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UNDERNEATH THE SKIN: THE WOUND THROUGH THE
PSYCHOANALYTIC THEORY

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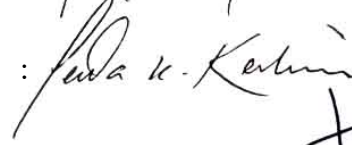
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ABSTRACT

Underneath The Skin: The Wound Through The Psychoanalytic Theory

Mert Özgen
June, 2016

This research sets out to study the connotative meaning of the corporal wound in the context of psychoanalytic theory through the Christian iconography and the representation of the wound on Christ's chest at the scene of Crucifixion. This study analyzes the transformation of the wounded body into an uncanny entity by virtue of the connotation of the visual representation of the wound as a vulva. The wound as an corporal opening, threatening the integrity of the skin that covers the body, excoriates and flays the skin and so redefines the conventional definition of the body as an unknown and unfamiliar entity. The concept of "uncanny" that theorized by Sigmund Freud, highly corresponds to the redefined interpretation of the wounded body. As a result of tearing the skin and violating the main function of the psychic envelope, now the body with its openings literally is an 'uncanny body'. The French psychoanalyst Didier Anzieu declares that skin is not only tangible, but also a representation that surrounds and covers the psyche, through his innovative concept 'Skin-Ego'. The skin is where the disturbances are kept as a memory on in the form of skin disorders and/or bruises and wounds, and also is where the perception of the body appears for the first time; this is also where the Ego arises, through Freudian discourse. The wound, by blocking the function of the Skin-Ego, undermines and/or eliminates the familiar perception of the body. Through removing the boundary between inside and outside, and through the visibility of the representation of the open wound as female genitalia, body transforms itself into a unusual, unfamiliar and unknown form. This transforming body is now an uncanny body itself.

Keywords: Skin, Skin-Ego, Wound, Uncanny, Psychoanalysis.

ÖZET

Derinin Altındaki: Psikanalitik Kuram Bağlamında Yara

Mert Özgen
Haziran, 2016

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Hıristiyan ikonografisi ve İsa'nın çarmıha gerilme sahnesini anlatan temsillerden yola çıkarak, bedensel yaranın psikanalitik kuram bağlamında ima ettiği temsiliyeti ele almaktır. Yaranın görsel temsilinin çağrıştırdığı dişilik organının, yaralı bedeni tekinsiz bir mecraya dönüştürmesi bu çalışmayla irdelenmektedir. Yarayla ele alınan açıklık, bedeni çevreleyen derinin alışıla gelmiş bütünselliğini tehdit ederek, deriyi yırtıp açarak, bedeni alışılmadık, yabancı ve hatta bilinmeyen bir oluşuma dönüştürmektedir. Sigmund Freud'un kuramlaştırdığı "tekinsiz" kavramı, bedenin açıklığıyla birlikte kurgulanan tanımıyla oldukça örtüşmektedir. Derinin yırtılmasıyla bedeni çevreleyen zarfın başlıca görevinin ihlal edilmesinin sonucu olarak, artık beden tam anlamıyla "tekinsiz beden" olarak adlandırılmaktadır. Fransız psikanalist Didier Anzieu, "Deri-Ben" kavramıyla deriyi sadece fiziksel değil, aynı zamanda tını saran, çevreleyen ve örten bir temsiliyet olarak ele alır. Çocuğun beden yüzeyi deneyiminden hareketle, deri hem bir hafıza yeri, hem de 'ben' kavramının oluştuğu yerdir; bu tanım, Freudyen 'ego' kavramının oluşumunun başlangıcıdır. Açıklıklarıyla yara, deri-ben kavramının işlevlerini engelleyerek, 'ben' kavramını zedeler veya ortadan kaldırır. İç ve dış arasındaki sınırın da kalmasıyla, birey bastırılmış olanı geri dönüştürür ve yaranın temsil ettiği dişilik organının da etkisiyle beden alışılmadık bir dönüşüm içine girer. Bu dönüşen beden tekinsiz bir bedendir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Deri, Deri-Ben, Yara, Tekinsiz, Psikanaliz.

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Lastly, I dedicate this thesis to my stunning sister Pınar Özgen who inspires me to write about wound.

Istanbul, May 2016

Mert Özgen

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INTRODUCTION

“... the subject is something which is finally identified to the body as such. So the subjective creation as a sort of paradigm is only experimentation of the limits of the body. The subject is something like an experience of its proper limits, an experience of finitude, an experience of the limits of the concrete unity of the body. But finally, what is a limit of the body, a limit of the living body?”¹

The plenary discussions on corporeality always reconstruct the perception of the body and aim to see beyond a physical form as more than an entity, as a concrete being with flesh and bones. All studies based on the notion of what a body is – that analyze the psychological and philosophical (also anthropological and sociological) approaches to the concept of the body over hand-painted portraits to mug shots, personal care methods to collective protection theories, the sexuality as a study of psychology not through morality – help create various

¹ “Alain Badiou,” accessed May 17, 2016, http://www.lacan.com/symptom6_articles/badiou.html.

unprecedented views and work to form an alternative definition for the perception of a body.

Many disciplines intervene when the research topic is on the concept of the body; as the sensations, the techniques of bodily movements, consumption or expression styles have been investigated, methods and studies of the epistemology are getting varied as required. Also, the developing studies on gender and identity cannot be considered without consulting the studies on the history of thought about the body. The studies of the body consolidate science and knowledge, and see the Body as an actor on a stage.

The body, even as a vision and not just a biological phenomenon, is more socially composed creation with solid or flexible boundaries that are imposed by each culture differently at each age. The functions of the body and the senses are also remarkably open to discussion for many theorists, philosophers, critics and psychoanalysts.

The ornaments of a human being, like a veil, a garment and a spear, are also important and signifiers for defining what is socially distinctive or what is civilized. All the considerations towards the body and also on the attachments that has been used through out, are consistently essential, substantial and highly noteworthy in order to understand the mankind and the humanity.

What is the body? The answer of this 'simple and quite brief' question cannot be easily explained. It is such a dominant and crucial study topic that many academics rummage about just like Michel Foucault, Marcel Mauss, Merleau-Ponty, Judith Butler, Donna Haraway, Elizabeth Grosz, Deleuze and Guattari and many others. They are all skeptical about the solid and immutable

boundaries of the body. The understanding of what the body is and its function(s) has changed radically and geographically over time.

As stated by Mary Douglas in her book *'Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo'* (first published in 1966) regarding the body is a model that stands for any bounded system.² The boundaries of the body “represent any boundaries, which are threatened or precarious. The body is a complex structure. The function of its different parts and their relation afford a source of symbols for other complex structures. We cannot possibly interpret rituals concerning excreta, breast milk, saliva and the rest unless we are prepared to see in the body a symbol of society, and to see the powers and dangers credited to social structure reproduced in small on the human body.”³

Douglas mentions that the body symbolizes everything; the body is a microcosmic reflection/representation of the public. Therefore, the body movements of each society differ one to another: i.e. the French people smoke, walk, swim, eat and also make fashion dissimilarly comparing to Americans do and vice versa. Marcel Mauss, during his lectures on *Techniques of the Body* in 1934, explains that the body is “‘miscellaneous’ social” phenomenon.⁴ The body, according to Mauss, is “man’s first and most natural instrument. Or more accurately, not to speak of instruments, man’s first and most natural technical object.” The same can be said with all instruments: the body as an instrument that also needs to be learned first. For Mauss, this learning process is totally cultural. On the other hand, Foucault declares that “the soul is the...instrument of

² Mary Douglas, *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (London ; New York: Routledge, 2002).

³ Ibid., 142.

⁴ “Mauss_Techniques Body.pdf,” 456, accessed May 17, 2016, http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/docs/icb.topic1458086.files/Mauss_Techniques%20Body.pdf.

a political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body.”⁵, the instrument of the state that is always under constant surveillance. Every aspect of social life was mechanized: education, army, behaviors and also sexuality. Foucault analyzes the period before 18th century, the time that allows corporal punishments, public executions and torture. The title *Discipline and Punish* highly corresponds Foucault’s discourse on the essence of social life: discipline and punishment are both oppressively omnipresent in society. “*The historical moment of the disciplines was the moment when the art of the human body was born... What was then being formed was a policy of coercions that act upon the body, a calculated manipulation of its elements, its gestures, its behavior. The human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it. A ‘political anatomy’, which was also a ‘mechanics of power’, was being born.*”⁶ The power is definitely not gender-neutral; the phallus is power: the phallus strengthens the patriarchal order in society. Thus, the discipline in society and the perception of the visual body and also the world are depicted through masculinity: the male gaze.⁷ Nancy Fraser also examines the problematic of the dominance of the male power through the political-economic and cultural differentiation between the representation of the phallus and the vulva as two genders. “*Gender, ... , has political-economic dimensions. It is a basic structuring principle of the economy. ... The result is a political-economic structure that generates gender-specific models of exploitation, marginalization, and deprivation. This structure constitutes gender as a political-economic*

⁵ Michel Foucault, *Discipline & Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan, 2nd edition (New York: Vintage Books, 1995), 30.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 138.

⁷ Laura Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures*, 2nd edition (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire England ; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

differentiation endowed with certain class-like characteristics.”⁸ In the late 20th century, many philosophers and theorists like Judith Butler argue that gender roles are socially constructed.⁹ Claiming this is not a denial of physical integrity and/or visible reality of the body. Cultural and social approach towards the body is a moral judgment that the aesthetics of the image. The concept of aesthetics and the ‘ideal’ form of the beauty that each society determines at each age depend on the moral judgments created/formed/formulated by social intuitions.¹⁰ Hence, in mostly American and Asian culture, many women have plastic surgery to transform their appearances into the ‘ideal’ feminine beauty, and likewise men lift weights and get hair transplants and pectoral implants in order to form their bodies as masculine ideals.¹¹

Deleuze and Guattari, a French philosopher and a French psychiatrist, influenced by a French poet Antonin Artaud’s phrase ‘the body without organs’, figure the concept of ‘reversibility’ of the body.¹² The body as a subject can become an object, and so as an object become a subject through vision and touching. The state of being both a subject and an object at the same time represents the body as a unique entity and therewithal as a universal existence to all humanity.

⁸ Nancy Fraser, *Justice Interruptus: Critical Reflections on the “Postsocialist” Condition*, 1 edition (New York: Routledge, 1996), 23.

⁹ Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 2006).

¹⁰ Umberto Eco, ed., *History of Beauty* (New York: Rizzoli, 2010).

¹¹ Kathy Davis, *Reshaping the Female Body: The Dilemma of Cosmetic Surgery* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Suzanne Fraser, *Cosmetic Surgery, Gender and Culture* (Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2003).

¹² Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, 1st Edition edition (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987); Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas, trans. Mark Lester and Charles Stivale, Revised ed. edition (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).

Despite centuries of debates about the implicit definitions of the body, there is no common and universal description. Each culture in each period reconstructs and redefines the notion of the body through its own desires, discipline or superstitions. The studies on the perception of the body, physical and also social, testify that the definition is always shifting, and have been ambivalent and vague. The body because of its conflicting, ambiguous and obscure meaning and definition through the centuries, literally, is *unknown* that makes itself fantastic and worth to be exceptionally focused on.

