



**HAMLET IN A NUTSHELL: McEWAN'S NOVEL *NUTSHELL* AS A  
POSTMODERN REWRITING**

**Hatice Şeyma ŞAHİN**

**MA Thesis**

**Department of English Language and Literature**

**Advisor: Prof. Dr. Tatiana GOLBAN**

**2021**



**HAMLET FINDIK KABUĞUNDA: BİR YENİDEN YAZIM OLARAK**

**McEWAN'IN *FINDIK KABUĞU* ROMANI**

**Hatice Şeyma ŞAHİN**

**Yüksek Lisans Tezi**

**İngiliz Dili Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı**

**Danışman: Prof. Dr. Tatiana GOLBAN**

**2021**

**T.C.**  
**TEKİRDAĞ NAMIK KEMAL UNIVERSITY**  
**INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**  
**MA THESIS**

**HAMLET IN A NUTSHELL: McEWAN'S NOVEL *NUTSHELL* AS A  
POSTMODERN REWRITING**

**Hatice Şeyma ŞAHİN**

**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**  
**ADVISER: PROF. DR. TATIANA GOLBAN**

**TEKİRDAĞ-2021**  
**All rights reserved.**

**T.C.**  
**TEKİRDAĞ NAMIK KEMAL ÜNİVERSİTESİ**  
**SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ**  
**İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI**  
**YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ**

**HAMLET FINDIK KABUĞUNDA: BİR YENİDEN YAZIM OLARAK**  
**McEWAN'IN *FINDIK KABUĞU* ROMANI**

**Hatice Şeyma ŞAHİN**

**İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI**  
**DANIŞMAN: PROF. DR. TATIANA GOLBAN**

**TEKİRDAĞ-2021**  
**Her hakkı saklıdır.**

## **BİLİMSEL ETİK BİLDİRİMİ**

Hazırladığım Yüksek Lisans Tezinin bütün aşamalarında bilimsel etiğe ve akademik kurallara riayet ettiğimi, çalışmada doğrudan veya dolaylı olarak kullandığım her alıntıya kaynak gösterdiğimi ve yararlandığım eserlerin kaynakçada gösterilenlerden oluştuğunu, yazımda enstitü yazım kılavuzuna uygun davranıldığını taahhüt ederim.

24 / 06 / 2021  
Hatice Şeyma ŞAHİN

## **SCIENTIFIC ETHICS STATEMENT**

I undertake that I comply with scientific ethics and academic rules at all stages of my Master's Thesis, that I refer to every quotation I use directly or indirectly in the study, that the works I benefit from are those shown in the bibliography, and that my writing is in accordance with the institute's writing guide.

24 / 06 / 2021  
Hatice Şeyma ŞAHİN



## ÖZET

Kurum, Enstitü : Tekirdağ Namık Kemal Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü  
ABD : İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı  
Tez Başlığı : Hamlet Fındık Kabuğunda: Bir Yeniden Yazım Olarak  
McEwan'ın *Fındık Kabuğu* Romanı  
Tez Yazarı : Hatice Şeyma ŞAHİN  
Tez Danışma : Prof. Dr. Tatiana GOLBAN  
Tez Türü, Yılı : Yüksek Lisans Tezi, 2021  
Sayfa Sayısı : 63

Shakespeare'in en önemli eserlerinden birinin yeniden yazımı olan *Fındık Kabuğu*, anne ve babası Hamlet'in anne ve babasının tanık olduğu trajediye tanık olan doğmamış bir bebeğin hikayesini anlatır. *Hamlet*, *Fındık Kabuğu*'nda da gözlendiği gibi genellikle Oidipus Kompleksi ile ilişkilendirilerek Freud'un çalışmaları ışığı altında incelenmiştir. Karmaşık duygular ve güdüler bağlamında karşılaştırma yapabilmek için iki eseri de anne ile ilişki açısından irdelemek oldukça önemlidir. Tüm bunlar yapılırken, iletişim bağlamında önemli bir rol oynadıkları için duyulara bulunulan atıflar da yakından gözlenmelidir. Zira, *Fındık Kabuğu*'ndaki ana karakterin doğmamış bir bebek olduğu göz önüne alındığında görme duyusunun yokluğu karakterler arasındaki bağı etkileyecek ve hikayeye yeni bir boyut getirecektir. Her iki eserde de öne çıkmaları sebebiyle, nasıl temsil edildikleri, onlara nasıl davranıldıkları ve erkek egemenliğinden etkilenip etkilenmedikleri üzerine yorum yapabilmek için, kadınların durumlarının incelenmesi gerekmektedir. Dolayısıyla bu tez, bahsedilen tüm bu maddeleri *Hamlet* ve *Fındık Kabuğu* ile ilişkilendirilerek benzerlik ve farklılıkları tespit ederken belirli alt başlıklar altında incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Hamlet*, Oidipus Kompleksi, Freud, *Fındık Kabuğu*, Postmodernizm

## ABSTRACT

Institution, Institute : Tekirdağ Namık Kemal University, Institute of Social Sciences

Department : Department of English Language and Literature

Title : Hamlet in a Nutshell: McEwan's Novel *Nutshell* As a Postmodern Rewriting

Author : Hatice Şeyma ŞAHİN

Adviser : Prof. Dr. Tatiana GOLBAN

Type of Thesis, Year : MA Thesis, 2021

Total Number of : 63

Pages

As a postmodern rewriting of Shakespeare's one of the most essential plays, *Nutshell* narrates the story of an unborn baby whose parents go through the same tragedy as Hamlet's did. *Hamlet* has been examined mainly under the light of Freudian studies, regarding the issue of Oedipus Complex which can also be observed in *Nutshell*. It is fundamental to delve into the relationship between the mother and the protagonist of each of the works to compare them in terms of the complicated feelings and motivations. While doing so, the references to the senses should be surveyed closely since they play a very important role in communication. Because, the lack of the sense of sight would be affecting the connection between the characters and bring a new dimension to the story especially when the protagonist happens to be an unborn baby in *Nutshell*. Since women characters step forth due to their significance in both works, their conditions ought to be reviewed to comment on how they are represented and treated and whether they are affected by male domination in any way. This paper thus aims to examine all the mentioned concerns under certain subtitles, relating them to *Hamlet* and *Nutshell* while spotting the similarities and differences.

**Key Words:** *Hamlet*, Oedipus Complex, Freud, *Nutshell*, Postmodernism

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I specially want to thank my grandparents who have always been here all along.

I also want to thank Tatiana Golban for paying attention to my enthusiasm about Shakespeare's rewritings and helping me to choose this novel.



## CONTENTS

BİLİMSEL ETİK BİLDİRİM BEYANI.....	
ÖZET.....	i
ABSTRACT.....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iii
CONTENTS.....	iv
INTRODUCTION.....	1
<b>1.THE ISSUE OF OEDIPUS COMPLEX and ITS REPRESENTATION in     <i>HAMLET</i> and <i>NUTSHELL</i></b>	
1.1. OEDIPUS COMPLEX and the MYTH of OEDIPUS.....	5
1.2. HAMLET as an OEDIPAL VICTIM: THE REAL REASON BEHIND FRUSTRATION.....	11
1.3. THE LITTLE VICTIM: <i>NUTSHELL'S</i> PROTAGONIST and OEDIPUS COMPLEX.....	18
<b>2.THE SENSES OF SIGHT and HEARING</b>	
2.1. THE CONCEPT of SIGHT and PHYSICAL and METAPHORICAL BLINDNESS in <i>OEDIPUS REX</i> .....	24
2.2. THE SENSES of SIGHT and HEARING and THEIR CORRELATION in <i>HAMLET</i> .....	29
2.3. SEEING THROUGH EARS: THE LACK of SIGHT in <i>NUTSHELL</i> .....	32
<b>3.FEMINIST DISCUSSIONS REGARDING GERTRUDE, OPHELIA and     TRUDY</b>	
3.1. WOMEN, SHAKESPEARE and THE REPRESENTATION of GERTUDE.....	36

<b>3.2. OPHELIA, OBJECTIFICATION and REPRESSION.....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>3.3. MOTHERHOOD and INDIVIDUALISM in <i>NUTSHELL</i>:</b>	
<b>INTRUSION of PRIVACY and INEQUALITY.....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>CONCLUSION.....</b>	<b>58</b>
<b>REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>60</b>



## INTRODUCTION

No human author can claim to be totally original and writers who work on an historical subject do not even want to be original. Aischylos' *Oresteia* is probably taken from oral tradition, Shakespeare based his history plays on written chronicles, Goethe copied parts of his *Götz von Berlichingen* from the knight's autobiography, and Büchner based all his literary works either on existing comedies — as in the case of *Leonce und Lena* — or on historical writings. (Dedner, 2006: 17)

A rewriting, therefore, is the new form of a work and it could have similarities with or differences from its original version. It is a common technique in literature, especially for Shakespeare's plays. His plays are rewritten so many times both as plays and novels. One of the most famous ones would be *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* by Tom Stoppard as a rewriting of *Hamlet*, *Lear* by Edward Bond as a rewriting of *King Lear*, *Hag-Seed* by Margaret Atwood as a rewriting of *The Tempest* in a novel form and many more. This work aims to study another rewriting of *Hamlet*, written by Ian McEwan, titled *Nutshell*.

Rewritings are quite essential for an author or playwright to show their interpretation of a work. It is interesting to survey the new versions of Shakespearean works in order to inspect them through new literary movements and modern tools. It corresponds to binding Elizabethan elements with modernity to criticize traditional conventions or provide a personal version of the rewritten work. Being one of the most renowned playwrights who challenges Shakespearean tradition, Edward Bond "...seems to express his hidden instinct to overcome Shakespeare..." (Biçer, 2017: 479). He demonstrates Shakespeare's inconsistency between actions and discourses. His *Lear* differs from Shakespeare's *King Lear* by harshly criticizing the system and the endless cycle which is the root of people's misery and how inevitable it is considered to be. However, what *King Lear* endures is glorified and he is considered to be a tragic hero which renders him appreciated due to his downfall which arouses pity and fear.

*Nutshell* narrates the story of an unborn baby whose parents are about to split up due to the mother's loss of interest towards the father and her blooming relationship with the baby's uncle which is pretty much the topic of *Hamlet* with some additions. This time, the representation of King Hamlet, portrayed by John Cairncross is alive, yet to be killed by his wife and brother. McEwan employs a baby without his visionary abilities and physical strength as the narrator of his book to challenge the convention of the fiction. However, while doing so, McEwan enables the baby to display the dynamic chain of events through his own perception in an assertive manner. Therefore, the narration is adorned with his clever usage of words and impressive style of description of what he previously hears from the outer world.

*Nutshell* is an excellent rewriting going beyond the conventions.

Ian McEwan makes use of postmodern literary devices in order to scrutinize concepts such as truth – falsehood, reality – illusion, art – life, innocence – guilt, freedom – confinement, good – evil, Eros – Thanatos, as means to question the so-called persistence of classicism. (Civelekoğlu, 2019: 104-5)

The novel contains intertextual elements as McEwan makes use of Shakespearean poetics while mixing them with his own postmodern interpretations. For a baby who narrates a psychologically thrilling story of the murder of his father, the protagonist arouses curiosity with his dichotomy of extraordinariness stated by his opinions ahead of his age and childish neediness due to his weak physical state and mixed feelings he has towards his mother. It is possible to compare him to Hamlet since both are children of mothers who have an affair with their brother-in-law. Yet, their responses and the actions they decide to take differ from each other given that Hamlet always seems to be in despair and his thoughts are distorted due to the presence of his father's ghost while the baby has the ability to think rationally despite lacking the sense of communication. Therefore, both the protagonists and the women of the mentioned works are inspected through certain points in order to point out the similarities between *Hamlet* and its postmodern version *Nutshell*.

In the first part of the work, the issue of Oedipus Complex is brought forward as the relation between King Oedipus and Hamlet have always been quite worth

mentioning. The Myth of Oedipus and King Oedipus as a tragic hero are surveyed in relation to the condition of Oedipus as someone who paves the way for Freudian studies. King Oedipus is thought to be the symbol of desires which appear subconsciously since they naturally dwell in a boy's mind without his awareness. Therefore, Hamlet's condition is compared to Oedipus' to inspect the similarities and differences between the two characters who attract attention with their obsession towards their mothers. It should be noted that the release of those desires carries importance in terms of evaluating the victims as successful or unsuccessful. While the fact that whether King Oedipus is accepted as a victim of the complex remains ambiguous due to his separation from his family at young ages, Hamlet and *Nutshell*'s baby Hamlet can easily be inspected under the light of the case. They can also be labelled as successful or unsuccessful according to their satisfied or dissatisfied desires.

In the second part, the importance, usage and coherence of the senses in terms of communicating are shown through the ways the characters make use of the senses. First, the case of Oedipus and his ironical state in the context of seeing are discussed. While referencing to Oedipus, it would be remarkable to compare him to Tiresias, a blind prophet whose capability of seeing overcomes Oedipus', to underline the dynamic between the two. It is quite interesting how the attribution of blindness shifts from Tiresias to Oedipus upon correlating the darkness and blindness with ignorance. Oedipus' lack of awareness rooting in his excessive pride is trumped by Tiresias who is robbed off physical sight but has the ability to distinguish the truth. While Oedipus is completely wrong about his actual past despite his glory, Tiresias, who has the impression of a powerless person due to his disability has full awareness. Therefore, the shifting dynamics of physical and metaphorical blindness is constructed through Oedipus and Tiresias whose personalities constitute the opposing concepts of darkness and light. Shakespeare's Hamlet and McEwan's unconventional protagonist, the baby, can be considered as the representatives of Oedipus and Tiresias. Hamlet is driven by his subconscious desires which prevents him from using his sensory abilities effectively. His actions are effected by his overflowing feelings which fluctuate constantly. Another point which should be

recognized is the importance of the harmony between the two senses which is tried to be shown through the two stage plays in *Hamlet*. However, *Nutshell*'s baby Hamlet goes beyond the usual usage of the senses and creates his own dimension of making use of his senses to communicate with the outer world, avoiding any kinds of passivity and regression. His resistance against marginalization and depotentiation despite his inexperience and lack of strength in order to interfere in the incidents contradict with Hamlet's nature which gives a sense of acceptance while reminding his misfortune over and over again.

