, in fact, consists in a transfer from the realm of the mother (that is dominated by her image as the first individual in the subject's life) to the world of the father (to identification with the phallus itself). So the child consents to the loss of the mother because he recovers her again, in language. Lacan's symbolic reconciles Freud's libido theory with linguistics. "A Symbolic order, the intervention of the order of speech, that is, of the father. Not the natural father but what is called the father... The symbolic order has to be conceived as something superimposed" (Van Pelt 62).

The Symbolic emerges twice in *Hamlet* in Act I. In the beginning, the ghost, which symbolizes the dead father, gives hints about betrayal and destabilizes Hamlet's idealization of his parents' relation. It is also the representation of the Other's discourse through which the subject (Hamlet) receives, in an invented way, his own forgotten or repressed message. The ghost serves to remind Hamlet of his task (revenge) and stimulate him whenever his willingness weakens. It summons Hamlet to *Filiation*—to observe the law of the father. Then, the play puts a lot of emphasis on the rite of mourning which has not been completed due to the mother's desire and her hasty marriage. In a nutshell, the play *Hamlet* is a representation of the Symbolic *par excellence* despite the fact that it also elaborates the other registers quite eminently. Everything in the play points at Hamlet's problem of entering the Symbolic and of framing his identity within the realm of the father. In fact, Hamlet's endless thirst for revenge, the ghost's recurrent call for vengeance and the hazy relationship to Ophelia are the principle symbolic details which resonate throughout the play and direct its flow.

Turning to the Real now, Joseph H. Smith states that

of his three orders, the Real, the Imaginary, and the Symbolic, the Real is at farthest remove. We and our world are constituted by language. The real, the thing in itself, remains, as such, unknowable. Needs, for instance, are real, but we come to know them only as they are represented as desire, at first in the image—a form of signification and thus a part of language in the broad sense—and later in the world. The world of images, of fantasy, of wish fulfillment, is the Imaginary order. It is the dominant order of the pre-oedipal period notwithstanding the beginning of speech during that era. The definitive passage to the Symbolic order, the world of language, law, and institutions, is by way of the oedipal crisis. The passage does not do away with the Imaginary. On the contrary, it is in the light of the Symbolic order that the Imaginary is situated as Imaginary [...]. For Lacan, in summary, man is language. Our only access to the Real is via language, and the Imaginary and the Symbolic are themselves linguistic orders. (268)

Lacan's movement beyond Imaginary and Symbolic to the Real as it is anticipated in his reading of *Hamlet* constitutes a turning point in his career, both institutionally and theoretically.

In Lacan's own essay on *Hamlet*, he places the problem of the play in the symbolic. Lacan's version of the Id is the symbolic order or the Other. The price of stepping into the symbolic is always castration. However, to be put in touch with his own desires and to access successfully the realm of the symbolic, "Hamlet must renounce [his father], must internalize the Law of forgetting, not by remembering" (Lacan 131), which he does not do. He sticks to the memory of the dead father (in other words, he clings to the Subject) and promises to keep it alive. His redirection of the letter from Claudius on the ship allegorises his subjection to the symbolic order since in using his father's seal to sign the letter, he evokes his presence and his dependence on him. Hamlet refuses to have his father killed twice (the first time by his uncle and the second time, probably by him, through forgetfulness). He cannot act without a father on his side and even when this figure is no longer alive, it remains a source of inspiration.

The last section of this chapter will be devoted to an analysis of another aspect of Lacan's dialectic of desire epitomized by Hamlet's ambivalent relationship to his mother, or mOther (as Lacan likes to write it because it combines *the mother* and *the Other*). This relationship evades the conventional one because Hamlet acts within her network of desire and cannot step out of that.

The Desire *in* the Other: Hamlet and his MOther

Lacan pins down two essential factors holding the structure of *Hamlet*: his dependent status with respect to the desire of the Other, the desire of his mOther; and his constant suspension in the time of the Other, until the very end of the plot. Desire is a functional 'réseau' that works in a network of relations; it affects and gets affected by them, it is multi-directional and cannot be attached to a particular subject. Desire, as Lacan claims, is the unconscious of the 'Other'. It always seeks that which is prohibited by the law of the father because it imitates the structure of the law itself: it is always the desire of another. It is through Oedipus that one can

internalize his desire for the Other. Desire always comes from outside and not from an subjective internal world of phantasies, shuttering thus the myth of the subject's autonomy. Although, in this part I refer to many characters as 'the Other' (Claudius, the mother, Ophelia and Laertes), I focus more particularly on the role of the mother/mOther because she is crucial to the subject. Hamlet's desire is not the desire *for* his mother but it is the desire *of* his mother, gathering both meanings ambiguously. For instance, the difference between her and the rest of the characters is that she forms part of the Oedipus complex structure involving Hamlet and she represents his object of desire as well. Hamlet, in the network of his relations with Ophelia, with his mother and with his uncle most of all, proves to be mutually linked *to the hour of the Other*. "[He] must find again in the very discourse of the Other (mother) what was lost from him, the subject the moment he entered into this discourse. What ultimately matters is not the truth but the hour [*l'heure*] of truth" (Lacan 16).

The hour of truth, Lacan is pointing at, is the one in which the object is at another hour, coming too fast or too slow, early or late, just as Hamlet is always missing his hour of revenge: either he postpones his act when it is the right time to do that (the prayer scene for example), or he strikes too late (the tragic end with four deaths) when it is useless to act. The subject's and the Other's hours do not tally. Hamlet had the chance to kill Claudius and circumvent tragedy at a very early stage the moment of his uncle's prayer;

My fault is past. But oh, what form of prayer
Can serve my turn? 'Forgive me my foul murder'?
That cannot be, since I am still possessed
Of those effects for which I did the murder,
My crown, mine own ambition, and my queen,
May one be pardoned and retain th' offence!

.....
Help, angels!-Make assay:
Bow stubborn knees, and heart with strings of steel
Be soft as sinews of the new-born babe.
All may be well.

[*He kneels*] (Shakespeare III, iii, 51-73)

Still, “Hamlet stops,” Lacan explains, “because it’s not time. It’s not the hour of the Other: not time for the Other to render his ‘audit’ to heaven. That would be too kind from one point of view, or too cruel, from another” (18). Hamlet feels that the hour of Claudius has not come yet and he has to wait for the appropriate moment to fulfil his revenge. Prayer is a moment of repentance and may lead to salvation for his uncle instead of annihilation. That would further harm Hamlet because he would smear his hands with sinful blood and redouble his crime. He never acts at the right hour because it was not his and he was not prepared for that;

when he stays on, it is the hour of his parents. When he suspends his crime, it is the hour of the others. When he leaves for England, it is the hour of [Claudius]. It’s the hour of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern when he sends them on ahead to death—with a casualness that amazed Freud—by means of a bit of hocus-pocus that he brings off not half badly. And it is the hour of Ophelia, the hour of her suicide, when the tragedy will run its course, in a moment when Hamlet has just realized that it’s not hard to kill a man, the time to say ‘one’...he won’t know what hit him. (Lacan 18)

Acting out of his time, thus, and rushing to accomplish his task at the hour of the Other, Hamlet fails in his mission and falls pray to a constant procrastination although he was satisfied with catching his uncle’s conscience. Whatever Hamlet will do will be at the hour of the Other, neither before that nor after. This notion leads to a further discussion involving a distinction between two concepts that Lacan elaborates in his essay on *Hamlet*. The search for the hour of truth represents a fantasy of perversion which orbits outside of time rather than being atemporal, in contrast to the fantasy of neurosis which requires the subject to be related to time in his relationship to the object. Hamlet, from the beginning of the story, is suspended in the time of the Other (his mother), reinforcing his obsession with time. Lacan believes that Hamlet is bound to his hour; “for Hamlet, there is no hour but his own. [...] There is only one hour, the hour of his destruction. The entire tragedy of *Hamlet* moves toward that hour” (25). In his perturbation and indeterminacy of decision, he finds the moment for his action is too early and resorts to

postponing it. To put it differently, Hamlet is lost in time and he does not know how to manage it going against the normal movement of the clock, which, no doubt, leads to his failure. The need for the Other to restore order and resolve Hamlet's mess comes in the end when Fortinbras intervenes to gather the dead, clarify certain circumstances and tell the truth. It is only then that Hamlet calls for a halt to ponder his behaviour.

Hamlet wavers between two objects: the eminent, idealized, exalted object—his dead father—on the one hand, and the degraded, spiteful object, Claudius, the killer and the adulterous figure on the other hand. In all this maze of desire, Hamlet does not choose. Armstrong thinks that “[Hamlet’s] neurosis is illuminated either directly by the Oedipal Complex or in the distress of the subject in the face of the desire of the [Lacanian] Other, forced to choose between being the phallus and being no phallus” (62). In fact, being the phallus is the ultimate goal of Hamlet who wants “to be” his mother’s object of desire as she is his object of desire, too. In his attempt, he repudiates the limits imposed by the Law of the father who intends to intervene in this relationship. This rejection is a rejection of castration itself, in a nutshell. Renunciation, or ‘being no phallus’, on the other hand, would be to withdraw from the arena of desire and to leave it vacant for Claudius to occupy and to play the role of the phallus. Obviously, the mother’s desire presents a real problem in encountering Hamlet. By killing Claudius and having his revenge, following the instructions of the ghost, he does away with Gertrude’s object of desire (phallus represented by Claudius). In other words, by conducting his act, Hamlet deprives his mother of the phallus itself.