Body takes a place in the extent with its own cover/envelope: the skin. This physical and tangible body can be touched, smelled or seen through the skin.¹³ Skin is the surface of the body that is also an interface between the in and out. This interface protects the inside of the body from external effects and disturbances.

The skin, while protecting the inside from external disturbances, keeps the disturbances as a memory on itself in the form of skin disorders and/or bruises and wounds.¹⁴ From the Fall of man, the corporal punishments, torture and sufferings have been represented on the surface of the body.¹⁵ Besides, sexual stimulation and corporal pleasures consist of sensual, somatic touch through the skin.¹⁶ Considering all, skin is a reflector, a mirror that represents the inside and make it visible to eye. It makes the body visible to the others; the tactile sensory activities open the body to the others.

¹³ Corbin, Alain, Jean-Jacques Courtine and Georges Vigarello, *Bedenin Tarihi 1 - Rönesans'tan Aydınlanma'ya* (Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2007), 7.

¹⁴ Didier Anzieu, *Deri-Ben*, (Metis Yayınları, 2008), 69-71.

¹⁵ Didier Anzieu, *The Skin Ego* (New Haven: Yale Univ Pr, 1989), 45.

¹⁶ Anzieu, *Deri-Ben*, 69.

This thesis focuses on the notion of the *skin* not as an object, but as a representation of the psyche through its integrity and also, contradistinctively, through its openings. The main question that guides the quest about the skin and its openings is “how the body with openings, cuts and wounds on its skin, that are obvious threats to the corporeal integrity of the body, can be defined?” The function of the skin, plainly, is to cover the body; no eye is entitled to observe and see naturally what exists under the skin without the need of a medical supply. This question with a myriad of answers motives to rethink the concept of to being covered by solid skin through psychoanalysis and philosophy and brings other thought-provoking questions in its wake: what does a wound represent beside being a medical symptom and how can an open wound be designated and identified by means of psychoanalytic studies?

The enlightening graduate courses that are taught at Istanbul Bilgi University like “*Melancholy and Modernity*” lectured by Ferda Keskin, “*Psychoanalytic Method in Culture*” and “*The Fantastic, the Mimetic and the Psychotic*” by Bülent Somay and “*The Corporeity in Modern and Contemporary Thought*” lectured by Selen Ansen highly contribute to the figuration of this thesis. These lectures provide a wider psychoanalytic and philosophical perspective to the thinking of the skin.

This thesis frequently appeals to the psychoanalytic method; there are – on purpose and on point – unspoken/unwritten approaches for the thinking of the skin and body in order not to digress the fluidity and clarity of the study. This limitation is because of the restriction of time and words that a master’s thesis should contain; if not, the thinking of the skin can be perceived through

numerous disciplines such as medical science, sociology, women's studies, gender and queer studies and etc.

Blaise Pascal, a French physicist, once wrote in his letter to the Reverend Fathers in December 4, 1656; "*The present letter is a very long one, simply because I has no leisure to make it shorter.*"¹⁷ By taking into consideration the oblique implication of Pascal, the study intends to be an understandable and clear text that is written cautiously so as not to be pleonastic. Therefore, the concept of the skin and the wound is touched on through certain theories.

It is substantial to declare that this thesis is analyzing the psychoanalytic definition of the open wound and trying to identify the skin with openings through the psychoanalytic method.

This thesis sets out to study the connotative meaning of the corporal wound in the context of psychoanalytic theory through the Christian iconography and the representation of the wound on Christ's chest at the scene of Crucifixion. This study analyzes the transformation of the wounded body into an uncanny entity by virtue of the connotation of the visual representation of the wound in art as female genitalia. The wound as a corporal opening, by threatening the integrity of the skin that covers the body, excoriates and flays the skin and so redefines the conventional definition of the body as an unknown and unfamiliar entity. The concept of "uncanny" that theorized by Sigmund Freud, highly corresponds to the redefined interpretation of the wounded body. As a result of tearing and violating the main function of skin, the body transforms into an 'uncanny body'. The skin is where the disturbances are kept as a memory on in the form of skin disorders and/or bruises and wounds, and also is where the

¹⁷ Blaise Wilhelm Pascal, *Pascal: The Provincial Letters* (Forgotten Books, 2008), 219.

perception of the body appears for the first time; this is also where the Ego arises. The wound, by blocking the function of the Skin-Ego and Ego, undermines and/or eliminates the familiar perception of the body. Thus, body transforms itself into an unusual, unfamiliar and unknown form. This transforming body is now an uncanny body itself.

Semiotics is the most instructive study in the context of this research; it allows analyzing many various texts, concepts and approaches simultaneously in order to interpret and define profoundly the sign that is the open wound in this study. This interdisciplinary approach that semiotics ensures, helps to bring the wounded body and the uncanny body together through psychoanalytic theory. In order to examine thoroughly the affinity between the wounded body and the uncanny body, the wound of Christ is the predominant origin and also a guiding pathway for to read the notion of the open wound with a variant point of view. The portrayal of the open wound is frequently represented as a vulva lookalike form nearly in all of the paintings that picture the crucifixion scene in Western art. This transformation links to Kafka's *Metamorphosis* in many aspects but mainly in the thought of castration. The wounded body of Christ has been altered with the unfamiliar opening on the skin, so the body of Gregor Samsa with his metamorphosis. The wounded body of Christ as a visual representation, and the mutated body of Gregor Samsa as a literary representation are both a distinct images of the uncanny bodies.

The first chapter of the thesis that is entitled "*The Skin: The Veil of The Body*", tenders the content of the tangible skin. In order to explore the psychological content refers to skin, the concept of the *Skin-Ego* theorized by the French psychoanalyst Didier Anzieu is a most valid pathway that should be

touched on. Anzieu's intensive concept eases the understanding of the importance of the skin and its functions, also emphasizes the essentialness of the integrity of the skin.¹⁸

The second chapter, "*To Lift The Veil*", questions the concept of the inside and the outside with suspicion through the term *extimacy* coined by Jacques Lacan. The term brings the *interior* and the *exterior*, also the *intimacy* and the *exteriority* together. If the skin is a barrier between *inside* and *outside*, considering Lacan's and also Jacques-Alain Miller's approach to *extimacy*, a corporal wound that cuts the boundary, the skin should be an opening that unites inside and outside. Further in the second chapter, based on the grounded theory of Didier Huberman, the image of the wound on the skin of Christ illustrated by Philippe de Champaigne's *The Dead Christ* painting, will be analyzed through the psychoanalytic method.¹⁹

The third and last chapter reveals the overlapping interpretations of the open wound, the melancholy represented by Sigmund Freud and the metamorphosis of Franz Kafka.²⁰

The chapters in this study, just like lifting of a veil gradually, flay the skin layer by layer and lay bare the invisible that has been kept underneath the skin. This thesis examines the connotative meaning of the wound through non-medical language and identifies the body with the corporal openings that betray the integrity of the skin.

¹⁸ Anzieu, *The Skin Ego*.

¹⁹ Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1959-1960 (Vol. Book VII)*, ed. Jacques Alain-Miller, trans. Dennis Porter (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997); Jacques-Alain Miller, "Extimacy Jacques-Alain Miller – the Symptom 9," *The Symptom 9*, accessed March 27, 2016, <http://www.lacan.com/symptom/?p=36>; Georges Didi-Huberman, *L'image ouverte: Motifs de l'incarnation dans les arts visuels*, GALLIMARD edition (Paris: Gallimard, 2007).

²⁰ Sigmund Freud, *General Psychological Theory: Papers on Metapsychology* (Simon and Schuster, 2008); Franz Kafka, *The Metamorphosis* (Classix Press, 2009).

CHAPTER I

THE SKIN: The Veil of The Body

“... the skin itself served as a notebook, a reminder of what was not allowed to be forgotten.”²¹”

The notion of *Skin-Ego*, *Le Moi-Peau* in French, for the first time by Didier Anzieu, a French psychoanalyst who studied in the field of dermatology for many years, was mentioned in an article published in *Nouvelle Revue de Psychoanalyse, Numéro 9*.²² The term *Skin-Ego* is based on what skin is and its functions. The article served as an introduction to the formulation of skin-ego; in 1985, Anzieu presented his deeper researches by a book titled ‘*Le Moi-Peau*’ that describes the concept precisely.²³ According to Anzieu, while skin is the surface of the body, it also designates a mental representation psychoanalytically; in that it is the intermediate between concept and metaphor, makes the mental content

²¹ Elizabeth A. Grosz, *Volatile Bodies: Toward a Corporeal Feminism* (Allen & Unwin, 1994), 132.

²² J.-B. Pontalis, ed., *NOUVELLE REVUE DE PSYCHANALYSE - 1974 n°09: Le Dehors et Le Dedans* (Gallimard, 1974), 195–209.

²³ Didier Anzieu, *Le Moi-peau*, 2e ed. (Dunod, 1995).

visible. Anzieu defines and develops his researches referring to the importance of the skin.

Skin, the surface of the body, is the largest sense organ and also an interface between in and out by separating them from each other. The surface protects the inner body and/or the psyche from external effects and externalities physiologically and psychologically.²⁴

A baby in the womb, surrounded and protected by a membrane that provides the essential contact with the mother is through an interface. After the birth, the primary relation with the mother by the care - like breastfeeding, cuddling, touching, watching and etc. - given to the baby; this interaction is rebuilt through the skin. According to the researches on pediatrics, the relationship build with mother percutaneously has an important role in the child's psychological development; i.e., children who have not been touched enough or over touched face some major psychological problems. Psychoanalysts stage that the most skin diseases that children have are the symptoms of underdeveloped sense of touch and/or being stimulated strongly. These symptoms are for defensive purposes or self-protection.²⁵ Also many dermatologists emphasize the importance of the skin on mental development many times: most patients with skin diseases, are prone to mental distress.

Anzieu defines *Skin-Ego* as representation and reflection of mental development as well as the experience of perceiving the existence of the body surface during the early stages of development of the infant's identity at the same time. Anzieu goes on to underline the eight functions of the skin-ego, and states

²⁴ Claude Bouillon, *Deri - Bedenin Örtüsü* (Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2009), sec. 2.

²⁵ For further reading; See. Tevfika Tunaboşlu-İkiz, *Psikanaliz Buluşmaları 3 - Psikosomatik* (Bağlam Yayıncılık, 2006).

that a disruption and/or a lack of at least one of these eight functions, causes the deterioration of the formula for the skin-ego.²⁶

1.1. The Skin, The Visible

All the entities, a body, organs have a cover: skin and flesh.²⁷ Skin is the largest organ of the body that protects the body against external factors: and in this sense, it is most vital amongst other organs. Without tasting, smelling, hearing and seeing, one would exist in a different experiential world, but live without sense of touch at all. The total lack of the sense of touch would be fatal.