Finally, this work aims to examine the condition of *Hamlet*'s Gertrude and Ophelia and *Nutshell*'s Trudy in order to reflect the problematic situations these women deal with while some of them also have the responsibility of being the mothers of children who have mixed emotions towards themselves. This situation of these children effects the reputation and representation of Gertrude and Trudy since they cannot shape the narration as much as their sons do. The concept of objectivity and the reliability of the narrators are discussed along with the portrayal of the mothers. On the other hand, *Hamlet*'s Ophelia and her silent and repressed state are explored to be able to point out how Hamlet's condition effects her along with her brother's and father's intrusion of her private life. Ophelia's objectification and underlined fragility which are compatible with the qualifications defined by the society are portrayed by Shakespearean symbolism, especially in her death bed. Consequently, the final part of this paper intends to reflect the hardships and oppression these women cope with and how easily they can be victims of bad press due to being depicted through men who cannot provide a reliable narration because of their personal resentments.

## **CHAPTER I: THE ISSUE of OEDIPUS COMPLEX and ITS REPRESENTATION IN *HAMLET* and *NUTSHELL***

### **1.1. OEDIPUS COMPLEX and THE MYTH of OEDIPUS**

Being introduced by Sigmund Freud and named after the myth of King Oedipus, the Oedipus Complex is a psycho-analytic theory focusing on the sexual desire a child has towards their parent from the opposite sex. The theory roots in the tragic story of the Theban King who accidentally ends up killing his father and being married to his mother. Freud came up with this complex upon examining a five year old patient whose name is Hans, having a phobia towards horses. Freud implies that the image of a horse's having a large penis is what triggers Hans. Therefore, Hans' phobia becomes more specified, reducing itself into being a phobia only towards horses with black harnesses over their noses. This appears to Freud as a representation of the father, the harness representing the moustache he has and the large penis both a horse and a father may have. It is claimed by him that Hans' sexual excitement peaks with his realization that his mother does not have a penis which differs her from himself. From that moment, he considers his father as the reason behind this difference or separation from the mother. Freud also argues that when Hans saw a horse falling down the street, he must have wished that the same thing happened to his father as well in order to be able to get rid of the prevention of being with his mother. Being the representative of his father, the horse's large penis becomes the source of Hans' phobia. This also has a relation with his anxiety upon being told by his mother that she would get his "widdler" cut off if he did not stop playing with himself which forms his castration phobia. Therefore, it may be said that Hans' interest towards her mother turned into a kind of sexual anxiety caused by this fear. Creating a connection between Hans' fear of horses and the growing anxiety, Freud concludes that the horse represents the father and is just a symbol of a father figure, having both a black harness over their mouth similar to the father's moustache and blinkers reminding him of his father's glasses. In a way, it can be deduced that Hans' oedipal desires are hidden behind his phobia towards horses which is in fact his hostility towards the father.

The case of Oedipus forms the basis of the Oedipus Complex which indeed has its roots in the Ancient Greek myth, the myth of Oedipus. Although the tragic story of the King Oedipus is considered to be the case where the complex comes from, it is disputable whether the king himself suffers from the complex or not. Freud claims that King Oedipus exists due to the subconscious desire towards his mother. Thus, Freud concludes that Oedipus who killed his father and married his mother could not have been created if man had not desired his mother and wished to eliminate his father. However, known as the very first Oedipal victim, King Oedipus has not always been considered as a victim of Oedipus Complex. In this context, there appears some questions to be asked in order to fully comprehend the tragic tale of the king and its relation to the complex. Does Sophocles' play go beyond and manifest itself as a case of Oedipus complex? Could it be that Oedipus is the only person without the complex since he was the first to put it into action? Does it function like a main source for psychoanalysts? Is it, like Freud says, a representation of all humans' subtle desire to mate with their parents?

In order to be able to talk about Oedipus' case and to decide whether he suffers from the complex or not, it would be essential to take a look at Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex* and survey the chain of events leading him to have an unconventional relationship with his parents. It is very well known that King Oedipus marries his own mother after killing his father without being aware of their true identities. As a tragic hero, King Oedipus is supposed to have a hamartia which is considered to be the reason of his downfall. Hamartia is an Aristotlean term meaning "error of judgment" or "morally wrong action". Aristotle mentions about it in his *Poetics* in which he defines a tragedy and its components. He also asserts that in order for a tragedy to be considered as a successful one, it should arise the feelings of pity and fear:

A perfect tragedy should, as we have seen, be arranged not on the simple but on the complex plan. It should moreover, imitate actions which excite pity and fear, this being the distinctive mark of tragic imitation. It follows plainly, in the first place, that the change of fortune presented must not be the spectacle of a virtuous man brought from prosperity to adversity: for this

moves neither pity nor fear; it merely shocks us. Nor, again, that of a bad man passing from adversity to prosperity : for nothing can be more alien to the spirit of Tragedy. (1902: 45)

Therefore, it makes the reader question whether the tragedy would possess the same effectiveness if the king had happened to go through such a change. It is known that King Oedipus gives importance to moral values throughout the play, being considered to be a hero by saving Thebes from Sphinx. Oedipus' personality as an honorable man is depicted from the very beginning of the play where the priest comes and kneels in front of him. His very first lines and the priests' view of him give the reader the impression of how great of a king he is:

OEDIPUS

Speak up old man. Your years,

Your dignity – you should speak for the others.

Why here and kneeling, hat preys upon you so?

Some sudden fear? Some strong desire?

You can trust me. I am ready to help,

I'll do anything. I would be blind to misery

Not to pity my people kneeling at my feet. (Sophocles, 1984: 159)

That Oedipus lets Creon reveal the oracle related to his personal life in front of his people justifies his honesty and reliability. It is also notable how he reacts upon hearing about the previous king and his brutal death which again could be associated with him being a savior for his people, aiming to avenge the previous king who unknowingly happens to be his father in order to save Thebes again. Furthermore, the way he questions the crowd to find out whether the murderer of Laius is among them is another remarkable detail in terms of depicting his amicable nature. He even claims that if the murderer were to be there, he would be exiled from the country at worst without being harmed physically. Throughout the play, Oedipus approaches to

the reveal of the bitter truth step by step, swinging from one feeling to another, hoping for the best. His growing fear and mixed feelings are shared by the reader as the play comes to an end. The way he expresses his agony makes it hard for one to not feel pity for him which makes the king an excellent tragic hero. The strong depictions of him expressing his grief and saying his goodbyes to his children are quite suitable to Aristotle's quote taken from *Poetics*. He also blinds himself, thinking he has seen enough and there is nothing else to see and even if there was, he would not deserve to do so. He says: "You, you'll see no more the pain I suffered, all the pain I caused! Too long you looked on the ones you never should have seen, blind to the ones you longed to see, to know!" (1984: 237) while blinding himself with Jocasta's brooches.

Going back to hamartia, a morally wrong action, it would be right to say that Oedipus suffers from the consequences of them. One of the tragic flaws he has is his excessive pride which is also called hubris. No matter how much of a moral king he is, it is undeniable that he is a proud man, constantly repeating his good deeds. Yet, the excessive pride causing his downfall here is his desire to know the truth in spite of all the warnings of the oracle and Jocasta. This is seen as crossing his boundaries as a mortal man which Oedipus seems to ignore. This ignorance roots in his excessive pride which could be associated with his attempt to deny his fate. His futile attempt of escaping from what is to come by leaving the city he was born in order not to come face to face with his parents, thinking they are Polybus and Merope could be defined as his very first flaw.

Upon mentioning Oedipus' greatness, one should not neglect his excessive pride, recklessness and outrageous nature which altogether cost him his life. When all these are combined with undeserved misfortune, one feels pity for the tragic hero which is an essential element for the play. In Oedipus' case, it is a bit more complicated for being the first example of the complex. It makes one think whether Oedipus goes through all the tragedy just because he suffers from the complex or it is because of the hamartia which has to make him suffer in the end. Even though it looks like the king is observed to go through the complex either way, preventing his father from touching his mother for good and claiming his mother as his own despite doing it out

of his will, Oedipus is not a victim of the complex from a Freudian perspective, as claimed by him:

King Oedipus, who slew his father Laius and married his mother Jocasta, merely shows us the fulfilment of our own childhood wishes. But, more fortunate than he, we have meanwhile succeeded, in so far as we have not become psychoneurotics, in detaching our sexual impulses from our mothers and in forgetting our jealousy of our fathers. (2010: 280)

From the excerpt above, it may be concluded that king Oedipus is the embodiment of a child's bodily desire towards his mother which comes from the collective consciousness. He asserts that everybody lives with that holy aim of mating with the mother even though they are not aware of its existence which is symbolized by Oedipus' ignorance towards the whole incident. While Oedipus' ignorance is symbolic and is associated with his fluctuating life, it mirrors the problem of every children who subconsciously have the same desire as him even though some of them tend to ignore the situation. To confirm that, it would be useful to remember the fact that Freud asks his patients whether they have a dream in which they are in a sexual intercourse with their mother. Even when their answer is negative, he claims that there are other clues related to the matter in their other dreams which constantly keep appearing. Freud calls them Oedipus dreams which are the reflection of their oedipal desires seeming to be undiscovered. Yet, he also comments that this situation is surmountable unless one becomes psychoneurotics, meaning that one can get rid of their jealousy towards their father and overcome the situation as long as they are not psychoneurotic.

Another thing one should consider is Freud's psychosexual stages which again can be discussed with the complex. There are six stages which are oral, narcissist anal, phallic, latent and genital, each standing for a different process of sexual development. According to Freud, childhood plays a pioneering role for the development of an individual. In the oral stage, the child depends on their mother's breast, whether they are being breastfed or not. Everything that is experienced during this stage affects an individual's future. If they struggle throughout this stage, they are likely to end up being aggressive and languid. Narcissist stage is where a child

explores their body which is also considered to be the primitive stage of narcissism. If they are to be restricted during the exploration of the body, they are likely to suffer from lack of self-confidence in the future. Afterwards, the anal stage begins where a child is being toilet-trained. During this stage, children get sensitive and tend to feel like they are constantly being scolded or not enough if parents fail to show them the otherwise. If they feel repressed throughout this stage, it causes them to end up being a controller in the future. The following stage is called the phallic which is often associated with Oedipus complex. In this stage, children explore their genital organs which is also considered to be the primitive steps to sexuality. They also get the first glimpse of the possibility of having sex with the opposite gender. Freud's comment on the matter is given below:

The boy enters the Oedipus phase; he begins to manipulate his penis, and simultaneously has phantasies of carrying out some sort of activity with it in relation to his mother; but at last, owing to the combined effect of a threat of castration and the spectacle of women's lack of a penis, he experiences the greatest trauma of his life and this introduces the period of latency with all its consequences. (2010: 12)

Boys are likely to think that girls are punished due to the discovery of them not having penises. If they happen to feel repressed during this stage, they may have hysterical problems in the future. Then comes the latent stage where sexuality is ignored and the child is mainly involved in daily activities. The most outstanding fact about this stage is that they start making friends of the same sex. The final stage is called genital where sexuality is re-discovered. The body keeps on developing whereas emotional development regresses.

In this context, Oedipus' case is complicated in terms of being a victim of the complex. While he perfectly plays the role of a victim of the complex, achieving the aim of eradicating the obstacle preventing him from being with his mother and eventually mating with her, it is hard to say that he actually suffers from the complex from a Freudian perspective. Therefore, even though the king's tragic life story seems like the perfect plot for the complex, the relationship between him and his mother is not established from his young ages, which means he does not have an

attachment with his mother during those stages. Since Oedipus could not get to form a bond between his mother in his young ages, he is prevented from experiencing the very first intimate contact with her; being breast-fed. Furthermore, he also could not go through the phallic stage with the parentage of his mother which prevents him from developing any kind of desire towards the queen. Also, Oedipus thinks that his mother happens to be Queen Merope, whom he mentions several times throughout the play. The extent of their relationship remains unknown which does not give any clues about Oedipus' attitude towards Queen Merope. It would be logical to assume that even if Oedipus had the complex, he would have performed it on Merope and Polybus whom he thought were his parents. By only looking at his relationship with Jocasta, it is hard to deduce since neither he knew about his real mother nor he grew up with her. So, even though he performs an oedipal act on his parents in practical terms, it is not certain whether he actually suffers from the complex in theory according to the Freudian stages.

## **1.2. HAMLET as an OEDIPAL VICTIM: THE REAL REASON BEHIND HIS FRUSTRATION**

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* narrates the story of the prince of Denmark who has also been observed and surveyed many times while being compared to king Oedipus. While the plot of the play differs from the myth by giving Hamlet the chance to form that kind of attachment with his mother, it would be interesting to take a look at the play through a Freudian perspective in order to point out some similarities between the king and the prince. The play begins with a discussion over the appearance of a ghost being thought to be belonged to the deceased king. The Ghost is a very essential figure in relation to the revenge Hamlet wants to get from the very beginning of the play. Furthermore, while Barnardo, Horatio and Marcellus are all able to see him, it is noted that Queen Gertrude is robbed of it which makes the situation ambiguous. It makes one question whether he is created by Hamlet's imagination in order to back him up and encourage him to avenge his father or is it the queen who fails to see him. Either way, it is only Hamlet who is able to hear him which is most probably the reflection and justification of his inner world.

When inspected from a Freudian point of view, it is observed that Hamlet's behaviours are all subconsciously controlled by his oedipal desires which are covered by his revenge plan. The main thing one should take into consideration is Hamlet's procrastinations about fulfilling his task of killing his uncle, Claudius. It's his hesitation and inner conflict mingled with his repressed feelings that prevent him from taking an action until he loses his mother. Also, the timing of Hamlet's killing Claudius is extremely spectacular which will be discussed thoroughly. Yet, Hamlet's delaying his murder could be attributed to his appreciation towards Claudius for killing King Hamlet which was his eventual purpose from the very beginning. From Hamlet's perspective, Claudius achieves the ultimate task by eradicating the obstacle preventing him from being with his mother. Therefore, it would be correct to say that his feelings towards his uncle is complicated by compounding both gratitude and jealousy. "The call of duty to kill his stepfather cannot be obeyed because it links itself with the unconscious call of his nature to kill his mother's husband." (Jones, 1910: 90). He is crashed between the oppressive spirit of his father reminding him of his existence with the assignment he has given and the mixed feelings towards his uncle creating a contrast with what he should have felt instead. Lacan approaches the subject by claiming that since Hamlet does not fulfill his desire upon King Hamlet's disappearance, which differentiates him from Oedipus, there appears to be a bound between Hamlet and Claudius. Before his father dies, he could only have an imaginary relationship with the queen as the *phallus* was still there. When he is replaced by Claudius, Hamlet creates a correlation between himself and his uncle in his mind, thinking his father's successor should have actually been himself. Therefore, by forming a bound between them, Hamlet delays killing Claudius since he is linked with himself in his imagination. The new *phallus* is now identified with Claudius, manipulating Hamlet's mind and causing him to hesitate when it comes to take an action. Killing Claudius would be equating the act of killing himself and the imaginary bond he could have with his mother through his uncle.

