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JOUİSSANCE İN ANCİENT GREEK TRAGEDY

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ANTİK YUNAN TRAGEDYASINDA JOUÏSSANCE

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- 4) Acı
- 5) Haz

Anahtar Kelimeler(İngilizce)

- 1) Tragedy
- 2) Jouissance
- 3) Psychoanalysis
- 4) Suffering
- 5) Pleasure

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Five years ago, if someone had told me that I was going to analyze tragedies related to psychoanalysis, I would have thrown that person out of the window. I was of the opinion that psychoanalysis, in particular, interpreted the meanings of tragedies incompletely and incorrectly with its own concepts. I took a psychoanalysis course in postgraduate school with the aim of discussing this mistake with psychoanalysts and justifying it. As the lesson progressed, my purpose began to disappear. As a result, I wrote this thesis, which I wouldn't have believed five years ago that I would write.

The issue that I had the most difficulty while writing this thesis was the issue of finding resources. It was really difficult for me because there were no comprehensive resources; especially on *jouissance*. Most of the important sources were in French. The fact that not all of Lacan's seminars have been translated into Turkish is a great problem for the Turkish academic life.

I have to thank Associate Professor Ferda Keskin and especially Psychoanalyst/Psychiatrist Doctor Özgür Ögütçen with their help to me in this thesis. The postgraduate courses I took from Associate Professor Ferda Keskin and Psychiatrist Doctor Özgür Ögütçen helped shape this thesis. In particular, in psychoanalysis, without the contribution of doctor Özgür Ögütçen, I wouldn't have been able to undertake such a task. My dear husband Cengiz Samsun has contributed greatly to the progress of the thesis by reading and discussing what I have written. Special thanks to my classmate Ebru Asal and my dear friend Erdem Ergen, who meticulously read the thesis, commented, and made corrections.

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This pleasure was undoubtedly painful. Without my sister, Rabia Öztürk, who supported me in the care of Abel, I wouldn't have found time to write this thesis. *Jouissance* came out of such an experience. Lively, full of life, exhilarating and enjoyable.

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ABSTRACT

JOUISSANCE IN ANCIENT GREEK TRAGEDY

Sinem Öztürk

This study was created based on the relationship between Ancient Greek tragedies and psychoanalysis. Considering the suffering and pleasure experienced by the hero of a tragedy together with the concept of *jouissance* of Lacanian psychoanalysis forms the center of this study. As *Jouissance* is a kind of energy that experiences suffering and pleasure together, the relationship of the tragic universe that creates the tragedies with Dionysus seems to be in the same line. Accordingly, the fact that Dionysus has a place in tragedy with the contrasts in tragedy, moreover, about being ecstatic and 'limited' brings these two concepts closer to each other. Three tragedies handled in this respect; The Trilogy of *King Oedipus*, *Prometheus in Chains* and *Oresteia* will be discussed in detail how the concept of *jouissance* emerged in the plays of *Agamemnon*, *The Suppliants* and *Eumenides*. The 'limited' structure of the tragic universe which creates the tragedies and the relationship between the concept of *jouissance* and the 'limit' will be discussed again in the partnership of pain and pleasure.

Keywords: Tragedy, Jouissance, psychoanalysis, suffering, pleasure

ÖZET

ANTİK YUNAN TRAGEDYASINDA JOUISSANCE

Sinem Öztürk

Bu çalışma, Antik Yunan tragedyaları ve psikanaliz arasındaki ilişkiden yola çıkarak oluşturulmuştur. Trajik kahramanın deneyimlediği acı ve hazzı, Lacancı psikanalizin *jouissance* kavramıyla birlikte düşünmek bu çalışmanın merkezini oluşturur. *Jouissance*'ın acı ve hazzı birlikte deneyimleyen bir çeşit enerji olmasıyla, tragedyaları oluşturan trajik evrenin, Dionysos'la ilişkisi aynı çizgide görünür. Buna göre Dionysos'un tragedyadaki karşıtlıklarla, üstelik esrik ve 'sınırlı' olma konusundaki karşıtlıkla, tragedyada kendine yer edinmesi bu iki kavramı birbirine daha da yaklaştırır. Bu açıdan ele alınan üç tragedya; *Kral Oidipus*, *Zincire Vurulmuş Prometheus* ve *Oresteia Üçlemesi*; *Agamemnon*, *Adak Sunucular*, *Euriminedler* oyunlarında *jouissance* kavramının nasıl ortaya çıktığını ayrıntılı olarak ele alınacaktır. Tragedyaları oluşturan trajik evrenin 'sınırlı' yapısıyla *jouissance* kavramının 'sınır'la ilişkisi acı ve hazzın ortaklığında yeniden ele alınacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Tragedya, Jouissance, Psikanaliz, Haz, Acı

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INTRODUCTION

The fact that the tragedies which emerged in the fifth century still have a great impact in today's world has been the factor which started this study. Eric Robertson Doods said this: 'The pressure of human ignorance and insecurity; the fear of divine *phthonos*¹ and *miasma*²; all these combined burdens couldn't be endured without the comforting words of an all knowing divine counselor.' Actually, this 'irresistibility' contains a very strong curiosity. The enigma of tragic heroes and tragedy creates excitement in every reading, repetition and encounter. This excitement is a two sided thing. The first, may it be empirical or not, is about the audiences relationship with the tragedy. The second is the excitement which rises for those who wonder what constitutes the essence of tragedy. The second one characterizes the excitement of solving a mystery. This study contains this two sided excitement.

Tragedies used to take their heroes from the myths. "The myth of heroism isn't tragic by itself; it is the troubadour who makes it that way."³ The ends of these mythical heroes who were the subject to these tragedies were also different from those which were in the myths. "Homer's Oedipus dies on the throne of Thebes. (Odyssey, XI 275-276) It is Aeschylus and Sophocles who blinded him and told of him as an exiled man."⁴ This point is where the tragic element comes into play. According to Aristotle, the hero of a tragedy suffers "terrible" events. And the tragic hero, so to speak, does an act which goes beyond his limitations. This happens because the character is in a *hybris*.⁵ The hero of the tragedy crosses a threshold with his actions and is exposed to suffering as a result of this overstepping. This suffering takes on another dimension with pleasure. In the psychoanalysis part of this study, the issue of pleasure will be discussed in more

¹ It means disaster and destruction. Also known as the Goddess of Envy.

² Stain, means becoming dirty.

³ Vernant, J. P & Naquet. P.V. (1990) *Mit and Tragedy in Anticent Greek.*, (J. Lloyt, Çev.)
Brooklyn: Zone Books. pp.413.

⁴ *ibid*, pp.413.

detail. At this point, Plato approves of transgression as a means of attaining pleasure.

“(…) He saw the equanimity and evil which was caused by God’s providing no limits to peoples pleasures and appetites and put forth the law and order which had a limit. You argue that if you limit pleasure, you destroy it. On the contrary, I say it is done to protect it.”^{6*}

When we consider the relationship of pleasure and borders all together, we can talk about the tragic pleasure that emerges with the unrestricted nature of the hero of a tragedy. On the other hand, the same pleasure causes suffering too. These horrible “events” which befell on the hero of a tragedy must provoke fear and pity.”⁷ The pain felt in the face of these horrible events contains pleasure.

“The tragedy can’t be asked to provide all kinds of pleasure. The pleasure expected from it is pleasure of the (essence of the) tragedy. So then, since the troubadour has to prepare the feeling of pleasure which rises from **fear and pity** which he awakens with his imitation skills, it is clear that the story has to hide the effect which will arouse the sense of pleasure within itself.”⁸

The audience experiences feelings of “fear and pity” in the face of the horrible event that the hero of the tragedy experiences. This feeling of pity and fear serves to “free the soul from passions”. The audience experiences the *catharsis* (*katharotês*, *purity*) at the dramatic turning point of the play. There are two kinds of suffering here. The first is suffering that

⁵ *Hybris* (ὕβρις); It is a form of *hamartia*.

⁶ Platon. (1997). *Philebos*. İstanbul: Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Basımevi. pp.38-39.

* It should be noted here that we find it very surprising that Plato thinks this way. Because in his ideal view, he doesn’t at least affirm art, the pleasurable side of art and the concept of catharsis.

⁷ Aristoteles. (1987). *Poetica*, (Translation: İsmail Tunali). İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi pp.42.

⁸ *ibid*.

the hero of the tragedy endures. The second kind of suffering is: “Suffering pain while a person suffers pain which he isn’t worthy of.”⁹ The audience can experience *catharsis* with the second kind of pity. What Aristotle means by: “Pleasure born of fear and pity” is very similar to the concept of *jouissance* in psychoanalysis. Considering the ‘pleasure in pain’¹⁰ and ‘pain in pleasure’ expressions of *Jouissance*, we can understand the importance of the combination of pain and pleasure. The fact that the hero of a tragedy can be protected from *hamartia* by the limit that allows us to consider these two concepts together: “Considering that *Jouissance* isn’t limitable” and “It only emerges with a limit.”¹¹ In this study, the concepts of “limit” and “pain” in tragedy are tried to be discussed with the concept of “*jouissance*” in psychoanalysis.

I used to think that psychoanalysts had no right to enter the magical and glorious realm of tragedy and upset it with today’s emotions. This was the thoughts of a time that the knowledge of psychoanalysis wasn’t yet established. The destruction of the magical realm of the tragedy seemed extremely devastating to the tragedy lovers. Thou it is this matter of ‘turning upside down’ that which constituted the tragic universe. Only the tragedy that occurs when it is ‘upside down’ is about the destruction of the true universe. The ambiguity, which appears as if the boundaries are violated and even, mocking the inability of these boundaries to be boundaries from the very beginning, has an ecstatic spirit which the rational mind can’t reach in the ambiguous complexity of the tragic universe. In this sense, the tragic universe stands apart from *jouissance*. Again, in this sense, the limit is; it is very closely related to the *hamartia* (tragic mistake) in the actions of the

⁹ *ibid*, pp.39.

¹⁰ Fink, B. (2006). *Lacancı Psikanalize Bir Giriş*, (Özgür Ögütçen, trans.). İstanbul: Encore Yayınları, pp.34.

¹¹ “... Since it imposes as little enjoyment as possible, the principle of pleasure is a principle of limitation of pleasure. But also seeks pleasure by limiting it. The subject tends almost constantly to exceed the limitations of the principle of pleasure. However, this does not achieve the expected result of ‘more pleasure’ because there is a degree of pleasure that Lacan calls pleasure that is unbearable pleasure that the subject can’t tolerate. Clero, Jean-Pierre. (2011). *Dictionary of Lacan*, (Özge Sosyal, trans.). İstanbul: Say Yayınları. pp.167-169.

hero of the tragedy. Thinking together with the meaning of *Jouissance* which goes beyond pain and pleasure, which can't be captured and the ambiguous side of the tragic universe that can't be captured, functions as a key to open the doors in this same sense. In the same way, although the uncanny journey of carrying out this study with a possibility of uncertainty of this key being wrong may seem to be scary it is also exciting to work on it.

