

T.C.  
İSTANBUL AYDIN UNIVERSITY  
GRADUATE INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES  
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE



**A PSYCHOANALYTIC CRITICISM OF HAWTHORNE'S THE SCARLET  
LETTER AND MELVILLE'S MOBY DICK**

M.A. Thesis

HANDE İSAOĞLU

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SUPERVISOR  
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İstanbul-2014

## APPROVAL PAGE



T.C.  
İSTANBUL AYDIN ÜNİVERSİTESİ  
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ

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I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

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## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my mother.  
For her endless love, support and patience

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## INTRODUCTION

In this thesis, Nathaniel's Hawthorne's novel named *The Scarlet Letter* and Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* is going to be examined under the light of Freudian psychoanalytic literary theory. While examining these two novels, the main focus will be the unconscious of the main characters and the effects of their repressed feelings and desires on their actions. During this Freudian examination of the characters, Lacanian psychoanalytic theory and Jacques Derrida's deconstruction theory will be benefitted too. Those psychoanalytic observations of the characters will provide data for the readers to perceive the inner world of the characters and how their inner worlds, their repressed desires, and feelings are revealed via their actions.

Sigmund Freud known as a primary figure in psychoanalytic theory focuses on the terms such as conscious, unconscious, conflict, id, ego, and super ego. In both *The Scarlet Letter* and *Moby Dick*, the central characters of the novels will be examined within these terms. These characters and their acts are going to be analyzed according to those Freudian terms; how those Freudian psychoanalytic terms work on these characters and their behaviors. In addition, it can be assumed that the influence of both Hawthorne's and Melville's childhood traumas has a great influence on their works and the characters they created since their repressions and desires shape their works.

The main purpose of this thesis is to observe the unconscious minds of the characters and how they repress and reveal their repressed feelings and desires in relation to 18<sup>th</sup> century American society. It is crucial to remark that both of these novels are written in the same century, analyzing these two novels within the parameters of Freudian psychoanalytic theory will provide insight to the readers in order to understand the reasons which lay behind this repression and the results of revealing their repressed desires and feelings via their actions.

*The Scarlet Letter* and *Moby Dick* are suitable resources that can be used with psychoanalytic criticism. The feelings of the central characters and their behaviors show similarities with Freud's patients that he examines during psychoanalytic therapy process. It is certain to benefit from repression of the desire and emotions, Oedipus complex, outpouring of these repressed feelings and desires in relation to Freudian psychoanalytic approach. The reasons of these behaviors or these actions of the characters are directly related to these Freudian terms. During the psychoanalytic process, the analyst intends to highlight the truths that are kept in the unconscious level; the same process is possible to apply to the literature. In literature, the reader tries to find the untold truths which lay under the literary works. This is the way psychoanalytic theory is applied to the literature. The reader functions just like the analyst and the characters in the novels take the role of patients. Therefore, while reading the text, the reader tries to find what is kept or repressed in a character's unconscious minds and how these repressed desires and emotions are reflected through their actions. Through this process, the reader or the critic benefits from psychoanalytic literary criticism.

Apart from Freudian psychoanalytic approach, it is also benefited from Lacanian psychoanalytic process. Jacques Lacan aims to broaden Freudian psychoanalytic viewpoints. Lacan like Freud divides the development of personality into different stages, and remarks that the incompleteness of one of these stages will cause fragmentation in person's identity. *The Scarlet Letter* and *Moby Dick* are efficient resources that can be also analyzed under the light of Lacanian Psychoanalytic terms. Some of the characters in these novels have split identity problems that stem from the lack of one of these stages while developing their own personality, and since they did not complete one of these stages properly, during their entire life they have experienced fear of revealing their desires as a result of repressing them.

In addition to Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalytic approaches, Jacques Derrida's deconstruction theory is another important way which can be used in relation to psychoanalytic criticism while observing the inner worlds of the characters. In both of these novels, there are two major

symbols that the characters attribute different meaning to them. In *The Scarlet Letter*, letter A, which Hester Prynne carries on her bosom, and White Whale in *Moby Dick* are both major symbols that have to be analyzed carefully. These two symbols do not have stable meanings, each character attaches different meanings to them, therefore in this case Derrida's deconstruction theory of the object has great importance, and the reasons of these different meanings are directly related to the characters' unconscious fears and desires. Therefore, why each character attributes different meanings to these symbols is directly related to their past memories and repressed desires. As long as psychoanalytic approach and deconstruction theory are used in cooperation while analyzing the characters' inner worlds, there is no doubt that the unconscious minds of the characters will be highlighted why these symbols have different meanings for the people.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Psychoanalytic theory has a significant place in psychoanalytic field and, since Freud first introduced this theory, it has been used as a way of treating patients that experience mental disorders. As mental disorders or neuroses do not happen without any reasons, it has been thought that there are some reasons that trigger such disorders. That is why psychoanalytic approach is resorted to highlight the unknown reasons of these disorders. It is used to make out repressed feelings, memories and the effects of childhood traumas of the patients.

Not only in psychology but also in literature, psychoanalytic criticism has an important place, because it is a well-known fact that most of the authors reflect their inner worlds; their conflicts, repressed desires and the effects of their childhood traumas via their fictional characters. Therefore, psychoanalytic criticism is the best way to understand the inner worlds of the characters, their repressed feelings, desires, and conflicts and how their unconscious minds affect their acts and behaviors throughout the lives.

Several researches have been conducted to analyze the unconscious minds of both authors and their characters in their works. While doing this, the main purpose is to find out how their repressed desires and memories are revealed through their actions and words. Selen Baranoglu conducted a research in 2008 named "*An Analysis of Mark Shelly's Frankenstein and Robert L. Stevenson's Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in relation to Lacanian criticism*". In this study, she aims to help people develop a new perspective for these two novels while applying Lacanian terms on the characters. In her study, she focuses on Lacanian terms of desire, repression and their probable outcomes and how these terms are displayed through the central characters' actions and words in both novels. She mainly focuses on the psychological formation of the central characters in both of the novels and tries to show that their repressed memories and life experiences have a significant impact on this transformation process in relation to Lacanian psychoanalytic terms.

Another research named "*Hunting and Writing Whale: Masculine Responses to the Maternal in Herman Melville's Moby Dick*" has been carried out by Seth A. Hagen in 2013. In his thesis, he intends to observe how Captain Ahab's masculine identity is formed and how his internal conflicts, childhood fears and repressed desires contribute to the formation of his masculinity. Hagen makes one point clear that Moby Dick is the living symbol of his repressed feelings and childhood traumas. It is a known fact that Captain Ahab could not form a healthy identity due to the lack of parental support during his childhood. As a result he could not fulfill his desire toward his mother, he directs his anger and hatred to Moby Dick, since he could not satisfy his desire, this caused him to experience lacks in his masculinity. Moby Dick is the second living identity that shatters his manhood after his own mother figure.

Gamze Egri Demirci conducted a research named "*Freudian Psychoanalytic Analysis of Nathaniel Hawthorne's The Scarlet Letter and Kate Chopin's The Awakening*" in 2008. In her study, she mainly concentrates on Freudian psychoanalytic terms such as unconscious, id, ego and superego. She tries to observe the central characters of these two novels to find out how Freudian terms work for these characters while touring in their deeper unconscious minds. She aims to show the reader how their conflicts, incomplete desires, childhood traumas and instability in their psyche are seen through their behaviors and relationships.

In conclusion, psychoanalytic approach is a very effective way of analyzing the real causes of mental disorders and repression. It is a really applicable theory to literature as well to observe the unconscious minds and repressed desires of the central characters and their action. It can be suggested for further studies that Freudian and Lacanian psycho sexual stages can be compared to see which differences and lacks characters show and experience throughout their lives.

## 1. INTRODUCTION TO PSYCHOANALYTIC CRITICISM

### 1.1. The Founder of Psychoanalytic Theory: Sigmund Freud

Sigmund Freud is believed to be the founder of modern psychiatry and psychology and he is regarded as one of the best of all among his colleagues. He is a really well-known figure in the field of psychology since he achieved great works during his career in the field of psychology. He was born in 1856 in Austria. He spent most of his life in Vienna, however later he had to flee away when the Nazi powers invaded his hometown. Since he could not stay under the pressure of Nazi power, he did not come back to Vienna and he stayed in London till his death in 1939. After having finished his education in medical school in Vienna, he departed for France to get a postgraduate degree in psychiatry and neurology. At first, he worked as a doctor, but later, he chose to specialize in neurological disorders (disorders of the nervous system). As the founder of psychoanalysis, Freud tried to explain how the mind works in terms of psychology and neurology. During the therapies of his early patients with neurological disorders, he realized that most of the symptoms that patients showed did not have an organic or bodily basis, and they could seem to the patient as they were real. Freud insisted on the fact that there must be other reasons of their situations which cannot be treated by medical care by stating: "There must be *other causes*, which medical research had as yet been unable to determine" (Hoffman 4). For this reason, Freud started to look for psychological explanations of these unreal symptoms and tried to search ways to treat them.

During his years in France, he learned "hypnosis" from the neurologist Jean Charcot, and then he started to use hypnosis during the treatment of his patients in Vienna. However, later Freud found out that the use of hypnosis for the treatment of neurological disorders had only temporary effect; it did not show us the origin of the problem or the causes of this type of

neurological disorder. Freud talks about the psychoanalytic therapy of the patient by saying: "It had been noticed that the patient, in her states of "absence," of psychic alteration, usually mumbled over several words to herself" (Freud 184).

When Freud returned to Vienna in 1886, he began his research to find a more effective and permanent method of treatment. In his research, Freud worked closely with one of his ex-colleagues with whom he had studied medicine in the past. They found out that if patients speak freely about their neurotic symptoms, they can get relief from their neuroses. For this reason, Freud adopted Breuer's method which he called as "cathartic method". In such treatment, patients could talk about their problems freely and loudly. Later, Freud named this method "free association" and this term has become one of the most fundamental terms of psychoanalysis. Freud's new theory discarded hypnosis in favor of free association. Maud Ellmand describes Freudian psychoanalytic theory by stating:

When Freud abandoned the use of hypnosis in the 1890s, he gradually dispensed with the cathartic model but replaced it with the equally Thespian concept of the 'transference'. In the transference model, the psychoanalytic session provides a theatre in which patients re-enact the conflicts of their early history, 'transferring' their forgotten feelings towards their parents or their siblings onto the neutral figure of the analyst. Thus the analyst is forced to play a part, and play it badly, so that the patient may be freed from the compulsion to repeat the script of childhood (Ellmand 8).

In such therapy, patient is lying on a couch, relaxing and talking about whatever comes to his mind. The effective part is that patients can speak freely; the aim of this method is to find out what causes the neurological disorder. Freud put forward the theory that most of his patients' neurological disorders stemmed from psychological traumas, repressed feelings or memories. Freud attempted to remind all these traumas or repressed memories during the therapy, so he let his patients examine all these



symptoms freely and overcome them. All Freud's effort and studies on psychology and disorders of the nervous system set ground for the psychoanalytic movement.

## **1.2. Introduction to Psychoanalytic Theory**

Sigmund Freud is known as the father of psychoanalytic approach. By studying on neurotic disorders deeply, he made up his theory of psychoanalysis. He questions himself to find the hidden causes of these neurotic disorders by asking: "How could one reach beyond the surface appearance of a neurosis? One could not discover the cause by taking the pulse count or examining the blood" (Hoffman 4). Therefore, psychoanalysis deals with the repressed feelings, memories in addition to the secret, unvoiced thoughts of individuals. Through his studies, Freud mainly focuses on the causes of repression.

Our brief analysis of the unconscious suggested that repression is the mechanism by which unconscious impulses or drives are forbidden access to conscious life. [...] Only those impulses whose satisfaction it is apparently possible to put off are repressed. [...] The repressed instinct does not "give up" when it is denied entrance into consciousness. It expresses itself digressively, disguisedly, in "derivatives" (Hoffman 31).

Therefore, psychoanalysis is directly based on mental activity; the activities occurring in brain consist of the basis of psychoanalysis. Freud's theories about psychoanalysis are somehow concerned with the nature of the unconscious. Unconscious has the function of being a store for the past memories and traumatic childhood events that have an impact on our unconscious thought and behavior. Repressed feelings, memories, forbidden desires are generally about childhood abuse and sexual harassment. Such problems are kept in the level of unconscious and later can have serious

impacts on a person's mental and psychological conditions. Dolnick comments on this issue by stating:

[b]y the 1950s and 60s, the master's warning had been drowned in a tumult of excited voices. Psychoanalysts and psychiatrists could cure even schizophrenia, the most feared mental disease of all, they claimed, and they could do it simply by talking with their patients (Dolnick 12).

Moreover, psychological issues such as schizophrenia and depression are not actually brain disorders; they do not need any behavioral treatment, but only require "talk therapy". Talk therapy consists of the basis of psychoanalytic treatment. Psychoanalytic therapy searches for what is generally repressed in the unconscious. Unconscious mind determines behavior and psychoanalytic approach takes this idea as the basis. Repressed feelings can lead to disorders in human personality, self-destructive behavior, in order to recover from these symptoms, he intended to make out what is hidden or kept in the unconscious mind. He explains this issue : " [About consciousness and the unconscious] there is nothing new to be said... the division of mental life into what is conscious and what is unconscious is the fundamental premise on which psycho-analysis is based." (Freud 9). In his therapy, he wanted his patients to relax and talk about whatever came to their minds. He listened carefully and looked for the clues that might have caused the disorders; he also attempted to bring the repressed memories in the unconscious mind to the level of conscious mind. The patient was placed on a couch and the therapist asked the patient to articulate his fears, repressed memories. By doing this, Freud's aim was to make his patients understand and face their feelings, fears and help them find ways to cope with them. Freud's psychoanalytic theory suggests the powers shaping men and women's behaviors are exactly unconscious. The main target of the psychoanalytic treatment is to reveal all the realities and dilemmas that lay under the deepest parts of unconscious mind; analyst intends to bring them to the level of conscious mind and find a solution for them. As for Freud, conscious represents reason in general. There are two

levels of conscious thought. The first part is the “pre conscious” and the second part is the “unconscious”. There are some ideas, thoughts, feelings that we cannot differentiate in conscious mind, therefore the act of bringing such memories to the level of conscious happens in the level of preconscious, however, the part where all the repressed feelings, desires, private ideas or thought of an individual are kept is the level of conscious mind. Human personality resembles to an iceberg. The small part above the water that is visible to everyone represents our conscious deeds; however the larger part in the deeper part of the water that is hard to see represents the unconscious; our passions, desires, impulses, private memories. To prove his thesis, Freud divided the psyche or personality into distinct parts: id, ego and superego. In *The Ego and the Id*, he attempted to redefine the psychic constitution and to establish the proper relationship between consciousness and unconsciousness” (Hoffman).

### **1.3. Freudian Model of Psyche: Id, Ego and Superego**

#### **1.3.1. The Id (Primitive Impulses)**

The id is the part of the personality, which includes our primitive impulses; such as anger, hunger, and hatred. As for Freud, the id is something natural and we were born with these primitive and natural impulses. “The *Id* is the repository of all basic drives, the ego’s enemy, ‘the obscure inaccessible part of our personality’. It is entirely unconscious, hence remote from our understanding and difficult to manage” (Hoffman 25). The id which is one of the most important parts in our personality helps people meet their basic needs. The id depends on the pleasure principle; it requires satisfaction and requirement of the basic needs of people, it is located in the sub-conscious and it contributes to the improvement of ego and superego later as well. In addition, it avoids pain and tries to obtain pleasure whatever the external circumstances or results.

### **1.3.2. The Ego**

The second part of the personality is the ego. “The Ego is both conscious and unconscious: in that fact lays the explanation for the conflict between instinctual pleasure and reality which takes place within it” (Hoffman 25). It is a well-known fact that all of our impulses or desires cannot be satisfied immediately, because reality comes to the stage. While trying to satisfy such desires, one encounters with the reality in other words: “ego”. The ego is located in our unconscious and depends on the reality, it is one of the most crucial parts of personality, because ego decides what is suitable for the individual and which impulses or desires offered by the id can be satisfied and to what degree they can be satisfied. According to Freud; “[The ego] is not only the ally of the id; it is also a submissive slave who courts the love of his master” (Freud 83). Therefore, it is just like ladder between the needs of id and the realities offered by ego.

### **1.3.3. The Super Ego**

The last part of the personality is “superego”. It is certainly about moral values of society in which we live or as we have already been taught by our parents. Jackson describes the superego by saying:

A third major component – corresponding roughly to conscience – is the superego. This consists of social, and in particular parental, standards introjected into the mind. The superego is partly unconscious: it issues blind commands, just as the id issues blind desires, and produces feelings of guilt when its commands are disobeyed (Jackson 49).

Actually, it can be named as the conscience of the individual. The main function of the super ego is to decide whether an action is true or not. Super ego retains and struggles for perfection or satisfaction. On the other hand, three basic parts of the personality have some conflicts: the self has some

basic impulses or desire, then ego does not fulfill them immediately, because it is the representation of reality in the universe, id wants them to be satisfied as quick as possible, and super ego serves as a bridge between both of these parts. Freud states: "The super-ego is always in close touch with the id and can act as its representative in relation to the ego" (Freud 70). The superego deals with both because individual deeds do not sometimes fit into the moral codes that superego represents. Superego is developed according to the moral and ethical values which were taught us by our families when we were young. It is the pitiful part of the personality since superego directs ego to base the behavior on how actions can affect the whole community. Richter summarizes Freudian relationship of these three parts of personality by stating; "Freud tries to think outside the dictates and principles of life, beyond what can be known according to the norms of society or culture" (Richter 15).

#### **1.4. How to Manage Conflict through Personality and Defense Mechanisms**

As it is mentioned above, the existence of conflict is possible to be seen among the parts of the personality. Freud put forward a theory that the ego develops a number of defense mechanisms so as to protect itself from the pressures of the id, the real world and the superego. Escapism, displacement, transformation and condensation are some ways which are introduced as defense mechanisms.

Conflict can be seen everywhere and every time. In addition, conflict is inevitable and it is the main reason of human anxiety and depression. Such defense mechanisms are the ways to cope with our inner conflicts or dilemmas that we are keeping in the unconscious. Psychoanalysis is an important method to overcome the problem of conflict and unconscious dilemmas. Psychoanalysis strongly deals with the human beings and their changing nature. Most of the time individuals attempt to escape from the unwanted dreams, ideas or thought by forming their own defense mechanism

so psychoanalytic therapies provide a light to highlight these fears, anxieties and the underlying reasons of these mechanisms. In his book, *Guide to Psychoanalytic Psychology and Literature and Psychology*, Norman Holland states:

Psychoanalysis is the science of human subjectivity. It offers insights into the mind's ways of thinking, dreaming, imagining, wanting, and especially the mind's ways of hiding from itself. Ultimately, each of us has to find those ways out in our own minds since we do not have access to the minds of others (Holland 13).

As it is clearly seen, psychoanalytic approach provides insights to the deeper parts of the human beings. Every individual has some fears, anxieties or unforgotten events, however, we have to cope with them in a way, because the more we suppress them, the more we will come across them in the future. These three phases of psychoanalysis attempt to define or explain the complicated nature of human beings. Norman Holland defines these three phases like that:

One can define these three phases by the polarity psychoanalytic thinkers used to explain events. First, it was conscious as opposed to unconscious. Then, ego vis-a-vis non ego. Today, it is self and not-self. More whimsically, you could contrast these three phases by the parts of speech they would make the word *unconscious*. (Holland 16).

As an individual we keen to keep and hide everything or shortly repress everything. Therefore, William Todd Schultz defines psychobiography "*return of repressed*" (Schultz 16). However, one day it is an inevitable fact that we will encounter with our repressed feelings, emotions or neuroses. As individuals, we have some basic needs and sometimes we are not able express them freely because of the repression that we have from our surrounding area. Instead of expressing them freely, we choose to keep them in the deepest part of our mind.

## 1.5. Interpretation of Dreams

The theory of interpreting dreams in order to recover from neuroses is strongly related to Freud's psychoanalytic theory. We always dream for a reason, each dream contains its own reason. Sometimes, in our daily lives we can have some problems that our conscious mind cannot deal with them strongly, in such cases unconscious mind comes into play to deal with the problems that our conscious mind cannot overcome. The common way of revealing such desires is the dreams. Censored materials generally include sexual desires, repression of sex. They are kept to an unconscious level and they emerge in another form; dreams. Dreams interpretation is a significant part of Freud's psychoanalytic theory. Everything that we keep in the level of unconscious appears in our dreams. Therefore, dreams are just like a tool that we use to express the repressed impulses or desires. In order to reveal these desires, analyst should be careful with the signs or the symbols that the patient implies or utters during the therapy. Dreams are the reflection of the all repressed feelings, ideas or unvoiced desires. Roy Easier explains Freudian understanding of dreams and their functions within the psychoanalytic theory by stating:

In dreams, particularly, Freud found ample evidence that such wishes persisted ... Hence he conceived that natural urges, when identified as "wrong, may be repressed but not obliterated...In the unconscious, these urges take on symbolic garb, regarded as nonsense by waking mind that does not recognize their significance (Easier 14).

He developed this theory and during his therapies with his patients, he benefited from the power of dreams. He analyzed the dreams of his patients in order to find out the real causes of their depressions, anxieties or neuroses. Analyzing dreams helps us understand how the past memories or events including repressed childhood traumas and anxieties affect our current feelings and behaviors without the awareness of our conscious mind. During his therapies, Freud listened carefully to his patients and he tried to

analyze the associations of the dreamer. With the help of these associations or motifs appeared in dreams, one can understand the conflict between the present and past situations. This method is called “free association”. Free association is that when the patient is asked to say their thoughts loudly, without controlling them, the analyst looks for the signs or links between thoughts and ideas to find out what is hidden in unconscious mind. Freud comments on this issue:

Properly speaking, the unconscious is the real psychic; its inner nature is just as unknown to us as the reality of the external world, and it is just as imperfectly reported to us through the data of consciousness as is the external world through the indications of our sensory organs. (Freud 226).

While listening to the patient, each motif or sign should be analyzed carefully because the patient might relate it to one of the past events that has a significant importance in his/her life. Such signs in dreams are expected to be the manifestation of repressed feelings and memories kept in the unconscious mind. Freud claims that by analyzing the dreams, it is easy to reach knowledge about the unconscious activities of our minds (Freud, 608). Freud tries to say fantasies are really significant signs of the working unconscious mind. Interpretation of dreams provides a direct understanding for how the unconscious mind works. Interpreting dreams is a unique method that is used to reach the data which is hard to access. This data helps the analyst to learn about the weaknesses, anxieties, fears of the patient.

### **1.6. Psycho Sexual Development of the Self and Oedipus complex**

The incompleteness of psychosexual development of an individual takes an important place in the field of psychoanalysis. It is widely believed that the common problems that people encounter during their adulthood stem from the early childhood experiences of the people. Freud believes that people undergo five stages of psycho sexual development throughout their



lives named; oral, anal, phallic, latency and the genital stage. Each represents the fixation of libido by sexual drives in different parts of the body. His psycho sexual theory shows how our sexuality starts to develop from very early ages. Two terms have a significant importance in psychosexual development: "libido" and "fixation". Libido is the forces, which are strongly associated with the pleasure principle, so what is true to state is libido has a strong bind with "id". Libido requires pleasure and satisfaction. If this satisfactions or gratification does not occur, fixation comes out. Fixation is a focus on an early stage of psycho sexual development. If the stages of psycho sexual development are completed successfully, the result comes out as a healthy person and personality, however, if these five steps are not completed accordingly, it leads to problems and we may be trapped by them and they may lead to some depression problems or anxieties for people.