Lacan, like Freud, believes that Hamlet’s problem is with the mother and not with Claudius since she is at the heart of the Oedipus complex. However, Lacan emphasizes this role and points out its strong domination in the triangular relation, more than Freud did: “The play is dominated by the Mother as Other [autre], i.e., the primordial subject of the demand [la

demande]. Hamlet does not choose” (Lacan 12). Hamlet’s desire, in fact, is far from being his own desire. Gertrude’s desire is discursive as well. Her son cannot act because he cannot come to terms with her desire. Hamlet does not make the difference between his own desire and that of his mOther. This is quite represented by the French expression that Lacan chooses to underline this ambiguity: “le désir de la mere” (133). It refers both to the mother as a desired object as well as a desiring subject. The focus on the mother, on her adequacies and inadequacies, is the development in psychoanalytic theory itself which Lacan wants to redress, precisely because, like Hamlet, it makes the mother a cause of all good and evil. He pleads to his mother to confess her sins and avoid the coming evil deeds caused by her alliance with her husband:

Confess yourself to heaven,
Repent what’s past, avoid what is to come,
And do not spread the compost on the weeds
To make them ranker. Forgive me this my virtue,
For in the fatness of these pury times
Virtue itself of vice must pardon beg,
Yea, curb and woo for leave to do him good. (Shakespeare III, iv, 150-157)

While the Romantics referred Hamlet’s loss of desire to his knowledge, the psychoanalysts pinned down his problem in his unconscious desire for his mother. He is unable to act because he does not have control over himself. But at several points in the play, this hero has no problem with action. He kills Polonius by mistake, sends Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to their deaths by changing the letter, causes the death of Ophelia. However, Lacan refers Hamlet’s inability to complete this one act (revenge) to the nature of this particular act itself. Hamlet knows that the Other knows and that hinders his desire. His destiny, in a sense, gets enmeshed with the destiny of the Other, whether he is fully conscious of that or not. The debt that fuels this cycle is the debt of the Other (the ghost of his dead father) who asks him to keep up with his desire:

Do not forget. This visitation

Is but to whet thy almost blunted purpose.
 But look, amazement on your mother sits.
 Oh step between her and her fighting soul:
 Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works.
 Speak to her, Hamlet. (Shakespeare III, iv, 109-114)

He cannot act independently because his world is crossed by the Other and his action involves the Other definitely: when he ultimately recovers his ability to act and with it his desire, it is in relation to the Other (Laertes). His act is carried out during a dual arranged by the Other (Laertes and Claudius); he kills his uncle with the Other's weapon (Laertes) at the hour of the Other (the hour of his death when he is breathing his last). Hamlet's desire, in the long run, cannot find its way unless it hangs onto what is left of the Other in the form of fragmented "'others'" surrounding the subject.

As far as desire is concerned, Lacan's Oedipus Complex is imposed on *the mother* since it is she who must affirm the symbolic relation between the father and the child. Van Pelt thinks that Hamlet speaks to Gertrude as Other, to his 'mother' but beyond herself, "'and he is all the more a subject because he speaks, not with his own will, but with the will... of the father (the ghost's order: "'Speak to her, Hamlet.'")', for whom Hamlet is only the 'support'" (108). Alenka Zupancic, for her part, thinks that Lacan concludes that the desire at stake

Is far from being Hamlet's desire: it is not his desire for his mother, rather, it is *his mother's desire*. It is not only in the famous climactic closet scene that Hamlet is literally driven mad by the question of his mother's desire: why and how can she desire this spiteful, inadequate, unworthy object, this 'king of shreds and patches!' How could she abandon so quickly the splendid object that was Hamlet's father, and go for this wretch that can give her but some fleeting satisfaction. (180)

Not only did the mOther betray her husband's memory, but she also relinquished her son and neglected his presence in her life when he was supposed to replace the father figure. Hamlet's erotic words, in the closet scene, reveal his internalized unconscious desire for the mother although he refers to his uncle:

Let the bloat king tempt you again to bed,
Pinch wanton on your cheek, call you his mouse,
And let him for a pair of reechy kisses,
Or paddling in your neck with his damned fingers,
Make you to ravel all this matter out,
That I essentially am not in madness,
But mad in craft. 'T were good you let him know. (Shakespeare III, iv, 183-189)

In the end, it is undoubtedly unavoidable to confirm that Lacan remains the only psychoanalyst of the twentieth century whose achievements can be compared to Freud's in psychoanalytical studies. His originality emanates not only from his structuralist reading of Freud, but also in his new departures from the original, Freudian source. His theory of desire as a dialectic and his suggestion of the three registers will always be related to his name. Within this context, *Hamlet* could enter the late twentieth century and its structuralist theories with great success after having spent many centuries under investigation by the classic theories.

Section 3

The Deleuzian Approach to Desire: *Anti-Oedipus* and the Critique of Psychoanalysis

“Lie down then, on the soft couch which the analyst provides, and try to think up something different. The analyst has endless time and patience; every minute you detain him means money in his pocket... Whether you whine, howl, beg, weep cajole, pray or curse—he listens. He is just a big ear minus a sympathetic nervous system. He is impervious to everything but truth. If you think it pays to fool him then fool him. Who will be the loser! If you think he can help you, and not yourself, then stick to him until you rot.”

Henry Miller, *Sexus*

“I don’t believe in father
in mother
got no papamummy.”

Artaud, *Van Gogh, the Man Suicided by Society*

The Deleuzean image of Oedipus is compatible, it seems to me, with the image I intend to present in this chapter which turns around giving a social identity to Oedipus, departing from Freud, Lacan, and the psychoanalyst clan. Desire is not a “familial fantasy” but it is the expression of a group fantasy. It is evident that the economic and political situations of a society contribute actively to the production of desire within the individual. Psychoanalysis, in this view, reduces all to childhood memoirs/ memories. However, Deleuze thinks that the subject is not delirious on “mommy-daddy”; it is delirious about a well-determined “social field.” The difference between the two situations is very significant. In the first place, desire is perceived as a mimic model which repeats and/ or reproduces the original scene related back to the parents. As a result, it only takes a subtle return to the past or, as Deleuze calls it, to the “archive” to grasp the functioning of desire. In the second place, on the other hand, Deleuze wants to insist on the productive nature of desire. We understand from this point of difference that desire with Deleuzean thought is a phenomenon which is liberated from the individual’s frontiers. It does not originate in the subject. Desire with Deleuze is not a natural spontaneous phenomenon but it is the result of what he calls “agencement” between many machines. It is the result of an “ensemble” of factors and circumstances which are coupled to give birth to desire. It is never

linked to interior factors, to “mommy-daddy,” in other words. The child is already in a position of desiring-production where the parents play the role of partial objects, witnesses, mere reporters or agents in a process that puts desire in an immediate relation with a historical and social reality. It is essential to note the rise of the bourgeoisie in Europe, which may explain the strong desire expressed by literary characters for wealth, prestige, and power—this is how desire is registered in the greatest movements of history. However, the historical dimension has been ignored by psychoanalysis whose language is characterized by both dream and fantasy. If desire has a history, according to Freud, it is that of a familial past which affects the scene of the present. Deleuze completely rebuffs this idea because he believes that the historical situation dictates to the subject its objects of desire.

For Deleuze, it is all literature, and not only realist literature, that is based on the interrogation of history. What preoccupies writers and what torments them has never been the individual’s private world but the history of all society. Palpably, if Deleuze criticizes the psychoanalytical school, it is also through a conception of the literary text. In fact, to decipher a text, according to the psychoanalytical method, is to clarify and to highlight its unity: there abides the old disease of the Western philosophy, Deleuze argues; it can consider things only in terms of unity and essence. For Deleuze, the text is a more complex reality. In opposition to what psychoanalysis pretends, the literary text is formed by a subversion of homogeneity. This may happen, but it only has a precarious status. If the text resists categorization, that is mainly because it is the *milieu* where the multiple and the heterogeneous abundantly exist. It is not unity that stands for the origin of the text but rather diversity. This kind of multiplicity dwells the text in the same way tribes inhabit the desert which does not give up being the desert: “*Un peu comme les tribus peuplent le désert sans qu’il cesse d’être un désert*” (Deleuze 22). Similarly, the text—despite diversity—never gives up being the text, being itself.

Starting from this idea, Deleuze claims that one should not look for meaning in a transcendental origin. More precisely, one should not start from a pre-defined model—psychoanalysis for example—to trace the representation of desire in the text. This method, based on interpretation, risks missing its goal for it supposes that meaning rises above the text, or in other words ‘prior’ to the text. Conversely, there is no other meaning other than the one produced by reading, for meaning is what the reader constructs and not what the theorist imposes; it is not fixed or finite, and it follows not a straight line but crooked “zigzags.” This is how the Deleuzian thought functions: a rhizomatic logic that invites us to look at unity starting from multiplicity. For Deleuze, details and contradictions must be interrogated to understand a text, but this is only possible with a method based on experimentation. To ‘experiment’ the text, instead of interpreting it, is the exercise that Deleuze has always recommended and practiced. Experimentation necessitates thinking through the text independently from any model. The text itself is not an imitation [*un calque*], but an invention/production [*une carte*], at the level of form and content.

Deleuze also has his own conception of the writer and his role. “The writer for Deleuze is a Nietzschean physician of culture, both a symptomathologist who reads culture’s signs of sickness and health, and a therapist whose remedies promote new possibilities for life” (Bogue 2). Félix Guattari later describes his friend Deleuze as “a man of the group, of bands or tribes, and yet he is a man alone, a desert populated by all these groups and all his friends, all his becomings” (Stivale 4). Deleuze, the writer, preferred phenomenology because it rejected previous systems of knowledge and strove to examine life just as it appeared (as phenomena). Alongside structuralism, Phenomenology also discarded the idea that knowledge could be centered on ‘man’ as the human knower. The two movements aimed at providing more secure foundations. Deleuze challenges his reader, but at the same time pushes him to accept the

challenge to transform life and to resist some false axioms. He diverted from the way that his contemporaries took regarding the unity of Western thought and rejected the ordinary, refusing to consider it as the essential part of something. The day-to-day concepts (in fact, all of them) do not satisfy human needs simply because they are not compatible with what a concept should do. “For Deleuze, everyday opinions generalise and reduce concepts to their already known form. Everyday opinion is also limiting, Deleuze argues, because it assumes that there simply is a common world, there to be shared through language as information and communication” (Colebrook 24-25). A concept is a powerful tool capable of bringing change to life. A concept, in other words, is the power to surpass and step beyond what one knows and experiences to think how experience might be stretched. Eventually, a concept is not only a word or a signifier; it is rather the creation of a way of thinking.