Still in the Imaginary, Hamlet is suspended in what Lacan calls "the hour of the other" (*l'heure de l'autre*), a formula whose homophone *leurre de l'autre* (the trap or illusion of the other) underscores the delusional, fictitious

equivalency of Hamlet's identification with the other as phallus. (Rashkin, 1922: 25)

Freud compares Hamlet and Oedipus in terms of whether their missions being completed. While Oedipus' desires are revealed upon the death of the father and fulfilled with the achievement of mating with the mother, Hamlets' remain hidden until the death of King Hamlet which begins his anxiety. This gives Hamlet an uneasy feeling mixed with the fact that he is tasked by the ghost of his father against whom Hamlet internally feels hatred and jealousy. That causes him to delay his revenge for both feeling content with the elimination of the father and grateful towards his uncle which make it unable for him to kill him. It would be useful to remember that Hamlet is not the kind of person who avoids killing people which therefore cannot be associated with his hesitance. He does not refrain from taking an action if need be which is linked with his quick tempered and anxious nature. Therefore, the reason why he does not follow the order of the ghost is correlated with the fact that Hamlet considers his uncle as the embodiment of his childhood desires. He would not like to exterminate the person through whom he can somehow express his desires and reach out to his mother in the way he has always wanted.

Hamlet is able to do anything – except take vengeance on the man who did away with his father and took that father's place with his mother, the man who shows him the repressed wishes of his own childhood realized. (Freud, 2010: 282)

Hamlet's subtle gratitude contradicts with the idea of possessing his own mother as his, which causes him to have mingled feelings, effecting his actions. It had already been discussed that Hamlet identifies himself with his uncle, creating an illusion in order to be attached with the queen through it. It is also emphasized by the way Hamlet reacts upon being told that it is Claudius who murdered his father. Although he never aims his uncle as the murderer until The Ghost informs that he actually is, Hamlet says that it had been obvious from the very beginning and that he had already known it. In that way, he could justify his feelings through Claudius while being able to associate himself with him. It also makes it able for him to

express his jealousy mixed anger towards his mother's partner which he was not able to show before the ending of the partnership between his mother and his father.

Hamlet's approach towards Ophelia carries much importance in terms of commenting on the differences of his interactions with two important women in his life; her and Gertrude. Apart from the comparison, it would be interesting to take a look at Ophelia's interpretation of the sudden change in Hamlet's actions in order to comprehend the process from her point of view while affiliating it with his condition. After his encounter with The Ghost, Hamlet's obsession with his mother starts being depicted with his uncle being involved. Yet, Ophelia seems to have a different perspective towards his situation which she thinks that Hamlet is so madly in love with her that he acts like he lost his sanity. To prove her wrong, it is enough to consider the events that subsequently happened after Ophelia sees him being torn and gone mad. Their conversations start lacking meaning which put them into a situation where they are disconnected. When Ophelia mentions that she wants to give his belongings back to him, Hamlet denies their existence as if he does not have any remembrance of their past. It should be noted that The Ghost's arrival changes Hamlet's behaviours towards Ophelia by making him feel free to reflect his inner desires towards Gertrude while using The Ghost as a tool of justification.

Another outstanding subject that should be touched upon is the fact that Hamlet openly tells that he wishes Gertrude were not his mother. He asserts that this wish of him is based on the ground of the upcoming crime he is tasked to commit. Yet, this desire can be correlated with what Freud calls "Disguised Oedipus Dream" in which a dreamer dreams about having an intercourse with a woman who is not necessarily the mother of the dreamer but is supposed to have a partner other than himself. Although Gertrude is Hamlet's birth mother, the desire of eliminating the blood relation between him and his mother in order to have a relatively valid relationship can be surveyed from another Freudian theory. Freud highlights the similarity between a conventional victim of the Oedipus complex and a Disguised Oedipus Dreamer by affirming that the two have the same motivation of being able to kill the possessor of the woman. Freud analyses the dream the same way he comments on the complex, highlighting the fact that the dreamer is driven by his suppressed feelings.

Both the dreamer and the victim of the complex share the same desire of experiencing the death of the “other” man and claiming their desired women as theirs. Freud adds a little detail while giving the example of a “Disguised Oedipus Dream”;

His wife was prepared for the possibility of his dying suddenly, and the dreamer was consciously occupied with an intention to marry the young widow after her husband’s death. This external situation placed the dreamer in the constellation of the Oedipus dream. His wish was capable of killing the man in order to get the woman as his wife. The dream expressed this wish in a hypocritically distorted form. Instead of her being married already, he made out that someone else wanted to marry her, which corresponded to his own secret intentions; and his hostile wishes towards her husband were concealed behind demonstrations of affection which were derived from his memory of his relations with his own father in childhood. (2010: 409)

Thus, even if Hamlet’s wish of not being related to Gertrude somehow came true, it would have not saved him from being the victim he is, according to this theory of Freud which involves the mother even though they are not directly mentioned. Consequently, if Gertrude was not Hamlet’s mother and there was a possibility for Hamlet’s feelings and desires to be valid and acceptable, they would have still been considered as oedipal desires, subconsciously dwelling in his mind.

It has been mentioned that a victim of the complex carries the intentions of possessing their mother which includes having sexual intercourse with them. In this respect, Hamlet’s sexual comments about his mother should be taken into consideration in order to be able to examine the emphasises on sexuality. The fact that he hesitates when it comes to the murder of his uncle has already been affiliated with the subtle gratitude he feels towards him. However, in order to justify the delay of his revenge, Hamlet affirms that it is not the right time to kill him since he thinks there will be times that are more suitable for his revenge. One of the more suitable times, he claims, is when Claudius is having sex with Gertrude. Thus, Hamlet thinks that it will hurt Claudius more if he is killed during an intercourse with Gertrude which means this would also hurt Hamlet if he were in Claudius’ place. It would be

interesting to take a look at Hamlet's answer when Gertrude tells him that he has broken her heart with his hurtful words:

HAMLET

O throw away the worser part of it,

And live the purer with the other half.

Good night, but go not to my uncle's bed,

Assume a virtue, if you have it not,

[That monster custom, who all sense doth eat,

Of habits devil, is angel yet in this,

That to the use of actions fair and good,

He likewise gives a frock or livery

That aptly is put on.] Refrain to-night;

And that shall lend a kind of easiness

To the next abstinence. [The next more easy;

For use almost can change the stamp of nature,

And either the devil, or throw him out

With wondrous potency.] Once more good night,

And when you are desirous to be blest,

I'll blessing beg of you. For this same Lord,

I do repent: but Heaven hath pleas'd it so,

To punish me with this, and this with me,

That I must be their scourge and minister.

I will bestow him, and will answer well

The death I gave him: so again, good night.

I must be cruel, only to be kind;

Thus bad begins and worse remains behind,

[One word more good lady.] (Shakespeare, 1994: 107-8, Act3, Scene4.)

It is surprising how Hamlet implies that Gertrude should refrain herself from having more sex with Claudius which will make it easier for her to say no in the future. Moreover, Hamlet repeats himself when Gertrude asks him what she should do, implying that she should refuse having intercourse with Claudius. He wants his mother to distance herself from Claudius as if it could be a solution to the death of his father or a part of his revenge. However, the revenge only happens to be the justification of Hamlet's desires which become more obvious upon implying how disgusted he feels when it comes to the idea of their sexual encounters. In this respect, it would be right to say that Hamlet's mingled feelings are discernible since he has a stronger contact with his mother through the illusion he created thanks to Claudius. Yet, his not very satisfied desires and growing jealousy display themselves throughout the play.

In conclusion, Hamlet's obsession with his mother and mixed feelings towards his uncle all root in his Oedipus complex. Hamlet's growing anger caused by his suppressed feelings starts showing glimpse of itself in certain situations where he is allowed to express his thoughts on the marriage of Gertrude and Claudius. The Ghost seems to be getting more marginalized from the perspective of Hamlet as the play goes on since he focuses more on what is going on between Gertrude and Claudius rather than planning his revenge tasked by him. Bradley expresses Hamlet's inner self through Gertrude; "Her son was forced to see in her action not only an astounding shallowness of feeling, but an eruption of coarse sensuality, 'rank and gross', speeding post-haste to its horrible delight." (1992: 99). The marriage between Gertrude and Claudius which is followed by the declaration of the murderer of the previous king made by The Ghost trigger Hamlet's suppressed feelings and desires.

The two recent events, the father's death and the mother's second marriage, seemed to the world to have no inner causal relation to each other, but they represented ideas which in Hamlet's unconscious fantasy had for many years been closely associated. (Jones, 1910: 267)

### **1.3. THE LITTLE VICTIM: *NUTSHELL'S* PROTAGONIST and OEDIPUS COMPLEX**

McEwan's *Nutshell* is a rewriting of Shakespeare's *Hamlet* from the perspective of an unborn baby who narrates the whole story through the connection he has with the outer world. In the review of the book on Guardian, McEwan mentions that he chose a foetus to be the protagonist of the book, pointing out that the only person who could be more helpless than a foetus would be Hamlet by being able to think a lot but feels trapped. (August, 2016). This contradicts with the image of a foetus who has a very restricted place with a mind full of ideas and plans. This unborn baby has such self-awareness, starting his narration by saying; "So here I am, upside down in a woman." (McEwan, 2016: 1). From the very beginning of the novel, the reader is informed to have an unconventional narrator, very much suitable for a postmodern adaptation. The novel encompasses intertextuality with Hamlet, touching upon the same themes as revenge, adultery and Oedipus complex. Hamlet's role as a victim was already discussed in the previous chapter which claims that his imaginary bond with his mother is supplied through the existence of Claudius who eliminates the previous king, the father of Hamlet. Therefore, Hamlet cannot be considered as someone who achieves to satisfy his ultimate desires in person. In this chapter, the relationship with this unborn baby and his mother will be inspected and evaluated under the light of the complex.

While *Nutshell* has many motifs and themes in common with *Hamlet*, the distinction between the two protagonists should be highlighted to compare and take a closer look at their situations as victims. The moment it is implied that the foetus is a boy, it makes one easier to relate him with Hamlet and consider the possibilities of him suffering from the Oedipus complex. The unborn baby, who narrates the whole story, does not refrain himself from commenting on almost everything, including the

adultery he witnesses which gives the reader the access to bring the complex into discussion. Unlike Hamlet, the unborn baby does not rely on assumptions or imaginary figures, he witnesses every step of the unfaithful actions of his mother and uncle, the planning and happening of the murder. Thus, his opinions about the people in his life and his interpretations on events are easier to access.

In the very beginning of the book where the baby forms his first opinions on Claude, his choice of words reflects a very hostile attitude towards the acquaintance of his mother, whom has not been identified as his uncle yet. It is important to note that he is not able to interact or even see his surroundings. Still, he feels distant from Claude even without knowing that he is his uncle since Claude is only considered to be a threat to his relationship with his mother. The baby considers him as a friend of his mother before knowing the truth, paying attention to their conversations and actions to find out more about the bits of their relationship. As their relationship becomes more established, the baby seems to be trying to assert his identity to remind his mother of his existence and distract her from focusing on Claude. This is shown where the mother, Trudy, is dining with Claude while having some wine which is perceived as sharing a glass with her by the baby: "I like to share a glass with my mother. You may never have experienced, or you will have forgotten, a good burgundy (her favorite) or a good Sancerre (also her favorite decanted through a healthy placenta)." (2016: 5). The aim of proving that he is, just like the man who is drinking with Trudy, capable of sharing a glass with her is reflected along with the fact that it also harms him whenever she drinks. He also adds that Trudy refuses to drink the third glass which wounds him, showing that he is willing to maintain the drunkenness coming from his mother. Furthermore, the refusal of another glass is celebrated by the baby since he connects that with the idea of his mother caring for him.

Then begins the description of the baby's complicated feelings towards Trudy upon learning that Claude is more than just a friend of her. Before learning that it is indeed his uncle, the baby refers him as the lover whom he thinks is a superficial man. As the baby criticizes his uncle's behaviours and detests him, he does not abstain from describing his father's negative behaviours and humiliating some of his

actions. His father, John Cairncross, is still desperately in love with Trudy and is told to stay away from her by herself. He criticizes his father for not being able to comprehend the depths of their died out love as if to convince that neither John nor Claude can know him better than he does. He goes; “He really believes that to write a poem in praise of my mother (her eyes, her hair, her lips) and come by to read it aloud will soften her, make him welcome in his own house.” (2016: 12). By saying that, he causes his father to seem like an ordinary man, almost justifying Trudy’s betrayal. Yet, he also likens himself to his father in terms of admiring Trudy. The baby knows Trudy’s physical appearances through John’s strong depictions and love poems. Nevertheless, he does not steer away from competing with his father. “I am as deluded as my father. And it’s true. Her beauty and remoteness and resolve are one.” (2016: 15) he says, lumping himself together with his father. He does the same towards the end of the book where he gets quite possessive; “We should be close, she and I, closer than lovers.” (2016: 164), referring to his uncle and father. He also tries to interfere whenever it comes to mention about the weakening relationship between his parents. He sometimes expresses his feelings through his father by agreeing with his admiration towards Trudy. This can be observed when he says; “My father and I are joined in hopeless love.” (2016: 16) where he deliberately tries to involve in their relationship in order to create his own. As he gets more attached to his mother and the father fails to gain her back, the baby gains the power and criticizes his father for not being able to go beyond reading or reciting poems. It would also be remarkable to compare the amount of time they could spend from the moment the baby starts to tell the story; an unborn baby who can accompany her and eventually gets to share everything she goes through and an unwanted husband whom she does not feel any connection with. The baby depicts his father’s inner thoughts by saying that he would endure any humiliation in order to spend some more time with her which is something the baby is always capable of.