Writers which constitute the multiverse of tragedy and whose works have survived to this day are: Aeschylus and Sophocles. We are going to examine the plays of Sophocles' King Oedipus, Aeschylus' Prometheus Bound and Oresteia. The tragic heroes of these two leading writers are the people who call out to their God Dionysus lamenting in horror in a multi and ambiguous universe. The specific reason why Euripides and his tragedies aren't included can be explained by the absence of the *Dionizak* element, which constitutes the tragic universe, in Euripides's works. Euripides is the person who put the suffering of the common man on the scene.

In this regard, Friedrich Nietzsche's comment is very important,¹² according to Nietzsche, until Euripides came, Greek tragedy only dealt with the suffering of Dionysus. Dionysus is a God who experiences the suffering of individuation and fragmentation in himself. Those who attend the ritual also rejoice to see the fragmentation and the world separated into individuals because they believed that only in this way, by seeing themselves through art, can they be freed from the concept of individuation. Euripides brought the problems, troubles and the questions of the ordinary people to the stage. Urban bourgeois mediocrity began with Euripides. Euripides angered the ecstatic Gods with his *deus ex machina*¹³, and the

¹² F. Nietzsche's work, The Birth of Tragedy can be consulted.

¹³ Deus Ex Machina is a fictitious construction used by Euripides, meaning the Chariot of Gods, which is used to tie the end of the game. In the Ancient Greek theatre, it was used to mean that the character portraying a God was lowered from above with the help of a crane (machina). It is a method frequently used by the authors of the plays in the theater works written in the Ancient

Gods left the earth forever. Euripides, like Prometheus, stole tragedy from the Gods and gave it to mankind. In Nietzsche's point of view, his worthless liver should be fed to birds on Mount Olympus.

Just before I drowned in a vast sea of psychoanalysis, I chose myself a concept: *Jouissance*. I have to specifically point out that I didn't choose the concept of *jouissance* haphazardly. In my nearly twenty years of theater experience, the combination of pain and pleasure were always in my mind in many tragedies I read as a result of my intense interest and admiration for Ancient Greek tragedy. Especially after reading Terry Eagleton's *Sweet Violence*, it became a concept which haunted me. Later I realized *Sweet Violence* was describing *jouissance*. However, I couldn't understand such a concept until I met psychoanalysis.

The first part of the study will serve to understand the concept of *Jouissance* and *Jouissance* of Lacanian Psychoanalysis; it will deal with the concepts of *Symptom*, *Anxiety*, *Object Petit A*, *Sign*, *Pleasure Principle*, *Drive*, *Desire*, *Symbolic*, *Imaginary* and *Real*. The second part will include the elements that make up the tragic universe and the place of tragedies in this universe. The third part will include the reconsideration of the selected tragedies around the concept of *Jouissance*.

Just as we can trace *jouissance* in tragedy, psychoanalysis seeks its own exit in tragedy.

"If analytic experience finds itself in a position to owe some of its nobility to the Oedipal myth, it is because the prophecy retains its sharpness in its pronunciation. I have to say more on this: That the interpretation in the

Greek period. The course of the story becomes so complicated and inextricable that there is no longer an interesting solution for the author to come up with, and as a method often used, mythological Gods suddenly appeared and intervened; they killed those who had to die and save those who had to be saved.

analysis remains at the same level, becomes true only with its results, just as in the example of prophecy.¹⁴

It is necessary to look for the psychoanalysis experience that Lacan fed from the universe of tragedy in the fact that the secret of the tragedy had not been solved.

This study does not aim to solve the mystery but to pursue what constitutes the mystery. At this point, we will try to reinterpret the concept of *jouissance* in the context of tragedy and psychoanalysis, by needing the accompaniment of psychoanalysis, by trying to examine the relationship of the concept of *jouissance* with this mystery and ambiguity.

¹⁴ Lacan, J. (1971). *D'un Discours Qui Ne Serait Pas Du Semblant*. Paris: Unpublished Lecture. pp.41

CHAPTER ONE

1.1. THE FIELD OF PSYCHANALYSIS

Although it isn't easy to say what formed the basis of work of the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan, (1901 – 1981) his contribution to the field of psychoanalysis is comparable to that of Freud. The basis of this contribution can be attributed to the fact that he put forward a theory and practice the deeply affects many fields from linguistics to literary theory, from ideology criticism to cinema studies. To some he was a psychoanalyst, to others he was a post-structuralist or post-modern thinker, while others even went so far as to say that he was a 'charlatan'. But we wouldn't be saying the wrong thing if we call Lacan one of the most important theorists of the unconscious and *psyche* in the broadest sense.

Where the field of psychoanalysis begins and ends has been the subject of much debate: Is psychoanalysis just a therapy? Is psychoanalysis a science? Is psychoanalysis subject to the laws that any science is subject to? Or is psychoanalysis just nonsense, made up of purely empty debate with no scientific basis at all? Wouldn't it be best for psychoanalysis to confine itself only to the clinical space, to its own private therapy room? I am not one of those people who think that psychoanalysis oversteps its bounds, acts boldly, and intrudes on other fields in these matters. However, Oedipus includes trauma, castration, anxiety, dream interpretation, slip of tongue, unconscious, fantasy, desire, etc... He considers that many psychoanalytic concepts, such as these, are even in daily language. We can say that we have a right to ask questions on psychoanalysis. Indeed, are there any limits on the fields of psychoanalysis? Before we start looking for answers to all these questions, we should briefly take a look at what psychoanalysis is.

Sigmund Freud (1856 – 1939) is the founder of psychoanalysis. He started his studies as a medical doctor in Vienna. Freud was educated in neurology and physiology and had the opportunity to work with leading doctors of his time.

Vienna at that time was one of the main centers of Europe, where scientific progress reached its peak, new discoveries were made every day and scientific passion was intense. Freud grew up in such a scientific climate. On one hand he continued his studies in the field of physiology and on the other hand he was working on his clinical practice in the field of neurology. There was a particular group of patients who showed Freud that he wouldn't be able to find what he was looking for in neurology: The hysteria patients. Freud was going to deal with hysteria and femininity throughout his entire psychoanalytic career. At the end of his life he regretted that he couldn't give a satisfactory answer to the subject of femininity. Before Freud, hysteria was a disease that needed to be treated, but with the work of Freud, hysteria was replaced by the context of listening to the subjects who needed to be listened to. With this, Freud actually discovered the 'divided nature' of man. This means stepping into a hitherto untouched and unformulated field.

A human is a divided being. How did it get divided? It is divided between the conscious and unconscious. Therefore, for Freud, the fact that psychoanalysis is a therapy, a method of treatment and isn't more theoretical than the progress of psychoanalysis. To say that a human is a divided being is another way to say that we all have one side that we all realize and another that we won't be able to reach easily. But Of course, this isn't a simple matter of memory. Freud argues that is this division that marks human nature. The name he gave it in German is *Ein Anderer Schauplatz* which means The Other Scene. This other scene is unconscious and the unconscious actually expresses that there is knowledge without a subject and there is knowledge that eludes us. This approach of Freud that says that knowledge can lack a subject is a very important move in itself. The question is, how do we get to this field which is a field of knowledge that lacks a subject. Thanks to hysterical women, Freud discovers that access to this field is through a special arrangement of speech, which is not mere speech, it is free speech that emerges within the analytic relationship in analytical terms this is called 'free association'. Free association allows reaching areas that can't be reached through thought; it provides a gateway to this Other Scene that we can

never reach, no matter how much we think about ourselves as a conscious, rational being.

Thus, despite the efforts to explain mankind rationally, by analogy with animals, or by purely abstract concepts, Freud put forward a radically different idea of human nature. The nature of mankind – if there is one – is based on his division, and the source of this division has to do with the fact that man speaks, his emergence in the field of linguistics. This point: is it constitutes a transition point where we can articulate Freud with Lacan. As early as the 1950's when Lacan began to deal with linguistics in his own methods, he realized the privileged relationship that linguistics and speech establish within the unconscious. The first case of psychoanalysis, Bertha Pappenheim as known as 'Anna O' hit the jackpot when psychoanalysis was described as "talk therapy". Psychoanalysis has found the first source of its method in free association. In free association, the analyst asks the analysand to say whatever comes to mind, without censoring or changing it, even if he finds it meaningless. This is the most basic rule. It is probably the only basic rule that the analysand has to follow. Thanks to this method, an area of unconscious information which the patient didn't notice until that day, or to put it more accurately, could never reach, gradually begins to emerge. According to Freud, this is a process of 'deciphering', it is decoding. Thus, the repression that encodes the unconscious, preventing it from our direct access will be removed and the patient will formulate new unconscious information about oneself.

It was unthinkable that such a process wouldn't attract the attention of artists. From the very beginning, the artists recognized this innovative, radical, subversive and creative dimension of Freud's discovery. The disappearance of repression and the emergence of the unconscious don't simply mean solving an obscure problem, but with the disappearance of repression the subject begins to be subjected to a new kind of regulation. Precisely for this reason it would be unfair to see psychoanalysis as a mere cure or a mere symptomatic relief. Although there are analysts who do so, as Lacan has rightly stated over and over again! Many analysts who came after Freud overlooked this subversive, radical, creative

dimension of psychoanalysis and initiated it as a cosmetic treatment for social adaptation.

However, as we discuss in this thesis, psychoanalysis is about the tragic, it is about who is in the borderline. As it is known, this relationship is bidirectional, and Freud found an important basis for his work in a tragedy, Oedipus. Freud did not deal with tragedy with psychoanalysis; on the contrary he said that the premises of his theory had already been revealed in this work. It wouldn't be wrong, then to say that psychoanalysis deals with the unconscious mind. The unconscious is the concept of psychoanalysis, and psychoanalysis takes the unconscious as its foundation. In the broadest sense, both Freud and Lacan were concerned with the unconscious mind. In fact, according to Lacan, psychoanalysis is the 'science of the unconscious'. Lacan had defined the unconscious in many different ways: The one most well-known of these is the adage "the unconscious is structured like a language". Here we find two references together: The unconscious has a structure and this structure contains elements similar to the structure of language. In other words, this means that the functioning of the unconscious mind is subject to certain laws, just like a language. Lacan goes beyond Freud to reveal why the unconscious is formed and how it functions. Lacan's main reference here is structural linguistics, which didn't emerge fully in Freud's time. Lacan had often called his own work 'linguisterie', not linguistics, to indicate that he isn't interested in linguistics like a linguist does. He brought a certain critical approach to the work of some important linguists such as Roman Jakobson (1896 – 1982) and Louis Hjelmslev (1899 – 1965), in particular the works of Ferdinand de Saussure (1857 – 1913) and used their concepts. Basic linguistic concepts that Lacan finds important; on one hand, the signifier, the signified and on the other hand, metaphor and metonymy are the concepts that he thinks are involved in the functioning of the unconscious.