*. . . you find human beings who suffer from blindness or deafness, or no sense of smell, and this does not prevent them from living, nor from succeeding in communicating, perhaps in a somewhat more complicated way, but they do communicate. By contrast, there is no human being without a virtually complete envelope of skin. If one seventh of the skin is destroyed by accident, lesion, or burns, the human being dies. One can find a symbolic mode of communication even with a child who is both deaf and blind at birth, starting from increasingly differentiated tactile contacts. The skin is so fundamental, its functioning is taken so much for granted, that no one notices its existence until the moment it fails.*²⁸

Although the skin envelopes all of the other sensory organs of the body, has more biological functions comparing to the sensory organs: breathing, sweating, throwing out the secretions, maintaining the movement of the muscle

²⁶ Didier Anzieu, *Deri-Ben* (Metis Yayınları, 2008), 138–49.

²⁷ Bülent Somay, in his writing “Ten, Ben ve Gen”, defines the terms *the skin* and *the flesh* and explains the difference between. According to Somay, as a summary, *skin* is the cover of the body; on the other hand, *flesh* is the meat that is the core of the body, including the skin, and also that welcomes the sexual and carnal connotations. Bülent Somay, “Ten, Ben ve Gen,” in *Cogito Ten: Derinden* (Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2006), 162.

²⁸ Didier Anzieu and Gilbert Tarrab, *A Skin for Thought: Interviews with Gilbert Tarrab on Psychology and Psychoanalysis* (Karnac Books, 1990), 63–64.

fibers and tendons, etc. and effecting the circulation, digestion and the reproduction implicitly. Framing all that the human body encompasses, keeping it upright and functioning²⁹, also activating the nervous system by the nerves that lay under are the other functions of the skin. As Montagu and Matson declare: skin is the external nervous system of the organism.³⁰ Skin is one of the main sources, other than the brain that stimulates the body for sexual arousal and pleasure where the corporal punishments, pain and sufferings are represented on.³¹ The skin, while protecting the inside from external disturbances, keeps the disturbances as a memory on itself in the form of skin disorders and/or bruises and wounds.³² The skin is a reflector, and a mirror that represents the inside and make it visible to eye. According to Didier Anzieu, the skin has three basic functions:

“The first function of the skin is to be the sac that contains and retains inside itself all the good, full material that has accumulated through breast-feeding, everyday care, and the experience of being bathed in words. Its second function is to be the interface that marks the border with the external world, which it keeps on the outside, the barrier that protects one against being penetrated by the aggression and greed of others, whether people or objects. The third function of the skin, which it shares with the mouth and carries out at least as much as the mouth does, is to be a site and a primary mode of communication with other people, to establish meaningful relations; in addition, it is a surface for registering the traces left by those others.”³³

²⁹ Anzieu, *Deri-Ben*, 50.

³⁰ Ashley Montagu and Floyd W. Matson, *The Human Connection* (McGraw-Hill Companies, 1979), 88.

³¹ Dr R. K. Freinkel and D. T. Woodley, *The Biology of the Skin* (CRC Press, 2001), chap. 2.

³² Anzieu, *Deri-Ben*, 69–71.

³³ Didier Anzieu, *The Skin Ego* (New Haven: Yale Univ Pr, 1989), 44.

The skin of a human being, to an outsider observer offers distinctive physical characteristics that facilitates or complicating the determination of the identity through age, gender, ethnicity, personal history, etc. just like the clothes covering the body/skin do: pigmentation, wrinkles, lines, pores, hairs, nails, scars and wounds, pimples, moles, also, the roughness or smoothness of the skin, the smell being changed by perfume determine the identity of the self.³⁴

Anzieu's definition that the skin is an interface that marks the boundary barrier with what is on the inside & out and that it keeps the outside out is particularly interesting. What happens if this interface and the outside merge? In order to understand the corporal opening through psychoanalytic theory, mentioning the importance of touch and underlining the term Skin-Ego will create a pathway that will be discussed further on.

1.1.1. On Touching

*Touch is a primary process by which humans gather information about the world.*³⁵

If the length of entry in the Oxford Dictionary of English corresponds with the significance of a word, then the extended definition on 'touch' declares the importance of the word: it is being in contact with someone; bringing one's hand into contact with, handling in order to interface with; causing harm to someone,

³⁴ Anzieu, *Deri-Ben*, 51-52.

³⁵ Michael G. Hunter and Jim Struve, *The Ethical Use of Touch in Psychotherapy* (SAGE Publications, 1997), 3.

affecting or concerning; being or becoming visible or apparent, producing feelings of affection, gratitude, or sympathy in, etc.³⁶

Touch is one of the senses that develop first; the reflex of touch as an act of tickling is noticeable in a eight weeks fetus.³⁷ The skin that clothes the entire body is the organ of touch. The exterior, veil and cover of the body is a sensory organ by itself.

The importance of *touch* is an extensive field of study for phenomenology.³⁸ Touch is highly associated with the perception of one's own body and the body of the other: according to Edmund Husserl, touch is the only and the most important sense that shifts the body into an *appearing corporeality*.³⁹ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, inspired by Husserl's discussion, also describes the importance of touch through phenomenology. Merleau-Ponty writes: "...if I can, with my left hand, feel my right hand as it touches an object, the right hand as an object is not the right hand as it touches: the first is a system of bones, muscles and flesh brought down at a point of space, the second shoots through space like a rocket to reveal the external object in its place. In so far as it sees or touches the world, my body can therefore be neither seen nor touched. What prevents its ever being an object, ever being 'completely constituted' is that

³⁶ Angus Stevenson, *Oxford Dictionary of English* (OUP Oxford, 2010), 1879.

³⁷ Anthony Synnott, *The Body Social: Symbolism, Self and Society* (Routledge, 1993), 156.

³⁸ Philosophical discussions of perception mostly based on *vision*. On the other hand, some philosophers like Edmund Husserl and Maurice Merleau-Ponty, underline *touch* is an essential way to perceive the world. Although Merleau-Ponty gives importance to *touch*, he also mentions the effect of *vision* on the mind and perception. Because this thesis focuses on the notion of *skin* and *skin openings*, I will examine the sense of *touch* deeply besides *vision*. For further information and reading on the discussion on the vision and phenomenology: Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, ed. Claude Lefort, trans. Alphonso Lingis, 1st edition (Northwestern University Press, 1968); Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Galen A. Johnson, and Michael B. Smith, *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting* (Northwestern University Press, 1993), pt. 2.

³⁹ Edmund Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy: Second Book Studies in the Phenomenology of Constitution*, trans. R. Rojcewicz and A. Schuwer (Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1989), 153.

it is that by which there are objects. It is neither tangible nor visible in so far as it is that which sees and touches."⁴⁰

Husserl and Merleau-Ponty both lead the study of the tactile perception of the body. They specifically question the experience of touching the one hand with the other. For Husserl, this experience embodies a *double sensation*: each hand is both perceiver and perceived. "*The sensation is doubled in the two parts of the Body, since each is precisely for the other an external thing that is touching and acting upon it, and each is at the same time Body*".⁴¹ This double sensation – being the perceiver and the perceived at the same time is a way to represent the body as an entity itself and also a network to the perceived world.⁴² Merleau-Ponty expands the discussion further considering the concept of the 'reversibility' of touch – as being the perceiver and the perceived - by thinking the possibility of intersubjectivity.

"...while each monocular vision, each touching with one sole hand has its own visible, its tactile, each is bound to every other vision, to every other touch; it is bound in such a way as to make up with them the experience of one sole body before one sole world, through a possibility for reversion, reconversion of its language into theirs, transfer, and reversal

Now why would this generality, which constitutes the unity of my body, not open it to other bodies? The handshake too is reversible; I can feel myself touched as well and at the same time as touching."⁴³

According Merleau-Ponty, through touching and/or being touched by

⁴⁰ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (Routledge, 1962), 92.

⁴¹ Husserl, *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, 153.

⁴² On the relation between vision and phenomenology, Husserl remarks that the experience of seeing the body does not involve at the same intimacy of touching one's own body by becoming perceiver-perceived at the same time: *an eye does not appear to one's own vision*. Ibid., 155.

⁴³ Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, 142.

another person, the experience of touch now is a form of unification with another subject; that it is not just an object of perception anymore.⁴⁴ The body is a ‘perceiving thing’ and a ‘subject-object’ considering: the touched hand becomes a touching hand.⁴⁵ His concept focuses on to the multiplicity of sense perceptions. The experience of touch – being perceiver-perceived, subject-object, reversible and intersubjective simultaneously – is the perception of the body and also beyond it. Humans perceive the world through touch and through intricate experience of perceiving its own body by touching. According to Merleau-Ponty, the perception that makes the body subjective through touch, is the same that opens up the intimacy of the body to other bodies experiencing to touch and to be touched, and to see and be seen simultaneously. Now, the skin is not just matter but can be understood as the sensibility of the seen and also the sight of the sensible.⁴⁶

The skin releases the body to the world and the other bodies. The segregation between the self and the other is subverted in the intimacy of the physical contact through touch.

Didier Anzieu, while defining the notion of Skin-ego, in addition to the importance of touch, explains the effect of implementation and/or violation of the tactile prohibitions on child’s mental and social development. According to Anzieu, ego is the protection of the body’s surface: the skin and all of its functions, primarily touching, are there for to maintain the psyche. “*The earliest prohibitions a family imposes on a child, once it enters the world of (locomotor) movement and (infra-verbal and pre-linguistic) communication, are essentially*

⁴⁴ Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Signs* (Northwestern University Press, 1964), 168.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 166.

⁴⁶ Sara Ahmed and Jackie Stacey, eds., *Thinking Through the Skin* (New York, N.Y: Routledge, 2001), 5.

to do with tactile contacts” writes Anzieu⁴⁷. He remarks, *touching* is important only in certain and necessary moments; for the rest of the time it is prohibited. This prohibition reveals three problems of the touch: (1) sexual seduction, (2) acts of bodily care as constituting the Skin-ego and auto-eroticism, and (3) touch as proof that the touched object exists.⁴⁸ Anzieu mentions that all the prohibitions are dualities in nature and that they inhibit the some of the certain functions and cause others to change their form. He lists the dualities as four⁴⁹:

1. The taboo of touching that relates both sexuality and aggression, embodies two basic drives. One of the prohibitions states “do not touch the sensitive areas of your body or the other’s, otherwise you will be overwhelmed with an excitation you are not capable of satisfying and/or understanding”, aims to protect the child against the sexuality toward his own of the other people’s body. The other prohibition is “in order to not break them or hurt yourself, do not touch external objects and do not use violence/force upon the parts of other people’s and/or your won body”, aims to protect the child from the aggression.

In the taboo of touching, sexuality and aggression are both the expressions of instinctual violence in general.

2. Every prohibition has a dual face: a face turned outwards (that receives and filters the interdictions communicated by people), and a face towards the inner reality (that deals with the representational and affective representatives of instinctual currents). The taboo on

⁴⁷ Anzieu, *Deri-Ben*, 183.

⁴⁸ Didier Anzieu, *The Skin Ego* (New Haven: Yale Univ Pr, 1989), chap. Ten - The Prohibitions and their four dualities.

