A CULTURE-SENSITIVE AND NON-HETERONORMATIVE EXAMINATION OF THE OEDIPUS COMPLEX AT THE JUNCTION OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

BY

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ABSTRACT

While anthropology has intensely been occupied with the cross-cultural meanings attributed to family and kinship relations from the beginning of its emergence as a separate field, its involvement with the Oedipus debate began with the publication of Freud's *Totem and Taboo*. Further examinations of the Freudian claims by the ethnographers of the time incited a debate about the universality of the Oedipus complex, which marks the beginning of the volatile encounter between psychoanalysis and anthropology. In this thesis, presenting a chronological account of the arguments around the Oedipus complex within the frameworks of psychoanalysis and anthropology, it is proposed that (i) the western and androcentric formulations of the Oedipus complex are not adequate to reflect the myriad manifestations of our sexualities and our family configurations, hence cannot be contemplated as a universal phenomenon, (ii) one of the basic mechanism of the Oedipus complex is to mediate and repress our polymorphous desires, which is argued to be a direct result of the projection of the personal fear of annihilation onto the societal level, where the generational and cultural survival is ensured through the imperative maintenance of the exogamous and heteronormative social order, and (iii) recognizing that the Oedipus complex is here to stay; we need to formulate culture-sensitive and non-heteronormative accounts, considering the different family configurations in non-western cultures, where semiotic is not necessarily maternal, and those family configurations in our contemporary societies, where non-binary and non-heteronormative realms of 'symbolic' are being created. In line with the last hypothesis, I finally try to present one of the possible culture-sensitive and non-heteronormative accounts of the Oedipus complex, calling for future endeavors in the same path.

Keywords: the Oedipus complex, anthropology, psychoanalysis, feminist theory, queer theory, cross-cultural differences, family, kinship, culture, heteronormative

ÖZET

Ayrı bir disiplin olarak ortaya çıktığı günden bu yana antropoloji, aile ve akrabalık ilişkilerinin kültürlerarası anlamlarıyla yoğun bir şekilde ilgilenmişse de, antropologların Oedipus kompleksi tartışmasına müdahil oluşu Freud'un *Totem ve* Tabu'yu yayımlamasıyla gerçekleşmiştir. Freud'un Oedipus kompleksinin evrensel bir olgu olduğu yönündeki iddialarının erken dönem etnograflar tarafından incelemesi, psikanaliz ve antropoloji arasındaki hassas ilişkinin temellerini atmıştır. Bu tezde, psikanaliz ve antropoloji disiplinleri çerçevesinde Oedipus kompleksine dair düşünceler kronolojik bir şekilde sunulacak olup, bu bağlamda (i) batılı ve erkek-merkezli mevcut Oedipus kompleksi tanımının cinselliğimizin ve aile çeşitliliğimizin dinamiklerini ve çoğulluğunu yansıtmak için yeterli olmadığı ve dolayısıyla evrensel bir olgu olarak düşünülemeyeceği; (ii) bireysel düzlemdeki yok olma korkusunun, soyun ve kültürün devamının 'ekzogami' ve heteronormativite aracılığıyla sağlandığı toplumsal düzleme yansıması sonucu, Oedipus kompleksinin (henüz) sınırlandırılmamış arzularımızı kontrol edilmesine ve bastırılmasına hizmet ettiği; (iii) gelecekte de hayatlarımızda var olmaya devam edecek bir kavram olduğu düşünülürse, semiyotik düzenin sadece anneye özgü olmadığı batılı olmayan toplumlarındaki ve heteronormatif olmayan sembolik düzenlerin yaratılmaya devam edildiği günümüz toplumlarındaki aile düzenlerini de açıklayabilecek kültürel farklılıklara hassas, heteronormatif olmayan bir Oedipus kompleksi tanımına ihtiyacımız olduğu ileri sürülmektedir. Bu ihtiyaç doğrultusunda, kavramın yeniden kurgulanarak, mümkün tanımlar arasından biri sunulacak olup, bu alanda gerçekleştirilecek gelecek çalışmaları teşvik etmek amaçlanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Oedipus Kompleksi, antropoloji, psikanaliz, feminist kuram, queer kuram, kültürlerarası farklılıklar, aile, akrabalık ilişkileri, kültür, heteronormativite

Above all,

To my precious mother, for whom I would always spurn

any other version of reality, where we are not together.

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1. Introduction: Enter Oedipus

"And he will turn out to be the brother of the children in his house—their father, too, both at once, and the husband and the son of the very woman who gave birth to him", warned Teiresias, the blind prophet in Sophocles' play *Oedipus Rex* (c. 429 BC/ 2010), whose protagonist – the king of Thebes, bearing the name Oedipus – finds himself in a 'blind' alley, having discovered that he killed his father and married his own mother, Jocasta – both crimes committed unknowingly. Teiresias' sagacious words undermine the presence of a never-fading threat that lurks in our mind, a threat so detested that we no longer talk about it; the 'atrocious' possibility that a child may desire the love of their mother the same way their father does, sexually, emotionally, consumingly… Discovering that he actualized Teiresias' prophecy, Oedipus gauges his own eyes in order not to see the 'crime' he had committed.

Is it not the very horror of realizing the ineradicable 'nature' of our desires that has long kept us away from reality, where we ascribe the 'evil deed' of Oedipus to myths and folktales, as we anxiously encircle ourselves with an illusion of a world that is less chaotic and more consistent. Though only a few questioned it so far (see Foucault and Butler), can it not be the case that it is this act of attributing biologically and psychologically innate characteristics to these desires that create them in the first place? Perhaps, it is this essentialist attribution that produces the eternal battle with our desires, which did not primarily call for the repression of them. I reckon, it was Teiresias' presumptuous claim that he *knew* what was to come that paved the way for the fall of Oedipus, who tragically carried out what the prophecy had put into his head. While it is truly speculative, it may be this undying will to know and to comprehend why the mind desires what it desires that generates such concepts as the Oedipus complex.

These above-provided ponderings are merely a glimpse of the curiosities that enabled the birth of this thesis, among many others, and it will be my initial aim to keep directing similar questions in the following pages from the lens of the disciplines, anthropology, and psychoanalysis. Due to its 'timeless' message and 'surprisingly' familiar problems surrounding our family lives, the 'crimes' of Oedipus continue to impress and intrigue us. I have chosen the Oedipus complex as the central focus of this thesis, for firmly believing that it accentuates the blurred points, where our psychoanalytical and anthropological discussions about the meaning of 'being human' clash. More importantly, I propose that the anthropological reflections on the cross-cultural validity of the Oedipus complex, combined with the teachings of feminist and queer theories, might inspire psychoanalytic theories into embracing a non-westernized and non-androcentric understanding of being human in addition to enhancing the reevaluation of our cultural values such as sexuality, kinship, family, marriage, and incest.

In a close examination of the Oedipus debate, it will be seen that the early psychoanalysts and anthropologists presented a number of questions, having focused on the 'dark chest of wonders' of childhood sexuality and the 'unspeakable' sexual tension amongst family members: If the Oedipus complex is a psychological fact, how does it manifest itself in other cultures? Does it manifest itself in the same way in every family configuration? How does it unfold in the case of women?, etc. Informed and inspired by the questions posed by the psychoanalysts and anthropologists, whose ideas will be presented chronologically in the next chapters, this thesis hypothesizes that;

(i) The western and androcentric formulations of the Oedipus complex are not adequate to reflect the myriad manifestations of our sexualities and our family configurations and, thus cannot be contemplated as a universal phenomenon.

(ii) One of the basic mechanism of the Oedipus complex is to mediate and repress our polymorphous desires, which is argued to be a direct result of the projection of the personal fear of annihilation onto the societal level, where the generational and cultural survival is ensured through the imperative maintenance of the exogamous and heteronormative social order.

(iii) Recognizing that the Oedipus complex, despite the fact that it is a historically-created phenomenon necessitated by heteronormativity, is here to stay; we need to formulate culture-sensitive and non-heteronormative accounts, considering the different family configurations in non-western cultures, where semiotic is not necessarily maternal, and those in our contemporary societies, where non-binary and non-heteronormative realms of 'symbolic' are being created.

In congruence with the above-stated hypotheses, I try to present one of the possible culture-sensitive and non-heteronormative accounts of the Oedipus complex, which is deemed to follow a non-gendered and non-heterosexual developmental route until the infant is 'forced' into the symbolic, which is claimed to be principally masculine, even though particular cultural cases demonstrate that the intensity and structure of the pattern of valorizing masculine characteristics differ cross-culturally. Agreeing with Butler's claim that the Oedipus complex is a historically-created, androcentric concept necessitated by the laws of heteronormativity and exogamy (2004), which, in my opinion, they arise because of the projection of the personal fear of annihilation onto the societal level, I argue that these laws are no longer indispensable, since we can overcome the conditions of cultural and generational survival thanks to the recent technological developments in our assisted reproductive medicine, and the recent developments in the understanding of our sexualities

and gender identities, which have resulted in a proliferation of non-cisgender, non-binary family configurations.

Although a large number of thinkers wrote extensively on the Oedipus complex before, their arguments were primarily adjunct to their theories and/or they were not able to offer a thorough account of the development of the 'debate' since the scope of the debate intensified long after the period they lived in. In the literature, there is currently one published work that is written exclusively on the psychoanalytical *and* anthropological understanding of the Oedipus complex: Eric Smadja's *The Oedipus Complex: Focus of the Psychoanalysis-Anthropology Debate* (2017), where he explains that the Oedipus complex "crystallizes the conflict" between anthropology and psychoanalysis. Through an analysis of the ways how the social and biological theories of the time approached such a 'sensational' topic and what kind of scientific explanations they felt closer to, Smadja reveals how this debate designated the theoretical and methodological future routes of the two disciplines. Even though I was captivated by the Oedipus 'debate' in the final year of my Bachelor's education thanks to an advanced course in cultural psychology, it was Smadja's book, which incited me to write on the 'debate', even if it demanded an intensive reading on a vast range of disciplines and theories. Therefore, I am indebted to Smadja's work to a great extent.

Nonetheless, Smadja's work is not without its shortcoming and 'wrongdoings', as most academic works are. The biggest 'lack', I think, arises from his exclusion of the feminist thinkers of the 20th century, who wrote against the Western male bias in their formulations of the Oedipus complex. Even though Smadja accommodated the theories of Margaret Mead and Karen Horney, the space allotted to their ideas are either meager in comparison to that of the male theorists, or he simply refrained from explaining in detail how Mead's and Horney's ideas presented grave problems for the Freudian 'spot' Smadja explicitly defends. In the same vein, it remains a mystery why he did not choose to include French feminist thinkers in his

work in spite of the fact that he demonstrates to have an advanced grasp of French with his reading of the original works of the contemporary French psychoanalysts.

It may well be due to that fact that, as one of the most prominent Freud experts today, Smadja might have opted not to deal with the feminist and queer critiques of the Oedipus complex, which throw a fatal blow to Freudian psychoanalysis in its 'heart': the phallus. The main problem with Smadja's ideas lies in the strictly androcentric understanding of the Oedipus complex with a focus on castration anxiety (2017, p. 153). Despite his precise insights into the individual and collective properties of the unconscious, which we actually owe to Jungian psychoanalysis; Smadja seems not to be disaffected with adopting an androcentric explanation. Moreover, Smadja explicitly chooses the psychoanalytical 'side' in the 'debate', criticizing anthropologists for rejecting the 'apparent universal nature' of the Oedipus complex. Consequently, he fails to make sense of the ethnographic accounts that contradict his claims, as he obstinately clings to his psychiatric education and the 'unquestionable' teachings of psychoanalysis.

In this thesis, I will initially present the pertinent literature through a line of temporality (even though sometimes the chronology is violated for believing that the relevant theoretician's ideas are deemed to make more sense within the integrity of the theories they have been presented along). More importantly, this thesis is distinguished from Smadja's work by its inclusion of the Post-Freudian theories, believing that psychoanalysis does not only comprise of classical Freudian psychoanalysis as well as embracing a critical stance that will bring the feminine and the queer voices into the Oedipus debate, focusing on the ways feminist and queer theories later altered the anthropological and psychoanalytical theories.

The theoreticians and figures, whose theories have been allotted here are selected according to personal choice, where I assumed that the mentioned theoretician's role on the

'debate' and how their ideas were more relevant for the discussion. Additionally, the prominent anthropologists and psychologists from France such as Maurice Godelier, Bernard Juillerat, Didier Anzieu, René Kaes, André Green have been excluded due to the fact that their original works are scarcely translated and published in English (even if translated, they were not reachable in the Turkish libraries). Hence, the literature review will only cover the theories and ideas of the English-speaking psychoanalysts and anthropologists, and those figures, whose works have been translated into English. It should be noted that this thesis, by no means, claims to present an authoritative and/or a final and a complete account of the literature surrounding the Oedipus debate.

Realizing the ambiguities and the conflicting explanations regarding the Oedipus complex, the literature review is divided into seven sections. The first section will focus on the historical development of the Oedipus complex, focusing on its 'birth' with Freudian analysis of the individual and society. Therefore, Freud's infamous *Totem and Taboo* (1913) and his other – respectively more cherished – works on the Oedipus complex and its supposed role in the birth of culture and society will be examined.

After presenting a brief analysis of Freud's formulation of the Oedipus complex and his ideas in *Totem and Taboo*, I move onto the second and the third chapters, where I present what the Post-Freudian thinkers (Carl Gustav Jung, Otto Rank, Melanie Klein, and Ernest Jones) thought of the Oedipus concept and how they revised it (the second chapter), and how Freud's universality claim of the Oedipus complex was interpreted, confirmed or contested by the early anthropologists such as Malinowski, Róheim, Kroeber and Mead (the third chapter). In the following chapter, I will return back to psychoanalysis however, it will be seen that these psychoanalysts (Kardiner, Fromm, and Horney), contrary to many psychoanalysts, combined their psychoanalytical theories with the insights of the anthropological theories and findings. It will be presented how new forms of explanations

emerged at this stage, where the universalists explanations were replaced by the relativist accounts.

In the fifth section, it will be seen that the 'hostile' relationship between psychoanalysis and anthropology changed in nature and gave way to a 'reconciliation', where both disciplines compromised on their strict claims of universality and cultural relativity. Starting with the ideas of Lévi-Strauss and Lacan, on whose theories Lévi-Strauss had great influence, the review will move to the theories of the Oedipus complex in American anthropology, where we see a similar polarizing pattern in the ways the Oedipus complex is perceived. Following the sixth section, where the criticisms of Kristeva, Irigaray and Chodorow against the male bias in the classical formulation of the Oedipus complex will be provided, I will present Butler's ideas (the seventh section). Here it will be presented that one of the main mechanism of the Oedipus complex is to establish a culturally-approvable kind of desire, referring to the arguments that the laws against incest and homosexuality are established through the Oedipus complex.

In the concluding chapter, after presenting a short revision that demonstrates how the Oedipus debate progressed and where we are in the 'final' stage, I will try to point out why we need culture-sensitive and non-heteronormative accounts of the Oedipus complex, making use of the ethnographic studies and the contemporary family configurations, which further complicate the previous formulations. After mentioning the limitations of the study, I will present my ideas and recommendations for future research.

2. Theoretical Review of the Oedipus Debate

2. 1. The Birth of the Oedipus Debate: Sigmund Freud

Freud's contributions to psychology are so vast that it is impossible to sufficiently explain his concepts; 'free association', 'dream analysis', 'repression' 'libido', 'unconscious', 'id', 'ego', 'super-ego', 'transference', 'death drive', and 'Eros' are just a small percentage of his own contributions to psychology, let alone founding a whole new field of expertise: Psychoanalysis. Realizing the vast nature of the Freudian literature, this thesis will not present and explain his 'basic' concepts, and simply assume that the reader possesses a basic understanding of the Freudian psychoanalysis; those, who are not familiar with Freud's theories might start with Thurschwell's introductory book *Sigmund Freud* (2000). Relevant to the aim of the thesis, only the ideas of Freud's that are pertinent to the Oedipus complex will be provided in the following pages.

Although Freud's first ideas pertinent to the Oedipus complex appeared in his letter to Wilhelm Fliess dated May 31, 1897, where he initially focused on the hostile impulses and the death wishes of his clients towards their fathers, which emerged out of familial rivalry and jealousy (Masson, 1985), it was on October 15, 1897 that Freud wrote to Wilhelm Fliess, with whom he had been exchanging his then-unorthodox ideas and the matters of his personal life that, through his painstaking self-analysis, he discovered that he had shown sexual wishes towards his own mother and a deep-seated jealousy for his father for some time, concluding that he saw this phenomenon to be a universal event for every child (Masson, 1985, p. 272). In the same letter, he referred for the first time, to the tragedy of *Oedipus Rex*, and created a mythology-based analogy between his newly-emerging concept of the Oedipus complex and the 'fate' of the King of Thebes, and how each child was destined to experience this

‘abominable’ stage of development in order to be a ‘proper-functioning’ adult in society, just as the king Oedipus was doomed to meet his ‘fate’.

In his phenomenal study of dreams and the unconscious, *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900/1999), Freud publicly wrote that the phenomenon of dreaming one’s mother in a sexual manner has been a very common dream element and that it was adjacent with the dreams, where the father dies (p. 203), claiming that “It is the fate of all of us, perhaps, to direct our first sexual impulses towards our mother and our first hatred and murderous wish against our father.” (p. 364). According to the initial Oedipal scenario of a boy’s development, upon realizing that he is not the only one in his mother’s life and that his mother, in fact, has another desire-object, the father, the baby starts to develop rivalrous feelings towards his father, and naively wants the father out of the picture. However, the baby unwillingly acknowledges the sad reality that the father is all-powerful and not only is he indestructible, but he also poses a threat to ‘castrate’ the child – the idea of castration anxiety, which can be interpreted as a real threat to cut away the boy’s penis. (p. 120). Due to the fear of being castrated, the boy succumbs to the will of the father, and learns to identify with him and, rather than following their sexual wishes towards the mother, they project those desires towards other women, who happen to share great personal similarities with the mother of the boy (p. 355). However, this is the ‘optimum’ scenario, where the boy child experiences the oedipal catastrophe and successfully overcomes it and becomes a ‘healthy’ adult.

But, what happens when the boy cannot resolve his sexual impulses? On *Three Essays on Sexuality* (1905/2000), he elaborated on this subject matter. He theorized neurotics to be the individuals, who could not ‘successfully’ resolve their Oedipus complex, and somehow carried those desires over to their adulthood. However, since those desires were repressed and unavailable to their consciousness, they appeared through the manifestation of symptoms and ‘troubling’ dream patterns. On a footnote in the same work, he wrote: “It has justly been said

the Oedipus complex is the nuclear complex of the neuroses and constitutes the essential part of their content. […] Every new arrival on this planet is faced by the task of mastering the Oedipus complex; anyone who fails to do so falls a victim to neurosis." (p.92). He claimed that the neurotics were not only psychologically disturbed individuals, who were suffering from an incestuous fixation in their childhood, but were also not the preferable citizens and adults, for trying to transgress the 'mighty-rule-of-them-all', namely the taboo of incest, which he claimed to be a cultural demand by the society for the establishment and welfare of the society (p.91) – an idea that he would explore more in detail in *Totem and Taboo* (1913/2001).

In his work titled 'Some Neurotic Mechanisms in Jealousy, Paranoia and Homosexuality' (1922), he developed his theory of the 'negative Oedipus complex' for the boys, even though he had speculated in his works between 1919 and 1926 that the infants were born with bisexual desire. According to this 'negative' type of the Oedipus complex, as a result of *some* arrest of sexual development, the boys would develop over-attachment to his mother, which causes him to identify with her instead of his father, and as a result of his over-developed narcissism, he cannot repress his unconscious desire for the father, creating his homosexuality.

Freud culminated the beginning of the socio-historical roots of the Oedipus complex in *The Ego and The Id* (1923/1989), where he combined his earlier ideas with his topological triad of the mind; the ego, the id, and the superego. He attributed the origin of the superego to the combination of biological (child's biological needs and helplessness at birth) and historical factors (having influenced by Ferenczi's ideas), on which he wrote:

> […] the last-mention phenomenon (being the historical explanation), which seems to be peculiar to man, is a heritage of the cultural development necessitated by the

> glacial epoch. We see, then, that the differentiation of the super-ego from the ego is no matter of chance; it represents the most important characteristics of the development both of the individual and of the species; indeed, by giving permanent expression to the influence of the parents it perpetuates the existence of the factors to which it owes its origin. (p. 31)

As it can be realized, Freud saw the existence of the oedipal feelings to be a 'normal' event however, in the case of psychically healthy adults, these desires would remain repressed in the unconscious, 'retaining its libidinal cathexis under the perpetual pressure of the ego'. Therefore, the adult would have either eliminated those Oedipal desires and channeled these desires to other love-objects, or that they would have repressed those desires long ago, and would naturally be unaware of those feelings, unless in times where their unconscious finds ways to surface such as the slip of the tongues, dreams, jokes etc. However, for the neurotics, the ego simply failed to develop 'properly' and is unable to manage the tensions between the neurotics' id and the super-ego.