The basic concepts put forward by Saussure are the sign, the signified and the signifier. Although the sign first brings to mind Saussure's "sign" study in linguistics, Lacan's interpretation of the signifier stands in a separate place with it. We can begin by saying that Saussure's work does not cross the boundaries of

linguistics. According to Saussure, the signified is superior to the signifier, whereas in Lacan the signifier is superior. When Lacan speaks of the signifier, it can be 'everything' that can be recorded in difference relation, so that the field of the signifier has expanded and has come into play in creating a new meaning. However, when considered, the use of the phrase "chain of signifiers" is more understandable. In Saussure's theory, the sign is 'things' that take the place of something else and show something other than itself; object, being, concept or phenomenon. Saussure says that the sign is the combination of the signifier and the signified. In here the signifier refers to an auditory image... The signified is a concept in the mind. Lacan takes this thinking in reverse in his own theory. According to Lacan, the signifier and the signified don't have the same denominator. As it isn't "the signifier enters into the signified". According to Lacan, the signifier has a priority over the signified. Again, according to Lacan, with the signified being symbolic, we can see it as an illusion within the symbolic. In this sense, we shouldn't expect him to point to the truth. But the symbolic order here is very important for the sign, as it can reproduce all the subjective forms. And with this aspect, it will be able to cover open spaces.

On the other hand, Freud's work, which examines the functioning of the unconscious in the complex structure of dreams, would open the door for Lacan. Lacan explains his work on how dreams are formed in our thoughts with the concept of 'two basic primary processes' metaphor and metonymy. Metaphor is what is expressed by what we call, for example. Since this has been studied in relation to the functioning of conscious in dreams, it will be necessary to add: The mind produces some metaphors for what it hides or suppresses, and the metaphors it produces create something else. Or it is done to hide something. Metonymy is as it is in linguistic metaphor; it is just like a metaphor. Here it refers to the emergence of an element as a representation of something else, just as it is in a sign. However, unlike the sign, it is the figurative meaning that comes into the language as a part of the representative element. Fragmented structures represent another whole. According to this, the operation of Lacan's unconscious will be

covered up, so to speak, in partnership with the signifier – signified and metaphor – metonymy. The Job of analyst here is to uncover this cover up.

When we come back to the question of ‘is there a limit to the field of psychoanalysis?’ we will first mention a theater theorist who gave the news of psychoanalysis to the world and said that psychoanalysis has acquired a glorious place among the other disciplines. Let’s remember that the person who announced the birth of psychoanalysis to the world wasn’t a physician or a psychiatrist, but the director of the Cienna Burg theatre Alfred von Berger. He, with an article he wrote in a newspaper dated December 2, 1895. Again, the most praiseworthy articles on this subject came from the novels of Thomas Mann. Herman Hesse also wrote to Freud in 1918 and said: ‘Poets will always be your closest friends, and they will understand what your writings mean the most.’¹⁵

As we see with these explanations, the field of psychoanalysis, from poetry to theater and many other disciplines, expanded with the work of Freud. Moreover, many of Freud’s books have been associated with the most important works that changed the world. Therefore, Freud and his work went beyond just dealing with the human *psyche* and became pioneers by reinterpreting the origins of culture, archaic societies and art. Moreover, by addressing all these, he developed a new theory with creative and impressive ideas. Psychoanalysis comes from the civilization which constitutes the universe of man. Freud took the notion of his work from all the aspects of life, dealing with everything from mathematics to logic, from topology to literature, from art theory, from *Antigone* and from *Hamlet*. That is, the field to which psychoanalysis refers is really broad.

After Freud, Lacan gained similar fame too. In Lacan’s studies, there are traces of many important thinkers such as Aristotle, Georg Wilhelm, Friedrich Hegel, Immanuel Kant, Baruch Spinoza, Karl Marx, Claude Levi-Strauss, Ferdinand de Saussure, Melanie Klein and Martin Heidegger. On the other hand, the concepts that Lacan added to psychoanalysis and that we will examine throughout this study continue to expand the field of psychoanalysis. Reinterprets

¹⁵ Teber S. (2013). *Bilimsel Bir Peri Masalı: Freud'un Aile ve Tarihsel Romanı*. İstanbul: Okuyan Us Yayınları. pp.82.

in the focus of arts such as cinema, theatre, literature, painting and sculpture. Today, innumerable branches of art and cultural studies, established relations with psychoanalysis. The field of psychoanalysis, then, is as great as it spreads.

The effort of psychoanalysis to make sense of the human *psyche* by leaving the clinical field of intriguing. This curiosity creates an expanding field with various disciplines reinterpreting their own concepts by establishing a relationship with psychoanalysis. Similarly, this study aims to reinterpret the Ancient Greek tragedies by establishing a relationship with psychoanalysis. In this regard, especially Aristotle's idea of *catharsis* is very important. Aristotle expresses the purpose of tragedy with this well-known phrase: "The duty of tragedy is to cleanse the soul of passions with the feelings of pity and fear it evokes."¹⁶ Aristotle want to "psychologically justify" this function of tragedy.¹⁷ Considering that the concept of *catharsis* which Aristotle mentioned in *Poetica* is a reference to human emotion and psychological state, we can say that there is a need for psychological interpretation in order to understand the tragic character in tragedies.¹⁸ On the other hand, many tragedies that psychoanalysis uses to express itself, especially the Oedipus tragedy, shows the power of tragedy... So, tragedies and psychoanalysis seem intriguing at some point. This study emerged from the strong relationship between tragedies and psychoanalysis. There are two disciplines which have very important common points: Border and suffering. Accordingly, the Ancient Greek tragedies, which we will deal with, with *jouissance* which is a concept produced by the psychoanalytic method and indeed Lacanian psychoanalysis, and the 'border' and *pathos*¹⁹ (suffering) which determine the tragic universe that constitutes the tragedy, are very important elements that will shape the work by coming together at a common point. Another important issue is the transcendent actions and the way of thinking of the hero in the tragedies.

¹⁶ Aristoteles, *Poetica*, (İsmail Tunalı, trans.) İstanbul: Remzi Kitabevi. pp. 23.

¹⁷ *ibid*, pp.105.

¹⁸ The concept of *catharsis* was discussed in detail in the chapter titled Tragic Universe, in which the structure of tragedies were examines.

¹⁹ *Páthos*: It means to suffer. Feeling, emotion, especially the feeling of pain. Retrieved June 8, 2021, from: <https://www.etimolojiturkce.com/kategori/Antik-Yunanca/60>

Lacan, at a public lecture he gave at the Catholic University of Louvain in Belgium in the early 1970's, talks about a dream that an analysand told him about, in which the female patient sees herself as "the source of existence" and "an eternal life arises from her."²⁰ After a short pause, Lacan said this to the audience loudly: "*Est-ce que vous pourriez supporter la vie que vous avez?*" Which means, "Can you endure the life you have?" What is mentioned here is the essence of *jouissance*; this intolerable hard to bear thing is the essence of *jouissance*. The aforementioned life according to Hewitson isn't the everyday life we all know; it isn't a life full of daily drams, troubles at work or family relationships. It is rather the excess of life that goes beyond the pleasure principle. This life is, in Lacan's terms, a "*jouissance* apparatus." It isn't an ordinary life with its calm and troublesome moments, but instead perhaps it is Life with a capital L; that is what *jouissance* appeals to. And why not, it appeals to life in the tragedies too! The life of the hero of a tragedy feeds the tragic as "hard to bear" on the border of *jouissance*.

The text in your hand combines the concepts of 'border' and pathos²¹ (suffering), which determine the tragic universe in Ancient Greek tragedies and the relationship between the phenomena, pain and border in the essence of *Jouissance*. The Ancient Greek tragedy plays I chose for this study are: Sophocles' *King Oedipus*, Aeschylus' *Oresteia Trilogy* and *Prometheus in Chains*. Though these plays are of the tragic universe, in the field of psychoanalysis, the concepts of *border* and *suffering* will be explained in detail.

1.2. ON JOUISSANCE

Jouissance is a Lacan word, a neologism derived from the French verb *jouir*, a word that didn't exist before. Before this concept was used, Freud's concepts of *libido* and *drive*, and particularly the '*death drive*' [Todestrieb], bear a

²⁰ Transferred: Owen Hewitson, <https://www.lacanonline.com/2015/07/what-does-lacan-say-about-jouissance/>

²¹ Páthos: It means to suffer. Feeling, emotion, especially the feeling of pain. Retrieved June 8, 2021, from: <https://www.etimologiturkce.com/kategori/Antik-Yunanca/60>

certain resemblance to *jouissance*. As a matter of fact, this new concept of *jouissance*²² which is introduced by Lacan has a new meaning.

We wouldn't be wrong if we say that the concept of *jouissance* in psychoanalysis – naturally Lacanian psychoanalysis should be understood when we say psychoanalysis – is one of the most difficult concepts to talk about. The most important reason for this is that *jouissance* isn't a self-evident concept. It becomes explicable only in relation to other concepts. Before we can grasp *Jouissance*, we will first need to explain some other concepts. We will evaluate *Jouissance* in the context of *Drive*, *Pleasure Principle*, *Desire* and *Symbolic*, *Imaginary*, *Real* concepts. Later we will deal with the concepts of *Sinthome*, *Anxiety*, *Object Petit A* and *Ethics*. With these concepts, we hope to be able to explain *jouissance* in more detail. Then we will try to understand the relationship of *jouissance* with *suffering* and *border*. In this way, we will reevaluate the *pathos*

²² This French Word is almost untranslatable into English and German. The highly developed Lacanian acceptance of the Word largely diverges from its usual meaning. Undoubtedly, Lacan speaks of pleasure (plaisir) as the pleasure (bonheur) we derive from the sexual object, but on the other hand, he changes the direction of the concept profoundly under the Kojévian reading of the Hegelian dialectic of master and slave working for the master's pleasure, and on the other hand in his attempt to bring the pleasure principle back into the field of study. Since it imposes as little enjoyment as possible, then the pleasure principle is a principle of the limitation of pleasure. But he also seeks pleasure by limiting it. The subject tends almost constantly to exceed the limitations of the pleasure principle. However, this does not achieve the expected result of 'more pleasure' since there is a degree of pleasure that the subject can't tolerate, which Lacan calls pleasure, which is unbearable (SVII, 218) Pleasure isn't pleasure, it can be even suffering. Thus the subject can derive paradoxically pleasure from his symptom, which is suffering. "Masochism is a greater pleasure from the real one." [Le sinthome, p. 90] The concept of pleasure thus conceived leads to three kinds of scrutiny. First, Lacan's VII. Seminar 1 covers the constant desire to exceed the limits fixed by the pleasure principle in order to reach the 'Thing' and thus the death drive to obtain an excess of pleasure. Then, pleasure is the "way to death" [SXVII, 17-18]. The second is in the relation that pleasure engages in symbolic structure. Of course this convergence seems strange, especially if we insist on understanding impulse as instinct or natural force rather than knowledge, which is wrong in Lacan's point of view. However; "we know the path and the road there, this is knowledge about the ancestors. What is this knowledge? Not so much as a reversal of pleasure, if we remember that Freud included what he called beyond the pleasure principle; it is knowledge that stops life at the limit of pleasure. [...] Knowledge has a primitive relation to pleasure and what comes to the surface settles in the moment the device originating from the signifier appears." Third is extremely important to complete the discourse on the difference between the sexes. This difference arises mainly from identification. For the male and female subject, there are roles that involve identification, but the concept of pleasure allows one to go beyond a rather ordinary naming. Undoubtedly, Lacan, following in Freud's footsteps demonstrated that pleasure is essentially phallic. [SXX. 14] However, Lacan recognizes in women an additional pleasure that stands beyond phallic pleasure, the indescribable pleasure of the Other. Cited from [SXX, 71]: Clero, Jean-Pierre, (2011). *Lacan Sözlüğü*, (Özge Soysal, trans.). Istanbul: Say Yayınları. pp: 167-169.

and *border*, which we think constitute the essence of the tragic universe and tragedies, in relation to *jouissance*.