As Hamlet’s main rival had already been defeated by his current rival, he had only one person to eliminate in order to achieve his mother’s partnership. However, *Nutshell*’s protagonist has both his father and uncle to cope with, his uncle planning to abolish the main rival to replace him. Like Hamlet, the baby has mingled feelings

towards his mother, rooting in his admiration and jealousy coming from the relationships she has. As the uncle starts to seem like he will annihilate what the baby and him consider as an obstacle, the baby lets his father go and focuses more on the uncle while planning his revenge plan. In this way, the baby follows Hamlet's lead by actually comprehending the fact that their uncles are meant to deal with their fathers. Still, the one possessing the mother, preventing him from establishing stronger bonds with his mother, making him witness the way he both emotionally and physically owns her would only aggravate the foetus. "The only point that at present concerns us is the resentment felt by a boy towards his father when the latter disturbs his enjoyment of his mother's affection." (1910: 95). The foetus argues that his and his uncle's existence contradicts with each other, meaning one could always ruin the other. His revenge plan starts being formed as his uncle becomes a stronger threat to his possible happiness with Trudy, encouraging him to come up with a plan. Upon inspecting the bond Trudy and Claude have, the baby Hamlet finds himself in a never ending thinking session which ends up with an achieved revenge plan. This revenge plan intends to get rid of the uncle while containing excuses to justify his desires. As the foetus says; "His existence denies my rightful claims to a happy life in the care of both parents. Unless I devise a plan." (2016: 20) the need to exterminate Claude starts blooming. However, this plan neglects the fact that John is still alive, signifying that he already accepted the death of his father. As the plan is supposed to take place upon Claude and Trudy committing the act of murder, no real efforts have been put to inform or save John beforehand.

The baby Hamlet becomes terrified by the news of his mother and uncle planning to leave him as soon as he is born. This brings him anxiety and sorrow as the idea of being abandoned by the mother becomes a huge threat to his existence. The feeling of betrayal is now multiplied since his former assumptions of Trudy caring about him turn out to be an illusion. Thus, the baby Hamlet shares another common aspect with Hamlet by having complicated feelings, his love and dedication towards the mother contradicts with the feeling of betrayal and jealousy. There begins a more serious contestation between Claude and the baby about being the ultimate possessor of Trudy. Since John had already been eliminated by Claude, whether technically or

physically, his son gets more engaged in the rivalry between his uncle. As the declaration of their abandonment is displayed, his rage gets more clear: "...Trudy will be mine, not Claude's, as able to dump me as tear her breasts from her ribcage and toss them overboard. I can be ruthless too." (2016: 44). This pure possessiveness does not solely come from the unconditional love the baby feels, it is strengthened by the challenging circumstances he has been coping with and the competition of owning Trudy. Borch-Jacobsen and Brick comment on the problematic state of mind of a person who goes through the complex:

A second, no less important, consequence of Freud's accentuation of the initial coincidence of love and identification is that love can no longer be separated from jealousy, as the classical oedipal schema insisted. (1994: 271)

The intrusion of Trudy's sexual life would be useful to survey in order to be able to comment on the baby's approach towards the affair. The omniscient protagonist gets to witness each and every sexual encounter of Trudy and Claude. His existence is crushed by their encounters, restraining his physical abilities and harming his psychology. The baby is able to feel the movements of Claude whenever him and Trudy have sex which always ends up with him being exasperated. He has a special term to refer to his surroundings when they become one. Whenever he feels the strokes of Claude's penis, his existence is humiliated, making him feel trapped in what he calls "The Wall of Death" both physically and mentally;

My mother goads her lover, whips him on with her fairground shrieks. Wall of Death! On each occasion, on every piston stroke, I dread that he'll break through and shaft my soft-boned skull and seed my thoughts with his essence, with the teeming cream of his banality. (2016: 21).

The repetition of "The Wall of Death" appears each time Trudy and Claude are skin on skin, contrasting with the baby's growing jealousy. The baby's indignation is not one-sided. Claude also portrays the baby as a handicap preventing him from starting a new life with Trudy as the baby reveals the fact that Claude hoped for his demise when he saw blood all over the floor, leaking from Trudy's foot due to her stepping

on a piece of glass. Claude triggers the baby's identity as someone related to Trudy. Both the baby and Claude are quite bothered by each others' existences. During one of their sexual intercourses, the baby likens Claude's penis to a gun to his head which could be counted as an another proof of their contradicting existences. Meanwhile, John is marginalized as he is refused by Trudy and already replaced by Claude. He starts to function just like King Hamlet in terms of allowing his son to justify his oedipal desires. Likewise, the way Claudius views Hamlet resembles how Claude portrays the baby.

Finally, it would be appropriate to analyse the baby Hamlet's sacrifice in order to maintain his togetherness with Trudy. He keeps reminding his possible resolution which has already been planned, aiming to keep Trudy all to himself. He sacrifices his own freedom along with Trudy's to omit Claude from her life while ensuring their inseparableness. Claude becomes someone whom the baby regards as a barrier between him and Trudy. The baby obtains the courage to get rid of Claude to have an eternity with his mother. At the end of the book, the baby makes a great effort and manages to be born before due, giving Claude and Trudy away as they were about to run away from the police. It has always been recognizable how the baby has complicated feelings towards Trudy just like Hamlet does towards his mother, both for preferring another men. However, the baby's rage towards Claude extends to a level where it trumps the love and fondness he feels towards Trudy; "Hatred of my uncle may exceed love for my mother. Punishing him may be nobler than saving her. But it might be possible to achieve both." (2016: 184). The eventual consequence of the baby Hamlet's ultimate plan could be considered as successful since he accomplishes separating Trudy from her possible lovers. It is noteworthy to pay attention to the fact that the baby implies the sacrifice he would make as he foreshadows the aftermath of the crime which has yet to be committed by naming the title of a radio documentary Trudy listens; *Babies Behind Bars*. The novel ends with his last thoughts of their prison cell which corresponds to their shared space without anyone's intrusion where he can have his mother all to himself. As the story ends with him saying; "And I'm thinking about our prison cell – I hope it's not too small – and beyond its heavy door, worn steps ascending; first sorrow, then justice, then

meaning. The rest is chaos.” (2016: 199), the achievement of insulating his mother against any rivals is portrayed through the perspective of the fortunate victim.

## **CHAPTER II: THE SENSES of SIGHT and HEARING**

### **2.1. THE CONCEPT of SIGHT and PHYSICAL and METAPHORICAL BLINDNESS in *OEDIPUS REX***

The sense of sight and the concept of vision in *Oedipus Rex* are pretty remarkable in terms of possessing a metaphorical meaning and a contradiction between being physically able to see but failing to find out the truth. The ability to see and being able to see as in comprehending things and the contradicting dynamic between the two conditions are portrayed through two essential characters; one lacking the sense of sight and the other lacking the ability to see the truth which led to his physical blindness. Throughout the whole play, the metaphorical aspect of seeing is emphasised through Oedipus who is constantly glorified as a ruler and a blind oracle named Tiresias who happens to know the bitter truth which is being tried to be revealed by Oedipus. The theme of blindness can be attributed to Oedipus' excessive pride which is called hubris. Since blindness is Oedipus' self punishment for being oblivious to the truth which is his metaphorical blindness, the concept of sight can be related to having the ability of comprehending things that are not directly told or expressed. What makes it hard for Oedipus to envision his back ground is mainly his personality as a ruler who is always appreciated and eulogized. Since his greatness is out of question, Oedipus never gets the chance to question what he knows and consider the reliability of Tiresias. He immediately disagrees with him, even humiliating him due to his disability. His self punishment carries much importance in terms of indicating that the blindness equals to being oblivious due to the superior feeling he has. Ironically, he gains wisdom when he blinds himself by accepting the truth of his parents and his ignorance which he would not dare to confess. As he is talking to his children, he admits that before blinding himself he was not able to see beyond what he could as he says: “Seeing nothing, children, knowing nothing, I became your father, I fathered you in the soil that gave me life.” (Sophocles, 1984: 248).

There are some instances where Oedipus subtly refers to his blindness without knowing that he actually fails to conceive the further. In the very beginning of the play where the priest is talking to him, Oedipus says that he would consider himself blind if he did not pity his people, meaning he is pretty positive about the way he thinks and takes action. Later on, he tells Creon – his brother-in-law – that he would bring light to the situation they were in to be able to find the murderer of the previous king and save the city. The usage of the word “light” here is quite remarkable as it corresponds to the unrevealed truth about the murder of the king. However, as the untold truth is revealed, Oedipus is banished from seeing the light from then on while he actually succeeds to bring the metaphorical light to remove the curse. The moment Oedipus realizes that it is actually himself whom he has been looking for all this time, he mentions of never looking at the light again before blinding himself with Jocasta’s brooches. Therefore, the moment he brings light to the salvation of the crime, it takes the literal light out of his sight for good. The excessive pride and bewilderment are replaced by self punishment and acceptance of what was yet to come.

The dichotomy between Tiresias and Oedipus must be surveyed in order to see Oedipus’ conception of sight and vision and the alteration of his idea of blindness. Tiresias is one of the key characters of the play who implies the misconception of Oedipus and confidently proclaims that Oedipus is the murderer of Laius. Being physically blind, Tiresias is claimed to see through the eyes of Apollo whom Oedipus mentions a couple times as the lord of the light. The dynamic between light and darkness is also pretty striking for representing the contrast between knowledge and ignorance. When there was light, Oedipus was avoiding the truth which kept him in dark but as he gained knowledge about the actual background of his life, he was metaphorically enlightened by the disappearance of the made-up life story he had. This beautiful contradiction is reflected through the contrast between Oedipus and Tiresias.

The response given by Oedipus to Tiresias when he reveals the truth about the murderer of Laius is nothing but a denial. His attitude towards Tiresias completely changes as what he heard from him does not really please Oedipus. He even implies

that Tiresias does not deserve the title “prophet” due to lacking the sense of sight despite calling him wise earlier. Tiresias keeps insisting on his claim and emphasises Oedipus’ blindness multiple times:

TIRESIAS

So,

you mock my blindness? Let me tell you this.

You with your precious eyes,

you’re blind to the corruption of your life,

to the house you live in, those you live with –

who *are* your parents? Do you know? All unknowing

you are the scourge of your own flesh and blood,

the dead below the earth and the living here above,

and the double lash of your mother and your father’s curse

will whip you from this land one day, their footfall

treading you down in terror, darkness shrouding

your eyes that now can see the light! (1984: 183)

Tiresias makes an allusion to darkness and light again to demonstrate their metaphorical aspects. He also implies that conceiving things does not require eyes. As they keep on arguing, Oedipus gets more enraged by what he hears and identifies his words as riddles, murks and darkness. This darkness just vanishes away when the light vanishes away from his eyes. Tiresias describes him as someone who is blind but has eyes, quite the opposite of himself. It is automatically correlated with the role of fate in a tragedy which has a strong effect on the downfall of a tragic hero. It also plays an important role in shaping of the characteristics of a tragic hero or giving moral lessons to the rest of the characters and the audience. As a tragic hero, it

effects the audience if he dies tragically at the end of the play which causes them to feel sorry for him. The term used to explain this situation is called catharsis. Catharsis can be created through showing the immense suffering of a tragic hero and his overflow of emotions full of anguish and bitterness. Therefore, it is not necessary for a tragic hero to be dead as a consequence of his former misjudgments in order to give the audience a meaningful message. Oedipus can be shown as an instance to that since he perfectly explains his reason behind blinding himself rather than committing suicide. On the other hand, Jocasta kills herself upon finding out who Oedipus actually is which is her self punishment to her own blindness. However, Jocasta and Oedipus are distinguished from each other in terms of their responses to their destined future. Jocasta is led by her blindness and escapes from the possible truth by trying to prevent Oedipus from uncovering the truth. She does not defy her fate or try to challenge her destiny. She rather tries to refrain from revealing the possible disastrous truth which she fails to do. It is notable how she also references to the dark and light as Oedipus strives to inspect the situation:

JOCASTA

What should a man fear? It's all chance,  
chance rules our lives. Not a man on earth  
can see a day ahead, groping through the dark.  
Better to live at random, best we can.  
And as for this marriage with your mother—  
have no fear. Many a man before you,  
in his dreams, has shared his mother's bed.  
Take such things for shadows, nothing at all—  
Live, Oedipus,  
as if there's no tomorrow! (1984: 215)

Jocasta's obliviousness about what Oedipus is about to discover draws attention. She asserts that he cannot live a predictable life where everything is scheduled which supports the idea of giving in to an uncontrollable and unchangeable life scenario. Unlike Oedipus, her attitude is not very reactionary, it is rather a passive action to put an end to her sorrow. As she consoles Oedipus about the bothering matter, Jocasta indeliberately justifies their actions by indicating that people are destined to get through the dark and mentioning about other men sharing their mothers' bed in their dreams. As the theme of darkness stands for ignorance throughout the play, what Jocasta implies here confirms the relation between darkness and ignorance.

The limitation of human body and the restricted capacity of a human being are portrayed through the actions of the king who is considered to be a great ruler and capable of overcoming hardships. The glorification of Oedipus as a representation of people's misconception shows the incapacity of humans who are destined to go through everything they are meant to. As a component of tragedy, hubris plays such an essential role in order to determine how the downfall of a tragic hero will be. In *Oedipus Rex*, the punishment is losing the sense of sight since the incomprehension is attributed to the dysfunction of the eye organ. The utilization of light and darkness to depict the wisdom and ignorance is displayed through multiple characters. Being one of them, Oedipus proves that physical blindness is not doomed to mean living in darkness and being deprived of the rest. Quite the opposite, Oedipus and Tiresias attest that physical strength or disability are not automatically correlated with one's inner self and his extend of thoughts.

...Oedipus eradicates his own personal existence only to light upon it in the very adoption of the pulic stance. And this sets the pattern for nearly all his utterance in the early scenes; the public role makes him unconscious of his own secrets. (Seale, 1982: 216).

The excitement increases as Oedipus acts very eager to uncover the mystery. By the end of the play as he finds out the truth, the transitions from both the light to the darkness and darkness to the light, one being metaphorical and the other physical, have been completed.

## 2.2. THE SENSES of SIGHT and HEARING and THEIR CORRELATION in *HAMLET*

The connection between sight and hearing is demonstrated through many references to the both senses throughout the play, mainly claiming that they co-exist together. So, differing from the two other works; *Oedipus Rex* and *Nutshell*, *Hamlet* highlights the correlation between the senses rather than focusing on only one of them.