It should be realized that Freud was barely starting to shape his theory of the Oedipus complex, and therefore this early conceptualization was only receptive to the case of the boys, which subsequently created tremendous upheaval within the feminist cycles. What Freud achieved with the publication of the *New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis* (1933/1973) was that he managed to differentiate between the ways the girls and boys reacted to the Oedipus complex, and there he introduced new ideas into the dynamics of the flow of desire within the family. Even though he initially wrote that the oedipal development of the girls followed the opposite direction of what he had presented for the boys, he corrected himself, stating that the case of the girls was more complicated.

"The mother-identification of the woman can be seen to have two levels, the pre-oedipal, which based on the tender attachment to the mother and which takes her as a model, and the later one, derived from the Oedipus-complex, which tries to get rid of the mother and replace her in her relationship with the mother", he declared (p. 183). The model speculated that the girls initially start developing hostile feelings towards their father for 'coming in between' them and their mother, but realizing that, the mother lacks a penis, they develop 'penis envy'. Accordingly, the girl, who is frustrated with her mother, who is also penis-less like her, starts to develop hostile feelings towards mother, initially for not having protected her from the 'castration' as a result of which she 'lost' her penis, and for being the center of the father's desire, even though she herself may not.

What caused a wide outburst in this explanation was that Freud claimed that the girl remained in the Oedipus complex much longer compared to the boys, if not carrying it incompletely. He suggested that if the girl remained attached to her father, thus 'choosing her alliance for the father', she remains in the Oedipus complex and either finds a husband that very much resembles her father or gives birth to male children, through which she claims the grip of a penis, though symbolically. If the girl remains attached to the mother, however, the girl would adopt masculine characteristics and would create a 'fake' masculine identity, which symbolically compensates for her loss of masculinity and penis. Freud called the outcome of this scenario 'negative Oedipus complex' for girls. The reasons why so many feminist thinkers of the time rejected this approach is apparent *per se* however, these objections towards Freud's phallogocentric explanations will be dealt in detail in the sixth section of this chapter.

Amongst the plethora of Freud's works, *Totem and Taboo* (1913/2001) remains possibly the most controversial and widely challenged work, where he crystallized his psychological theories making use of the ethnographic data from the early anthropological

works and his own clinical experience with his patients. From the beginning of his career, in spite of the education he was provided (psychiatry and neurology), Freud attributed great importance on the effects of culture and society on the psychological development and the well-being of the individuals, wondering how the individuals of other societies lived their psychic lives, whether they also suffered from the same existential, religious, and psychological problems. Having formed the theoretical basis of the Oedipus complex, he began wondering how this complex might have started in the first place. More importantly, since it was "evident in every individual and every culture", he reasoned why it emerged in the first place. Suspecting that it might be misguiding to search for the historical roots of the Oedipus complex through the examination of the minds and psyches of the individuals of his time, he decided that it would be more suitable to examine the psychological experiences and the lives of people, who were freer from the chains and shackles of the modern culture, therefore he turned his face towards what anthropology at the time called the 'primitive savages'.

Freud hoped that the 'primitive' savage and their 'underdeveloped' culture would come to be a fertile medium to start his theoretical excavation for the roots of the Oedipus complex. Following in the footsteps of the evolutionists such as Haeckel and the evolutionists such as Morgan and Spencer, he believed in the idea of '*ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny*', which proposes that the childhood of a human being resembles the prehistoric stages of humanity. Since he had started his analysis of the mind with the case of childhood, through which he came up with his developmental theory and the Oedipus complex, he thought that starting with the 'primitives' (the 'children' of our cultural history) would constitute an effective method. Having examined the religious practices and the Totemism of the 'primitives', he concluded that such religious beliefs and practices, with their obsessional and ritualistic manner, resembled the behaviors and beliefs of the neurotics.

In the first two chapters titled 'The Horror of Incest' and 'Taboo and Emotional Ambivalence', he presented an overview of anthropological theories and ethnographic data on the case of incest, especially having made large use of Frazer's *The Golden Bough* (1890), and presented particular parallelisms between the beliefs and the ritualistic practices of the 'primitive' people and the beliefs and the daily practices of the obsessives and the compulsives. Until the second half of the book, he strengthens his reasons for rejecting the idea that explains the horror of incest as an inborn, natural instinct as presented by Westermarck's *aversion hypothesis* (1922). Even though he would present a hypothetical scenario that attempts to explain the origin of the Oedipus complex in the history of the human kind, he also embraced a somewhat agnostic attitude towards the idea that the origin of the horror of incest could be wholly known (p.145).

In the final chapter 'The Return of Totemism in Childhood', substituting the father for the totem animal, Freud focused on the two main prohibitions that must be obeyed by the primitive people under the 'rule' of Totemism, namely; the rule not to kill the totem animal, and the rule not to have sex with the females of the same totem group (p. 153). Building upon Darwin's 'primal horde' (1871) and Atkinson's later hypothesis (1903) where Atkinson hypothesized that there was an all-mighty powerful father that kept all the women of the tribe for himself only and sent his sons away through the use of violence, he presented his own infamous account of the origin of the Oedipus complex and how the primal father started to be associated as the primal totem:

> One day the brothers who had been driven out came together, killed and devoured their father and so made an end of the patriarchal horde. United, they had the courage to do and succeeded in doing what would have been impossible for them individually. (Some cultural advance, perhaps, command over some new weapon, had given them a sense of superior strength.) Cannibal savages as they were, it goes without saying that

> they devoured their victim as well as killing him. The violent primal father had doubtless been the feared and envied model of each one of the company of brothers: and in the act of devouring him they accomplished their identification with him, and each one of them acquired a portion of his strength. The totem meal, which is perhaps mankind's earliest festival, would thus be a repetition and a commemoration of this memorable and criminal deed, which was the beginning of so many things—of social organization, of moral restrictions and of religion.(p. 164-5).

In addition to the emotional basis of the prohibition of incest and the law that protects the totem animal – an idea that emerged as a way of ensuring that the father lives symbolically in a revered state, even though he had been killed and devoured by the brothers, Thurschwell (2000) explained that the prohibition of incest served practical motives as well. According to this explanation, the brothers of the horde might have easily wanted to spare all the women of the horde to themselves, just as the primal father did. Thus, in order to avoid the same catastrophic event, they instituted the law of incest and indicated which women they were actually interested in. Thurschwell speculates that this 'law' might have been possible due to the homosexual desires and actions that 'came into being' during the time of their exile (p. 167).

For Freud, the law of incest, therefore, served to establish the social institutions of our civilizations. Having killed the primal father, we have felt an insurmountable grief and shame on our part; therefore we came up with the idea of the sacred Totems. Moreover, we introduced the law of incest, so that we would not have to live through the same events. The atonement of Oedipus was his sight, while the atonement of humankind was their freedom of sexuality, with the loss of which the regulatory rules of sexuality emerged, stating with whom it was fine to copulate and which members of the clan (family) were forbidden. Just like the king Oedipus gave up his sight, having gauged his own eyes upon realizing the sins he had

committed, the human kind gave up their freedom of sexuality in order not to re-live the same horrific event. In this regard, I believe Freud was revolutionary for realizing that culture was not only a way of doing things, but also a way of not doing things.

In *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930/1963), he elaborated his claim that the origin of the law of incest lies at the establishment of all religions and that all religious dogmas and teachings were aimed at resolving the Oedipus complex. Yet, the readers should be aware of the missing points and the contradictions in his account, for there is no anthropological and historical evidence, available to us that supports his claims. Moreover, as Thurschwell states, the contemporary anthropological and historical data does not support the idea that our early ancestors were organized in a manner that was dominated by a single male figure, the primal horde (p. 102).

At this point, it should be realized that there is one more problem with Freud's account of the origin of the Oedipus complex that is in need of further explanation: Even if it could be proven that the killing of the primal father was an actual event that happened in the past, the questions as to how the human kind managed to transfer the emotional and psychological remnants of this 'traumatic' experience to the next generations, and why the next generations chose to abide by the law of the incest, and this law was maintained throughout history remain unanswered. Though the concept of the unconscious is assuredly bound to the works of Freud, he found the central support for the collective and temporal links of the unconscious in his follower and friend Carl Gustav Jung's work, whose works he repeatedly rejected and severely criticized. Unlike Freud, Jung divided the unconscious into two components: the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious, the latter of which designated an unconscious reservoir that incorporated the archetypes, symbols, and the psychic material common to all humanity (1959/1980).

In the final chapter of *Totem and Taboo,* Freud acknowledged a 'difficulty' in his conclusions; that he had posited the existence of a collective mind at the center of his arguments (p. 183). Linking the id with the unconscious, he speculated that the sense of guilt that emerged due to the 'deed' (the killing of the primal father) somehow have always persisted in our collective unconscious or, more precisely, its emotional and psychical remnants. In this light, he wrote:

> For psycho-analysis has shown us that everyone possesses in his unconscious mental activity an apparatus which enables him to interpret other people's reactions, that is, to undo the distortions which other people have imposed on the expression of their feelings. An unconscious understanding such as this of all the customs, ceremonies and dogmas left behind by the original relation to the father may have made it possible for later generations to take over their heritage of emotion. (p. 184)

While he had formulated the 'primal crime' to be a real event in our long-forgotten past, having been criticized heavily, Freud later revised that idea, and stated in *Civilization and its Discontents* that this event has been recurring again and again for thousands of years – a change in his ideas that has been neglected by many (1930/1963, p. 327).

In conclusion, while Freud's daring ideas about the Oedipus complex and its origins initially caused a general outcry amongst his colleagues and the social scientists of the time, his insights were quickly popularized amongst the psychoanalysts, majority of whom criticized his ideas and opted to 'correct and expand' his theory of the origin of the Oedipus complex. Freud's account of the origin of the Oedipus complex in *Totem and Taboo* later acted as the central point of analysis of any cultural phenomena for many thinkers of psychoanalytical anthropology such as Géza Róheim. It should not come as a surprise that the disciplines of psychoanalysis and anthropology realized that they shared great similarities in

terms of their area of research and interests around the origin of the Oedipus complex. But, before the anthropologists of the time took the matter in their hands, a group of prominent psychoanalysts came forth and they revised the Freudian account of the Oedipus complex.

2. 2. Early Psychoanalytical Revisions

2. 2. 1. Carl Gustav Jung

Similar to Freud, with whom he worked in close contact for five years, Jung was also intrigued by the conundrum of the Oedipus complex. Although Freud and Jung commonly shared a great interest in the dynamics of the human psyche and its relations with the social, Jung started to develop his own ideas in time, which led to their 'break-up'. For instance, whereas Freud defined libido, a central concept to psychoanalysis, as "the energy, regarded as a quantitative magnitude… of those instincts which have to do with all that may be comprised under the word 'love" (1921, p. 90), Jung speculated that libido was not only restricted to the sexual instinct but, it was a sort of neutral energy, which took part in the mental creation of symbols such as fire, sun etc. in the mind (1959/1980, p. 139).

As for the Oedipus complex, Jung was firmly in the belief that it should not have been given the status of a 'primal cause'. In this light, he speculated the Oedipus complex was a symptom, rather than a cause. He criticized Freud' insistence on sexualizing the mother-son relationship with the following statement;

> Just as any strong attachment to a person or a thing may be described as a 'marriage', and just as the primitive mind can express almost anything by using a sexual metaphor, so the regressive tendency of a child may be described in sexual terms as an 'incestuous longing for the mother'. But it is no more than a figurative way of

> speaking…To apply the same term (incest) to the difficulties in the development of a child's consciousness is highly misleading (1959/1980, p. 75).

Yet, Jung's greatest contribution to our understanding of the Oedipus complex came from his ideas on the 'mother-complex' and his conceptualization of the Electra complex –a term that was rejected by Freud. In the third chapter of *the Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious* (1959/1980), Jung initially defined the mother-complex of the son and defined its three outcomes; homosexuality, Don Juanism, and impotence. In terms of homosexuality, however, he showed quite the unorthodox approach and asserted that the mother-complex might benefit a man for providing him 'great capacity for friendship', 'a good taste and an aesthetic sense', 'feminine insight and tact' as well as having a 'feeling for history'. As for the mother-complex of the daughter, he presented four scenarios: (i) Hypertrophy of the Maternal Element, (ii) Overdevelopment of Eros, (iii) Identify with the Mother, and (iv) Resistance to the Mother.

In the first scenario, the outcome for the female child was the overvaluation of the feminine aspects, and consequently the woman's 'only' goal was to bore a child. In this case, the Eros is underdeveloped, which can be described as 'psychic relatedness. In the second scenario, though, the woman's Eros is overdeveloped and the maternal instinct is underdeveloped, which gives rise to the unconscious incestuous relationship with the father. In the third example, the mother complex would lead to an identification with the mother and a renunciation of her feminine aspects. The girl, therefore, presents a shadow-like existence, clinging extremely to her mother. The last scenario, which he describes an intermediate stage, occurs when the girl rejects everything related to the mother. He defines this example of the mother-complex as the 'supreme example of the negative mother-complex'.

As Borovecki-Jakovljev and Matacic (2005) state Jung was the first to speculate that the girl's sexual development differed from that of the boys not only because of the 'phallic organization' and their different libidinal development, but also because of their different way of attachment to the mother. (p. 354). In his analysis of the Oedipus myth, Jung also differed greatly from Freud, for extending the scope of the complex to the myth of the Electra, who killed their own mother Clytemnestra, the wife of King Agamemnon, and their stepfather Aegisthus, plotting the murder with her sister Orestes (Sophocles, c. 409 BC/1997). However, Jung's conceptualization of the Electra complex is not merely a use of another fascinating tale of family complex, instead Jung de-masculinized Freud's phallocentric conceptualization of the girl's Oedipus complex. In short, Jung not only revolutionized some of the central themes in Freudian psychoanalysis such as the concept of libido, and the role of the father, but he also brought forth the biggest gap in Freud's theory of the Oedipus complex: The mother.

2. 2. 2. Otto Rank

Another ground-breaking contribution to the 'debate' came from Otto Rank, who was a close friend and a devoted colleague of Freud, even an 'heir' to his legacy. Though Rank favored the theories and claims of classical Freudian psychoanalysis earlier in his career, Rank's main 'break' with Freud came with his emphasis on the maternal relationship. Although Freud was the first to argue for a pre-oedipal stage in the psycho-sexual development of an infant, he did not prioritize this stage as much as Rank and Klein did. While Freud's focus was primarily on the oedipal tensions that arose with the anal stage, a later stage of psycho-sexual development, Rank speculated that the 'prime stage of life' was the pre-oedipal stage, which started with the baby's birth and continued throughout infancy, marked by the relationship between parents and the infant. In his seminal book *The Trauma*

of Birth (1924/1993), Rank introduced a prior stage to the 'complex', which occurred at the moment of birth. As Segal states (1909/2004);

> For Rank, the infant's anxiety at birth is the source of all subsequent anxiety. Conflict with the father remains, but because he blocks the son's yearning to return to the mother's womb rather than because he blocks the son's Oedipal yearning. Fear of the father is a displacement of fear of the mother, who, moreover, has abandoned, not castrated, her son. Sexual desire for the mother is likewise a means of returning to the womb, not of securing oedipal satisfaction. (p. xvi).

In Rank's scenario, the parents are stripped away from their sexual positions, and the Oedipal scenario now stems from the anxiety caused by the trauma of being separated from the mother and the serene darkness of the womb, the state of being whole with her, not from, as Freud stated, the anxiety from having hostile and rivalrous feelings towards the father and the unconscious incestuous desires towards the mother. The aim of the child was not to kill one parent and have sex with the other, but 'retain the love of both without sacrificing autonomy'. Here autonomy is a keyword for understanding how Rank differs from the accounts of Freud and Jung. In his following works such as *Will Therapy* (1929-31/1978), he introduced terms such as will, autonomy, creativity, immorality, return, and knowing. Therefore, it becomes clearer in his later works that the anxiety caused by the Oedipal scenario is not only due to the anxiety felt by the ambivalent incestuous desires of the child towards the parents, but also stems from the child's desire to establish autonomy and to establish their difference from the parents. Re-interpreting the myth of the Oedipus Rex, he concludes that Oedipus struggle was actually for gaining his independence from his family, assuming that Oedipus became a hero for he did not want to feel bound to his parents and felt the 'urge' to establish his independence through his achievements (1909/2004, p. xxvii).

However, it should be borne in mind that Rank's theory was not free from any theoretical and methodological shortcomings. His very theory of the 'birth trauma' had a similar theoretical pitfall with Freud's hypothetical theory of the 'primal crime', falling for the same 'monolithic' trap like Freud, having placed another hypothetical event for the origin of anxieties and the family complex. Although Freud's and Rank's paths diverged into different routes through the years, the fact that even the shortcomings in their theories resemble each other should not come as a surprise, considering how much they had in common in the beginning. Nevertheless, Rank's aspirations remain irreplaceable contributions to our understanding of the Oedipus complex as well as inspiring other theoreticians such as Klein and Kristeva in their formulations of the complex.

2. 2. 3. Melanie Klein

Another prominent revision was presented by Melanie Klein, who is accredited as the early originators of the 'object relations theory'. For her relationship with the Freudian psychoanalysis, she stated that her ideas did not contradict Freud's claims and that she dated those processes to earlier stages, where the later development phases were construed as less strict and merging into each other (1921-1945, p. 197). However, there were apparent differences in her ideas that were overlooked or neglected by the psychoanalysts of the time. For instance, contrary to the conceptualization of libido by Freud, Klein regarded libido to be fused with aggressiveness from the beginning of life, therefore, the development of the libido was doomed to generate anxiety that emerges from aggressiveness felt. For her, anxiety and guilt were forces that prompt the libido to seek new channels of gratification. Following her conceptualization of the libido, she focused on the destructive impulses of the infant, and how these impulses made the infant feel. In *Psycho-analysis of Children* (1960), she wrote:

> The anxiety evoked in the child by his destructive impulses takes effect, I think, in two ways. In the first place it makes him afraid of being exterminated himself by those very impulses, i.e. it relates to an internal instinctual danger; and in the second place it focuses his fears on his external object, against whom his sadistic feelings are directed, as a source of danger. (p. 184)

Klein believed that the Oedipus complex emerged approximately in the second half of the infant's first year and finds its zenith in the phallic stage, which eventually led to the development of the super-ego. Regarding the breast of the mother as the primal cause, she stated that the origins of the Oedipus complex laid in an earlier stage, just like Rank proposed, however, she speculated in her article 'Early Stages of the Oedipus Conflict' (1928) that these pre-oedipal anxieties started with the deprivation of the breast, which caused the infant to turn to the father (p. 173). Although she acknowledged that her ideas of an infant at the age of six to twelve months desiring to destroy their mother with their 'teeth, nails, and excreta and with the whole of its body' might sound dreadful to the readers (p.177), her ideas of the infant followed Freud, in that the infant was no longer a naive 'angel', but rather an ambivalent being that experienced aggressiveness and destructive impulses as well as desiring to be loved.

She stated that the boy's and the girl's sexual development followed similar paths in the beginning and started with the early infancy, where the infant starts experiencing sexual sensations through the satisfaction and deprivation of 'oral libido, urethral and anal desires, and phantasies'. She believed that both the boy and the girl had sexual desires towards their mother and father; and that they had somewhat unconscious knowledge about the genitals (1921-1945, p. 416). According to Klein, if the infant has an ambivalent relationship with the breast, from which they demand unlimited gratification, and which they have no control over. Therefore, the breast becomes a 'good' and a 'bad' object at the same time, leading both the

boy and the girl to turn away from it and seek another object for the oral gratification: The penis of the father. So, their frustration with the breast will lead to the infant's libidinal strivings to turn to the father's penis. Soon, the genital desires of the infant become stronger, and "the boy seeks for an opening into which to insert his penis, i.e. they are directed towards his mother. The infant girl's genital sensations correspondingly prepare the desire to receive her father's penis into her vagina" she wrote. Then, she presented her formulation that the infant's depressive feelings such as losing their loved objects and the infant's anxiety-inducing feelings of hatred and aggression play a vital part in their Oedipus complex (p. 410).

Although she shares a great amount of commonalities with Freud's account of the feminine Oedipus complex, she maintains that the little girl's 'discovery' of mother's lacking a penis does not play as an important part in the Oedipus complex as Freud had suggested. Additionally, she affirms that the girl's desire to internalize the penis and bore a child to her father preceded the girl's wish to possess a penis of her own, what Freud called the penis envy. (1921-1945, p. 418-19). For the boy's Oedipus complex, following Freud's line of thought in this regard, she stated:

> While I thus fully agree with Freud that castration fear is the leading anxiety situation in the male, I cannot agree with his description of it as the single factor which determines the repression of the Oedipus complex. Early anxieties from various sources contribute all along to the central part which castration fear comes to play in the climax of the Oedipus situation. Furthermore, the boy experiences grief and sorrow in relation to his father as a loved object, because of his impulses to castrate and murder him. For in his good aspects the father is an indispensable source of strength, a friend and an ideal, to whom the boy looks for protection and guidance and whom he, therefore feels impelled to preserve. His feelings of guilt about his

aggressive impulses towards his father increase his urge to repress his genital desires (p. 417-18).