Lacan, like other concepts and terms didn't introduce *jouissance* on the basis of an explanation that we can simply explain. Since Lacan distributes the content of his new concepts to many different texts, it is necessary to consider many different texts in order to reach the scope of a concept. Moreover, in an area where there are many linguistic games, we will be wandering in the forest while looking for an exit door. Of course, these wanderings are very important. Both Lacan's linguistic games and his style hover in implicit spirals. The situation makes the concept of *jouissance* especially difficult to grasp. But the apparent incomprehensibility is not just an incomprehensibility because of this; there is also a state of *jouissance* that closes itself to being explained in words transcending, so to speak, transcendent. When all this comes together, we hit a rock bottom.

Although Lacan first used the term *jouissance* in 1953, he combined it with the concepts of drive and truth in 1960 and thus *jouissance* took on a new meaning. Previously, Freud had mentioned a similar situation with this concept in his article *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. "Freud called this state of being *beyond pleasure* (bonheur) the "death drive" and said that the main purpose of life is to find path to death."²³ Lacan sees *jouissance* as separate from Freud's pleasure principle, as we will see later.

This French word (*Jouissance*) has a sexual connotation. It is the most well-known dictionary meaning of *pleasure* (*Plaisir*) in terms of right, property and sexual orgasm. In French, the word *jouir* means to ejaculate in a sexual slang meaning. On the other hand, we see that it is used as a legal meaning to benefit the right (*jouir de*

²³ Homer, S. (2013). *Jacques Lacan*, (Translation: Abdurrahman Aydın). Ankara: Phoenix Yayınları pp:125.

droit). But Lacan takes *Jouissance* beyond pleasure, even to a place quite separate from pleasure and enjoyment.²⁴

If we go back to the meaning of ‘to benefit the right’ (*jouir de droit*); ‘The benefit the right means that one can *jouir* the possibilities at hand, but not waste them.’²⁵ That is, to distribute, to deploy and to give its due. Accordingly, it gives rise to benefit the right of an existing pleasure. Thus, the meaning of *jouissance* associated with law emerges.

Lacan emphasizes the issue of ‘utilisation’ common to the relationship between *jouissance* and law. It considers that the word *usufruct* is a legal concept and, in this sense, the concepts of utility and *jouissance* are on the same level. Lacan, as a Sphinx waiting for us at the outside of a door, asks the necessary question for *jouissance*: ‘What is beneficial, beneficial for?’²⁶ The answer for that is something linguistics can’t express. According to Lacan, *jouissance* is language, which is the prosthesis of the ‘prosthetic god’²⁷ intended to be the god of the speaking being, perhaps the age. Although Freud said that what makes man God is about controlling the nature, I have made this ascription because we think that ‘language’ is one of these control mechanisms. For God does not need language. The very language of the beings speaking in His place has already made Him God. If we return to the question of “What is beneficial, beneficial for?” Lacan says that we can never know the answer to this question, since it is indefinable. And he adds: ‘*Jouissance* is what is useless.’²⁸

When we think of *Jouissance* with *enjoyment*, we can say that we have a right to enjoy it. It is like, ‘superego’s enjoyment’²⁹ command. Here we have to

²⁴ *Ibid*, pp.9.

²⁵ Lacan, J. (2019). *Seminer Encore*, (Translation: Murat Erşen) İstanbul: Metis Yayınevi pp.9

²⁶ *ibid*.

²⁷ In his book *The Restlessness of Civilization*, Freud describes man as trying to have all the knowledge of the age, emulating being a God and calls today's people the ‘God with a Prosthetic’

²⁸ *ibid*, pp.19.

²⁹ Freud, S. (2014). *Haz İlkesinin Ötesinde Ben ve İd* (Translation: Ali Nahit Babaoğlu). İstanbul: Metis Yayınevi pp.47

discuss about the difference between pleasure and enjoyment. *Enjoyment* expresses a desire that our fantasy world produces and creates; in this respect it is abstract. Pleasure, on the other hand, necessarily includes an action, and as a result of this action, something happens. Pleasure is related to the satisfaction state here. On the other hand, we shouldn't forget the *pathos* that will emerge with our pleasure. *Jouissance* contains an emotion as energy that hits the border of the body and can turn into *delight* only when it encounters a border phenomenon. When we think of *jouissance* as a painful pleasure, when the limit of pleasure is reached it becomes possible to grasp the relationship between the pain and the pleasure. It is precisely at this point that we can make a connection with the phenomenon of reaching and crossing the limit in tragedy: The hero of a tragedy transcends familiar conventions, crosses the border, and his existence opens up another dimension of meaning. It can also be added that the hero of a tragedy isn't a hedonist who seeks pleasure. He isn't a mediator trying to reconcile conflicts. At this point the ethical dimension in tragedy comes into view. The hero of a tragedy questions the ethical limitations existing in the society with his action. Often challenges this with his own body, even with his own life.

While Lacan deals with the concept of *jouissance* and indeed some other psychoanalytic concepts, he also dwells on a number of philosophical concepts. So we can't deny that Lacanian psychoanalysis is in a critical relationship with some philosophical concepts. Lacan considers Aristotle's interpretation of pleasure and *jouissance*'s relationship with *pleasure* together. While explaining this relationship, Lacan mentions the seventh book of Aristotle's *Nicomchean Ethics*.³⁰ Aristotle tells *Nikomakhos* in the seventh book of the *Ethics* that there is *pleasure* beyond need, beyond it all. In short, pleasure doesn't correspond to the satisfaction of needs such as eating and drinking water. According to Aristotle, need comes before pleasure. Although satisfying a need can provide pleasure, pleasure isn't a need by itself. It seems possible for pleasure to hide itself behind a need in this indirect relationship. According to Aristotle, the satisfaction of needs

³⁰ Aristoteles. (2015). *Nikomakhos'a Etik*, (Furkan Akderin). İstanbul: Say Yayınları.

is related to action. Action is necessary to satisfy the needs. That is, they can only be satisfied by taking action. Lacan continues to look at the law of action and pleasure from Aristotle's point of view. Aristotle placed the 'immovable mover'³¹ at the center of his world. And what is that? It is God. According to Lacan, the part that Aristotle calls the field of activity (*energeia*) constitutes the part that includes pleasure.³² Pleasure is a mover, that doesn't move at all. It is some kind of God. God of Pleasure. The struggle for the deification of pleasure is the greatest guardian of the experience of ecstasy; this can not be spoken about *jouissance*. On the other hand, Lacan asks Aristotle the question of what is the *jouissance* of being. "The first being that we can feel is our own being and everything that is for the good of our being will therefore be the *jouissance* of the Supreme Being, the God. So, when we love God, we love ourselves... When we love ourselves first, we show Godlike love."³³

Lacan allows us to think of the concept of *jouissance* with the concept of border. At this point, we should state that Lacan introduced *jouissance* as a state of pleasure related to the body in the book *La jouissance au fil de l'enseignement de Lacan*, compiled by Jean-Marie Jadin and Marcel Ritter on *jouissance*. The important point to add here is the fact that *jouissance* isn't just a bodily pleasure. However, we also encounter the fact that *jouissance* hits the border of the body. There are other connections within *Jouissance*'s inseparable relationship with the body. For Lacan, this is the 'language and speech.'³⁴ With language what Lacan calls repetition takes place. The 'thing' repeated with language draws *jouissance* into a kind of linguistics game. As it is inseparable in language and speech as well as in *Jouissance*'s relationship with the body. According to Jadin and Ritter, *jouissance* is in an inevitable relationship with the unconscious, the impulse and the desire. Urias Arantes, in his article *Pleasure and Speech*,³⁵ tries to explain *jouissance* from a language expressible field. According to him, the speaking

³¹ *ibid*, pp.

³² Lacan, J. *Seminer Encore*. pp.96.

³³ Lacan, J. *Seminer Encore*. pp.96.

³⁴ Jean-Marie Jadin, **Marcel Ritter**. (2009). *La jouissance au fil de l'enseignement de Lacan*. Toulouse: Editions érés. pp.193.

³⁵ *ibid*, pp.276.

being [être-parlant] is determined by the rules of speech. This situation takes place in relation to the signifier. Thus, it borders the dynamic *jouissance* within this framework. The body of the being manifests itself only through language. The body ceases to be a directly experienced phenomenon that can be grasped empirically; this distinction is based on a distinction made between the organism and the body. We can explain this with the phenomenon of death, with death the organism puts an end to its biological activity, but the actual death of the person, in other words, the symbolic death requires much more than that. This point of articulation, that is the point of articulation of the biological body and language, shows us that *jouissance* isn't just a pleasure received from or through the body. There is even a *jouissance* that speech itself provides: The kind of sometimes hurtful, cross border, pleasure that one gets from chatter, gossip or banter. *Jouissance* constructs a meaning that points beyond the phallus, in the sense of 'more'. It is in the out of reach of the subject. Thus, it stands beyond the subject. With its non-symbolizability, it stands in an ecstatic state beyond the symbolic. The place where it stands isn't the state of unconsciousness. 'It is somewhere outside the conscious.'³⁶ One aspect of *jouissance* is characterized by being out of reach of the subject, a state of absolute pleasure-pleasure-*jouissance* is impossible. Thus, the field it addresses stands beyond the subject. This brings us back to our own problem; the intersection between the tragic and the realm of *jouissance*. This beyond field is a field that makes it possible for the subject to go beyond himself, to reveal what is potentially in himself. Also, this beyond is unsymbolizable; it resists being expressed in words, by the means of a language. Nor is it unconscious as such: It is, according to Lacan's point of view, ex-sist, the inside outside, the most intimate and the most remote, that is, ex-timité. 'It is somewhere outside the unconscious.'³⁷

³⁶ Lacan, *Seminar Encore*. pp.85.

³⁷ *ibid*, pp.86.

1.2.1. A *Jouissance* Beyond the Phallus³⁸

So how else can we define *jouissance* that emerges beyond this beyond, beyond this border, beyond existing compromises, beyond pleasure? Lacan, makes an irony in his speech Seminar Encore which was translated into Turkish under the name, Yine/Hala and mentioned that a new book title can be made from ‘a *jouissance* beyond the phallus.’ Using this irony, we will try to understand the state of *jouissance* being beyond the phallus. *Jouissance*’s relationship with the body and the phallus can be explained by what Lacan expresses as the phallus. Lacan interprets the phallus as a signifier.