Deleuze points three powers and methodologies of thinking: science, which fixes the world under observable states and scrutinizes its minute details; philosophy, which has the responsibility of creating concepts to function as possible solutions for the world’s problems instead of representing them; and finally Art, which creates affects and percepts. It is certainly what Goodchild sums up when he writes, “the aim of art, for Deleuze, however, is not to make moral or existential judgements about our conditions of experience. Instead, it is a question of wrestling with the vision that is too much for us, in order to disengage a force of life” (193). The philosophy of Deleuze is known for its mobility and activity. For him, life is transformative, changeable and unstable. This is how he refers to the notion of ‘Becoming’. It is “an idea which he gathers from Nietzsche. Time is eternal only in its power to always produce the new, over and over again—with no origin and no end” (Colebrook 60). That is why all art and philosophy are not about representing an already existing world, but about creating connections and becoming machines, desiring-machines. “Philosophy [for Deleuze] is the theory of what we do, not what

we are” (Goodchild 14). Derrida himself found some affinity between his own philosophy and that promoted by Deleuze. He states clearly in his famous eulogy to his colleague despite the differences and the disagreements that might have existed between their texts and their views.

Deleuze, for his part, indirectly refers to Derrida and their age of philosophy claiming

I belong to a generation, one of the last generations that was more or less bludgeoned to death with *the history of philosophy*. The history of philosophy plays a patently repressive role in philosophy, it's philosophy's own version of the Oedipus complex. You can't seriously consider saying what you yourself think until you've read this and that. (Patton and Protevi 3)

Deleuze asks, “is it the unconscious that represents itself through Oedipus and castration? Or is it the psychoanalyst—the psychoanalyst in us all—who represents the unconscious in this way?” (297). “Psychoanalysis has its own metaphysics—its name is Oedipus” (Deleuze 75 *AO*), so, “Deleuze and Guattari try to outflank Oedipus, to run faster than he does and leave him behind. It is merely a chimera predicated by psychoanalysis” (Genosko 681). The interest that Deleuze proves in literature is to attain a certain purpose and much of “[his] writing on literature is a thinking-alongside literary works, an engagement of philosophical issues generated from and developed through encounters with literary texts” (Bogue 2).

Which comes first from the point of view of libido: the familial investment or the social and political investment? Does the family play the “primary” role, while the political, the social and the economic are merely secondary? How is unconscious desire invested in a social, economic and political field? How do our love affairs stem from universal history and not from mommy-and-daddy? Inspired by Deleuze, I will try to find an approximate answer for these questions and to show that the Shakespearean “*Oedipus*” (Hamlet) does not obey a predestined structure. It is an Oedipus that alternates, at the same time, between some traits of psychoanalysis and some other features of society: a character that stays in the intervals between fantasy and ideology. It is very hard, actually, in this century to apply Deleuzian theory to a work of art that

belongs to the seventeenth century and that offers some hints about the Elizabethan era. However, everything remains viable as long as Shakespeare reveals the transformations that society, in general, undergoes. These transformations are not proper to a single time or society; they may happen at every age and to every human community. *Hamlet*, then, remains an adequate work of art to investigate the manifestations of desire. I agree with Martin Dodsworth's claim that "this does not imply that the less recent, critical critics of Shakespeare—Johnson, Coleridge, Bradley—have nothing to offer us today, but merely that it has suited me in my corrective aim to think largely in terms of our own century" (1).

Anti-Oedipus: The Book of the Century

While Rolando Perez considers *Anti-Oedipus* "a how-to-book, a book for all and no one, a book which may be entered as one enters a map: from a multiplicity of directions" (Perez 52), Michel Foucault, in his introduction, thinks it is a book of ethics (xiii). It presented provocative claims that challenged the usual standards for theory and rational thinking. Goodchild claims that the book is

a brute object, a matter of fact, a reality: contrary to a deeply rooted belief, the book is not an image of the world, there is an aparallel evolution of the book and the world; the book assures a deterritorialization of the world, but the world effects a reterritorialization of the book, which in turn deterritorializes itself in the world (if it is capable, if it can). (52)

It is a continuation of the 1960s criticism of social conventions and the limitation of desire to "bourgeois" or "familial" forms. The book tries to historicize and to explain the repression of reason that emerged at that time. Indeed, most of its chapters are intended to give a socio-political geology of the Oedipus complex in terms of a universal history of different social formations and their modes of repression. Deleuze opposed the idea that there was anything like a psyche at all. He even created

the term ‘schizoanalysis’ to describe their [his and Guattari’s] own approach and goal: not the primacy of psyche but the primacy of parts, ‘schizzes’ or impersonal and mobile fragments. Instead of beginning from the assumption that there are fixed structures such as language or logic that order life--this would be a ‘paranoid’ fixation on some external order—they argued that life was an open and creative whole of proliferating connections. He celebrates the schizo against paranoid man. (Colebrook 5)

Schizoanalysis would allow the individual, most of all, to think differently, to cut off the essentialist roots binding him/ her to the ground and to liberate his/ her thinking from restrictions. It repeats but only to begin again, to restart, to renew, to question and to reject stability and sameness. *Anti-Oedipus* smashes everything first of all by the form of the text and its language since the use of “curse words” needles the reader from the very beginning and warns him to get prepared for this shocking book because it is different and exceptional.

It is described as a Nietzschean book of ethics in that it is addressed to all and no one at the same time. Deleuze, in a letter to one of his critics entitled “I Have Nothing to Admit,” says that he and Guattari do not care a lot about what readers as individuals do with *Anti-Oedipus* or may think of it. He writes

We consider a book as a small a-signifying machine: the only problem is—Does it work and how does it work? How does it work for you? If it doesn’t function, if nothing happens, take another book. This other way of reading is based on intensities: something happens or doesn’t happen. There is nothing to explain, nothing to understand, nothing to interpret. It can be compared to an electrical connection. A body without organs [for example]: I know uneducated people who understood this immediately, thanks to their own ‘habits.’ (114)

Anti-Oedipus develops a style that is mainly diagnostic and healing. It attempts to cure the twenty-first century subject of the cure itself (psychoanalysis) and to correct what has been “falsified” by its predecessors. In France, the book became of great interest in 1972-3 for many reasons. First, Deleuze, with his colleague Guattari, articulates a general theory of nature as a “machining” of flows. It is from this perspective that he approaches works of literature. Machines are scattered everywhere and they drive other machines. Lacan thinks that the unconscious is

structured like a language and that its content can be diagnosed even mathematically. For him, the Oedipus complex is not a fixed moment in the family. It is about the child's ability to use symbols or what he calls the entering of the Symbolic dimension. In this sense, Deleuze and Guattari believe that Lacan is the only psychoanalyst worth studying because his approach to psychoanalysis deserves to be called "scientific," but they reproach him for remaining confined to the family metaphor and the notion of one-to-one relationships in the discussion of the unconscious. The crux of Deleuze's theory centers around the role of the Oedipus complex while Freud's position about that is fairly clear: the Oedipus complex drama consists in the internalization of a parental super-ego and it is played out in a triangle of child, father and mother.

Subsequently, Deleuze focuses his attack on the idea of Oedipus and despite the fact that Lacan, for example, criticizes biologism in psychoanalysis, the former thinks that the more serious problem lies in the way that the notion of Oedipus imposes restrictions and limitations on any field where things are infinitely open and unlimited. Psychoanalysis is trapped in Capitalism's notions of the family and sexuality which distort the production of desire. Oedipalization is a social-political technique to turn desire back onto the family. On the contrary, in *Anti-Oedipus*, desire takes its place and assumes its role as an element in the social order and not exclusively in the individual psyche. Deleuze argues that psychoanalysis complicitly relates how Capitalism has formed the family because it refers production of desire to the superficial level of relations between child and parents. He claims that his work closes the old debate on Freud and Marx because it shakes both traditions and demonstrates their insufficiencies as well as their deficiencies to understand desire in its social context. Deleuze refers to the family triangle as "the papa-mama matrix" in a very sarcastic way. Yet, the individual's unconscious does not get its identification from the closed family system but through a historical-political-economic

context. For example, if psychoanalysts might perceive May 1968 events as an unresolved Oedipal complex, in terms of things occurring within the family, Deleuze would investigate both the individual and the family across the *flows* of desire produced during that same era. Foucault demonstrates that “*Anti-Oedipus* shows first of all how much ground has been covered. But it does much more than that. It wastes no time in discrediting the old idols, even though it does have a great deal of fun with Freud. Most important it motivates us to go further” (xii). The book, in fact, combats three adversaries at the same time and tries to deconstruct the beliefs they imposed on beings: the terrorists of theory who would preserve the purity of the political discourse for their own sake; fascists who are considered as strategic enemies; and finally, psychoanalysts (the poor technicians of desire) who intend to subjugate the multiplicity of desire to the binary of structure and lack which Deleuze completely rejects and opposes. Among the other aims of this book are to free political action from totalization and to develop action, thought and desire by juxtaposition, not by subdivision and pyramidal hierarchical structures. Above all, it aims to choose what is different and multiple rather than uniform, flows rather than unities, mobility over systematization and the belief that what is productive must be nomadic. In better terms, the book asks, “what is the function of desire other than making connections?”

It does not consider desire independently, but in a network of interrelations, of flows and of machines working together to reach that ultimate effect. It brings a revolutionary change to methodology and interpretation, and that is why, Deleuze concludes, “If someone reading this book feels that things are fine in psychoanalysis, we are not speaking for him, and for him we take back everything we have said” (380). The book, in a sense, speaks to those who did not find any solace in psychoanalysis.

Deleuze’s criticism of Freud: The Limitations of Psychoanalysis

To begin with, Freud was criticised by Deleuze and Guattari for three methodological approaches. “These were that Freud took no precautions against suggesting actiologies to his patients, that his methods of interpretation were arbitrary, and that he abused the term ‘sexual’ and its cognates” (Cioffi 17). Obviously, psychoanalysis applies its knowledge and its same methods to all psychic manifestations, whereas the anti-Oedipal doctrine protects against this way of doing things and, on the contrary, proceeds in the reverse direction. It is the purpose of this section to investigate the Deleuzian criticism of Freud and his departure points from psychoanalysis.