As the above-provided psychoanalysts were fervently discussing over the origins, dynamics, and consequences of the Oedipus complex, the social sciences were equally affected by these speculative ideas of 'origin of the horror of incest' and the universality of the Oedipus complex. In the midst of these discussions in the circles of the social scientists, a student of Seligman, who was trained in medicine, psychology, and anthropology, Malinowski set forth on his journey to the Western Pacific.

2. 3. Early Anthropological Reformulations

2.3.1. Bronislaw Malinowski

Having left for Western Pacific in 1914, Malinowski found himself bound to remain there due to the outbreak of the First World War. However, this 'inconvenience' provided him with a great chance to live within and study a study that was not studied in detail before. In 1922, he published his much-celebrated monograph *Argonauts of the Western Pacific* (2002). Five years later, he published *Sex and Repression in Savage Society* (1927/2001), where he focused on the intricate dynamics of sexuality and family life in the Melanesian society, problematizing one of the most debated topics in the sciences such as the incest taboo, the Oedipus complex, the taboo of cannibalism and patricide through his observations and findings in the field.

Sex and Repression in Savage Society (1927/2001) positions Malinowski at a special juncture for the study of the universality of the Oedipus complex. Malinowski wrote that the understanding of paternity among the Trobrianders was much different than that of ours, in that the natives had no knowledge of the physiological aspects of the part a father played in

the conception of a child, therefore his status within the family was regarded solely on the social level, and that different from the familial relations in our 'modern' society, the Trobriander life was quite extraordinary, which led the father to be associated as a 'nurse' and a 'protective companion', while the authority figure that we associate with the father in our society was represented by the mother's brother. (p. 9-10). In the light of his findings, the Oedipus complex proved to be an invalid assumption in the family lives of the Trobrianders. Therefore, he warned that one should not falsely assume that a patriarchal concept such as the Oedipus complex exists in all types of societies, including the matrilineal ones' (p. 6).

Moreover, Malinowski speculated that the Freudian developmental stages, particularly that of the latency period, was not present in the psychic and physiological development of the young Trobrianders. In this context, he stated that the Oedipus complex arises not due to the ambivalent hate-and-love relationship with the father, but with the maternal uncle, and the incestuous desire was not towards the mother, but was directed towards the sister, upon whom the greatest taboo was implemented as a restriction extending to all the women in the maternal line of the clan.

In the same work, he explicitly states that it is necessary to study the familial relationships in a society through the lens of biological and social sciences and reveal the 'special' complex that was evident in a society. For Malinowski, the Oedipus complex, properly named the family complex, which could demonstrate different kinds of properties and dynamics depending on the society in question was a by-product in 'the process of the gradual formation of culture', rather than acting as a cause in the origin of culture as it was suggested by Freud (p. 182). On this idea, he wrote;

> […] the nuclear family complex is a functional formation dependent upon the structure and upon the culture of a society. It is necessarily determined by the manner

> in which sexual restrictions are molded in a community and by the manner in which authority is apportioned. I cannot conceive of the complex as the first cause of everything, as the unique source of culture, of organization and belief; as the metaphysical entity, creative, but not created, prior to all things and not caused by anything else. (1927/2001, p. 142).

From this quotation, it can be realized that Malinowski acknowledged that Freud had discerned something 'real' in his formulation of the Oedipus complex, however rather than presenting it as the origin of the culture, Malinowski purported that it was the cultural dynamics themselves that gave rise to the complex, which he called it the 'nuclear family complex', implying that the relations of the child to the family members are determined by the type of society.

In *the Sexual Life of Savages in North-Western Melanesia* (1929/2002), he presents a list of the taboos of incest in a hierarchal order, where the most gruesome crime of incest (called *suvasova* by the natives) was shown to take place between a brother and a sister, whereas an incestuous relationship between a father and a daughter, although it was not encouraged and socially welcomed, was not received with equal repugnance and horror. From these accounts, it can be realized that Malinowski was agreeing with his counterparts in the view that the taboo of incest was a universal phenomenon, however instead of scrutinizing its underlying elements and what role the unconscious plays in its emergence, he regarded it as a by-product of the family structures and relations in a society. He claims that the incest taboo was present in all societies, not because of some underlying *psychic* desires, but because of a combination of both social and biological factors.

Nevertheless, Malinowski needed to integrate a theory that could explain why the infant would develop incestuous desires in the first place, regardless of whom it was directed.

Therefore, he drew heavily from Shand's theory of sentiments, which were derived from instinctually based emotions, and referred to a system of emotions organized around a common goal. According to this adaptation of Shand's theory in the Oedipus complex, the infant child had instinctual desires to gratify satisfaction and formed sentiments around this instinct, rather than having hostile feelings towards the father – feelings that could not be shown to exist biologically. Therefore, he wrote;

> Had the founders of psychoanalysis known Shand's contribution, they might have avoided a number of metaphysical pitfalls, realized that instinct is a part of human sentiments and not a metaphysical entity, and given us a much less mystical and more concrete psychology of the unconscious (p. 241).

As a result, while Malinowski was beyond his years for realizing the significance and the determining factor of the context and the culture on the manifestation of the dynamics of a socio-psychological phenomenon, he was missing certain points in his analyses, where it was possible to realize that certain Freudian dynamics of the unconscious, which he was reluctant to accept due to their 'metaphysical' quality, were at work in the family relations of the Trobrianders he studied. For instance, when he stated that the incestuous desires were directed towards the sister, while the hostile feelings were directed towards the maternal uncle, he was unable to realize that, even though the 'directions' of the feelings, or 'sentiments' in his own vocabulary, were different from the case in our society, the way these sentiments came into being and the intricate way they worked in the maintenance of the family relationship remained quite the same. In the case of Trobrianders, the father seemed to work as an 'additional' mother' with masculine characteristics, while the maternal uncle was now embodying what the father represented in our patriarchal society. His idea that each society might demonstrates a specific type of a 'nuclear family complex' was soon widely

embraced by the then-anthropologists and ethnographers, who set out to 'foreign lands' to uncover the 'mysteries' of the conundrum through their own efforts and observations.

2.3.1.1. Psychoanalysis Strikes Back: Ernest Jones vs. Malinowski

Although Ernest Jones might have been included in the section, where I have provided the theories of the Post-Freudian thinkers, since he revised many central concepts and ideas of the Freudian psychoanalysis. For instance, he refined Freud's concept of the penis envy, suggesting that it might arise due to three possible reasons: (i) the girl's desire to incorporate the penis 'inside' the body, (ii) the girl's desire to enjoy it during intercourse (though here *libidinally*, not narcissistically as Freud assumed), or (iii) the girl's desire to possess it a male organ instead of the clitoris (as cited in Irigaray, 1985, p. 56). For the castration complex, he asserted that the boy turned to this father, not because of fearing a 'real' castration, but because of *aphanisis* (a term he coined), which is the infant's fear of losing all capacity to enjoy sexual desire (as cited in Chodorow, 1978, p. 115). Influenced by Klein's ideas, he introduced another crucial term *phallocentricism*, as he criticized Freud's ideas on the feminine Oedipus complex and revising his previous claims, suggested that the penis envy arose as a defensive mechanism, rather than a feeling of a biological 'lack' – an idea he formulated with Horney.

Despite these criticisms, which were directed towards the feminine Oedipus complex and the role of the penis in the origin and development of the Oedipus complex, Ernest Jones mostly remained within the boundaries of the classical psychoanalytical theory for most of his career, which he believed was capable of revealing the unconscious dynamics of any cultural material (1910/1971). After reading Malinowski's piece 'Psycho-analysis and Anthropology' in *Sex and Repression in Savage Society* (1927/2001), Jones defended the claim of the universality of the Oedipus complex and asserted that the difference in the

familial formation in the Trobrianders case was just another proof that the Trobrianders set that kind of formation in order to deflect the hostility towards the father. In his 'Mother-Right and the Sexual Ignorance of the Savages' (1925), he initially rejected Malinowski's claim that the savages were ignorant of the physiology of paternity in the mother-right societies. Therefore, 'If a child of two years old can frame an image of a genital coitus, and a year or so later connect it with the birth of another child, then the feat should certainly not be beyond the mentality of any adult savage', he wrote (p.67).

Implying that Malinowski's account assumes that the mother-right was made possible in matrilineal societies due to the savages' ignorance about the physiology of paternity, Jones claimed that the mother-right emerged as a defense mechanism in order to 'deflect the hatred towards his father by the growing boy'. He believed that the symbols in the myths of the Trobrianders would reveal this 'cloaked' hatred of the oedipal father, and how the mother-right worked as a mechanism to deflect these ambivalent feelings and set another scene, where the father came the maternal uncle, and the mother became the sister. Contrary to Malinowski, he re-stated his Freudian approach to the matter and stated: "On Malinowski's hypothesis the Oedipus complex would be a late product; for the psycho-analyst, it was the *fons et origo*." (p. 75).

While I find Jones' suspicious attitude towards Malinowski's ethnographic authority and validity of his observations a necessary attitude of scientific inquiry, I also believe that Jones brought not much unique to the discussion except for his competent application of the Freudian concepts to nightmares, myths, and folktales. Moreover, his approach does not work well in the case of the Oedipus complex of the girls – a faulty line of thought that was unrelentingly pursued by Freud himself. However tempting his reasoning as to the origin of the mother-right and how it works as a deflection mechanism against the oedipal hatred towards the father, I concur that it is still linked to an old idea that the father should be the

center of all things, in all times and everywhere. Furthermore, the fact that the father in the Trobrianders' case becomes a 'loving' figure does not explain how this 'extra' figure in the household might alter the relationship. For instance, if we were to regard the father as a mother figure, then what kind of problems does this 'extra' figure pose for the child? If we were to regard the father as a 'brother', then how should we treat 'real' brothers in the first place? More importantly, why do we have to assume that the father becomes 'something familiar' to our conception of family, while it might simply present something unfamiliar to us, something that we might discover further, even if it meant that we have to place our theories and sciences to the background?

2.3.2. Géza Róheim

Without a doubt, amongst the anthropologists presented in this section, Géza Róheim remains the idiosyncratic one, for having trained both in psychoanalysis and anthropology. Determined to test the validity of the Freud's claim that the origin of culture had its roots in people's unconscious, he set out to the D'entrecasteaux Islands in New Guinea, where he would be able to study one of the most 'primitive' people on earth. Since the arguments of the psychoanalyst of the time were that most anthropologists were unable to validate their claims was because they lacked a sound understanding of the pertinent psychoanalytical concepts, Róheim was marked as the first figure, who happened to have enquired the necessary theoretical and practical background both in anthropology and psychoanalysis. Following his nine months in Australia among the natives of the Normandy Island, he published 'Psychoanalysis of Primitive Cultural Types' (1932), which was followed two years later by the publication of *The Riddle of the Sphinx* (1934/1974), where he stated that "the main element of the nightmare was the dreamer's desire to replace one of the parents in the 'primal scene' but was manifested in the form of a punishment in the face of castration-anxiety (p. 56).

According to Róheim, psychoanalytical anthropology was a new kind of interdisciplinary method that could reveal how the unconscious manifests itself in the cultural and social expressions – an aim that was laid by Freud, but left unfinished due to several personal and theoretical reasons. For Róheim, the psychoanalyst would be able to observe, detect, and analyze the unconscious dynamics of what the cultural practice and beliefs demonstrated on the surface, and uncover the underlying psychoanalytic motives behind the origin and the implementation of a given cultural practice. As a devout psychoanalyst, he attributed insurmountable importance to the contents of the dreams that one comes across in a society, and he asserted, just like Jung and Freud, it was not a valid argument to state that each dream needs an analysis sensitive to that culture's norms and symbols, instead he suggested that symbolism worked the same across the globe, and it was the psychoanalyst/ethnographer's duty to see beyond the differences on the surface. In his article 'The Song of the Sirens' (1948), he stated that the oedipal nature of a dream was transformed into a nightmare or an anxiety-induced dream (p. 34).

He pursued the same psychoanalytic orientation with almost every explanation and analysis of the cultural material he had collected. For instance, in his article 'Myth and Folktale' (1941), he initially differentiated between what was considered myth and folktale, and then he found the pre-Oedipal and oedipal motives in the myths and folktales he encountered. With the example of a Kiwai myth of Marunogere, where the great leader eats a handful of 'sago' (a kind of starch), which he later defaecates in the form of a pig. Following the leader's naming of the pig after himself, his sons hunt the pig, which comes back to life once again. But, then the pig teaches the men how to have sexual intercourse with women, only to die only last time. People cut the pig's flesh and keep them as 'medicine (p. 277). Róheim regards this as a 'clear Oedipus and Primal Horde myth', where we see the power of the ultimate father is combined with the anal fantasies of the children, and that we see the

primal crime of the sons killing an animalistic reincarnation of the father. He takes this myth to be deeply associated with identification with the father, through which the son becomes part of the group (as in the hunt) and the father becomes the 'Lone hero' – a dynamism that reduces the anxiety induced by the son's hostile feelings and, which creates the belief that 'revolt is imaginable'.

In his article 'Children's Games and Rhymes in Duau (Normandy Island)' (1943), he focuses on the unconscious elements of the children's games and rhymes in Normandy Island, through which he aimed to show the Oedipal contents of the games and how the Oedipus complex manifested itself in many cultural materials from children's games to songs and rhymes. He referred to a particular game, where the children sing a song that narrates a woman giving birth to a child, who is eaten by the father. Then, the woman becomes pregnant again, but this time she takes it to a sea-shell that protects and rears him. The surviving child then comes back and sings this song as a supernatural 'sea-shell' child. Róheim indicated that the very contents of this game rhyme are typical for manifesting the existence of the Oedipus complex in the unconscious of the native children. He read the Shell as a symbol for vagina (a common association by the natives as he noted) and that the father's act of eating the child is a symbol of the unconscious hostile feelings of the children towards the father, and that the survival of the child at the end symbolizes the child's dissolution of the Oedipus complex and initiation into the culture. In another game, he analyzed what the witch and the sorcerer symbolized for the children. He asserted that, in this type of 'tree chopping' game, and that the association of the mother and the father with the figures of the witch and the sorcerer, which were played by the children, indicated that one of the main elements of the game was resolving anxiety caused from the 'anxiety objects of the parental images' (p. 112).

In his article 'Witches of Normanby Island' (1948), he followed the symbol of the witch even further. Studying the story of Peora, he focused on the unconscious tension between the 'good' mother figure and the 'bad' mother figure. It is already evident that, unlike earlier psychoanalysts or anthropologists, Róheim showed a greater degree of competence in Klein's and Jung's psychoanalysis. Although he was a devout psychoanalysis in the sense that his ideas followed greatly in the path of Freud, he was not ignorant of later theories and explanations as to the origin of the Oedipus complex. He explained the symbol of the witch as a reaction of the infant's to the oral frustration that was caused by weaning (notice Kleinian influence). He wrote;

> In its (i.e. the child's) imagination the mother's body is a storehouse which contains the gratification of all its desires and the appeasement of all its fears. But as the infant's desire to obtain these good things takes the form of a violent aggression as an attempt in phantasy to tear them out of the mother's body, these body contents 'become dangerous through the aggression projected to them (p. 306).

He explained that the witch symbolized the 'bad' aspects of the mother, projecting the infant's body-destruction phantasies. The witch symbolism was a precise example of the infant's projecting their unconscious anxieties and frustrations that arose due to the never-quenching demands of the libido to the 'real' mother in the world, which in return initiated the infant's dis-identification with the mother and finding their way out of the oedipal tendencies. Similarly, in his article 'Professional Beauties of Normandy Island' (1940), he uncovered similar unconscious contents through the beauty norms in Normandy Island and how the young girls (beautiful ones) found themselves within a conflict with their mother.

Róheim's significance for this thesis not only lies in the fact that he is regarded as the founder of the entire discipline of psychoanalytical anthropology, but also in the fact that he

was the first one to ‘competently’ work within the shifting spheres of psychoanalysis and anthropology as he was carrying out his fieldwork and analyzing his ethnographic data. As Devereux stated (as cited in La Barre, 1989), “Róheim’s true stature, as a creator of the first rank in the field of the psychoanalytic study of society and in the field of culture and personality problems, is just beginning to be recognized”. The truth of this statement is revealing even today, where we still have no Turkish translation of Róheim’s work, let alone find the English translations of his works in the libraries of even the best Turkish universities. Though it might seem that Róheim’s ideas should have reconciled the ‘fragile’ relationship between psychoanalysis and anthropology, the discussion around the Oedipus complex, and its ‘alleged’ role in the origin of culture was revived again by the new group of psychoanalysts such as Kardiner, Fromm and Horney and anthropologists like Lévi-Strauss. However, just before that, another prominent anthropologist appeared in the spotlight, whose remarks are deemed considerably important at this point: Kroeber.

2.3.3. Alfred Kroeber

Even though Kroeber went through psychoanalysis himself and worked as a psychoanalyst for two years in the United States, his stance towards psychoanalysis was rather ambivalent. As Burnham states, Kroeber considered that the production of language was deeply affected by the ‘unconscious’ processes that were presented by the Freudian psychoanalysis, however his ideas of the psychoanalytic approach did not go far from this point (2012, p. 18). However, it can be seen that he was influenced by Jung’s ideas, whose two books he reviewed, and stated that the contributions of Jungian psychoanalysis such as the conversion of repressed material and dream material are not to be ignored by any anthropologists (p. 13).

In his famous article published in 1920 titled '*Totem and Taboo*: An Ethnologic Psychoanalysis', he aimed to present an anthropological criticism of Freud's *Totem and Taboo*. Listing eleven criticisms, most of which claimed that the book was mainly of hypothetical nature and was in need of more substantial proof. For instance, he rejected Freud's assertions that the 'primal crime' marked the beginning of the taboo of incest or that the psychic accumulation of a generation might be passed to the next generations through the dynamics of the collective unconscious. He was critical of Freud's method of writing, however captivating his narration and style, he accused Freud of having selected only the ethnographic material that strengthened his case. Though his article posed certain criticisms towards *Totem and Taboo*, Kroeber also acknowledged that the book raised some important questions for the interests of both psychoanalysts and anthropologists (p. 55).

In his later article that was published in 1939 titled '*Totem and Taboo* in Retropect', he re-visited his initial criticisms and challenged the Freudian psychoanalysis' universality claim of the Oedipus complex. He claimed that the psychoanalysts such as Freud and Jones were consciously resisting what the anthropological laid before them. Instead of 'open-mindedly' reading these 'new' findings and re-considering their theories, Kroeber noted, they simply sought to adapt these findings to the structure of their theories, which were founded on the claims of functionality. Within this context, he wrote;

> Therewith Malinowski had really vindicated the mechanism of the Oedipus relation. He showed that the mechanism remained operative even in a changed family situation; a minor modification of it; in its direction, conforming to the change in given condition. Jones, however, could not see this, and resisted tooth and nail. (p. 449).

As it can be deduced from the above-given quotation, Kroeber was critical of the obstinate standpoint of the psychoanalyst towards the anthropological data, however this criticism did not stop Kroeber from adopting an embracing attitude towards the contributions and insights of psychoanalysis. Stating that almost all anthropologist would agree that the incest prohibition to be a universal human institution, he wrote "If there is accordingly an underlying factor which keeps reproducing the phenomenon in an unstable world, this factor must be something in the human constitution – in other words, a psychic factor" (1939, p. 448). This explicitly demonstrates how much importance Kroeber attributed to psychoanalysis and its contribution to anthropology. Another ethnographic account that combined both psychological and anthropological theories was presented by Margaret Mead's original studies, who stated that she was unable to find support for Freud's universality claim of the Oedipus complex.

2.3.4. Margaret Mead

"The close relationship between parent and child, which has such a decisive influence, upon so many in our civilization, that submission to the parent or defiance of the parent may become the dominating pattern of a lifetime, is not found in Samoa" (p. 209), wrote Margaret Mead in her seminal book *Coming of Age in Samoa* (1961), where she wrote about her observations and findings from her 9-month participatory observation among the girls between the ages of nine and twenty in Tao, Samoa. She concluded that the general disturbances that were observed during the adolescent years in Western society were foreign to the adolescents of Tao, which she explained as the result of less severe taboos on sexuality. According to her, to be an adolescent girl in Samoa was a 'painless development from childhood to womanhood', which led her to speculate over the reasons why the average American adolescent girls were experiencing this stage so fervently and troublesome.

Influenced by Malinowski's 'discovery' of nuclear family complex, through which he demonstrated that the claim of the universality of the Oedipus complex should have been re-considered, Mead undertook the task of studying female adolescence, realizing the combined effects of biological and social factors that might bring differences in manifestations in cultural practices and norms. As for the 'non-existence' of the Oedipus complex in the Samoan family, she stated that the Western families were specific in the sense that the adolescents of the Western families were vexed by the paralyzing control and authority of the parents over the lives and choices of their children. So, she confirmed Malinowski's prior claims, as she said that she was unable to find any proof to suspect the existence of the Oedipus complex or an Electra complex. She speculated that this might have been due to the fact that the families in Samoa were not 'nuclear' in terms of their volume and the number of the relatives in the household. Followingly, she wrote for the adolescent Samoans;

> They are schooled not by an individual but by an army of relatives into a general conformity upon which the personality of their parents has a very slight effect. And through an endless chain of cause and effect, individual differences of standards are not perpetuated through the children's adherence to the parents' position, nor are children thrown into bizarre, untypical attitudes which might form the basis for departure and change" (p. 213-4).