⁴⁹ Anzieu, *Deri-Ben*, 193–197.

touching helps to create an interface / a border between the Id and the Ego. The first tactile interdiction imposed to child aid is the principle of self-preservation. The tactile prohibition separates the protected and protective familiar physical area from the disturbing and dangerous unfamiliar area. This differentiation invites the child to touch the unfamiliar things in order to know them. But also, the interdiction teaches to be forearmed against the dangers of ignorance: you are not able to touch the things as you did before like putting it in your mouth or smashing it: you are only able to pick up an object in order to understand how it works. The prohibition on touching helps the child to alter the orders of reality after the early tactile body-to-body experience; with this experience the child is able to differentiate its own body from others.

3. Every prohibition is constructed in two phases. The Oedipal taboo that focuses on the threat of castration restricts the love relations according to sexes and generations. The prohibition on touching also has a dual starting-point. There are two structures of tactile experience that have to be focused: (1) a contact/touch that has connotations of the common skin phantasy in the form of an embrace, which involves a large portion of the skin, (2) the touch of the hand cares for the infant's body, that must be limited once the child has mastered the gestures of pointing and grasping objects and when the skin-to-skin contact is too erogenous. The primary taboo on touching follows the first tactile experience

transposes the effects of biological birth onto psychic and demands the separate existence to become an individual self. The taboo forbids the return to the womb, now a phantasy, and is specifically opposed to attachment. The secondary taboo on touching applies to the drive of mastery: you are not allowed to touch, grasp, or master everything; you have to know that there is a risk of a refusal or a delay. “The hands that steals, strikes or masturbates will be tied up or cut off” is the threat of physical punishment that corresponds to the secondary taboo in familial and/or social discourse.

4. Every prohibition is bilateral: this can also be applied to a person who is addressed it to, not only to the person who is issuing it. Parents must not act on their incestuous and Oedipal desires when their children are on the brink of sexual maturity. The taboo on touching must be respected by the parents to achieve the effect of restructuring psychological functionality. Serious breaches of taboo touching will result in a trauma that can cause major psychopathological consequences.

The taboos on touching is minimized or emphasized from one culture to another; no society can be found which does not have a taboo on touching.⁵⁰ The sanctions range from moral disapproval to aggressive corporal punishments, and

⁵⁰ The difference of tactile experiences between genders is one of the study fields on Gender Studies. The meaning of the social life tactility in many areas like talking, violence and having sex are gender-specific. ‘How to perform gender through skin and/or is it possible to’ is one of the basic questions. For further reading on the body and gender and how body performs the gender: Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (Routledge, 2011).

is applied to the transgressions against the tactile taboos are shifting in consequence.⁵¹

1.2. The Skin-Ego

“... the ego is ultimately derived from bodily sensations, chiefly from those springing from the surface of the body.”⁵²

Anzieu offers a unique approach to the relation between the body and the mind: he constitutes a new theory on the body contrary to most post-structuralist theories. With this new concept, he forms to human subjectivity: the surface of the body, the skin, is a compelling constituent of the structure and functions of the mind. Anzieu reconsiders the Freudian study on the *Ego* and the *unconscious* through corporeality. The term *Skin-Ego* refers the surface of the body as the primary sense that determines the formation of the ego. The skin-ego individualizes the psychic functioning and also transforms the visual – touchable and observable - skin into the unique entity.

According to Freud, the body sensations and feelings are the primary essences of the *ego*. The roots of the ego are appearing in the internal perceptions of the state of latency and/or primordial feelings of the body. As Freud declares, there are three components of the personality. The *id* is the biological and instinctual component of the personality that has been mediated with the external world through the *ego*. Succinctly, the *ego* is the psychological component that is

⁵¹ Anzieu, *Deri-Ben*, 196.

⁵² Sigmund Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, ed. James Strachey, trans. Joan Riviere (New York: Norton, 1989), 20.

the representation of the process of making the conscious decisions. The *superego* is the social and ethical component that provides the conscience.⁵³ Ego is the interface, a psychic envelope, between the self that also includes the ego itself, and the external world. The ego is a cause of the perception of *reality* that Freud calls *reality principle*. Simply put, the ego tries to filter, compress and/or buffer the desires of the id for them to be acceptable by reality and the external world.

An infant, 0-6 months old, is in a 'helplessness' state that, instead of a full formation of ego, a *body ego* develops.⁵⁴ Anzieu contends that the body ego, helps the infant to develop a fully-fledged ego is currently a skin-ego. He upholds that the body functions of the newborn in the pre-ego phase are performed through the skin. The skin of the infant performs the vital functions of the body that ego should take over; eventually this shifting will present the fully-fledged ego to form inherently. Anzieu remarks that the mental imagery of skin-ego of a child is created through its body surface experiences during the early stages of development, which represents itself as an Ego that encompasses physical content.⁵⁵ In other words, the skin-ego is Ego only when the infant is capable of expressing itself through its body and functions, and through experiences of the surface of the body. The newborn will experience the skin through a phantasy that is the mode of mental functioning characteristic of the primary processes including self-protection and hunger. For Anzieu, the phantasy is not only towards its own skin, but also to the skin of the mother; and he states

⁵³ For a deeper understanding of the term *Ego*: Bülent Somay's CULT 525 *Psychoanalytic Method in Culture* course has helped me much during my Cultural Studies Graduate Program in 2012.

⁵⁴ Sigmund Freud, *The Standard Edition of The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Vol I. (1886-1899)*, ed. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press, n.d.), 322-24.

⁵⁵ Anzieu, *The Skin Ego*, 61.

it is a phantasy of a *shared skin*: representation of their symbiotic union.⁵⁶ The infant experiences its own body through the skin of the mother, without having the awareness of being a singular being. As the infant grows mentally, the sense of individuality develops through discovering its own body as a three-dimensional being through the tactile exchanges with the mother.

The individualization of the infant, is also an effect of a shared skin phantasy in a way: it is a transition of the phantasy of shared skin into the skin-ego. In other words, the moment when a baby develops the capacity to envision itself as a unique, singular being, body that is covered by its own skin, the skin-ego is achieved.⁵⁷ Therefore, the acquisition of the skin-ego is at a time that the infant's own skin is perceived as physically and mentally as an entity: at that point, the surface of the body is its own skin.

1.3. The Functions of The Skin-Ego

In the book published on Skin-Ego, Didier Anzieu discusses eight functions of skin-ego: maintenance, containment, protection, individuation, intersensoriality, sexualization, libidinal recharging and inscription.⁵⁸

The first function of Skin-ego that Anzieu describes is 'maintenance'. Just as the skin supports the skeleton and muscular system, the skin-ego maintains the psyche.⁵⁹ The *holding* hand that is the primary physical support of the mother, is unconsciously incorporated into the infant as a maintenance of its body in a state

⁵⁶ Ibid., 45.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 60.

⁵⁸ Anzieu, *Deri-Ben*, 140–49.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 140.

of unity and solidity. This function is acquired through the body's introjection of this physical support.

The second function of 'containment' is carried out by the mother's *handling* of the infant that is the physical manipulation of the mother to the baby's body.⁶⁰ As the mother's handling of the infant change, the image-sensation of the skin in the infant also changes: (1) the image-sensation of the skin in the infant is represented as a sac and as a corporal envelop with bodily contents, and (2) the image-sensation of the skin forms the ego as a psychic envelop with psychic content. The sense of physical and psychic containment of the infant is actualized by the mother's handle.

The third one: 'protection' is to protect the psyche against physical trauma.⁶¹ The baby, in the period that the ego cannot develop a function to protect the body from external affects, is protected against outside stimulation by the surface of the mother's body as a proxy. After a while, the infant will be able to experience its own bodily surface as a shield to protect its own body from the outside.

'Individuation' is the fourth function of the skin-ego: individualize the Self, and also give the Self a sense of its own uniqueness.⁶² The corporal boundary and the psychic envelope help the infant to identify its own Self, and differentiate it from the self of the other.

The fifth function is 'intersensoriality':⁶³ for Anzieu, the skin-ego leads to a feeling of a "*common sense*", but still the touch is the most fundamental sense

⁶⁰ Ibid., 143.

⁶¹ Ibid., 145.

⁶² Ibid., 146.

⁶³ Ibid.

among them all. Now, the infant is able to manage all its sensory perceptions simultaneously instead of being afflicted by them.

The sixth function of the skin-ego is 'sexualization'. The erogenous zones of the infant are awakened unconsciously through the skin-to-skin contact with the mother through her acts of holding and/or handling. These primitive pleasures are the most essential drives considering the sexual development of the baby: localization of the erogenous zones and recognition of gender differences.

'Libidinal recharging' of psychical functioning is the seventh and last function of the skin-ego to the skin as a surface that is subject to constant sensorimotor stimulation by external excitations. The skin-ego maintains the internal energy tension and distributes it among the psychical sub-system.

The eight and the last function of the skin-ego is registering tactile sensory traces. Just like the skin archives external traces of the infant's physical experiences, so the skin-ego stores the internal traces. Skin-ego is like a *parchment* that sustains the first-outline of an original pre-verbal writing made up of traces upon the skin.

Didier Anzieu's work on the surface of the human body, shows corporeality is substantial as well as the psychic, and mentions the importance of the relation between the physical skin and the psychic skin. This bilateral relationship is essential for the development of the Self and the body. The skin of the psyche is not just a touchable surface, and also a skin that is visual, olfactory, auditory and gustatory skin at the same time. For Anzieu, all senses of sight, smell, taste and sound, with the sense of touch assemble the skin of the psyche.⁶⁴ He also mentions that the continuity and integration of the skin ensure a strong

⁶⁴ Anzieu, *The Skin Ego*, 243.

experience of having/being a skin itself; so that a subject can subsist. If the containment function of the skin-ego fails somehow, Anzieu underlines, the collapse of the notion of the skin will be predictable.⁶⁵ In this case, as a reaction to non-functioning skin-ego, the person may act aggressively to its skin trying to find a disparate fashion to reclaim its own skin as a new entity. Sado-masochistic sex, piercing, tattooing and also cutting the skin are definite examples of some aggressive acts. These acts give a new definition to the skin, and transform it into, like Anzieu cites, defensive second skin.⁶⁶

What a body transforms into under loosing its continuity and integration?
How a body can be defined for having unnatural, artificial corporal openings and/or as being flayed skin that, from now on, does not support and maintain the solid boundaries of the visual body?

⁶⁵ Ibid., 124.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 220.

CHAPTER II

TO LIFT THE VEIL

“The body provides a point of mediation between what is perceived as purely internal and accessible only to the subject and what is external and publicly observable, a point from which to rethink the opposition between the inside and the outside, the public and the private, the self and other, and all the other binary pairs associated with mind/body opposition.”⁶⁷

2.1. A Black Hole On The Skin⁶⁸

It is always feasible to consider a work of fine arts and literature not just with a certain point of view of its apparent content, but by searching the underlying political and/or psychological message that has/had been confidentially fades in. Most of philosophers, theorists and critics analyze the art

⁶⁷ Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 20.