The play *Hamlet*, suggests that information gained through the ear alone can be malignant, and that information gained through the eye alone can be incomplete or ineffectual. Shakespeare shows that a dialectical relationship exists between the functions of the eye and the ear and that an equilibrium between the two must be sought within the reason before will is called into action. (Anderson, 1991: 302)

The play begins with the consequence of an incoherence between the two senses. As Barnardo asks who there is and Francisco and Barnardo acknowledge each other, they need the harmony of both senses in order to comprehend each other's existence. One of the most important visual elements is the ghost of Hamlet's father whom some characters can see and hear whereas some others cannot. The Ghost makes many allusions to the both senses while associating them with the theme of revenge. Although the sentinels are able to see The Ghost as well, it is only Hamlet who can communicate with it through the effective usage of both senses.

The Ghost's entrance plays an important role to show the need to connect a person's image with their voice. As he makes his first appearance, Horatio orders him to speak upon Marcellus' request in order to confirm the identity of the king. Also, before seeing it himself, Horatio refuses to believe in The Ghost's existence and claims that his friends are just imagining things. This shows one's need to match the voice to the person in order to have a full vision of someone. Upon receiving the confirmation from his eyes, Horatio finally comprehends the existence of The Ghost. However, he still demands to hear his voice to have a better sense of reality. Even Hamlet tells him to speak after spending a considerable amount of time just

following him as he is told. As Hamlet keeps following his lead until he feels like he needs confirmation of the identity of The Ghost, he says that he will not go any further unless The Ghost speaks. Then he utters his first words by saying “Mark me.” (1994: 48, Act1, Scene5), meaning he orders Hamlet to listen to him. After hearing his explanations and identifying him as the ghost of his father, Hamlet eventually obtains the full identification of him due to the correlation of the both senses he provides.

The part where The Dumb Show and Mousetrap are performed point out the influence of combining the hearing and sight and how effective it will be when compared to perceive something through only one sense. The Dumb Show is a pantomime show where the players enact the murder of the king upon Hamlet’s request. It is all about visuality where the players perform a short play to represent the murder of the previous king. In the show, the player who represents Claudius comes into the room and pours poison into the king’s ear after the queen exits. There is no talking, however, the scene is perfectly enacted according to The Ghost’s narration. As the Mousetrap sequence begins, it becomes more clear what the previous play is all about since the players start talking. The dialogues between the player king and the player queen show Hamlet’s inner thoughts about the marriage between Claudius and Gertrude. Also, he claims that the title of the play is metaphorical but does not explain how since it might be related to his idea of Claudius’ calling Gertrude “my mouse” as a nickname. The Mousetrap evokes more emotion and attracts more attention since it contains dialogues and the audience can be more attached to the topic. The difference between the two plays is attributed to the importance of appealing to the both senses in order to convey a wholeness. Mary Anderson examines the two plays in terms of the King’s responses to the both plays to show the difference of their effectiveness:

Hamlet devises the play so that he can “pique the conscience” and know for certain the guilt of the King. He draws our eyes to the King just before the play begins, so that we note that the King is totally unaffected by the Dumb-Show, which Hamlet has already judged to be “inexplicable” (III.ii. – 12). In this way, Shakespeare demonstrates that the play which appeals to the eye

alone is totally ineffectual. In the Mouse-Trap however, the King is forced to both *see* and *hear* the dramatization of his guilty deed, and is trapped its “argument”. (1991: 306)

Lastly, the prayer scene can easily be considered as another product of lacking one of the senses. During the prayer scene, Claudius confesses his crimes while talking to himself, referring to Cain as a reflection of himself. As Hamlet enters the scene and sees Claudius alone, he supposes that he is praying which prevents him from committing the crime he has been planning to. Hamlet comments on the situation by saying that killing Claudius while he is repenting would only help him going to heaven. Since he cannot hear Claudius’ confession, he regresses and delays the murder. Therefore, he is misdirected which effects his decision. This time, Hamlet becomes the victim of not being able to benefit from both faculties, causing disconnections and misunderstandings.

The profusion of eye and ear imagery in the play reflects Shakespeare’s philosophy about the dialectical relationship between the eye and the ear and the reason. He shows that the exclusion of one or the other results in a truncation of the intellect and thus, in wholesome judgement and action. (1991: 311)

### **2.3. SEEING THROUGH EARS: THE LACK of SIGHT in *NUTSHELL***

As a postmodern protagonist, the baby Hamlet is employed to narrate the story while devising a resolution plan through the connection he has with the outside world. His idea of space which is likened to a nutshell is quite mysterious since what inside of a shell is not known or seen before it reveals itself which reduces the sense of sight. By doing this, the baby restricts the reader’s sight and refuses to satisfy their desire to have a visual opinion on himself. The idea of space is brought into discussion by underlying the inability to see inside of his “nutshell”. By depriving him of the sense of sight, McEwan challenges the conventions and criticizes the enlightenment principles which uphold the idea of gaining knowledge through sensory experience. The thought, “seeing is believing” is questioned throughout the

entire novel by the omniscient baby who gathers a considerable amount of information together and devise a plan. Therefore, McEwan pushes the limits of traditional thoughts by creating such a protagonist and tasking him to depict his surroundings through his imagination while narrating the story. Scientific methods of gaining knowledge and the experimental methods of learning are challenged by McEwan. “The dysfunctionality of the enlightenment organ as far as the narrator is concerned, can be claimed as a reference to the Enlightenment all by itself.” (2019: 104)

The baby explains the way he perceives the things he has never seen in the very beginning of the novel where he talks about colors; “When I hear ‘blue’, which I’ve never seen, I imagine some kind of mental event that’s fairly close to ‘green’ – which I’ve never seen.” (2016: 1). The implication of having the qualifications of a learned narrator in spite of lacking the most important sense is pretty obvious which highlights the fact that he is capable of breaking the boundaries of the conventional fiction. He knows that he is lacking a sensory organ but never fails to explain things in his way while having a playful and extraordinary attitude. In doing so, the protagonist once again refutes the idea of “seeing is believing” by claiming that wombs have ears. He makes such a great use of them, portraying the characters from each others’ perspectives and describes their inner worlds just by examining their relationships with his mother.

When inspecting the baby Hamlet through a Freudian perspective, it is said that he accomplishes the ultimate goal of a victim of the complex, separating his mother from his lover for good. If the theme of blindness is applied to the novel due to the protagonist’s lacking the sense of sight, would there be a similarity between Oedipus and the baby Hamlet? Or would it be wiser to compare him to Tiresias since both are incapable of seeing but are more knowledgeable than they are expected to be? The baby Hamlet gives a hint about the extend of his ability to see in the metaphorical sense; “...and I’m left in the dark to confront the outrageous fact and consider my stupidity.” (216: 30). Like the two other works, there happens to be references to the darkness in *Nutshell* too. Yet, the darkness the baby is talking about can easily be correlated with the “nutshell” he is in, where his actions are restricted and his

reactions are reduced. The idea of space is once again brought into the center which restrains the baby's intentions and prevents him from getting involved in the whole situation. It is correct that he is left in the dark since he lacks the sense of sight which somehow strengthens his visual depictions and the ability to link the events together. However, the blindness caused by this situation of being left in the dark could only be physical considering the self-awareness and the capacity of perception he possesses. Therefore, he differs from both Oedipus and Hamlet by enriching his envision and actively participating from the womb of his mother in spite of lacking physical vision. In this sense, it would not be incorrect to establish a bond between the baby Hamlet and Tiresias in terms of processing the sequence of events and drawing conclusions from them while being left in the "dark".

Creating such a protagonist who lacks one of the senses, McEwan chooses to put emphasis on his auditory abilities. He lets the baby Hamlet explain the way he obtains information not only about what is going on among his mother, father and uncle but also all over the world despite being a foetus in the womb of a woman:

I have my sources, I *listen*. My mother, Trudy, when she isn't with her friend Claude, likes the radio and prefers talk to music. Who, at the Internet's inception, would have foreseen the rise and 'wireless'? I hear, above the launderette din of stomach and bowels, the news, wellspring of all bad dreams. Driven by a self-harming compulsion, I listen closely to analysis and dissent. Repeats on the hour, regular half-hour summaries don't bore me. I even tolerate the BBC World Service and its puerile blasts of synthetic trumpets and xylophone to separate the items. In the middle of a long, quiet night I might give my mother a sharp kick. She'll wake, become insomniac, reach for the radio. Cruel sport, I know, but we are both better informed by the morning. (2016: 4)

The playful narration style of McEwan once again shows up by reflecting the baby's inner thoughts about almost everything in a mature manner while still having the qualities of a foetus. Yet, his sophisticated sense of reason and point of view towards things that he has not been exposed to yet are other products of postmodernity.

The reader is bound to depend on the baby's narration and commentary in order to have a full vision of the story and the inner thoughts of each and every character, their responses and actual feelings about the things they go through. The method the baby Hamlet uses in order to earn the reader's trust is all about explaining the sequence of events from his perspective and underlying his source of information. His descriptions get stronger and more convincing as the reader becomes more attached to his narration and gets used to picturing everything through him. He keeps reminding the reader of the reliability of his sources as he comments on the podcasts and radio programs his mother listens to, so that the more the reader gets into the story, the more his omniscience looks reliable despite the position of him as a foetus. It gets easier for him to evoke antipathy towards Claude and sympathy towards himself upon creating a bond of reliance between the reader and himself. Therefore, when he says he sees John in his dream, it does not sound extraordinary since he helps the reader accept the fact that his observation skills without using his eyes have improved throughout the whole time so much that he can picture him without the slightest interaction. It is fascinating how much power he has over the presentation of the characters given they are doomed to be introduced and their motivations are to be expressed by him. Even his father's feelings and the way he portrays Trudy are all narrated by the baby's perspective along with his mother's mixed state of mind after the deed is done. Thus, his being robbed of one of his senses gives him an opportunity to prove the reliability of his auditory sense in a relatively manipulative manner. As Civelekoğlu claims; "...if seeing provides a mechanism of authority in relation to knowing, then it is bound to remain on the target board of postmodernism and constantly be questioned." (2019: 106).

The concept of space and its literary usage is once again brought into discussion in relation to his auditory senses. It is no doubt that the womb of the mother provides space for the baby and gives him a chance to gather as much information as he can. He gets used to connecting the dots and examining every little movements of the people around him due to his curiosity and desire to participate in. Yet, it is inevitable for him to escape from being exposed to unpleasant conversations or events; many of them being related to the murder plan. Also, his reluctance to depict

the intercourses Claude and Trudy have and the growing jealousy and hatred towards the couple just prove the fact that there can be times when he feels trapped and unable to intervene physically. This roots in his perfect usage of auditory senses which renders him an extremely successful observer. The inevitability of being obliged to witness the harshness of the words shows up again as the policemen come to inform Trudy about their succeeded plan; the news of John's death. As Trudy pretends to be shocked and searches for a way to share the news with Claude, the baby feels remediless and goes: "I need a moment alone, beyond the reach of voices." (2016: 109). Thus, it justifies the fact that the womb of his mother is a place where he is bound to make use of his sense of hearing and take mental notes to share them with the reader.

Lastly, it is crucial to consider the baby's activeness and willingness to contribute to other's lives and comments on almost everything despite what is expected due to his powerlessly situated condition in his "nutshell". In spite of his omniscience and usage of words in a playful manner, the baby Hamlet is physically defenseless and misses the chance to get in touch with his acquaintances. However, he should be considered to be more active and effective when compared to Hamlet. "...Hamlet's passivity is more likely to be the result of his profound pathological melancholy..." (2019: 107). Hamlet's hesitance about the murder and unavailing attempts of eliminating his uncle and his proclamations of his unhinged mental state remain inconclusive while the baby Hamlet patiently waits and devises his plan which works magnificently in the end. Besides his accomplished plan, the baby's little kicks at the intended moments where he wishes to warn his mother or send a sign to her to reflect his annoyance and discontentedness can be counted as his ways of interfere. During the last meeting of Trudy, John and Claude where John is being offered the poisonous drink, the baby attempts to prevent him from doing so by kicking his mother. His response to the situation is expressed by him in a desperate voice: "Again, with both heels I kick and kick against his fate." (2016: 99). Despite being precluded from taking action physically, the baby never gives up on trying to be a part of the life they share and has a more mature and rational attitude in comparison

to Hamlet who chooses to delay his presumed task and cannot help being controlled by his instincts often.

## **CHAPTER III: FEMINIST DISCUSSIONS REGARDING GERTRUDE, OPHELIA and TRUDY**

### **3.1. WOMEN, SHAKESPEARE and the REPRESENTATION of GERTRUDE**

The traditions and conventions of the Elizabethan era effected the representation of women characters in literature considerably. Women in Elizabethan drama are likely to be portrayed as helpless victims suppressed by men and unmarried women are considered to be properties of men of their families until marriage which is very ironic due to the fact that Queen Elizabeth I was an unmarried woman herself.

The well-educated Queen Elizabeth battled for women to be viewed as equivalents to men through her rule. Be that as it may, although her majesty admired drama, and in cherishing the theatre, she never enabled women to be on the stage; compelling men to assume the job of people makes her beliefs and society's misleading. (Bastan, 2019: 166)

The representation of values that are decided by the society is affiliated with the characterization of women characters, especially in drama. The tasks that were attributed to women and their symbolizing domesticity shaped the way Elizabethan society views them. Their being considered as the weaker sex or what Simone de Beauvoir calls “the second sex” years later, explaining the processes women went through causing them to be addressed as inferior, puts them into a position where they are assumed to be in need of men.

“Shakespeare’s feminine characters mirror the Elizabethan era’s image of women...” (Bastan, 2019: 165). Regardless of the way the audience renders them evil or good, women characters in Shakespeare’s plays are extremely crucial in terms of reflecting the norms of the patriarchal society and their effects on women. Therefore, women who are not suited to the characteristics of a conventional

housekeeper can easily be depicted as “fallen”, a word which is often used for labelling a woman who is thought to lose her moral values which are defined by the male dominated society. One of the very first attempts of a rebellion against the inequality between the two genders appeared right after this period (The Jacobean Era) when activists from London protested the conventions of the society by wearing men’s clothes. However, that movement is not the invention of the mentioned era since it was also seen towards the end of the Elizabethan era.