According to Lacan, it isn’t correct to equate the phallus with the penis. Lacan treats the phallus as a signifier that performs a different function in each of the three orders of “imaginary”, “symbolic”, and “real.” Similar “father” is a signifier or a metaphor rather than a real person. As we shall see, the “Name of Father” is a signifier that distorts the mother child pair and introduces the child into the symbolic order of desire and lack.³⁹

In many places Lacan speaks of *pleasure*, *desire* and *jouissance* together. Because they are in an inseparable relationship with each other. In the satisfaction that desire seeks, *jouissance* stays away from the feeling of satisfaction. Whereas, desire will follow the path of *jouissance* in this satisfaction. Moreover, the boundary he mentions is in relation to *jouissance*. What is this boundary? The inaccessible boundary of the pleasure of death. The inaccessibility of the boundary is closely linked to the inaccessibility of *jouissance* – a *jouissance* in the absolute sense. Both are unassailable, unsymbolizable, indescribable: Death and *jouissance*.

³⁸ *ibid*, pp.86.

³⁹ Homer, S. *ibid*. pp.75.

The ‘thing’ that corresponds to or serves to describe pleasure, pain or *desire* is closely related to the inaccessibility of *jouissance*. ‘In contrast to desire, which moves from one signifier to another to appease itself, *jouissance* in a sense is absolute and certain.’⁴⁰ The movement of desire seeks to satisfy *jouissance*. According to Lacan, desire; seeks satisfaction in the consistency of *jouissance*. “Whether we like it or not, the ‘symbolic’ is governed by the death instinct. Death is beyond pleasure, inaccessible and forbidden. It is the ultimate boundry that can’t be overcome, and at this boundry it is associated with *jouissance*.”⁴¹ Lacan refers to the hidden but very strong link between ‘the pleasure of death’ and *jouissance*. Death and *jouissance* are alike in the commonality of being unreachable. It goes beyond the phallus because of this similarity and the fact that *jouissance* is beyond the bodily pleasure. ‘The woman approaches phallus in a different way and keeps it to herself. In terms of its phallic function, it is not because it is not there at all – it is not whole. This function *doesn’t* exist at all. It is there fully. But there is something extra (*en plus*).’⁴² We can say that the extra one serves to describe *jouissance*. In other words, *jouissance* as such refers to a kind of extremism. In Lacan’s example of phallus, which he uses when describing the *jouissance* of the body, he says that with that excess ‘thing’ the *jouissance* is revealed and actually goes beyond the phallus with this ‘excess.’

According to Lacan, the overcoming of the Freudian pleasure principle is possible only with suffering, not with more pleasure.⁴³ When we think of this painful situation with the pleasure of death, it seems more understandable. When the intensity that follows pleasure turns into a *páthos* (suffering), we encounter *jouissance*. The strong bond between suffering and pleasure will transform that ‘thing’ into what is called ‘the pleasure of death.’

In tracing *jouissance* let’s look at the emergence of *jouissance* in therapy, which will allow us to better interpret meaning by looking at exactly where Lacan uses this concept.

⁴⁰ Homer. S. Lacan. pp.125.

⁴¹ *ibid.*

⁴² *ibid*, pp.86.

⁴³ *ibid*, pp.125.

Lacan mentions *jouissance* in the excerpt below, where he tells how the analyst's attitude to the analysand should be in therapy. What is stated here is very important for us. In Bruce Fink's book, *An Introduction to Lacanian Psychoanalysis*, the part in which he talks about the *Satisfaction Crisis* – the crisis of the patient's satisfaction – explains the situation with this concept:

“Then these people derive a great deal of pleasure from torturing themselves, subjecting themselves to painful experiences and the like. The French language has a subtle word to describe this kind of pleasure and pain, satisfaction in insatiability: *Jouissance*. This word denotes the kind of ‘excitement’ one can derive from punishment, or self-punishment by doing something painfully pleasurable (in example, sexual ejaculation) or by doing something painfully pleasurable.”⁴⁴

The people Fink mentioned, who give themselves painful pleasure turn pleasure into pain mediated by the pleasure they receive. The analysand mentioned here underlines that he has established a strong bond with the complaints that he constantly complains about and claims to hurt him. His intention isn't to give up on them. What is taken care of here by the analyst is to enable the analysand to see the pleasure that those situations that he claims are giving him pain at the same time. It won't go unnoticed by the analyst that he conveys or tries to hide the pleasure he receives, as if he was only in pain.

Sean Homer expresses in his book, that this concept in the chapter with the subtitles of the impossibility of reality and *Jouissance*:

‘A little more things’ that will fill us and satisfy us beyond the missing pleasure we experience; that what *Jouissance* is. We don't know what

⁴⁴ Fink, B. (2016). *Lacancı Psikanalize Bir Giriş*, (Translation: Özgür Ögütçen). İstanbul: Encore Yayınları pp.34-35.

is is, but we assume it must be there. Because we are always in dissatisfaction.

[.....]

Moreover, we often attribute it to the Other, assuming it is there and we lack it. The Other is believed to experience pleasure on a level beyond our own experience. The important point here is that this everlasting *jouissance* does not exist.’⁴⁵

With ‘a little more’ we encounter *Jouissance* that goes beyond the body. When we talk about *Jouissance*, we are talking about a situation that doesn’t exist, can’t be seen, can’t have a place and is difficult to express. The phrase “This is the non-existence of ever diminished *jouissance*” makes things even more difficult. The concept mentioned here is drive. That’s why it never decreases, because the impulse has an endless loop, it always comes back to the same place, that is, to the starting point. It is always there. It appears in other forms of expression and in other ways. However, since there is no end to be reached there is a relationship with death, the state of non-existence. We are talking about something that does not exist. What is and then immediately disappears. And ‘*Jouissance* contains pleasure and pain’ a kind of energy which doesn’t arrive at its destination.⁴⁶

According to Lacan, it is the superego that compels a person to take pleasure. So the superego takes commands from *Jouissance*.⁴⁷ Have pleasure! Superego is both the legislator and the thing that undermines the law. How can that happen? The subject can’t escape tension between the desires to break the law. And in that case, guilt arises. The more we are subjected to the pressure of the superego, the more guilt we feel. When the superego tells us to have pleasure, our guilt for the sake of having more pleasure increases.⁴⁸

The difficulty to understand *Jouissance* is because it doesn’t have a symbolic. There is nothing that symbolizes it; there is, not a word that which

⁴⁵ Homer. S (2016). *Lacan*, (Translation: Abdulrahman Aydın). Ankara: Phoenix Yayınları pp.126.

⁴⁶ *ibid*, pp.124.

⁴⁷ J. Lacan. *ibid*, pp.87.

⁴⁸ S. Homer. *ibid*, pp.125.

explains it, nor is there an image that shows it. However, understanding the truth seems more reasonable in this sense. Although we can't concretize it when we think about it in other terms, we can get a little closer to its meaning. However, the truth of *Jouissance* is hidden in itself. Maybe things will get a little easier if we call the coal that makes the unconscious mind work in psychoanalysis, *Jouissance*. However, even though we seem to embody *Jouissance* at this point, it would seem more accurate to think of it as an energy that fuels the fire rather than a logical system that formulates it as coal. Self burning fire is the visibility of self raising energy in the fire...

Jouissance's relationship to pleasure falls somewhere beyond Freud's Pleasure Principle. Before Lacan uses the word *jouissance*, Freud makes a comment implying *jouissance*. Accordingly, *jouissance* stops at a place that crosses the boundaries of pleasure.

1.2.2. Beyond Pleasure

Freud's interpretation of the 'Pleasure Principle' which will allow us to take a closer look at the relationship of *jouissance* to pleasure, will help us in understanding how *jouissance* is distinguished from pleasure. Freud says *jouissance* exists as libido. Although this isn't enough to fully grasp *jouissance*, we can say that it characterizes the excitement created by libido in terms of actions and results for pleasure. It must be said that even in this state, we can not express it completely. Because *jouissance* isn't just that. It's not only libido, it's something else that hovers in an area where libido mediates. Libido, is the meaning of the word just about the circulation of sexual energy? Lacan described the word libido as follows:

The word "libido" actually simply refers to the notion of reversibility, which implies that there is a certain equivalence or metabolism of

images. To conceptualize this transmission, it takes a word about energy. The word “libido” works for that.⁴⁹

In the *pleasure* that Freud mentioned in his work *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, there is an expectation that a spiritual and bodily tension will be discharged and thus satisfaction will be realized. ‘*Jouissance* on the other hand, can be expressed in the satisfaction of the impulse rather than the satisfaction.’⁵⁰ In Lacan’s point of view, *jouissance* is impossible because it isn’t possible to satisfy a drive. So there is a rift in *jouissance* created by the dissatisfaction of the drive. The reason for that seems to be related to Lacan’s issue of truth. Although Freud doesn’t use the concept of *jouissance*, what is meant by *jouissance* in the text in Freud’s point of view, means pleasure.

Freud defines what is beyond pleasure as the “death drive”. Lacan also thinks on the same level as Freud on this issue. According to them, the death drive is related to a pleasure. Only when it goes through and beyond pleasure is when it can be called the “death drive.” We will continue this issue under the heading ‘Drive’

1.2.2.1. Drive

Freud’s definition of the drive is a concept that exists at the border between the body and the psyche. Freud divides the concept of drive into two at this border. He refers to Ancient Greece to name them. According to Freud, the willing drive for life is Eros (love) and the will to die drive is Thanatos (death).⁵¹ Love and death are bound to want their fair shares. Although the drives are based on need, on the other hand, they have an abstract side too. It will be because of this that Freud wants to embody the impulses by giving them these ancient Greek names.

⁴⁹ Lacan, J. (2012) *Baba-nın Adları*, (Translation: Murat Erşen). İstanbul: Monokl Yayınları. pp.21.

⁵⁰ S. Homer, *ibid*, pp.21.

⁵¹ Thanatos is the God, symbolizing death. He is the child of Nyks and is the brother of Sleep. Hypnos and Thanatos are inseparable and dwell underground, deep in Tartaros. [Hes. The-op. 755 et al] quoted by Erhat A. (2015) *Mitoloji Sözlüğü*. İstanbul. Remzi Kitapevi Pp. 282.