During the third stage, "phallic stage", the child starts to discover first sexual desires. In this stage, the child realizes his/her unconscious desires for the opposite sex of the parent. Through this stage, the child looks for love, affection, and acceptance from the parent of the opposite sex. Oedipus complex occurs in this stage and is used to clarify the roots of psychological disorders in immaturity. It is thought that Freud inspired from the story of Oedipus the King written by Sophocles, (5 BC). According to the tragedy, Oedipus is the son of the King Laius and Queen Jocasta, one day Oedipus is cursed just because of his father's fault. The prophecy tells that Oedipus will murder his own father, marry his own mother and have children from his own mother. Many years later, the prophecy came true, and Oedipus murdered his own father but not intentionally, he married his mother but he does not know that Jocasta is his mother because he was separated from his family when he was a child in order to prevent the prophecy. In the end of the story, Jocasta committed suicide and Oedipus made himself blind. When it comes to the relation to the theory of Freud, Oedipus has a strong drive to find out his real identity, he has doubts about his real family and heritage, he does not realize the future comings and this leads to his failure in the end. He actually knows he is the murderer but he suppresses this feeling into his

unconscious. In the play these words shows us his guilt, "-- yes, though he fears himself to take the blame on his own head; for bitter punishment" (Oedipus the King 246-47). It may be defined like that it is the unconscious desire of a baby for opposite sex parent. The child possesses anxiety, fear or hatred for same sex parents. Since child intends to replace position of the same sex parent with himself/herself, he can enhance revenge and hatred towards the same sex parent for not being able to replace this position. His reaction includes being jealous towards the same sex mother or father and the wish of death for that parent. The child believes that his father is aware of his desire for his mother and so he fears that the father will punish him in order to end his desire for the mother. In order to avoid being punished, the child represses his desire and as a defense mechanism, he identifies himself with the same sex parent. Freud was deeply inspired from this story while naming his own theory. In *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, Freud defines the feelings of a little boy with these words:

What does direct observation of the child at the time of the selection of its object, before the latent period, show us concerning the Oedipus-complex? One may easily see that the little man would like to have the mother all to himself, that he finds the presence of his father disturbing, he becomes irritated when the latter permits himself to show tenderness towards the mother and expresses his satisfaction when the father is away or on a journey. Frequently he expresses his feelings directly in words, promises the mother he will marry her (287-288).

According to this theory children see their same sex parents as their rivals; they really want them to be destroyed. While the child hates the same sex parent, the child inwardly shows sexual orientation towards the opposite sex parent:

It is the fate of all of us [males], perhaps, to direct our first sexual impulse towards our mother and our first hatred and our first murderous wish against our father. Our dreams convince us that is so. King Oedipus, who slew his father Laius and

married his mother Jocasta, merely shows us the fulfilment of our own childhood wishes (Freud 262).

Throughout following chapters, it will be made clear that there is a connection between the behaviors of the characters and the Freudian Oedipus complex. The life of Nathaniel Hawthorne has a strong relation with his novel *The Scarlet Letter*. In the novel, it is really possible to see the traits of his life. Therefore, for the following chapters, it is possible to find common points between Hawthorne's life and the relationship between Hester Prynne, Chillingworth and Dimmesdale by drawing attention to Oedipus complex. Moreover, it is likely to admit that there is a strong connection between King Oedipus from whom Freud inspired while giving name to his theory and Captain Ahab, the main character of *Moby Dick*. The most common point that they share is that they both want to have their own free wills in which they have authority, but being so dictator leads to their destruction at the end. As mentioned before, psychoanalytic theory can be applied by the writer in literature, because while writing some novels, writers put themselves in the place of their characters, their characters become the reflection of their unconscious and personality. That's why it can be accepted that psychoanalytic theory does not have a place only in psychology but it has a place in the field of literature as well. With the contribution of other literary movements, psychoanalytic theory sets ground for the deeper analysis of both characters and their creators.

### **1.7. Jacques Lacan and His View of Psychoanalytic Theory**

Jacques Lacan is a French psychoanalyst and he takes Freudian psychoanalytic theory a step further. He is considered as the most controversial psychiatrist till Freud. He benefits from post structuralism while improving Freud's psychoanalytic theory. For Lacan, unconscious is shaped by the social interaction; the aim of the psychoanalysis should be to analyze how the human norms are created through social interaction, understanding

that the unconscious is not just a place where we keep our deepest desires and feelings. Desire is a social phenomenon and appears through the combination of language, culture and the interaction among the people. Freud divided identity into five stages, in this part; Lacan did not follow Freudian psychosexual division. Lacan puts literature in the center, and divides the formation of identity into three stages: imaginary, symbolic and real. Since very beginning of human lives, we start with a complete identity, however, in the later years, it becomes a double one, in other words, fragmented. Fragmentation in the identity causes desire and the gratification of this desire causes problems in human psychology when it is not fulfilled completely. Lacan strongly defends that language is the main structure that forms the desire and unconscious. In one of his seminars Lacan states: “[p]sychoanalysis is a technique of unmasking; it presupposes such a point of view. But, in fact, it goes further than that” (Lacan 9). Psychoanalysis does not only uncover the repressed desires, it also tries to find out the reasons, causes and results of such repressed feelings. Contrary to Freudian psychosexual development process, in Lacanian psychoanalytic theory individuals experiences three different stages named; “Imaginary, Symbolic and Real Order”. In contrast to Freudian psychosexual development, Lacan offers a linguistic approach to psychosexual development.

The earliest step of personal evolution is named “imaginary”. In this period, infant is dependent on his mother, he cannot distinguish from his mother, and mother figure is just like a part of the baby. During this stage, the baby finds himself in a complex mix of perceptions, feelings and needs. Newborn baby sees his own reflection on the mirror and spends time to perceive the connection between him and the reflected image. Jacques Lacan explains this imaginary stage and how the baby does not have the ability of controlling himself; he just perceives the image on the mirror as his own self by stating;

Unable as yet to walk, or even stand up and held tightly as he is, by some support, human or artificial, he nevertheless overcome in a flutter of jubilant activity, the obstructions of his

support and fixing his attitude in a slightly leaning forward position, in order to hold it in his gaze, brings back an instantaneous aspect of the image (Lacan 4).

Function of the mirror is to help the baby develop his own personal identity. During this stage, the baby experiences a progressive development of his body. When the parts of his body are completed one by one, the baby recognizes his own energy on the mirror. Such recognition lets the baby recognize himself as a whole identity. During the formation of his whole body, the baby experiences both fragmentation and satisfaction of his desires and biological needs. For this reason, he identifies himself with the mother the one who is closest to him. However, when his formation is completed, he gains his identity and the sense of "I" is formed through the realization of a complete image of self. After such formation, ego comes out and functions as illusion. The baby finds the self in the mother but it is not the real self, it is just imaginary one but acts an ideal one.

The second stage is Symbolic order. In this stage, Lacan mainly focuses on the formation of language and linguistic terms. The whole system of unconscious, conscious, id and superego mainly consists of symbols, signifiers, and associations. Symbolic order can also be defined as the domain of culture or society over the self. After the baby gains his self-identity, he enters the world of language; he accepts the rules and forces of the society. He accepts the rules of the language too, because he gets used to the language of a place in which he was born and grows up. As Homer states, we are born into language;

It is the discourse of the circuit in which I am integrated. I am one of its links. It is the discourse of my father, for instance, in so far as my father made mistakes which I am condemned to reproduce .... I am condemned to reproduce them because I am obliged to pick up again the discourse he bequeathed to me, not simply because I am his son, but because one can't stop the chain of discourse, and it is precisely my duty to transmit it in its aberrant form to someone else. We are born

into this circuit of discourse; it marks us before our birth and will continue after our death. To be fully human we are subjected to this symbolic order - the order of language, of discourse; we cannot escape it, although as a structure it escapes us (Homer 44).

The rules of the language are the imposed values of the society on the self. Like Freud, Lacan benefits from Oedipus complex as well while forming his own theory. Once the child was born, he is forced to accept the Name of the Father. Those rules, restrictions both control the desire of the self and the rules of communication with others. By learning language, the infant is reduced into a signifier, I in the field of other. In this case, "other" represents the ones come before the infant and they determine the language and culture previously. When it comes to Oedipus complex, Freud's idea is that the child develops anger for the father and a desire to replace his father because of his desire for the mother. In addition to his idea, Lacan believes that the child gets obsession to the mother while he is trying to find out what the mother wants and how her desire can be fulfilled. Since the child recognizes the law term dominated by the symbolic father figure, the child identifies himself with a larger cultural collective group, rather than the limited world of the mother's desire. Lacan states: "It is in the name of the father that we must recognize the symbolic function which, from the dawn of history, has identified his person with the figure of the law" (Lacan 67). At first, the mother and the infant have an imaginary relationship, the infant attempts to fulfill his desire through his mother, but then the father appears. The law of the father forbids such relationship. The infant is not allowed to grow desire for the mother, and can have a desire of his own. This also helps him gain position of his own, however this prohibition actually helps the infant create an unconscious state and so find the self-identity.

And, the last is Real stage. This becomes active shortly after the entrance into language. Lacan describes this case of nature as a moment of fulfillment or completeness, which is consumed through the entrance into the language. In this stage, the real is impossible to be reached. It is impossible

to express this in language, because the entrance into the language shows our irremediable separation from the Real. Stravrakakis comments on this issue: "Here Lacan may be of some help. Why? Precisely because, from the very beginning of his teaching, his aim was to articulate a theory, an orientation of analysis, based not on the reduction but on the recognition of the unrepresentable real" (Stravrakakis 9).

The infant will have emptiness at the core of his being through his life, due to his separation from the real; his desire stays unsatisfied or unfulfilled. In her thesis related to this issue, Selen Baranoğlu explains this lack of expression by stating;

In the unconscious, the subject always experiences a lack which cannot be filled with language. As a result, the lack forms the identification of the subject in the symbolic order of the signifiers. For Lacan, the subject is represented in the signifying chain which consists of the imaginary, symbolic and real orders. While the real reflects the fullness of the subject without language, the imaginary signifies the alienation of the subject because of the uncertainty of language (Baranoglu 2).

Therefore, desire can be defined like this: desire is a state of deficiency which will never be reached or fulfilled completely and repressed wholly.

### **1.8. Introduction to Psychoanalytic Literary Criticism**

Psychoanalytic approach is not a term which can be only used by the psychiatrists. Most of the time apart from the doctors, this theory can be applied for the artists or writers as well. Most of the time, we need to understand the reasons of an action done by a certain character in a novel, therefore psychoanalytic reading of the text provides insight to learn the hidden reasons or desires of a certain character, because sometimes it is possible to see that artist reflect their unconscious desires or anxieties to their characters while writing. *In Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis,*

Freud described artist as one “one urged on by instinctive needs that are too clamorous” (Freud 314). Therefore, it can be said that psychoanalytic literary criticism is a literary technique that uses the psychoanalytic approach while interpreting the literary texts. It was strongly influenced by the psychoanalytic theory of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan. Psychoanalytic criticism aims to provide a psychological description of the individuals or the writer, then displays the psychological effects on the readers. It strongly argues that literary text like our dreams is a way to express the secret unconscious or repressed desires of the author to the readers. We are all actually driven by our impulses and instincts, an artist follows his instincts and this contributes to his creativity. The author is inspired from these impulses and instincts and this makes him more creative as an artist. Furthermore, psychoanalytic criticism requires a close reading of the text. The reader or the critic should relate the behaviors of one of the character with their own neuroses, own desires of the author. Psychoanalytic criticism is defined by Brian Moon like this:

[A]s seeing literary texts as representing the unconscious thoughts and desires shared by members of a culture. It provides a way of exploring the social construction of personal identities, especially through the readers’ interaction with the text (Moon 97).

Psychoanalytic theory developed by Sigmund Freud strongly focuses on the unconscious minds of the individuals; interpreting the symbols related to their repressed desires and feelings. Literary texts actually do the same thing. They try to uncover the authors’ own repressions, unconscious and desires and how the author displays them through the characters in literary texts. Psychoanalytic criticism does not approach to the texts only from the point of literature. It tries to go into the deeper parts of the text; it does not want to only examine the surface. In his book, Maud Ellmann states: “In literary studies, for example, psychoanalytic criticism often disregards the textuality of texts, their verbal surface, in favor of the Freudian motifs supposedly encrypted in their depths” (Ellman 2). The most important part is to uncover



the secret or unvoiced wishes of the author and how he conveys them to the readers through his texts. It can be said that the main goal of psychoanalytic criticism is not to know the author; it requires the recognition of the text. Robert Mollinger states; psychoanalytic literary criticism is “a theory of the mind that can serve as an explanatory model for literature” (Mollinger 31). However, in order to achieve the recognition of the text, the reader firstly should know the author and establish a relation between the author and the text. The biography of the author in that sense has an important place during the interpretation of the text. Having information from the personal life of the author may help the critic reach reliable deductions.

As it is stated before, the relation between literature and psychoanalysis might be like this; during the psychoanalytic therapy the analyst tries to highlight the facts and desires that lay in patients' unconscious. On the other hand, the critic intends to find out the hidden facts that take place in the text. Meredith Anne Sakura in her book *The Literary Use of Psychoanalytic Process* notes: “to a degree critic and analyst are doing the same things already” (Meredith 271). The analyst diagnoses the problem of the patient after examining the deeper parts of unconscious mind. The critic actually does the same thing. The underlying symbols or metaphors can represent the unconscious mind of the text. The analyst tries to find solution for the anxiety or depression of his patient, which stems from the repression of desires. Critic attempts to find the underlying clues of the text in order to find out the hidden meaning in the text. In other words, both analyst and reader are interested in the stories that are expressed by the patient and the author. Analyst listens to the story of his patient and tries to analyze and comment on the situation of the patient. The reader as an analyst of the literary texts reads the story and tries to understand the underlying reality of the text by following the traces that are mentioned in the text. Psychoanalytic critics search for the examples of classic psychoanalytic symptoms in the text (such as oral, anal, and phallic stages, or the Oedipus complex). Literary texts come out as a result of a figment of the imagination.

In his book, Ellman points out the relation between the literary criticism and psychoanalysis like that:

If the unconscious operates according to the stratagems of rhetoric, this means that psychoanalysis and literary criticism are united by a common object of investigation: the boundless creativity of tropes. Moreover, Freud's most famous theory was inspired by a work of literature, *Oedipus the King*; and indeed, it could be argued that the whole tradition of psychoanalytic theory that extends from Freud to Jacques Lacan consists of variations on the theme of Oedipus (Ellman 5).

It is a widely known reality that unconscious of an individual is a main source of creativity and productivity. A literary text is the production of imagination, dreams and fantasies. According to the psychoanalytic theory, dreams and fantasies are the important products of unconscious. During the psychoanalytic theory, the patient expresses his fantasies to find a solution; this can be applied to the author too. The author might be expressing his own fantasies and desires via the literary text. Barry describes psychoanalytic literary criticism like that: "the unconscious, like the poem, or novel, or play, cannot speak directly and explicitly but does so through images, symbols, emblems, and metaphors" (Barry 102). Literary texts may resemble to the patient who takes place in the process of psychoanalytic therapy. The literary texts are produced to provide interpretation for the reader. For this reason, the patient shares the same points with a literary text, because both of them require interpretation. In the introduction part of his book, Ellman states: "The literary text, like the analytic patient, provides the terms of its interpretation, and the reader has to learn to wrestle with this idiom rather than replace it with prepacked theories" (Ellman 11). As it is stated above, literary texts are treated like patients, they include secret signs and meanings, and they are open to interpretation just like the unconscious mind of the patient. The critic should deal with these texts by using new approaches or his own point of view rather than depending on the old fashioned literary theories. The critic should benefit from the theories, but at the same time he should develop his

own perspective as well, he needs to interpret the text from a different literary angle. For this point, the text and the patient meet at the same point. The analyst interprets his patient's situation from a different point of view in order to reach more valid conclusion and solutions, just like the critic of a literary text.

### **1.9. Jacques Derrida and Deconstruction Theory**

Jacques Derrida, well-known French philosopher, is famous for his theory of deconstruction. Deconstruction theory proposes the idea that there is no fixed meaning of a text and the critic has no responsibility to highlight or find out the meaning that is hidden in the text. Derrida explains his deconstruction theory with these lines;

The definition of deconstruction is not so clear, however Derrida's deconstruction theory is directly related to intertextuality, there should be a relation between the text, history or philosophy, since the text does not have unified meaning, it might be a good way to find the relation of the textual ideas with history or philosophy in order to increase the number of interpretations. Derrida states in one of his conversations: " Because as soon as one examines my texts, not only mine but the texts of many people close to me, one sees that respect for the great texts, for the texts of the Greeks and of others, too, is the condition of our work" (Derrida 9).

While focusing on the actions of the characters in the novels, it is necessary to examine the objects and their hidden meanings. In addition to their psychological states and the reflection of their unconscious desires on their actions, we need to take all the objects into consideration which need to be interpreted due to their contributions to the characters' psychological states. To develop his own theory, Derrida benefits from Ferdinand Saussure's idea of signifier and the signified. This theory requires a deep critical and close reading of the text. Since it is a clear fact that the language is commonly

dominated by the Western forces and they let their own ideas shape the literary texts, Derrida challenges with this idea. A text might have numerous meanings, there is no single interpretation of the text, and therefore these texts should be deconstructed in order to reveal new meanings of the text contrary to what is already known. Author's beliefs, intentions or desires should be put aside by the critic in order to reach an exact conclusion. Derrida defines his deconstruction theory like that:

What I consider as deconstruction, can produce rules, procedures, techniques, but finally it is no method and no scientific critique, because a method is a technique of questioning or of interpretation, which should be repeatable in other contexts also, without consideration of the idiomatical characters. The deconstruction is not a technique. It deals with texts, with special situations, with signatures and with the whole history of philosophy where the concept of method would be constituted. When deconstruction investigates the history of metaphysics and of the concept of method, it cannot be simply a method (Derrida 70).

As it is stated above, Derrida uses Saussure's linguistic approach of signifier and signified relation to reveal the real meaning. Language is a kind of system which includes some signifiers, signified and binary oppositions such as male/female, day/night, and conscious/unconscious. However, according to the deconstructive theory, such structures are not universal; they do not have a unique meaning. Signifier is the object itself and signified is the meaning(s) which is conveyed by the signifier. In the end of their combination, one gets the sign or in other words the meaning which stays in the text itself. For this reason, the meaning resides in the text and can only be decoded by using these codes. According to N. Holland;

To deconstruct is to take a text apart along the structural "fault lines" created by the ambiguities inherent in one or more of its key concepts or themes in order to reveal the equivocations or

contradictions that make the text possible. (Holland, "Deconstruction").

Deconstruction theory defends that there are some ambiguities in signifiers and there might be numerous signified meanings for a simple signifier. Therefore it can be said that language is not a reliable system for this reason. Both for Hawthorne's and Melville's books provide suitable ground to use this theory while analyzing the characters' acts deeply. Derrida's deconstruction theory is benefited to reach more interpretations of the objects. The letter "A" is just a signifier in *The Scarlet Letter*, but it does not have only one signified meaning. It may signify adultery, angel or authority. There is no stable meaning of the signifier; the same approach can be applied to *Moby Dick* as well. The main focus in the novel is the White Whale. Moby Dick is only a simple signifier, but it has many signified meanings. Since it is called White Whale, it may represent purity or darkness for the readers.

### **1.10. Nathaniel Hawthorne**

Nathaniel Hawthorne is a famous American writer of the Romanticism who lived between 1804 and 1864. He directly dealt with the concept of sin, punishment, Puritan society, its rules and their effects on individuals. He strongly benefited from symbolism in order to express the inward thoughts and wishes of his characters. It is possible to make a connection between Hawthorne's attitude and Freud's psychoanalytic theory. In most of his novels, Hawthorne deals with the social restrictions, their effects on the individuals and the consciousness and unconsciousness of the text in relation with the characters' id, ego and superego development. According to the psychoanalytic theory, our repressed desires, wishes and memories are stemmed from the social constraints attached to the sexual impulses. Although Freud put forward his theory after a century later, it is possible to apply this idea to Hawthorne's novels and short stories. Since he pays

attention to the effects of social taboos on the individual, he forms a basis to the psychoanalytic analysis of his characters' unconsciousness. Terence Martin in his book gives a description about Hawthorne's understanding of fiction:

The difficulty of creating fiction in the 'broad and simple daylight' of his native land (where experience, no matter how limited, would be engaged and encumbered) encouraged Hawthorne to cultivate the resources of the haunted mind which gave him access to a frightening world of disengaged experience (Martin 47).

Through this quotation, it can be inferred that Hawthorne strongly dwells on the complicated mind of the individuals, he aims to center his fiction on his native land, Salem in the United States, and he observes the society of his own land, their culture and social rules. Such observation gives him access to go deeper into the unconscious minds of the individuals to reveal all the memories and wishes that are repressed by the effect of social rules and social pressure upon the characters of the fiction. James Mellard, in his book *Using Lacan, Reading Fiction*, establishes a connection with psychoanalysis and Hawthorne by stating that *The Scarlet Letter* is nearly an example of Lacanian fiction, because of the connections between the letter and identity (Mellard, 70). The letter "A" and its meanings attributed by the society members provide a suitable to use Derrida's deconstruction theory, also the central characters of the novel and their changeable natures let the reader and the critic apply psychoanalytic literary criticism to the novel to have better understanding of the inner worlds of the characters.

### **1.11. Herman Melville**

Herman Melville is another reputable American fiction writer who took part in the period of Romanticism as Nathaniel Hawthorne. He produced most of his fiction during the 19<sup>th</sup> century too. He focuses on the role of

unconscious and the key role it plays in the main character's life; Captain Ahab's strong obsession with the white whale actually symbolizes endless pride of Captain Ahab. Being obsessed with the whale is only the part which is seen on the surface, but the deeper part, his unconscious shows that the white whale did not only take his leg, it also took his pride, manhood and power as well. Melville directly dealt with the unconscious mind of his characters in his novels. All the characters perform an action; however these actions are just the reflection of their repressions and unconscious minds. Their unconscious minds provide insight for the field of psychoanalytic theory and let the readers find out the underlying reasons of their repressions.

Melville references the transference method of psychoanalysis introduced by Sigmund Freud. Transference is a way of reflection. The patient transfers his fears or anxiety about somebody significant in his past to the analyst. That's why it is called transference method, for example if the patient is angry with somebody in the past; he directs his anger unconsciously to the analyst, the main goal of this method is to give the patient an opportunity to express his own fears, conflicts or repressed emotions and to reach a solution about his inner conflict with this person. Melville, in his book *Moby Dick*, uses this method before Freud's representation to the psychological field. His main character Ahab directs his personal anger to Moby Dick, the white whale. Actually, he is angry with himself; he has inner conflict that he cannot find a solution on his own. That's why he creates Moby Dick; he directs his hatred to the whale in order to justify his tendency to the evil. He behaves as if Moby Dick is the only reason of his evil side and his inner conflicts. The loss of his leg and his tendency to the evil for this reason are his inner conflicts that he cannot directly articulate and overcome. Therefore, he transfers all his anger and hatred upon Moby Dick. He blames Moby Dick for his loss and hatred. Captain Ahab needs to create Moby Dick just for his own sake. Moreover, not only in *Moby Dick*, but also in many other his novels and short stories, Melville directly deals with the repressed anxieties and mental disorder of his characters. He mainly focuses on the past events that had a deep impact on the unconscious minds

of the characters. Actually, Melville is not a psychological novel writer, but he uses psychological elements in his novels. Most of his novels set ground for psychoanalytic interpretation for both readers and critics and David Tacey in his book, *The Jung Reader*, comments on this issue:

In general, it is the non-psychological novel that offers the richest opportunities for psychological elucidation. Here the author, having no intentions of this sort, does not show his characters in a psychological light and thus leaves room for analysis and interpretation, or even invites it by his unprejudiced mode of presentation (Tacey 260).

The main objective of Melville actually is not to create characters that are used in psychological interpretation. The insight and the confused unconsciousness of the characters provide psychoanalytic interpretation for the critics. Since Melville's *Moby Dick* did not come out in the same period with Freud's psychoanalytic theory, it is not true to declare that Melville was inspired from Freudian approach. However, it can be said that Melville benefits from the psychological elements to provide analysis for his characters minds and actions.



## 2. PSYCHOANALYTIC CRITICISM OF HAWTHORNE'S *THE SCARLET LETTER*

### 2.1. Introduction to *The Scarlet Letter*

*The Scarlet Letter* (1850) is a well-known novel of Nathaniel Hawthorne. It has a widely known reputation in American Literature. *The Scarlet Letter* is an excellent example of Gothic literature of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Throughout the novel, Hawthorne makes his reader experience the psychological disorders of his characters. Thus, it is possible to conduct a psychological study of the characters in the novel. *The Scarlet Letter* primarily concentrates on psychological transformation of central figures and the elements or events that contribute to their psychological transformation. *The Scarlet Letter* begins with a quite long explanation by the unnamed narrator which explaining how he began writing the novel. The unnamed narrator works as an officer in the Salem Custom House. At work, he finds a number of documents in the attic and he finds a piece of cloth on which there is a symbol like the letter "A" (Hawthorne, 61). He finds a text under this cloth a memoir of a tragic event which occurred two hundred years ago, but not yet completed. Later, the unnamed narrator decides to bring these uncompleted events together himself and make up a story.