As asserted before, Shakespeare’s women characters reflect the norms of the society they belonged to. However, that does not mean that each and every character share the same qualities in order to show the importance of staying in border lines defined by men. Yet, the ones who may be considered as unconventional or rather willing to take the initiative to show their assertion of strength and resistance are inclined to be grounded. Juliet easily comes to the forefront as an instance for being a rebellious woman who challenges the traditions of her period. As a tragic hero, Juliet goes through stages that all tragic heroes go and ends up facing the consequence of her tragic flaw. Her tragic flaw is her impetuosity and her eternal fondness towards Romeo, leading her to her sudden death which is also the result of standing against the defined norms. Juliet challenges the rules set for her by insisting on having Romeo as her lover in spite of being informed about his identity. Romeo and Juliet meet at Capulet’s traditional feast given by her family even though Romeo’s first intention was to see Rosaline whom he was in love with before Juliet. This could be the first indicator of how much of an unconventional woman Juliet is since Romeo was in so much pain until his first encounter with her. She takes the initiative to meet Romeo by sending The Nurse to ask his name while clearly asserting that it would only be Romeo whom she would marry. From the very first interactions of Romeo and Juliet, Juliet’s consistency contradicting with the norms of her family shows up. She prioritizes her feelings over the relationship Capulets and Montagues have which differs her from the rest of her family. Furthermore, Juliet appears to be the first one to confess during the balcony scene even though she is not aware of Romeo’s presence. She intrepidly expresses her emotions and even asks Romeo to deny his family and change his name or else she would do it herself. These are all in

contrast to the position of a young and unmarried woman who is not supposed to act freely by her own will. By standing up against the conventions set by the patriarchy and the hostile attitude the families have against each other, Juliet's unhappy ending seems to be inevitable for being a woman who does not regress. Pragati Das' comments about Juliet's personality would be worth mentioning in terms of emphasizing her nature:

...Shakespeare's Juliet is a headstrong and intelligent character in spite of her young age, though she often seems timid to the audience because of her young age. She is considered by many to be the true hero of the play, acting as a sounding board and a balance against the impulsive Romeo. It is Juliet who sets the boundaries of behavior in her relationship with Romeo. She allows him to kiss her, she pledges her commitment before him, and it is she who suggests their marriage. Juliet's forgiveness of Romeo after he kills Tybalt indicates her mature nature in contrast to his passionate impulsiveness. Furthermore, Juliet lies and clandestinely subverts her family's wishes, a truly rebellious action against traditional Italian society. (1995: 52)

Queen Gertrude of *Hamlet* shows difference from Juliet in terms of being a reactionary woman who raises her voice in order to demonstrate her identity as an independent woman. However, it is also a fact that she never happens to be in a position where she can freely express herself without the interruption of others. Gertrude indeliberately justifies the assumptions of a woman's inadequacy in the absence of her husband by remarrying her brother-in-law right after the demise of her previous husband. Hamlet criticizes her haste and accuses her mother of being so unbothered while she should have been mourning.

The nonattendance of a grieving period for the Queen proposes that she required a spouse so severely that she shamelessly deceived Hamlet and her late husband, and included herself in a corrupt marriage basically for assuaging her very own dejection. (2019: 169).

Also, the way The Ghost contributes to the representation of Gertrude is pretty significant since he has a considerable amount of power over Hamlet. The Ghost

shapes Hamlet's perspective towards Gertrude in a way that causes him to have mixed emotions, jealousy and obsession domineering mainly. As The Ghost reveals the murderer of himself, his commentary on Gertrude draws attraction for forming the audience's perception of Gertrude. As the Queen is addressed as "seemingly virtuous" (1994: 49, Act1, Scene5), the guilt of killing King Hamlet is attributed to her as well. The King also asserts that the queen would not have been seduced if she was virtuous which once again stresses the unreliable and in need image of her as a woman.

"Despite her limited speech throughout the play, Gertrude has been the subject of quite a bit of research and speculation." (Graf, 2013: 16). Gertrude's personality is formed through the opinions of other characters, mainly Hamlet and The Ghost. Kinney comments on the representation of her character to indicate the impact of the commentaries of the two main male characters on the image of Gertrude: "inferred from the other characters' impressions of her, for her lines in the play do not yield an aura of immorality" (2002: 41). Both Hamlet and The Ghost share the feeling of betrayal due to her second marriage which has a huge impact on the reliability of the way the two men validate Gertrude's personality. Gertrude had never been given the opportunity to express her true nature. There are many assumptions about her made by The Ghost and Hamlet, reducing her into a being whose only motivation is lust. However, even their accusations contradict with each other as they criticize her sudden marriage. It would be useful to study the contradicting statements about Gertrude's sexuality in order to reconsider the reliability of the two male characters' narration:

GHOST

Ay that incestuous, that adulterate beast

With witchcraft of his wits, with traitorous gifts

(O wicked wit, and gifts, that have the power

So to seduce!) won to his shameful lust

The will of my most seeming virtuous Queen:

O Hamlet, what a falling-off was there,

From me, whose love was of that dignity,

That it went hand in hand, even with the vow

I made to her in marriage; and to decline

Upon a wretch whose natural gifts were poor

To those of mine. (1994: 50, Act1, Scene5)

Not only The Ghost accuses Gertrude of being weak and immoral, but he also implies that she was seduced by the gifts and witchcraft which reduces her capability of choice into nothing. However, without the testimony of his father's ghost, Hamlet approaches to her sexuality with a different perspective. Like The Ghost, Hamlet constantly blames Gertrude for remarrying with Claudius not much after the death of King Hamlet. Yet, Hamlet questions Gertrude's sexuality in relation to the both marriages of her while comparing them as they look at the painted images of the two brothers:

HAMLET

This was your husband. Look you now what follows.

Blasting his wholesome breath. Have you eyes?

You cannot call it love: for at your age,

The hey-day in the blood is tame, it's humble,

And waits upon the judgement: and what judgement

Would step from this, to this?... (1994: 105-6, Act3, Scene4)

With his expression of “the hey-day in the blood”, Hamlet makes another sexual reference since blood stands for her sexual desire. Yet, Hamlet implies that her libido should be tamed and considers the possibility of Gertrude’s having genuine feelings towards Claudius. In this way, what The Ghost said with which Hamlet seemed like he agreed gets refuted, proving how the way Gertrude is portrayed through the perspectives of two pained men may show inconsistency.

The duality between the two statements made by the two main male characters who are hurt by Gertrude prove that the portrayal of her would be invalid due to the lack of self-expression she has. It would not be correct to claim that both males purposely offer a misconception of Gertrude’s identity. Rather, they unconsciously have this character image of her since they are incapable of viewing her objectively due to their personal relations. Besides, while Gertrude’s lustful nature is highlighted many times throughout the play, there is no confirmative action made by her justifying the assumptions. Gertrude had never been in a condition where she can express her lustful desires even if she had since she was always surrounded by the other characters in public places. Therefore, one can come to the conclusion that Gertrude can be considered as the symbol of other women of her period who are not allowed to have a voice of their own. They are mainly explained and expressed through the men surrounding them.

Another noteworthy fact that should be touched upon would be the implication of Gertrude’s being responsible for the murder of her previous husband. The guilt of killing King Hamlet somehow shifted from Claudius to Gertrude since her actions after the death of the king are considered to be quite disturbing for both Hamlet and The Ghost. Thus, the two male characters merely focus on Gertrude’s motivations causing them to manipulate the reader’s conception of Gertrude instead of actually blaming Claudius for his deed. Hamlet’s approach to the matter is almost based solely on the relationship between Gertrude and Claudius rather than taking action against Claudius to fulfill his task of revenge. The dialogue where Hamlet blames Gertrude for the killing of his father “...seems to parallel Gertrude with the action of not only the murder of King Hamlet but also the seduction of Claudius.” ( 2013: 23):

QUEEN

O what a rash, and bloody deed is this!

HAMLET

A bloody deed, almost as bad good mother,

As kill a King, and marry with his brother. (1994: 103, Act3, Scene4)

The player queen in *The Moustrap* is a quite interesting element to perceive the concepts of motherhood and wifehood through the perspective of Hamlet. Some critics argue that the play was written by Hamlet himself in order to indicate his expectations of a woman as a wife and mother. While the playwright of the work remains ambiguous, it would not require certain evidences to link the play with Hamlet's opinions since he encourages them to watch it. It can be thought to be his way of reflecting his dissatisfaction in Gertrude since she does not meet his expectations as a woman. As he asks her how she finds the play, Gertrude tells him that the player is overdoing her role to which Hamlet responds that she will keep her promise of not remarrying if her husband happens to die. At this point, there appears a misleading perception since Hamlet behaves as if Gertrude promised what the player queen did but failed to keep it. Graf argues that she may have promised the king she would not remarry, adding: "However, she most likely did not expect King Hamlet to be murdered by his own brother. Therefore, under the circumstances, Gertrude did what was necessary to protect herself and Hamlet." (2013: 35).

...when we see her [Gertrude] in herself, apart from their characterizations of her, we tend to see a woman more muddled than actively wicked; even her famous sensuality is less apparent than her conflicted solicitude both for her new husband and for her son. (Adelman, 1992: 15)

If the interpretations of the male characters are neglected, Gertrude's actual characterization does not match with the portrayal that was provided by his son and former husband. There is not a valid proof of her being a sensuous and needy woman despite the protests of the men related to her. She is accused of being as responsible as the murderer of the king which is a very exaggerated and serious allegation, easily

manipulating the reader to side with the psychologically pained male characters of the play. There are many references to her sexuality and implications of its being the root of everything including the murder, reducing every other aspect of her as a woman into nothing. It is often ignored that Gertrude is a caring mother to Hamlet as Adelman states: "...she seems to enact every son's scenario for the good mother, choosing his interests over her husband's. But she may of course believe that he is mad..." (1992: 15). Adelman touches upon the theme of madness and Gertrude's approach to his son's state of mind, continuing her words:

...and think that she is reporting accurately to her husband; certainly her courageous defense of her husband in their next appearance together where she bodily restrains Laertes, as 4.5.122 specifies-suggests that she has not wholly adopted Hamlet's view of Claudius. (1992: 15)

Gertrude and the concept of motherhood once again step forward with their collaboration of tricking Claudius into believing in Hamlet's madness upon his request. She accepts being included in his plan, saying:

QUEEN

Be thou assur'd, if words be made of breath,

And breath of life: I have no life to breathe

What thou hast said to me. (1994: 109, Act3, Scene4)

Therefore, Hamlet's former accusations and the immoral representation of her are effortlessly refuted once Gertrude obtains the chance to speak up on behalf of herself. The contradiction between the naiveness and calmness in Gertrude's expressions and the elusive display of her through others' lenses confirm the repressed and marginalized position she is in. Montgomery's comments on Gertrude's switching her devotion to his son is affiliated with her will to demonstrate her capability of choice, as she asserts:

She has promised that she will not tell Claudius that Hamlet's madness is false, and she twice tells her husband that her son's madness is genuine. This

moment represents more than a relocation of Gertrude's subservience from her husband to her son. (2009: 105)

“Gertrude is the victim of a bad press, not only on the stage and screen and in the critical arena, but also within Shakespeare's text.” (Levin, 2008: 323). Within the limited lines and distorted representation of her character, she still manages to give hints of her true nature which render the narration of the male characters questionable by both subtly and directly showing the glimpses of her inner self. Gertrude should be validated as a woman having free will. Her being robbed of having a voice of her own which forces her personality to be represented by others has a tremendous effect on the way she is viewed. Therefore, Gertrude should be counted as “...a full participant in the action, a powerful interpreter, an essential party to tragedy – in *Hamlet*.” (Montgomery, 2009: 114)

### **3.2. OPHELIA, OBJECTIFICATION and REPRESSION**

Ophelia is another astonishing woman character of Shakespeare who has to cope with the oppressive conventions of the patriarchy of her time. Ophelia is always mentioned with her frailty and submissiveness. Teker and Sayin describe Ophelia as:

“the fair Ophelia,” “chaste treasure,” or “minist’ring angel,” having all the qualities appropriate for an ideal, innocent, young virgin or, because of her madness, she was described as a physically, psychologically, and morally weak young woman that again classified her as typically “feminine.” (2006: 113)

Hamlet addresses Ophelia as a “frail” woman, referring to her fragility since he thinks it has a proper connotation for her gender. Such adjectives were attributed to women as they were thought to be suitable according to the gender norms. Therefore, the dynamic between women as needy and weak beings and men as stronger and independent while also being addressed as the one possessing women would balance the gender norms defined by the society. Ophelia’s condition in the play portrays the devastating effects of the patriarchy victimizing and rendering her inferior because of her gender. “Ophelia, it would seem, wholly at the mercy of the male figures throughout her life, is certainly a victim figure.” (1995: 38).

Throughout the play, Ophelia's womanhood is reduced into being the daughter of Polonius, the sister of Laertes and the love interest of Hamlet. Therefore, no inner thoughts or direct reflections of her mind is offered since her whole self is thought to be described by the men related to her. In this context, Ophelia carries much importance by reflecting the struggles of women who are prevented from taking action and silenced by the domineering gender. When talking about the role of Ophelia, Lacan asserts that; "Ophelia is obviously essential. She is linked forever, for centuries, to the figure of Hamlet." (1977: 20). Finkelstein indicates a similar statement, saying: "That Ophelia lets others construct her is obvious, but that her experience can represent Hamlet's is less evident." (1997: 6). Similarly, Showalter reviews how most critics of Shakespeare value her: "...Ophelia has been an insignificant minor character in the play, touching in her weakness and madness but chiefly interesting, of course in what she tells about Hamlet." (2005: 77) Like Lacan and Finkelstein, she highlights the fact that one is subconsciously inclined to consider her as a person having relations with Hamlet, ignoring her whole identity as a person. Ophelia's story is discussed through her relation with Hamlet, being considered as a part that should be completing his story as a whole. "Ophelia's plight was ignored as a tragic story in its own right." (2006: 113). In her book titled *The Female Malady: Women, Madness and English Culture*, Showalter talks about the representation of Ophelia, touching upon the weak image she has been given: "The stage conventions associated with the role have always emphasized the feminine nature of Ophelia's insanity as contrasted with Hamlet's universalized metaphysical distress." (2014: 10-1)

Similar to Queen Gertrude, Ophelia has few lines which are all good at portraying her condition. One of the most highlighting moments would be the ending of the first dialogue she has with her brother Laertes. He talks quite a lot about the bond she has with Hamlet, telling her what and what not to do in a relationship where the only people could be concerned should have been Hamlet and Ophelia. What is more surprising and upsetting is Ophelia's submissive response to her brother, showing full obedience to his guidance which is actually more like an order:

## OPHELIA

'Tis in my memory lock'd,

And you yourself shall keep the key of it. (1994: 43, Act1, Scene3)

Ophelia's offering the key of her mind is Shakespeare's symbolic way of demonstrating that Laertes has so much power over her that he could actually control her mind if he wishes so. Ophelia's admission of her defenseless state confirms that her whole existence is actually taken over. Her statements always fail to give a sense of independence throughout the dialogues she has. Upon letting him comment on her personal relationship with Hamlet, her father Polonius harshly criticizes the way she describes her emotions, to which Ophelia answers: "I do not know, my lord, what I should think." (1994: 43, Act1, Scene3). This state of not knowing what to feel does not stem from having an ambivalence due to her mingled feelings towards Hamlet. It is actually the contradiction between her inner self and the imaginary world she could have had without carrying the weight of being crushed by others' opinions and what her father and brother order her to do without considering her choices.