Nevertheless, she also noted that one even found the presence of certain psychological problems and conflicts in the Samoan family and explained these as a result of the combination of physiological changes that arose with the onset of puberty, and sociological conditions that affected the ways the society and family reacted towards the child. Following the criticisms of the anthropologists, a number of psychoanalysts came forth and decided to revise the former theories in the light of their own theories and the ethnographic data presented.

2.4. The Cultural Turn of Psychoanalytical School

2.4.1. Abram Kardiner

Rejecting the claim propounded by the anthropologists that culture created infinite variations in terms of our 'family complexes' and the opposing claim of the psychoanalysts, which asserted that culture itself was an outcome of human nature and psyche, Kardiner developed an 'relativist' insight around the 'debate', and asserted that the early child-rearing practices and the socio-economic factors that surround the individual conditioned them in particular ways that they would develop a configuration of 'adaptive mechanisms' that form their personality and psychical tendencies, incorporating the both sides of the debate (1961, p. xxi-xxii). The primary institutions, he stated, were those that configure the individual such as the practice of breast-feeding, sphincter control, sexual disciplining etc., while the secondary institutions were the systems that arose out of the primary institutions such as religions and myths.

He explicitly stated that, like Freud, he believed in the psychic unity of mankind, by which he underscored the inescapablity of certain psychic and physiological experiences (such as childhood, puberty, and the Oedipus complex etc. Concordant with this line of thought, he presented his 'modal personality', which can be described as 'the product of the interplay of fundamental physiologically and neurologically determined tendencies and experiences common to all human being acted upon by the cultural milieu, which denies, directs, and gratifies these needs very differently in different societies' (p. 3). In simpler terms, Kardiner believed that it was possible to find a particular type of 'modal personality' in each culture that represents the central norms and beliefs of that culture, which manifest themselves in the psychical characteristics of its members. For example, if the majority of the members of a tribe showed aggressive tendencies in their daily lives and social relations, the

modal personality of the tribe would be defined around the psychic tendency to develop aggressive behaviors.

His definition of 'modal personality' becomes quite determining when it comes to his conceptualization of the Oedipus complex, since it meant that, in a culture where the modal personality was not built around intense attachment relationships with the parents or in a culture where sexuality was freely exercised and remained a lesser taboo (i.e. in comparison to the Western norms), it would be hard to observe an Oedipus complex in the members of that culture (leaving out the case of the neurotics, whose personality development was already obstructed in the 'normal' developmental route of that culture).

In addition to his concept of modal personality, Kardiner espoused great influence on the role of the mother in the Oedipus complex, which indicates that he was heavily influenced by Kleinian account of the oedipal tendencies. In his exploration of Alorese culture, where he observed the family lives and relationships of the natives, he stated that the mother became a 'frustrating object' in the mind of the Alorese child, since she disappeared for a long period of time during the evening, when she went to deal with her chores, and therefore caused a deep oral dissatisfaction. Moreover, he alleged that this ambivalent picture of the mother, who was sometimes present to nurture the child and who was most of the time absent to do so, determined the future relationship of the Alorese boys and the girls with the members of the opposite sex (falsely assuming that most relationships are lived in heterosexual manners). Since the child's relationship with the mother was not adequately fulfilling, he speculated, this eased the child's attachment with the father. However, as the child grows, they learn that the father is also not better than the mother, feeling his despotic power over their lives. On this relationship, Kardiner wrote;

> We have thus in the father an individual whose rights over the child are strong but who gives the child practically nothing. The father's control over the children is apparently unequally divided between the sexes; a daughter, by whose marriage the father has something to gain, is more likely to remain in his power than a son. Sons, however, must feel some hostility toward him because of the sexual advantages he enjoys. The young man can have sexual relations only at the risk of incurring financial penalties. This factor must reinforce the already divided feelings toward women that the young man has derived from relations with his mother (1961, p.179).

These words of Kardiner's maintain that this circumstances of the developmental schemas made the development of an Oedipus complex possible, which he was able to observe in the Alorese culture. However, contrary to the Freudian psychoanalysis, he believed that the 'basic personality' was not identical in all societies and human beings (whence comes forth his notion of the modal personality). Although the Alorese culture presented the existence of the Oedipus complex, he nevertheless stated that, noting the case of the Trobrianders and the Marquesans, the Oedipus complex was not a universal factor, instead it appeared in cultures, where it was possible to observe strict sexual taboos and laws around sexuality and marital relationships.

2.4.2. Erich Fromm

Another figure from the psychoanalysis 'bench' that presented a 'relativist' understanding of the Oedipus complex was Erich Fromm, who is included in this thesis primarily for his critiques towards the Freudian psychoanalysis. In *the Crisis of Psychoanalysis: Essays on Freud, Marx, and Social Psychology* (1970), reading and critiquing Freud's famous case 'The Little Hans', Fromm concluded that Freud made a wrong assumption, when he explained the later traumas and psychic manifestations of individuals

were resulting from their incestuous and aggressive fantasies towards their parents (p. 101). According to Fromm, these disturbances that came into being during puberty or early adulthood were the outcome of the incestuous desires and fantasies of the parents themselves, rather than having emanated in the psyche of the children. Going back to the case of Little Hans, for instance, Fromm emphasized that fact that Hans's mother was 'actually' threating the boy to cut off his penis and thereby castrate him, rather than Hans unconsciously fearing such an outcome on his own imagination (p. 102). Even though Fromm did not reject the fact that children showed sexual interests and desires, and that the desired object is usually the mother for many boys, he questioned the intensity and exclusivity of this incestuous desire and the part this desire played in the overall development of the child (p. 103).

In his piece 'The Varieties of Aggression and Destructiveness' in *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* (1973), Fromm re-examined the powerful bond between the child and the mother, and wrote, "The affective tie to mother is so intense because it represents one of the basic answers to man's existential situation: the desire to return to 'paradise where the existential dichotomies had not yet developed – where man can live without self-awareness, without work, without suffering, in harmony with nature, himself and his mate" (p.401). Here he strengthened his claim that the oedipal anxiety did not 'necessarily' arise from the child's incestuous desires, but it came into being due to the anxiety of being born into the world, which is an idea influenced much by the later theories of Rank.

He not only re-examined and altered the main presupposition of the Freudian psychoanalysis, but he also combined his own explanations with a Marxist reading. Therefore, while the anxiety that arose because of 'being born into the world' was an inevitable psychological outcome of being alive, he speculated that the conflict between father and child was something historical – something that occurred as a by-product of patriarchal society. For this claim, while he agreed that the boys showed hostile feelings

towards the father, he stated that one should not read these feelings and wishes 'too literally', since Fromm explained the origin of these feelings as the outcome of the ambivalent situation the child finds themselves in – the limbo, where the child is neither an infant nor not yet an adult. Therefore, he wrote, "the little boy has no idea of what death is, and all he is really saying is 'I wish father was away, so that I can get all her attention" (1973, p. 32). So, Fromm explained the hostile feelings of the Oedipus complex not merely through sexual aspects, but through the child's need for their mother's love and care, and the fact that they fear this 'unconditional love' being exterminated by the father factor, perhaps, in lay people's terms, simple jealousy.

In the light of the above-given explanations of Fromm's theories, it would not be surprising to realize that Fromm rejected the universality of the Oedipus complex. For Fromm, the family structure had to be explained in accordance with the cultural dynamics and norms of that particular culture, without assuming a universal and supra-cultural attitudes and beliefs towards the phenomenon of being (in) a family. Having been influenced by Kardiner's notion of 'modal personality', Fromm believed that each culture reinforced certain characteristics of the individual, while rejecting or punishing certain behaviors and ideas, which, in turn create the overall 'social unconscious' through time.

2.4.3. Karen Horney

Karen Danielsen Horney might be regarded as the last segment of the group of the 'relativist psychoanalysts'. She developed a radical criticism of the classical psychoanalytical approach, in that she rejected the Freudian presumption that human behaviors occurred as a result of physiological events called 'instincts', instead she assumed that the inconvenient and troubling behaviors emerged as a result of problems and malfunctioning in the familial relationships, which were also simultaneously affected by the socio-cultural factors. In the

same vein, unlike Freud, she did not prioritize the historical manifestation of a psychically troubling symptom, which usually emerged traumatically during one's childhood. For Horney, what was important was the current manifestation of a symptom and the reason why it emerged 'now', since she believed that it was almost impossible to establish a logical link between one's experiences in their childhood and their adult lives.

For our interest in her theory marked her refusal of the biological explanation of the Oedipus complex. While she admitted that she observed through her own clinical cases that the Oedipus complex was a common psychological ailment, she speculated that this complex came into being as a by-product of the 'wrongful' behaviors and attitudes of the parents, who showed certain psychological misdoings such as reluctance to accept the child's sovereignty, overprotective behaviors and/or reflected perfectionist beliefs. Through the concept of anxiety, which Freud had speculated that it emerged as a result of the hostile feelings towards the father and the incestuous desires towards the mother that the child needs to repress and feel guilt and shame (remember the Kleinian explanation), Horney believed that anxiety came into being when the overall developmental process of a child was interrupted or damaged, rather than being caused by the Oedipus complex. On the Oedipus complex, she wrote,

> As I have already mentioned, I believe that the Oedipus complex is, instead of a primary process, the outcome of several processes which are different in kind. It may be a rather uncomplicated response of the child provoked by the parents giving sexually tinged caresses, by the child witnessing sexual scenes, by one of the parents making the child the target of blind devotion. It may, on the other hand, be the outcome of a much more complicated process. (1937/1994, p.160-1)

Having been influenced by Fromm's focus on the 'unconditional love' and 'care', Horney explained that in a loving child-parent relationship, the child would learn to perform

three social tasks easily; (i) to approach other people when they feel in need of support and care; (ii) to resist their parents and other adults if their wishes are disregarded or questioned, and (iii) to recluse themselves from other without feeling lonely, since they would know that the others would be there when the child wants to return for their love and support. However, the neurotic, according to Horney, was incapable of successfully carrying out these three behaviors, and the individual, who could not resolve their Oedipus complex, which did not regard as a universal phenomenon, would choose one of these behaviors and perform it for the rest of their lives, if they do not go through psychoanalysis. For instance, a girl with a non-resolved Oedipus complex might fixate on their mother as the rival and seeking fights with her constantly, or resisting everything to do with the mother, or complying with every wish and demand of the mother without showing whatsoever agency. So, Horney embraced an approach that would combine both a culturally relativist and a biological explanation of the Oedipus complex. She highlighted the fact that Freud's mentioned 'destructive' feelings of the child were common reactions in many cultures, as well as whereas affirming that these tendencies were dependent upon a culture's psychological and social norms around family and relationality (p. 147).

2.5. A 'Reconciliation' of Psychoanalysis and Anthropology

2.5.1. Claude Lévi-Strauss

Criticizing the functionalist explanations of culture and ethnographic data, Lévi-Strauss was influenced by two other immense theoretical orientations at the time, namely; the Maussian tradition, and the Saussurean structuralism. Firstly, he was highly influenced by Mauss' work on gifts and the part exchange systems played in the overall functioning of a culture. Moreover, he applied the structural analysis and theories of structural linguistics to

the anthropological phenomena, and therefore presented a theory of culture that functioned like a language, a system of signs..

In *Elementary Structures of Kinship* (1970), which was originally published in 1949, he posited that the incest taboo was a universal phenomenon and that it marked the transition from nature to culture – a claim that was already propounded by Freud in *Totem and Taboo*. However, instead of embracing the Freudian scenario of the primal crime, Lévi-Strauss asserted that the incest prohibition came into being as a result of exchanging women across clans. Suggesting that the 'savage minds' of the 'primitive' people worked the same way the minds of the 'civilized' Westerns did, Lévi-Strauss asserted that giving away their women to the other clans with the expectation of obtaining other women from them in return was the logical choice for strengthening the alliance and social solidarity amongst the clans. Presenting three view standpoints as to the explanations of the incest taboo; (i) Morgan's and Maine's both biological and social explanations, (ii) Westermarck's and Ellis' exclusively biological and instinctual explanations, and (iii) McLennan's, Spencer's and Durkheim's sociological explanations, he wrote,

> The prohibition of incest is in origin neither purely cultural nor purely natural, nor is it a composite mixture of elements from both nature and culture, it is the fundamental step because of which, by which, but above all in which, the transition from nature to culture is accomplished. In one sense, it belongs to nature, for it is a general condition of culture. Consequently, we should not be surprised that its formal characteristic, universality, has been taken from nature. However, in another sense, it is already culture, exercising and imposing its rule on phenomena which initially are not subject to it. We have been led to pose the problem of incest in connection with the relationship between man's biological existence and his social existence, and we have

immediately established that the prohibition could not be ascribed accurately to either one or the other. (p. 42).

Criticizing Freud's 'bold assertions' in his *Totem and Taboo*, Lévi-Strauss denounced the both the claims that 'ontogenesis follows phylogenesis' or the vice versa, claiming that both claims enacted a circular logic (1970, p. 491). However, he shared a common understanding with Freud in the sense that he believed that the 'primal crime' myth reflected some sort of psychical conditions in the human psyche. Moreover, he appreciated the symbolic nature of the myth of the primal crime, and pointed out that there was something 'magical' about this myth, writing;

> The magic of this dream, its power to mold men's thoughts unbeknown to them, arises precisely from the fact that the acts it evokes have never been committed, because culture has opposed them at all times and in all places. Symbolic gratifications in which the incest urge finds its expression, according to Freud, do not therefore commemorate an actual event. They are something else, and more, the permanent expression of a desire for disorder, or rather counter-order. Festivals turn social life topsy-turvy, not because it was once like this but because it has never been, and can never be, any different. Past characteristics have explanatory value only in so far as they coincide with present and future characteristics. Freud has sometimes suggested that certain basic phenomena find their explanation in the permanent structure of the human mind, rather than in its history. (p. 491).

In his article 'The Structural Study of Myths' (1955), he expanded on this notion and asserted that there was no 'original' myth as in the case of Freud's myth of primal crime, instead every myth resembled one another in certain ways, which can be read as a proof that Lévi-Strauss saw a strong link between the products of the social unconscious and the materials and contents in these products (i.e. myths). Such a conceptualization of the

unconscious as something that transcends time and place is very familiar at this point, since it was seen in the paragraphs dedicated to Jungian theory, that 'collective unconscious' was at work in every human mind, carrying over the past experiences and traumas.

In 1963, he published one of his most acclaimed works, *Structural Anthropology*, where he presented his method of analyzing myths in the chapter titled 'The Structural Study of Myth', examining the metaphors and meanings in Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex.* Carrying the methodology of the Saussurean linguistics over to the analysis of myth, he argued that myths were made up of *mythemes*, just like morphemes and phonemes, and myths were, in this respect, suitable for analysis when they were broken up into their smaller units. With this idea in his mind, he presented his oedipal matrix;

Cadmos seeks sister			
Europa Ravished by Zeus			
		Cadmos kills the dragon	
	Spartoi kill one another		
			Labdacos (Laios' father)= *lame (?)*
	Oedipus kills his father Laios		Laios (Oedipus' father= *left handed (?)*
		Oedipus kills the Sphinx	
			Oedipus= *swollen foot (?)*
Oedipus marries his mother, Jocasta			
	Eteocles kills his brother Polynices		
Antigone buries her brother, Polynices, despite prohibition			
Overvaluation of blood relations	Undervaluing of blood relations	Slaying of the monster	Difficulties walking

According to this matrix, the 'slaying of the monster' in the third column represented the 'denial of the autochthonous origin of man', while the fourth column referred to the

'persistence' of that denial. Thereby, he speculated that the Oedipus myth was a 'model' that shed light into the 'unknown' of the sexual intercourse, in that how one came into the world from the union of two (autochthonous origin). So, the Oedipus myth was not inherently about the incest taboo and the fear it governed in the minds of the people, but it was about birth and sexuality in general. He added that this myth was replaced by what we called 'politics'. However, he believed that we had something very similar to the working of the myths: science (1963, p. 230). He asserted that the logic behind the myths and science was very similar. In a later work, he established a link between the methodologies of psychoanalysis and structural analysis, stating that both methodologies incorporated a 'relativist' approach towards their analyzed phenomena; psychoanalysis explained the contents of a dream in relation to the other dream contents and the context, where they find their meanings, while structural analysis explained the symbols of a myth or the elements of a social phenomenon in relation to other social phenomena (1985, p.188).

In *The Raw and the Cooked* (1969), he presents a key Bororo myth, whose main theme is the 'crime' of incest between a son and his mother, and then he uncovers 187 variations of the same myth. In his analyses of the key myth and its variations, he stated that there was a striking indifference towards incest among the Bororo, who regarded the victim to be the incestuous son and the offender to be the father, who seeks to avenge the deed and punish his son (p. 81). He re-stated his linguistic stance towards the study of cultural material and myth once again, stating that the symbols in the myths he compiled and analyzed had no intrinsic meaning, but they gained their significance through their positions to other symbols and the context (p.56). Here, he sought to strengthen his main claim that all myths, including that of *Oedipus Rex*, were different, 'transformed' versions of each other.

In *The Jealous Potter* (1996), which he published in 1985, he established a sound criticism of the psychoanalytic methods of interpretations regarding dreams and myths, and

he pointed to the power of a structural analysis instead. Analyzing a Jivaro myth in the Andes, he speculated that the myth was a precursor of the myth of the primal crime in Freud's *Totem and Taboo*, criticizing Freud once again for employing a single 'perspective' in the analysis of the symbols in the myths; the lens of sexuality. Investigating the contents and the symbols in the North and South American Indian myths such as sloths, goatsuckers, potters, excrements, and meteors he aimed to demonstrate that the myths enacted numerous symbolic codes, sexual as well as cosmic, religious, and zoological, he rearticulated his claims that the myths, which were all interconnected in some ways, were conveying certain lessons and messages as to the relationship between nature and culture. Taking the case of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* and Labiche's *The Italian Straw Hat*, he asserted that these works pointed to a similar psychic element in our unconscious (here he refers to the collective unconscious, though not explicitly), which can be read as a proof that he is not denying the significance and the role of psychological factors in cultural analysis.

2.5.2. Jacques Lacan

The scope of Lacanian psychoanalysis and his heritage is so vast that it is impossible to justly revise and explain his concepts and the details of his theories, bearing in mind the limited space allotted. Therefore, only the parts pertinent to his conceptualization of the Oedipus complex will be presented here. Lacan wrote;

> You are aware of the profoundly dissymmetrical character, right from the start, of each of the dual relations included within the Oedipal structure. The relation linking the subject to the mother is distinct from that linking him to the father, the narcissistic or imaginary relation to the father is distinct from the symbolic relation, and also from the relation that we really do have to call real – which is residual with respect to the edifice which commands our attention in analysis (p. 66).

In order to make better sense of his 'imaginary-symbolic-real' triad, it is first needed to explain what Lacan referred to with his concepts of 'imaginary, symbolic and real' in short. Lacan divided the psyche into three main realms. Lacan's imaginary might be defined as the realm of identification, where the ego struggles to maintain an 'imaginary unity', which starts to shatter with the 'mirror-reflection', whereas the Symbolic component refers to the realm that might be said to be activated once the child enters into the language, being forced to abide by the linguistic rules and social dictates of their society. Therefore, the symbolic also refers to the confrontation with the Name-of-the-Father, so the child has to learn how to control their desires as well as the ways to 'properly' communicate. Lastly, the Real refers to the component that resist what the symbolic brings, in other words, it is the 'materiality of existence' that we have lost, the one that is 'impossible' and the one that cannot be expressed in language. Although these concepts might sound very vague at first, it is hoped that they will make more sense as it will be presented how Lacan made use of these concepts in relation to his understanding of the Oedipus concept.

According to his theory of the Oedipus complex, or more precisely that of 'family complexes' (1938/1988), Lacan stated that, during the first six months, the child started to experience anxiety and tension concerning to the weaning practice, as we have seen in the Klein section. From then on to the first half of the second year of the infant, the child, who is thought to be completely dependent upon their mother for survival and desire fulfillment at the beginning of life, experiences the 'complex of intrusion', where they realize that they are separate beings from their mother, which enable them to project the earlier anxieties to the mother, not to something intrinsic. However, with the onset of the 'mirror image' stage, where the child sees their reflection in a mirror-like medium. At this stage, the infant, for the first time, experiences their body as a whole and a unified thing in the world, however it simultaneously creates the experience of fragmentation, which makes the infant realizes that

they are no longer ‘one thing as the self’, but now two things in the world; themselves and the image in the mirror. Although the child had already experienced in the first six months of their life that they realized that they were not able to assimilate the external objects that bring satisfaction such as the mother’s breast, her voice etc., the ‘main break’ occurs due to this confrontation with the infant’s reflection.