According to Freud, the drive has purpose, object, source and pressure. The purpose of the drive is to seek self soothing. Its objective is what the drive attaches to itself in order to achieve its own purpose. Freud says that the close relationship between the drive and its object is excessive attachment. This commitment is also a tool for pressure. According to Freud, the drive is relaxed by arousal. With arousal comes the question of need. This is like hunger and thirst. But Freud explicitly says he doesn't speak about them. The arousal (Reiz) that Freud speaks of is different from a stimulation which comes from the outside world. It is an internal arousal and refers to sexual arousal.⁵² Lacan also accepts that the drive arises through an internal stimulation and is a sexual stimulation. Freud sees the "death drive" beyond pleasure. According to Lacan, pleasure and death drive can't be separated from each other in this sense. 'The concept of death drive can be understood, in a sense, as a naming of all the imperfections that prevented Freud from conceiving an inner psychic structure for a person that functions on the pleasure principle.'⁵³

According to Lacan, the death drive was different from what was described by Freud. According to him, the death drive isn't something that makes a will for death. 'According to Lacan, every drive is a sexual drive by nature and are in the area where sex games are played. And every drive is a death drive. With the death drive, it will become one with *jouissance* and reality.'⁵⁴

In Freud's definition, in its simplest form, the subject tends to stay away from inner tension and have pleasure. But what clinical experience reveals is the opposite of this; which is, the subject needs to go 'beyond the pleasure principle' to increase the tension in order to receive pleasure. To call this area, beyond the pleasure principle, *Todestrieb* is to cut off all its ties to death, so *Todestrieb* isn't about death, but about pleasure, in other words, about the revolution of life.

⁵² Lacan, J. (2017). *Psikanalizin Dört Temel Kavramı*, (Translation: Nilüfer Erdem). İstanbul: Metis Yayınları. pp.173-174.

⁵³ Ö. Ögütçen. (2015). "Death Drive-Todestrieb" *Bibliotech*, vol.21. pp.30.

⁵⁴ Homer, S. *ibid.* pp.109.

It is about repetition. And this repetition is undoubtedly an essential feature of the drive. Thus, the death drive, far from being like death, wanting death, contemplating death or striving towards an original inorganic pleasure of fragmentation, zero tension, is concerned with the pleasure created by repetition. The death drive is a property of all drives, their common denominator. This being the case, it becomes difficult to maintain an independent concept of the death drive. As a result, creating theoretical duos opposing Eros and Thanatos carries contradictions in itself. (Öğütçen.2015.21)

Lacan's interpretation of the 'death drive' isn't simply a will to die, as Öğütçen puts it. It must be said that it isn't the other way around. According to Lacan and on his statement with a quote from Heraclitus: 'The bows name is life, though its work is death.' In Lacan's thinking, our drive towards death isn't accompanied by death itself. It is accompanied by loss. As a matter of fact, Lacan says, 'What leads life to desire is loss.'⁵⁵ We are driven relentlessly by our lost desires. When we try to fulfill our desires, we are met with many other things. These things often lead to devastation. Because even if we realize our desires, we are far from being satisfied. This distance is even more infuriating, because in this interval we experience a kind of endless dissatisfaction, hoping that there is more and we get what's extra. On this point we always focus on something which is missing. *Jouissance* is the 'thing' which is something more than this lack of pleasure. It is revealed through a pleasure hunting that the driven desire is not satisfied and always taken for granted that there can be more. Protected against '*jouissance*', sheltered from the drive to do things against our well being, we rush ourselves towards death in order to avoid this realization, so that we can finally 'live in peace.' "Death is the best shelter against the death drive."⁵⁶

⁵⁵ *ibid*, pp.125.

⁵⁶Lacan, J. (1998). *The Four Basic Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, New York: W. W. Norton & Company pp.175

The drive refers to the concept of *Befriedigung* (satiety). What does it mean to satisfy a drive? It means that the drive is satisfied. It is necessary to repeat that this isn't related to the things which we are urged from outside by vital needs, as we have stated above. According to Lacan, it is impossible to satisfy the inner, the sexual drive. 'What they satisfy through being discontent is the law of pleasure.'⁵⁷ This interpretation, which reaches *jouissance* through the relationship of drive and pleasure, brings us closer to *jouissance*. The object of the drive is not an object that is supposed to provide a satisfaction to the subject itself.⁵⁸ The object of the drive is as an *object*, satisfaction.⁵⁹

According to Lacan, every drive becomes destructive as it has a repetitive search for satisfaction. Thus, Lacan states that 'every drive is actually a death drive.'⁶⁰

Can we talk about free will, when we have drives? Or we can ask this for the hero of a tragedy; can the hero of a tragedy, which can't cope with his impulses, have a free will? Let's try to answer this question from the field of philosophy rather than the field of psychoanalysis. According to Vernant, 'the hero of a tragedy has no free will.'⁶¹ The issue of will here is related to the domain of Ancient Greece and the ethics in a tragedy, as we will explain later, rather than its relation to the drive. Therefore, these two concepts united in a tragic way; *jouissance* is the mischievous child of ethics and drive.

In contrast to the desire to be satisfied by being driven, the expectation of 'more' prevents the desire from being satisfied. Accordingly desire is an endless dissatisfaction, and this dissatisfaction appears to be very closely related to *jouissance*.

⁵⁷ Lacan, J. *ibid*, pp.176.

⁵⁸ Zupancic, A. *Ibid*, pp.162.

⁵⁹ Miller, Jacques-Alain (1995). 'On Perversion', in *fading seminars I and II: return to Freud*. Albany, NY: SUNY Press. pp.313.

⁶⁰ Lacan, J. *Ibid*, pp.176.

Vernant, J. P & Naquet. P.V. (1990) *Mit and Tragedy in Ancient Greek*, (J. Lloyd, Çev.) Brooklyn: Zone Books.. pp.46.

1.2.2.2. Relationship Between Desire and *Jouissance*

For Freud and Lacan, desire (*désir*) has an important place as the will of the unconscious. Lacan reconsiders desire with Freud's and indeed Hegel's interpretation of it. Accordingly, the question will arise when we consider desire as a need or demand.⁶² The need stands in a place that can be understood in the first state of a human. Accordingly, a basic need such as being hungry as a baby causes the baby to express itself: Crying. When the baby cries, it informs the person who is going to provide it with vital support: The baby needs something. So, as long as there is the other who oversees the babies crying as a sign, the act of crying will mean something. Meaning is created by the person who gives the meaning and thus becomes the signifier of need as the "other." Thus, the other as subject and signifier is positioned as something else. In this case, the subject is alienated from the other, separated from it. This separation refers to the subject divided by the knowledge that 'man is a divided being' that we mentioned earlier. This process continues with a drive. The baby is driven against what it demands. The baby gets its need from the mother as being breastfed. What it wants or receives from the breast is not only milk. It is also love. After this, we encounter something very important that Lacan will both ask the question of and answer it. 'First where, here is the desire? Second, how does demand turn into desire?' Desire is how demand turns into desire. According to Lacan, in the future something else will replace the mother's breast for the baby. The use of a teddy bear instead of a breast as a metonymy will cause anxiety for the baby who falls into the gap created by this deficiency on the one hand.⁶³ According to Lacan, this lack is where the desire begins. And Lacan will call the emptiness created by what the baby needs (which he no longer needs, but still demands) with what he demands, anxiety. The example of this baby, which now demands things in the fantasy universe, not in reality with deficiency, shows that desire finds existence in the fantasy universe. The fantasy universe is where we can understand how

⁶² Korulsan C.. *Desire in Lacan*. Retrieved June 1, 2021, from <https://cerenkorulsan.com/2019/08/18/lacanda-arzu/>

desire will arise. Thus we will consider desire as something that appeals to fantasy. While talking of desire in fantasy, Lacan also talks of ‘the desire of the other.’

Lacan calls the gap between enjoyment and pleasure *jouissance*. *Jouissance*, which is also associated with the place of desire, is fantasy, stands in this area. It being indefinable may be due to the idea that this gap creates an unsolvable universe. When we talk about the close relationship between desire and *jouissance*, we will have to think together with the founder of psychoanalysis, Freud’s concepts of *drive* and *pleasure*. Freud speaks of a satisfaction focused on pleasure (*lust*) and the discharge of body tensions. Physical tension also provides relief from mental tension. Thus, a real discharge can be achieved. There is always a sense of satisfaction in *pleasure*.⁶⁴ Pleasure and desire are in process of being satisfied. But the process is definitely about to come to an end. *Jouissance*, on the other hand, is the satisfaction of the drive as opposed to the satisfaction of pleasure. It is also impossible because the impulse is unsatisfied. The satisfaction of *pleasure* is possible. While pleasure tends to protect the self, *jouissance* tries to destroy it. Thus it goes *beyond the pleasure principle*.

The sharp discrepancy between ego drives and sexual drives revealed by our data so far, with the first being directed towards death and the second being directed towards the maintenance of life, will certainly not satisfy us in various ways.⁶⁵ (Freud, 2019,53)

Freud speaks about the pleasure that turns to life with the ego drive and the pleasure that turns to death with the sexual drive. Is not the cause of dissatisfaction because the pleasure towards death can’t be experienced? This dissatisfaction fits well with the dissatisfaction of *jouissance*. That ‘thing’ which can’t be captured in the pleasure of death and the dissatisfaction of *jouissance* hurts the whole process. It’s just like the pain of the baby who just started to move, trying to reach an object that it wants to reach as a result of its struggles.

⁶⁴ Freud, S. (2016). *Haz İlkesinin Ötesinde Ben ve İd*, (Translation: Ali Nahit Babaoğlu). İstanbul: Metis Yayınları. pp.28.

⁶⁵ *ibid*, pp.53.

The possibility of reaching the object and actually the act of itself (the act of trying to reach) gives the pleasure to the baby, who cries and whines with pain for what it can't reach. Its eyes shine, its voice becomes high pitched and it wants to reach that thing with its screams. It experiences the feelings of pleasure and pain together for what it can't obtain and can't reach.

Jouissance is like the invisible wall against desire. The impossibility of the 'thing' we desire sustains a mechanism that makes us want more, disappointing us forever. The *objet petit a* stands in the writhing side of the desire that can't actualize itself within the fantasy.

There is an important relationship between the anxiety created by *objet petit a* and *Jouissance*. In order to understand this relationship, we will first have to take a closer look at this concept.

1.2.2.3. **Objet Petit A**

We will have to look at the relationship of anxiety with the word which has been translated as 'nesne a' into Turkish; *Objet (object)*, *petit (small)* and *a (other)*. According to Lacan, the concept of *objet petit a*⁶⁶ has an important relationship with *jouissance*. Although it doesn't fully encompass *jouissance*, 'it indirectly contains some of the *jouissance* in the relationship that it maintains with the other, which is not lacking.'⁶⁷

According to Lacan, the drive that is, the driven subject, indirectly revolves around the *objet petit a*. *Objet petit a* is also impossible to reach, as it is a

⁶⁶ Lacan wants this concept to be preserved, as in its translation from French into other languages, "so that languages, like an algebraic symbol, gain extreme meaning". Here the letter a is the first letter of French word *autre* (other). The concept can also be translated into Turkish as "small other object" with a literal translation. By this concept or term, or "algebraic sign", Lacan means the object of desire, which isn't in reality, but in the realm of imagination or fantasy as an "excess" concept, and therefore is never attainable. Quoted by Alenka Zupincic, *Gerçeğin Etiği*, page 11-12 –indicated as the translator's note.