In psychoanalysis, it seems as if all natural as well as artificial objects can be turned into Freudian symbols because Freud himself moves beyond material reality to roam in abstraction and symbolization. “We may explain, by the Freudian principles, why trees have roots in the ground,” Cioffi says, “why we write with pens; why we put a quart of wine into a bottle instead of hanging it on hooks like a ham, and so on” (18). Freud is constantly claiming to have a scientific approach, but what he offers is simply a speculation or something prior even to the structure of a hypothesis. In addition, Freud is blamed for his complete dependence on mythology to the extent that his theory emerges from Greek (*Oedipus*), literary (*Hamlet*) myths or personal stories and narratives (dreams). Oedipus can be a myth, a tragedy, or a dream²³. It always expresses the displacement of the limit. “To overturn the theater of representation into the order of desiring-production: this is the whole task of schizoanalysis” (Deleuze 271). Psychoanalysis is disconnected from the real and it is characterized by its lack of any coherent basis because it is based on myth which, for its turn, depends on representation. The major question that Deleuze asks when it comes to psychoanalysis and its examination of the unconscious is; “*why return to*

²³ Deleuze doubts the fact that Freud found the Oedipus complex in his self-analysis but at the theatre during his classical education. The contrast between the theatre and the factory becomes a contrast between the stage and the battlefield, between representation and creation.

myth? Why take it as the model?" (57 AO); the answer is principally because psychoanalysis is referential like the structure of the myth itself. What is very disturbing and what creates an impasse in the way of psychoanalysis is that everyone should believe in it and in what it preaches or dictates:

How does one go from a nice little play to a highly structuralized theory of the psyche? Where is the blueprint in *Oedipus Rex* for all those nuts and bolts so tightly fastened in the structure of the Oedipus complex? [...] Oedipus telling us how to live—who will believe this a hundred years from now: that there was a time when human beings were structuralized according to a nice little play? [...] Freud was never interested in production at all. What he wanted above all was to *re-produce* the same old scenario on the same old stage. (Perez 110)

What dominates in Freud's version of psychoanalysis is nothing more than mythical representation next to some symbolic construction (a symbolic order, the bit about castration, Oedipus and the phallus). However, Oedipus cannot be a universal Referent for all human relationships.

Furthermore, among the literary texts that marked the Freudian theory is Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, which has dominated psychoanalytical studies for a whole century to the point that Hamlet became a stereotypical mythical character in the same way as Oedipus. Deleuze challenges this fact:

The hero never looks backward, nor does he ever doubt his powers. Hamlet was undoubtedly a hero to himself, and for every Hamlet born the only true course to pursue is the very course which Shakespeare describes. But the question, it seems to me, is this: are we born Hamlets! Were you born Hamlet? Or did you not rather create the type in yourself! Whether this be so or not, what seems infinitely more important is—why revert to myth? [...] in the myth there is no life for us. Only the myth lives in the myth.... This ability to produce the myth is born out of awareness, out of ever-increasing consciousness. (Deleuze 298)

Hamlet is not a drama about the human family. It is about a specific king and political power, instead, determined by its own social, political and economic circumstances which are pertinent to that era. In our age, it is difficult to sympathize with a character like Hamlet for different

reasons: hearing voices from a higher world (the ghost) belongs mainly to the world of abnormal psychology; revenge may be a common idea but seems hardly supportable; Gertrude's sexual behaviour after her husband's death and her remarriage seem to be ordinary events. Yet, if the reader feels that his actual skepticism hinders his understanding of the seventeenth-century Hamlet, he is to remember that the play is built specifically upon the twentieth century attributes of doubt and revaluation. "Hamlet takes for granted that the ethics of revenge are questionable, that ghosts are questionable, that the distinctions of society are questionable, and that the will of heaven is terribly obscure" (Edwards 60). Shakespeare endeavours to present a beautiful past in which kingship, human relations like marriage and the organization of society had a heavenly sanction. However, a ruthless murder destroys that past and turns order into chaos. Therefore, Hamlet strives to recuperate the past and restore a balance.

Deleuze continues:

Oedipus (or Hamlet) led to the point of autocritique, the expressive forms—myth and tragedy—denounced as conscious beliefs or illusions, nothing more than ideas; the necessity of a scouring of the unconscious, schizoanalysis as a *curettage* of the unconscious; the matricial fissure in opposition to the line of castration; the splendid affirmation of the orphan-and-producer unconscious; the exaltation of the process as a schizophrenic process of deterritorialization that must produce a new earth; and even the functioning of the desiring machines against tragedy, against 'the fatal drama of the personality', against 'the inevitable confusion between mask and actor'. [...] yes, myth, tragedy, Oedipus, and Hamlet are good expressions, pregnant forms; they express the true permanent drama of desire and knowledge.²⁴ (299)

Despite the fact that Deleuze and his colleague Guattari refer constantly to Marx and Freud, their book should not be understood as a repetition of these two figures or as a return (as

²⁴ Freud's psychoanalytical career can be divided into two different eras; the first occurs between 1906 and 1920 and represents the great period of mythological work in the history of psychoanalysis, while the second period is characterized by Freud's shift to the problems of the second topology (the id, ego and super-ego). It investigates as well the relationship between desire and institutions and loses interest in mythology. The interest that psychoanalysis first showed in myths (or in tragedies like *Hamlet*) was highly critical, since the specificity of the myth had to melt under the rays of the subjective libido.

in Lacan's case) to the founding father(s)²⁵. Deleuze concludes in one of his interviews that "if they tell us we've misunderstood Freud, we'll say: 'Ooh well, we have too much else to do'" (221). However, his study of desire in the social field raises attention—despite his denial—to the relationship between Marxism and psychoanalysis in France because French anti-psychiatry is both psychoanalytically-oriented and deeply immersed in a Marxist tradition of political practice on the French Left. By contrast, Deleuze's overcoming of Freudian psychoanalysis, which assumes that desire is always invested in a familial context, does not mean that he tends to create a Marxist narrative whereby the bourgeois family—or any other regime which possesses money and power—is located within a history of other familial contexts. He opposes the old stereotypical image of a child whose need is always placed in dependence and relation to its mother. Rather, he starts from the idea of flows (the milk flow from the breast-machine to the mouth-machine...). While Deleuze and Guattari begin from the idea of privacy and the private individual, psychoanalysis began with the human condition in general: a child who faces his mother as his object of desire. For Deleuze, this Oedipal scene that accounts for political practice is itself an outcome of political history. Psychoanalysis considers that the subject's entry into culture and his relegation to law is the corollary of abandoning his desire for his mother and submitting himself for the law of the father (in the Symbolic phase). In a further step, the individual copies and transfers that law to govern all the relations in his life which, otherwise would be lawless, ahistorical, chaotic and anarchic. Deleuze employs this same idea to turn psychoanalysis's arguments topsy-turvy. The use of the mother-child relation is itself a political argument and cannot be used to explain politics. The child's loss of the mother—or his fear of losing her—is extremely political because it aims at keeping the child permanently attached to

²⁵ While Lacan tried to revisit Freud because he thought that there had been a lot of injustice and misunderstanding veiling the analysis of his texts, Deleuze sought to dismantle the whole Freudian heritage. His return is not syncretical, but rather critical.

that object of desire. For instance, after Hamlet has convinced his mother of the error of her ways following the death of Polonius, the eavesdropper, the queen implicitly encourages her son in his vengeance, promises to keep his secret—since she seems to be aware of his feigned madness now—and hopes to see him enjoy his right as the legal king of Denmark. During the dual with Laertes, she cannot hide her support for Hamlet;

He's fat and scant of breath.
 Here Hamlet, take my napkin, rub thy brows.
 The queen carouses to thy fortune, Hamlet.

 Come, let me wipe thy face. (Shakespeare V, ii, 264-272)

Oedipus forces the individual either to internalize the differential functions that govern the exclusive disjunctions and thereby “resolve” Oedipus, or fall prey to neurosis. It is, in the long run, a colonial education based on power and violence²⁶. The debate between culturalists and Orthodox psychoanalysts was about the universality of the Oedipus complex and the possibility of considering it a great paternal symbol gathering all the churches around it. Like Deleuze, Geza Roheim accuses psychoanalysis of creating the Oedipus complex notion and imposing it on psychiatry “[It] was not to be found if it wasn’t looked for. And that one wasn’t looking if one hadn’t had oneself analyzed” (490-91). In fact, if Oedipus himself ‘has no complex’, the Oedipus complex has no Oedipus, just as Narcissism has no Narcissus. It “has to become an idea so that it sprouts each time a new set of arms and legs, lips and mustache. [...] We have been triangulated in Oedipus, and will triangulate in it in turn. From the family to the couple to the family” (Deleuze 312) the cycle never ends: “Oedipus itself would be nothing without the identifications of the parents with the children; and the fact cannot be hidden that everything begins in the mind of the father: isn’t that what you want, to kill me, to sleep with your mother?” (Deleuze 273). In

²⁶ Nowadays, Deleuze’s theory of *Anti-Oedipus*, is used in the Postcolonial studies to account for the relationship between the subject and the object; i.e, the colonizer and the colonized.

fact, what Hamlet unconsciously wanted was his ascendancy to the throne of Denmark, a right that he was deprived. Hamlet was a subject of social institutions and processes but also a subject made from the result of those institutions and processes. After his father's death, he becomes aware of the corruption that threatens Denmark. While the external threat is epitomized by Fortinbras's coming troops to conquer Denmark and reclaim the land that was usurped by the old king [Hamlet's father], the internal threat is embodied by the corruption of the political institution headed by Claudius. The ghost's first appearance is taken by the soldiers as a sign of warning against "something [which] is rotten in the state of Denmark" (Shakespeare I, v, 90). In the final scene, Laertes announces the purification of Denmark and the recuperation of stability; "He [Claudius] is justly served, / It is a poison tempered by himself. / Exchange forgiveness with me, noble Hamlet" (Shakespeare V, ii, 307-309).