Therefore, Ophelia never had the chance to consider her feelings the way a young woman would do, meaning her mingled feelings in the romantic sense are highly effected by brother's and father's opinions. She never rejects her brother's and father's intrusion of her private life, in contrast, she just submits to their words, finishing the previous dialogue by saying: "I shall obey my lord." (1994: 44, Act1 Scene3). She really does so, as in the following act, she admits that she sent Hamlet's letters back to him just like Polonius told her to do.

Hamlet's attitude towards Ophelia should be given attention since she is not only dominated by Polonius and Laertes, but also by Hamlet through the changing nature of him due to feeling disappointed about her mother's second marriage. This causes Hamlet to have a general idea about women since it is enough for him to have a prejudice towards the rest of the women when his mother remarries. How he is effected by the news of her mother's and uncle's togetherness changes his approach to Ophelia as well. "...when his disgust at his mother's conduct has already generalized itself into a doubt of womankind, Ophelia, at the behest of her father,

repels his letters and denies his access to her.” (Sen, 1940: 146). Hamlet often tends to refer to his mother while talking to Ophelia about women in general and sometimes Ophelia herself as well. Therefore, Ophelia’s identity as a whole individual is completely ignored due to Hamlet’s generalization. That Hamlet emphasizes Ophelia’s fragility roots in the idea of women depending on men in order to maintain their lives since this is what Hamlet deduces from Gertrude’s instant marriage. He reflects his anger towards Ophelia as he talks about marriage:

HAMLET

If thou dost marry, I’ll give thee this plague for thy dowry. Be thou as chaste as ice, as pure as snow, thou shalt not escape calumny. Get thee a nunnery. Go, farewell. Or, if thou wilt needs marry, marry a fool: for wise men know well enough, what monsters you make of them. To a nunnery go, and quickly too. Farewell. (1994: 83, Act3, Scene1)

His approach towards Ophelia is quite normal since it is directly linked with the emotional mess he is in.

Hazzlit’s comment upon the Hamlet-Ophelia relationship in “Hamlet” (first published in the *Morning Chronicle*, March 14, 1814) is as follows: His conduct to Ophelia is quite, : natural in his circumstances. ...It is the effect of his disappointed hope, of bitter regrets, of affection suspended, not obliterated, by the distractions of the scene around him.” (Hudson, 1942: 65)

The objectification of Ophelia by the three men mentioned above would be one of the major factors effecting her sense of personality as a woman. Ophelia is constantly displayed as a pure and naive woman, symbolizing her untouched and inexperienced state. Therefore it is something to be glorified to have a sister or daughter like her since she is someone to be proud of due to her untouched state. Ophelia is the symbol

of feminine beauty, innocence, chastity, pureness and female sexuality, the ideal image of woman decided by patriarchal norms. Laertes pays attention to Ophelia's usage of her body pretty much and feels free to give advices often. "As a father figure acting out his patriarchal duties on his mock-daughter sister, Laertes is adamant about preserving Ophelia's virginity..." (Olivas, 2015: 21). His approach towards Ophelia is constantly showing a sense of superiority even though he himself does not have much life experience or anything that she does not have except for being male. Yet, he does not refrain from lecturing Ophelia and in a sense creating his ideal woman through her, using his manipulative language to effect her behaviour towards Hamlet:

LAERTES

Then weigh what loss your honour may sustain,

If with too credent ear you list his songs;

Or lose your heart; or your chaste treasure open

To his unmaster'd importunity.

...

The canker galls the infants of the spring

Too oft before their buttons be disclos'd,

And in the morn and liquid dew of youth,

Contagious blastments are most imminent.

Be wary then, best safety lies in fear;

'Youth to itself rebels, though none else near. (1992: 41, Act1, Scene3)

Laertes tells Ophelia to be scared of losing her virtue, claiming that fear is what will keep her safe although is it his own fear that Ophelia could actually take decisions on behalf of herself and acts upon her own will. Instead of simply stating that he does

not trust her life choices and finds her incapable of thinking and comprehending, he rather tries to effect her view of Hamlet by claiming that Hamlet belongs to the royalty and his decisions about marriage would not be his, but his family's.

The attribution of the nature to the display of Ophelia is quite interesting in terms of making an effort to link the feminine aspects of the nature such as flowers and mermaids with her which is also objectification. When lecturing her about how she should behave to Hamlet, Laertes refers to her sister as a flower that should not be ruined by worms. Since flower is generally thought to have a feminine and fragile connotation, Laertes finds it quite suitable to his sister in terms of possessing the same naive beauty. It is not only Laertes who attributes the femininity of the nature to Ophelia; by showing the bond she has with them, Ophelia does the same. She shows her rosemary and elaborates on what they symbolize. During her funeral process, Ophelia is still surrounded by flowers and the way Gertrude narrates her death in detail just proves the natural objectification she has been exposed to. The scenery of her death is all about nature, sounding pure and silent, like the obedient nature she used to have:

QUEEN

There is a willow grows aslant a brook,

That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream:

There with fantastic garlands did she come,

Of crow-flowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples,

...

And mermaid-like, awhile they bore her up,

Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes,

As one incapable of her own distress,

Or like a creature native, and indued... (1992: 132, Act4, Scene7)

“The willow tree growing "askaunt a brook" conveys images of drooping branches, weeping tears of sadness and depression.” (2015: 20). The bond between Ophelia and mother nature is portrayed by depicting the nature’s response to her demise. The usage of water here applies to Ophelia’s pure and clean personality. The combination of different kinds of flowers are all representatives of her different aspects. Crow flowers symbolize naivety which is one of the most outstanding characteristics of her. Nettles are stinging and they symbolize pain which could be associated with her condition after losing her father and Hamlet. Then comes the daisies which represent innocence and cleanliness since she died untouched. The long purples are thought to be orchids which signify sexuality and what can be called sexual awakening here. Gertrude’s mention of mermaids is affiliated with Ophelia’s fairy-like beauty. Mermaids belong to water, so the water image is once again brought forwards not only to symbolize cleanliness and brightness, but also as a reminder of how she died, in the water, her clothes spread out wide in the water, silent, powerless, adorned with flowers, incapable of resisting what was yet to come, but still beautiful.

Ophelia’s revival in an another rewriting of *Hamlet*, Heiner Müller’s *Hamletmachine*, is quite exciting in terms of recreating such a powerful woman with so much self-awareness, challenging the consuetudinary display of the woman who is famous for her dependence, obedience and fragility. Shakespeare himself proves that her silence or silenced state is what led her to her death while what turns her into such a passive person is nothing but male repression. “...when the guiding male is like the cynical Polonius or the unperceptive Laertes, the fate of the subordinate female is considerably threatened.” (1995: 39). By reviving Ophelia as a strong and rebellious woman, Müller actually challenges the customary weak vision of her.

I am Ophelia. The one the river didn’t keep. The woman dangling from the rope. The woman with her arteries cut open. The woman with the overdose. SNOW ON HER LIPS. The woman with her head in the gas stove. Yesterday, I stopped killing myself. (1984: 54)

Ophelia is introduced with her assertion of identity, so sure of herself, demonstrating her confidence. She is once again a symbol but a powerful one this time, being the

voice of other women. Despite her inexperienced condition with no self-awareness in *Hamlet*, Müller's Ophelia provides a woman who gained consciousness and is very angry with what happened to her Shakespearean version and willing to defend other women who have gone through similar things. As she mentions of the woman with her head in the gas stove, one instinctly thinks of Sylvia Plath. Therefore, while "the one the river didn't keep" refers to herself, it could easily be linked with Virginia Woolf as well. Ophelia's meek and submissive image is nowhere to be found. She becomes aware of what has been done to women and takes action against it:

With my bleeding hands I tear the photos of the men I loved and who used me on the bed on the chair on the ground. I set fire to my prison. I throw my clothes into the fire. I wrench the clock that was my heart out of my breast. I walk into the street clothed in my blood. (1984: 55)

The imagery of clock is quite impressive as Ophelia is introduced with the description of her heart being a clock. The symbolic usage of the clock here stands for a woman's biological clock since women are often considered to be child-bearers. Her refusal of this perception of fertility's being considered as vital as the human heart attracts attention as she knows that she will be criticized and degraded for doing so. Her removal the men who harmed and abused her from her life indicates gaining power and freedom to take decisions on behalf of herself. She rejects any kind of restriction, repression and humiliation and is ready to fight for claiming her rights, not minding the blood dripping from her. *Hamletmachine* is a beautiful Brechtian play in which the play is enacted in a way that aims to shock the audience and display everything in a realistically disturbing sense. Muller also makes use of Brecht's alienation effect in the play which gives a sense of "realization that this text can *only* properly exist in performance." (Walsh, 2001: 25)

Shakespeare's Ophelia, in all her fragility and tenderness, is the epitome of repressed women who never had the opportunity to find and express themselves. Shakespeare shows the destructive consequence of marginalizing a woman from her life and normalizing male dominance. Ophelia's objectification gives an idea about the portrayal of women through the eyes of the patriarchal society. "Even her death

by drowning has associations with the feminine and the irrational, since water is the organic symbol of woman's fluidity: blood, milk, tears.” (Showalter, 2014: 11). In her death, Ophelia is represented as a woman who has fulfilled her responsibilities, lying there lifelessly in complete silence. “...she remained a virgin, she is silent in her grave, and she obediently lies on her deathbed as the adults around her bemoan and objectify her death.” (2015: 24)

### **3.3. MOTHERHOOD and INDIVIDUALISM in NUTSHELL: INTRUSION of PRIVACY and INEQUALITY**

The revived Gertrude who is *Nutshell*'s Trudy is the mother of the baby Hamlet who narrates the whole novel through his own perspective. For this reason, one is once again reminded of the silenced state of a woman and its consequences. In *Nutshell*, the reader is robbed of perceiving Trudy's inner world and real nature since one is doomed to receive whatever the baby is offering. It is shown that she is cheating on her husband with her brother-in-law and the two are planning to murder the baby's father. As the protagonist of the novel, the baby Hamlet rants about his mixed feelings towards Trudy and the ranting lasts until the very end of the book. He neither stops talking nor lets others express themselves. Even though there are mentioned flashbacks going back to the times where Trudy and John were in the beginning of their relationship before she got pregnant, what the baby tells seems to be constituting the reality.

The baby makes it very clear that his mother is not in love with his father anymore in the very first pages of the book. Therefore, it becomes obvious that there will be an adultery since Claude is also introduced as Trudy's partner. The expressions the baby uses when he has to contribute on behalf of his mother are quite assertive, giving a sense of certainty. Whenever she utters a word, the baby is free to comment on her expressions regardless of whatever they are. When she does not speak, he goes through her mind and reflects her inner world filtered by his point of view. As he realizes that Trudy has a mind of her own and can speak about things that he never thought about, the baby becomes surprised. His expression of “She's been thinking about this. Thinking without my knowing. She's a tigress.” (2016: 60)

carries importance at this point. The simile of tigress stands for her fierce and rebellious side which is quite impressive according to the protagonist. What is tried to be emphasized by him is his omniscience and wisdom, implying that she and her ideas are doomed to be shared by him as well. Whenever there is an inconvenience, he considers that as a rebellious action, someone's pushing their limits by acting beyond his knowledge.

“Employing an unborn baby as a narrator is technically an attempt to question the reliability of the narrator...” (2019: 104). McEwan's usage of postmodern devices to go through a crime novel where the concept of reality is quite ambiguous is enriched with his preference of narrator. While his capability of visualize the outer world is quite impressive, it is quite obvious that he has a persuasive attitude towards the reader. Therefore, the concept of reality is questioned through his observations of others, including his mother who is quite the subject of a discussion whereas her inner thoughts remain hidden. In this context, Trudy's womb which is referred as the nutshell the baby is in, provides the space for the baby and makes it able for him to make use of his auditory senses and narrate the whole story while playing an active role for the plot. As Trudy's body acts as a literary space for the baby, her private life is intruded by the abusive approach of him. The abuse of women body is not necessarily physical which is a whole another topic discussed by many feminist critics over the years. In this case, Trudy's womb is considered to be a place where her baby dwells in while speaking and thinking on behalf of her and restricting her from seeing anyone else in the end.

The physical abuse of Trudy's body can be discussed along with the thoughts of radical feminists who correlate motherhood with serving to the system which fails to provide equal rights and gender mainstreaming. If one wishes to take a look at Trudy's worn out marriage with John through the ideas of one of these critics, Shulamith Firestone, the physical abuse and the psychological consequences of her pregnancy would become more clear. Trudy is the one taking the initiative to part ways with John even though it is not specified when they fell out of love and her runaway relationship with Claude started. Yet, it is not possible to think that it has been a lot of time since Trudy and John felt strange from each other considering the

fact that Trudy is heavily pregnant with his baby in the beginning of the book. There was plenty of time for Trudy to have an abortion considering that the baby's father is the man she wants to leave. Yet, there is not a single evidence that John is willing to take responsibility for the baby they are going to have. On the contrary, he is pretty hostile towards the subject although his attempts to be taken back by Trudy is constantly repeated. Therefore, from the way John does not care about the baby and Trudy still kept him could address only one possibility; they fell out of love after it was too late to have an abortion. Additionally, Trudy also implies that they are going to leave the baby as soon as he is born which exasperates him so much and helps him devise a plan. It is evident that John does not picture Trudy as a means of reproduction. However, forcing her to deal with the pregnancy and the way he easily gives up on the baby just because they are no more together are pretty suspicious. He behaves as if the concept of fatherhood solely depends on the togetherness of the family members which is an invalid approach to the topic. Therefore, as Firestone puts forward, childbearing would only effect the mother and even if they were not separate, not much would have changed, as Firestone asserts:

“The squirming husband at the bedside, like the empathy pains of certain tribesmen (“Just look what I go through with you, dear”), may make a woman feel less alone during her ordeal. But the fact remains: childbirth is at best necessary and tolerable. It is not fun.” (1970: 199)

Firestone's comments could apply to what could have possibly happened if Trudy and John would have remained together given the reckless attitude John possesses towards his own son. It does not necessarily have to be John in order to prove her point. Also, as her uncle and Trudy's current partner, Claude is quite indifferent to Trudy's pregnancy, even feeling relieved upon seeing blood all over the floor, thinking that she had a miscarriage. The two brothers' approach to the condition is sufficient to prove Firestone's point, even though one of them is not the biological father of the baby. Not much would have changed if he happened to be, given how he treats his current pregnant partner.