⁶⁸ Influenced by the subhead “A Black Hole in Reality” in the book *Looking Awry* written by Slavoj Žižek.

works which require a more detailed consideration and thinking⁶⁹; such as Slavoj Žižek, Slovenian cultural critic and philosopher, considers the works of popular culture from Alfred Hitchcock to Stephen King, through Jacques Lacan's teaching. Žižek explains the strenuous philosophical theories of the French psychoanalyst who has been one of the most highlighted psychoanalysts since Sigmund Freud. In his book "Looking Awry," Žižek aims to reveal the understanding of what is 'reality' and 'substance', in the subtitled section "A Black Hole in Reality", which refers to a literary work of popular culture science fiction novel by Robert Heinlein, *The Unpleasant Profession of Jonathan Hoag*.⁷⁰ Jonathan Hoag contacts a private investigator Ted Randall to find out what his profession is; he is absolutely unfamiliar with his actions for living. Hoag especially has no recognition of the times spent on the thirteenth floor of the Acme building where he has been working, except for the blood-like substance underneath his fingernails every evening. Thus the suspenseful investigation begins. With his partner, Ted tries to fingerprint Hoag; however, despite Hoag not wearing any gloves, they cannot find any prints. On top of that, Randall is not able to reach the – nonexistent – thirteenth floor. Everything is now imperceptible and unknown.⁷¹ Ted Randall, the same day, dreams of his

⁶⁹ For exemplify, see. Michel Foucault, *This Is Not a Pipe* (University of California Press, 1983); and Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* (A&C Black, 2003).

⁷⁰ Slavoj Žižek, *Looking Awry: An Introduction to Jacques Lacan Through Popular Culture* (MIT Press, 1992), chap. 1.

⁷¹ The word 'unknown' matches perfectly with Freud's 'uncanny'. And, it is required to mention the etymology of 'uncanny' at this point. The word 'uncanny', originally Scottish, is a combination of un- (not) and canny. Canny (adj.), is Scottish formation from 'can' in its sense of 'know how to', plus -y. With this knowledge, it is easy to understand 'uncanny'; simply it means 'unknown'. If we reread the science fiction novel with this perception, apparently the condition that Hoag in, is totally uncanny itself. I will try to explain 'uncanny' more detailed in the following text.

"Online Etymology Dictionary," accessed March 29, 2016, http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=canny&allowed_in_frame=0.

double in the mirror.⁷² And his doppelganger tells Randall to pursue him to where the committee of twelve is, known as the ‘Sons of Bird’. The president of the committee explains to Randall that they are now on the thirteenth floor. With time, and through their investigative efforts Randall figures out that this committee believes in a ‘Great Bird’ that rules the universe. After he returns to ‘reality’, he recognizes that the images are real and covers up the mirrors by painting in order to not reach them again. Meanwhile, because of his wife Cynthia who has an improbable slumber, Randall asks a doctor to examine her, where she is diagnosed with a neuromuscular disease. After realizing that the doctor is a member of Sons of Bird, Randall locks the doctor in the bathroom. Afterwards, when Randall enters the bathroom, he finds a hole in the painted surface of the mirror, and a black bag on the floor that brings Cynthia back to life. Once Hoag becomes aware of his real identity and is aware of all he invites Ted and Cynthia to have a picnic in the park: he tells them that he is an art critic. Our universe is one of the universes that been created by universal artists as works of art. These artists, from time to time, send into their creations one of their own kind to control the artistic perfection of their works. Hoag is one of the distinctive art critics who has a flaw in his identity and asks Randall’s help for awareness. The members of the committee – that interrogates Randall – are only reflections of the evil to break off the artistic performance of the real gods who the artists themselves are. That blood-like substance underneath Hoag’s

⁷² Focusing on Lacan’s mirror stage, Allen defines the mirror stage as “the moment when the distinction between the me and the not-me is constituted.” It helps us to understand better or question why the author creates a look-alike image of Randall through mirror. Richard Allen, *Projecting Illusion: Film Spectatorship and the Impression of Reality* (Cambridge University Press, 1997), 27.

fingernails is the ichor that spreads fear.⁷³ Hoad informs them that some minor defects have been discovered in the universe and will be fixed in a few hours. He advises Randall and Cynthia, on the drive back to New York, not to open the window of their car despite what they might see, so that they never notice what is going on. On the way back to home, as they pass an accident, out of a sense of duty, they crack open the car window to inform the patrolman of the accident. But once they open the window they see that outside of the car there is no accident, no patrolman, no sunlight, nothing but a grey mist. To see the city is now beyond the bounds of possibility, not as a result of the dense of the mist, just because of the emptiness. Even though Cynthia tries to roll up the window in seconds, the mist drifts inside quickly. After roll up the window, the city scene, and also the accident is visible again through the window. Randall, carefully and in suspense, rolls down the window for the last time and through the opening they see the spooky and haunted emptiness. The novel ends stating that Ted and Cynthia Randall live in a rural and isolated area without any mirrors. Every night Ted handcuffs one of Cynthia's wrists to one of his.⁷⁴

The most crucial point when rereading this science fiction novel with a corporeal perspective, is the car window as a metaphor as the sense of an interface: Žižek declares it is a *borderline separating the outside from the inside*.⁷⁵ It is conceivable through corporeality to consider the skin as a borderline not just separating the outside from the inside, but also the inside from the outside too, exactly like the window does. We have to question the uneasiness of experiencing the inside and outside at the same time, like Ted and

⁷³ Ichor is the heavenly golden fluid that is the blood of the real gods in Greek mythology.

⁷⁴ Robert Anson Heinlein, *The Unpleasant Profession of Jonathan Hoag* (Berkley Books, 1983).

⁷⁵ Žižek, *Looking Awry*, 15.

Cynthia do at the end of the novel. This uneasiness is a result of the unexpected and sudden observations of how the inside is hanging by a single thread and how pervious the borderline, window and the skin are. External objects *appear to be fundamentally “unreal”*. *It is precisely this phenomenological experience of the barrier separating the inside from the outside, this feeling that the outside is ultimately “fictional,” that produces the horrifying effect of the final scene in Heinlein’s novel.*⁷⁶

Outside and inside, the state of being exterior or interior, outer world or inner, exteriority or intimacy... The term *extimacy*, coined by the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, literally joins **exteriority** with **intimacy**.⁷⁷ This psychologically created term, briefly, means *intimate exteriority*.⁷⁸ Extimacy marks the non-distinction between the surface and the depth, and questions this dualism. The term clearly states the combination of both.

Lacan describes *extimacy* through the *Thing*. The concept of *Thing* is everything apart from the symbolic order that cannot be dialectically expressed.⁷⁹ It has been excluded from inside, and hence, creates the exteriority. At the end of the novel, the mysterious grey mist represents the *Thing*; it is the origin of the subject’s (both Ted and Cynthia’s) exteriority and also comprises the subject’s intimate experience that makes the external exists. The window is the edge, the interface and the borderline between the inside ad the outside and connotes

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ The merging of interiority and exteriority and also the problematic of the exteriority, is one of the main researches, not just by Lacan, done by many psychoanalysts and philosophers. Foucault is one of them who questions and challenges the term exteriority. See.

Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge* (Psychology Press, 2002), 118–26.

⁷⁸ Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis 1959-1960 (Vol. Book VII)*, 139.

⁷⁹ Ibid., chap. 1.

bipartition between the interior and the exterior, and refers to “object *a*”. The uneasiness of facing the inside and the outside simultaneously is the *Real* itself.

Jacques-Alain Miller, additional to Lacanian theory, focuses on the presence of the exteriority in the intimacy of the psyche, stating: “*the extimacy of the subject is the Other. This is what we find in ‘The Agency of the Letter’ (Écrits, 172), when Lacan speaks of “this other to whom I am more attached than to myself, since, at the heart of my assent to my identity to myself, it is he who stirs me” (translation modified) – where the extimacy of the Other is tied to the vacillation of the subject’s identity to himself.*”⁸⁰ Extimacy helps to escape the dualism between the self and the other and the bipartition between inside and outside. Millerian extimacy refers the Other that lies in the heart of the subject.

The open window, much like the umbilicus/the navel openings and open wounds on the skin, brings the interior and the exterior, the inside and the outside, the subject and the outer world, the signifier and the signified together just like the expression “extimacy” does.

Lacan and Miller have complementary approaches towards the concept of extimacy; what is inside is already outside and vice a versa. Exteriority is, now, the *intimate*. The uneasiness occurs while seeing the bare outside, will appear again with the same ensemble when witnessing inside. Just like the window is a gateway for the uneasiness of the subject’s experience, the openings on the skin are the gateway through the *unknown*. The *opening* is the destruction of the borderline located in between inside and outside – Julia Kristeva denominates this destruction as *Abjection*.⁸¹ Urine, blood, tears, spittle, excrement, sweat and etc. that come out from orifices of the body, represent the “horror”: seeing the

⁸⁰ Miller, “Extimacy Jacques-Alain Miller – the Symptom 9.”

⁸¹ Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror* (Columbia University Press, 1982), chap. 4.

hidden through the absence of the boundary that disconnects the inside from the outside. The wound with blood and pus – the open window – is the representation of what is kept hidden inside behind the skin; this creates the *horror* and the uneasiness, and also visualizes the *unknown*. The corporal openings unite the ambiguous inner body with the outer world and form an unknown entity.

2.2. The Pathway to Vulva: The Mandorla⁸²

The myth of Marsyas, the satyr where Apollo removes his skin alive for challenging the God of Music, represents and reveals the act of flaying, stripping-off the outer covering of the body, as a condition of knowledge. Apollo flays Marsyas with the blade of knowledge, and hangs him bare from a tree for accomplishing his song impressively. His bare body with all of the entrails is observed freely: displayed for all to see. Now, the eyes, which are now able to see the representation of a stripped, bare body that could not be conceived before - to see such an opening.⁸³ By removing the borderline, all the entrails that should be hidden, safe inside and covered by is incorporated with the outside. The inside and outside become a connected and an indistinct entity for the first time,

⁸² Influenced by the text titled “*The Pact Between The Veil and The Wound or The Pathway to The Flesh*” by Barbara Baert for Berlinde De Bruyckere’s exhibition curated by Selen Ansen “Wound” in Arter/Istanbul 2012: Selen Ansen et al., *Berlinde De Bruyckere: Yara | The Wound* (ARTER, 2012), 76–94.

⁸³ Merleau-Ponty in the essay “*Eye and Mind*”, examines the act of seeing an artwork and the importance of this action. He also explores how an artist’s body and artwork manifest the world especially through the eye of the artist. He mentions, “*I do not see (space) according to its exterior envelope; I live in it from the inside; I am immersed in it. After all, the world is all around me, not in front of me.*” Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenological approach to examine the perception of seeing the visible through art, is helpful to clarify the corporeality and corporal openings.

Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Primacy of Perception: And Other Essays on Phenomenological Psychology, the Philosophy of Art, History, and Politics* (Northwestern University Press, 1964), chap. 2, 178.

contrary to what it used to be and/or should be before. Thus, this representable and upresentable physical opening legitimizes the ‘visibility’ of the inside at the heart of the description.⁸⁴ The veil of the body is lifted.