Deleuze points out that the fundamental function of schizoanalysis [the substitute for psychoanalysis] is to "destroy. [It] goes by way of destruction—a whole scouring of the unconscious, a complete curettage. Destroy Oedipus, the illusion of the ego, the puppet of the super-ego, guilt, the law, castration" (311). The main task is to discover desiring-machines among the social molar machines. In fact, the father assumes his fatherhood in relation to a child and vice versa. "*Oedipus is first the idea of an adult paranoiac, before it is the childhood feeling of a neurotic*" (Deleuze 274). In this way, he places schizoanalysis at a higher position than psychoanalysis. In fact, schizoanalysis is in the power of analyzing psychoanalysis itself. Some psychiatrists may see schizophrenia as something rooted in the family, but Deleuze prefers to analyze it separately because it abides in an extended process that undoes the family and contains it.

Together with Guattari, he tackles the notion of the holy family or what they ironically call the "daddy-mommy-me" structure, destabilizing thus the Freudian triangular model of the

Oedipus complex that has dominated psychoanalytic thought for decades. Individuals with psychological problems resort to psychoanalysis in the hope of finding the security they lost, but it is a hopeless security; as Henry Miller points out, “there is none. The man who looks for security, even in the mind, is like a man who would chop off his limbs in order to have artificial ones which will give him no pain or trouble” (xvi). Psychoanalysis, now, proves to be helpless and old-fashioned because it reduces every manifestation of desire to the familial conflict fixed by Freud and his followers. *Anti-Oedipus* proposes Nietzsche as the substitute because he preaches a theory of desire and will, of the conscious and the hidden unconscious forces that transfer desire from an obsolete familial ground to a wider economic social field in which relations are based upon profit and exploitation.²⁷ In *Hamlet*, a desire for something to be fulfilled is always behind the construction of relationships. For instance, Horatio forms an axis with Hamlet to help him recover his natural place as the legitimate king of Denmark because he was favored for election to the throne, to start a new and less corrupt cycle in the history of his country. In addition to their childhood friendship, they join their forces to achieve a political goal. On the other side, Claudius urges Laertes to align with him against Hamlet, taking advantage of the death of Polonius and the suicide of Ophelia. He tells him;

Revenge should have no bounds. But, good Laertes,
Will you do this, keep close within your chamber;
Hamlet, returned, shall know you are come home;
We'll put on those shall praise your excellence,
And set a double varnish on the fame
The Frenchman gave you; bring you in fine together,
And wager on your heads.

.....
So that with ease, or with a little shuffling, you may choose
A sword unbated, and in a pass of practice
Requite him for your father. (Shakespeare IV, vii, 127-138)

²⁷ For Deleuze, Nietzsche is more convenient because he pointed a way out for the individual, while Marx and Freud restricted themselves to explaining the culture they were opposing.

The dual, suggested and organized by Claudius for a purpose, is one of the social manifestations of the way the mechanism of power works. In fact, Claudius tries to stimulate Laertes and to win his allegiance because he feels threatened as the reputation of the latter is growing after his return. The messenger tells Claudius,

The rabble call him lord,
And, as the world were now but to begin,
Antiquity forgot, custom not known,
The ratifiers and props of every word,
They cry 'Choose we! Laertes shall be king.'
Caps, hands and tongues applaud it to the clouds,
'Laertes shall be king, Laertes king!' (Shakespeare IV, v, 102-108)

In this sense, Deleuze thinks that fantasy is not an individual phenomenon, but rather a collective one. It is a collective fantasy putting the individual in a mutual contact with his counterparts. All psychoanalysts, before Deleuze, concentrated their focus on primal repression so as to wriggle out of the system of social and psychic repression that creates neurotics. The major task of the psychoanalyst remains to reterritorialize, on the couch, the flows of desire in the representation of castration and Oedipus. However, the schizoanalyst has to disengage those *detrterritorialized* flows, in the molecular components of desiring-production, instead.²⁸

Actually, the primary Deleuzean thesis of schizoanalysis is that every kind of investment is merely social and always bears upon sociohistorical foundations. For Freud, the libido does not invest the social field except on certain conditions. It must be desexualized and sublimated first. He adheres to this hypothesis mainly because he wants to preserve sexuality within the limited boundaries of Narcissus, Oedipus, the ego and the family romance. Still, the schizo is the one who escapes all familial limitations as well as all the Oedipal "and personological references—

²⁸ Schizophrenia as a process is inseparable from deterritorialization. It differs from the stases that may reterritorialize it into neurosis, perversion, and psychosis. "Everything becomes mobile: images, consumer products, and people are cut off from their conditions of production and circulate around the globe, resting in juxtaposition with others of entirely different origins, before attaining an ultimate egalitarian status in the garbage dump, old age or oblivion. Deleuze and Guattari call this kind of movement *detrterritorialization*." (Goodchild 3)

I'll no longer say me, I'll no longer say daddy-mommy—and he keeps his word” (Deleuze 362 *AO*). The problem of psychoanalysis lies in “the postulate common to Oedipal relativism and Oedipal absolutism—i.e, the stubborn maintenance of a familialist perspective, which wreaks havoc everywhere” (Deleuze 173-174 *AO*). The family organization is lived by the child first as a microcosm, and then projected into the adult and social development (*devenir*). All the attention before was given to the understanding of an extra-familial libido. It is a question of the familial organization itself which has to be lived by the child as his first stage and then it propagates to the social level when the individual grows up.

According to Deleuze, Freudian psychoanalysis is typical of the figure of *Interpretosis* which is a western ‘disease’ that traces all becomings back to some distant origin. It is an automatic interpretation machine. Whatever one says, one means something else different which causes a split in the ego. Psychoanalysis has a certain pious conception of itself; through lack and castration, psychoanalysts seem to be too self-righteous. Freud, for his part, argues that pieces of memory lead back to a primal scene where the child had witnessed his parents in their sexual intercourse, which the child understood as an act of violence. All connections are traced back to this childhood trauma, a process which Deleuze tries to deconstruct. He believes that in “The Wolf Man” case history, the image of the wolf does not stand for that original scene where the mother is ‘lost’ to the father. It is not a desire to possess or regain something which is the object of desire; it is rather a desire to become-other through what is more than oneself. Oedipus was universal for Freud and “the unconscious [...] merely re-told this story in ever varying-forms. The unconscious, then, functioned as a personal and timeless ‘theatre’, replaying the Oedipal drama within us all” (Colebrook 144). In the same way, the Oedipal drama was seen as a representation (theatre) and not as a production (factory) of desire. This is taken by Deleuze as a proof of the positivity of desire and against the referential mythical tendency of psychoanalysis.

In fact, Deleuze starts from psychoanalysis, but soon departs from it to criticize Freud for *psychoanalyzing* desire or reducing it to a familial framework:

According to Deleuze, though, the fixed terms of ‘mother’ and ‘child’ are only formed after desire has been organised and socialised. We need the modern notion of family, for example, to think of the first life relation as a mother-child relation; and we can only have the mother-father figures of the family after a long history of passing from tribes, to extended clans, to modern nuclear units. The mother-child dyad is not the beginning of desire, for desire begins collectively. [...] Desire, for Deleuze, does not begin *from* a relation between persons—such as the mother and child with the intervening father. Desire begins impersonally and collectively, and from a multiplicity of investment which traverses persons. Body-parts are invested *before* persons. (Colebrook 141)

This kind of desire cannot be framed within the limits of sexual relations between individuals. Desire is pre-personal, pre-human, a flow that cannot be fixed. Anti-Oedipal desire is an ‘orphan’ with no original identity or home. In the long run, multiplicity, creation and desire are the principal elements of the social unconscious and they are understood in terms of other concepts such as *detritorialization* (travelling in foreign areas), *intensity* (vitality), *machine* (production), *virtuality*, *actuality and immanence* (ability to be affected). The structural version of Oedipus is taken by Deleuze to be the first agent of repression in society. He notices that the Oedipus complex, as it is called by psychoanalysis, will be born of latency, and it signifies the return of the repressed under the conditions that disfigure, displace, and even decode desire. The Oedipus complex appears only after latency²⁹; and when Freud recognizes two phases separated by latency, it is only the second phase that merits the complex’s name, while the first expresses only its parts and wheels functioning from a completely different viewpoint, in a completely different organization. Deleuze adds that

the cure has become an endless process in which both the the patient and the doctor chase each other round and round, and this circle, whatever modifications are applied, remains Oedipal. It’s like ‘OK, talk!’ But it’s always about the same thing: mommy

²⁹ By ‘latency’, it is meant an interval of time separating the event and its echo or its return. The childhood trauma is a belated event which is repressed in the unconscious and which returns later when the subject grows up.

and daddy. Psychoanalysis goes round and round, in a vicious circle, a familial circle, so to speak, represented by Oedipus. All sorts of mental derangement or psychological troubles are still located in the familial determinations of the father and mother type. Oedipus and castration—whether in the Imaginary or in the Symbolic—systematically efface the social, political and cultural content from every psychic disequilibrium. There we see the mania of psychoanalysis with all its paralogisms: it presents as a resolution, or an attempted resolution, of the complex what is rather the latter's definitive establishment or its interior installation, and it presents as a complex what is still the complex's opposite. What will be necessary in order for Oedipus to become *the* Oedipus, the Oedipus complex? (234 *DI*).

Desire in *Hamlet*, mainly with Freud and to a certain extent with Lacan, did not deviate from the general conception of the Oedipus complex that functions within the closed arena of the family eliminating any extrinsic elements. The individual is instructed by the family but he is tamed by society because he needs a wider milieu where rules are internalized. The child growing up in a society acquires self-control by assimilating the rules and laws as well as the behaviour and ethical values commonly agreed upon and Hamlet does not make the exception. His academic background, his royal descent and his unconscious desire for recuperating the throne of Denmark rise him from family conflicts to social interactions.

Deleuze also fortells the fall of psychoanalysis;

Take advantage of Oedipus and castration while you still can, it won't last forever. [...] Psychiatry was attacked, along with the psychiatric hospital. Psychoanalysis seemed untouchable and uncompromised. But we want to show that psychoanalysis is worse than the hospital, precisely because it operates in the pores of capitalist society and not in the special places of confinement. [...] Psychoanalysis fulfils precise functions in this society. [...] The family, instead of constituting and developing the dominant factors of social reproduction, is content to apply and develop the factors in its own mode of reproduction. Father, mother and child thus become the simulacrum of the images of capital (Mister Capital, Madame Earth, and their child the worker) (220-265).