As if this confrontation is not challenging enough, the infant soon realizes that as a separate entity from the mother, there is another figure standing between themselves and their ‘very-much-loved’ mother; the father. Lacan positions the Oedipus complex at this conjecture, where the infant is baffled about their position in the mother’s desire. Having been influenced by Saussure’s linguistics and Lévi-Strauss’ structuralist ideas in *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (1969), where he regarded to be some sort of signs of exchange, operating like a language, Lacan formed his initial theory around his belief that the unconscious worked like a language, working through symbolic signification. Therefore, his conceptualization of the Oedipus complex was formed in this ‘symbolic’ route. He posited the Oedipus complex to be a symbolic structure.

Accordingly, he presented his triangular structures of the oedipal conflict, the infant-mother-father. In this triangular structure, Lacan asserted that the father did not have to be a real father, therefore calling this third element ‘the Name-of-the-Father’, which designates the symbolic position assigned to the object of the mother’s desire, since the infant realizes that they are no longer the single locus of their mother’s desire. However, the Name-of-the-Father is a concept that is larger than the locus of the mother’s desire, following the child’s initiation in language and social structure, it comes to symbolize any social power and structure that control our lives. It can realized that the Oedipus complex, for Lacan, marks the transition from the realm of imaginary to that of the symbolic.

Another important concept that was introduced by Lacan within the framework of the Oedipus complex was the 'phallus'. Yet, unlike Freud, he did not specifically explain 'phallus' in biological terms, he stated that the 'phallus' acted as 'the loss-of-being', that emerged upon the child's realization that a sense of unified and unfragmented self is no longer possible, since we are now 'doomed' to live within the symbolic. In the same vein, the 'phallus' represents everything that is associated with the 'symbolic father' and every source of power and knowledge that come to dominate the child's life. For Lacan, the Oedipus complex designated the disengagement with the 'imaginary phallus', for which Homer (2005) writes that 'the phallus is imaginary in the sense that it is associated in the child's mind with an actual object that has been lost and can be recovered' (p.55). Here 'castration' becomes very crucial for a clearer understanding, since Lacan regarded Freud's castration not as something actually 'real', but something symbolic. In the same work, Homer explains this with the following words:

> For Lacan, castration involves the process whereby boys accept that they can symbolically 'have' the phallus only by accepting that they can never have it 'in reality' and girls can accept 'not-having' the phallus once they give up on their 'phallic' identification with their mothers (p. 55).

What has been remarkable in Lacan's conceptualization of the Oedipus complex was his approach towards the unique ways the family complexes are experienced by women. Focusing on the above-provided relation to the 'phallus' and how women lacked and were even robbed of the chance to obtain the 'phallus', even if symbolically, Lacan posited that women were outside the 'symbolic order', since the symbolic was inherently phallic and was pertinent to the unconscious of the men – an idea that is very much under the influence of Irigaray's ideas on phallic language and symbolization. Therefore, he stated that women were not 'torn-into-two' as men, writing: "[…] she (women) has different ways of approaching

that phallus and of keeping it for herself. It's not because she is not-wholly in the phallic function that she is not not there at all. She is *not* not at all there. She is there in full. But there is something more." (1975, p.74).

As it can be seen, the parts played the parents and the meanings adhered to their roles and presence were of utmost significant for Lacan, thereby he had to account for the cross-cultural differences that might arise within the family structures. As a consequence, following Malinowski's works, he rejected the universal nature of the Oedipus complex. In *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: The Other Side of Psychoanalysis, Book XVII* (1991), which was edited by Jacques-Alain Miller, Lacan mentioned that he took three people from the high country of Togo into analysis. These analysands, who had spent their childhood in Togo showed very typical 'symptoms' of the Oedipus complex. However, he was of the opinion that their unconscious carried the residues and the remnants of the Western unconscious and the guilt that was sold to them through colonialization. In this Hegelian master-slave dialectic, these analysands, who showed neurotic tendencies, had internalized with the 'master' to such extents that their unconscious was retroactively showing the traumas of a familial past that was not 'actually' experienced by them. In these words, it becomes clear that Lacan was explicitly refusing the universality claim of the Oedipus complex. In the same passage, he was warning future ethnographers and psychoanalysts that, if they were to rightly understand these dynamics, they had to diverge into the 'foreign' field, where the ethnographer was entrusted wtih the quest to step foot into the bleak forest of psychoanalysis, while the psychoanalyst had to break into the thorny bushes of anthropology (p. 92).

In conclusion, it is revealed that Lacan placed the Oedipus complex at the juncture of his triad of the psyche (imaginary-symbolic-real), where the relation with the symbolic is damaged, as the individual can no longer successfully foreclosure their struggle with the Name-of-the-Father. Therefore, the individual is entrached in a neurotic stance, where the

symbolic communication and linkages are now formed through the ways of 'mythic formation'. While refusing the universality of the Oedipus complex, Lacan defended the universality of the symbolic, the psyche's need to make sense of the materiality and the self through symbolization, and since the symbols differed across various cultures, the family complex one could observe was to differ according to the cultural context. However, the thinking pattern that Lévi-Strauss and Lacan saw in the myths was another commonality in the minds of the people of the world: the things one talked and singed in a myth were the ideas, fears and desires that were not interpreted and expressed in the symbolic. With the Lacanian perspective towards the Oedipus complex, which compels mentioning the influences of Lévi-Strauss and Saussure in his theories, the tendencies to attribute biological explanation to the Oedipus complex phenomenon was replaced by his claim that the symbolic function was the only 'universal' in the debate. Amidst the discussions around the universality of the Oedipus complex, there were two American anthropologists, whose ideas around culture and personality were heavily influenced by the psychoanalytic thought: Melford E. Spiro and Gananath Obeyesekere.

2.5.3. Melford E. Spiro

In his earliest works such as 'Is the Family Universal?' (1954), Spiro took the claim of the universality of the family with the case of the Kibbutz – an agricultural collective community in Israel, and he asserted that the Kibbutz lacked the specific characteristics of a traditional family, and therefore had to act as a large extended family as the whole community (p. 846). Although Spiro acknowledged that different cultural infrastructures would present varying cultural manifestations, he held that the unconscious would eventually reveal itself as in the case of the Kibbutz, in whose lives it was hard to observe the traditional

family practices and values. But, in greater detail, Spiro showed that the 'family' institution found its reflection on the level of the entire community.

In his much-debated article 'Whatever Happened to the Id?' (1979), he embarked on his criticism of Lévi-Strauss and his 'denial of aggression' in the myths, particularly the Oedipal type. Rejecting the claim that the myths Lévi-Strauss collected and analyzed in his The Raw and the Cooked were etiologically explaining the origin of the cooked food, rather than pointing to aggressive and sexual wishes and desires, Spiro maintained that aggression was a dominant theme in the Bororo myths and the underlying meanings and motives of the myths should not have been interpreted on the surface level (p. 9).

Three years later, he published one of his most controversial books, Oedipus in the Trobriands (1982), where he meticulously analyzed the pre-oedipal and the oedipal experiences of the Trobriands and criticized Malinowski's works in the Trobriands, stating that the Trobriands also suffered from the Oedipus complex, however it was of a particular kind. His worked marked his idea that, while its forms and intensity might vary across culture, societal institutions that take their roots from the unconscious and the psychological needs such as family would nevertheless present themselves wherever and whenever people lived.

In 'Oedipus Redux' (1992), Spiro followed a similar route, where he examined Stanley Kurtz' article titled 'A New Approach to Oedipus in the Trobriands'. Refuting Kurtz' claim that the 'first phase' of the boy's sex life occurred in the play group, Spiro criticized him for establishing a causal link between the actions of the members of a society and the actions that are described in stories (p. 364). Furthermore, he stated that the claim that the Trobriand play group was influential in diminishing the mother-boy libidinal attachment was not supported the beliefs and ceremonies that Spiro observed in the *baloma.* All of this led Spiro to refuse Kurtz 'polysexualization' explanation of the Trobriand sexuality, where Kurtz

alleged that polysexualization that started in the play group from an early age 'transformed the universal oedipal triangle into a more complex structure' (as cited in Spiro, p. 374). However, Spiro refused this explanation on the grounds that it did not adequately and consistently reflect the ethnographic reality of the Trobrianders sexual and familial lives and that it left the father outside the picture. According to Spiro, even if it could be accepted that the Trobriander father was not attributed much significance in the family, this very 'peculiarity' should have been a point of inquiry and further analysis.

In the support of his arguments against strong cultural relativism, he purported that human beings had a unique cognitive function, which supported his 'universalist' claims of the cultural and societal manifestations: the capacity for symbolization. This Lacanian thinking enabled Spiro to back up his explanations as to how the unconscious worked in different cultures in similar fashions. On the role of the folklore, for instance, he stated that folklore acted as projection and dissipation of a society's repressed desires and collective tensions (1951, p. 290).

Finally, in his later works, 'Anthropology and Human Nature' (1999), he returned to the discussions around cultural relativism and the cultural universals, among which the Oedipus complex had an eminent role, Spiro 'gradually and reluctantly' came to the conclusion that he were not able to make sense of his ethnographic data, which he collected from his fieldwork in the Micronesian atoll of Ifaluk (Burrows & Spiro, 1953), the Israeli kibbutz (Spiro, 1956-1979) and the Burmese village (Spiro, 1967-1992), as long as he followed the footsteps of strong cultural determinism and/or strong cultural relativism. (p. 8). Even though his claims around the universality of the 'human nature', from the beginning, were not suggesting that cultural differentiations and variations of the psychic experience were not possible to find, Spiro reinstituted his ideas on the possibility of a pancultural human nature.

However, what needs to be realized here is that just as his precursors, Spiro also neglected the case of the feminine Oedipus complex or the negative type (homosexual). It is probable that he was particularly influenced by the classical Freudian psychoanalysis in the beginning, and then reformed it through the 'cultural relativist' school of the psychoanalysts such as Kardiner and Fromm. On the other hand, the omission of the feminine Oedipus complex in such accounts always begs the question 'Why?', and I believe how much the feminine Oedipus complex complicates things for the anthropologist or the psychoanalyst will be clearer in the latest sections, where it will be dealt in detail. But, before the discussion was centered on the feminine Oedipus complex, the fervent discussion on a pancultural human nature, which had been revolving around the Oedipus complex in the cross-cultural dimension was, not for the last time, taken up by Gananath Obeyesekere.

2.5.4. Gananath Obeyesekere

In *Medusa's Hair: An Essay on Personal Symbols and Religious Experience* (1981), Obeyesekere stated that, taking the case of the matted hair locks of the ascetics in Sri Lanka and India, symbols were generated from the unconscious, and once they were created, they acted on the public level as a cultural symbol. However, he noted that a cultural symbol might appear on two levels: the personal and the social. Therefore, he rejected Leach's approach towards such symbols as 'symptoms', and asserted that, while these symptoms had unique meanings to their bearers, they also conveyed a social message to the other people. Followingly, he approached the case of the Oedipus complex, and stated that the father in the oedipal triangle was not a 'real' father, but was a 'fantasized image' (imago).

For the universality debate of the Oedipus complex, he stated that 'some' anthropologists were in the wrong page, albeit naively, for believing and insisting that a culture's specific system of thought would be inapplicable in another culture (p. 51). He

found such strong cultural relativism doing more damage than good, as his friend and co-worker Melford Spiro. However, Obeyesekere had quite a sound critical approach towards his methodology and his ethnographic data. As he criticized the cultural relativists for their view of the world and human nature with endless possibilities and infinite variations, he was also critical of the universalist approaches such as that of Freud's. While Obeyesekere admitted that some symbols might be more prevalent than others, he held that the context and the relations between the symbols were of primary importance to the full meaning of the cultural element or the dream element (p. 54).

He explained his use of the term 'work of culture' (Originally from Freud and later Ricouer) as "the process whereby symbolic forms existing on the cultural level get created and recreated through the minds of people. It deals with the formation and transformation of symbolic forms, but it is not a transformation without a subject as in conventional structural analysis" (p. xix). In other words, what he termed the 'work of culture' was the way how people's unconscious desires and motivations were symbolically transformed into a system of cultural and personal symbols. These 'transformed' symbols, therefore, both existed on an individual and a societal level, which created a reciprocal relationship between the two realms. In order to realize the importance of his concept of the 'work of culture' for the case of the Oedipus complex, it should be examined how Obeyesekere relates the 'work of culture' to Freud's dream work. He believed that people, in his case, the ecstatics in Buddhist Sri Lanka "…through *the work of culture* which parallels the dream work, recreated and moved into another level of reality that makes life not only bearable but transfigured and meaningful…It is this new level of reality that is now the crucial one: the mundane world where the Freudian reality testing takes place is left behind entirely or subordinated to the new reality" (p. 68). Therefore, he stated that, through the 'work of culture', which still needs to be examined, these societies – Sri Lankan and Indian – 'somehow' became more tolerant

towards accommodating fantasy into their open consciousness, which he saw as the tolerance of cultural symbolization (p. 63). Accordingly, the symbols of the Oedipus complex, or rather complexes in this case, were frequent cultural symbols in these societies contrary to the Western case.

In his *Work of Culture: Symbolic Transformation in Psychoanalysis and Anthropology* (1990), he examined the Trobriand case of Malinowski, and stated that he also found the argument regarding the physical absence of the mother's brother unconvincing and questioned: "Is it necessary for the mother's brother to be physically present in his sister's household for the sister's son to have a negative image of him as an authority figure?" (p. 73). Followingly, he presented the Hindu Indian Oedipus complex and the Buddhist Sri Lankan Oedipus complex for the boys only (a 'habit' that he embraced just like his friend, Melford E. Spiro). Contrary to Malinowski's claim, Obeyesekere held that the Trobrianders' matrilineal organization was the main thing that compelled the presence of the maternal uncle to be a part of the oedipal triangle, which he named 'the matrilineal complex' or the 'matrilineal Oedipus'. In the same work, Obeyesekere wrote;

> In this matrilineal complex, in my view, there are four crucial relationships in the son's circle of the oedipal kin: father, mother, sister, and mother's brother… There is no nuclear Oedipus complex of which the Trobriand is a variation; there are several, possibly finite, forms of the complex showing family resemblances to one another. One might even want to recognize the likelihood of different forms of the Oedipus complex within a single group, especially in complex societies…"(p.75).

Accordingly, he defined the Hindu Indian Oedipus complex as a 'type' of the complex, where the mother and son were linked to each other with a strong attachment and erotic underpinnings, while the father was construed as the jealous one of this relationship. At the resolution of this complex, both the boys and the girls would succumb to the authority

and the power of the father, while they identified with the mother instead. As for the Buddhist Sri Lanka Oedipus complex, the 'typical' erotic tensions and relation between the mother and the son was also evident here. However, Buddhist Sri Lanka Oedipus complex glorified the parricide, whereas the Hindu Indian Oedipus complex glorified the son who submitted to the father (p. 138-9). Moreover, Obeseyekere asserts that there might be more than one type of Oedipus complex in cultures, while there might even be several Oedipus complexes in a single culture. On the case of Buddhist Sri Lanka Oedipus complex, he wrote, "My approach not only opens up the Oedipus complex to the impact of cultural and societal conditions, but also obviates the necessity to postulate an exact repetition of a particular type of Oedipus complex from one generation to another." (p. 105)

With this idea, he speculated that the 'pattern' of the Oedipus complex may even change cross-generationally, where the first son, who happens to be submissive and yielding to the power of the father (which is the typical Oedipal scenario) becomes the father himself, which causes his son (the second generation), who feels capable of dethroning the submissive father.

As for the feminine Oedipus complex, he returned to Freud and the way he revised his theories regarding the female account of the Oedipus complex, as shown in the previous sections. Notwithstanding his criticisms against certain theories of Freud, especially that of his second topography of the mind, Obeyesekere was initiated into the psychoanalytical literature through the works of Freud and other classical ego psychologists. Therefore, Obeyesekere, like Freud, saw castration anxiety and prohibition on masturbation as determining factors in the development of the Oedipus complex. In the second lecture, including the aspects of homosexuality and the sibling complex, which have been left out of the oedipal schemas thus far, he defined his conceptualization of the Oedipus complex in a general form as such;

> […] what we have, in my phrase, an 'erotically desirable circle of familial kin'. Within this group of kin each culture (or some cultures) isolate in their fantasy lives a group of kin that are significant for neuroses. These are the 'Oedipal' kin; and the complex that emerges in the psychosexual development of the child is the 'Oedipus complex'. This complex can be represented at different degrees of remove in culturally significant oedipal myths. Neither myth nor complex is universal in the sense of exhibiting an invariant pattern or structure; but they exhibit 'family resemblances'." (p. 88).

From this above-provided quotation, it shall be realized that Obeyesekere's approach was influenced by Wittgenstein's philosophy in certain ways, in that the anthropologists needed to realize the Wittgenstein's 'insight' that similarity and difference could exist simultaneously and with the premise of a 'common' human nature. In this light, Obeyesekere makes use of Wittgenstein's term 'family resemblances' (1993, p. 82) and concludes, just like the later position of his friend, Spiro, that there are certain similar patterns in the familial configurations and the underlying psycho-social mechanisms across cultures, while one needs to account for the cultural and individual differences that would arise.

On the account of what has been discussed so far, it might seem that we are closer to a resolution on the 'debate', however it is evident by now that the feminine Oedipus complex remained a taboo-like area that needs further examination and thinking, which many of the thinkers presented thus far have either willingly refrained from for the fact that it blurs and even disrupts the entirety of their theories, or have simply assumed that it followed a 'reverse' route. The only women psychoanalysts (Melanie Klein and Karen Horney) and the women anthropologist (Margaret Mead) presented thus far have not presented 'complete' accounts of the female account of the Oedipus complex as well as not having situating their theories within the teachings of feminist theory. In the next section, the views and the

theories of three 'revolutionary' female thinkers of their time, their critiques of the classical views on the Oedipus complex, and how they incorporated their critique of the heteronormative and masculinist culture into their conceptualization of the 'feminine Oedipus complex'.

2.6. The Feminist Critique in the House of Psychoanalysis

2.6.1. Julia Kristeva

Before anything, it is deemed necessary to get acquainted with some of Kristeva's key concepts in order to create a solid understanding of her conceptualization of the Oedipus complex. The semiotic and *chora* may be one of her most influential, yet equally confusing, key concepts. The semiotic, as she described, refers to the way one communicates supra-verbally and how one's drives and emotions make their way from their unconscious into language as is the case in poetry, music, dance, and art (1982, p. 25-7). In simpler words, the semiotic is beyond the confinements of the syntax and the grammatical rules that are forced in the symbolic. As for *chora* (a term she borrowed from the *Timaeus* of Plato), she defined it as the maternal space, where the grammatical language has no ruling (1982, p. 49). Therefore, *chora* becomes the space where the infant makes sense of themselves and the external world through their 'semiotic' communication with the mother. According to her theory of the semiotic *chora*, the infant starts their life through babbling without realizing that certain sounds in particular patterns might mean something that would consequentially create an action or an answer. Thus, the baby in the semiotic *chora* may be said to possess something particular;

> […] before he or she develops clear borders of his or her own personal identity. In this early psychic space, the infant experiences a wealth of drives (feelings, instincts, etc.) that could be extremely disorienting and destructive were it not for the infant's

relation with his or her mother's body. An infant's tactile relation with its mother's body provides an orientation for the infant's drives (2004, p. 19).

In time, though, the infant realizes two things upon further maturation: (i) they become aware of their 'separateness' upon the collusion of the 'primary narcissism', and (ii) they realize that language might be used to express their desires and frustrations, helping them to point out things and people in the external world, which she calls the 'thetic break' (1982, p. 42-5). However, her ideas on 'primary narcissism' and 'projective identification' are different from the theories of Freud and Klein, which asserted that the infant starts to identify themselves, the self-other distinction with the emergence of the Oedipal conflict. In her piece 'Freud and Love: Treatment and Its Discontents' in The Kristeva Reader (Moi, 1986), Kristeva maintains that the infant has a narcissistic components that makes it possible for them to 'communicate' with the other before they could form a solid understanding of the self-other distinction due to the infant's experiences in the semiotic *chora* (p. 259).

Once the infant realizes that language is capable of referring to objects and agents in the external world, the thetic break occurs (a term possibly borrowed from Edmund Husserl), which relies on the condition that the infant should have realized their lack (for the girls) or that they might lose their penis. In short, the infant comes to the thetic phase only with the emergence of the oedipal conflict and the castration complex. Kristeva distinguishes herself from the feminist psychoanalyst that will be introduced in the following chapter for the fact that she does not reject the castration complex altogether and, instead she maintains that the physical differences between the sexes (specifically 'penis') are crucial for the development of individual. In *Revolution in Poetic Languag*e (1984), she re-examines the relationship between the castration complex and how the infant becomes a subject, she writes;

> The discovery of castration, however, detaches the subject from his dependence on the mother, and the perception of this lack [manqué] makes the phallic function a

symbolic function – the symbolic function. This is a decisive moment fraught with consequences: the subject, finding his identity in the symbolic, separates from his fusion with the mother, confines his jouissance to the genital and transfers semiotic motility on to the symbolic order (p. 101).