Georges Didi-Huberman, French philosopher and art historian, cultivates an inventive discourse of art in *L’image Ouverte*, which defines the openings of the image/body as a gateway.⁸⁵ According to his discourse, the image/body created as a reflection of God’s image. After loosing this unity, and the connection with God, during the Fall, and from that point onwards, the history of image becomes a history of nostalgia for the original image which represents God.⁸⁶

The image and concept of the body of Christ is located at the heart of Christianity.⁸⁷ The only religion where God has been embodied in a human body throughout history. The religion which represents the body of God through Christ’s mortal body. The body of Christ, as the representation of Christianity until the Ascension, was willing to sacrifice his image, and corporeality to unite with his origin again.⁸⁸

The basis of Christianity is the body; and yet, the body is what Christianity wants to take control of. The definition of the physical body and the image created through out has always been dubious in Christianity: both exalting and

⁸⁴ For further reading on the perception of *visibility* and *invisibility*: Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*.

⁸⁵ Didi-Huberman, *L’image ouverte*.

⁸⁶ Georges Didi-Huberman, *Confronting Images: Questioning the Ends of a Certain History of Art* (Penn State Press, 2005), chap. 4.

⁸⁷ Barbara Baert, *Fluid Flesh: The Body, Religion and the Visual Arts* (Leuven University Press, 2009).

⁸⁸ For further information: *The Holy Bible: King James Version* (Hendrickson Publishers, 2004), 565.

insulting the body.⁸⁹ The belief and fidelity to the body of Christ – the body created by God’s word and flesh – dignifies the mortal body. Contrary to this sacred body, imagery of the iniquitous body disgraces the interpretation. The existence of the iniquitous, contemptuous and disrespectful body is there to remind the possible danger or threat that can make mankind go astray. The sins, and hamartia are waiting to be spread like a wild fire since all of mankind was expelled from paradise. The church states that the flesh is weak, and if so, no one has a chance at victory against evil.⁹⁰ Furthermore, the worst threat is not just the body, but predominantly the *flesh*. Thus, desire – concupiscence – is an impulse, a seduction of the flesh; and sexuality, is a reprehensible sensual intercourse.⁹¹

Christianity is known for glorifying the complete opposite of iconoclast: the *icon*.⁹² Accordingly, figurative imagery is not a fetish, but a benefit. After all, the figurative image is a representation of God by embodying His invisibility into visibility with flesh. This representation – enfleshment of God, becoming a man for the eternal salvation, in other words, incarnation - is the foundation for the Western Art History that sanctifies the body and the flesh. The body is itself recreated as an artistic image with the icon; this makes the artistic representation of the image bearable, not a taboo, through the image of the body.

Veronica’s Veil (fig. I) is a striking example that shows icons as not just a representation of Christ and not through corporeality, but also, a presentation of a

⁸⁹ Corbin, Alain, Jean-Jacques Courtine and Georges Vigarello, *Bedenin Tarihi 1 - Rönesans’tan Aydınlanma’ya* (Yapı Kredi Yayınları, 2007), 18.

⁹⁰ For further reading: Ernst Benz, *The Eastern Orthodox Church: Its Thought and Life* (Transaction Publishers, 2008); Daniel B. Clendenin, *Eastern Orthodox Theology: A Contemporary Reader* (Baker Academic, 2003).

⁹¹ Sam Riches and Sarah Salih, *Gender and Holiness: Men, Women and Saints in Late Medieval Europe* (Routledge, 2005).

⁹² Iconoclast is a destroyer of images used in religious worship.

“Iconoclast - Definition of Iconoclast in English from the Oxford Dictionary,” accessed April 4, 2016, <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/iconoclast>.

Saint, a holy figure that shows and carries the image of the face in order to glorify Christianity.⁹³ This *acheiropoieton*, ‘not made by human hands’ icon, merges a legend and a vision of presentation.⁹⁴ In the icon, Saint Veronica holding a veil, a handkerchief on which Christ’s three-dimensionality facial illusion stands out, is called *sudarium* or *vera icona*.⁹⁵ Legend of the illusion of the face relates when Veronica wiped Christ’s face with her linen handkerchief as he was crying on the cross and his face was then imprinted suddenly on the veil. This linen handkerchief symbolizes the sacredness of having been touched by divinity. This illusion makes the divine present and visible.

In *Veronica’s Veil* icon, the navel is situated behind the ‘not made by human hands’ image: as can be seen, it is a female body that carries the veil, where the reflection of the face, is made visible over a white veil. At this point, it makes a perfect match to look the Greek concept *apotropaion*.⁹⁶ It is the power to turn away the evil influences, and positions mostly on the eyes and the navel, before all else, on the female genitalia. These are the perilous “openings” that facilitate the evil entering the body. Behind the image on the veil, the birthing capacity of the female form, genitalia and a uterus phantasm exist secretly and mysteriously.

⁹³ “Master of Saint Veronica | Saint Veronica with the Sudarium | NG687 | National Gallery, London,” accessed April 4, 2016, <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/master-of-saint-veronica-saint-veronica-with-the-sudarium>.

⁹⁴ Didi-Huberman, *Confronting Images*, 188–89.

⁹⁵ Corbin, Alain, Jean-Jacques Courtine and Georges Vigarello, *Bedenin Tarihi 1 - Rönesans’tan Aydınlanma’ya*, 20.

⁹⁶ *Confronting Images*, 190.



Figure I:
Veronica, circa 1420
Anonymous
The National Gallery, London

In *Symposium*, Plato describes Apollo cutting the human form that revolts against the gods.⁹⁷ He then loosely ties the skin to close the cavity for leaving a mark: a scar on the skin as punishment to remind humanity of their hubris. The scar is now in the center of the body. The umbilicus, the navel – almond-shaped – is a mark, a cicatrix of this split. The shape of the scar (the umbilicus) is closely related to an archaic schema of the all-holy, and is a schematization of a reality splitting to reveal the opening of the unknown, also not neutral motif by iconographically. This almond-shaped motif is called as *mandorla*⁹⁸ (fig. II). This

⁹⁷ Plato, *Symposium* (OUP Oxford, 1998), para. 190 e.

⁹⁸ Mandorla, (Italian: “almond”), in religious art, almond-shaped aureole of light surrounding the entire figure of a holy person.

schema has a second meaning in visual anthropology: *vulva*.⁹⁹ The mandorla and the rhomb are familiar as a schema with the external female genitalia.¹⁰⁰

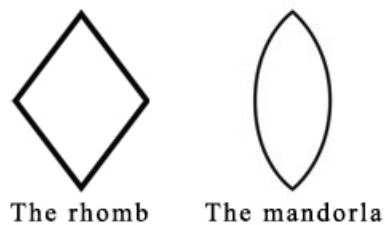


Figure II:
The rhomb and the mandorla schema

The mandorla schema can be easily recognized as an opening of her garment from her breast till her genitalia in *Madonna del Parto*¹⁰¹ (fig. III). Piero della Francesca, in 1460, painted the pregnant Virgin Mary, the female body that no-needs a *phallus* to conceive. The fertility of the vulva and the uterus is represented in the painting just by an almond-shaped opening. To positioning of Virgin Mary's hands at the opening of her dress, clearly showcase the feminine form and her holy fertility.

"Mandorla | Iconography," *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed April 4, 2016, <http://global.britannica.com/topic/mandorla>.

⁹⁹ Lisa M. Bitel and Felice Lifshitz, *Gender and Christianity in Medieval Europe: New Perspectives* (University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), chap. 2.

¹⁰⁰ Riches and Salih, *Gender and Holiness*, 160.

¹⁰¹ "Sito Ufficiale Della Madonna Del Parto - Monterchi Museum -," accessed April 5, 2016, <http://www.madonnadelparto.it/>.



Figure III:
Madonna del Parto, circa 1457
Piero della Francesca,
Museo della Madonna del Parto, Monterchi

2.3. The Connotative Meaning of The Wound

The most essential subject of figurative painting in Western Europe between 15-18th Centuries is the scene of Crucifixion.¹⁰² The open wounds on the hands and feet, drilled by nails, visually surround the almond-shaped wound on Christ's chest. The spear wound on the side of the body, is another imagery of a bloody opening of the *labia minora*, created by the ultimate phallic symbol.¹⁰³ This is another gateway to the now visible inside. The image of the tortured body

¹⁰² Editors of Phaidon Press, *Crucifixion* (London: Phaidon Press, 2007).

¹⁰³ Corbin, Alain, Jean-Jacques Courtine and Georges Vigarello, *Bedenin Tarihi 1 - Rönesans'tan Aydınlanma'ya*, 24.

of Christ with all of the five wounds instigates and legitimizes the body made of flesh and blood.

The skin, which is the veil of the body once pierced to create an opening is consecrated as sacred. When the veil, skin, no longer covers the body, it reveals the hidden to eyes. The mandorla as a schema for female genitalia is in relation to the wound on Christ's skin. This symbolization transforms the wound into a sex symbol: *a vulva*. The wound on Christ's male body becomes a female opening. As a result, a blending of genders becomes evident; thus a nullification of gender. Taking into consideration the wound opening, the imagery evokes *limbo*, *the fantastic* and *the uncanny*. By lifting the veil, this opening finally reveals what the eye is unable to accept/perceive. The body has now, become an *unknown* image where the inside comes into existence through the wounds.

In Philippe de Champaigne's seventeenth-century *The Dead Christ* painting, the wounds on his lying corpse, legitimates the symbolic value of the *vulva*.¹⁰⁴ The wounds now unveil what suppose to be dissimulated, and apparently become female openings (fig. IV).

¹⁰⁴ Vincent Pomerède and Erich Lessing, *1001 Paintings at the Louvre: From Antiquity to the Nineteenth Century* (Louvre Museum, n.d.), 130, accessed March 28, 2016.



Figure IV:
The Dead Christ, before 1654
Philippe de Champaigne
Musée du Louvre, Paris

In Freudian theory, the repressed infantile beliefs and desires play an integral role in the psychosexual development.¹⁰⁵ The return of the repressed material creates, a rise in anxiety. Consciously facing the beliefs i.e. that once were unconsciously present for a short time, but repressed, hidden, and

¹⁰⁵ Sigmund Freud and Philip Rieff, *Sexuality and The Psychology of Love* (Simon and Schuster, 1997), 5.

overcome, is an *uncanny* experience; just like *Oedipus complex*.¹⁰⁶ This anxiety is a *defense* against the secret and hidden mementos coming to light. The revelation of what is concealed, and hidden, not just from others, but also from the self, is the ‘*uncanny*’ itself.¹⁰⁷ Freud states: *The “uncanny” is that class of the terrifying which leads back to something long known to us, once very familiar.*¹⁰⁸

Castration complex, one of Freud’s earliest psychoanalytic theories, is related and familiar to the Oedipus complex.¹⁰⁹ It is the simple fear of damaging or losing the *phallus* in return of sexual interest to the mother.¹¹⁰ Is it possible to be castrated without losing the penis? Or, physically creating a *vulva* on the male body deprives the self of the masculinity?¹¹¹

The opening mandorla look-alike wounds and openings, symbolizing the *vulva*, on the skin of Christ allows the blood flow from inside to outside, and unlike drowning, poisoning or hanging of the body to death, is an attack on the masculine power despite the existence of the *phallus*. Hereby, the male body loses its power. Furthermore, the body having both a female opening embodied and symbolized by the wound and a (hidden) phallus covered by white handkerchief, becomes the *freaky* and the *uncanny*. The body of Christ is now an *unknown* and *unfamiliar* image.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 45.