The story takes place in Boston during the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Boston is a small town where Puritans live. Hester Prynne, the novel's protagonist, is a very young and beautiful woman. The first moment the reader encounters Hester is when she appears on the scaffold with her baby, Pearl. There is remarkable letter "A" embroidered on her shirt over her chest. It is learned from the crowd that Hester is being punished because she committed the sin of adultery. She is actually married, but her husband who is a bit older than her and sent her to America before himself and never came back again (Hawthorne, 89). Later it is heard that her husband was lost at sea. Hester commits adultery with a man whose identity is not known and gives birth to a

child. Despite being placed pressure, she never declares the identity of her lover and is sentenced to carry letter "A" on her chest as a symbol for her sin for the duration of her life. Meanwhile, while she is standing on the scaffold, Hester realizes that the man whom she can easily recognized. That's Roger Chillingworth who is known dead for a long time. He returned to Boston the day when his wife was on trial due to adultery. He introduced himself by saying his name Roger Chillingworth known as an expert of different sorts of herbs which he learnt during his Indian captivity (Hawthorne, 140-141). Many years passed, Hester works as a tailor and her baby Pearl grew up, but she becomes a stubborn and strange girl. Hester and Pearl live in a small wooden house outside the town since they are alienated from the society. The notable ones in Boston society attempt to take Pearl from Hester in order to provide her better education and life standards. However, Minister Arthur Dimmesdale who is known as good hearted and respected by the society does not let them separate Pearl from her mother. Despite being known good hearted and merciful, Dimmesdale seems to have the added pressure of conscience. Buried in the deepest part of his heart is a secret that pains his soul. When Chillingworth becomes his friend, he seems suspicious about Dimmesdale's mental situation. He takes responsibility of the recovering Dimmesdale's health conditions, preparing medicines for him, even sharing the same flat with Dimmesdale. This is because Chillingworth realizes that there is something wrong with Dimmesdale and by becoming his caregiver, he believes that he can find out what sickens Dimmesdale's conscience (Hawthorne, 145).

After a while, Chillingworth suspects that there might be a relationship between Hester's secret lover and Dimmesdale's deep sorrow. Later on, he understands that he is right: there is a secret relationship between Hester and Dimmesdale, because one night while the minister was sleeping, Chillingworth found a sore on his chest formed in to the same shape as Hester's scarlet letter A. For this reason, he believes that his wife Hester and Chillingworth had secret affair.

While Dimmesdale's psychological condition worsens day by day, the secret he keeps slowly kills him. Hester and Dimmesdale decide to flee abroad towards the end of the novel. One day before the arrival of the ship, Dimmesdale gives the last sermon of his life to the public. After his last sermon, Dimmesdale realizes that Hester Prynne and Pearl are standing on the scaffold and suddenly he throws himself next to Hester and Pearl, then he confesses his guilt to Boston society. After his confession, Dimmesdale dies. One year later, Chillingworth dies because of his grief over what he did to Hester. Hester and Pearl leave Boston and nobody hears from them for many years. Years pass and Hester returns to Boston without Pearl but still wearing the scarlet letter A on her chest. Pearl gets married to a reputable European man and Hester receives letters from her. In the end of the novel, Hester Prynne dies and is buried beside her lover, Arthur Dimmesdale. The novel finishes with the description of the gravestone. The letter A is chiseled onto the gravestone which Hester and Dimmesdale share.

## **2.2. Freudian Family Romance and Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter***

Freudian concept of family romance has a significant place in the psychoanalytic field. Family romance is a conscious fantasy of the child. The child believes that his parents are not the real parents but they are adoptive ones. When the child begins to grow up and turns into an adult, he needs to escape the overwhelming effects of childhood. He chooses to move away his parents' love and endless power in order to liberate himself. The child makes up fantasies in order to achieve this liberation. Freud describes the child's feeling by stating:

The liberation of an individual, as he grows up, from the authority of his parents is one of the most necessary though one of the most painful results brought about by the course of his development ... For a small child his parents are at first the

only authority and the source of all belief. The child's most intense and most momentous wish during these early years is to be like his parents (that is, the parent of his own sex) (Freud 237).

Such fantasies which are created by the children's strong imaginary world are called family romances. In order to convince themselves, children tell these stories. It becomes really difficult for them to believe that their parents are the real ones, because they see themselves as the adoptive children. Freud explains these childhood fantasies stemmed from early childhood traumas by saying:

His sense that his own affection is not being fully reciprocated then finds a vent in the idea, often consciously recollected later from early childhood, of being a step-child or an adopted child. People who have not developed neuroses very frequently remember such occasions) on which—usually as a result of something they have read—they interpreted and responded to their parent's hostile behavior in this fashion. But here the influence of sex is already in evidence; for a boy is far more inclined to feel hostile impulses towards his father than towards his mother and has a far more intense desire to get free from him than from her (Freud 237).

The child develops the idea that his parents are adoptive parents or he is an adopted child. Since devotion of his parents to each other is realized, he makes up fantasies and his fantasies lead him to display hostile behavior toward his parents. He can see the father as a rival for himself or he can hate his parent of the same sex. He has a physical desire towards his mother and he sees his father as his rival towards his desire for his mother. This situation reminds us the Oedipus complex. It is possible to say that Oedipus complex is a good example of Freudian family romance theory. It is possible to see the traits of Hawthorne's own childhood on *The Scarlet Letter*. Marianne Hirsch explains the concept of "family romance," defined as someone's:

“...identification with the victim or witness of trauma, modulated by the unbridgeable distance that separates the participant from the one born after...It is a question of adopting the traumatic experiences—and thus also the memories—of others as experiences one might oneself have had, and of inscribing them into one’s own life story” (Hirsch, 10).

Hawthorne lost his father when he was only at the age of four and was raised by his mother. Hawthorne articulates these words while his mother was about to die:

I love my mother; but there has been, ever since my boyhood, a sort of coldness of intercourse between us, such as is apt to come between persons of strong feelings, if they are not managed rightly” (Hawthorne 338).

The father’s absence leads Hawthorne to carry all the masculine burdens of his family. The lack of father in his life causes desire for his mother, but he has to repress his desire. Such repression causes problems in his relationship with his mother. The early loss of the father has contributed greatly to the incompleteness of early oedipal feelings by taking place of the father figure in the family. When he was only a small child, he faced his father’s death and was not able to establish a bond with father figure. He lacked the love and affection which he expected from his father. His mother faced difficulties after the death of her husband; she was not able to find a house to stay for her children. When Hawthorne got married, he experienced brain fever, a potential physical manifestation of his repressed desires throughout his life. His desires are related to the relationship with his mother and lack of his father.

In *The Scarlet Letter*, it can be said that Hawthorne mostly inspired from his own life. That is to say, Arthur Dimmesdale is represented as oedipal son who looks for care and affection. Dimmesdale finds all he looks for in Hester Prynne. However, Dimmesdale and Hester cannot come together, Dimmesdale is afraid of revealing the secret affair between him and Hester. Since he is a member of the church leadership and a minister, such

affair would harm both his reputation and piety. In *The Minister's Vigil*, it is possible to see how Dimmesdale is afraid of revealing his secret to the public.

“Minister!” whispered little Pearl.

“What wouldst thou say, child?” asked Mr. Dimmesdale.

“Wilt thou stand here with mother and me, to-morrow noontide?” inquired Pearl.

“Nay; not so, my little Pearl !” answered the minister; for, with the new energy of the moment, all the dread of public exposure, that had so long been the anguish of his life, had returned upon him; and he was trembling at the conjunction in which ---with a strange joy, nevertheless--- he now found himself.

“Not so, my child. I shall, indeed, stand with thy mother and thee one other day, but not to-mor-row” (Hawthorne 172-173)!

Arthur Dimmesdale does not have enough courage to reveal his sin to the public. On the one hand, he really wants to acknowledge his sin to purify his soul, on the other hand, he is not ready to accept his sin, because he knows when he accepts he had an affair with Hester Prynne, he will lose all he has; his reputation, piety and respectability. However, in the beginning, he did not consider any of these while he was having an affair with Hester, because Hester is like a mother for him. He wants to escape his desolation; Hester is like a harbor for him where he can find affection, love and attention. Dimmesdale transfers all the feelings into Hester that his mother would normally have received. Dimmesdale always has the feeling of incompleteness. Dimmesdale does not a family in this world and his talk about his condition with Roger Chillingworth shows that he is fully in despair and he has nothing to live for (Hawthorne, 144). Therefore, Hester is like a remedy that completes him. She and Pearl substitute the place of his missing family, but Dimmesdale cannot completely have Hester, because he cannot make his love and need for Hester public. The scene shows parallels with Hawthorne's own life. Hawthorne was raised by his mother alone and due to the lack of father, his id grows for his mother, however, his superego comes

to the stage and stops him by telling that such desires are unacceptable in the society. He represses his desires in the unconscious level but his desires do not disappear, they are just kept at the level of the unconscious.

In the Oedipus complex, the father figure is the source of hatred and is depicted as a villain by the child. Here, in *The Scarlet Letter*, the villain figure is Roger Chillingworth, Hester's lost husband. In the Oedipus complex, the child directs his hatred towards the father figure, because the child regards his father as an enemy towards in his question to win over the mother. The loss of the father and the hatred towards the father are the reasons for incompleteness during phallic stage of child development. In the novel, Roger Chillingworth is known as the lost husband, and the father figure, Arthur Dimmesdale is the child who wants to possess the mother and the mother figure is Hester Prynne. The conversation between Hester and Chillingworth shows us the villain role of him towards the minister.

“Yea, woman, thou sayest truly!” cried Roger Chillingworth, letting the lurid fire of his heart blaze out before her eyes. “Better had he had died at once! Never did mortal suffer what this man has suffered. And all, all, in the sight of his worst enemy! He has been conscious of me. He has felt an influence dwelling always upon him like a curse (189).

This conversation shows us that Chillingworth is aware of the desires and actions of his enemy, Dimmesdale. He tries to take revenge on Dimmesdale for taking Hester away from him. His behavior shows us the villainous side of Chillingworth. He intentionally wants to harm Dimmesdale's health; he does not show any pity for him. However, the first wrong behavior starts with the marriage of Chillingworth and Hester Prynne. Chillingworth accepts that firstly he wronged Hester. He accepts that he did the first wrong, getting married with a young woman having full of spirit and joy was his first mistake (Hawthorne, 100). Marrying such a charming and young woman is Chillingworth's first wrong and captivate her in his narrow and limited world.

Hester Prynne is depicted as an affectionate mother in the novel. She never reveals the identity of her lover and father of her daughter, Pearl

despite the pressure put on her by the community. She tries to provide a better life for her daughter Pearl, and she is depicted as an ideal mother figure, even as heroine. Therefore, according to Oedipus complex, Hester is the ideal mother figure that the child looks for to fulfill his desires and find the things he looks for. In chapter 8, the dialogue between Hester and the governor illustrates how Hester protects her child from the external forces of the society.

“God gave me the child!” cried she. “He gave her, in requital of all things else, which ye had taken from me. She is my happiness! --- She is my torture, none the less!. Pearl keeps me here in life! Pearl punishes me too! See ye not, she is the scarlet letter, only capable of being loved, and so endowed with a million-fold the power of retribution for my sin? Ye shall not take her! I will die first” (135).

Hester Prynne was depicted as a heroic character in the book. She never lets external forces separate her child from her. She takes a risk fighting against these forces in order to protect her child. Becky Garibotto explains the similarities between Hester Prynne and Hawthorne's own mother by stating;

His mother, Betsey Clarke Manning Hawthorne, was left to raise her three children without her husband, under the supervision of her strict and stern Puritanical in laws. Perhaps, for although his mother did not conceive her first child, Elizabeth, out of adultery, she did conceive her out of wedlock, which was also severely frowned upon by the Puritans, particularly her husband's family, with whom she resided (Garibotto 3).

She is the ideal mother figure that everyone yearns for. That is why Dimmesdale finds peace and affection in the arms of Hester Prynne. The only difference between Hester and Dimmesdale is that Hester has enough courage to take responsibility of her sin, but Dimmesdale does not. At the end, he decides to reveal his immoral act that he committed with Hester Prynne which he does during the Election Day. He confesses that his guilt



stemmed from his repressed desires. However, Dimmesdale dies in the end without facing the consequences of his sin. In chapter 23, Dimmesdale reveals the secret he keeps for many years and then dies.

“Hush, Hester, hush!” said he, with tremulous solemnity. “The law we broke! ---The sin here so awfully revealed! --- Let these alone be in thy thoughts! I fear! I fear! It may be, that, when we forgot our God, --- when we violated our reverence each other’s soul, ---it was thenceforth vain to hope that we could meet hereafter, in an everlasting and pure reunion ... By bringing me hither, to die this death of triumphant ignominy before the people! Had either of these agonies been wanting, I had been lost for ever! Praised be his name! His will be done! Farewell!” (269).

These lines show us that Dimmesdale escapes from family romance by dying in the end without confronting his guilt at the sin he had committed. In the beginning of the novel, he is overwhelmed by his deep desires and passions, at the end of the book he finally reveals his sin to the public, and however he dies without facing responsibility, again leaving the whole burden on Hester’s shoulders alone.

It has been argued that *The Scarlet Letter* is a symbol of Hawthorne’s mourning for the death of his mother. J. Diehl explains that: “Writing on the process of mourning, Freud asserts that the son’s guilt at the death of the father is associated with his wish to vanquish him, to destroy the father in order to clear the way to sleep with the mother” (Diehl 657). Hawthorne’s mother was rejected by her family, she was left alone, and she experienced all her difficulties alone. The burdens she experienced are lived in the character of Hester Prynne. The death of both father and mother causes mental deprivation of Hawthorne and all his dilemmas and repressed feelings are reflected back in the novel through the actions of the main characters, Arthur Dimmesdale and Hester Prynne. Dimmesdale experiences an incomplete phallic stage, he cannot unify with Hester, the mother figure. Hester, Pearl, and Dimmesdale cannot come together in any place; their

union is not something attainable. However, after delivering his last sermon, Dimmesdale goes physically close to Hester and Pearl on the scaffold. Diehl points out:

It is only when Dimmesdale confesses that he achieves true union with the tainted mother; the comfort of the breast, the reunion with the mother/lover, robs Chillingworth, the vengeful father, of life, as Dimmesdale turns his eyes from his adversary toward the source of maternal comfort (Diehl 663).

Dimmesdale finally finds the affection he has been looking for, when Hester puts her arms around the minister; he experiences the true union with the mother figure. In part, *The Revelation of The Scarlet Letter*, Hawthorne explains how minister feels pleased, finds the affection he has been looking for by saying: "They beheld the minister, leaning on Hester's shoulder and supported by her arm around him, approach the scaffold, and ascend its steps; while still the little hand of the sin-born child was clasped in his" (266). Hester's breast and shoulders give Dimmesdale comfort, however Chillingworth, the father figure, wants to prevent Dimmesdale from revealing his sin, he attempts to restrain the union of the mother and the son.

Family romance stems from dual nature of the overwhelming passion and at the same time the restricted love of the child towards his parents. The child idealizes the mother figure and the mother turns into a symbol of passion for the child. After the death of his mother, Hawthorne fell into a deep depression, because she was ideal figure of his repressed desires and passions. In *The Scarlet Letter*, Hester is idealized as the mother figure. Since she has all the qualities that an ideal mother can provide her child, Hester replaces the ideal mother figure of Arthur Dimmesdale especially his own mother as the object of his passion. For this reason, it can be accepted that Hester Prynne is the reflection of Hawthorne's own mother in the novel. The denial of Hawthorne's own mother by the society in which she lives shows parallels with Hester Prynne's desolation in Puritan community in the very beginning of the novel in the chapter *The Market – Place*:

It was, in short, the platform of pillory; and above it rose the framework of that instrument of discipline, so fashioned as to confine the human head in its tight grasp, and thus hold it up to the public gaze ... In Hester Prynne's instance, however, as not unfrequently in other cases, her sentence bore, that she should stand a certain time upon the platform, but without undergoing that gripe about the neck and confinement of the head, the proneness to which was the most devilish characteristic of this ugly engine (83).

These lines show that both Hester and Hawthorne's own family were isolated in a way. Hawthorne's mother was declined by her own family; Hester Prynne was declined by her own society which is more public. We know that Hester has a family in England, but it is not mentioned throughout the novel, so the people with whom she shared the life are actually a family for her. That's why it can be said that Hester was declined by her family as well. Because there were time when she needed the protection of affection of her family, but there was no one around her to save her from the treatment she faced. Nathaniel Hawthorne might have tried to reflect the harsh conditions and ostracism that his mother faced via the character of Hester Prynne.

Hawthorne was born and spent most of his childhood in Salem. The first chapter of the novel takes place in Salem highlighting the strict rules of Puritan society. The nature of Puritans depends on strict rules and confinements. Hester's denial of her lover's name is actually a way of protecting Dimmesdale from the curse of Puritan society, because an affair such as the one between Hester and Dimmesdale cannot be accepted. Both Dimmesdale and Hawthorne do not have the opportunity to reveal their desires or passions publicly. The strict rules of Puritan people in Salem do not give the chance of revealing their sin or live their love fearlessly. In the introductory chapter, *The Custom-House*, the unnamed narrator who is thought to be Hawthorne himself, expresses his feelings about Salem;

I felt it almost as a destiny to make Salem my home; so that the mould of features and cast of character which had all along

been familiar here --- ever, as one representative of the race lay down in his grave, another assumption, as it were, his sentry-march along the Main Street --- might still in my little day be seen and recognized in the old town (Hawthorne 43).

It can be said that the Puritans and their social attitudes directly contribute to the denial of sin and desire by the characters in the novel. Dimmesdale cannot reveal his love and desire for Hester due to the pressure that community put on him as being a minister. The confinement and restrictions that Puritan people endured directly affected Hawthorne, and thus he creates his own fantasies and family romance and in order to save himself from the fantasies he made up, he needs to repress them and pretend as if nothing has existed in his mind like that before. He tries to behave as if he has never thought such fantasies or passions about his parent before. Therefore, it should be accepted that the attitude of the villagers and their strict natures are the direct factors for Hawthorne's creation of his family romance and fantasies.

In conclusion, Hawthorne's own life and *The Scarlet Letter* show many similarities as reflecting the traces of Freudian family romance theory. This novel is the journey of Hawthorne's search for a lost mother. It can be argued that Hawthorne, through the novel, created his own defense mechanism against the hardships he had experienced. That mechanism being: escapism. Hawthorne finds a way of dealing with the emotional problems he experiences by using cultural art in an imaginary world. That is why it is said that *The Scarlet Letter* is a work that allows the reader to look closely into his dilemmas and confusing phases of his life. Therefore, Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* is a tool that helps him overcome his emotional dilemmas. The setting and characters of the novel are all a reflection of Hawthorne's ongoing inner fight between his id and super ego. He is not able to overcome these inner conflicts without doing anything, he is probably in need of revealing them in a way and by writing *The Scarlet Letter*, he finds an alternative way to say "goodbye" his mother. The lack of the father figure in Hawthorne's life leads to his strong desires for his mother

figure and his subsequent attempts to idealize her. The same attempt is also seen in the behaviors of Arthur Dimmesdale. Hester is an ideal mother figure for him. The angry father figure can be seen in the character of Roger Chillingworth. In this case Hawthorne draws on the idea of the Oedipus complex, where the son tries to take place of the father in order to the mother figure. Dimmesdale, a younger man, literally attempts to take Chillingworth's position in Hester Prynne's life. In the course of usurping Chillingworth, he turns the older man into the novel's villain. Scenes of life and social interaction of the characters provides the foundation of the family romance in the novel. The rules and manners of Puritan society, in both Salem and Boston, force both the main characters and Hawthorne himself to suppress their desires, fantasies and passions.

### **2.3. Psychoanalytic Analysis of the Unconscious Desires of the Central Characters**

#### **2.3.1. Hester Prynne**

Hester Prynne as a youthful woman is trapped by her desires. The reason that she carries the scarlet letter on her chest is that she was caught engaged in secret love affair. In the beginning of the novel, Hester insists on not revealing the identity of her lover. However, at the end of the novel, it is understood that her secret lover is the young Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale. Although Hester is quite aware of the strict rules of the Puritan community, she violates one of the most important rules of Puritan society by having a secret love affair and giving birth to baby out of wedlock: in other words she has committed adultery. Hester Prynne is not only in a loveless marriage at a young age, but also her husband left her alone in Boston far from her family in England. Trapped and desperate for a real loving relationship, she behaves impulsively, driven by her id, to satisfy her desires that she has repressed deep in her unconscious. According to Freud, the id consists of

our primitive impulses that we have had since birth. Since Hester Prynne does not have love or affection in her marriage, she needs to satisfy her desires outside of it. She finds Arthur Dimmesdale who provides her with love and affection she desires. Thus, Hester stays under the effect of her id committing adultery even though she knows that it is forbidden. Her secret love affair results in being forced to place the scarlet letter on her chest during lifetime, also to bear alone the shame that is put on her shoulders by the Puritan community, and this situation is described like this:

Could it be true? She clutched the child so fiercely to her breast, that it sent forth a cry; she turned her eyes down-ward at the scarlet letter, and even touched it with her finger, to assure herself that the infant and the shame were real. Yes! --- these were her realities, --- all else had vanished! (86).

The result of immediate gratification of her id is Pearl and letter A on her chest. It is seen that Hester does not regret what she has done; she protects both the baby and the scarlet letter. They are the signs of her sin, but she does not even think of throwing the scarlet letter away. She is just torn between her id and the superego. Despite being in between, she is not ashamed of her sin; she looks after both Pearl and her scarlet letter by carrying it on her chest for many years. This is a kind of revelation with which she accepts she is defeated by her strong id. She cannot resist against the strong gratification need of her id.

After leaving the prison and revealing her sin to the public, she does not know what to do and how to live without money to live by, but then Hester moves to a small, wooden cottage and she tries to earn her life by sewing at her needle. Most of the people from Puritan community order Hester to prepare clothes for them. Hester designs embroidered and ornamented clothes for them. For an alone woman, sewing dress actually is a way of displaying hidden desires and passions and this is explained in the novel with these lines:

It was the art---then, as now, almost the only one within a woman's grasp---of needle-work. She bore on her breast, in the

curiously embroidered letter, a specimen of her delicate and imaginative skill, of which the dames of a court might gladly have availed themselves, to add the richer and more spiritual adornment of human ingenuity to their fabric of silk and gold, ... Her needle-work was seen on the ruff of the Governor; military men wore it on their scarfs, and the minister on husband; it decked the baby's little cap; it was shut up, to be mildewed and moulder away, in the coffins of the dead. But it is not recorded that, in a single, instance, her skill was called in aid to embroider the white veil which was to cover the pure blushes of a bride. The exception indicated the ever relentless vigor with society frowned upon her sin (106-107).

She strongly focuses on her work, sewing. In Puritan society, woman is in the place inferior beings. They are not given much value, they are not considered as creative and talented beings. In a way, Hester intends to prove herself through her abilities. In this strict, plain and normative Puritan society, Hester appears to be a caring and affectionate figure. She creates fanciful objects and earns her life by this way; this shows us that Hester is not one of them; she cannot be the one that they want her to be. Her character cannot be changed or shaped, briefly she cannot be a member that Puritan society. However, she has to ensure compliance to their demands and choices. She wants to beautify the life she has to live despite being isolated by the Puritans. In his article *Arts of Deception*, Michael Davitt Bell comments on Hester's personality and her needle work.

Hester is defined as their text, and she attempts to read herself at their valuation. Yet Hester's extirpation of her "individuality", of her inner life of "impulse," is hardly so complete or successful as she wishes to believe. It is to this expressed "impulse," for instance, that she gives covert expression through the art of needlework, with which she adorns her scarlet letter and her daughter, Pearl (Bell 50).

Sewing clothes is a way of expressing Hester's passions to the outside. Hester spends most of her time sewing clothes and this is a sign of her passion, repressed desires and creativity. That is to say sewing can symbolize Hester's id. Because by ornamenting the scarlet letter, she expresses her passion and desire she repressed to the outer world. By ornamenting the scarlet letter, Hester tries to show that the sin she committed is not something supernatural. She has an affair with a man she loves despite being married and as a result of their sinful affair; she has Pearl, her precious daughter. Therefore, Hester believes that sometimes people cannot control their emotions and desires, having sexual desires and passions are not something extraordinary, every person harbors such desires, it is something that can be found in the nature of every human being. Hawthorne supports this idea by stating:

Women derive a pleasure, incomprehensible to the other sex, from the delicate toil of the needle. To Hester Prynne it might have been a mode of expressing, and therefore soothing, the passion of her life. Like all other joys, she rejected it as sin (108).