For some, the semiotic might sound similar, since it is similar to Lacan's pre-mirror image stage described in the previous sections. Especially the way the infant moves from the semiotic chora into the symbolic she presents is almost identical to Lacan's theory, but in different words. However, as McAfee (2004) notes, Kristeva distinguishes her theory from that of Lacan in the following ways:

I. While Lacan maintains that, following the initiation of the individual into the symbolic, they are structured through its markings, Kristeva asserts that the semiotic continues to affect and alter one's life and personality even if the person is now within the symbolic. Therefore, Kristeva's symbolic may be said to be a more 'penetrable' realm than that of Lacan's.

II. Kristeva alleges that the child learns the dynamics of the symbolic not from their father, but from the mother due to their ambivalent relationship that begins in the semiotic *chora*.

III. Kristeva departs from Lacan drastically when she disagrees about the time the infant realizes their separateness from the mother. Placing this break at an earlier period, she introduces her concept of *abjection*, which she defines as a "process by which the infant emerges from the undifferentiated union it has with its mother and surroundings…by expelling, physically and mentally, what is not part of its clean and proper self" (p. 49). She places this process before the beginning of the mirror stage or the thetic break as it has been mentioned above.

Yet, one might ask how all of these concepts, some of which are quite complex and sometimes vague, fit into her conceptualization of the Oedipus complex? In her *Some Observations on Female Sexuality* (2004), she takes up the 'Oedipus complex' and scrutinizes the matter in detail, writing that 'infantile sexuality… is thus formed from the outset in the newborn's interaction with his two parents and under the ascendancy of maternal seduction." (p. 60). For the boys' account of the Oedipus complex, she maintains that the *primary oedipal phase*, which spans from three to six years of age, is marked by the maternal-paternal seduction and engagement with his orifices, mouth and anus. The *secondary oedipal phase*, is marked by the boy's engagement in their penile excitation and "his desire for oral and anal possession of the father's penis and for its destruction in the maternal breast, which is fantasized as containing this penis and so forth." (p. 60). Then, she follows a Lacanian route for the development and the dissolution of the boy's Oedipus complex, which ends (?) so long as they consign themselves to the Name-of-the-Father – a 'fate' that should not be so difficult, considering how it aids and abets them throughout their lives, if they live masculinist, heterosexual lives.

As for the girls' Oedipus complex, things become more complex, Kristeva writes. She asserts the little girl, in the *primary oedipal phase*, cannot eliminate orifical pleasure (vagina) that becomes stronger during the phallic stage, due to the limited pleasure-giving capacity of clitoris, and therefore remain more passive compared to boys (p. 62). Since female bodies lack the *phallus* (here in its physical sense) and the fact that their clitoris is not efficient as a penis in creating 'necessary amount' of pleasure, they find it hard to anchor themselves to a *real* object or to assign their 'separateness' successfully since their bodies with the mother are of the same characteristics. Therefore, Kristeva maintains that the little girl engages in *interactive subjectivity,* for which she writes;

> Thus begins slow and long-lasting work of psychization that is later accentuated by the secondary oedipal phase, in which the female tendency to privilege psychic or loving representation-idealization over erotic excitation can be recognized. This female psychization is, however, placed in difficulties by identification with an agent of the parental seduction—an identification reinforced by the resemblance between girl and mother and by the projection of maternal narcissism and depressivity onto the girl (p. 62).

In the *secondary oedipal phase*, things get more complicated, and girls find themselves in an ambivalent position. According to Kristeva, here the above-provided 'female psychization' starts and cause the girls to value loving representation and idealization more than erotic excitation. More importantly, the girl now realizes that it is the father, who has the *phallus*, and they consequentially change their object of desire, from the mother to the father. The ambiguity lies in the fact that the girl, since she is now living in the realm of the symbolic, identifies with the *phallus*, however she knows that she does not have one and therefore, passively accept her 'fate' (!) to become the object the father's desire. In other words, the little girl *pretends* to be a phallic object, who is capable of producing logical arguments, creating a syntactically correct sentences, an actual object in the phallic realm of the symbolic. However, while Kristeva believes that the girls experience more psychological problems due to their 'irreducible strangeness in the phallic-symbolic order', she concludes that;

> By contrast, when the female subject manages to accomplish the complex tourniquet imposed on her by the *primary* and *secondary oedipal phases,* she can have the good fortune to acquire that strange maturity that the man so often lacks, buffeted as he is between the phallic pose of the "macho" and the infantile regression of the "impossible Mr. Baby." With the benefit of this maturity, the woman is able to encounter her child not as a phallic or

narcissistic substitute (which it mostly is) but as the real presence of the other, perhaps for the first time, unless it is the only possible one, and with which civilization begins as a totality of connections based no longer on *Eros* but in its sublimation of *Agape* (Kristeva, 1986).

In sum, while Kristeva leads to the way how she prioritizes the psychological experience and difference of the women, highlighting the need to examine it thoroughly from a non-androcentric manner, she does not fare well, since she is still following Freud and Lacan' theories that create a psychic world of relations, where everything is bound to the *phallus*. She is still trying to capture the complexities of women's psychology and therefore the development of the Oedipus complex from the men's corner. These tendencies to follow Freudian and Lacanian theories, regardless of the fact that she tries to develop them in non-androcentric manner, cause her question their essentially heterosexist and phallogocentric explanations. For instance, she fails to question the assumed 'passivity' of the female position, or that clitoral excitation is not powerful and effective as the penile excitation, or that she does not explain why she takes the orifical excitation to be only vagina for the girls, while anus and oral erogenous zones are included for the case of boys. While she does justice to the fact that the little girl maintains an aspect of bisexuality due to their unique relationship with the mother, she re-creates the phallogocentric analogy between women and men as, emotion vs. logic, when she attributes *interactive subjectivity* to the girls. Nevertheless, Kristeva remains one of the leading feminist psychoanalyst and social theory thinkers, who present a feminist critique of the psychoanalytic explanations of the Oedipus complex. The other feminist figure that would present a similar, but theoretically more systemic explanation is Luce Irigaray.

2.6.2. Luce Irigaray

Irigaray starts her phenomenal book, *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1974/1985), with a criticism of Freud's early writings on female sexuality, particularly the infamous essay 'Femininity', asserting that Freud's ideas on female sexuality are inherently wrong, and blames him for assuming a symmetry between the sexual development of the girls and the boys, while he, nevertheless, employs a strictly phallogocentric metaphysics of sexuality and sexual (in)difference. The exact example of this artificially-created symmetry, finds Irigaray, in Freud's account of the feminine Oedipus complex. Moreover, she accuses Freud of having consciously ignored and even shadowed the mother-daughter relationship – never analyzing enough the pre-oedipal and the oedipal maternal relationship of the female infant. This 'theoretical matricide' is, in Lacanian terms, the expulsion of women from the symbolic realm. Therefore, claiming that there is nothing to be found in the interpersonal psycho-social relationships of the women (insisting that he examined its dynamics with 'open' eyes), Freud commits the crime of erasing women and the female sexual experience from the realm of psychoanalysis and other sciences. Women, therefore, are nothing but 'little men'. Not only are they depicted as not having evolved and developed properly, they are additionally more hysterical and lacking. It is this 'lack' Irigaray finds her voice, the core of her theory. While de Beauvoir had stated that 'the woman is the other', Irigaray speculates that the woman does not exist at all – an idea that will be examined further in the following pages.

Presenting her critique of the Freudian and the Lacanian psychoanalysis, Irigaray presents a number of problematic questions that needs further examination and answers from the classical psychoanalysts such as the fact that Freud uses the term 'masculine' when he refers to the period the little girl loves and desires her mother (1974/1985, p. 32). As a result, she questions the very case of calling any desire towards the mother 'masculine'; why should the act of 'active' loving and desiring someone be attributed to the masculine? Is it only the

male that acts and does something? Is the feminine doomed to be the passive one in the interpersonal relations? Why should women constantly depicted to be in need of love and care? Such inquiries form the basis of Irigaray's critique of the phallocentric dialectic.

Taking 'penis envy' onto her focus, she not only questions the choice of 'envy' for this 'so-called' phenomenon, she also presents her disagreement with the claim, suggesting that it is illogical to assume that a girl would develop a penis envy, considering that she has a clitoris and a vagina that brings sexual excitation. Instead, she argues, the girl is taught to develop this 'envy' by the society, which keeps telling itself that it is better to have a penis and be a boy than being a woman. She asks, 'What is the relationship of that 'envy' to man's 'desire'? In other words, is it possible that the phobia aroused in man, and notably in Freud, by the uncanny strangeness of the 'nothing to be seen' cannot tolerate *her* not having this 'envy'? *Her* having other desires, of a different nature from *his* representation of the sexual and from *his* representation of sexual desire." (1974/1985, p.51).

Even though Kristeva and Irigaray did not respond to each other's writings (at least, as far as we know), it is only practical to realize how Kristeva's term 'abject' fits into the above-given statement. Accordingly, men produce their own understanding of the female sexuality and the female desire, because the feminine psychic world and everything related to it is abject to the men's world. (Heterosexual) men know a single world – a world that is made meaningful around a singular sexual organ, or more precisely, they have learnt to see the world behind the 'misty cliff' of their phallus, the only organ, whose sexual excitation they are taught and forced to enjoy. According to Irigaray, it is this sexual indifference of men that drives women out of the symbolic realm, therefore out of the logical, the law, the sense, and the language. This phallic world does not let a woman exist in their own terms, in their own 'naturality' and 'strangeness'. A woman is, therefore, not even the other. She is the

none. It exists only according to the language and the minds of men. It is the physical, psychological and consequently the sexual difference that Irigaray points to as the beginning point of women's emancipation.

She takes the issue of the Oedipus complex in a subtitle 'Is the Oedipus Complex Universal or Not?' in the *Speculum* and manifests that Freud attributes neurosis to women, when he stated that women remain arrested in the Oedipus complex for the rest of their lives (although its intensity decreases) and that the Oedipus complex remains at the center of all neuroses (p. 63). So, the Oedipus complex, as they present, remains a mechanism based on castration anxiety and penis envy, which unconsciously and consciously posits that masculine *jouissance* is superior to the feminine *jouissance*. Creating an analogy between the scene, where the mythical Oedipus, the King of Thebes, blinds himself, and willful blindness of the psychoanalytical theory for the feminine sexuality, she writes;

> Because it has neither 'truth' nor 'copies', nothing of its 'own', this (so-called) female sexuality, this woman's sex/organ will blind anyone taken up in its question. Therefore the gaze – and the theory, the theoria – must be protected by being resolved into a phallomorphic representation, into phallic categories. By being considered, for example, only 'in regard to' the shape of the male sex organ (p. 80).

In her interview, 'Pouvoir de Discours/ Subordination du Feminin', published in *The Sex Which Is Not One* (1977/1985), she asks the question: "What meaning could the Oedipus complex have in a symbolic system other than patriarchy?'. She follows in the tracks of this question, and asserts that 'penis envy', which is postulated to be of utmost significance for the development of the feminine Oedipus complex, is actually a "*defensive symptom, protecting woman from the political, economic, social and cultural condition that is hers". (p. 51).* She presents a familiar explanation to that of Kristeva, presenting the feminine

Oedipus complex as a n‘active form’ that starts from the beginning of the girl’s early ‘sexual appetites’ instead of seeing it as a ‘counterpart of the castration complex’. She borrows Jones’ term *aphanisis,* which is ‘the complete and permanent disappearance of all sexual pleasure’, and explains the little girl’s denouncement of femininity and her turn to father as the love object as a result of the girl’s fear that, if she does not yield to the society’s bidding, she might lose all her sexual pleasure (p. 56).

To sum it up, Irigaray presents a linguistic and a post-structuralist critique of the classical account of the Oedipus complex. Like Kristeva, she focuses on the feminine Oedipus complex and how it problematizes the phallogocentric explanation in the psychoanalytical literature. Irigaray believed that the sexual difference between men and women is a factual reality, Irigaray asserts that women need to focus on their corporeal and psychological experiences in order to attain subjectivity and re-form their subjectivity by returning to their ‘unmarked’ femininity and exploring those sexual blind spots, which were feared to be explored and lived. Although she has been criticized for establishing an essentialist view on womanhood and women’s bodies, Irigaray’s main contribution to the Oedipus debate has been her insights into how the Oedipus complex (both feminine and masculine) crystallizes the sexual differences between the ‘two’ sexes, how the theory of the Oedipus complex perpetuates the claim that ‘masculine is superior’, and how much mother-daughter relationship explains about our future psycho-sexual characteristics. Nonetheless, this tendency to prioritize woman’s corporeality and the ‘mystic’ world of woman sensuality and sexuality, which lies outside of the phallogocentric order has been criticized for several other reasons. The last feminist thinker to be presented here is Nancy J. Chodorow, who has developed a theory of the Oedipus complex, which does not focus on the sexual difference as a starting point, and explains the gender asymmetries that are born out of the ‘complex’ as a result of the fact that it is women, who take care of the infant in many cultures.

2.6.3. Nancy J. Chodorow

Chodorow's significance on the Oedipus debate stems from her decision to turn the androcentric perspective around the father and take the spotlight towards the mother. Her own understanding of the Oedipus complex, therefore, relied heavily on the mother and how the mother and the infant relationship affected one's psychological and sexual development. The main reason Chodorow was included in this thesis is not because of her feminist approach towards the debate of the Oedipus complex, but her revolutionary explanations as to how the Oedipus complex helps to perpetuate the 'forces' and the 'boundaries' of the heterosexist system.

In her article 'Oedipal Asymmetries and Heterosexual Knots' (1976), which she later revised and included in her phenomenal book *Reproduction of Mothering* (1978), she argued that, rather than genital differences between the 'two' sexes, it was the 'determining primacy of the societal relational experience' that created the experiential differences in the oedipal conflict. Followingly, she places 'mothering' at the center of the experiential differences in the Oedipus complex, and she further speculates that it is 'mothering' itself that creates the differences in the designation of heterosexual object choice for men and women. Rather than presenting explanations that rely on innate psychological tendencies, which posit that men are naturally less emotional and women are the opposite case due to their inborn characteristics, she locates the restrictively shaping powers of the established patriarchal social conditions, she explains that fathers are physically and emotionally are more unavailable to the children, whereas mothers, since they are generally the primary caretakers in many cultures, are the ones, who are emotionally and physically available for children. She alleges that this asymmetry in the upbringing patterns of the infants creates differences in the feminine and masculine Oedipus complex.

For the masculine Oedipus complex, she confirms most of the later formulations of the classical Freudian psychoanalysis, where the boy resolves their oedipal conflict by submitting to the father and repressing his incestuous desires for his mother (at least in its 'positive' form). For the feminine Oedipus complex, however she states that this is not so simple. Unlike Freud, though, she speculates that, when the little female infant turns to the father as the libidinal object, her attachment and emotional ties with the mother do not cease to exist. Considering the physical and emotional absence of the father, the girl is strongly bound to her pre-oedipal attachments to the mother. On this complex relationship, where the attachment to the father remains only secondary, she writes;

> Instead, the girl retains and builds upon her pre-oedipal tie to her mother (an intense tie characterized by primary identification – a sense of oneness; primary love – not differentiating between her own and her mother's interests; and extensive dependence) together with oedipal attachments to both her mother and her father. These latter are characterized by eroticized demands for exclusivity, feelings of competition, jealousy. She retains the (internalized) early relationship […] (p. 458).

Furthermore, she alleges that this 'difference' in the libidinal relationship with the mother creates two implication. According to Chodorow, women arise from the feminine Oedipus complex with a remaining and reigning bisexuality, compared to men. While men become *primary erotic* objects for the girl, *emotionally* they remain *secondary*. Additionally, she asserts that the inner feminine object world would be more complex due to this secondary love object position of the fathers in the oedipal triangle. All of these 'complexities', she writes that girls are more likely to enter the Oedipus complex later than boys.

In her seminal book, *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender* (1978), which laid the foundations for a sociological and anthropological criticism of the androcentric explanations of the Oedipus complex for the

future feminist thinkers, she developed the above-provided early ideas of hers and presented a complex and comprehensive account of her own understanding of the masculine and feminine Oedipus complex. Chodorow presents her goal, 'feminist effort' as to present a psychoanalytical and sociological account of how mothering influences the early and later psycho-sexual development of individuals and how sociological factors play a prominent role in its reproduction. With this goal in mind, she examines the pre-oedipal phase both for boys and girls, and concluded that the differences in length and the complexity of the pre-oedipal phase, which has been provided in the previous paragraphs, was due to women's mothering, since the mother was of the same fender as her daughter and different from the gender of her son. On this relationship, she notes;

> Because they are the same gender as their daughters and have been girls, mothers of daughters tend not to experience these infant daughters as separate from them in the same way as do mothers of infant sons. In both cases, a mother is likely to experience a sense of oneness and continuity with her infant… Sons tend to be experienced as differentiated from their mothers and their mothers push this differentiation (even while retaining, in some cases, a kind of intrusive controlling power over their sons) (p. 109-10).

As for the 'proper' oedipal phase, or more precisely, during the dissolution of the Oedipus complex, she initially presents the Freudian schema, where the boy identifies with the father due to the fear of castration and the privilege of being masculine and 'powerful', the girl initially identifies with the mother, however, upon realizing that the mother does not have a *phallus*, she turns to the father. Then, she rejects the account presented by Horney, Jones and Klein, which assumes a primary innate heterosexuality, and speculates that this 'so-called' observed heterosexual is actually created by mothers and fathers, who 'sex-type their children' and encourage feminine heterosexual behaviors. (p. 118). Chodorow explains

that the reason why the daughter turns to the father is due to the 'special nature of the pre-oedipal mother-daughter relationship'. As the mother, with all the physical similarities and the ambivalent narcissistic relationship that has existed among each other for some time, does not give the girl the chance to be 'herself', and the turn to the father becomes an issue of attaining freedom and establishing subjectivity. In the end, she comes to the conclusion that there are asymmetries in the feminine and masculine Oedipus complex, where the first is marked by the girl's ambivalent position (her rivalry with the mother is countered with her love for the mother), and that there are three differences in the feminine and the masculine Oedipus complex:

(i) The feminine Oedipus complex lasts longer and that girls enter into the complex later than boys

(ii) The configuration of the feminine Oedipus complex is different and follows more complex patterns

(iii) The way girls and boys resolve their oedipal conflict is different

The last difference between the feminine and the masculine Oedipus complex, Chodorow argues lies in the way how boys and girls resolve the complex. While the resolution scenario for the boy follows the classical Freudian explanation, the feminine Oedipus complex results in a 'bisexual triangle', which is later 'overcome' at the end of puberty. Contrary to Freud and Lacan's claims, the infant girl does not renounce or 'reject' their mothers, but they form their pre-oedipal and pubertal bisexual tendencies into emotional relationships with other women, while attributing the realm of sexuality specifically to men.

In the 'Conclusion', she rearticulates her thesis that the Oedipus complex does not arise *only* due to 'endogenously changing' erotogenous zones and sexual drives, but rather both the masculine and the feminine Oedipus complex come into being as a result of family relations, social structure, and the unique ways 'mothering' takes place. While she

acknowledges the role of 'penis envy' in addition to the need for the self-other distinction for the girl, she maintains that the girls learn that a penis is better and preferable to a vagina initially from their parents and then, the society (p. 163). She summarizes her final standpoint as such;

> The Oedipus complex leaves in a child unconscious inner representations of feelings about its position in relation to both parents, and potentially other primary figures as well. Whether or not this fixing and these inner relationships are heterosexual, focused on masculinity or femininity, uniquely preoccupied with love for an opposite sex parent or rivalry with a parent of the same sex, depends on the quality of the child's object-relations and family constellation, on societal norms, on parental personality, and on the inner object-world repressions, ego splits, conflicts, and ego defenses which a child brings to and uses during the oedipal period (p. 164).

Even though Chodorow was criticized for having placed the Western classical family at the center of her theories, she actually provides 'additional' cases, where the primary caretaker is not the mother. Mentioning particular cultures, where the primary caretaker is the father or the cases, where the caretaking is shared between different agents, Chodorow realizes the shortcoming of her theories to a certain extent. Furthermore, she even accounts for the cultures, where the infant sleeps with the mother and/or such caretaking practices vary considerably. She examines the clinical and experimental studies by eminent researchers and thinkers such as Bowlby, Caldwell, Rutter and Schaffer, and concludes that, even in these cases, where the mother is a single parent, or the caretaking is shared among various family members, the primary attachment to the mother maintains its power and significance for the psycho-sexual development of the child.

Another critique that must be stated is the fact that Chodorow presents a dichotomous picture of 'two' personality types; the masculine personality, and the feminine personality.

But, it is evident that these 'two' personality types are not adequate to reflect the complex patterns individuals experience and express their gender and sexual identities. In this regard, Chodorow takes gender identity to be synonymous with sexual identity in most parts, disregarding the queer experiences of non-binary individuals, however one must present their criticism cautiously here, considering the historical intellectual atmosphere of the time of her theories, where only a few people were talking about the experiences of non-binary identifying individual. Nevertheless, she treats the cases, where a 'feminine' woman (or a feminine man) is sexually and/or emotionally attracted to another 'feminine' woman (or another feminine man) as extraordinary cases. Similarly, she has left out how her theories enact in same-sex families, as to how the infant reacts to the dynamics of having two parents of the same sex in an oedipal triangle. In spite of her 'homonormative' schema, where the sexual relationships are imbued only with a reciprocity between the 'feminine' and the 'masculine', even if they are accounted to be homosexual or bisexual in nature, she has presented a unique feminist paradigm for studying and analyzing the Oedipus complex and the family formation across societies.