The intrusion of privacy is pretty much what is the whole book is all about since the narrator is an omnipotent unborn baby, shaping the story from his nutshell. Yet, his attack on Trudy's individuality and private life should not be neglected since after some time, he normalizes making inclusive statements, such as saying "Then we all sleep." (2016: 105) after depicting the sexual intercourse between his mother and uncle in detail. At this point, her pregnancy is considered to be a tool of providing enough space for the baby to dig through everything. As Katleen L. Komar indicates, "The violated space of the female womb appears repeatedly in texts by contemporary women as the symbol of patriarchal violence." (2016: 92). In this context, Trudy's pregnancy manifests itself as a compulsory situation in which she is doomed to share her private life with her narrator baby and let him go through her mind. Civelekoğlu's comments on Trudy's pregnancy and McEwan's making use of her womb as a literary space in which her privacy is exposed are quite noteworthy: "The womb can also be interpreted as a literary space, which has been frequently addressed from the perspective of the mother." (2019: 105). She goes on: "...the womb is often handled as a space disrupted by the patriarchal power mechanisms and therefore worked on as part of the feminist discourse." (2019: 105). Consequently, Trudy's womb becomes a place where the baby can freely access to others' lives and silence or dominate them with his powerful choice of words. Thus, despite being the owner of the body, not a single process is portrayed through Trudy's perspective even though pregnancy effects her physical and psychological state enormously. Whatever she experiences, the reader is bound to perceive it through the baby who is upset with her due to her life choices. "This narrative strategy shows that McEwan also goes beyond the conventions of feminist discourse making his postmodern attitude vibrant." (2019: 105).

The examination of the depths of the relationship Trudy and Claude have addresses nothing but repression on Trudy. Claude seems to be ignoring Trudy's hesitant pleas when it comes to John while she is not as indifferent as him. Also, she regrets the murder as it is declared when John is gone, implying that Claude had been manipulating her:

"It's escaped your attention."

“Clearly.”

“Today, just a few hours ago.”

“Yes?”

“I lost my husband – ”

“No!”

“The man I once loved, and who loved me, and who shaped my life, gave meaning to it . . .” (2016: 120)

While it feels like Trudy has come to her senses and the realization of the deed they have done hits her, Claude is still so reckless about Trudy’s regretful utterances. As the previous times of their marriage are not given due to McEwan’s choice of narrator, it is only possible to witness the true nature of Trudy during an emotional outburst. Furthermore, Trudy gives the bits of Claude’s manipulative nature, saying: “You got me drunk. That’s what you mostly do.” (2016: 121). This drunkenness does not necessarily depend on alcohol consumption. Throughout the work, Trudy’s choice of alcoholic beverages depends solely on her, she drinks if she wants to. This state of drunkenness is definitely metaphorical, referring the times Claude tricks her into doing anything he wants to through creating such an effect on her. It can be applied to the situations where Trudy feels like drifting through her emotions and gives in Claude’s touches since he knows when she feels less powerful, going on even though she states that she is not in the mood for such things. However, it is impressive that she starts to take over after the death of John, her senses coming back and resistance strengthening:

“Go now. They could be back at any time.”

“I’ll do this my way.”

“You’ll do as you’re – ”

“Was she really going to say ‘told’? What a distance she’s travelled, treating him like a child, when just now she was his pet.” (2016: 133)

Trudy is said to be understood and sufficiently explained by the narrator multiple times. However, there is still so much to know about the beginning of the previous times to survey the factors causing them to end up the way they did. It is interesting that bits of their relationship when they first met are provided through a speech made by John. As he digs through their past and expresses his opinions on what they have become, Trudy does not say a single word, sitting there in silence. Her pregnancy is completely ignored by the two men despite her complaints about his abandonment of the baby. She suffers from the physical and psychological outcomes of her pregnancy which enables the narrator to involve in any situation he can while using the advantages of being an untraditional narrator making use of postmodern devices in order to enrich the narration. While doing so, the reader comes across with the passivity of Trudy whose inner thoughts cannot be reflected wholly since she always seems to have mingled feelings towards John. Claude's manipulative nature carries much importance in terms of directing her through his impressive speeches and gestures, justifying their action by asserting that normal people would not dare to do what they did. In the end, Trudy gives in and causes Claude to do the same by preventing him from escaping alone. The death of John has a major impact on Trudy so much so that her approach towards Claude changes and she gains a sense of individuality, thinking herself and hiding the passports just in case. As she gives birth to the baby in the end, the function of her womb is once again highlighted by creating a new beginning while ending certain things, including their life outside the prison cells.

## CONCLUSION

Shakespeare's *Hamlet* and as a rewriting of the mentioned play, McEwan's *Nutshell* share so many common aspects despite the differences of the plots. The protagonist of *Nutshell* who can be referred as "the baby Hamlet" shows some similarities with Hamlet through his mingled feelings consisted of jealousy, anger, obsession and love towards his mother while also showing differences by having a more mature attitude causing him to have consciousness and finally gain control over the situation. Therefore, the way the two of the characters react to their mothers' love affairs is examined under the light of Freud's Oedipus Complex which focuses on the relationship between a mother and her son who desires to be in his father's place in order to be the one possessing her. When a boy's desire is not fulfilled and when it is called "unachieved", the consequences would be destructive as in Hamlet. However, in his postmodern version, the baby Hamlet achieves to keep his mother all to himself through his devised plan isolating them from the any possible threat to their togetherness. These two characters are discussed along with Sophocles' King Oedipus, who names the complex due to his accidental marriage with his mother after defeating his father without being aware of his true identity.

The importance of senses and McEwan's challenging attitude towards the conventional style of narration and the Enlightenment principle "seeing is believing" are discussed in comparison to Hamlet's incapability of making use of his senses. Hamlet and King Oedipus share the same fate by failing to comprehend the reality in spite of not lacking any of their sensory and auditory senses, in contrast to the baby Hamlet. Therefore, the functionality of the senses in *Hamlet* and Oedipus' are displayed in comparison to the baby's assertive nature and extraordinarily designed ability to think beyond what is said and done. His active state of thinking a step further while relating the chain of events to each other is incredibly impressive along with the postmodern characteristics of the work.

Women in both *Hamlet* and *Nutshell* and the way they are represented and behaved by the men around them are studied through a feminist perspective in order to demonstrate the unobjective point of view of the "pained" men and how it could

effect the reliability of the works and the representation and evaluation of the women characters. Starting with Queen Gertrude, Ophelia and *Nutshell's* Trudy are discussed while the fact that they are all victims of the domineering and repressing nature of male domination is drawn attention. Each women are discussed according to the situation they are in, their relationship with the concerned man or men are taken into consideration.



## REFERENCES

- Adelman, Janet. *Suffocating Mothers: Fantasies of Maternal Origin in Shakespeare's Plays, Hamlet to the Tempest*. New York: Routledge. 1992.
- Aitkenhead, Decca. (Review on Guardian). ‘Ian McEwan: “I’m Going to Get Such a Kicking”’. *The Guardian*, 27 Aug. 2016, <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/aug/27/ian-mcewan-author-nutshell-going-get-kicking>.
- Anderson, Mary. “Hamlet: The Dialectic Between Eye and Ear.” *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance Et Réforme*, vol. 15, no. 4, 1991, pp. 299–313. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/43465069](http://www.jstor.org/stable/43465069). Accessed 24 Apr. 2021.
- Aristotle. *Poetics*. Trans. S.H. Butcher. London. 1902.
- Bastan, Ajda. *The Elizabethan Era and Shakespeare's Women Characters in the Public Arena*. Dec. 2019.
- Biçer, Ahmet. *Shakespeare ile Hesaplaşma: Edward Bond'un Lear Adlı Oyunu*. MCBÜ SOSYAL BİLİMLER DERGİSİ. 2017.
- Borch-Jacobsen, Mikkel, and Douglas Brick. “The Oedipus Problem in Freud and

Lacan.” *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 20, no. 2, 1994, pp. 267–282. *JSTOR*,

[www.jstor.org/stable/1343911](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1343911). Accessed 23 Apr. 2021

Bradley, A. C. *Shakespearean Tragedy: Lectures on “Hamlet,” “Othello,” “King Lear,” and “Macbeth.”* 1904. London: Penguin, 1991.

Civelekoğlu, Funda. *The Voice of the Unheard: Ian McEwan’s Nutshell as Cultural Criticism*. MJH. 2019.

Das, Pragati. *Shakespeare’s Representation of Women in his Tragedies*. Prime University Journal, ISSN: (1995). Vol.6, 2: 37-56. 2012.

Dedner, Burghard. “*Highlighting Variants in Literary Editions: Techniques and Goals*”, in *Texts in Multiple Versions: Histories of Editions*”, ed. by Luigi Giuliani, Herman Brinkman, Geert Lernout and Marita Mathijsen. Rodopi, Amsterdam. 2006.

Finkelstein, Richard. ‘*Differentiating “Hamlet”*: Ophelia and the Problems of Subjectivity’. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, vol. 21, no. 2, Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme, 1997, pp. 5–22.

Firestone, Shulamith. *Feminism and Ecology in The Dialectic of Sex*. William Morrow and Company, INC, Newyork, 1970.

Freud, Sigmund. *The Interpretation of Dreams*. Trans. James Strachey. Newyork 2010.

--- *An Outline of Psycho-Analysis Revised Edition*. The Modern Library. Ed. Clara Thompson. 2006. Internet Archive. [ark:/13960/t7vm43v52](https://www.archive.org/details/13960/t7vm43v52) 1940

Graf, Emily. *Gertrude's Role in Hamlet*. Senior Honors Theses, Honors College, Eastern Michigan University.

Hudson, Arthur Palmer. "Romantic Apologiae for Hamlet's Treatment of Ophelia." *ELH*, vol. 9, no. 1, 1942, pp. 59–70. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/2871668](https://www.jstor.org/stable/2871668). Accessed 24 Apr. 2021.

Jones, Ernest. "The Œdipus-Complex as an Explanation of Hamlet's Mystery: A Study in Motive." *The American Journal of Psychology*, vol. 21, no. 1, 1910, pp. 72–113. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/1412950](https://www.jstor.org/stable/1412950). Accessed 23 Apr. 2021.

--- Shakespeare's Tragedies: An Anthology of Modern Criticism,  
Ed. Laurence Lerner, *Hamlet Psychoanalyzed*. Penguin, UK. 1968.

Kinney, Arthur. *Hamlet: New Critical Essays*. NY: Routledge. 2002.

Komar, Kathleen. "*Feminist Curves in Literary Space*". Eds. M. Higonnet & J.  
Templeton, *Reconfigured Spheres: Feminist Explorations of Literary Space*  
Massachusetts, 1994.

Lacan, Jacques, et al. "*Desire and the Interpretation of Desire in Hamlet*." Yale  
French Studies, no. 55/56, 1977, pp. 11–52. JSTOR,  
[www.jstor.org/stable/2930434](http://www.jstor.org/stable/2930434). Accessed 24 Apr. 2021.

Levin, Richard. "*Gertrude's Elusive Libido and Shakespeare's Unreliable  
Narrators*." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*, vol. 48, no. 2, 2008, pp.  
305–326. JSTOR, [www.jstor.org/stable/40071336](http://www.jstor.org/stable/40071336). Accessed 24 Apr. 2021.

McEwan, Ian. *Nutshell*. Penguin Random House, London, 2016.

Montgomery, Abigail L. "*Enter QUEEN GERTRUDE Stage Center: Re-Viewing  
Gertrude as Full Participant and Active Interpreter in Hamlet*." *South Atlantic*

*Review*, vol. 74, no. 3, 2009, pp. 99–117. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/25681397](http://www.jstor.org/stable/25681397).

Accessed 24 Apr. 2021.

Müller, Heiner. *Hamletmachine and Other Texts for the Stage*, ed. Carl Weber, New York: PAJ Publications, 1984.

Olivas, Tynelle. “*Who is Ophelia? An examination of the Objectification and Subjectivity of Shakespeare's Ophelia*”. UNLV, Las Vegas 2015.

Rashkin, Esther. *Family Secrets and the Psychoanalysis of Narrative*. Princeton University Press. 1992.

Seale, David. *Vision and Stagecraft in Sophocles. Oedipus the King: Blindness and Sight*. Croom Helm, 1982.

Sen, Taraknath. “Hamlet's Treatment of Ophelia in the Nunnery Scene.” *The Modern Language Review*, vol. 35, no. 2, 1940, pp. 145–152. *JSTOR*, [www.jstor.org/stable/3717323](http://www.jstor.org/stable/3717323). Accessed 24 Apr. 2021.

Shakespeare, William. *Hamlet*. Penguin Group London, 1994.

Showalter, Elaine. "Representing Ophelia: Women, Madness, and the Responsibilities of Feminist Criticism". In *Shakespeare and The Question of Theory*. Ed. Patricia Parker and Geoffrey Hartman. Methuen, Newyork. 2005.

--- *The Female Malady Women, Madness and English Culture*. Penguin Books, 1987.

Sophocles. *The Three Theban Plays. Oedipus the King*. Trans. Robert Fagles. London: Penguin Random House UK, 1984.

Teker, G. Sayın. "Empowered by Madness: Ophelia in the Films of Kozintev, Zeffirelli, and Branagh". *Literature Film Quarterly*, Vol. 34, 2: 113-119. 2006.

Walsh, Brian. "*THE REST IS VIOLENCE Müller Contra Shakespeare*". The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.