Hester is quite aware of her sin and its results, so she dedicates herself to purifying her soul and body from the burdens of this sin. She earns enough money to survive and spends the rest on works of charity, trying to help everyone whether they are really in need or not. She believes that she served her sentence while she was in the prison, and now the only thing she wants to do is to purge her soul of the stain of her sin and provide a better life for her daughter, Pearl (Hawthorne, 107). The superego stands for moral and ethical values, that is why Puritan society takes the role of superego, because they punish anyone who does something wrong which does not comply to ethical norms or moral values. Thus, the superego represented by the Puritan community does not allow her to accomplish this, because Puritan society is still punishing her fiercely due to the sin she committed. In chapter, *Hester at Her Needle*, Hawthorne aims to show Puritan people are still carrying on punishing and underestimating Hester because of her sin:



The poor, as we have already said whom she sought out to be the objects of her bounty often reviled the hand that was stretched forth to succor them. Dames of the elevated rank, likewise, whose doors she entered in the way of her occupation, were accustomed to distil drops of bitterness in to her heart; sometimes through that alchemy of quiet malice, by which women can concoct a subtle poison from ordinary trifles; and sometimes, also, by a coarser expression, that fell upon an ulcerated wound (109).

Hester Prynne behaves according to her ego. She tries to create a balance between her id and the superego, which is symbolized by Puritan community. She obeyed the desires of her id and she committed adultery, now she witnesses the consequences of her sin and tries to compensate for her mistake, wanting to purify herself, however, the merciless people and the cultural norms of Puritan society still demand make her be treated as an object of sin. She is still despised by the community although she takes a positive step towards them through her charity work. Hester Prynne, while poor, still attempts to give a helping hand to others, but her hand is rejected. The Puritan community seems to enjoy reminding Hester of her sin and guilt all the time. Hester is doomed to live under the gaze of Puritan society who takes the place of super ego for Hester Prynne.

After leaving the prison, Hester Prynne is forced to remain standing on the scaffold with her daughter and letter A on her dress to show townsfolk that she committed one of the greatest sins: adultery. She has to stand on the scaffold and bear the contempt of the people. Nobody knows the name of the baby, and Hester is determined not to reveal the identity of Pearl's father. When Hester Prynne is questioned by Governor Bellingham, Reverend Wilson and Reverend Dimmesdale, she refuses to name of her lover. In chapter three entitled *Recognition*, Hawthorne shows that Hester insisting on not revealing the name of the father despite being under pressure by the authorities to do so:

“Speak, woman!” said another voice, coldly and sternly, proceeding from the crowd about the scaffold. “Speak; and give your child a father!”

“I will not speak!” answered Hester, turning pale as death, but responding to this voice, which she too surely recognized. “And my child must seek a heavenly Father: she shall never know an earthly one” (94-95)!

As understood from these lines, Hester actively chooses not to give the name of the father. It can be said that this action is controlled by Hester’s ego. Although she is not the only offender in the committing of this sin, she bears the blame and shame alone. Hester does not want to reveal the name of her lover, Arthur Dimmesdale, because of her love for him. Dimmesdale is a respected minister in the Puritan community and by if revealing him as the father, he will lose his respect, prestige and believability. Hester thinks that Dimmesdale can find peace with the help of Puritan people who have a deep respect for him. She expresses his idea by stating; “The people reverence thee,” said Hester. “And surely thou workest good among them! Doth this bring thee no comfort?” (209). Since Hester Prynne has already faced the consequences of her sin, she does not want Dimmesdale to be exposed to the public humiliation and social ostracization that she has suffered at the hands of Puritan society. Here, Hester’s ego functions as balance mechanism between her sin and the judgments of Puritan society. Therefore she chooses to keep the name of her love a secret, not to revealing it to anyone, no matter the cost.

At the end of the novel, the reader again encounters Hester Prynne deciding under the influence of her id. Hester offers to move away with Dimmesdale to Europe in order to escape the shameful life they are forced to live in Boston. Both Prynne and Dimmesdale spend their lives by suffering the sin they committed. Hester Prynne wants to end their sufferings and save Dimmesdale from the cruel plans of Roger Chillingworth. That is why; she offers to flee to Europe in an instant saying:

“Then there is the broad pathway of the sea!” continued Hester. “It brought thee hither. If you so choose, it will bear thee back again. In our native land, whether in some remote rural village or in vast London, --- or, surely, in Germany, in France, in pleasant Italy, ---thou wouldst be beyond his power and knowledge! And what hast thou to do with all these iron men, and their opinions? They have kept thy better part in bondage too long already!” (214-215).

Moving to Europe is a decision which is controlled by Hester's id. Hester want to be away from the place where she made her biggest mistake. Further, her id wants gratification once more. Despite knowing that it will be difficult for Dimmesdale, Hester cannot resist her passions and desires; therefore she suggests moving to Europe to make a new, fresh start with Dimmesdale and Pearl. While making this decision, her ego and super ego are not on the stage, she is only controlled by her id without fully understanding the consequences of her plan.

Throughout the novel, Hester Prynne is frustrated by influence of her id, ego and superego. As a result of her inner conflicts, desires and repressed feelings, she develops her own defensive mechanisms; repression and escapism. Since she is sentenced and punished for daring to gratify her desires and passions caused by her id, she chooses to repress them in order to prevent further loss. She tries to balance between her id and super ego choosing not to reveal the name of her secret lover. While making this decision, she is under the influence of her ego, wanting to protect Dimmesdale from further pain. She wants to leave Boston in order to leave all this shame and contempt behind, but she does not want to expose him to the shame that resulted from her sin any more, by doing so she develops her own defense mechanism against Puritan townspeople which represent the super ego for Hester Prynne.

### 2.3.2. Roger Chillingworth

Roger Chillingworth's character is depicted as a villain in the novel. Hawthorne describes Chillingworth by saying: "He was small in stature, with a furrowed visage, which, as yet, could hardly be termed aged" (87). He is Hester Prynne's husband, but he leaves her in Boston for while he conducts his business abroad. Later, in the novel it is reported that it is heard that he is lost in the sea. When he returns to Boston, he learns that he is deceived by his wife, Hester Prynne. When he learns of his wife's love affair, he swears to take his revenge on the man that Hester does not reveal. It does not take long for Chillingworth to learn the identity of Hester's secret lover. He finds out that her secret lover is Arthur Dimmesdale. As soon as he discerns the truth, he works on taking his revenge while forcing to confess his sin.

Hawthorne does not attribute sympathetic qualities to Chillingworth instead depicting him as a vengeful character. Throughout the novel, he is under the influence of his id. He listens to his conscience only one time in the novel. He admits his marriage to Hester Prynne was a mistake in the beginning by saying;

It was my folly, and thy weakness. I, ---a man of thought,---the book- worm of great libraries,---a man already in decay, having given my best years to feed the hungry dream of knowledge,--- what had I to do with youth and beauty like thine own ! Misshapen from my birth-hour, how could I delude myself with the idea that intellectual gifts might veil physical deformity in a young girl's fantasy! (99).

He admits their marriage was a mistake and thus, the first wrong act was his. He accepts that he is an old man and their marriage is one of a mismatched couple. Although he is aware of the differences between him and Hester, he cannot resist his id in front of this young and beautiful woman. His id needs gratification, marrying Hester in order to satisfy his desires and passions. However, while talking to Hester, he realizes that he has made a mistake from the very beginning. Chillingworth confesses his mistake by saying; "We

have wronged each other," answered he (100). With these words, it is understood that Chillingworth's superego comes into play. Despite being filled with the desire for revenge and hatred towards Hester and her younger lover, Chillingworth accepts that his marriage with Hester was the initial point of causation for all these events. He accepts his mistake under the influence of his conscience. His superego acts as the voice of his conscience while conceding his mistake in marrying the young and charming Hester Prynne.

Roger Chillingworth takes the responsibility of punishing Arthur Dimmesdale for his hidden sins throughout the novel. In doing so, it can be stated that Chillingworth acts as a. Dimmesdale suffers from the sin he committed with Hester and Chillingworth often appears to be a reflection of Dimmesdale's conscience. Chillingworth is always close to Dimmesdale, this means that Chillingworth acts a reminder of his sinful act whenever Dimmesdale tries to purify his soul from the pressure of his conscience, Chillingworth prevents it. He stands in as the voice of Dimmesdale's conscience by reminding of his sin with these words:

[T]hey are new to me. I found them growing on a grave, which bore no tombstone, nor other memorial of the dead man, save these ugly weeds that have taken upon themselves to keep him in remembrance. They grew out of his heart, and typify, it may be, some hideous secret that was buried with him, and which he had done better to confess during his life time (152).

Chillingworth's explanations about the graveyard are quite rough for Dimmesdale. Chillingworth's implications about Dimmesdale's secret serve as the reminder of his conscience. As long as Chillingworth stays with Dimmesdale, he serves as Dimmesdale's superego, reminding Dimmesdale that the suffering of the Minister stemmed from his secret affair with Hester Prynne. Dimmesdale's conscience will always chase him until he accepts the penalty of his shame. In other words, Chillingworth will not give Dimmesdale peace till his confession of this sinful affair. Nina Baym, in her article *Passion and Authority in The Scarlet Letter* comments on the function of Chillingworth in during the process of revelation of the sin;

“this monster becomes his constant companion and oppressor. If Pearl (to borrow a Freudian metaphor) is a representation of Hester’s “id”, then Chillingworth represents Dimmesdale’s “superego” (Baym 225).

Roger Chillingworth insinuates himself into Puritan society with a false name and profession. Hawthorne defines Chillingworth with these lines; “In pursuance of this resolve, he took up his residence in the Puritan town, as Roger Chillingworth, without other introduction than the learning and intelligence of which he possessed more than a common measure” (140-141). Since he has full of knowledge of medicine, the Puritans believed him as to be a physician. Dimmesdale’s worsening health provides Chillingworth with a chance to get close to Dimmesdale and to prove himself as a physician in the Puritan community. The Puritans entrust Dimmesdale to Roger Chillingworth in order that he be healed as soon as possible. Therefore, it is possible to find a similarity between the relationship of Dimmesdale and Chillingworth and the relationship of the patient and the analyst. According to Freudian psychoanalysis, Chillingworth can be seen as the analyst who tries to find out what is repressed in the unconscious level of the patient and Dimmesdale can be regarded as the patient who represses his passions, desires and memories in the unconscious level. Hawthorne clarifies the relationship between Chillingworth and Dimmesdale with these lines;

Thus Roger Chillingworth scrutinized his patient carefully, both as he saw him in his ordinary life, keeping an accustomed pathway in the range of thoughts familiar to him, and as he appeared when thrown amidst other moral scenery, the novelty of which might call out something new to the surface of his character. He deemed it essential, it would seem, to know the man, before attempting to do him good. Wherever there is a heart and an intellect, the diseases of the psychical frame are tinged with the peculiarities of these ... So Roger Chillingworth-- the man of skill, the kind and friendly physician---strove to go

deep into his patient's bosom, delving among his principles, prying into his recollections, and probing everything with a cautious touch, like a treasure-seeker in a dark cavern (145-146).

The task of the psychoanalyst is to draw out the repressed memories and desires of the patient from the unconscious level to the conscious. As it is clearly seen, Roger Chillingworth makes an effort to find out what grieves Dimmesdale so deeply. He wants to go into the deeper part of Dimmesdale's unconscious as an analyst to explore the cause of Dimmesdale's suffering. In fact, while Chillingworth is working on the secret of Dimmesdale, the reader takes up the role of psychoanalyst too. Both Chillingworth and the reader strongly want to learn the reasons of his deep agony and grief. Chillingworth like a talented psychoanalyst attempts to enlighten the inner world of Dimmesdale to heal his soul. He spends most of his time with Dimmesdale, and in order to heal him quickly, Chillingworth shares Dimmesdale's home with him. He strongly stays focused on his objective, finally learning Dimmesdale's secret. However, Dimmesdale is determined not to reveal either his secret or cause of his pain.

### **2.3.3. Pearl**

In the novel, Pearl is introduced as the outcome of Hester's private affair with the minister. Pearl is the living symbol of Hester Prynne's affair; she appears to be a constant reminder of their secret love affair too. Dan Qin describes Pearl like this;

Although she is a playful seven-year-old child, Pearl is precociously intelligent, bewilderingly subtle, frighteningly independent, and penetratingly wise. Her demonstrations of perversity toward social and religious authority, her acts of hostility towards the Puritan brats, her repeated demonstrations of sympathetic interest in the Scarlet Letter on Hester's bosom

and in the minister's gesture of pressing his hand to his breast, her precocious and ambiguous quizzing of both her parents, all these symbolic actions could only be described as prenatal (Qin 33).

However, Hester never regards Pearl as someone that she regrets having in her life. Pearl is Hester's only possession, rather than being the outcome of sinful act, and thus, Hester names her baby, "Pearl." It can be inferred that Pearl is a priceless being for Hester, that's why she gives this name to her baby. In his article, *Pearl and the Puritan Heritage*, Eisinger comments on Pearl with these words; "Hester partially as a consequence of a sin, of which Pearl is the living symbol" (Eisinger 326). It is possible to say that Pearl is the result of Hester's strong id. She commits adultery in order to satisfy the needs of her id. As a result of this gratification, Pearl comes to the world. Hester Prynne is doomed to carry the scarlet letter on her chest during her life and she is also doomed to take care of Pearl as well, because both of them are the apparent signs of her sinful act. Hester Prynne works on the scarlet letter and tries to make it as beautiful as possible. Since Hester likens Pearl to the scarlet letter, she tries to work on the clothes of Pearl too. She ornaments the clothes of Pearl and by doing so, Hester makes Pearl a focus point of Puritan society. Hawthorne emphasizes this relationship between Pearl and the scarlet letter with these lines;

Her mother, in contriving the child's garb, had allowed the gorgeous tendencies of her imagination their full play; arraying her in a crimson velvet tunic, of a peculiar cut, abundantly embroidered with fantasies and flourishes of gold thread. So much strength of coloring, which must have given a wan and pallid aspect to cheeks of a fainter bloom, was admirably adapted to Pearl's beauty, and made her the very brightest little jet of flame that ever danced upon the earth (124).

Hester's daughter, Pearl as the public sign of Hester's sin is not accepted by the Puritan society. Hester tries to convince the Puritan community that Pearl is the outcome of love, which she does not deserve to be isolated or belittled



just because she comes to the world after a secret love affair. By ornamenting the clothes of Pearl, Hester tries to display her passions and makes Pearl wear clothes generally red in color because, red is the color of passion, and because Pearl is the offspring of passion and desire. It is possible to create a bind between Freudian psychosexual development terms and Pearl's own personality. Through the oral stage, the infant has tendency to the breast of the mother, this is a kind of oral drive for the infant. As for Pearl, this oral drive includes the scarlet letter itself on her mother's breast. The infant needs gratification of this desire in order to complete the first stage of this development, Pearl finds gratification when she sees the scarlet letter on her mother's breast, when she does not see it, and she feels restless and afraid. Since the scarlet letter is a kind of oral drive for Pearl, the absence of it causes uneasiness and deficiency in Pearl's own life and her developing personality. Mellards comments on this issue with these lines: "Generally, the mother's body, particularly in the anaclitic object of the breast, devolves to the object a, that bodily part which in the unconscious becomes the aim of an oral derive" (Mellard 72-73). The scarlet letter functions as an oral image for Pearl, the object that is on the mother's breast is unconsciously derived as a symbol for the infant and the same thing happens to Pearl. In chapter 19, Hawthorne shows the reader how Pearl feels angry and uneasy when she cannot see the scarlet letter on her mother's dress;

But Pearl, not a whit startled at her mother's threats, any more than mollified by her entreaties, now suddenly burst into a fit of passion, gesticulating violently, and throwing her small figure into the most extravagant contortions. She accompanied this wild outbreak with piercing shrieks, which the woods reverberated on all sides; so that, alone as she was in her childish and unreasonable wrath, it seemed as if a hidden multitude were lending her their sympathy and encouragement ... still pointing its small forefinger at Hester's bosom! (226).

All of her anger actually stems from the absence of letter "A" on Hester's bosom. "A" serves as a way of gratification for Pearl and it is the only thing

with which she can satisfy her desires towards her mother. With the lack of the scarlet letter, Pearl feels that she will not appease her own desires, because the tool that she will use is missing, somewhere in her unconscious level Pearl integrates herself with the scarlet letter. The fear of incompleteness of her oral wishes causes Pearl's strange behaviors and anger. However, Hester knows the reason why Pearl is behaving so strangely when she cannot see the letter. While Hester and Arthur are in woods, she explains strange attitude of Pearl towards the absence of the scarlet letter to Dimmesdale with these words;

I see what ails the child, whispered Hester to the clergyman, and turning pale in spite of a strong effort to conceal her trouble and annoyance. Children will not abide any, the slightest, change in the accustomed aspect of things that are daily before their eyes. Pearl misses something which she has always seen me wear! (226-227).

In Governor's Hall, Pearl gets used to seeing scarlet letter her mother's bosom and the reflection of it on the mirror functions as a reminder of Hester for the little girl.

"Mother," cried she, "I see you here. Look! Look!"

Hester looks, by way of humoring the child; and she saw that, owing to the peculiar effect of this convex mirror, the scarlet letter was represented in exaggerated and gigantic proportions, so as to be greatly the most prominent feature of her appearance (128).

Hester Prynne is aware of the fact that removing the scarlet letter affects the behavior of Pearl. She feels lost without the scarlet letter, unable to recognize her mother because of her lack of letter and this lack makes her unable to satisfying her unconscious desire. When Hester realizes this, she picks up the letter and places it on her breast hoping that after a couple of days she will throw it into the deepest parts of the ocean. Melard explains this situation like this; "What happens in Pearl's case, however, is that she quickly shifts

the identity of the mother not to the image of the breast, but to the object located on Hester's breast---namely, the scarlet letter, A" (Mellard 73).

Pearl thought her own father was a rival for her mother's affections without even knowing that Dimmesdale is her father. This act reminds us of the Oedipus complex, however the only problem here is that Pearl is not a boy but a girl, it is known that Oedipus complex is used for the boys, however Pearl enemies Arthur Dimmesdale without knowing that he is her father. The child's fear is that the father figure will replace his position in mother's life. The child regards the father figure as an enemy and desire increases towards the mother figure. Pearl, who seems a little bit like a naughty little boy, sees her mother talking to Dimmesdale. Anna Marie McNamara comments on this issue with these words; "In the entire scene at the brook side she does not speak to him with her human voice at all. She addresses him indirectly through her persistent rejection of his advances and through actions ostensibly directed towards her mother" (McNamara 541). When Pearl sees them alone at the brook side talking, feeling of jealousy towards her father Dimmesdale increase.

But, whether influenced by the jealousy that seems instinctive with every petted child towards a dangerous rival, or from whatever caprice of her freakish nature, Pearl would show no favor to the clergyman. It was only by an exertion of force that her mother brought her up to him, hanging back, and manifesting her reluctance by odd grimaces; of which, ever since her babyhood, she had possessed a singular variety, and could transform her mobile physiognomy into a series of different aspects, with a new mischief in them, each and all (229).

Since her birth, Pearl and Hester have never been separated. Hester is the only person that Pearl knows and can find peace with. Therefore, when she perceives there might be someone else coming between the daughter and mother, she feels a bit jealous towards her father, but she does not know that Dimmesdale is her real father. These particular feelings and behaviors

exhibited by Pearl are examples of the desire she has for her mother. She strongly rejects sharing her mother with someone stranger, fearing that she may lose her mother to him forever. Hester gives birth to Pearl as the result of her strong passions, desires, and will to act on them which stem from her id. Therefore, Pearl symbolizes Hester's strong id. Through the novel, Hawthorne depicts Pearl as a stubborn, wild and independent girl. She is only comfortable in nature and she acts without considering the consequences. It is possible to see the qualities of particular id through Pearl's personality. Rebellion against cultural norms and rules, confusion and the search for gratification are some basic qualities of id, and Pearl's character includes most of these qualities. Eisinger comments on Pearl's personality; "She is endowed with "natural dexterity" and "natural grace." On one occasion she is a lovely flower, possessed, a page later, with a "wild-flower prettiness." (Eisinger 326). She does not have a stable personality; she can exhibit many different feelings at one time. Her feelings can change so rapidly that she is accused of being of a moody character. Hawthorne depicts Pearl in this way:

Her nature appeared to possess depth, too, as well as variety; but --- or else Hester's fears deceived her --- it lacked reference and adaptation to the world into which she was born. The child could not be made amenable to rules. In giving her existence, a great law had been broken; and the result was a being, whose elements were perhaps beautiful and brilliant, but all in disorder; or with an order peculiar to themselves, amidst which the point of variety and arrangement was difficult or impossible to be discovered (114).

As it is indicated, the desire for breaking laws can be observed in Pearl's personality. She chases the events that provide gratification for her desires and wishes. Pearl is not an ordinary child; there is something strange with her. The confusion and disobedience that the id contains can be seen through Pearl's behavior. She comes in to the world as a result of breaking a law, and it can be said that she is the living symbol or reflection of this sinful

act. Thus, she contains both the beautiful sides of a child and the spotty ways of this sinful act committed by Hester Prynne and Arthur Dimmesdale.

#### **2.3.4. Arthur Dimmesdale**

Arthur Dimmesdale is another main figure taking place in the novel. He has to suppress his desires for a married woman according to the norms of Puritan society. Since he cannot resist his desire for Hester Prynne and because of this lack of control, he commits adultery. It is only the end of the novel when he finally confesses his sin publicly. He tries to reveal his sinful act many times, but he cannot manage, so he starts to torture himself mentally in order to purify his soul from the taint of his act. Dimmesdale has an ongoing fight with his id, ego, and superego that affect both his actions and personality strongly. Jumat Barus depicts Dimmesdale's situation with these words; "Dimmesdale is oppressed by the weight of his crime. He suffers from an agony of remorse. But he does not have the courage to make a public confession of his guilt. He does not wish to tarnish the noble image which the public has of him" (Barus 49). Dimmesdale suffers from the sin he has committed, however he is not courageous enough to reveal his sin to the Puritan community, as he is a noble and holy being, it is not so easy to acknowledge that he committed adultery with a married woman. Therefore, he tortures himself not psychically, but mentally, in order to reduce the weight of the burden of sin he carries on his back. He is haunted by deep feelings of remorse and agony over what he has done, however his hands are tied, and he cannot move or act without revealing the sinful act he committed. At the end of the novel, when Dimmesdale meets Hester in the forest, it is clear that Dimmesdale has difficulty resisting his desire and passion for Hester. Both lovers decide to flee to Europe in order to make a fresh start. This is the second time in the novel when Dimmesdale acts according to his emotions and feelings rather than accepted moral norms. Hawthorne highlights the

feelings of Dimmesdale after the decision of leaving Boston with Hester and Pearl is made:

“The decision once made, a glow of strange enjoyment threw its flickering brightness over the trouble of his breast. It was the exhilarating effect---upon a prisoner just escaped from the dungeon of his own heart---of breathing the wild, free atmosphere of an unredeemed, unchristianized, lawless region” (219).

The minister feels like he escaped from a prison. The place where he lives now is like a cave but he believes that when he leaves, he will find peace and have the chance to spend the rest of his life with his family. In this scene, Dimmesdale's id plays an important role in making this decision. He wants to forget all the titles he has and yet he cannot find enough power to resist the temptation of his love for Hester Prynne. When he is under the influence of his id, he feels as if he has enough power to stand up to all the obstacles and fight against them. However, the three unique parts of the psyche are supposed to be in coherence with each other in order to lead a healthy life in the future. In the forest scene, Dimmesdale seems to be under the effect of his id, showing the reader that his attempts to free himself from these burdens might be in vain since he is deeply affected by his id.