¹⁰⁷ “freud1.pdf,” accessed March 27, 2016, <http://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/freud1.pdf>.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 1–2.

¹⁰⁹ Freud and Rieff, *Sexuality and The Psychology of Love*, chap. 7.

¹¹⁰ In males, castration complex mostly comes out as a fear of the penis severed by the father. In females, it comes out as blaming the mother for the absence of the symbolic equivalent to the penis.

¹¹¹ Creed’s *The Monstrous-Feminine* that explains how the female reproductive body challenges the patriarchal view, can be a perfect reference to understand how *vulva* representation breaks the masculinity.

Barbara Creed, *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism, Psychoanalysis*, 1 edition (London ; New York: Routledge, 1993).

The *uncanny* is both the known/familiar as well the hidden/unfamiliar and the covered. It is the reappearance of what was once the invisible covered to be hidden inside – just like the wound is to the skin. Mankind has an anatomical knowledge of what they keep inside, under the skin, where they are hidden from the eye, under the skin. The body in its totality is a home to us, while also being unfamiliar and unknown to the exterior eye. Seeing, witnessing, and facing the hidden, of what is inside of the body is unexpected but also consciously, is the *abjection*, the *horror*, and the *uncanny* itself. The wound, as a gateway, is the opening through to the uncanny.

CHAPTER III

The Open Wound

*“The complex of melancholia behaves like an **open wound**, drawing to itself cathectic energy from all sides (which we have called in the transference-neuroses “anti-cathexes”) and draining the ego until it is utterly depleted; it proves easily able to withstand the ego’s wish to sleep.¹¹²”*

The skin is the largest and the most expressive sense organ, and makes the body apparent to others through touch and sight. For Didier Anzieu, the skin is an envelope of the self and also a boundary that protects the inside / the self against the outside.¹¹³ The self reaches out to the world through skin-to-skin contact that brings together the intimacy with the exteriority – which is extimicity.¹¹⁴ Through the skin, the body can touch and to be touched simultaneously – it makes the body the signifier and the signified. According to Anzieu, the skin is, an interface, as well as an inscribing surface that provides the

¹¹² Freud, *General Psychological Theory*, 172.

¹¹³ Anzieu, *The Skin Ego*, 40.

¹¹⁴ Miller, “Extimicity Jacques-Alain Miller – the Symptom 9.”

marks left by others to be seen on the body. It defines both the corporeal and the psychic perception of the body and the self. Sara Ahmed and Jackie Stacey, in the book *Thinking Through The Skin*, state that the skin is also a writerly effect: they consider “*the materiality of the signifier as produced by skin, by the weight of the bodies that are formed as they are marked, cut or written into the world. Writing can be thought of as skin, in the sense that what we write causes ripples and flows that ‘skin us’ into being: we write, we skin.*”¹¹⁵ The skin is highly receptive to marks and/or cuts as ways of writing or labeling the skin in order to keep the categorizations and/or outer disturbances against the body as a memory on itself. Thus, it becomes an entry point for the traumas caused by those memories. The word ‘*trauma*’, etymologically links to Greek word ‘*wound*’¹¹⁶, refers to unfamiliar experience that causes a person to be in a disordered psychic state in psychoanalytic theory – the trauma is a wound of mind. So in literal sense, the affect of an injury and also a mental/emotional dispute are labeled as *trauma* and also a *wound*. Assuming that a wound is both psychic and corporeal, what does it represent as an opening that cuts/marks/labels the whole, intact skin which is a borderline between the self and the other, and also the inside and the outside?

The open wound is an opening that ruptures the boundary between inside and outside, and rewrites the skin as a pathway from life to death. The opening creates a discontinuity on the surface of the body; it cuts the skin, the psychic envelope that is the skin-ego as Anzieu declares.¹¹⁷ It is the failure of the skin-

¹¹⁵ Sara Ahmed and Jackie Stacey, eds., *Thinking Through the Skin* (New York, N.Y: Routledge, 2001), 15.

¹¹⁶ “Online Etymology Dictionary,” accessed May 6, 2016, http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search=trauma.

¹¹⁷ Anzieu, *The Skin Ego*, 92.

ego, therefore the Ego as well. The opening now forms the envelope as an *unknown* representation for the psyche. The act of wounding serves as a point of departure for considering the relationship between grief and illness in the light of Sigmund Freud's work on mourning and melancholia. Freud claims that the *open wound* and the *melancholia* behave in the same manner to the psyche and both drain the Ego until it is completely ineffective.¹¹⁸

Sigmund Freud's work on melancholia and mourning, that emphasizes the link between longing and grief, and the subtle difference between melancholia and mourning, implicitly tells how an open wound figures in the thought of melancholia, and disturbs the skin-ego / the ego.

Mourning is a response to a loss of a loved person or to a loss of an ideal, a country, liberty and other similar occurrences.¹¹⁹ It is a process of grief that empowers the person who has that feeling of loss to conquer the disappearance of the specific love object. Mourning, according to Freud, mostly occurs with the desperation of a loss because of death. The process of mourning always takes place in the conscious state of mind. As the particular love object no longer exists, but still having the libido towards the lost object, the ego now is "persuaded by the sum of its narcissistic satisfactions in being alive to sever its attachment to the non-existent object."¹²⁰

Melancholia, on the other hand, is a pathological form of mourning. Although, similar mourning, it is a response to a loss, but a loss that is not for any specific reason and this is why a person cannot overcome this kind of loss. In the condition of melancholia, a person is not able to perceive clearly what has

¹¹⁸ Freud, *General Psychological Theory*.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 243.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 174.

been lost, even though the subject suffers from the desperation.¹²¹ The loss in melancholia is not in a perceivable form to the Ego / skin-ego in order to sever attachments to the object of loss; the process of melancholia is apparent in the unconscious state. The ambivalence that the subject is in now with the nonfunctional Ego through the “loss of a more ideal kind”, frequently results as self-punishments of the subject, not only psychic but also corporeal as well. “A profoundly painful dejection, abrogation of interest in the outside world, loss of the capacity to love, inhibition of all activity, and a lowering of the self-regarding feelings to a degree that finds utterance in self-reproaches and self-reviling” are the symptoms of melancholia, and also are the expressions that come out after having the loss of what Freud calls an ‘ideal kind’.¹²² This kind of loss is not actually being the death of a loved one; what is lost might not be clear to be recognized. Freud declares that in this kind of loss, one is not able to see clearly what it is that has been lost.¹²³ As long as the nature of loss remains unknown, the subject appears to have no means of overcoming it. Concordantly, melancholia occurs in the realm of the unconscious. This definition of melancholia brings to mind the description of the notion of uncanny through being appeared in the unconscious state of mind and also being unknown and unperceivable. Freud’s these two concepts, melancholia and uncanny, link together in the sense of their similar definitions.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Ibid., 155.

¹²² Freud, *The Standard Edition of The Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud Vol I. (1886-1899)*, 252.

¹²³ Ibid., 245.

¹²⁴ For further reading on melancholia: Julia Kristeva, *Black Sun* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992).

Kristeva elaborates in *Black Sun* a theory of depression that builds upon and departs from the insights of Freud. Although she recommends the use of chemical anti-depressants to a point at which psychotherapeutic work becomes possible, Kristeva sees depression not as an illness to be corrected with drugs, but as a discourse to be listened to and analyzed.

The definition of melancholia declared by Freud, opens the door to consider the *open wound* as a loss of ideal self. What it does to the body is to rewrite the surface of the skin unconsciously into an *unfamiliar* form that has never been seen before. The skin suffers from the opening; the open wound drags the body into an unknown, through the uncertainty of the skin to be whole never again. The open wound - just like how melancholia makes the unconscious loss visible through wounding the skin and this wound provides the melancholia, that occurs unconsciously and subsequently through the loss, to become apparent to conscious state of mind – makes the unconscious and unknown perceptible, visible and tactile. The open wound is both the wound of the body and the mind; it is the opening on the surface of the skin, thereby exhibits the inside to the outside.

The ego, according to Elizabeth Grosz, evolves through the thinking of two kinds of surface; one is a representation and a projection of the ‘inner’ surface of the psychological agencies, and the outer surface of the body.¹²⁵ By that the melancholia is embodied on both surfaces, so the wound of the inner surface is also the wound of the body’s outer surface same time; the open wound bruises, injures and/or removes the boundary, the difference between two surfaces through draining the Ego.

The open wound that reveals what is underneath the skin to the eye, cuts the physical surface, thus combines the psychic and corporeal – the wound brings an *unknown* and *unfamiliar* – which is *uncanny* in other words – interpretation on the body image rather than it should be. The act of wounding, considering that it appears both in the consciousness and the unconsciousness state of mind and

¹²⁵ Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*, 37.

drains the Ego and the skin-ego by breaking their connection with the Self, is the *Metamorphosis* itself.¹²⁶

3.1. The Metamorphosis and The Uncanny Body

“One morning, when Gregor Samsa woke from troubled dreams, he found himself transformed in his bed into a horrible vermin.

...

‘What’s happened to me?’ he thought. It wasn’t a dream.”¹²⁷

The Metamorphosis, a novella written by Franz Kafka published in 1915, is the story of Gregor Samsa, a salesman who transforms into a gigantic, and horrible insect-like creature.

The unconscious transformation into an undefined creature, the metamorphosis of Gregor Samsa is the representation and the embodiment of the horror and his desperation; the transformation into a vermin is the cause of Gregor’s restrained, suppressed and silenced feelings, conflicts, desires and memories kept in the unconscious mind that arise as a metamorphosis into the conscious world. When taking into account Freud’s discussions on the unconscious mind of the psyche, this transformation is an expression against the power of phallus, like father figure and patriarchy all around: in other words against the Ego and also the super-ego. With the terms of Freudian perspective,

¹²⁶ Influenced by the name of the novella written by Franz Kafka that describes the transformation of a traveling salesman Gregor Samsa into a gigantic insect-like creature: Kafka, *The Metamorphosis*.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, 7.

the weak, pitifully thin and vulnerable legs of the vermin as Gregor also represent the phallus that is not powerful enough when comparing with the phallus of the father who is the authority and therefore the power. This attenuation of Gregor is a way of *castration* considering the psychoanalytic theory.¹²⁸

In the novella, besides the representation of phallus through Gregor's weak and thin legs, there are two significant evidences of castration that Gregor is subject to.