2.7. The Feminist Critique Meets Queer Anthropology

2.7.1. Judith Butler

In her most renowned book, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), Butler addresses the way classical psychoanalysis has dealt with the Oedipus complex. With this aim, they take up Freud's argument in *The Ego and The Id* (1923/1989), where he claims that the ego internalizes their of desire through imitation, when it faces the troubling case of losing someone dear (In the case of the Oedipus complex, where the ego has to renounce their 'forbidden' love to their object of desire). Moreover, Freud argues that this internalization and the recognition of the loss of the love object has melancholic

characteristics to it, which establishes its successful survival. Referring to this argument, Butler proposes that this process of internalization of the loss of the lost one is central to gender formation, claiming that this is exactly the way the incest taboo works for individuals, where the tabooed object of desire is internalized by the egos of the members of a society.

Butler, then, takes up the Freudian account of the Oedipus complex, where he stated that the boy chose between two objects of desire (mother and father), the result of which defined its negative and positive component, but the boy also determined their sexual 'disposition', namely, being masculine or feminine. However, Butler argues that, unlike Freud's contention, the boy does not choose heterosexuality (the mother, thereof) due to the fear of castration, but the boy makes this decision for the 'fear of feminization', which they point that it is tied with inferior characteristics in the same level with male homosexuality. Therefore, she writes, "it is no primarily the heterosexual lust for the mother that must be punished, but the homosexual cathexis that must be subordinated to a culturally sanctioned heterosexuality" (p. 59).

In simpler terms, Butler asserts that the Oedipus complex functions as the mechanism to introduce sexual difference, incest taboo and the taboo against homosexuality. Taking their inspiration from Foucault's attack on the 'repressive hypothesis' in *The History of Sexuality, Vol. 1* (1985), they claim that cultures do not simply repress and prohibit sexualities, rather through their 'scientific' theories, discourses and prohibitions, they create the so-called heterosexual 'dispositions', through which the Oedipus complex becomes possible in the first place (p. 64). Furthermore, she claims that the 'forced' selection of the heterosexual love object for the children in the oedipal conflict becomes possible through an artificial narrative of a melancholic loss of a *jouissance* lost. In order to society and culture to persist, individuals are discouraged to 'fall into' their homosexual desires, and therefore society

creates a ‘human-made’ story of loss and conflict, where the children are taught that they have heterosexual and incestuous ‘dispositions’, which are in need of strict personal and societal control.

According to Butler, the reason why this narrative was introduced into our sciences and into our psyches was in order to control homosexual desire and, cunningly reflect the fear felt in the face of homosexuality and femininity to a fear of incest. In accordance with her theory, which claims that even what we term ‘sex’ is a culturally and linguistically constituted ‘reality’ embedded onto our corporeal bodies, Butler attacks Freud’s claim on the heterosexual ‘dispositions’ and their factuality. Although Freud had acknowledged the negative and the positive account of the Oedipus complex (even the terms are problematic as it can be seen), Butler alleges that the Freudian explanation assumes only two ‘dispositions’, the feminine and the masculine, and claims that they are not adequate to reflect the myriad manifestation of one’s gender and sexual identity. So, Butler contends that the function of the Oedipus complex is;

> (i) The introduction of the taboo against homosexuality and the production of heterosexual ‘disposition’
>
> (ii) The introduction and the internalization of the incest taboo
>
> (iii) The formation of a gender identity in accordance with the established gender identity options, which exist in a heterosexists, dyadic system. (p. 57-65).

Summarizing her arguments, she writes;

> If the heterosexual denial of homosexuality results in melancholia and if melancholia operates through incorporation, then the disavowed homosexual love is preserved through the cultivation of an oppositionally-defined gender identity. In other words,

> disavowed male homosexuality culminates in a heightened or consolidated masculinity (p. 69).

This explanation as to the function of the oedipalization as the formation of a masculine heterosexual gender identity is not original to Butler, though. They were influenced by the famous article 'Traffic in Women: Notes on The 'Political Economy of Sex' (1975) by the feminist anthropologist Gayle Rubin, who was the first to assert that the incest taboo incorporated a taboo against homosexuality as well. Having been inspired by Rubin's argument, she applied a Foucauldian critique, and problematized their assertion that the incest taboo employed sanctions on homosexual desires and actions in addition to regulatory rules for a clan. According to Butler, it was the 'repressive hypothesis' mistake that Rubin was falling for, and they rejected the postulation that there was an 'ideal sexuality' and a sexual individual before the culmination of the incest taboo. Therefore, while Rubin formed her theory around an a priori self, Butler was not challenging this contention. For Butler, it was the taboos themselves that created the sexual being as a result.

When the previous feminist theories that dealt with the Oedipus complex are involved, Butler presented a critical stance. For instance, she criticized Kristeva's explanation for serving to maintain the heteronormative frameworks of the heterosexual matrix, when Kristeva formed her theory around a 'unique' relationship between the infant and the mother. This feminist theory, which cherished motherhood and the unintelligibility of woman's corporeality was doing nothing but to dwell on the other side of the dyadic heterosexual paradigm. Moreover, Kristeva was wrong in the first place for accepting the assumption tha the Name-of-the-Father was a factuality. However, she regarded Kristeva's insights about the pre-oedipal phase to be tide-changing, but recalled for an explanation that would not perpetuate the current dyadic formation. Similarly, she was critical of Irigaray for seeing

sexual difference as an inevitable reality, and presenting female genitals as the ground for establishing a patriarchy-defying feminist discourse.

As for the universality of her claims, Butler maintained that she was closer to its rejection, though she stated that further studies were still needed in order to come to a more solid conclusion. In *Undoing Gender* (2004), she wrote;

> Oedipus may or may not function universally, but even those who claim that it does would have to find out in what ways it figures and would not be able to maintain that it always figures in the same way. For it to be a universal—and I confess to being an agnostic on this point—in no way confirms the thesis that it is the condition of culture. Such a thesis purports to know that Oedipus always functions in the same way, namely, as a condition of culture itself. But if Oedipus is interpreted broadly, as a name for the triangularity of desire, then the salient questions become: What forms does that triangularity take? Must it presume heterosexuality? And what happens when we begin to understand Oedipus outside of the exchange of women and the presumption of heterosexual exchange? (p. 127).

This explicitly shows where Butler stands in the 'debate'. Even if it could be shown that the Oedipus complex was universal and evident in other cultures of the world, what was problematic from the beginning was its formulation, which heavily lied on a heterosexual, androcentric understanding of human sexuality. On this argument, she stated that, even if we could confirm that the mother was the 'hidden' incestuous object of desire, it was the desire that was both produced and prohibited by the law itself.

2.7.2. A Preliminary Culture-Sensitive and Non-Heteronormative Formulation of the Oedipus complex

Throughout the pages thus far, I have tried to present a clear account of the arguments around the concept of the Oedipus complex chronologically from both the frameworks of psychoanalysis and anthropology, as much as the time allowed and my intellectual capacities let me. But, where have all these abstruse theories led me? At the end of the 'debate', I have found myself in a 'queer' place – once again! Despite my predictions that this inquiry would not possibly cross paths with queer theory, I was amazed to realize that almost all of our contemporary discussions about culture, agency and sexuality have been rooted in the Oedipus debate. Not only did this inquiry open my eyes to the fact how almost every single concept in social sciences have been construed within strictly phallogocentric thinking patterns, it also revealed that there is a need for a culture-sensitive and a non-heteronormative formulation of the Oedipus complex.

It must be acknowledged that the theories of queer theorists such as Rubin and Butler did already lay the foundation for such a formulation, yet their ideas mostly focused on the origin and functions of the Oedipus complex in Western culture, where it was claimedly through the invention and the subsequent mechanisms of the Oedipus complex that the taboos against homosexuality and incest were established. Whereas they refer to a number of ethnographic findings, which remind their readers that there are other cultures, where the norms of gender and sexuality are not the same with the Western ones, they do not venture into speculating about how the Oedipus complex might come into being in such cultures, In spite of Butler's reflections on the factitious' nature' of the Oedipus complex, it sounds more like a wishful thinking to state that it will perish soon, recognizing that thousands of psychoanalytically-oriented therapists, researchers and psychology students around the world have long worked intensively with the concept of the Oedipus complex, and will continue to

do so. For these reasons, I believe we are in need of formulating a culture-sensitive and non-heteronormative formulation of the Oedipus complex (both theoretically and linguistically). Therefore, in the remaining pages, I humbly, if not naively, speculate on the various ways how the Oedipus complex might appear in different family configurations of western and non-western cultures, explaining how I conceive the Oedipus complex in the light of the theories I have read.

As far as the Oedipus debate is concerned, I personally concur that the Oedipus complex is inextricably linked with birth, which resonates with Rank's assertion that birth is our first traumatic experience in the outside world, while I account for the possibility that the baby might experience trauma due to some chemical, physical or psychological interference during their time in the womb. From then on, we find ourselves 'thrown' (see Heidegger's *geworfenheit*) into a world full of sensory stimuli, causing a certain amount of anxiety on the baby's part. Having used to be in the sheer darkness and 'comfort' of the womb and living our lives entrusted to the grace of our mother (having little power over when and what to eat), our eyes, like the shackled 'fools' in Plato's cave, who were so used to shadows and darkness, cannot make sense of the lights. We find ourselves bombarded with vibrant images, noises, smells, and caresses to an extent that we never experienced before. The hardest realization, though, possibly comes the moment, when we realize that we are no longer 'inside' the mother, who used to somehow make 'sense' of our needs and wishes. I do not propose that as babies, we know in the proper sense, what we have lost. But, since the baby is no longer surrounded by the membrane of the uterus, struggling with the exigent changes in the dynamics of getting what they need, the baby might well 'sense' that something is not the way it used to be. From my point-of-view, these anxiety-provoking changes in the condition of our being following one's birth mark the beginning of what we refer as the Oedipus complex.

Starting from the first weeks, it will be seen that the baby realizes that their actions such as crying, babbling and chuckling attract the attention of others around them, which correspondingly imply that we are capable of interacting with the outer world and with others to a certain extent, even as a baby (see Bowlby's *pre-attachment stage*). I believe, the changes in the way the baby communicates with the primary caretaker(s) and the others lead to an ambivalent relation with our existence, in that with the rapid development of our early cognitive capacities and our repetitive interactions with the outer world objects and the outer world agents, we come to realize that we now have a different sort of agency. Regardless of the fact that babies seem to have a some level of agency even in the womb, since they seem to mediate the actions of the mother, this 'new' feeling of agency (with the realization that our actions such as babbling, cooing etc. create actions and changes in the outer world more directly) generates two psychological consequences: On the negative side, we realize that we are no more 'one-in-two' with the mother, which implies that a 'lost' has occurred – a lost that preoccupied the classical Freudians for centuries, to which they attributed their insatiable desire to penetrate and find their way 'into' everything. On the positive side, we start to enjoy this 'new' forms of agency.

These changes in our conditions, more or less, correspond to Lacan's *pre-mirror stage* or Kristeva's *semiotic.* While I have borrowed considerably from Lacan's theory, my formulation is closer to that of Kristeva, who dates the intersubjective communication between the infant and the mother [the primary caretaker(s) and other figures in the environment] to an earlier period. The semiotic is, accordingly, where we experience the distinction between 'I' and 'other', 'I' and the 'primary caretaker(s)' in its most permeable quality, since the boundaries that define the self and the other(s) have not been totally established yet. These distinctions become more apparent and sharper in time, as in the cases, where the primary caretaker is present elsewhere, causing the baby to realize that the primary

caretaker(s) and they embody different spatialities. Of course, the baby does not name it as such, rather the realization of this distinction stems from the frustration and anxiety felt by the non-presence of the primary caretaker(s). However, as the cognitive abilities of the infant develop (see Piaget's *the onset of law of object permanence*) and the experiences of the baby, where the primary caretaker(s) always came back, the baby starts to realize that, they will eventually come back, which reduces their separation anxiety – on the conditions that the baby and the primary caretaker(s) have established a secure attachment relationship.

Here complying with Kristeva's account on the significance of the pre-oedipal experiences, I argue that the initial experiences with the mother are the earliest determining factors of our future psycho-sexual and interpersonal relationships. However, I reject to the claim that the primary caretaker(s) are always the mothers in all cultures and familial configurations (see Chodorow), since there are more than hundred different possible familial configurations in the 21st century with the increasingly comprehensive understanding of our gender and sexual identities. Therefore, regardless of the primary caretaker(s)' gender and sexual identities, I suggest that the primary caretaker(s) become the one(s), with whom the baby interacts the most. If the primary caretaker(s) remained absent for a considerable amount of time, or that they neglected the baby's basic physical and psychological needs, the attachment develops into a non-secure type, which the baby carries over to their future relationships. I will come back to the significance of a secure attachment relationship with the primary caretaker(s), when I focus on the 'negative' scenarios of the Oedipus complex.

What follows after is the development of the infant's cognitive linguistic abilities, the years of which might change intersubjectively and cross-culturally. What follows after the formation of the infant's ambivalent sense of agency and the establishment of attachment relationships with the primary caretaker(s), the infant starts to recognize that what people call each other vocally (the linguistic referents) signify particular people and objects in the outer

world, which structures a world symbolically for the first time. While I agree with the Lacanian premise that one's initiation into the symbolic realm, is simultaneous with the development of linguistic abilities and language, I believe that the infant has some sort of linguistic capacities before the symbolic 'proper' (even if this repertoire is 'semiotic', in that it is limited to the self, the primary caretaker(s) and other important family members, which renders it hard to discern with the 'lawful' linguistic syntax. Thus, through our initiation into the symbolic, which occurs with the mirror image in Lacan's terminology, the boundaries between the self and the other become more rigid and impermeable.

Extending Lacan's view, I conceive the mirror stage as the psychological outcome of the infant's repetitive experiences with the outer world, where the interaction with the others in the environment (primary caretakers, siblings, relatives etc.) strengthens the distinction between 'I' and 'them'. I think language crystallizes the boundaries of the self. As a result, the ambivalent agency we have experienced turn into a stronger sense of autonomy. With our developed abilities to think symbolically, we realize that we can form equally satisfying relations with other people, beside the deeply (un)satisfying relationship with the primary caretaker(s). It is true that the baby was already able to communicate with others, starting from the early weeks after birth, however this communication was not effective and satisfactory enough for the baby to pursue it, since these individuals were not experienced as 'constantly-existing beings' and the baby did not have enough experience in forming attachment and interpersonal relations back then.

But, what happened to these anxiety-inducing feelings in the meantime? With the infant's reconciliation with the altered conditions of being and their discovery of agency, no matter how ambivalent, these earlier are replaced by the anxieties of establishing self and autonomy. Following the thetic break, or the mirror image in Lacanian terms, at some point, the infant is informed about death, at least in the sense that some people are told not to appear

in our lives for any longer. This realization, although it is in its least abstract sense, resurrects a very familiar anxiety in our past: the trauma of birth. Now informed about where we come from and that we are bound to perish somehow, the previously-felt anxieties all rush in. However, the recently-acquired sense of autonomy and linguistic abilities to create change physically and symbolically in the outer world diverts these anxieties from the fragile psyche of the self and creates a 'necessary' battle of establishing autonomy. This agency banishes this fear of annihilation, which takes its roots through a retrospective thinking about birth, and through the once-permeable and ambivalent boundaries between 'I' and the 'primary caretaker(s) into the depths of the infant's psyche, which we will possibly deal with later in adolescence.

As if the anxieties born out of the very condition of being are not enough, on the condition that the infant has shown steady 'progress' in their cognitive linguistic and communicative capacities, we experience the most tumultous 'blow' in the course of our psyho-social development in the hands of the others: our initiation into culture. Perhaps it is remedial that our initiation into culture is called upon now, when we needed something the most to distract us from indulging in paralyzing anxieties. From this moment on, when the primary caretaker(s) and other adults no longer see us and our actions exempt from the rule of culture, we find ourselves inundated with cultural laws, musts and must-nots. For instance, we learn that we can no longer pee our pants or shit whenever we feel like it, or we cannot stay too late or sleep with the primary caretakers. If we did, we would be punished.

Principally, the first prohibition on our actions and desire was initially introduced into our lives, when the mother stopped breastfeeding us (This is one of the other points that I share with Klein). However, we were unable to name it back then, only to have suffered its psychological distress. But, our initiation into culture brings with it too many sanctions and prohibitions. For instance, it was the anal stage as speculated by Freud, where we were first

introduced into the law of culture, which prohibited our control on the erogenous zones. Unfortunately, the law of culture, also referred as the Name-of-the-Father by Lacan, which I reject for its phallogocentric connotations, does not suffice with the 'joy' of controlling how we defecate. It is at this particular moment the Oedipus complex comes in.

Before I explain how the Oedipus complex emerges and functions after this point, it is necessary to state that what I described until this point (until culture comes into the equation) applies to the individuals of all cultures in similar, if not the same ways. The only exception(s) to this formulation of mine are the family configurations in non-western cultures, where parenting practices are different, or the contemporary family configurations, where the infant is weaned through particular technological devices that renders the presence of a mother unnecessary for the task of weaning.

While I remain hesitant to draw strict developmental lines, as many cognitive developmental schemas have done, I propose that the trauma of birth is an experience common to all human beings. The only exception to this might have been the contemporary non-heterosexual family configurations, where the primary caretaker is not the mother, however as I stated earlier, the trauma of birth is not dependent on the presence of the mother, but rather comes into being as a result of the changes in the conditions of our being. Similarly, I propose that the early experiences in the semiotic remains the same across cultures, since I reject Kristeva's claim that semiotic is only pertinent to the relationship between the infant and the mother. I redefine semiotic as the realm, where the primary caretaker(s), whose gender is irrelevant until culture comes forth, and the infant develop a more intimate relationship with each different from the infant's relationship with others.

Our contemporary ethnographic findings also reinforce this position. As Kathleen Barlow (2004), conducting ethnography among the Murik of Papua New Guinea, demonstrated that family configurations and parental practices differ so much from the

western ‘norms’ that there are many cases, where an infant’s sister might be considered as the mother of her sibling. Moreover, the child rearing practices were shown to more inclusive, in that men (as parents, siblings, and relatives) also actively and presently participated. Another example, where semiotic is not imbued with the feminine, comes from Sheba George’s ethnography, *When Women Come First: Gender and Class in Transnational Migration* (2005) where she wrote about the changes in the family lives of Kerala Christian men, who were left with the choice of taking care of their children and the housework due to the fact that their wives went to the United States to do domestic work. These findings indicate that it is not the mother or the gender of the primary caretaker that matters, but the loving relationship between the infant and the primary caretaker.

While I posit the trauma of birth and the interpersonal experiences in the semiotic as non-gendered psycho-social happenings, I cannot do the same with the symbolic, which I allege to be ‘primarily’ masculine, serving the welfare of men in a given society. The contradictory evidence against this position would come from the cultures, where women are ‘believed’ to be incorporated in a symbolic, which is not entirely masculine, and thus capable of representing them. One of the most famous examples of such cultures, in which the ‘western’ fetishization of masculinity is claimed not to exist, are Herskovits’s (1937) and Oboler’s (1980) study of the female-husbands in addition to Mead’s controversial study of Tchambuli (1935/1970), and Shostak’s (1981) study of !Kung women.

However, in spite of the fact that the ethnographies of female-husbands were presented as the refutation of the universality of patriarchal systems, it could be seen that the female-husbands, instead of creating an alternative symbolic, where they establish their autonomy and social recognition through their femininity, they are shown to conform to the rules of masculine conduct. Notwithstanding the fact that the female-husbands are inborn-males does not seem to bother the members of their societies to the same extent as we have in

western cultures, I believe this does not mean that the valorization of masculinity is not present due to the above-mentioned 'masculine-like' actions of the female husbands.

Another frequently presented example is Mead's phenomenal study of Tchambuli of the Papua New Guinea (1935/1970), whose men, she speculated, engaged in decorating themselves, while their women were the actively working ones. She claimed that this 'discovery' indicated that the inferiority of femininity was not universal. However, as Deborah Gewertz (1984) and other anthropologists, who have conducted ethnographies among Tchambuli, revealed that Mead was wrong for most of her claims, sometimes accusing of her distorting the ethnographic findings for the sake of supporting her claims.

Similarly, Shostak's famous ethnography, *Nisa: The Life and Words of a !Kung Woman*, has widely been used as an exemplary of the cultures, where the inequilibrium between masculinity and femininity is different. Even though !Kung women enjoyed certain privileges for their status of equally-important economic providers of the society, further examination revealed that (Shostak also acknowledging this), the overall workings of the society enabled !Kung men dominate women's lives, although it was not to the same extent it was the case in many western countries.