It is possible to draw a connection between Freud's Oedipus complex and Dimmesdale's psychological situation in the novel. Superego has a powerful effect on Dimmesdale's personality. As it is stated in the previous paragraphs, Roger Chillingworth serves as an authoritative father figure for Arthur Dimmesdale by being his caregiver. Therefore, as this father figure, Chillingworth will punish Dimmesdale because of the sin he has committed and at the end, Dimmesdale is doomed to die due to the feeling of guilt on his conscience. In this sense, Dimmesdale takes the place of the boy in Oedipus complex, while at the same time he takes the position of the father figure in the women's lives. It can be said that Dimmesdale takes the place of Chillingworth in Hester's life. That's why the initial father figure, Chillingworth,

directs his anger and thirst for revenge at Dimmesdale. Hawthorne explains Chillingworth's cruelty towards Dimmesdale with these lines:

“A revelation, he could almost say, had been granted to him. It mattered little for his object, whether celestial, or from what other region. By its aid, in all the subsequent relations betwixt him and Mr. Dimmesdale, not merely the external presence, but the very inmost soul of the latter seemed to be brought out before his eyes, so that he could see and comprehend its every movement. He became, thenceforth, not a spectator only, but a chief actor, in the poor minister's interior world. He could play upon him as he chooses. Would he arouse him with a throb of agony? (160-161).

Chillingworth's only reason to exist to make Dimmesdale suffer more and more. Therefore, he comes closer to Dimmesdale secretly in order worsen his mental condition and destroy him spiritually in order to admit the sin he committed with Hester Prynne.

Arthur Dimmesdale employs his own defense mechanism, repression in order to get rid of unwanted ideas and desires that he holds in the depths of his unconscious. He is well aware of the fact that he is repressing all his improper and unwanted ideas instead of facing them. In her article, Diana Donnelly points out the repression that Dimmesdale experiences throughout the novel; “Dimmesdale first experiences a more serious weakening of repression, leading to a confusion about reality, when he attempts to put himself in Hester's shoes by holding a vigil on the same scaffold she stood on” (Donnelly 1145). Dimmesdale's unwillingness to reveal his sin causes him to repress feelings and thoughts in his unconscious, also while experiencing repression causing a slowly worsening mental condition in him. His conscience impels him to reveal his sinful act, but his cowardice restrains him from doing this. Hawthorne describes Dimmesdale's condition with these lines;

He had been driven higher by the impulse of that Remorse which dogged him everywhere, and whose own sister and

closely linked companion was that Cowardice which invariably drew him back, with her tremulous gripe, just when the other impulse had hurried him to the verge of a disclosure (167-168).

He is aware of results of repressing his desires and feelings; however even though it fails, he cannot find another way to end his self-torture. On the one hand, he really wants to get rid of this agony that surrounds his heart completely; on the other hand, he cannot find the courage to acknowledge that he is a sinner and reveal this fact to his community. The only moment he feels relief is when he gives his last sermon to the congregation. Since he had kept a diary revealing his sin and suffering for all these years, he experiences a sense of deep relief by confessing his sinful act in front of the people. Donnelly describes Dimmesdale's attitude by stating: "Tormented by guilt and sensing he is about to die, Dimmesdale is relieved by the knowledge that he is about to unburden himself to a public he will never have to face, hoping he might redeem himself in the eyes of God" (Donnelly 1147). By doing so, he leaves his burden and finds relief in the end. He decides that repressing this sinful act is not necessary any more, for both him and Hester Prynne, that perhaps; everybody should learn the truth in the end. Revealing his sin gives him the endless peace and redemption that he has been searching for seven years. Dimmesdale's relief and belief in God's mercy is understood by these lines: "For thee and Pearl, be it as God shall order," said the minister; "and God is merciful! Let me do the will which he hath made plain before my sight. For, Hester, I am a dying man. So let make haste to take my shame upon me." (266). Actually, he is still punished despite being dead, why Dimmesdale feels relieved and peaceful is only because he leaves this world with a clean soul, because by confessing his sin to the public, he purifies his soul and finds peace when he reaches to the God. In chapter 23, Hawthorne describes the peace and relief that Dimmesdale feels when he is about to die:

"My little Pearl," said he feebly, --- and there was a sweet and gentle smile over his face, as of a spirit sinking into deep repose; nay, now that the burden was removed, it seemed



almost as if he would be sportive with the child,--- “dear little Pearl, wilt thou kiss me now? (268).

At the end, Dimmesdale embraces his family and the unification is achieved. Revealing his sin, admitting Pearl is his daughter help Dimmesdale find redemption and peace in death. The only thing he wants to know is whether God forgives him or not when he reaches heaven. The conflicts that Dimmesdale experience between his id and super ego make his sin unendurable. He feels ashamed of committing such a sinful act since he is a holy man in the eyes of his people. Although he is not punished like Hester, humiliated in front of Puritan people, Dimmesdale punishes himself each day by torturing his psyche. In this case, his superego functions as his censor. Benjamin Kilborne mentions this in *Shame Conflicts and Tragedy in the Scarlet Letter*: “What makes Dimmesdale’s shame so unbearable? What constitutes “unbearability” seems to me of central importance in all analytic work, and can be related to conflicting superego ideals, to the framework of judgment that individuals bring to bear on their feelings” (Kilborne 467). Shame can be interpreted as a kind of defense for Dimmesdale. His deep and irresistible desire and passion towards Hester Prynne result in his feelings of shame. The sinful act they commit together brings shame to both of them. The clash between his moral values represented under the name of super ego and his yearning for gratification of his passion for Hester results in shame. The reason why Dimmesdale’s shame is unbearable is that he is aware of the fact that not only Hester but also he himself must be punished and humiliated in front of Puritan community and he must share the feeling of shame with his lover while she is standing on the scaffold. On the other hand, his ego stops him from falling through. He does not have enough courage to risk his status in Puritan society. Kilborne defines the term, shame like that: “shame often results from the intensity and overwhelming quality of emotions, rather than from any particular feeling” (Kilborne 472). Dimmesdale’s strong desire and passion for Hester Prynne causes him to forget his own identity and his holy status in Puritan society. In *The Interior of a Heart*, the minister talks about his condition in this world by saying;

It is the unspeakable misery of a life so false as his, that it steals the pith and substance out of whatever realities there are around us, and which were meant by Heaven to be the spirit's joy and nutriment. To the untrue man, the whole universe is false, ---it is impalpable, ---it shrinks to nothing within his grasp. And he himself, in so far as he shows himself in a false light, becomes a shadow, or, indeed, ceases to exist. The only truth, that continued to give Mr. Dimmesdale a real existence on this earth, was the anguish in his most soul, and the undissembled expression of it in his aspect (166).

The forest scene has a significant impact on Dimmesdale's at both a conscious and unconscious level. He actually tries to repress all his desires towards Hester, because his desire and passion for her remind him of his guilt and thus he wants to purge these happy moments from his mind in order to remove all the guilt he feels. Dianne Donnelly explains Dimmesdale's psychological state by stating:

By immersing himself in a project demanding his attention and getting his mind off happy thoughts about Hester, Dimmesdale instinctively and adaptively reinstates the repression of wicked thoughts that had too abruptly entered consciousness. In this manner, he also reinstates his identity as a minister, another higher mental function he was in danger of losing after his blissful time with Hester (Donnelly 1146-1147).

Dimmesdale needs to focus on something rather than his guilt in order to direct his attention away from Hester Prynne, because he is aware of the fact that he has still responsibilities for his Puritan community as a minister and a holy man despite the decision he makes with to sin with Hester Prynne. He has to give a sermon on the Election Day, firstly he has to repress his desire and excitement and instead focus his thoughts to work on his Election sermon. He can leave the country under only one condition; he must fulfill all his responsibilities for the Puritan community. In chapter 20, there is a long explanation that points out the dilemma Dimmesdale experiences;

The minister had inquired of Hester, with no little interest, the precise time at which the vessel might be expected to depart. It was probably be on the fourth day from the present. "That is most fortunate!" he had then said to himself --- to hold nothing back from the reader, --- it was because, on the third day from the present, he was to preach the Election Sermon; and, as such an occasion formed an honorable epoch in the life of a New England clergyman, he could not have chanced upon a more suitable mode and time of terminating his professional career. "At least, they shall say of me," thought this exemplary man, "that I leave no public duty unperformed, nor ill performed!" (231).

He is faithful to his duty, but at the same time he was making plans to run away with Hester just a few hours earlier. Now realizing his responsibilities, he tries to forget his plans for a while, because such sermon has a significant place in a Reverend's life and because of his name, Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale, "... the minister the hollow mockery of his good name" (213). He has to perform his duties before leaving, because he wants to be remembered as a person who always fulfills his duties properly for his congregation. Therefore, it can be said that Puritan community represents the superego for Dimmesdale, while Hester represents his id. It can be inferred that Dimmesdale gets stuck between his id and his superego. However, it can also be said that his super ego is dominant for him because of his thoughts mentioned above. Dimmesdale's superego or in other words his conscience is a constant reminder of his guilt, making him suffer more and more every day. He suffers greatly from his sinful act, and he wants to confess his sin to the public in order to free himself from burdens of his guilt. He cannot stand the voice of his conscience anymore and one night he decides to reveal his sin to the people by stating:

He had told his hearers that he was altogether vile, a viler companion of the vilest, the worst of sinners, an abomination, a thing of unimaginable iniquity; and that the only wonder was,

that they did not see wretched body shriveled up before their eyes, by the burning wrath of the Almighty? (164).

Although the minister talks to the people so clearly, they do not understand what he means. On the other hand, this speech has the opposite effect on its intention the Puritan people actually respect him more deeply. His community has a strong faith in him, which is why his pain grows day by day and he is unable to find a way to deal with it. Throughout the novel, it is possible to see some scenes in which Dimmesdale resorts to physical ways to punish himself. He whips himself "wielding the bloody scourge" (167), while staying awake long nights without eating anything, generally trying to live in darkness, he does not turn on the lights, dooms himself to darkness, with only his guilt to keep him company. Dimmesdale believes that he will be able to purify himself through suffering. He prefers enduring the pain rather than revealing his sin to Puritans.

And thus, while standing on the scaffold, in this vain show of expiation, Mr. Dimmesdale was overcome with a great horror of mind, as if the universe was gazing at a scarlet token on his naked breast, right over his heart ... Without any effort of his will, or power to restrain himself, he shrieked aloud; an outcry that went pealing through the night, and was beaten back from one house to another, and reverberated from the hills in the background; as if a company of devils, detecting so much misery and terror in it, had made a plaything of the sound, and were bandying it to and fro (168).

The scaffold scene clearly illustrates minister's worsening psychological condition. He stands on the scaffold where Hester Prynne stood as a consequence of her sin. He tries to prepare himself for the day when he confesses his guilt to the Puritan community. As a result of the deep pressure of conscience, he stands there, tries to relieve himself and shouts in the darkness to confess his sin in the end.

After meeting Hester in the forest, it is possible to see some differences in Dimmesdale's psychological state. During the forest scene,

when Dimmesdale's id becomes the central influence, his ideas and behaviors begin to change. When his id is active, he dares to ignore the oppressive rules of Puritan society and wants to live his own life according to his own wishes and desires. Nina Baym, in *Passion and Authority in The Scarlet Letter* explains this situation:

Dimmesdale's own astounding behavior after he leaves the forest convinces him beyond any doubt that he is, indeed, a morally polluted and hideously guilty man. A truly stupefying flood of demons are released from him when he asserts, deliberately, that the social law no longer binds him. He has turned the control of his psyche over to the passionate self that has been clamoring for freedom and recognition all these years (Baym 228).

When he leaves the forest, he realizes that he is actually a totally corrupted man. He wants to behave as he wishes and feels changed both psychologically and mentally. Hawthorne explains this transformation:

But he seemed to stand apart and the eye this former self with scornful, pitying, but half-envious curiosity. That self was gone! Another man had returned out of the forest; a wiser one; with a knowledge of hidden mysteries which the simplicity of the former never could have reached. A bitter kind of knowledge that! (238).

It can be inferred that he is deeply affected by his strong id with this transformation. However, whenever he stays under the influence of his id, he clashes with his ego. His ego acts as a censor for him, reminding him of the dangers of the outside world. For this reason, most of the time, he has to repress what he feels and what he really wants to do with the help of his ego, because his ego limits him from doing the things that he will regret later. In Chapter 20, Dimmesdale wants to behave as he wishes while he is walking along the way to his house, but his ego does not let him act however he wants; "The minister was glad to have reached this shelter, without first betraying himself to the world by any of those strange and wicked

eccentricities to which he had been continually impelled while passing through the streets” (237-238).

In the final scene of the novel, during Election Day, Dimmesdale gives his sermon to the congregation and then with a sudden movement, he stands on the scaffold and confesses his fault to everyone. He shows the image on his bosom to people. He needs to accept his past in order to end his sorrow and agony. By accepting his past, he wants to get rid of his pressure of conscience and feeling of guilty due to his sinful act. He admits his sin by saying;

--- “ye, that have loved me! --- ye, that have deemed me holy !  
 --- behold me here, the one sinner of the world! At last! --- at last! --- I stand upon the spot where seven years since I should have stood; here, with this woman, whose arm, more than the little strength wherewith I have crept hitherward, sustains me, at this dreadful moment, from groveling down upon my face! Lo, the scarlet letter which Hester wears! Ye have all shuddered at it! — “God’s eye beheld it! The angels were forever pointing at it! The Devil knew it well, and fretted it continually with the touch of his burning finger! (267).

Accepting his guilt and revealing it to the public makes Dimmesdale relieved. He feels as if he has left the entire burden he is carrying, feeling light and relaxed. For the first and the last time, he is together with his family on the scaffold where he should have stood before. However, he does not have enough courage to face the consequences of his guilt, that’s why he is doomed to die in the end. He is not as strong as Hester Prynne to confront the results of his confession. Dimmesdale cannot resist the potential future pressure of the society that represents the superego for him and he says farewell to his family and dies without sharing the life with his real family. He cannot accept the desires or passions that stem from his id, throughout the novel; Dimmesdale is under the influence of his ego and superego. However, since Dimmesdale cannot balance the good and the bad sides of his personality, he cannot reach happiness in his life. It should not be forgotten

that every human being has some good sides and bad sides. The most important thing is to balance them in order to bring happiness to life.

#### **2.4. The Scarlet Letter and Deconstruction Theory**

Throughout the novel, it is possible to encounter various interpretations of letter A. The first time when we see the scarlet letter is when Hester stands in front of the prison gate. She is wearing the scarlet letter on her bosom as the sign of a sinful act, adultery. There is no single and fixed meaning of the letter in the book. A goes through numerous transformations in text. It turns into Adultery, Angel, and Able, and Abnormal etc... Since there is no stable interpretation of the letter A, it is possible to interpret it in many ways as an analyst digging into the deeper parts of the patient's unconscious. Anthony Elliott states: "in line with structuralist linguistics, Lacan argues that the relationship between signifiers and signified is arbitrary and based on convention ... Meaning is created through linguistic differences, through the play of signifiers" (Elliot 105).

The letter A stands in the place of signifier for this reason. In such situation, the reader has the ability to solve the mystery of the letter and interpret the meaning of the letter A without submitting to authorial intent. Jacques Derrida, in his book, *Writing and Difference*, states;

"The unconscious text is already a wave of pure traces, differences in which meaning and force are united---a text nowhere present, consisting of archives which are always already transcriptions. Originary prints. Everything begins with reproduction" (Derrida 265-66).

The text has the capacity of being viewed in many ways. The most crucial thing is the meaning that the reader infers from the symbols or metaphors within the text and how the author transfers this meaning to the reader. All text has multiple meanings and the letter A is an example of this. In the beginning of the novel, Hester Prynne is seen while she is standing in prison

door. She is wearing the letter while the crowd is staring at her and the letter she is carrying on her chest. In chapter 2, *The Market-Place*, Hawthorne describes the first scene where we encounter the letter A; "On her breast of her gown, in fine red cloth, surrounded with an elaborate embroidery and fantastic flourishes of gold thread, appeared the letter A" (80). The letter A, in the beginning has only one meaning for the Puritan culture: Adultery. Hester committed adultery despite being married to another man and has a baby with an unknown father. This is one of the greatest sins in the Puritan belief system. Because of this she must become the physical manifestation of her sin, forced to carry the letter on her breast. This piece of cloth on which A is written is a reminder of her sin, shame, and guilt both for her and the people around her. Millicent Bell, in her article *The Obliquity of Signs: "The Scarlet Letter"* explains the importance of the scarlet letter which Hester is doomed to carry on her breast; "Hester's "A" is all these --- a badge she wears, a device for the escutcheon on her tombstone --- "On a field sable, the letter A, gules" and the "emblem of her guilt" (Bell 11). As the novel progresses, the transformation of the letter A begins. She starts to spend time with the sick and poor to help them, and by doing so, she starts to gain respect from some of the townsfolk who looked down her because of her sin and the letter on her breast. The letter A starts to become positive for Hester Prynne, because it is now interpreted as "Able" instead of "Adultery". Hawthorne explains the transformation of the scarlet letter by stating:

She was self-ordained a Sister of Mercy; or, we may rather say, the world's heavy hand had so ordained her, when neither the world nor she looked forward to this result. The letter was the symbol of her calling. Such helpfulness was found in her, ---so much power to do, and power to sympathize, --- that many people refused to interpret the scarlet A by its original signification. They said that it meant Able; so strong was Hester Prynne, with a woman's strength (180).

Instead of interpreting the letter A as the symbol of adultery, some people find it as strong as Hester Prynne, who despite carrying such a big burden, is



able to survive and thrive, helping and treating the very people who belittled her and her baby due to her sinful act of adultery. In the very beginning of the novel, the letter A carries a negative meaning, but now it begins to transform into a more positive meaning both for Hester and Puritans. As A.N. Kaul claims Hester manages to gain the respect of the people, who look down on her before due to her commitment of adultery,

“... disputing the sinfulness of her deed [Hawthorne] presents her also as a source of new life and moral vitality and as a woman of the tenderest human sympathies in a cold and intolerant society. He provides her adultery with a background of long bondage in a loveless marriage, and invests the passion which leads to it with ‘a consecration of its own’ (Kaul, 13).

Hester Prynne manages to survive in Puritan society through her determination, and by paying the price for her mistake; she is able to restart communication with the people who had shunned her. From now on, she is no longer regarded as a fallen woman, but she is remembered as a woman who is moderate and helpful for the people around her.

During the scaffold scene for the first time, a meteor appears as an “A” in the night sky. The interpretation of the letter is not directly highlighted to the reader in this scene. However, this letter A is interpreted as the mark of an Angel by the rest of the Puritan community. It is believed that it indicates Governor Winthrop’s entrance to the heaven. The meteor “...a light gleamed far and wide over all the muffled sky” (173) which Dimmesdale witnessed in the sky provides another interpretation for the reader. Governor Winthrop’s death is related to the meteor in the shape of A which appears in the sky. Hawthorne shows how Puritans interpret the letter;

“But did your reverence hear of the portent that was seen last night? A great red letter in the sky, --- the letter A, --- which we interpret to stand for Angel (177).

Briefly, author’s conflicts and repression are reflected through the indefiniteness and multi-sense of the letter A. Therefore, this gives the reader an opportunity of viewing the scarlet letter in many ways.

## 2.5. Lacan's Psychoanalytic Theory and *The Scarlet Letter*

The mirror stage is an important part of the psycho sexual development of the infant in Lacanian psychoanalytic approach. This stage happens when the infant is six month old. This is the first time when the infant sees himself in the mirror as a whole. However, the child is threatened by this unified image that he sees in the mirror. According to Dylan Evans, in order to solve this fragmentation problem between the self and the image, she states; "in order to resolve this aggression tension, the subject identifies with the image" (Evans 115). It is possible to find the traces of the mirror stage in *The Scarlet Letter* too. During the forest scene, while Dimmesdale and Hester are talking, Pearl is near the brook-side and she is looking at the water. In that case, water serves as a mirror for Pearl where she can see her image or reflection in the water.

Just where she had paused the brook chanced to form a pool, so smooth and quiet that it reflected a perfect image of her little figure, with all the brilliant picturesqueness of her beauty, in its adornment of flowers and wreathed foliage, but more refined and spiritualized than the reality. This image, so nearly identical with the living Pearl, seemed to communicate somewhat of its shadowy and intangible quality to the child herself (224).

Pearl sees her own image in the water and the image seems more refined than her real self. This shows that this image is superior to her real self. She becomes aware of the power of herself as an individual, since then she realizes that she is not in need of being dependent on her mother. Until the present time, Pearl has identified herself solely with her mother, however just after her encounter with her own image on the water, she realizes her own bodily existence as a self. From this moment, she gains power and authority and shows disobedient behaviors towards her mother, Hester Prynne. She feels independent since she manages to solve the fragmentation problem between her real self and imaginary self. Hawthorne explains Pearl's changing behaviors by stating;

Pearl, without responding in any manner to these honey sweet expressions, remained on the other side of the brook ... At length, assuming a singular air of authority, Pearl stretched out her hand, with the small fore finger extended, and pointing evidently towards her mother's breast (225-26).

Through these lines, it is clearly seen that Pearl experiences the mirror stage and gains some kind of authority over her mother. She separates herself from the mother figure and as a self; she develops a kind of autonomy and authority. Although her mother tells her to come back many times, she refuses her mother's commands. Pearl manages to become one with her own image. After experiencing the mirror stage, she realizes her own power as a self, that's why she opposes her mother when she calls her to come back to her side.

In *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, Jacques Lacan defines father's role as; "the prohibitive role of the father as the one who lays down the incest taboo in the Oedipus complex" (Lacan 119). According to Lacanian theory, not only boys but also girls can exhibit tendencies towards their opposite sex parents. Girls can be jealous of their fathers since the father's existence is regarded as a threat for the relationship between mother and the infant. In his paper, Marjan Yazdanpanahi describes the role of the father by saying; "His presence imposes some 'laws' upon the child because the child cannot be with his mother as much as he likes. The child finds out that his mother needs his father and likes to be with him" (Yazdanpanahi 10). The prohibitive role of the father is defined in that case as the-name-of-the-father. In *The Child at the Brook-Side*, Hawthorne gives a clear explanation of Pearl's feelings about Arthur Dimmesdale; "But, whether influenced by the jealousy that seems instinctive with every petted child towards a dangerous rival, or from whatever caprice of her freakish nature, Pearl would show no favor to the clergyman" (228). When Pearl realizes that her mother and Dimmesdale are so close and they are talking without realizing the presence of Pearl at the brook-side, Pearl feels jealous and starts to show the strange behaviors in order to catch her mother's attention.

Before they meet in the forest, Pearl is always with her mother, Hester Prynne, but now, she is away and Hester is with Arthur Dimmesdale in the forest, that's why Pearl sees him as a rival. After Dimmesdale leaves them, Pearl quickly comes to her mother's side and feels as if the danger disappears.

“ ... so that these two fated ones, with earth's heaviest burden on them, might there sit down together, and find a single hour's rest and solace. And there was Pearl, too, lightly dancing from the margin of the brook, --- now that the intrusive third person was gone, ---and taking her old place by her mother's side” (230).

Father figure is seen as the third person in the relationship between mother and infant. He takes the prohibitive role in their relationships. Pearl's feelings for the relationship between Hester and Dimmesdale only stem from that Dimmesdale is Pearl's real father. Despite knowing that he is her real father, Pearl sees his presence in her mother's life as a kind of threat for the relationship between her and her mother. In her thesis, Banu Yoruk explains the name of the father concept by stating;

‘Father’ figure is one of the key words in Lacanian structuralism because it symbolizes the social order. Lacan asserts that Symbolic Father is the producer of the Law which is necessary for the security of the social order, imaginary father is the ideal father to establish a proper order in patriarch, and real father is the effect of the father figure in language (Yoruk 13-14).

However, Pearl is not used to the presence of the father figure in her life. The presence or only the name of her father makes Pearl feel restless, because for many years, she was used to only the presence of her mother. There is no other person between her and her mother, that is why she has the fear of sharing her only valuable possession with somebody she does not know and has not met before. When Pearl sees that there is a stranger next to her mother, she feels afraid that her place in the family is threatened, because Hester is directing all her attention and affection to Dimmesdale in the forest.

Such behavior leads Pearl to have the fear of losing her place in Hester's life. Hawthorne explains Pearl's and Hester's feelings in this situation;

There was both truth and error in the impression; the child and mother were estranged, but through Hester's fault, not Pearl's. Since the latter rambled from her side, another inmate had been admitted within the circle of the mother's feelings, and so modified the aspect of them all, that Pearl, the returning wanderer, could not find her wonted place, and hardly knew where she was (225).