⁶⁷ Hekimoğlu, E. C. ve Bilik, M. Z. "Anxiety from Freud to Lacan", *AYNA Journal of Clinical Psychology* 2020, vol.7(3), pp.336-367.

‘thing’ in the fantasy realm. ‘The subject may have the illusion of reaching the *jouissance* that he has partially lost through this circle of drives.’⁶⁸

Since the subject can’t reach the *objet petit a*, the subject is driven more or goes on the path to satisfy its drives. In this situation it is possible for the person to go towards the destructive path. In this sense, it is important that *objet petit a* remains empty rather than filling the space to which it corresponds, because the only thing that will make the subject desire is the lack of this gap.⁶⁹ In this sense, desire and *jouissance* can’t coexist, as desire is a defense against *jouissance*.⁷⁰ Anxiety, on the other hand, is a median between *jouissance* and desire.⁷¹

Anxiety brings to mind the question of what was Oedipus’ anxiety and how did he cope with the anxiety in the context of the relationship between *objet petit a* and *jouissance*. According to Lacan, this is a way of escaping anxiety for the obsessive subject, who sees that his desire is no longer unobtainable and is confronted by reality.⁷² ‘In Oedipus, the fantasy of killing the father, which was suppressed after the oedipal period, and the threat of castration that will come as a punishment are seen. As a matter of fact, in both stories, the fantasy of killing the father took place, and to cope with this anxiety, the eye gauging phenomenon, a symbol of castration, occurred.’⁷³ The hero of a tragedy, who has fallen into anxiety, reveals this in his body, making his anxiety visible. On the other hand, the fact that the liver, which symbolizes his mind and power of his mind, is fed on birds indicates Prometheus’s anxiety. Agamemnon, who sacrificed his daughter, hesitates to step on the rose colored carpet because of this anxiety.

⁶⁸ Laurita, C. (2010). Working with the drive: A Lacanian psychoanalytic approach to the treatment of addictions. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Duquesne University, USA. Retrieved June 8, 2021, from <https://dsc.duq.edu/etd/805>. Transferred: Hekimoğlu, E. C. & Bilik, M. Z.. “Anxiety from Freud to Lacan”, *AYNA Journal of Clinical Psychology*, vol.2020, 7(3), pp.336-367.

⁶⁹ Lacan, J. (2014). *The seminar of Jacques Lacan. Book X: Anxiety* (Translation: A. R. Price). Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. pp.118

⁷⁰ Lacan, J. (1966). *Ecrits: The first complete edition in English* (Translation: B. Fink). New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company. pp 241

⁷¹ R. Salecl, (2004) *On Anxiety*. Londra: Routledge .pp.87

⁷² Lacan, J. (2014). *The seminar of Jacques Lacan. Book X: Anxiety* (Translation: A. R. Price). Cambridge, UK: Polity Press. pp. 175

⁷³ Hekimoğlu, E. C. & Bilik, M. Z. “Anxiety from Freud to Lacan”, *AYNA Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 2020, vol.7 (3), pp336 – 367.

In this case, the subject point to the Reality which underlines the existence of the anxiety that haunts him like a *miasma* that never leaves him, no matter what he does. The reality, as Lacan's phrase, "impossible but necessary", sees the subject as the remnant of the objet petit a.

Fantasy sustains the subject through the *objet petit a*. The moment we satisfy our desires, the desires die. To make a desire alive, we have to kill it. This death becomes traumatic when a person is left unsatisfied in the universe of insatiable desires. On the other hand, we will expand the meaning of *jouissance* here by taking a closer look at the concept of Anxiety, which emerged with objet petit a, in the later parts of this study.

We said that it will return to *jouissance's* relationship with desire, and as we desire, the impossibility of the desire makes us desire even more. Lacan mentions that desire can arise by the law. This makes us ask the question: 'What is the law of desire?'

1.2.3. Law of Desire

In the relation of desire to law, the emergence of desire seems possible only with law. Just as we can't speak of lawless desire, we can only trace a coexisting universe when we speak of the desire of the law. The law of tragedy is a kind 'mover' that activates the character's desires.⁷⁴ The law of the tragic universe, then, can't be separated from the character's desire. Lacan, who says that desire is the law,⁷⁵ mentions that desire can emerge with the law. We aren't talking about a subject which isn't subjected to the law. This is exactly why the character of a tragedy that creates its *hamartia* related to its adherence to the law can be tragic. Oedipus' relation to the law can be read in his relation to his desires. Oedipus apparently has no desire to marry his mother and kill his father. If he had it or had it been so obvious, it would undoubtedly not have had such a strong effect. Oedipus's desire is related to knowledge, indirectly related to his destiny.

⁷⁴ Aristoteles, *Nikhomakhos'a Ethik. Ibid.pp.54*

⁷⁵ Lacan, J. (1992). *The seminar of Jacques Lacan. Book VIII: The ethics of psychoanalysis* (Translation: D. Porter). New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. pp.186.

Oedipus' desire to know and his strong relationship with knowledge appear as a structure that creates the law of his desire. This is what we see when we look at the issue of Oedipus solving the Sphinx's riddle in its most obvious form. This desire to know opens his mother's bedroom as well as the doors of Thivai. This desire indirectly suggests the state of desire with his mother. On the other hand, the law that he killed his father with his *hybris* – the law that he will kill – works in reverse here. Now we have Oedipus, desired by the law. The place of desire seems to have a decentralized structure.

Pure desire is a moment, a torsion of bending moment comparable to the Möbius strip: If we insist on acting on the side, we suddenly find ourselves on the "other" side. Pure desire is the moment when desire, in its metonymy, meets itself, for its own sake among other objects. At the same time, pure desire coincides with an act. This act is completed within the framework of the subject's basic fantasy; however, since there is nothing but this very frame at stake, it ends up "outside" of the fantasy, in another field, that is, in the field of the drive.⁷⁶

'The dissatisfaction of desire is based on the fact that we are speaking of beings.'⁷⁷

This very word stands in a place that can be explained by the dissatisfaction of the desires of the tragedy and the character of a tragedy. The speaking person relates to the 'symbolic world' when he speaks. In this world of symbols, the desire to be satisfied means an endless field. As the speaking being, the word doesn't stand apart from the action. And meanings influence word and action together. Nor can the goal or ultimate goal of desire be fully satisfied. 'A path that has not been

⁷⁶ Zupancic, A. *ibid.*, pp.270.

⁷⁷ Nasio, D.J. (2009). "General Concepts of Lacan's Theory", (Translation: Atakan Karakiş) *Mono Kurgusuz Labirent* yaz yıl:3 vol.: VI-VII. pp:42.

drawn before opens a new path in every experience. Every border reached is the threshold to an endless series.’⁷⁸

In our study so far, while we tried to explain the concept of *jouissance* we have looked at the concepts that make it easier to understand. We will discuss the functioning of the unconscious in Lacan’s theory of psychoanalysis and the concepts of Imaginary, Symbolic and Real, which are important concepts in this process. It probably would have been more correct to explain these concepts at the beginning of this study but at the expense of establishing a structure in which the concept of *jouissance* is at the center, we have saved these three important concepts to the last. It is the signifier of the most important concept that constitutes Lacan’s unconscious mind. The concepts of Imaginary, Symbolic and Real are unconsciously structured as a signifier and are deeply related to *jouissance*.

1.2.3.1. From Imaginary, Symbolic and Real, to *Jouissance*

The concepts of imaginary, symbolic and real constitute an important area, which Lacan thinks his work begins in the ‘mirror phase.’ According to Lacan, in order to analyze the functioning of psychoanalysis and indeed the unconscious, it is necessary to reach the symbolic. To reach the symbolic, the imaginary is required. Accordingly, the imaginary was shaped in Lacan’s early period (1930 – 1940), the symbolic was shaped in middle period (1950), and the real was shaped (1960 – 1970) in the late period. Symbolic emerges at what Lacan calls the ‘mirror phase’ the infant’s sixth to eighteenth/twentyfourth month. In the mirror phase, the baby who has not yet spent enough time in the world to know itself identifies itself with the image in the mirror, which is the other itself, as a result of the encounter with the other one in the mirror (image). The baby, who has not known what his own body is and where its borders begin and end, will experience anxiety and fear in the face of this image. On the other hand, seeing this body for the first time will arouse hope, admiration and surprise. Since the image represents what is inside

⁷⁸ *ibid.* pp:51

the mirror, it is a concept that points to a similarity and also underlines the illusion of unity and fragmentation created by this similarity. Here, the physical integrity, and concreteness; neurologically abstraction and being uncanny will come into existence. The baby will be under pressure between these two poles; that is, in the mirror it encountered as a whole. On the other hand, is it in a mentally complex, incomplete and scattered state. In the case, the baby will take refuge in the whole, that is, the reflection of its body on the mirror. The baby's preference for the integrated structure in this fragmentation creates the ego. The ego will neutralize this conflict. In this case, the subject will be able to realize the symbolic, that is, symbolization, with the image in the mirror. The first appearance of the symbolic in the subject takes place in such a process. The subject symbolizes the reflection of the baby reflecting from the mirror and the subject symbolizes the signified. This is how the first link of the chain of symbols is formed. Accordingly if we say that the "ego" has emerged as a first symptom of mankind, we wouldn't be saying something wrong.

The imaginary emerges as the thing that constitutes the whole and parts of the 'things' that are made of images. These parts can be many things. A scream, a shade of the color red, a broken plate or the smell of rotten potatoes may create these images. And basically these parts are reminiscent of another more holistic mental state. In this case, it is possible to talk about the existence of the imaginary. These images appear as a 'thing' that reveals what Freud calls libido and Lacan's *jouissance* as an energy and about the functioning of this energy. 'As you can appreciate, all these images that *jouissance* goes through from the spiritual unity, what Lacan calls "me" (*moi*).'⁷⁹ The pipe example Nasio gave while describing the imaginary: He sees pipe not just as pipe, but all the examples we add to it such as grasping it, inhaling and exhaling the smoke, slightly moistening the eyes with smoke, all makes sense as images. Then when we think about the structure of the image that holds many things together, we can say that it is the unconscious expression of certain repetitions, such as smoking a pipe or perceiving a mnemonic theme. Lacan emphasizes that the phallus is symbolic and

⁷⁹ op.cit. pp.58.

the father is imaginary in his works. With this knowledge, we will have to consider the imaginary and the father together. Because we will see the function of ‘father’ in the symbolic, with the meaning of both the Big Other (Different) and the meaning that goes out of *jouissance* (the *jouissance* of the father.)

The issue of the phallus, which Freud frequently dwells upon with his castration complex, stands in a completely different place in Lacan’s point of view. According to Lacan, the fact that the penis and phallus are not the same in the symbolic universe is one of the most important distinctions at this point. The phallus expresses itself as the product of the symbolic order, that is, language. In the symbolic order, the phallus occupied an important place. Owning it brings some kind of power. Because, in this spiritual universe, everything revolves around it. When you own it, the feeling or the illusion of having many things creates a desire. Now all we want it to achieve this symbolic phallus and try to get it. This wish is notorious for not being fulfilled. It is a fictitious desire of the symbolic order, which is an impossible wish to come true. Therefore, the subject writhing due to an unsatisfied desire experiences a vicious circle. The imaginary father is an image reminiscent of the father.