In the end of the first part of the novella, Mr. Samsa, the father of Gregor, cripples him for scaring his mother. Gregor pursues avenues for regaining his mother's affection although now he has an unfamiliar image which he is not used to. The *uncanny* image of Gregor, which still holds some familiarity, thinking the memory of Gregor, belongs to the times when he was human and at the same time utterly is an unknown image as a gigantic creature, is a threat for the father through his wish of winning back his mother's affection towards him. After being crippled by his father, Gregor wakes up from his sleep in the evening twilight:

*"The whole of his left side seemed like one, painfully stretched scar, and limped badly on his two rows of legs. One of the legs had been badly injured in the events of that morning ... and dragged lifelessly behind."*¹²⁹

Injuring, wounding the leg is an apparent representation of a severed penis as the leg is a portrayal of phallus, is a clear trace of castration of Gregor by Mr. Samsa for the desires that he has toward his mother. The wound here is a visual image of the castration by the father.

¹²⁸ Sigmund Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, trans. James Strachey (Mansfield Centre, Conn.: Martino Fine Books, 2011), 88–90.

¹²⁹ Kafka, *The Metamorphosis*, 13.

The following morning of his father's attack, Grete, the sister of Gregor, opens the door of the room in which Gregor hides under a couch. From then on, she is the only one who feeds her brother and takes care of him. The only communication Gregor has with other members of the family is through the closed door by listening to them talking. Even though his mother is willing to see Gregor, her husband and Grete think that this would not be advisable. Gregor starts to spend the days clinging to the ceiling of the room, and this gives Grete the idea of removing all of the furniture out of the room for him to roam about easily. As Grete begins to empty the room, her mother thinks to leave the room just as it is in the hopes that her son to become a human being again and this *familiar* room will help bring Gregor back to his old self. Grete declaring that she knows the best for Gregor, insists on removing everything out of the room; but Gregor wants to preserve his familiar belongings within. The turmoil during the unexpected removal of the furniture, makes Gregor angry and scared, so he starts to scurry around trying to find a spot where he can hide. At this exact moment Mr. Samsa comes in and assumes that Gregor committed some violent crime. This crime, by means of psychoanalysis, refers to the desire of a son that is having a close, sexual relationship with his mother.

This is the first time that Gregor sees his father after the metamorphosis, and he is startled by the altered appearance of his father. Now, Mr. Samsa is standing erect in front of Gregor wearing a uniform with gold, shiny buttons, a cap affixed a gold monogram on and big boots. Yet it is a scary image to Gregor, it is an image of absolute power. So, Gregor starts to flee from his father; they go around the room chasing each other for a while. At one point, Gregor remains at floor level for not to be considered as wickedness if he takes refuge on the walls

or ceiling. As he lurches along, reserving all of his strength to save himself, when suddenly and unexpectedly something is thrown beside him, and rolls across his path: it is an apple. A second one comes flying across immediately afterwards. There is no point trying to escape now that his father decides to bombard him with red apples; Gregor stops in horror. Mr. Samsa fills his pockets with apples from the fruit bowl and throws one after another where Gregor is standing still. One mildly tossed apple hits Gregor's back harmlessly. But the apple immediately thrown after that, embeds itself in the back of Gregor causing incredible pain. He collapses there like all his senses are "in a state of utter bewilderment".¹³⁰

The tragic death of Gregor Samsa is the cause of the infected open wound that is injured through the thrown apple by the father / the phallus. The relation between apple and the death reminds *the forbidden fruit* that is a symbol of temptation, sin and the Fall from Eden where everything is safe and familiar, in the Christian tradition. God banishes Adam and Eve from Eden as a punishment because of consuming the apple; likewise, the death of Gregor, also through an apple, is a punishment of the F/father.

The metamorphosis, explored through the Freudian discourse, is the unfamiliar and unknown that is still in the house/familiar zone. Literally, this definition is the description of the *uncanny*. So, the open wound and likewise the melancholia behave exactly the same as the metamorphosis does; all ask the same question – the question that Gregor Samsa inquires himself – "what's happened to me?" and there is never a certain or a conscious answer. In this context, it is certainly fair to say that the transformed body of Samsa is all about

¹³⁰ Ibid., 25.

the uncanny; it is highly incongruous and frightening form that arouses dread and horror. On the other hand, even though the human body of Gregor Samsa has been transformed into a insect-like creature, it is still him in the flesh and still continues his existence in the home, family. This is exactly is what the wound does to the skin and the body. Hereby, just like the body of Samsa that has been transformed into a horrifying and unfamiliar form, the wounded body also becomes uncanny through the violation of the integrity of the skin for the same reasons. The open wound is the gateway to the uncanny.

CONCLUSION

*“We also call a living person
uncanny...”¹³¹*

The Freudian uncanny is the key concept of this study that aims to redefine the body having open wounds from the psychoanalytic point of view. Uncanny, in the simplest term, is literally the concept of horror that leads the subject back to a state, which was once very familiar, but today is unconsciously repressed, silenced and forgotten. The once familiar thing, that is concealed and hidden in the conscious world, is startlingly and strangely reimaged as unfamiliar and also as unknown.¹³² The experience of re-witnessing the hidden in a state of consciousness, is the uncanny; it is the horror and the fantastic.¹³³ How it is possible for the wounded body to become unfamiliar and unknown?

The open wound is one of the cardinal threats that can disqualify or destroy the second basic and vital function of the skin out of three that Didier Anzieu

¹³¹ “freud1.pdf,” 14, accessed March 17, 2016,
<http://web.mit.edu/allanmc/www/freud1.pdf>.

¹³² “freud1.pdf,” 1.

¹³³ For the further reading on the concept of the Fantastic: Jacques Lacan, *On the Names-of-the-Father*, 1 edition (Polity, 2013).

declares: the skin is the interface that borders the limits of the psyche.¹³⁴ The skin, the surface of the body, even though it keeps the external disturbances and makes them visible on itself as an image of metal content, is the largest sensory organ that is entirely unitary. Besides, the skin is highly important for stimulating the body for sexual arousal and pleasures. Since the primitive culture, corporeal punishments aiming to represent supposedly deserved tortures on the body through the skin have been the most predominant way to discipline the society.¹³⁵ So, how the act of damaging, cutting, tearing or flaying the integrity of the skin subverts the intimacy of the body? How the corporeal opening effect to the psyche?

The French psychoanalyst Didier Anzieu, mentions the notion of the Skin-Ego in 1974. This term emphasizes the priority and essentialness of the perception of the skin through its integrity. Just as the skin frames the body and environs the skeleton, muscular system and all entrails, so the skin-ego does the same to the psyche. The skin-ego, according to Anzieu, refers to the envelope of the body that is the skin. By taking his study into consideration, the corporeal opening is a representation of an aggressive act that disrupts the function of the skin-ego; and/or the wound is a consequence of an inefficacious skin-ego. The skin-ego, which refers to the Ego in Freudian concept, is also an intermediate between the psyche and the outer world, as well as being provided by the perception of reality. As a result of what the skin-ego does to the psyche, the lack of skin-ego will tear the network that connects the subject with reality. This disconnection shifts the subject between the reality and the Real somewhere in the middle of symbolic and the psychosis. This shifting leads the subject back to

¹³⁴ Anzieu, *The Skin Ego*, 44–45.

¹³⁵ Foucault, *Discipline & Punish*.

the once familiar time zone at the moment of birth where there is no language and no conscious connection with the reality: the subject cannot consciously exist in the symbolic world just like in the period of coming to the world for the first time.¹³⁶ Through the present-day the unfamiliar and terrifying moment that takes the person back to this experience is the reason of an open wound, the subject is able to witness the once familiar non-symbolic world again, is the exact definition of the uncanny.

The open wound on the skin, through cutting the border between inside and outside, merges the interior and the exterior by nestling the subject and the outer world without boundaries. Referring to the visual representations of the wound of Christ and also to the myth on the umbilicus as a mark of the hubris of humanity, the openings are symbolized through an almond-shaped motif: the mandorla. The mandorla has a clearly evocative figure that highly refers to the external female genitalia. More particularly the almond-shaped wound on Christ's chest is a hidden symbolization of a castration. The transformation of the wound into a sex symbol on a male body is a public assault to the masculine power of Christ. By carrying a female opening, the extant phallus critically loses its power and its authorization. Now, the body that owns both a wound as a representation of a female opening and a phallus as a rudiment, ghastly becomes a corpse that has no familiarity and is unknown even though the dead body is keeping the spiritual aspect in the memory of being holy as a representation of God. The corpse of Christ is presently an unknown and unfamiliar image through the mandorla shaped opening: the opening creates a regrettable rupture over the congenital integrity of the skin. Through these

¹³⁶ For further reading: Jacques Lacan, Jacques-Alain Miller, and Russell Grigg, *The Psychoses, 1955-1956* (W.W. Norton, 1997).

reasons, referring to the term of *Uncanny Bodies* declared by Robert Spadoni, the wounded body of Christ is in the zone of sensation that is called as *uncanny body modality*, which contains the unreal, and the naturally bodied zone.¹³⁷

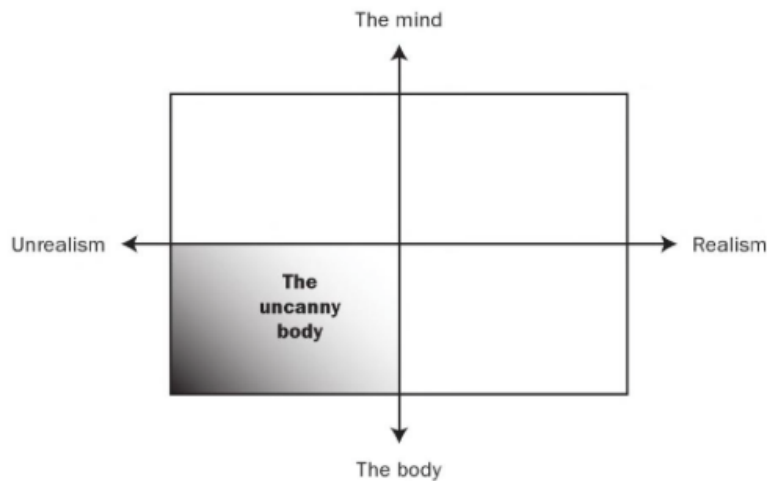


Figure V:
*Uncanny
Bodies*¹³⁸

The wounded body becomes an official representation of the uncanny body in this context. The flayed skin is “the distributed embodiment of a pluripotent, not yet stabilized” interface with the aspects of both female and male.¹³⁹ The skin as an entity with its openings is fluid, indeterminate and above all flexible, is contrary to its innate image that is supposed to be. The identifying power of the whole skin is annihilated through the open wound. The body covered by a ripped skin is ambivalent: it is gender-neutral, ambiguous, unknown but still familiar. In addition to deposing the important function of the skin, the new identification of the uncanny body is an image of the unknown. Thus, the open wound by cutting the physical wholeness of the skin transforms a body that had certain boundaries into an uncanny body.

¹³⁷ Robert Spadoni, *Uncanny Bodies: The Coming of Sound Film and the Origins of the Horror Genre* (University of California Press, 2007), 11.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹³⁹ Shane Denson, *Postnaturalism: Frankenstein, Film, and the Anthropotechnical Interface (With a Foreword by Mark B. N. Hansen)* (transcript, 2014), 409.

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