## **2.6. Conclusion**

*The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne's well known novel sets a suitable ground for Freudian psychoanalytic theory. The main characters in the novel are good examples that can be analyzed applying the psychoanalytic theory. The secret desires, repressed passions and untold memories of the characters that are kept in their unconscious prepare an appropriate ground to bring them to the level of consciousness. All the things they do or plan to do stem from what they have kept or repressed in their unconscious. All the main characters in the novel suffer from an ongoing fight with their id, ego and super ego. That is why they are not able to find peace and happiness in their lives, because there are always dilemmas in the parts of their personalities, and these dilemmas cause them to experience fragmentations in their personalities. Throughout the novel, it is possible to see some traits from Hawthorne's own life. Hawthorne's own experiences and life conditions are directly reflected through the lives the main characters lead, Hester Prynne's life can be somehow associated with Hawthorne's own mother's life. They both lead a hard life and try to survive despite the harsh conditions they face in their lives. The signifier and signified relation that were developed by Jacques Derrida can also be seen in the novel. The various interpretations of letter A provide insight to understand the different meanings

of the scarlet letter A such as Able, Angel or Adultery. Finally, Lacanian psychoanalytic theory is applicable for the analysis of Pearl's attitude towards her mother, and her father. Pearl's growing authority over her mother, becoming unified with her reflected image and growing jealousy towards the father figure are important key points that can be explained under the light of Lacanian psychoanalytic approach.

### 3. PSYCHOANALYTIC CRITICISM OF MELVILLE'S *MOBY DICK*

There Leviathan,  
 Hugest of living creatures, on the deep  
 Stretched like a promontory, sleeps or swims,  
 And seems a moving land, and at his gills  
 Draws in, and at his trunk spouts out, a sea.

PARADISE LOST  
 (412-146)

#### 3.1. Introduction to *Moby Dick*

Herman Melville's well-known work, *Moby Dick* (1851), focuses on adventures of a whaling ship named the *Pequod* and her captain who is haunted by the white whale, Moby Dick. The novel starts with the narration of Ishmael, who is the only survivor of the *Pequod*. As an experienced sailor, Ismael had completed several voyages and on one of them, he met Queequeg, a harpooner and a strange man, whose body was covered with tattoos. These two men decided to look for work on a whaling vessel and set out to Nantucket, a center of whaling industry. Ismael and Queequeg find a ship there named the *Pequod*, which is a strange one adorned with teeth and bones of the whales. The strangest thing about the ship is her captain, Captain Ahab, a mysterious man who has lost his leg. Later, it is learnt that he lost his leg during one of his encounters with the white whale, Moby Dick. After a couple of days, the *Pequod* leaves Nantucket with a crew consisted of; Ismael, Queequeg, Starbuck and Tasego. Sometime later, Captain Ahab declares that the reason they are on the ship: to hunt the white whale, killing her as soon as they come across her. As the *Pequod* sails to South Africa, they encounter another whaling boat whose leader, Fedallah, is a man with prophetic abilities. Ahab plans to benefit from the skills of the crew members and prophecies of Fedallah while he is hunting Moby Dick.

After sailing around Africa, the *Pequod* enters the Indian Ocean. Here, the *Pequod* encounters other boats and Captain Ahab seeks information about the white whale, Moby Dick. During another whale hunt, the ship encounters another ship named the *Samuel Enderby* whose captain, Captain Boomer, was seriously injured by his arm during an encounter with Moby Dick. However, he goes on his life happily and for this reason he cannot understand Ahab's unending hatred of and vengeance on Moby Dick. Then, one day Queequeg becomes ill and it is believed he will die soon, so a coffin is made for him. However, he recovers after sometime and this is seen as an important symbol for the further of the *Pequod's* mission. Ahab feels that the encounter with Moby Dick is coming soon, so he prepares a harpoon which is blessed with the blood of three harpooners on the ship. Fedallah's prophecy about the death of Ahab indicates that he will first see two different hearses and then he will be hanged from a strong rope. However, Ahab does not take the prophecy seriously since there are no hearses on the ship. Thus, Ahab believes that he will not die at sea.

The *Pequod* at the point of the *Pequod's* slow approach to Ecuador and the crew has still not found Moby Dick. However, Ahab expects to find the white whale somewhere nearby. Here, the ship confronts two more ships, the *Rachel* and the *Delight*. Finally Ahab catches sight of Moby Dick. He starts the attack on Moby Dick using harpoons, however, Moby Dick counter-attacks, destroying the boats that Ahab had launched for the attack. On the second day, Ahab again attacks Moby Dick unsuccessfully. At this moment Moby Dick attacks the ship and as a result of this attack, Fedallah dies trapped on the harpoon line. Ahab and his crew again are not successful in their hunt on second day.

On their third day, Ahab sends the boats once more to attack Moby Dick. However, Moby Dick again counters, striking the *Pequod* causing her to start to sink. As the ship begins to sink, Ahab himself is caught in a harpoon line and dies. All of the boats and crew is hooked in the whirlpool created by the sinking of *Pequod*. Only Ismael who is quite far away from the ruin of the ship is able to survive. He floats on the coffin which was made for Queequeg



managing to survive until he is rescued by the *Rachel*, another whaling ship that is looking for crew members lost in her earlier concurrence with Moby Dick.

## **3.2. Psychoanalytic Analysis of the Unconscious Desires of the Central Characters**

### **3.2.1. Ishmael**

“CALL me Ishmael. Some years ago---never mind how long precisely---having little or no money in my purse, and nothing particular to interest me on shore, I thought I would sail about a little and see the watery part of the world” (Melville 23).

These are the first sentences articulated by Ishmael, the narrator of Moby Dick. Ishmael provides the deep psychoanalytic observation of the other characters, especially Ahab for the reader. Ishmael makes his living by working on the sea. He has been to sea many times before this voyage, but still wants to seek adventures, which is why he chooses to sail on the *Pequod*. He really wants to experience something new by working a whaling ship. John Bryant describes Ishmael stating that: “Ishmael is Melville's central character because he is the most marginal” (Bryant 186). Most of the people who seek whaling work, wish to profit from the whale's oil, but Ishmael is not one of them. Instead, he has a long standing dream of white whale. He wants to see this great White Whale, while experiencing the wild and mysterious atmosphere of the endless ocean. Such things may seem quite normal for other people, but for Ishmael this is the meaning of his life, that's why he is not an ordinary character in the novel. In the very beginning, Melville highlights Ishmael thoughts with these lines;

Chief among these motives was the overwhelming idea of the great whale himself. Such a portentous and mysterious monster roused all my curiosity. Then the wild and distant seas where

he rolled his island bulk; the undeliverable, nameless perils of the whale; these, with all the attending marvels of a thousand Patagonian sights and sounds, helped to sway me to my wish. With other men, perhaps, such things would not have been inducements; but as for me, I am tormented with an everlasting itch for things remote (Melville 26).

Melville creates such a character in order to observe other characters and their actions objectively. Ishmael's role in the book is to observe both conflicts and desires of the people around him. Despite the fact that all others on board are there to hunt the white whale, Ishmael believes in the majesty of white whale himself. Ishmael serves as a kind of mirror for the other crew members. He starts this journey to hunt the whale, because this is his job. However, he does not have any hatred or feeling of revenge on Moby Dick. Ishmael does not want to be a part of Ahab's revenge on Moby Dick. He acts as if he is an outsider to the rest of the crew members. He helps them face their repressed desires and to see hidden thoughts kept in their unconscious. By doing so, Ishmael helps them see themselves and realize how their actions are shaped by their inner feelings and desires. In, *A Squeeze of the Hand*, he describes Ishmael's situation;

I forgot all about our horrible oath ... I felt divinely free from all ill-will, or petulance, or malice... such an abounding, affectionate, friendly, loving feeling did this advocacy beget ... why should we longer cherish any social acerbities or know the slightest ill-humor or envy ... let us all squeeze ourselves into each other (Melville 322-323).

When Ishmael embarks on the hunt, he is under the influence of his id, because he is looking for new adventures and thus new experiences. The id, as the primitive impulse of human beings, directs Ishmael to the whaling ship so he can find what he is searching. However, before they set out, the crew swears an oath to Ahab, vowing to find the white whale and destroy him. However, as the novel progresses, Ishmael's ego as a kind of stimulant appears and tries to convince Ishmael that his oath is not something true.

Since the white whale does not harm Ishmael and the other crew members, there is no need to hate him blindly. The rest of the crew members do not have their own reasons to hate Moby Dick, there is only one reason for them, Ahab's personal hatred for Moby Dick. That is to say Ahab makes the mistake of accepting his lost leg and other injuries occurred during a whale accident as a starting point of the conflict and never ending feeling of revenge between himself and the whale. However, Ishmael's ego reminds him of this fact and as a result of this, Ishmael forgets all about his horrible oath to Captain Ahab.

During his journey on the *Pequod*, Ishmael learns how to break the restraints placed on him by society when he is on land. In this case, it can be shown that the role of society can be viewed as superego. Since it functions as an outer voice for the individual, in this sense the society in which Ishmael lives functions as his super ego. In the chapter, *A Bosom Friend*, Melville explains Ishmael's feelings about Queequeg;

Savage though he was, and hideously marred about the face --- at least to my taste----his countenance yet had a something in it which was by no means disagreeable. You cannot hide the soul. Through all his unearthly tattooings, I thought I saw the traces of a simple honest heart ... Wild he was; a very sight of sights to see; yet I began to feel myself mysteriously drawn towards him. And those same things that would have repelled most others, they were the very magnets that thus drew me (Melville 58-59).

Although Queequeg is not an acceptable figure in society, Ishmael does not judge him based solely on his appearance. By doing so, he refuses to be bound by the restrictions that society places on him. He objects to the strains of social norms and then some time later we witness that Ishmael makes the right decision by not judging Queequeg only regarding his appearance. Queequeg may worship idols, he may be savage and uncivilized and he may not be loved by the others, however Ishmael accepts him as his brother saying; "Queequeg is my fellow man" (Melville 60). Despite being seen as

a pleasant individual, Ishmael contains many inner conflicts in his character. In order to escape from these inner conflicts, he prefers going to sea. This is because he is not able to find peace and love on the land, because of his social status as orphan. He does not have a family on land, that's why he believes that he can solve his conflicts and find peace on the ocean. For this reason, he uses escapism as a defense mechanism. Escapism as a defense mechanism is described by John Longeway; "Escapism is defined as the attempt to avoid awareness of aversive beliefs" (Longeway 1). In the very beginning of the novel, Ishmael explains his method when it is time for him to sail with the following lines;

It is a way I have of driving off the spleen, and regulating the circulation. Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet; -- then I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can (Melville 23).

What can be understood from Ishmael's words, is that he cannot find peace and love on land, so whenever he wants to escape from the unpleasant thoughts and memories trapped in his unconscious, he has to get to the sea, because the sea or the ocean is the only place that can keep away his unpleasant moments and thoughts. That is how his defense mechanism, escapism, works. He believes that going to sea is a way of escaping from the things that he does not want recall or remember.

Ishmael takes on the role of superego for the captain and the crew throughout the novel. He serves as a kind of determiner of Ahab's actions which are directed solely by his ego. Therefore, it can be said that in many of the events of the novel, Ishmael acts as Ahab's superego. John Bryant describes the role of Ishmael in the novel by saying that; "Ishmael projects Ahab out of himself" (Bryant 186). He tries to determine the reasons for Ahab's actions and decisions. In the chapter, *The Try-Works*, Ishmael explains Ahab's decisions by stating:

There is a wisdom that is woe; but there is a woe that is madness. And there is a Catskill eagle in some souls that can alike dive down into the blackest gorges, and soar out of them again and become invisible in the sunny spaces. And even if he for ever flies within the gorge, that gorge is in the mountains; so that even in his lowest swoop the mountain eagle is still higher than other birds upon the plain, even though they soar (Melville 328-329).

Throughout the novel, as readers, we witness Ishmael's search for identity. It can be articulated that Ismael experiences a conflict between his conscious and unconscious. As Freud states, the main purpose of the psychoanalytic approach is to solve the conflicts that the patient has between his conscious and unconscious minds. Freud briefly describes this process stating;

[The psychoanalytic technique] consists simply in not directing one's notice to anything particular...In this way we spare ourselves a strain on our attention which could not in any case be kept up for several hours daily, and we avoid a danger which is inseparable from the exercise of deliberate attention. For as soon as anyone deliberately concentrates his attention to a certain degree, he begins to select from the material before him; one point will be fixed in his mind with particular clearness and some others will be correspondingly disregarded (Freud 111-112).

Ishmael's choice of leaving his family land and having a life in ocean is directly related to his search for identity. He is aware of the fact that he experiences a dilemma in his inner self. Since he could not solve this problem on land, he chose to solve this at sea.

In the beginning of the novel, all the crew members have only one focus, hunting the white whale which was imposed on them by Captain Ahab. Especially Captain Ahab has a fixed perception about the White Whale; however Ishmael does not have such an objective. In her thesis titled *Nameless, Inscrutable, Unearthly: An Examination of Obsession in Moby*

*Dick*, Sarah Lingo asserts; “Though Ishmael does not become wholly obsessed with the pursuit of Moby Dick, he flirts with obsession, and his fanatical categorizing and describing of whales reflect this” (Lingo 2). As it is stated before, Ishmael’s main target of starting this journey is not to hunt white whale; this is his job, catching whales. However, when times passes, both Ishmael’s and other crew members only target become this; catching not another whale but only Moby Dick. Since Ahab imposes his own obsession on the crew members, they cannot be indifferent to his obsession. Ishmael has an open mind. Gerard Sweeny describes Ishmael’s personality saying; “And flux in turn ... is the chief characteristic of Ishmael himself.” Ishmael’s main purpose actually is not to hunt white whale, he is on the ship only because he cannot find peace and rest on land (Melville, 23). Melville states that there was; “...nothing particular to interest him on shore” (23). He knows that the only purpose of the *Pequod* and Captain Ahab is to hunt Moby Dick, but Ishmael does not believe that Moby dick is something evil. Therefore, he realizes that this is not his reason of leaving the land and living a life at sea. He is known as a wanderer on the sea in search of peace and love; however he is not able to find them on the *Pequod*. That’s why one part of his mind thinks that he is not one of the part of Ahab’s revenge, the other part thinks he should just work on this ship and behave according to the rules of the *Pequod*. He is aware of the fact that ho does not wish to hunt Moby Dick, but as a member of this crew, he has to get along with everyone and he is obliged to indulge Ahab’s wishes. Melville illustrates Ishmael’s dilemma here;

I, ISHMAEL, was one of that crew; A wild, mystical, sympathetically feeling was in me; Ahab’s quenchless feud seemed mine. With greedy ears I learned the history of that murderous monster against whom I and all the others had taken our oaths of violence and revenge (Melville 149-150).

[W]hile bathing in that bath, I felt divinely free from all-ill-will, or petulance, or malice of any sort whatsoever (Melville 322).

Thus it can be argued that Ishmael is not a stable character and that; he is not totally stick to his oath and purpose on the ship. The whale is not the thing that scares Ishmael; it is the unnatural whiteness of her that makes him afraid. He follows the instructions of Ahab as a member of the ship's crew, but he does not blindly believe in the evilness of Moby Dick.

### **3.2.2. Starbuck**

Starbuck is the First Mate of the *Pequod* and thus has command over the ship and crew when Ahab is not at the helm. Although Captain Ahab and Starbuck have strong ties, their ideas and view are quite different from each other. Starbuck and the others started this journey in order to find the white whale, because Captain Ahab wanted them to, not out of their own desire for revenge. He does not object to Ahab being so obsessed with the White Whale, but he does he believes that Ahab's hatred will eventually lead to their destruction. Henry Murray explains the position of Starbuck in the novel stating that; "Starbuck, the First Mate, stands for the rational realistic Ego which is overpowered by the fanatical compulsiveness of the Id and dispossessed of its normally regulating functions" (Murray 446). Therefore, it can be inferred that Starbuck functions as a more powerful ego for Captain Ahab than his own. Captain Ahab is strongly under the influence of his id, but Starbuck is more rational and he acts as a brake on Ahab's madness. Starbuck takes on the role of ego in the novel. He tries to balance the interaction between id and superego for primarily Ahab and then for the rest of crew members. Ahab behaves how his id directs him, however Starbuck acts as a reminder of his deadly quest. Most of the time when these two men have a conversation, Starbuck tries to deter Ahab from his destructive purpose. In *The Chase - The Third Day*, Starbuck attempts to stop him from pursuing the White Whale by saying; "Oh! Ahab," cried Starbuck, "not too late is it, even now, the third day, to desist. See! Moby Dick seeks thee not. It is thou, thou, that madly seekest him!" (Melville 428). He knows that the chase

of the White Whale will bring about the destruction of the ship and the crew, however he cannot resist Ahab's strong id. In *Dusk*, Starbuck comments on his irresistibility to Ahab stating; "My soul is more than matched; she's overmanned; and by a madman! Insufferable sting that sanity should ground arms on such a field! (Melville 143). Starbuck fails to resist against Ahab's strong id. In his book, *Melville, Shame and the Evil Eye: A Psychoanalytic Reading*, Joseph Adamson describes Starbuck's courage in the following lines; "... when it comes to crisis, Starbuck's courage fails; unable to resist his own inner doubts, he is unable to resist Ahab" (Adamson 118). In chapter, *The Quarter-Deck*, Melville clearly shows how Starbuck's ego fails to change Ahab's decision;

Something shot from my dilated nostrils, he has inhaled it in his lungs. Starbuck now is mine; cannot oppose me now, without rebellion.

"God keep me! ---keep us all!" murmured Starbuck, lowly.

But in his joy at the enchanted, tacit acquiescence of the mate, Ahab did not hear his foreboding invocation (Melville 140).

Starbuck, as his ego directs him, insists on the wrongness of Ahab's obsession, but he cannot find the courage to resist him, and because Ahab's id is so strong, showing the weakness of Starbuck's ego. It is a clear fact that Ahab has a strong influence on Starbuck, which is Starbuck, is not strong enough to use his ego in order to prevent Ahab from destroying the ship. Despite being aware of the destructive consequences of Ahab's deadly mission, Starbuck's ego fails many times to resist against Ahab's madness. However, it can be said that Starbuck is not completely under the influence of Ahab, in some parts of the novel, we as the readers see how he voices his resistance against Ahab's will. In the chapter named *Surmises*, Ishmael as the narrator of the book highlights the extent to which Starbuck is under the influence of Ahab stating that;

[Ahab] knew, for example, that however magnetic his ascendancy in some respects was over Starbuck, yet that ascendancy did not cover the complete spiritual man any more



than mere corporeal superiority involves intellectual mastership; for to the purely spiritual, the intellectual but stand in a sort of corporeal relation. Starbuck's body and Starbuck's coerced will ere Ahab's, so long as Ahab kept his magnet at Starbuck's brain; still he knew that for all this the chief mate, in his soul, abhorred his captain's quest, and could he, would joyfully disintegrate himself from it, or even frustrate it (Melville 175).

Starbuck apparently states his feelings about Ahab's fatal quest for Moby Dick, his ego forcing him to stop Ahab; however Ahab's id is so strong that most of the time Starbuck's attempts are ineffective. Ahab is also quite aware of the fact that Starbuck is trying to prevent him from chasing Moby Dick, which is why he tries to enhance his power and influence over Starbuck. Ahab's strength comes from his id and his unconscious obsession to kill the White Whale. In parts of the novel, Starbuck clearly reacts against Ahab as his ego directs him. In chapter entitled *The Quarter-Deck*, Starbuck highlights his position on Ahab's desire for revenge upon and hatred for Moby Dick stating; "Vengeance on a dumb brute!" cried Starbuck, "that simply smote thee from blindest instinct! Madness! To be enraged with a dumb thing, Captain Ahab seems blasphemous." (139). Starbuck strongly believes that captain's ongoing hatred for the whale will result in their destruction. That is why Starbuck tries to function as a bridge between Ahab's id and his own ego. However, as it is stated above, Starbuck is never completely able to reject the influence of Ahab's strong power on himself. In the chapter, *The Symphony*, Starbuck questions his weakness and inability to control Ahab or stop him from carrying his deadly desires by stating:

What is it, what nameless, inscrutable, unearthly thing is it; what cozening, hidden lord and master, and cruel, remorseless emperor commands me...recklessly making me ready to do what in my own proper, natural heart, I durst not so much dare? Is Ahab, Ahab? Is it I, God, or who that lifts this arm? (Melville 409-410).

From the quotation, it can be inferred that Starbuck's mind is separated into two parts, one side strongly opposes Ahab's deadly desire for Moby Dick, and the other is strongly overwhelmed by the influence of Ahab's irresistible power. Therefore, on the one hand, Starbuck acts under the power of his ego, on the other hand it is possible to see the times when Starbuck ignores his ego and is influenced by Ahab's strong id and unconscious desires. Adamson explains Starbuck's dilemma with these words, "Starbuck does resist to some extent, it is true, the influence of Ahab's charisma" (Adamson 119). However, at the end of the novel we see that Ahab leaves his life into the hands of Starbuck, and Ishmael the central voice of the novel proves that Starbuck acts under the influence of his ego by opposing Captain Ahab stating;

[T]he only strange things about [Ahab] seemed to be, that Starbuck, almost the one only man who had ever ventured to oppose him with anything in the slightest degree approaching to decision—one of those too, whose faithfulness on the look-out he had seemed to doubt somewhat; it was strange, that this was the very man he should select for his watchman; freely giving his whole life into such an otherwise distrusted person's hands. (Melville 405).

### 3.2.3. Queequeg

Queequeg is actually the strangest character in the novel. He is a man covered with tattoos and has a completely different life style from the other sailors. However, as time passes, he becomes Ishmael's best friend over the course of the whaling journey to kill the whale. In chapter named *The Spouter-Inn*, Melville describes Queequeg's appearance as:

Such a face! It was of a dark, purplish, yellow color, here and there stuck over with large, blackish looking squares....As I live, these covered parts of him were checkered with the same

squares as his face; his back, too, was all over the same dark squares...Still more, his very legs were marked, as if a parcel of dark green frogs were running up the trunks of young palms. It was now quite plain that he must be some abominable savage or other shipped aboard of a whaleman in the South Seas, and so landed in this Christian country (Melville 37-38).

Since Queequeg is in an inferior position in the Christian community on land. He wants to escape this predestined life leading him to find a place where he is treated equally, which is why he chooses to sail on the sea. On land, he has a standard life, he wants to change this in order to create his own destiny. It is stated that he actually has "...excellent blood in his veins---royal stuff" (Melville 62). However, instead of staying in his home land, he prefers to live amongst Christians. It can be argued that Queequeg has the desire to learn about Christians, because he wonders about Christians and somewhere in his unconscious, he has the desire to know them closely. That is to say, in this case that Queequeg's id overweighs more and for the sake of his own desires, he leaves his homeland, insisting on signing on as a sailor despite the warnings of the other sailors. Melville explains how Queequeg's desire to sail to the Christian countries controls him by saying;

A Sag Harbor ship visited his father's bay, and Queequeg sought a passage to Christian lands. But the ship, having her full complement of seamen, spurned his suit; and not all the King and his father's influence could prevail. But Queequeg vowed a vow. Alone in his canoe, he paddled off to a distant strait, which he knew the ship must pass through when she quitted the island....when the ship was gliding by, like a flash he darted out; gained her side; with one backward dash of his foot capsized and sank his canoe; climbed up the chains (Melville 62).

Terry McGraw defines the id as such; "...The id is the most primitive structure, viewed to be the repository of the individual's basic drives" (McGraw 1095). Therefore, it can be inferred that Queequeg is so

determined that nothing can convince him to stop visiting Christian countries. Melville explains that Queequeg's strong desire stemmed from his id with these lines; "...Struck by his desperate dauntlessness, and his wild desire to visit Christendom, the captain at last relented, and told him he might make himself at home" (Melville 62). He cannot stop his ongoing desire to go and explore Christian countries, and to fulfill his desire he will do anything he must. As it is stated above, Queequeg goes to sea and wants to explore other countries which are different from his own land just because he wants to escape his predestined life and create his own way, his own destiny. He is looking for differences in other parts of the world. In their books entitled "*All Things Shining: Reading the Western Classics to Find Meaning in a Secular Age*", Hubert Dreyfus and Sean D.Kelly explain why Queequeg's desire to explore Christian countries is so strong; "... [Queequeg] had set about on his whaling journey in order to learn about Christendom, in the hope that through its practices he might help his people to be happier, and better, than they already are" (Dreyfus, Kelly 155).