Each person as a little triangulated microcosm—the narcissistic ego is identical with the Oedipal subject. “Daddy-mommy-me—one is sure to re-encounter them everywhere” (Deleuze 265) since everything has been reduced, referred or applied to them. The family's role is to reorganize desire to become intra-familial; therefore, psychoanalysis intervenes to complete the work exercised by

the family and to help the neurotic to accomplish or to solve unfinished Oedipal conflicts. Oedipus, generally speaking, is resolved by internalizing the structure of desire it bolsters: logically then, authoritarian figures are only extensions of the father figure and any sort of sexual attraction is but a repetition of the primary desire for the mother. “Everywhere desire is repressed, but it still functions through the desire for the State, and the desire for the actualization of the State. Desire turns towards its own repression” (Goodchild 97).

Unlike the Freudian theory which associates desire with need and lack, Deleuze believes that desire is productive through and through and that it is invested in the *socius*, giving it an active role. “If desire produces, its product is real. If desire is productive, it can be productive only in the real world and can produce only reality” (Deleuze 26). It is the engine of flows and bodies functioning as units of production. Desire does not lack anything except from a fixed subject and it does not refer to any Law:

An idea like Oedipus, the theatrical representation of Oedipus, mutilates the unconscious and gives no expression to desire. Oedipus is the effect of social repression on desiring production. Even with a child, desire is not Oedipal, it functions like a mechanism, produces little machines, establishing connections among things. (Deleuze 233)

Deleuze, herein, corrects his predecessors’ views about desire and assumes that needs are derived from desire instead of stimulating it. Lack and need are created and organized in and through social production which is the aftermath of desire:

Each desire that motivates capitalist production, based on the postponement of pleasure, repeats the Oedipal structure. The child desires the mother in imagination, and is threatened with castration by the father in imagination; the child resolves the Oedipus complex by accepting the castration of its imagination, so as to internalize Oedipus as a symbolic structure. (Goodchild 101-2)

Deleuze and Guattari make desire the universal activity of a special sexual energy. It is neither biological, nor metaphysical nor symbolic. It is a plane of immanence: production is an autoproduction and does not depend on any external force. Deleuze claims that “social

production is purely and simply desiring production itself under determinate conditions [...] There is only desire and the social, and nothing else” (29). Oedipus, despite its widespread fame since its appearance with Freud, has been criticized for being a belief injected, like venom, into the unconscious. Undecidable, virtual, reactive or reactionary: such is Oedipus and its denunciation has always been its founding enunciation. It provides the individual with faith only to rob him of power and inculcate to him how to desire his own repression by means of different institutions which help to Oedipalize and neuroticize him. It is, in other words, a sort of imperialism paving the way for the colonization of man by another. “We are all little colonies and it is Oedipus that colonizes us” (265). Deleuze writes “it is often thought that Oedipus is an easy subject to deal with, something perfectly obvious, ‘a given’ that is there from the very beginning [...] [It] presupposes a fantastic repression of desiring machines” (3). The crux of the whole Oedipal problem turns around fixing the precise forces that cause the Oedipal triangulation to close up and the conditions that push this triangulation to divert desire so that it flows across a surface within a narrow channel that is not a natural conformation of this surface. The Deleuzean theory then, shatters the iron collar of Oedipus and defies ‘The International Psychoanalytic Association’ that bears above its door the inscription “*Let no one enter who does not believe in Oedipus*” (45). But once the child has grown up and is liberated from the fastening fetters of the family, he finds himself deeply immersed in a broad network of social relations completely different from his limited familial relations. “The small child lives with his family around the clock,” Deleuze comments, “but within the bosom of this family, and from the very first days of his life, he immediately begins having an amazing nonfamilial experience that psychoanalysis has completely failed to take into account” (47).

Desire in society is closely related to Schizophrenia³⁰. It is the universe of productive and reproductive desiring-machines, universal primary production as the essential reality of man and nature. It is primarily the process of producing desire and desiring-machines before being a mental state or a pathological case. However, Deleuze asks whether it is possible to consider schizophrenia as “the product of the capitalist machine, as manic-depression and paranoia are the product of the despotic machine, and hysteria the product of the territorial machine” (33). While psychoanalysis merely measures everything against neurosis and the castration complex, schizoanalysis starts with the schizo and studies his breakdowns and his breakthroughs. Psychoanalysis refuses to be updated and innovated, and lives on the Freudian legacy which belongs to well-determined era of time with specific circumstances. It continues to pose its old questions and to develop its interpretations which are based on the Oedipal triangle and its depths despite its full awareness that today, this method is inadequate to explain the so called psychotic phenomena. For them, “a schizophrenic out for a walk is a better model than a neurotic lying on the analyst’s couch” (xvii).

Psychoanalysis was shutting sexuality up in a bizarre sort of box painted with bourgeois motifs, in a kind of rather repugnant artificial triangle, thereby stifling the whole sexuality as production of desire so as to recast it along entirely different lines, making of it ‘a dirty little secret’, the dirty little family secret, a private theater rather than the fantastic factory of Nature and Production. (Deleuze 49)

Moreover, psychoanalysis is condemned for taking part in the repressive bourgeois work instead of contributing to an undertaking which may bring about liberation. It played a crucial role in keeping the European society yoked to daddy-mommy and made no effort to do away with this problem once and for all. Psychoanalysis is just like the Russian revolution, as it is

³⁰ “Term invented by Eugen Bleuler (1911) to denote a group of psychoses whose unity had already been demonstrated by Kraepelin when he placed them under the general heading of ‘dementia praecox’ and made what is still the classical distinction between three varieties, namely the hebephrenic, the catatonic and the paranoid types” (Laplanche and Pontalis 408).the term ‘schizophrenia’ comes originally from the Greek ‘to split’ or ‘to cleave’ and ‘mind’. Although Freud made different suggestions about Schizophrenia, the task of defining the structure of this illness and the way it functions has been carried by his successors.

described by Deleuze. No one can tell when it started going bad and corrupt. “It is, in fact, as if Freud had drawn back from this world of wild production and explosive desire, wanting at all costs to restore a little order there, an order made classical owing to the ancient Greek theatre” (Deleuze 54). The psychoanalyst is the principle enemy of desire because he is the emblem and the carrier of Oedipus and the agent of anti-production in desire who tries to inject Oedipus and force it upon the unconscious.

“Traditional psychoanalysis explains that the instructor is the father, and that the colonel too is the father, and that the mother is nonetheless the father too, it reduces all of desire to a familial determination that no longer had anything to do with the social field actually invested by the libido” (Deleuze 62). Schizoanalysis then, leads Oedipus to its self-criticism and “does not play the pretend mirror games dear to psychoanalysis” (Genosko 494). It explores and experiments with an unconscious in actuality [*en acte*] rather than being a science, a technique or a type of cure for an illness—as psychoanalysis pretends to be and promises to fulfil. It is, on the contrary, inseparable from a personal trajectory in specific social, cultural and political circumstances.

Guattari assumes, “we decided to relate capitalism and schizophrenia in an attempt to encompass these fields as a whole; that way we avoided limiting ourselves to the various pathways that allow you to pass between them” (233). The unconscious that schizoanalysis intends to analyze is *transcendental, material, schizophrenic, nonfigurative, real, machinic and productive* rather than *metaphysical, ideological, Oedipal, imaginary, symbolic, structural and expressive*. It is a molecular, microphysical and micrological unconscious instead of being molar or gregarious (Deleuze 110). Philip Goodchild notes that “the unconscious is no longer a theatre of representation posing questions of meaning, but it has [...] become a factory or machine posing questions of use: how is Oedipus used in capitalism?” (124).

The basic structure of the Oedipal apparatus must not only be generalized in time so as to account for all the triangular experiences of the child and his parents, it must be generalized in space to include those triangular relations other than the parent child relations. To put it differently, the Oedipal triangular structure is blamed for being limited to the family. It must, instead, start from the family to propagate into the society. David Cooper, for his part, in his article “On Being Born into a Family,” accounts for the attack on the family structure that Deleuze launches, saying:

It is not a question of denying the vital importance of parents or the love attachment of children to their mothers and fathers. It is a question of knowing what the place and the function of parents are within desiring-production, rather than doing the opposite and forcing the entire interplay of desiring machines to fit within (rabattre tout le jeu des machines desirantes dans) the restricted code of Oedipus. (12-13)

In the same way, Perez joins his voice to Deleuze and all the critics who find something wrong with psychoanalysis and try to deconstruct it. He says,

For Sartre, hell was other people: this is because he viewed all human relationships in terms of power and hier(archy). And the same applies to Freud, of course. Freud was concerned with preserving the old family tree: all those branches (boys and girls) depending on their root (Oedipus, the Father, the Phallus). As an alternative we propose the *rhizome*³¹: horizontal lines of connections and relations, none of them hier(archical). There is no reason to believe that human beings can only have vertical relationships, or relationships only in terms of power. This is another myth of the ‘centralist’ Western tradition. If something does not have a center, sure enough there is always Oedipus lurking in the background—in one form or another—ready to subsume whatever it is under a universal structure. (118-119)

Deleuze is always rejecting stability and in favor of mobility, action and flows. Therefore, he opposes the authority of any essentialist system of authority (family, Nation, Party, Congregation,

³¹ In *Le Vocabulaire de Deleuze*, François Zourabichvili writes :’’A la différence des arbres ou de leurs racines, le rhizome connecte un point quelconque avec un autre point quelconque, et chacun de ses traits ne renvoie pas nécessairement a des traits de même nature, il met en jeu des régimes de signes très différents et même des états de non-signes. Le rhizome ne se laisse ramener ni a l’Un ni au multiple... Il n’est pas d’unités, mais de dimensions, ou plutôt de directions mouvantes. Il n’a pas de commencement ni de fin, mais toujours un milieu, par lequel il pousse et déborde. Il constitue des multiplicités.’’ (71). This notion appeared for the first time in *Kafka*. People constantly look for roots or ancestors and for the key of existence back in childhood. Traditional Genealogists, Psychoanalysts and phenomenologists are the principal enemies of the rhizome. Deleuze and Guattari claim that the rhizome is an affair of cartography, i.e- of clinic or immanent evaluation.