What does the studies point at, then? I would rejoice over a discovery, where patriarchal values are not deemed superior to femininity. However, as Bamberger (1974) noted, though we have searched diligently, we have not come across a society, where women dominated men. The best ethnographic findings indicated at a somewhat gender equality, however even in these societies, while women seemed to enjoy some level of autonomy and equality, they were still forbidden from certain aspects of life. As a result, I hypothesize that, even though different cultural family configurations and non-heterosexual family configurations make it possible to create a non-gynocentric (with the exception of lesbian parents) and non-heterosexist semiotic for infants, as we immerse deeper into the rule of

culture, we cannot escape from the symbolic, whose masculine-aligned tendencies I have discussed above.

Now that I have explained how the trauma of birth, the transition from semiotic to the symbolic, and early anxieties that arise due to the fear of annihilation and social recognition are connected with the development of the Oedipus complex, I can go back to speculate on how the initiation into culture (symbolic) occurs, what I refer as the Oedipus complex 'proper'. Simultaneous with the development of the infant's linguistic abilities, the infant's insatiable erotogenous desire, which have been present all along (oral and anal desires), find their ways into 'actual' people: the primary caretaker(s). Upon developing sexual desires, which might be monosexual or polysexual depending on the quality and intensity of the interpersonal relationship between the infant and the primary caretaker(s), we are told that we cannot desire what we desire. Here concurring with the separate accounts presented by Rubin and Butler, which assert that the Oedipus complex is a mechanism that aims to accomplish the implementation of the law against incest, and the law against homosexuality (2004, p. 120), I propose that, at this moment in our lives, where cultures permeate into our minds, we are faced with the first *symbolic* prohibition on our sexual desire (I exclude oral and anal frustrations, since they are prohibitions that are directly reflective on our physical actions, even if their premises foundationally emerge from the symbolic). It is here, we are told that it is a 'wrongful' thing to *desire* the primary caretaker, who have been our earliest object of desire since forever. The first 'explicit' law that we find before us is, therefore, the law of incest, regardless of the gender of the primary caretaker, since such a flow of desire is presumably a danger to the social order.

At this point, one could easily question the validity of Butler's argument for a universal law against homosexuality, considering the ethnographic findings, which argue that there are cultures, where heterosexuality is not the norm. However, upon an examination of

the anthropological literature, which focused on societies, where the norms of gender experience and sexuality are different from the western cultures such as the ethnographic accounts of the third gender hijras (Nanda, 1999; Reddy, 2005), the Sambian Tahitian Mahu and Kwolu-aatmwol (Herdt, 1994), the Samoan fa'afafine (Schmidt, 2010), the American-Indian berdaches (Roscoe, 1998), and the Turnim-man of the New Guinea (Herdt, 1999), it became almost impossible to support these previous claims. For example, although many fa'afafine and Indian-American two-spirit individuals are accounted as proof that there are non-heteronormative cultures, the very account of the fa'afafine and Indian American two-spirit individuals indicated that they detested being identified as homosexuals or transgenders in the western sense, since they are generally attributed to some supernatural powers such as healers and/or mystics, which complicates the argument of non-heteronormative cultures.

A similar argument for non-heteronormative cultures usually comes from the ethnographic accounts of Papua New Guinea, where we observe 'ritualized homosexuality'. The problem in the cross-cultural analysis arose from the difference in the way various cultures made sense of sexuality and sexual desire. However, even the personal account of Herdt, who was the first to observe the phenomenon, warned us not to interpret it as a proof of homosexual identity. Instead, it was revealed that most men indulged in same sex coitus only for the initiation rite, where the young boys are masculinized through a substance-based (semen) ritual into manhood. Some, who were persistent in finding a 'homophilic' society, presented the fact that these men refrained from having sex with their female wives and preferred living in the clubhouse with other men and boys, with whom they continued to have sex with, to living among their women. However, what should be acknowledged here is that this preference for men might be mediated by their belief that femininity is polluting and dangerous for a man. Even if we could prove that these cultures used to accepting other forms sexuality besides heterosexuality, it would not change the fact that gender non-forming and

non-heterosexual individual in these no longer 'enjoy' the same privilege and acceptance since, their cultures have been deeply westernized in the past decades, which led their societal values of gender identity and sexual desire conform to the western standards.

So, one of the main functions of the Oedipus complex 'proper' is to create exogamous (in order to prevent incest) heterosexual desire, while mediating and repressing homosexual desires. Unlike Butler, though, I attribute equal importance to bisexuality (polysexuality and pansexuality alike) in the dissolution of the Oedipus complex, since I believe they possess a potential capacity for subverting gender-conforming beliefs and gender-affirmative attitudes. As it can be seen, with the emergence of the Oedipus complex 'proper', our previous anxieties about establishing autonomy and death are projected upon the anxiety of 'freely' living our gender identity and sexual desire.

Contrary to Butler's assertion that there is no agent or desire prior to the law, I agree with Freud that there is an agent with polymorphous desires. However, as Jung and Fromm speculated, I believe that these desires are also mediated and sometimes even intensified by the actions of the primary caretakers, which might be sexually provoking. But, there is another questions that demands answer: Even if it is the heteronormative culture that forces us to denounce our polymorphous desires, why do some of us maintain those desires, while some do not?

I suggest that this sexual resilience towards the law of heterosexist culture might stem from two factors: Initially, it might be the case that the infant, who have formed a developed sense of agency and/or a secure attachment relationship with the primary caretaker(s), would not be intimidated by the possibility of losing the love of the primary caretaker(s) as much as other infants do, considering that the first's sense of agency is more independent than other infants. In the same vein, the infant, who has not developed a secure, loving relationship with the primary caretaker(s) (who might be physically or emotionally absent), might and might

not choose to pursue the same-sex objects of desire throughout their lives. Unfortunately, for believing that we need more clinical and ethnographic studies about this subject matter, it will not go beyond mere speculation to incorporate the dynamics why an infant develops homosexual desire, whereas one develops a heterosexual desire.

As we find our way 'out' of the Oedipus complex 'proper', having made our object-choice (homosexual/heterosexual/bisexual), we become less egocentric (for now having established a more sound image of our 'self') and we start to engage with the world to its fullest, leaving those oedipal frustrations to be dealt with later, to adolescence, where the anxieties about gender identity and sexual desire will become more demanding. In adolescence, having already internalized the law against incest, we try to experience the same kind of loving relationship, which we experienced with the primary caretaker(s) through projecting those 'ancient' desires onto the members of the sex that is deemed appropriate to desire according to the society. However, due to the space allotted to this thesis, I will not go into the ways how the 'post'-Oedipus complex affects individuals specifically, since cultural differences and the changes in our contemporary understanding of sexuality and gender identity make this process difficult to reflect on.

3. Conclusion

It all started with Freud's brand new concept the 'Oedipus complex', through which he explained the infant's initiation into culture, the repression of incestuous desires, and the formation of gender identity and sexual orientation. On the one hand, the Oedipus complex was surprisingly efficient in providing answers insight into the enigma of a boy's development of his heterosexual object-cathexes, and his internalization of the laws of his culture through the repression of his 'natural' incestuous desires, on the other hand, it failed miserably to explain the account of these events for girls. The problem with the Freudian explanation were numerous: First of all, his whole explanation solely depended on 'penis' as the origin of the complex and the effects of its 'so-called' castration for the girls, and the fear of castration for the boys. Moreover, in the Freudian literature, all desire was male-aligned, therefore women were not given agency *per se*, and they were *little men,* who were diverging from the male desire. Even they were developed adults, they were either at the far end of the neurotic level of functioning, or they were devising possible scenarios, through which they could attain a substitute for the penis they never had: either through a male son, or marrying a man, therefore symbolically getting a 'grip' of it. As a result, in Freud's opus, there was no possibility for a woman to obtain sexual satisfaction without having some kind of connection with the masculine.

Although Freud was the first one to articulate the possible influential factors that emerge in the pre-oedipal stage of an infant's psycho-sexual development, it was Jung, Rank and particularly Klein, who prioritized the role of the mother in the development and the dissolution of the Oedipus complex. Nevertheless, even their theories remained somewhat in the central tenets of the classical Freudian psychoanalysis, where the castration complex and the penis were the most essential. With the introduction of the 'trauma of birth' by Rank, the scope of our understanding of the 'complex' enlarged as back as to the beginning of life.

Therefore, the Oedipus complex was gaining new meanings and functions in addition to the Freudian explanations. Whereas most post-Freudian thinkers rejected his hypothetical scenario of the 'primal crime', they were close to the explanation that one of the functions of the Oedipus complex was to ensure the development of the superego (what concerned the psychoanalysts of the time) and the successful initiation of the infant into culture, which came to the early anthropologists' notice.

The first anthropologist, who closely read Freud's work on the Oedipus complex and started to question its cross-cultural validity was Seligman. After his brief expedition to the Trobriands, he spotted it as the right place to start this inquiry and encouraged his student, Malinowski to go to the Trobriands and test the Freudian theses in a non-Western culture (Smadja, 2016; p. 150). Having conducted the first long-term ethnographic work in the Trobriands, Malinowski asserted that the Oedipus complex as in the Freudian sense was not evident among the Trobrianders. Consequentially, he stripped it from its biological connotations, which led Freud explain it in terms of 'in-born' drives and 'dispositions', and proposed that Freud was right in his claims that the family structure gave rise to certain psycho-sexual tensions among the members, but this complex did not have a single form, therefore he came up with his concept of the 'nuclear family complex'. In the Trobriand culture, the father was not the main 'rival', it was instead the maternal uncle, who came to be associated with the law.

In spite of the fact that Jones had his differences with Freud, he was skeptical towards the Malinowski's approach and maintained that what he 'found' in the Trobriands was nothing but a 'transformed' and 'cloaked' manifestation of the Oedipus complex. The hostile feelings towards the maternal uncle were actually taking its roots from the hostile feelings towards the 'natural' father, but unwilling to confront those feelings, the Trobrianders subverted these feelings to the maternal uncle. Apart from Jones and few other Freudian

psychoanalysts in the classical sense, Malinowski's approach caught the attention of a number of anthropologists and social psychologists. In the middle of these newly-emerging poles around the Oedipus debate as the universalists and the relativists, Róheim came forth. Róheim was not only influential in his creative applications of the Freudian psychoanalytical concepts to the cultural phenomena, but he was leading the debate as the first anthropologist to believe in the universal manifestation of the Oedipus complex. However, he did not take it to emerge 'biologically'. He asserted that what gave rise to the development of the Oedipus complex was our 'prolonged infancy where dependence on mother and the onset of sexuality' is marked earlier than any other living beings (1950, p. 489). Apart from Róheim, however, many anthropologists in the following decades would appropriate the relativist approach. Kroeber, for instance, conducted a close reading of Freud's *Totem and Taboo*, and concluded that his explanation was ethnocentric, however revolutionary his insights were. Another anthropologist that could not find the proof to the universality claim of the Oedipus complex was Margaret Mead. She stated that she was unable to find the oedipal conflicts that existed in the West, because the Samoans had different kind of familial structures, where sexuality was not a matter of taboo and the children did not live as in close proximity to their parents as in the West.

Followingly, a number of psychoanalysts decided to revise the classical accounts of the Freudian Oedipus complex, realizing its ethnocentrism among many other shortcomings. Therefore, the 'cultural turn' happened, which started with Kardiner's relativist explanations. Fromm-Kardiner-Horney axis shared the common understanding that the Oedipus complex was not universal. Fromm asserted that the Oedipus complex was specific to the society, where the class stratification and patriarchy was evident, whereas Horney alleged that the Oedipus complex should be construed as a neurotic phenomenon that develops due to problematic parental behaviors. With the theories of Kardiner, Fromm, and Horney, the scope

of the discussion regarding the universality of the Oedipus complex comprised speculations about its origin and role in patriarchal and capitalist societies.

The fervent encounter of psychoanalysis with anthropology was crystallized between two opposing sides until Lévi-Strauss and Lacan joined the debate. Prominent anthropologist and psychoanalyst of their time, these two figures, who were also close friends, marked the first reconcilement around the 'debate'. They both showed that the cultural material were a manifestation of the collective unconscious, even though Lacan believed that the unconscious did not necessarily produce the same results in every culture. As times changed and consequently the conditions our lives unraveled, the debate was then taken by the American anthropologists, who were well-trained in psychoanalytical theory, and were closer to a Freudian analysis of cultural phenomenon as demonstrated by Róheim, even though the American anthropology was marked by the relativist teachings of its founder, Franz Boas. The pioneer of such approach was Spiro, who believed in the universality of the Oedipus complex. However, he had noted that the intensity, its dynamics and psycho-social consequences could differ from culture to culture. Obeyesekere, on the other hand, was not strictly universalist as his counterpart, Spiro. He completed the missing points and corrected the androcentric explanations in the Freudian conceptualization of the Oedipus complex, having included the negative forms of the Oedipus complex, the feminine Oedipus complex, and other forms of familial sexual tensions as in between siblings, Obeyesekere concluded that while the Oedipus complex was not universal in a single form, there were 'family resemblances' in each culture that gave rise to certain oedipal conflicts between different configurations of familial kin. This idea of his is remarkably Malinowskian in certain aspects, since Obeyesekere follows the Malinowskian claim that the Trobrianders had a 'maternal Oedipus complex', and extends this idea and introduces a number of different forms and configurations of Oedipus complex cross-culturally.

Even when Obeyesekere's account is given prominence for doing just to the cultural relativity of a psychoanalytical concept that was derived in a singular time and a geography in the West, almost all of these accounts were either ignorant of the feminine Oedipus complex, or they did not attribute agency and authenticity to women and women's sexuality. I think, the reason why the early thinkers such as Freud speculated that the origin of the Oedipus complex lies in the castration complex stems from their androcentric bias and their own fear of 'being ostracized and rejected'. On the other hand, this abjection is what is so familiar to many of us; women, the disabled, the sexually dissident, and gender non-conforming persons. I believe all the previous explanations take their root from the existential dread of those men, who were fearful of annihilation and rejection to such extents that they could not realize another existence was possible: a queer form of being and living.

As a result, women thinkers stepped into the debate. While the theories of these women, who lived in the same epoch and mostly in the same countries (as in Kristeva and Irigaray) showed particular differences as to the origin of their arguments or how they approached the question of women's sexuality through their academic disciplines, they were common in their cry for a non-androcentric, non-biased re-examination of the Oedipus complex. Kristeva, Irigaray and Chodorow were concurred in their criticism against the Freudian fetishism of the penis and the devaluation of the feminine sexual organs and feminine psychology.

Kristeva, for instance, criticized the Freudian psychoanalysis for its strictly misogynist discourse and problematized why these male psychoanalysts (including Lacan) never focused on the pre-oedipal relationship between the infant and the mother, and she came up with her conceptualization of the complex that is intensified during the pre-oedipal phase, where the relationship between the infant and the mother is semiotic and therefore without the scope of the Name-of-the-Father. Irigaray, on the other hand, had quite a different

perspective. She primarily focused on the ways patriarchal system and its 'scientific' theories justified their repressive and controlling mechanisms, which construe female sexuality as something that cannot be deciphered or comprehensible, and the Oedipus complex, in all of this, was a mechanism that 'these men' created in order to deploy female sexuality as something inferior, something that is always lacking and unattainable. Therefore, there was no femininity that could be lived and enjoyed in the realm of men – the symbolic. When women were allowed to exist, it was only in the realm of the semiotic or the imaginary in Lacanian terminology – the illogical. These thinkers reinforced the need to realize a femininity in itself, its realization without the presence of a masculinity, and this could have been achieved through underscoring the feminine sexual difference that was never articulated.

Chodorow, who combined psychoanalytical theory with sociological theory, re-examined the case of the feminine Oedipus complex, asserting that a girl maintains an ambivalent bisexual 'disposition' towards her mother and father, only to divert these bisexual desires to homosensual friendship bonds. Without a doubt, her arguments against the androcentric Freudian analysis and her explanations as the feminine Oedipus complex proved fruitful for other feminist and queer thinkers in formulating their own theories.

But, the case was not close. Even the theories of Kristeva and Irigaray were 'lacking' something, or more precisely, they were bringing something extra that was not necessarily needed: the sexual difference. With the emergence of post-structuralist feminist theories and remarkably Queer theory, these feminist contentions were re-evaluated and were reformed with a mindset that would propose gender to be a culturally constituted product of culture. This production occurred, both for Rubin and Butler, what the previous thinkers named the Oedipus complex. While Rubin explained that the Oedipus complex was the psychoanalytical mechanism, where the taboo against incest and homosexual desire was introduced and

internalized into the psyches of individuals, Butler posited that even the very notion of the Oedipus complex was a theoretically and 'scientifically' created artificial construct. It was the result of the taboos created by those men, who were fearful of their own femininity and hom(m)osexual desire. As a result, the queer theoreticians regarded the Oedipus complex as a mechanism of the patriarchal system that ensured (and still failed most of the time) the reproduction of individuals with heterosexual desire and exogamous 'dispositions'. As their theories explicitly revealed, the Oedipus complex came into being as a result of two reasons: (i) due to cultures and societies' anxieties to maintain their survival through reproductive families, which were dependent exogamous kinship ties and strictly heterosexual desire, and (ii) to the fear of femininity experienced by the males in Western society. What had to be forbidden and repressed in the second case was the hom(m)osexual desire that was felt by the males of the tribe, which needed to be created in the first place according to a Foucauldian reading. However, unwilling and unable to confront their hom(m)osexual desire, man labelled these desires of theirs 'feminine' and attributed all those abject feelings to women, hence arose the misogyny inherent in the Western cultures.

Although Butler might possibly favor dismissing the concept all together for believing that it is a historically-created, artificial concept, I think we need to formulate more accepting and comprehensive accounts of the Oedipus complex, since I believe that the concept of the Oedipus complex points to a common psycho-sexual element in our 'being', which generates particular commonalities and resemblances in the ways we create families (and the ways the families create us). For instance, upon a brief examination of the Turkish myths, one could easily argue that the Oedipus complex does not exist in the ancient Turkish culture. However, it should be realized that our understanding of the Oedipus complex is now larger than its earlier focus on the incestuous desires of the infant. In this respect, I suggest that the ancient Turkish culture and the contemporary Turkish collective unconscious demand to be examined

and studied thoroughly in order to test whether the Oedipus complex existed or continue to exist in the minds of Turkish people, and if it does, it should be studied how it manifests itself and what kinds of familial and psycho-sexual problems it poses for the Turkish individual.

While I acknowledge that the current reality of our fluid and norm-defying gender experiences and sexualities makes the task of presenting how the Oedipus complex appears and 'dissolves' in non-western and non-heterosexual familial configurations an exhaustive one, I hope that the formulation that I have presented, which only reflects one of the many possible scenarios of how the Oedipus complex might arise in non-cisgender and non-heteronormative family configurations, will encourage researchers in the field to study and examine how many other possible scenarios are 'out' there. Therefore, it should be reminded that this preliminary formulation does not claim to have a final say on the subject matter. More importantly, due to the space limited and the complexity of the concept itself, the question how biological and evolutionary theories make sense of the Oedipus complex and their criticisms and contributions have been left out of the 'debate' deliberately. It is recommended that the future studies should include this part of the discussion into the 'debate' so as to acquire a broader perspective into the parable of the Oedipus complex.

Despite my earlier contention that the cross-cultural differences in our family configurations do not create entirely non-masculine realms of symbolic, it should be acknowledged that, thanks to the recent technological developments in assisted reproductive medicine and our increasingly inclusive understanding of non-heteronormative sexualities and non-cisgender identities, new realms of 'symbolic' are being created. Readers, who want to learn more about the family lives and relations in such non-classical families might start reading Kath Weston's (1977) *Families We Choose*, Yanagisako's (1977) *Women-Centered Kin Networks in Urban Bilateral Kinship*, Stacey's (1997) *Brave New Families,* and Lewin's (1993) *Lesbian Mothers: Accounts of Gender in American Culture.* However, even these

studies do not reflect how non-binary parents and infants, who are raised through a gender-neutral parenting experience the Oedipus complex, or if they experience it at all. Thus, it would be of higher priority to examine and study the validity of the Oedipus complex for such 'divergent' family configurations.

Perhaps, contrary to all cross-cultural findings and psychoanalytical theories, which posit that the Oedipus complex seem to be present in almost every culture, if not in the exact same way, the Oedipus culture is, as Butler argued, is a historically-created, androcentric concept that serves to maintain the heterosexual and exogamous status of our societies. Maybe, there is nothing 'really' psychological about it, and it is just another act of creating a 'scientific' concept that was not there, and we did not need. From the brief inquiry about the 'debate' presented herein, it seems that we are far from reaching a consensus in the near future, however, with the emergence of 'new' forms of being, as in this case, 'new' configurations of families and affinities, I posit that it is up to social scientists to keep questioning the validity of previous concepts or theories that invalidate any lived experience in our contemporary reality. Only through such relentless skeptical and inclusive attitude, could we come closer to understanding the multiple meanings of being human. It is not coincidental that the end of our inquiry and the riddle of the Sphinx in *Oedipus Rex* have lead us to the same 'problem', which we might arguably understand in further clarity with a profound understanding of the Oedipus complex.

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