#### **3.2.4. Captain Ahab**

Captain Ahab is the most significant character in the novel, even though Ishmael is the narrator. His strange behaviors and obsession with Moby Dick provide the essential materials for an analysis employing psychoanalytic literary criticism as its foundation. Captain Ahab is obsessed with the White Whale, however the question is whether he is obsessed with Moby Dick because he had taken his leg or this obsession is an outpouring of Ahab's repressed memories and unconscious desires. Most of the events that occur throughout the novel make it clear that Captain Ahab behaves under the influence of both his unconscious and his strong id. He is the leader of the ship and according to the Freudian definition of leadership, he "... possess [es] a strong and imposing will, which the group, which has no will of its own, can accept from him." (Freud 17). David Leverenz, in

*Manhood and The American Renaissance*, talks about Ahab's strong desire for domination over crew his crew members by stating that, Ahab really wants to extend his power of domination "over his crew, over his malevolent God, and perhaps over his still more malevolent self" (Leverenz 281). In the chapter entitled, *The Quarter-Deck*, Melville highlights how Ahab has all the characteristics of being a leader. Ahab addresses to the crew members by saying;

"Attend now, my braves. I have mustered ye all round this capstan; and ye mates, flank me with your lances; and ye harpooners, stand there with your irons; and ye, stout mariners, ring me in, that I may in some sort revive a noble custom of my fisherman fathers before me. O men, you will yet see that ..."  
(Melville 140-141).

Since he is the first commander of the ship, he acts as if he is the leader of the crew and the ship and orders the crew members anything that he wants to be done. Hunting Moby Dick is one of them, as their leader, he orders everyone to accept his rules, wishes and act accordingly.

When it comes to Ahab's unconscious, it is for sure that Captain Ahab has repressed feelings, memories and desires in his unconscious. His hatred and the feeling of revenge on Moby Dick are all directly related to this repression. Henry Murray describes Captain Ahab: "Ahab is captain of the culturally repressed dispositions of human nature, that part of personality which psychoanalysts have termed the "Id" (Murray 443-444). In most of the cases, we see that he is out of control and acts without caring what happens to the crew or even considering the possible consequences of his actions. He only focuses on his desire for revenge and there is nothing that can stop him from fulfilling his aim. In *Surmises*, Melville introduces Ahab's main purpose for whaling; "Though consumed with the hot fire of his purpose...the ultimate capture of Moby Dick" (Melville 175). He behaves as he wishes, he is ready to sacrifice everything to hunt and take his revenge on Moby Dick. In the chapter entitled *Moby Dick*, Melville clearly shows Ahab's desire to hunt Moby Dick without thinking about anyone or anything;

But be all this as it may, certain it is, that with the mad secret of his unabated rage bolted up and keyed in him, Ahab had purposely sailed upon the present voyage with the one only and all-engrossing object of hunting the White Whale ... He was intent on an audacious, immitigable, and supernatural revenge (156).

There is only one thing that motivates Captain Ahab. It is his strong desire to kill the White Whale. Laura Barrett explains what this whaling voyage means for Ahab explaining that; "... for Ahab, the goal is vengeance --- to destroy the whale that has dismembered him" (Barrett 2). Moby Dick took his leg and since then Ahab has had a never ending hatred for him. He has only one purpose left in life; hunting Moby Dick and taking his revenge. He does not care about anyone or anything, even forcing the crew to hate Moby Dick and try to catch him as soon as they see him. Murray states: "The truth is that Ahab is motivated solely by his private need to avenge a private insult" (Murray 446). Captain Ahab has a strong desire to kill Moby Dick, but why? It can be inferred from Ahab's actions that there is another reason behind his obsession with Moby Dick. As it is seen, Moby Dick took his leg, that's why Ahab wants to take revenge from Moby Dick, however it is possible to say that Ahab attempts many times to hunt Moby Dick, but not to take revenge of his lost leg, "to destroy the evil reason behind it" (Bryant 214). The whale recalls Ahab the evil forces, because as for Captain Ahab, the White Whale symbolizes the embodiment of the evil powers deeper his unconscious. Generally, for some people white is the symbol of purification, however for some other it is the representation of unknown and ambiguity. Since Ahab was injured by Moby Dick, he associates the whiteness of Moby Dick with evil powers, because the White Whale causes him to lose his leg. Therefore, we see that Ahab acts mostly under the influence of his id. His strong internal feelings force him to destroy the evil that he is keeping inside him, so Moby Dick with his whiteness means evil powers for him, by hunting Moby Dick, he actually wants to kill the evil thoughts or memoires that he keeps in his unconscious. Bryant explains what Moby Dick signifies for Ahab by stating; "If

we accept that whales are not whales but symbols and that the white whale symbolizes evil, then we can justify the destruction of that symbol and call it a spiritual act. It is the logic of genocide and holocaust” (Bryant 214-215). Moby Dick is not an ordinary creature for Ahab. In the chapter entitled *Moby Dick*, he describes what Moby Dick means to him; “... all evil to crazy Ahab, were visibly personified, and made practically assailable in Moby Dick” (Melville 154). Actually, when Ahab thinks about Moby Dick, he only sees what he wants to see, what his unconscious, repressed memories, and desires force him to see. Thus, Moby Dick is not actually the embodiment of evil, but he is the embodiment of Ahab’s repressed desires and unforgettable memories. That is why the only aim of his life is to kill Moby Dick. John Wenke identifies Ahab’s fragmented personality as “mad, maimed, [and] indigent” (Wenke 705). Ahab is quite aware of his madness to say: “... I’m demoniac, I am madness maddened!” (Melville 142). He believes that if he kills Moby Dick, he will have also killed the evil side of himself, destroying his repressed emotions and uncontrollable desires at the same time. Bryant describes Ahab’s psychological situation in the following way: “... his "madness" is not self-possessed but unbidden and uncontrollable. Unconscious fear and more conscious rhetorical desires shape Ahab's speech (Bryant 215). He is always ranting about hunting Moby Dick and takes his revenge on him, but these are the words shaped not in his logic conscious mind but by his unconscious fears and desires. In *The Quarter-Deck*, Ahab talks to crew members exposing his hatred for Moby Dick:

... it was Moby Dick that dismayed me; Moby Dick that brought me to this dead stump I stand on now. ...”Aye, aye! It was that accursed white whale that razeed me; made a poor pegging lubber of me for ever and a day!” Then tossing both arms, with measureless imprecations he shouted out: “Aye, aye! And I’ll chase him round Good Hope, and the Horn, and round the Norway Maelstrom, and round perdition’s flames before I gave him up. And this is what ye have shipped for, men! To chase

that white whale on both sides of land over all sides of earth, till  
he spouts black blood and rolls fin out (138-139)

This speech shows how strongly Ahab hates Moby Dick, he does not have any tolerance for Moby Dick, he wants his crew to find and catch him. His greatest desire is to kill her as soon as they find her; Moby Dick took his leg and made him a half-man. Therefore he wants to encounter Moby Dick and take his revenge. Alternately it can be said that his speech as John Bryant argues is shaped by his desires and fears which are buried in his unconscious.

As Ahab's vengeance for Moby Dick grows day by day, he cannot get rid himself of his desire to hunt Moby Dick. That makes his psychological state degrade almost daily. This monomaniacal desire for Moby Dick makes him more and more obsessed with the White Whale as the hunt intensifies. Ahab attributes evil to Moby Dick, and we, the reader, only see Moby Dick through Ahab's eyes. In his unconscious, Moby Dick is the representation of evil, but it is clear that Ahab suffers from a psychological disorder; the main cause of his mental condition is not actually Moby Dick and his question vengeance on the whale, but most likely his own memories of past sufferings. Chapter *Ahab* provides details about how Ahab is viewed by Ishmael;

“[his officers] plainly showed the uneasy, if not painful, consciousness of being under a troubled master-eye. And not only that, but moody stricken Ahab stood before them with a crucifixion in his face; in all the nameless regal overbearing dignity of some mighty woe (110).

The loss of his leg is only the surface cause of his desire for vengeance. The lost leg stands for his emasculation. Camille Paglia in *Sexual Personae: Art and Decadence from Nefertiti to Emily Dickinson*, proposes that Ahab's loss is not directly psychical, but is can also be viewed as a sexual one. Ahab has chased Moby Dick for a long time, and from this perspective, Paglia argues that the harpoon Ahab throws at Moby Dick is a “phallic mental projection, born of frustrated desire” (Paglia 589). Ahab considers that his leg is taken from him by Moby Dick, that is why there is an on-going pursuit between



Moby Dick and Ahab. By attempting to take his revenge on Moby Dick, Captain Ahab actually intends to regain his masculinity that the whale had stolen. He wants to show his strength and power over Moby Dick. He wants to prove that he is able to defeat Moby Dick with only one leg too. The harpoon that he uses to catch Moby Dick is an outcome of his phallic desire, because it has a significant function for Ahab. This functional harpoon takes the place of his lost leg, because it is used to hunt Moby Dick who injured Ahab and led to the loss of his leg. He aims to re-gain the power he lost with his leg by using this harpoon on Moby Dick. In *The Forge*, Melville illustrates why this harpoon is significant for Ahab with the lines; "I, too, want a harpoon made; one that a thousand yoke of fiends could not part, Perth; something that will stick in a whale like his own fin-bone" (Melville 372). This quotation clearly shows the importance of the harpoon for Ahab. He wants the blacksmith to make something really special for him and for Moby Dick. He wants the harpoon which will stick deeper into the cover of White Whale; therefore he will suffer more and will be caught more easily. Since this harpoon has a divine mission, Ahab baptizes it and in the same chapter he baptizes this harpoon by saying; "Ego non baptize te in nomine patris, sed in nomine diabolic!" deliriously howled Ahab, as the malignant iron scorchingly devoured the baptismal blood" (373). As baptism is a sacred ceremony, Ahab baptizes his harpoon, because this harpoon will commit a sacred act, mainly the return of Ahab's manhood. It will kill Moby Dick and be covered in the blood of the white whale. When Ahab kills Moby Dick with the harpoon, he will not regain his leg back, but he will regain his strength and power again, shedding his self-imposed view that he is half a man. Moby Dick, by taking his leg from him, shattered Ahab's manhood and its return is the true reason for his revenge but it is hidden deep in his unconscious. As Ahab claims: "... it was Moby Dick that dismasted me; Moby Dick that brought me to this dead stump I stand on now" (138). Ahab experiences almost complete split in his identity. The whiteness of the whale reminds him of all the evil powers in the world which has existed since Adam (Melville, 154), so the whale itself becomes a symbol of evil. Whiteness generally stands for purity, however for

Ahab; it is a sign of darkness, because God is replaced by the devil for him. His entire mind is surrounded by the evil thoughts. In his subconscious he wants to be in the position of God, as the one who has power over the world. His desire to be an all-powerful leader for all the people shows that he wants to take the position of God. He prefers not to worship or obey any rules, but prefers to be obeyed his rules and his orders. In *The Chase---The Third Day*, Ishmael makes a brief comparison between God and Captain Ahab saying that; "...Ahab never thinks; he only feels, feels, feels; that's tingling enough for mortal man! To think's audacity. God only has that right and privilege" (Melville 423). The novel also clearly illustrates that Ahab also compares himself to God. In chapter *The Ship*, Captain Peleg describes Captain Ahab to Ishmael by saying; "... He is a grand, ungodly, god-like man, Captain Ahab; doesn't speak much; but when he does speak, then you may well listen" (Melville 80). Ahab, like all ship captains, seen as god-like figure by the crew, he has the absolute authority over the crew and he wants to expand his influence to be the most powerful figure in the world. This is why it can be argued that somewhere in his subconscious he dreams of being God, since he sees Moby Dick as the devil. He must gain power over Moby Dick; he must defeat Moby Dick to gain his godly power back. He must prove that he is much stronger and powerful than Moby Dick. In *Ahab and Starbuck in the cabin*, Ahab compares himself with God by stating; "... There is one God that is Lord over the earth, and one Captain that is lord over the Pequod --- On deck!" (Melville 363). By making such comparison, he tries to show that he is the God of the *Pequod* and as it is a well-known fact that there is an on-going battle between God and the Devil, in this case, as for Ahab, he takes the role of God as the leader of other crew members and the *Pequod* and Moby Dick takes the role of Devil for Ahab, because Moby Dick stands for the embodiment of evil for Ahab. Since he considers himself as a godly being, he must achieve superiority over Moby Dick by catching and hunting him. In the chapter *The Quarter-Deck*, Ahab explains the main reason of their quest; "... Death to Moby Dick! God hunt us all, if we do not hunt Moby Dick to his death!" (Melville 141). As seeing himself a god like figure, Ahab takes on the

task of fighting with Devil, in this world the Devil is Moby Dick for him. Joseph Adamson comments on Ahab's desire for power by saying that Ahab has the strongest "sense of unconquerable power, the feeling that he is omnipotent and infallible ... Ahab is driven by the all-consuming need to overpower and defeat his enemy no matter what the cost" (Adamson 6). Ahab believes that he is undefeatable and powerful, he is the strongest and there cannot be any obstacle that can stop him from killing Moby Dick. Regarding himself as god-like figure in this world, he must be the one to win this battle whatever the cost is.

Ahab's desire of vengeance for Moby Dick directly stems from his unconscious level. He puts Moby Dick in the place of what he has lost so far in his life, and since he cannot bring them back, he transfers his guilt onto Moby Dick, so that by killing him, he believes that he will find peace in the end. Therefore, it can be argued that all Ahab's unacceptable actions, thoughts or ideas are the result of his unconscious mind. Richard Fleming and Michael Payne, in their book *New Interpretations of American Literature* suggest that the unconscious is responsible for Captain's Ahab obsession with Moby Dick and his crazy obsession to hunt Moby Dick by stating; "...It is no outer constraint but the inner necessity of the collective unconscious that drives Ahab on, and drives him crazy" (Fleming and Payne 105). All his repressed feelings, childhood memories, and experiences in the past and on the ship during his life-time contribute directly to his obsession with Moby Dick. Therefore, it can be inferred from all this that there is a direct connection between Ahab's unconscious desires and his monomaniacal obsession to destroy Moby Dick.

### **3.3. Fedallah's Dream Interpretation in relation to Freudian Interpretation of Dreams**

One of the most important theories put forward by Sigmund Freud is his interpretation of dreams. In psychoanalytic theory, interpreting dreams

has a significant place. Dreaming is not regarded as a simple process, because it is thought that dreaming is way of revealing the repressed desires and memories of the patient. It is a process which is directly related to the unconscious minds of the individuals. Carl Jung, in his book entitled *Memories, Dreams and Reflections*, comments on the process of dreaming and he says; "... dreams that represented a fairly deep experience of the unconscious" (Jung 1989). Therefore, it is possible to find a connection between Freudian theory of the interpretation of dreams and Ahab's on-going dreams. Throughout the novel, Ahab has been dreaming of the same thing, his death. Since dreams are known as the outcome of unconscious desires and memories, we can find a common point between Ahab's dreams and his unconscious desires. Ahab has been dreaming of two hearses and his death. He asks Fedallah, who takes the role of prophet in the novel, for the interpretation of his dreams. In the chapter, "*The Whale Watch*," there is a conversation between Ahab and Fedallah, they are talking about Fedallah's prophecies about Ahab's dreams;

"...I have dreamed it again," said he.

"Of the hearses? Have I not said, old man, that neither hearse nor coffin can be thine?"

"And who are hearsed that die on the sea?"

"But I said, old man, that ere thou couldst die on this voyage, two hearses must verily be seen by thee on the sea; the first not made by mortal hands; and the visible wood of the last one must be grown in America." (Melville 378).

Throughout the novel, Fedallah acts like an analyst and Ahab really cares about his opinions and interpretations of his dreams. Ahab has been having the same dreams since they began their voyage together to find Moby Dick. He believes these dreams are a king of sign of his fate. In that case, it is possible to draw a parallel between Ahab's and Fedallah's positions. It is like Ahab is lying on the couch and Fedallah is trying to analyze his dreams. Richard Fleming and Michael Payne comment on Fedallah's situation in the novel by stating; "Fedallah ... [is] a psychologist who, like Freud and Jung,

interprets dreams” (Fleming and Payne 99). Fedallah acts as an analyst attempting to uncover the untold or repressed thoughts of Ahab through the analysis of his dreams. Ahab’s current dreams are all about his future death. These dreams show him signs of how he will die while searching for Moby Dick. Fedallah interprets Ahab’s dreams and concludes that it is he, Fedallah, who will die first, and in the end, this belief comes true and Fedallah dies first. In Chapter named *The Chase---Second Day*, Melville shows how Fedallah’s interpretation comes true.

“The Parsee!” cried Stubb---“he must have been caught in---”  
 “The black vomit wrench thee! ---run all of ye above, aloft, cabin, fore-castle---find him---not gone---not gone!”. But quickly they returned to him with the tidings that the Parsee was nowhere to be found (Melville 422).

In the last chapter of the novel, *The Chase --- Third Day*, it is shown that Fedallah was drowned. At that moment, Ahab realizes that Fedallah’s prophecies are true, and that they will continue to come true. Ahab talks to himself about Fedallah’s prophecies becoming reality saying;

...What’s that [Fedallah] said? he should still go before me, my pilot; and yet to be seen again?...Aye, aye, like many more thou told’st direful truth as touching thyself...the half torn body of the Parsee was seen; his sable raiment frayed to shreds; his distended eyes turned full upon Ahab (425-427).

As Fedallah predicted his death, he was both drowned and did indeed die before Ahab. Most of the things that Ahab saw in his dreams symbolic rather than actual events or objects. For instance, Ahab dreamed of two hearses and one of them is apparent now. He understands that his dreams are reflections of his present situation. In the same chapter, Ahab understands that Fedallah’s prophecy will come true by saying; “Aye, Parsee! I see thee again. --- Aye, and thou goest before; and this, this then is the hearse that thou didst promise” (427). Through the end of this chapter, another sign from Ahab’s dream comes true, the second hearse appears in the shape of the ship, the *Pequod*, at that moment, and Ahab understands that now he will

die. He reacts to seeing the second sign of his dream by saying; "The ship! The hearse! ---the second hearse!" cried Ahab from the boat; "its wood could only be American!" (Melville 430). Finally, Ahab's dreams come true. His dreams serve as a warning of what will come out of for his obsessive attachment to Moby Dick. In essence, the dream sequences are trying to tell him that each step that he takes towards Moby Dick will bring his end closer. Somewhere in his unconscious, Ahab is quite aware of the eventual results of his obsession with Moby Dick, he knows that there will be only one winner and it will be either; Captain Ahab or Moby Dick. However, his hatred and desire for revenge outweigh this knowledge which is why he shuts his ears to both the members of the crew and the interpretation of his dreams. As it is stated above, dreaming is directly connected to repressed desires and wishes. Ahab's monomaniacal wish to hunt Moby Dick disturb Ahab's nights. Mac'ie Campbell, in his review, describes what dreams stand for, he says; "dreams frequently represent wishes in an undisguised form, and that they often represent wishes in a more or less distorted manner (Campbell 343). His obsession with Moby Dick appears in a disguised form in his dreams, in the form of nightmares; he is often woken from his sleep by insufferable nightmares. However, the central cause of his nightmares is not directly connected to his hatred of Moby Dick. His suffering is buried deep in his soul, and because of this, Ahab's suffering is intolerable. In the chapter entitled *The Chart*, Melville explains how deeply Ahab is affected by the nightmares he experiences.

Often, when forced from his hammock by exhausting and intolerably vivid dreams of the night, which, resuming his own intense thoughts through the day, carried them on amid a clashing phrensies, and whirled them round and round in his blazing brain, till the very throbbing of his life-spot became insufferable anguish...when this hell in himself yawned beneath him, a wild cry would be heard through the ship...Yet these, perhaps, instead of being the unsuppressable symptoms of some latent weakness, or fright at his time own resolve, were

but the plainest tokens of its intensity...this Ahab that had gone to his hammock was not the agent that so caused him to burst from it in horror again. The latter was the eternal, living principle or soul in him (167-168).

Captain's split identity; his monomania and hopeless obsession are all in their own way, the cause of his dreams. His soul suffers greatly, which is why his suffering reveals itself most clearly in his dreams. Ahab does not have an ordinary personality, his thoughts, memories, and relationships are all problematic. For example, he is so obsessed with his lost leg due to his violent encounter with Moby Dick, that it destroys his personality. Ahab claims his desire to get vengeance for Moby Dick's assault is the cause of his nightmares, however his childhood experiences, his adult life, and the love and affectionate he receives from the family members are also all direct causes of his nightmares. His hatred for and monomaniacal obsession with Moby Dick is only the apparent cause of these dreams precisely because he hides his past from the crew.

### **3.4 The Whiteness of the Whale and Deconstruction Theory**

[I]t was the whiteness of the whale that above all things appalled me (Melville 157).

The whiteness of the whale is interpreted in many ways by the crew, Ahab and Ishmael. White is used to describe the purity, beauty or innocence of somebody or something. Throughout the novel, however, as readers we encounter that whiteness of the whale which is interpreted as the embodiment of evil by Captain Ahab. Ishmael describes whiteness with these words; "Though in many natural objects, whiteness refining enhances beauty" (Melville 157). Thus, it is possible to say that there is a dilemma between the general interpretation of whiteness and Ahab's interpretation of whiteness. Since Moby Dick is known as the most dangerous creature in the world, Ahab describes his whiteness in this way;

... all evil to crazy Ahab, were visibly personified, and made practically assailable in Moby Dick. He piled upon the whale's hump the sum of all the general rage and hate felt by his whole race from Adam's down; and then, as if his chest had been a mortar, he burst his hot heart's shell upon it (154).

In the novel, Ahab intends to transfer his unconscious fears and desires onto Moby Dick and his whiteness. Moby Dick comes to represent one of the most dangerous sea creatures ever. As Moby Dick causes Ahab to lose his leg, it is believed that Moby Dick only brings destruction to humanity, which is why Moby Dick is not known as something pure and innocent, but known as something cruel and evil. In his essay, Dennis Williams explains what the whiteness of Moby Dick symbolizes Captain Ahab; "beyond the obvious fact of the revenge motif, continually emphasized throughout the novel ... exerts a wholly disproportionate fascination for Ahab" (Williams 73). Moby Dick stands for the symbol his vengeance for Ahab. Moby Dick caused him to lose his leg; therefore such a creature cannot be pure and innocent. Ahab sees the whale's whiteness as a kind of mask to hide his destructive and cruel powers. Ahab does not want to let Moby Dick deceive him by using his whiteness, pretending to be pure and innocent. Williams develops this interpretation, stating that; Moby Dick is "a phantasmatic object, a kind of fetish object at the center of Ahab's libidinal economy": the *objet petit a*" (Williams 73). As for Ahab, Moby Dick and his whiteness are a kind of displacement of his unconscious desires and fears. Moby Dick and his whiteness are the unveiled part of Ahab's own fears and desires. The loss of his leg has a significant place in his unconscious; it means the loss of his manhood, a lack of ability and its subsequent sense of inferiority. Therefore, he has an interminable desire to exact revenge on Moby Dick. Further, the whale's whiteness symbolizes to Ahab containment of all the evil forces and powers in him. In the *Whiteness of The Whale*, Ishmael attempts to define what whiteness means, however he gives two different definitions for white color:



Is it that by its indefiniteness it shadows forth the heartless voids and immensities of the universe, and thus stabs us from behind with the thought of annihilation, when beholding the white depths of the Milky Way? Or is it, that as in essence whiteness is not so much a color as the visible absence of color, and at the same time the concrete of all colors; is it for these reasons that there is such a dumb blankness, full of meaning, in a wide landscape of snows — a colorless, all-color of atheism from which we shrink? (163).

It can be inferred from Ishmael's words that the whiteness of the whale stands for ambiguity and meaninglessness. In short, it really means nothing. Since none of the crew knows what is waiting for them during this whaling voyage, everything is ambiguous for them. Ishmael does not know what will happen next, nor does he know when they will see Moby Dick or how this final fight between Moby Dick and Ahab will end. Therefore, Moby Dick is the meaning of ambiguity personified for him. The whale brings on the feeling of vacancy or the unknown. In the chapter entitled *Moby Dick*, Ishmael refers to this obscurity by stating; "For one, I gave up myself up to the abandonment of the time and the place; but while yet all a-rush to encounter the whale, could see naught in that brute but the deadliest ill" (156).

When Moby Dick is analyzed through Derrida's theory of deconstruction, it is possible to say that the white color of the whale is the signifier itself. However, the white whale can also represent the signified, in other words, as Slavoj Žižek explain in his book named *The Sublime Object of Ideology*, it is an "objectification of the void" (Žižek 95). The whiteness of the whale does not have a fixed meaning in the novel; the only stable object is Moby Dick, and the crew members, Ahab, and even the readers can attribute meanings to the whale that are just as valid as any other meaning. Through the novel, the whiteness of the whale is signified as pure, dark, evil and deceptive. Therefore, it can be inferred that the whiteness of Moby Dick due to the signified-signifier relationship does not have a fixed meaning or rigid interpretation. Anyone on the *Pequod* can interpret the whale's

whiteness as they wish, because the meanings that they will attribute to the whiteness do not have a stable meaning for everyone.