School, and Church) which attempts to territorialize the individual, chain his freedom and impede his movement. In this context, *Anti-Oedipus*, a specimen of Deleuze's revolutionary theory, seeks to resurrect the deterritorialized flows of desire, those that have been silenced or discarded, and also those that refused to be reduced or minimalized to the codes of the Oedipus complex in its Freudian sense. What is at stake in this "newly-founded" theory are life flows which waver between two extremes: from an existentialist questioning of birth and being to a state of power and proving of existence. That is how the process of desire within schizophrenics works. "The ego, however, is like daddy-mommy: the schizo has long since ceased to believe in it" (Deleuze 23). Indeed, Freud never stepped beyond this narrowly-formulated conception of the ego and what prohibited him from that was absolutely his tripartite formula (the Oedipal-neurotic one): daddy-mommy-me. He could never escape the world of the father or of guilt. Every neurotic problem is understood in terms of this formula that resembles a mathematical equation: "Say that it's Oedipus, or you will get a slap in the face. The psychoanalyst no longer says to the patient: 'Tell me a little bit about your desiring-machines, won't you!' Instead he screams: 'Answer daddy-and-mommy when I speak to you!'" (Deleuze 45). Freud goes up against the idea promoted by psychiatry, that madness is essentially linked to a loss of reality, but he forgets to account for the social reasons lurking behind it.³² In the back rooms and behind the closed door of the analyst's study, Deleuze starts his analysis noticing that what is needed is fresh air and a new relationship with the outside world based on openness rather than confinement. In a nutshell, "to be anti-Oedipal is to be anti-ego as well as anti-homo, willfully attacking all reductive psychoanalytic and political analyses that remain caught within the sphere of totality and unity, in order to free the multiplicity of desire from the deadly neurotic and Oedipal yoke" (xx).

³² For a distinction between the Neurosis and the Psychosis, see chapter 1.

Deleuze pins down two ways to escape from the repressive authority of psychoanalysis. First, the pervert must resist Oedipalization and create other territorialities for himself, more artificial than those of Oedipus. Second, and more important, the schizo is not Oedipalizable. He goes beyond territoriality and takes his flows right into the void (what Deleuze calls the desert). In this way, Hamlet's reterritorialization (his Deleuzian desert) or his going beyond the oedipalization happens in his intellectual world. Psychoanalysis blames Hamlet's education and his intelligence for hindering his way to revenge, but it forgets that this is his only way to step outside the oedipal ring and to foreground his identity. Hamlet's sophisticated soliloquies, his philosophical meditations, his main plot to decipher the mystery of his father's death and his secondary plot to send Rosencrantz and Guildenstern to death are all but testing moments which prove that his interests and his concerns are far from representing a merely identical version of Oedipus. Schizoanalysis, this politically-oriented analysis of desire, becomes a mighty means in which schizophrenia as a process serves both as a starting point as well as a final destination. Still, "it is not the purpose of schizoanalysis to resolve Oedipus, it does not intend to resolve it better than Oedipal psychoanalysis does. Its aim is to de-Oedipalize the unconscious in order to reach the real problems" (Deleuze 81). To illustrate, in schizoanalysis, Hamlet's attachment to Gertrude is not only an unconscious Oedipal desire for the mother, but it is also a desire to use her as a weapon to array himself against Claudius. All his acts and desires are politically-oriented. For example, Hamlet's cry for revenge is, in fact, a mere counter-reaction for a murderous take-over of the kingdom and the appearance of the ghost is merely a reminder of what happened to Denmark and what to do to redeem it:

Oh horrible, oh horrible, most horrible!
 If thou hast nature in thee bear it not;
 Let not the royal bed of Denmark be
 A couch for luxury and damned incest.

.....

Adieu, adieu, adieu. *Remember me.* (Shakespeare I, v, 80-91)

Revenge, in this case, may be taken from a political perspective and not only as an ethical value. The ghost, before being a father-figure, is dressed in a king's attire and is addressed as a king. Hamlet's final objective behind killing Claudius is not to intercept his incestuous marriage to Gertrude or to punish him for his crime as much as it is to purify the throne of Denmark from political corruption. The dead father (Old Hamlet) and the actual father (Claudius) are two faces of the state; its glorious past which Hamlet wants to resume and its rotten present which he desires to redeem through *revenge*.

In the end, psychoanalysis remains an essentialist school that was from the start, still is, and perhaps always will be a well-constituted church and a form of treatment based on a set of beliefs to which only the very faithful could adhere to; those who believe in a security that amounts to being lost in the herd and defined in terms of common and external goals (Foucault xvi).

To find a better supplement for this school of thought and criticism, Deleuze and Guattari suggest a new modal of desire which is the result of their understanding of society and their observation of its changes. This modal is based principally on the desiring-machines which work together in a collective homogeneous cycle to *produce* desire rather than *represent* it.

Desire and the "Desiring Machines"

Deleuze's concept of desire has its source in Kantian philosophy. But its construction draws on elements from Bataille, Marx, Nietzsche, Spinoza, and, of course Freud and Lacan. It takes *something* from *everything* and tries to be *itself*. Foucault asks, "How can and does desire deploy its forces within the political domain and grow more intense in the process of overturning the established order? *Ars erotica, ars theoretica, ars politica*?" (xii), in an attempt to unveil the

way this mechanism functions. Deleuze's theory is concerned with knowledge *of* desire, *by* desire and *for* desire. Indeed, the social field is like a set of film images, and desire is merely a director who builds relations and connections through montage and cutting. Power is not the repression of desire but its expansion. It goes without saying that power and desire are inseparable and go hand in hand and "one has only to look at our former codes of punishments to understand what effort it costs on this earth to breed a 'nation of thinkers'" (Deleuze 145). Once desire is related to Oedipus and explained in terms of the castration complex, then its productive nature is ignored. Deleuze says, "we condemn desire to vague dreams or imaginations that are merely conscious expressions of it; we relate it to independent existences—the father, the mother, the begetters—that do not yet comprise their elements as internal elements of desire" (107). There are, in fact, three errors formulated about desire: lack, law and signifier. It is often thought that desire is for what one lacks and wants to acquire or recuperate but it is, for Deleuze, more than that. Desire creates an investment and this is its productive attribute. A child's mouth experiencing pleasure at the breast of his mother, desires the breast. In this way, desire becomes a producer. The breast, more than being a body part in the literal sense, turns into a virtual object: the breast of fantasy and pleasure. For Deleuze and Guattari, desire is under too much repression in a society. However, it is an *explosive* desire as there is no desiring-machine assembling itself without demolishing entire social sectors. Oedipus, on the contrary, is not a state of desire. It is only *an idea* that repression inspires in us concerning desire. It is inevitable to remember that desiring production is as old as human existence, and recurs from the moment there is social production and reproduction.

Eric Fromm in his *The Crisis of Psychoanalysis* argues that the individual cannot be extracted from his social and historical context. He explains, "up to now, the vast majority of psychoanalytic works, which have tried to apply psychoanalysis to social problems [...] saw

clearly enough that the individual can only be understood as a socialized being” (117). In different terms, psychoanalysis shows that the instinctual drives develop on biologically determined bases although their content is widely affected by the individual’s socio-economic conditions. Even if psychoanalysis places the individual within the confinement of the family, it neglects the wider arena of society. Absolutely, the child makes his beginning in the family and he/she is initiated by its members, “but the family itself, all its typical internal emotional relationships and the educational ideals it embodies, are in turn conditioned by the social and class background of the family; in short, they are conditioned by the social structure in which it is rooted” (Fromm 116). There is a cause-effect relationship between society’s libidinal structure and its economic conditions for new libidinal intentions, desires and satisfactions are stimulated to arise when the economic conditions change. Even in love, the economic and social background plays a crucial role in the success or the failure of any relation. To illustrate, Polonius advises Ophelia to avoid Hamlet once he finds out what happens between his daughter and the prince: “Lord Hamlet is a prince out of thy star. / This must not be” (Shakespeare II, ii, 139-140). Short of arguments, Polonius resorts to highlighting the ample social differences between an aristocratic family that rules and another at its service. For his part, Laertes also addresses his sister “Fear it Ophelia, fear it my dear sister, / And keep you in the rear of your affection, / Out of the shot and danger of desire” (Shakespeare I, iii, 32-34).

Everything, however minute and unnoticed its role may seem, is a machine that produces something. For Deleuze, the anus—a neglected organ in the Freudian theory—may replace the penis and account for the phallus,

One is even compelled to say that, while in our societies the penis has occupied the position of a detached object distributing lack to the persons of both sexes and organizing the Oedipal triangle, it is the anus that in this manner detaches it, it is the anus that removes and sublimates the penis in a kind of *Aufhebung* that will constitute the phallus. (Deleuze 143)

So, to put it differently, Deleuze opposes the sex-based distinctions. While the penis distinguishes the two sexes, according to the Freudian theory, through possessing the phallus or lacking it, and while it is fundamental to the oedipal structure, Deleuze suggests the anus; another machine which transcends the duality of lack/possession and which, like desire, produces flows. Deleuze subverts the notion of the phallus because it has been, since its discovery, the territorialization of desire and the center around which all libidinal powers, desires and wishes revolve. Instead, he uses the concept of the *machine* to describe an immanent production: it is not the production of something by an individual, but production per se. A machine has no subjective identity and no center around which it organizes its work: Deleuze relates the constantly recurrent idea of 'deterritorialization' to the machine which is essentially chosen as a big metaphor of production for its assemblages, connections and disclosures. It is only through the connection of one machine to another that something is produced. Think for example of the bicycle, which is nothing if it is not connected to the human body, another machine. It is indispensable to remember here that the 'machine' in the Deleuzean thought is an idea and not a metaphor, which removes it from the referential/representational/figurative level of language.