### 3.5. Lacan's Psychoanalytic Theory and *Moby Dick*

Melville's famous work *Moby Dick* has been known as a male-centered novel since its publication. This stems from the lack of female figures in the book, and as it is seen, the characters in the novel not only have no attraction to but also little actual interaction with female figures. The only interaction that they all share is with Moby Dick, the White Whale. Throughout the novel, as readers we witness the feelings of vengeance that Ahab harbors for Moby Dick. However, the cause of this desire for vengeance not only stems from Ahab's lost leg but can be traced much further back in Ahab's life. In essence, Ahab replaces the place of mother with Moby Dick, connecting the role of mother to the White Whale, Moby Dick.

According to the Lacanian view of psychoanalysis, infants who experience the lack of a mother figure cannot wholly complete his/her personal identity and throughout his/her life, individual is in the search of something to take the place of his/her loss to complete his/her personal identity. That is why; Ahab's monomaniac obsession to Moby Dick can be the result of the lack of his mother during his life time. Seth Hagen makes a connection between Ahab and the function of femininity in his life by saying; "... a connection I will pursue in Melville's novel as it relates to the white whale as a monstrous mother/womb, particularly as beheld by Ahab" (Hagen 25). The White Whale in other words is a kind of object which is put in the place of mother. Ahab's strong hatred for Moby Dick is a kind of reaction which he cannot show his mother due to the lack of the mother in his life.

Lacan explains the relationship between desire and the phallus by saying; "If the desire of the mother is the phallus, the child wishes to be the phallus in order to satisfy that desire" (Lacan 289). Since Ahab cannot satisfy

his desire due to the lack of phallus which appears as the missing leg in the novel, he seeks ways to fulfill this desire deeply. The wooden leg is a substitute for his phallic desire. This is also the reason why he experiences fragmentation in his identity, and it is this lack which causes him to hate Moby Dick during since their first encounter. He is convinced that it is Moby Dick who is responsible for the loss of his leg, as I have mentioned above the loss of his leg means the loss of his masculinity. Thus, the whale is the only thing from which he can take his revenge to satisfy his desire, which he believes will unite fragmented identity and end his torment. The loss of his mother at the age of one year causes Ahab to develop an unhealthy personality and further, this lack deters him from satisfying his desire. In the chapter entitled *The Ship*, while Captain Peleg is talking about Ahab with Ishmael and Queequeg, he claims; "Captain Ahab did not name himself. 'Twas a foolish, ignorant whim of his crazy, widowed mother, who died when he was only a twelvemonth old" (80). Captain Ahab cannot form a stable and healthy identity for himself. During the first years of childhood, the child is dependant on the mother, later in mirror stage the child identifies himself and gains self-identity. Captain's Ahab problem stems from the incompleteness of this part. Since he did not have parental dependence during his infancy, he cannot unify himself with the mother figure. Without fulfilling his phallic desire, he shifted to forming his own identity as an individual and this caused him to experience fragmented identity in his entire life. Now the situation in which Ahab is clearly shows that Ahab wishes to complete the missing part of his identity by taking revenge on Moby Dick. The missing leg stands for his phallic desire and in order to satisfy his desire, he has to hunt Moby Dick, because Moby Dick is responsible for his loss. Anika Lemaire mentions the presence of the father as the complement of the phallus in the infant's life, she states; "The father is perceived to be in possession of the phallus and to be the one who can use the phallus in a socially normalized relationship. This perception leads to the child's identification with the father" (Lemaire 87). Captain Ahab lacks of both father and mother in his life, in the chapter named *The Ship* it is understood that Ahab's mother was a widow woman and died

when he was only twelve years old (Melville, 80). Thus, he needs to satisfy his desire, and in the abstract, the phallus is represented first by his mother and then his father, however, as it is stated in the novel, Captain Ahab does not have a father in his life, his mother is widowed and she is described as foolish, crazy and ignorant, so it can be inferred that Ahab feels the deficiency of both mother and father, hence this causes him to experience fragmentation in his identity, personality. Since Ahab cannot satisfy his desire completely, he attempts to complete his deficient identity by satisfying his desire through the White Whale, Moby Dick. His main desire is to catch and hunt Moby Dick. In the chapter, *The Chart*, Melville explains Ahab's desire to destroy the White Whale: "to which it was conjoined, fled horror-stricken from the unbidden and unfathered birth (168). However, this is not an ordinary whaling journey; his desire is directly based on taking revenge on Moby Dick. Only by doing so, he believes that he can re-gain his masculine power and complete the missing parts in his fragmented identity. It can be inferred that Ahab fails to complete the Lacanian symbolic order and, this incompleteness is the cause of his quest to get vengeance against Moby Dick. He transfers all of his hatred onto Moby Dick. Hagen explains how Ahab sees Moby Dick stating that:

"[F]or Ahab, the White whale is monstrous, and its monstrosity for him seems particularly linked to its feminine, maternal associations. Indeed, Ahab's monomania—his single unswerving task to destroy the white whale—can be understood as a form of violent abjection of the maternal" (Hagen 26).

Having the lack of parental support during his childhood forces Ahab to direct his hatred to Moby Dick, because he led a life without his parents. Therefore according to Lacanian psychoanalytic process, he is not able to fulfill his desires, since he cannot direct his hatred to his parents, Ahab focuses his hatred for everything that has happened to him onto the first thing which damages him, and this was the White Whale, Moby Dick. Due to the lack of fulfillment of desire, Ahab thinks that all human beings are born in pain and

will die in pain too, because this deficiency and incompleteness will not let them form a united identity over the course of their life. In the chapter, *The Doubloon*, Ahab states; "Born in throes, 'tis fit that man should live in pains and die in pangs!" (Melville 333). At this point, he connects the pains and grief to not knowing or having parental support during their lives. Physical and mental lack in his life greatly affected Captain Ahab and his personal development. Since he cannot satisfy his desire, he grows his hatred for Moby Dick, and puts Moby Dick in the place of both his mother and father; Moby Dick also damages him by taking his leg and by doing so, shatters Ahab's masculinity.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* provides essential background for an analysis of the unconscious of the central characters. It can be said that nearly all the central characters in the novel Ishmael, Starbuck, Queequeg and Captain Ahab are driven by their desires and thoughts that are kept at the level of the their unconscious. Firstly, Ishmael, who is known as the most rational person of the crew, tries to break the restrictions which are put on him by society. He chooses to embark on whaling ship, because somewhere in his unconscious, he dreams of having an endless and free life, thus he seeks freedom on the sea which he cannot find on land. Since super ego functions as the rules determined by the society, he wants to depend on his id which tells him that whaling will mean freedom for him. However, sometimes Ishmael takes on the role of super ego on the ship. He functions as the super ego of Captain Ahab, questioning Ahab's actions and trying to limit the impact of those actions such as hunting or killing Moby Dick. Ishmael does not blindly stick to his oath to kill Moby Dick. He does not start his journey to kill Moby Dick, he goes on the whaling ship in order to find freedom and complete his fragmented identity which he cannot complete in

the land. This voyage helps him articulate his repressed feelings, thoughts and overcome this.

After Captain Ahab in command is First Mate Starbuck. Despite being good friends, Captain Ahab and Starbuck have completely different personalities. Throughout the novel, Starbuck is seen obeying the rules Captain Ahab has laid out. However, he represses his own ideas about the White Whale as not to challenge Ahab in front of the crew. They all set out this journey to hunt Moby Dick; however Starbuck knows that Ahab's monomaniac obsession will bring destruction and not victory to them in the end. This is the idea that he has to repress, but when Starbuck takes the role of ego, he uncovers his thoughts sharing them with Captain Ahab. In this way he attempts to limit Ahab's deadly desires. While Ahab is controlled mostly by his id, Starbuck is mostly controlled by his ego. However, it becomes clear that Ahab's id is so strong that Starbuck's ego cannot resist its will. Starbuck also experiences a duality in himself. One side of him is completely against Ahab's deadly purpose of hunting Moby Dick, while his other side is greatly under the influence of Ahab's strong id. However, his idea which he represses in his unconscious is that Ahab's strong desire to kill Moby Dick will only bring a curse on them. Despite all his warnings to Captain Ahab, he continues the voyage to destruction.

The strangest crew member of the *Pequod* without doubt is Queequeg. It can be said that Ishmael and Queequeg share the same fate. Like Ishmael, Queequeg is also controlled by his id. He wants to escape from the life that he lives on land. His desire to explore new things and cultures has been repressed so far and therefore he decides to become a whaler, setting out on an endless journey with the rest of the crew. He does not care about Ahab's monomaniac desire to find Moby Dick, he only wants to escape his stable life on land while finding a new purpose for himself. He tries to manage his inner conflict developing his own defense mechanism; escapism. He seeks ways to escape from his predetermined life and embrace his repressed desires and feelings by setting out this whaling journey.

Captain Ahab, the central most important character of the novel, provides the greatest amount of information for a psychoanalytic approach. His monomaniac desire to find and kill Moby Dick is directly related to his unconscious and is the result of his repressed feelings and memories. Ahab is the central character of the novel and is fully driven by his id. He does not allow his ego to build a bridge between his id and super ego. He is fully obsessed with Moby Dick, because by taking his leg, Ahab thinks that Moby Dick has also taken part of his manhood.

The whiteness of the whale is the most important thing that attracts both Ishmael and Captain Ahab to it. In most cultural understanding of color whiteness generally stands for purity and goodness, however for Ahab the whiteness of the whale signifies the embodiment of all evil powers in the world. However, for Ishmael it does not stand for evil, instead the whiteness of the whale reminds him of the ambiguity and meaninglessness that he experiences on land.

The interpretation of dreams also carries great weight in understanding the unconsciousness of the novel's characters. Through this, it is possible to find the parallels between the patient and the analyst Fedallah's and Captain Ahab's situation. Ahab's ongoing dreams about his death are the outcome of his monomaniac desire to kill Moby Dick. He is aware of the fact that his deeds will bring destruction to all the crew members. However he hates Moby Dick so much that it will not allow him to articulate this aloud. Instead he chooses to repress his fears in public, but his feelings and thoughts bleed into his mind while he is sleep and cause brutal nightmares. Fedallah, in the role of analyst, interprets his dreams and tells him what awaits him in the future, and most importantly, the consequences of his desire to kill Moby Dick.

Finally, Melville's *Moby Dick* also provides material for a Lacanian psychoanalytic analysis. The lack of a mother in Ahab's life stands for the lack of phallus that leads him not to have a complete identity. He is in need of satisfying of his desire of phallus, however he is not able to satisfy such desire due to the lack of parental existence, and he has to repress his desire.

This repressed desire in later time is revealed as his desire for vengeance on Moby Dick. Moby Dick reminds him of his loss, therefore by through finding and hunting Moby Dick he intends to fulfill this desire. In addition to this, later some time in his life, the father takes the role of phallus to set a social place in the society, since he does not have father, he experiences fragmentations in his identity and his place in the society too. Ahab is not able to show his hatred to his mother and father; however he has to fulfill his desire in order to set peaceful identity. That is why, he directs his hatred to Moby Dick which is responsible for his loses.



#### 4. CONCLUSION

The main objective of psychoanalysis is to understand and interpret human behaviors which are affected by unconscious desires and repressed feelings. Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic theory is an important way to find the reasons of or for abnormal human behaviors. Sigmund Freud's theory of bringing the desires from unconscious to the conscious level is an applicable method to understand the main reasons of for these behaviors. The deeper analysis of the id, ego, and superego provide reliable information for the reasons possible abnormal behaviors. According to Freud, these abnormal behaviors stem from the person's childhood traumas. When desires, memories or emotions are kept in the unconscious, they will certainly come out in a way in the future. The main objective of Freud is that; bringing the untold desires or repressed feelings to the level of conscious and make the patient voice them to overcome these abnormal behaviors. For Freudian model of psyche, it has three parts; id, ego and superego. All of them directly contribute to the development of self-identity. These three parts of psyche are integrated one another. The id works for the pleasure principle, it focuses on gratification, the ego works for the reality principle and it decides if something is appropriate for the self or not. The last one is the superego. It serves as a kind of bridge between ego and id. It represents the moral and ethical values imposed by society. When there is a disagreement among these three parts, conflict occurs. In order to get over these conflicts, self develops defense mechanisms. By developing their own defense mechanisms, the individual can escape from their unwanted dreams and repressed desires which are kept in the unconscious. These conflicts mostly occur disguised in the form of dreams. Dream interpretation is an important part of Freudian psychoanalytic theory. By interpreting dreams, it is possible to find the concealed causes of depression, repressed feelings, and unvoiced ideas. The child needs to complete the psycho sexual development to be a healthy being. Psycho sexual development has five basic parts and if one of

them is not completed the individual experiences fragmentation while shaping his self-identity. Moreover, throughout the third step of this psychosexual development, the child experiences phallic desire for the first time for his mother. The child wishes to gratify his desire of love and affection from his opposite sex parent. During this period, father figure appears as a kind of threat for the relationship between mother and child. This is called Oedipus complex, and since the child cannot fulfill his desire for his mother, he has to repress it and this will cause him to experience split identity problem.

In addition to Freud, Jacques Lacan viewed psychoanalytic approach from a different perspective. Contrary to Freud, Lacan places the language into the center. Desire is uttered via language, so as a critic; one should pay attention to the language. Similar to Freud, Lacan divides the formation of identity into three parts: imaginary, symbolic, and real order. Again not completing one of these stages properly will cause the individual to experience fragmentation in his identity and some psychological problems. Actually, the mirror stage has a great importance here, because this stage shows how the infant identifies himself as a self without his mother. The infant realizes that he does not need to depend on his mother anymore; he realizes his own identity immediately. When we combine both Freudian and Lacan's psychoanalytic theories, they are both useful in literature. Psychoanalytic criticism helps reader understand the inner worlds of the characters, their fears, and desires and how they are revealed through their actions. Most of the time, the novels reflect their writers' lives via the central characters. By analyzing the text, we as reader go into deeper parts of the characters and try to solve the reasons of their abnormal behaviors. This thesis aims to provide psychoanalytic interpretations of two novels: *The Scarlet Letter* and *Moby Dick*. Both of these novels provide essential information to conduct psychoanalytic analysis. In this study, the central characters and major symbols of these two novels are analyzed and criticized to reach a common point. In these novels, two major symbols are open to various interpretations. While interpreting these symbols, Jacques Derrida's deconstruction theory becomes highly useful. The Scarlet of the

letter A and the whale Moby Dick's whiteness are interpreted in many different ways. That is to say, in both of the novels there are only two major signifiers but it is possible to find various signified meanings. While deconstructing these symbols, as readers we encounter various interpretations.

The first novel, which is analyzed under the light of psychoanalytic criticism, is *The Scarlet Letter* written by Nathaniel Hawthorne. The past lives led by the central characters in novel in addition to their present behaviors shaped by their unconscious desires are explained by Freudian method of bringing desires or repressed feelings to the conscious level. According to Freud's unconscious concept, the repressed feelings and desires of the characters are revealed and the effects of their unconscious on the actions are analyzed. In *The Scarlet Letter*, we can find traces from Hawthorne's own life. He aims to reflect his childhood trauma and its effects via his fictional characters. Through this characters, he intends to show the dilemmas he has and his repressed feelings and memories. Therefore, Hawthorne's own life, Hester's life and Dimmesdale's life show parallels. In Puritan society, both woman and man live under the oppressive conditions, so they both have to repress their feelings especially their sexual desires for each other.

The characters in the novel have a direct relationship with Freudian concept of id, ego, and superego. When these characters are analyzed carefully, it is found out that id, ego and superego do not work in harmony. They are not able to balance these three parts of personality. Sometimes they stay under the effect of their ids, egos and sometimes they face with the strict rules of the Puritan society that serves as superego. However, in the end, the results of this inconsistency cause destructive results for the characters. Hester Prynne and Arthur Dimmesdale acted according to their ids, but the price of their love affair cost too much, Hester is condemned and isolated in the first place. Then Dimmesdale cannot resist against his conscience and punishes himself secretly to ease his grief.

In addition to Freudian analysis of the novel, Lacan's psychoanalytic ideas can contribute to the further analysis of the novel. There is a relation between Lacan's mirror stage and Pearl's forming her self-identity. Pearl without knowing her real father grows jealous for Arthur Dimmesdale. Since she identifies herself with her mother, Hester Prynne, she perceives Arthur Dimmesdale as a threat between herself and her mother. Moreover, the scene in the forest shows that Pearl starts to gain her self-identity. She sees her own image on the sea and then she realizes her own power and identity as an individual. From this moment, she gradually begins to separate her own identity from her mother's identity.

The signifier and signified relationship finds place in *The Scarlet Letter*. Letter, A is an open signifier to many different interpretations. Throughout the novel, we see only one major signifier, A, but it signifies various different meanings. In this place, Derrida's deconstruction theory comes in. He defends the idea the text does not have a stable meaning; it has the capacity of being viewed in many different ways. In the novel, it is clearly seen that the letter, A has been attributed different meanings; able, angel, abnormal...etc. In addition to this idea, being viewed in different ways shows that signified meanings change from person to person. That is to say, each reader has his own past, present and future, desires, wishes and repressions. While interpreting these images on their own, they stay under the effect of their own lives. They relate the meanings with their unvoiced desires and memories. By doing so, they get the chance of giving voice to their repressed desires and feelings.

The second novel, which analyzed under the light of Freudian psychoanalytic criticism, is Melville's *Moby Dick*. The central characters of the novel stay under influence of their unconscious desires and in a way then are in need of revealing them outside. Their childhood traumas or experiences bring them together; each of them has his own repressed desires and feelings, through their actions or their statements they attempt to reveal them. Throughout the novel, while explaining Ahab's life and his

conflicts, traces from Melville's life and dilemmas can be recognized. Captain Ahab's life and conflicts show similarities with Melville's one.

Starting with Captain Ahab, the entire crew members act under the influence of their id or ego and sometimes they gain the role of superego for their friends. Captain Ahab's actions are mostly shaped by his strong id. That is why in the end he faces the destructive results of his actions. He only behaves according to the pleasure principle; however he has to balance these three parts of psyche equally. Starbuck the First Mate of the ship, mainly acts by using his ego, he bases his actions on the reality principle. Ishmael as the most rational being on the ship most of the time takes up the role of superego for both Ahab and other crew members.

Most of the time repression comes out in the form of dream. Thus, dream interpretation has an important place while analyzing *Moby Dick* under the light of psychoanalytic criticism. Ahab's dreams about his death appear as a kind of warning for him. He dreams about his death attempt to deter him from his monomaniac obsession to Moby Dick. He asks Fedallah about the interpretation of his dreams. In this place, Ahab is in the position of the patient and Fedallah is in the position of the analyst. Dreams are the outcomes of the individual's repressed and unvoiced desires or memories. Therefore, Ahab is aware of the probable consequences of his deadly quest, however he does not reveal this awareness, because he is bound up to his vengeance on Moby Dick.

In addition to Freudian psychoanalytic analysis, Captain Ahab's life and actions provide further material for Lacan's psychoanalytic criticism. The lack of parents in Ahab's life leads him to not have a complete identity and become a healthy being. Due to the lack of mother, Ahab cannot fulfill his desire for his mother, and this causes him to have the lack of phallus. Later, the wooden leg takes the role of phallus and Ahab directs his hatred to Moby Dick, because the whale is responsible for the loss of his leg, in other words his phallus. Furthermore, the lack of the father also causes him to experience fragmentation in his self-identity and his place in the society. That is why he cannot find a place in the society and continues his life on the sea. Captain

Ahab does not reveal his lack apparently; instead he keeps his lack in his unconscious. His hatred and monomaniacal desire of hunting Moby Dick directly comes from his repressed desires and childhood traumas.

The whiteness of the whale is the major signifier in the novel and its signified meanings differ from person to person. For Ahab, the whiteness is the embodiment of evil forces. However, for Ishmael it is the representation of indefiniteness and ambiguity. Interpretation of Moby Dick's whiteness has different meanings for each crew members. That is to say, when they attribute some meanings to the symbol, they stay under the effect of their repressed desires or past memories. White stands for evil for Ahab, because Moby Dick is his enemy, the monster who takes his leg and shatters his masculinity. However, for Ishmael, white stands for ambiguity and meaninglessness, because Ishmael leaves his home land and sails on the sea, because his life is meaningless and ambiguous on the land, he cannot find peace and relief there.

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## ÖZET

İsaoğlu H. Hawthorne'un *Kızıl Damga* romanı ile Melville'in *Moby Dick* isimli romanının psikanalist açıdan incelenmesi. İstanbul Aydın Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, TR. Yüksek Lisans Tezi. İstanbul. 2014.

Bu tez 19. Yüzyıl Amerikan edebiyatının iki önemli romanının psikanalitik incelemesini sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Nathaniel Hawthorne'un *Kızıl Damga* isimli romanı ile Herman Melville'in *Moby Dick* isimli romanları Freud'un psikanalitik teorisi ışığı altında incelenmiştir. Bu tezin temel amacı romandaki ana karakterler arasındaki ilişkiyi göstermek, onların psikolojik durumlarını yansıtarak davranışlarının bu psikolojik durumlarından nasıl etkilendiğini göstermektir.

Birinci bölümde, bu çalışma Freud ve Lacan'ın psikanalitik yaklaşımları, Derrida'nın yapıçözüm teorisi ve Nathaniel Hawthorne ve Herman Melville'in biyografileri ile ilgili gerekli bilgileri içermektedir. Psikanalitik eleştirinin temel hedefleri ve psikanalitik yaklaşımın temel konseptleri okuyucuya tanıtılmıştır. İkinci ve üçüncü bölümlerde ise *Kızıl Damga* ve *Moby Dick* romanlarının detaylı psikanalitik incelemeleri okuyucuya anlatılmıştır. Psikanalitik eleştiri ile alakalı olan temel kavramlar id, ego, süperegö, bilinçaltı ve bilinç gibi kavramlar *Kızıl Damga* ve *Moby Dick* isimli romanlardaki ana karakterler ile ilişkilendirilerek analiz edilmiştir. Karakterlerin içsel çatışmaları ve hayatlarının bastırılmış arzuların ve çocukluk travmalarından nasıl etkilendiğini okuyucuya göstermek amaçlanmıştır. İd, ego ve süper egonun karakterler üzerindeki etkileri çocukluk ve geçmiş anılarına göndermeler yaparak tartışılmıştır. Karakterlerin detaylı psikanalitik analizine ek olarak, romandaki temel semboller yapı çözüm teorisinin yardımı ile incelenmiştir. Dördüncü bölümde ise bu çalışmadan çıkarılan sonucu içeren tezin özetinden bahsedilmiştir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sigmund Freud, Psikanaliz, Baskı, İstek, Yapı çözüm, Oedipus karmaşası

## ABSTRACT

İsaoğlu H. A Psychoanalytic criticism of Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* and Melville's *Moby Dick*. Istanbul Aydın University, Institute of Social Sciences, English Language and Literature. İstanbul. 2014.

This thesis aims to provide a psychoanalytic criticism of two significant novels of 19<sup>th</sup> century American Literature. Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* and Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* are analyzed under the light of Freudian psychoanalytic theory. The main objective of this study is to show the connection between the main characters, their psychological states and how their actions are influenced by their psychological states.

In the first chapter, this study gives the necessary background information about Freud's and Lacan's psychoanalytic approaches, Derrida's deconstruction theory, and the biography of both Nathaniel Hawthorne and Herman Melville. The main objectives of psychoanalytic criticism are highlighted and psychological concepts of psychoanalytic approach are introduced to the reader. The second and third chapters include a detailed psychoanalytic analysis of both *The Scarlet Letter* and *Moby Dick*. Main concepts related to psychoanalytic criticism, id, ego, superego, unconscious, conscious are analyzed in relation to the central characters of both *The Scarlet Letter* and *Moby Dick*. The inner conflicts of the characters and how their lives are affected by their repressed desires and childhood traumas are analyzed. The effects of id, ego and superego are discussed during the analysis of the main characters of the novel by making references to their childhood and past memories. In addition to this detailed psychoanalytic analysis of the characters, the major symbols of two novels are analyzed with the help of deconstruction theory. In the fourth chapter, a summary of this thesis including the conclusion drawn from this study is mentioned.

**Key Words:** Sigmund Freud, Psychoanalysis, Repression, Desire, Deconstruction, Oedipus complex