Among the desiring machines that *Anti-Oedipus* pins down are the *Despotic desiring machines*. Hamlet can be a good case in point. The Prince of Denmark surrenders to the Law of the State in much the same way that the neurotic surrenders himself or herself to the Law of Oedipus. His identity is only made possible in a triadic relationship: that of himself, the Elector (the mediator of the Law), and the State. Mommy plays the role of the State, Daddy the punishing mediator. It is only after completely surrendering to the State, to the Law, to the despotic machine, to the overcoding machine, that the Prince can at last be forgiven by the Elector, the Father. Hamlet is nothing other than a "machine" which has to regulate all these conflicts. Had

his father died a normal death, had his mother preserved an honourable widowhood, he might well have attained the crown and married Ophelia. However, some frustrations are attendant upon him and he must carry them alone; hence the ghost and revenge. His own desiring machines proved to be deficient—or at least insufficient—to carry that task alone. He needs the intervention of other machines to form a cycle, but that comes very late when Hamlet was breathing his last. Fortinbras' arrival in the last scene does not help Hamlet reclaim his kingdom and finish his revenge, but could help him recover his honour as Fortinbras orders;

Let four captains
 Bear Hamlet like a soldier to the stage,
 For he was likely, had he been put on,
 To have proved most royal; and for his passage,
 The soldier's music and the rite of war
 Speak loudly for him. (Shakespeare V, ii, 374-379)

In an interview, Deleuze points out, “yes, we’ve given the notion of machine its maximum extension: in relation to flows. We define the machine as any system that interrupts flows” (219). To put it differently, a machine is recognized by Deleuze as a system of cuts [*un système de coupures*]: the portioning-cut of desiring-machines, the detachment cut from which emanates the Body without Organs³³ and the remainder-cut producing the nomadic subject: every machine is in relation to another material that it cuts. All these machines are heterogeneous, dispersed parts which form conjunctions, disjunctions and connections through some indirect processes. Machines are real and therefore the real consists only of machines. For instance, Deleuze describes the movement of desire flows and he examines the ways in which this movement is blocked and in which flows are restricted and guided into channels or circuits that

³³ The Body Without Organs (BwO) or “Le Corps sans Organes (CsO): “Le corps n’est jamais un organisme. Les organismes sont les ennemis du corps. Le corps sans Organes s’oppose moins aux organes qu’à cette organisation des organes qu’on appelle organisme.” (Zourabichvili). The Body without Organs is no longer a specifically schizophrenic entity, but the body itself of desire.

are fixed, limited and exclusive in their connections. Saying the unconscious “produces” means that it is a kind of mechanism that produces other mechanisms.

Exactly like a machine, desire “is at work everywhere, functioning smoothly at times, at other times in fits and starts” (Deleuze 1). The breast, for instance, is a machine that produces milk and the mouth forms another machine coupled to it to form a cycle. These desiring-machines work only when they break down, and through continually breaking down:

A machine may be defined as a system of interruptions or breaks (*coupures*). [...] every machine, in the first place, is related to a continual material flow (*hylé*) that it cuts into. It functions like a ham-slicing machine, removing parts from the associative flow: the anus and the flow of shit it cuts off; for instance; the mouth that cuts off not only the flow of milk but also the flow of air and sound; the penis that interrupts not only the flow of urine but also the flow of sperm.” (Deleuze 36)

Every machine, in this sense, is related to another machine connected to it. It may represent a flow or the production of a flow. “In desiring-machines everything functions at the same time, but amid hiatuses and ruptures, breakdowns and failures, stalling and short circuits, distances and fragmentations, within a sum that never succeeds in bringing its various parts together so as to form a whole” (Deleuze 42).

On the other hand, through his fervent attack against Psychoanalysis, Deleuze tackles the Freudian representation of woman in an attempt to do justice to a very productive component in society. ‘Becoming woman’ is not undergoing a biological metamorphosis to really become a woman; it is the desire to recuperate the real image of woman that reflects its identity—an identity that was mutilated and relegated to inferior positions based on sex and gender;

Desire is a ‘sexuality’ which extends beyond gender relations, because it can relate entirely heterogeneous terms and territorialities, a multiplicity of sexes. Deleuze and Guattari will use three kinds of knowledge to examine three different kinds of syntheses: codes, territories, and becomings. (Goodchild 41)

Indeed, Ophelia, despite her obedience of her father and of her brother’s commands, tries to take a stand by retaining her desire and by defending her love to Hamlet. Although she listens to

Polonius's and Laertes's instructive tips, which are often preceded by imperative verbs (fear, keep, be, think, hold), she seems to have a voice;

I shall th' effect of this good lesson keep
As watchman to my heart. But good my brother,
Do not as some ungracious pastors do,
Show me the steep and thorny way to heaven,
Whiles like a puffed and reckless libertine
Himself the primrose path of dalliance treads,
And recks not his own rede. (Shakespeare I, iii, 45-51) [my italics]

Implicitly, Ophelia's response implies a rejection of submission to the male authority represented by a father, a brother or a lover. It is also an indirect criticism of the religious institution represented by the church and a call for the individual's freedom of choice and thought and that define woman as an entity of lack. Perez claims that "that is correct, not even as hole can woman be defined as absence or lack: woman is energy, constant movement, flow, and her denied clitoris is just as active as the penis, releasing flows of desire which may shatter the established codes" (104). The little girl must first undergo the realization that she lacks a penis, and secondly, the penis envy which results from such realization. In point of fact, the Oedipus complex becomes the end-result of the little girl's penis envy. The little girl first turns to the mother, but since her mother cannot provide her with the penis, she emerges out of her pre-Oedipal relationship with the mother, and enters the triangulation (or better yet, strangulation) of the Oedipal relationship with the Father. While the castration complex leads to the dissolution of Oedipus complex in boys, the opposite is true for girls. It is precisely because she lacks a penis that she enters the Oedipal relationship, and turns to the Father to provide her with the missing or the castrated penis. The flows of desire, however, released by the clitoris, and hence the active and productive character of her sexuality are replaced by the passive and reproductive character of her sexuality. Deleuze accuses psychoanalysis of territorializing women's sexuality, and a territory—which is namely the vagina—is demarcated for her: a line is drawn between the deterritorialized flows of

the clitoris and the territorialized flows of the vagina. In the end, a prohibition is placed over the former and as Sartre describes it, “the vagina becomes a receptacle, a voracious mouth, a thief, a hole that must be filled, and the territory colonized it is only when the hole is filled and that territory is colonized that “Woman qua Woman is defined for Man” (Perez 106). The purpose is to destroy and to debunk the economy of Freud’s neurosis factory. It is also to liberate women’s flows of desire. Perez claims that

Oedipus is everywhere: Oedipus is the company Boss who harrasses women on the job, Oedipus is that little ‘prick’ called ‘the psychoanalyst’, Oedipus is the political despot, Oedipus is the fascist Teacher, Oedipus is God, Oedipus is the oppressive Priest, Oedipus is the brutal Cop, Oedipus is... any figure of authority. And lastly Oedipus is the Author of reactive desire. Oedipus, as Deleuze and Guattari point out, introduces lack into desire, and the imperialism of Oedipus is founded here on an absence, a symbolic absence, a mythological absence. (108)

Woman never desired the father’s penis for she never lacked it. There is nothing lacking in woman. Instead, what woman as a human being—rather than a Referent—has always desired is the obliteration of universal referent of gender which territorializes her identity and grounds her to the phallogentric classification. This phallogentric hierarchy is the prison of woman’s desire. Her freedom comes from the Deleuzian theory of rhizomatic and horizontal relationships, whether they be with her own gender or with both genders. Freud’s territorialization of woman’s desire is repressive and oppressive. Woman, in a few words, is a “becoming”, a process, a flow, a movement and metamorphosis. It is not a state or a despotic assumption of essences.

Deleuze attempted not only to attack the Freudian school of psychoanalysis but also to find a way for himself and for his theory. Together with Guattari, he managed to amend our understanding of the Oedipus complex through an anti-Oedipal approach that is applicable to different disciplines and that cannot be limited to literature. It turns desire into a rhizomatic concept that spreads everywhere in society, economy and politics to shake the tree-like thoughts implanted in the subject’s head and serving all generations and all times. With *Anti-Oedipus*,

Deleuze announces the death of psychoanalysis, as his favourite philosopher Nietzsche had announced the death of God before him. It is not a surprise, then, when Foucault claimed that one day, the twentieth-century would be called "Deleuzean."

Conclusion

As Flaubert claims, silliness consists in wishing to conclude because an issue like desire is always open to changes and ratifications. However, I ought to say that this research project tried exhaustively and carefully to present a study of desire in *Hamlet* which was, is still and will always be an endlessly controversial issue. In fact, controversy and difference have been my guiding points as I intended to present a multi-dimensional perspective in dealing with the topic at stake. I tried to begin with the origins of psychoanalysis and the contribution that Freud added to the interpretation of *Hamlet*. He paved the way for his followers to better investigate the play; without him, that could hardly have been possible. He accounted for desire in terms of the Oedipus complex which emanates from the ancient Greek theatre and which depends thoroughly on the analysis of the subject's interactions in the family. The individual, for Freud, is purely what the family produces despite its limited area of work.

In the second part, I put Lacan's arguments next to Freud's. His rectifications were based on the linguistic studies that evolved during Structuralism. Lacan argues that the unconscious is structured like language and therefore he moves far away from biologism to give psychoanalysis the scientific dimension that Freud himself claimed without attaining it. Psychoanalysis with Lacan becomes more reliable because it is based on strong objective bases.

The last part of this research is dedicated to the type of desire proposed by Deleuze; it is more appropriate to the twentieth-century and it destroys what Freud had built. Deleuze takes the family fantasy as his starting point but, unlike Freud, he does not stop there. He sees desire operating everywhere through machinic relations and rhizomatic expansions. Desire, in its new version with Deleuze, has no limits. It is a production of social, political and economic metamorphosis that Freud had neglected in his practice. However, through his approach, Deleuze does not pretend to be Marxist but blames Marxism, along with psychoanalysis, for their representation of the individual rather than altering his situation. Desire remains a stretched

concept that the space and limitations of such a project may not fully contain, but it may be a good background for future research. The controversy over desire remains as endless as the concept itself. Every critic can only rely on his 'present' time and his actual circumstances to understand the way desire functions and therefore, every reading is subjective.

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