‘Imaginary fathers are images of the father embedded in the unconscious, images from my own father or the father figure in general. It may be an image of authority, or the image of a raised finger or the dominating tone of a voice. *This is what we call the imaginary father, the whole formed by the images engraved in us.*’⁸⁰

In that case, we can call the imaginary what constitutes the invisible parts of the spiritual universe. What is described as symbolic (*symbolique*) finds meaning not alone but with other things that make it up. While in the imaginary there are individual parts and the state they point to; in the symbolic, they can be understood by the things they point to, including all other images created by the

⁸⁰ Nasio, D.J. (2009). “Lacan Kuramının Temel Kavramları”, (Translation: Atakan Karakış) *Mono Nonfiction Labyrinth* yaz yıl:3 vol.: VI-VII. Pp:53

symbolic universe. The imaginary serves the symbolic with its layered and insperable struclike like a cabbage. Although the symbolic contains the imaginary, it doesn't mean anything in the universe where there is at least one signifier. Therefore, the symbolic and imaginary relationships here are concepts that are both independent and not completely interchangeable and are helping to understand the other with their relative parts. It diversifies into symbolic 'one' and 'other' which doesn't mean anything by itself. These two concepts, which can't be understood simply due to the confusion brought by their narration and perhaps their expression, can come out of the world of the abstract universe and become easier to understand with examples of daily life.

The example of cabbage we gave for the imaginary is a representation of something that is closely connected to each other, and that has an important place in that spiral, apart from the other. For example, when we are eating an apple or intend to eat an apple, and immediately remembered with the intention, it will probably take us to the garden, the crop of childhood, where we played constantly in the garden of our past. To our childhood when we hastily and excitedly plucked the apples from their branches, took a bite out of it and when tasted the bitter taste spat it out with a sour face, then run away with all our might. In this example, if the imaginary refers to the apple and the bitter taste of the apple, the symbolic points to the memories of all other connections and establish the symbolic. The apple, the smell of the apples, where we ran to, our knee didn't hurt when we fell and the rehearsal of the unnecessary scolding we will get when we get to home in the evening... Sad memories of all these recollections are linked together. While giving these examples, not being able to get rid of the romanticism of the triumph of the sad seems to be released to the construction of the fiction of 'another' symbolic universe that constitutes these symbolic examples. The imaginary serves the symbolic in its inclusiveness as other parts of these abstract representations. All units of the imaginary are determined by the symbolic. It is in a position related to the bodily and material as it can't be expressed through real language. Therefore, the imaginary and the real take place in the denominator of the

symbolic and indeed the symbolic. And in Lacan's point of view, "The symbol transcends the word."

Imaginary and symbolic have the ease of being explained in terms of what they represent or show, but it won't be easy to explain the real that we deal with the imaginary and symbolic. For what is real, can't be symbolized. Real (*Reel*) appears in Lacan's IIVth seminar as an example of vase. Accordingly, the center of the real is a void, but the void inside the vase. Thus, the vase was made to show the emptiness that's at the center of the real. Accordingly, the potter who made the vase turns his hand around this void, revealing the void. A void, framed by the potter serves to define the real, but any gap outside it does not describe it. 'Truth is either totality or the vanishing moment. In analytic experience, for the subject, truth is always bumping into something, for example the analyst's silence.'⁸¹

The real father is the being within me; a powerful being that determines my actions that I didn't know existed. So the real father is a force, the most sincere, the least known and at the same time an irresistible force that whispers movement into my spiritual life. So, *"truth" means this: The only energy that is already here, that lies deep within me and which gives life to my spiritual world.*⁸²

Lacan used the concept of the real in the 1950's to explain the relationship between the imaginary and the symbolic. Because the difficulty of explaining all these concepts used by Lacan can be explained by the existence of another difficult concept. Therefore, we are tied by a thread to the chain of concepts that are growing and getting harder and harder to explain. From 1964 until the 1970's, this concept forms the backbone of Lacan's psychoanalysis. No matter how appropriate an ascription of this concept, while is so difficult to understand, as material, alive, bloody, like a 'backbone' ... Actually in reality is an ambiguous concept. With this aspect, it is similar to the ambiguity in the center of the

⁸¹ op.cit. pp.49.

⁸² Op.cit. pp.49.

fictional tragic universe that constitutes the tragedy, which we frequently dwell on the later parts of this study. It is reminiscent of a paradox that deserves the necessary explanation by being in the center, while rendering the explanation ineffective with its non-symbolizability.

According to Lacan, our reality consists of symbols. What we know as reality, then, is united with the symbolic order or ‘social reality.’ Reality, on the other hand, resists symbolization. Here, at the very heart of the subjectivity and the symbolic, the traumatic is the substance. Thus, it merges with *jouissance* as the inexpressible border of human existence with the real death drive. Reality is now an impossible encounter. And throughout Lacan’s psychoanalytic work, there is what we can call a repetitive mechanism revolving around the impossible encounter and revolving in an ‘uncertain’ universe where we don’t know where and how the end can be caught.

‘What is reality? The reality is ten minutes waiting for us; we are at a certain hour now, I don’t know what will happen in ten minutes. So in reality, what awaits us is the unknown that it is always ahead of us and it can’t be named, symbolized or imagined. Of course, I can predict and even imagine a future event, but my prediction never quite matches the future reality, I really never know what fate awaits me. With this simple example, I want to make you feel the unknown and incomprehensible nature of real. The real is impossible to symbolize.’⁸³

The real is that which appears at the very edge of its relation to the symbolic universe, but is then immediately lost. Real, is the side of the human being that has changed, transformed and will no longer be the same in the universe created by the *psyche*. So once again it may seem impossible.

Lacan will say in the further course of his work that there is an important difference between real and reality. Reality comes into play as a defense mechanism in an area that can be produced by fantasy. It emerges to protect itself

⁸³ Op.cit. pp.50

from the ambiguous, terrifying and attractive existence of fantasy. Fantasy and the mind that produces the fantasy embrace the trauma created by this protection. He also owns the *jouissance* that emerges with the fantasy. The meaning of *jouissance* here is meant by its side that includes suffering and pleasure in pain, also involves the world of fantasy. With this aspect it also undertakes the trauma of real trauma and perhaps *jouissance*.

Dealing with the functioning of the unconscious with imaginary, symbolic and real, Lacan associates it with *jouissance*, which we don't know exactly in which field. Lacan considers *jouissance* from a ground that serves to explain the unconscious, but whose location that he doesn't know. According to Lacan, *jouissance*, "The place where it stands, isn't in the realm of unconscious. 'It is somewhere outside the unconscious.'" ⁸⁴ He underlines this decentralization.

1.2.5. Anxiety and *Jouissance*

Anxiety is when the objet petit a gets too close to the subject. The following paragraph is a good example of this situation:

'A patient comes to the psychoanalyst complaining that a crocodile is hiding under his bed. Over several sessions, the psychoanalyst tries to convince the patient that this is the product of his imagination. In other words, he tries to convince the patient that this is a purely "subjective" feeling. The patient stops going to the psychoanalyst that he is treating him. A month later, the psychoanalyst runs into a friend who knows the patient and asks the person how his former patient is. The friend answers as such: "Are you talking about the friend that crocodile ate?" the lesson to be learned from this story is seriously Lacanian: If we start the idea that anxiety has no object, then what

⁸⁴ Lacan J. *Seminary Encore*. pp.71.

shall we call this thing that kills, “eats” the subject? What does the subject say to the psychoanalyst in this story? “I have an objet petit a under my bed; he says nothing but: ‘I got too close to it.’⁸⁵

This story shows that anxiety is a subjective effect in Lacan's psychoanalysis. In Lacan's point of view: ‘It is an effect that doesn't deceive.’

Here we will need to look at the concept of anxiety to try to understand the relationship between anxiety, *objet petit a*, and *jouissance*. According to Lacan, we worry, “when we don't know what we are from the Other⁸⁶ or when we don't know what the Other wants from us” so according to Lacan, “If anxiety is a signal, then the signal has to come from the Other.”⁸⁷

Lacan describes the concept of the ‘Big Other’ as initials are capitalized with mathematical formulas. Of course, it won't be easy to understand what this complex concept, in which we will quickly get lost, means. Moreover, it would be more logical to return to Lacan again in this confusion and to proceed from here with a single formula because nowadays everyone, whether Lacanian psychoanalyst or not, uses this concept at random. First of all, let's remember that this is a mathematical formulation. The question remains, what does Lacan mean by the big ‘B’ and the ‘Big Other’? We can say that the meaning of ‘Big’ written in capital letters is actually related to culture and cultural production. Ethical law, legal laws, linguistics and perhaps all the institutions regulated by the ideological apparatus created by the state should also be considered and we can say that the meaning produced by all these things is the “Other Big.” He refers to his book in which he explains that the structures are produced by the state as a means of oppression. ‘The Big Other is in a sense the language we speak, our unconscious structured through it and the symbolic order. According to Lacan, the symbolic is

⁸⁵ Zupancic, A. *ibid.* pp.165

⁸⁶ The word *autre* means “Other” in French, so capitalizing the first letter of this word represents “Big Other.” “Sujet” means “subject” in French. Therefore, Lacan uses the first letter of this word to express the undivided subject (Evans, 1996) Published Year: 2019 Writer: Dylan Evans. Lacanian Dictionary of Introduction to Psychoanalysis. Whistle Releases. Translator: Umut Yener Kara, Tugay Sivrikaya. Pp: Related Title.

⁸⁷ Hekimoğlu, E. C ve Bilik, M. Z. *Anxiety from Freud to Lacan*”, *AYNA Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 2020, vol.7(3), pp.336 – 367.

the linguistic, grammatical and cultural structure in which the self can become subject.’⁸⁸ When we consider the Big Other as a structure that holds things together, the universe that expresses the Big Other and actually has a common side with this side; we would be right about Jacques-Alain Miller who said that there is no more big other today. To say that the Big Other doesn’t exist also requires us to accept that it continues to exist in a symbolic way. Even though it doesn’t exist it has a name. And this name makes an impact. Just like a nonexisting father won’t make the concept of a father disappear completely.

After explaining the meaning of the Other, we return to Anxiety and ask our question again. ‘What am I for the Other?’ Lacan argues that the relationship between anxiety and *jouissance* is a matter of what the ‘Other’ is or how it appears to the ‘Other.’ According to Lacan, for the subject it is what the ‘Other’ wants from him and his desire from him that what creates the state of anxiety. The ‘obscurity’ mentioned here, is the unknown of the self in the eyes of the Other; this is what reveals the anxiety. While it is the idea of the ‘Other’ about him that brings out the anxiety, the object of the anxiety is *jouissance*. Because, according to Lacan, ‘with deprivation of this *jouissance*, the subject begins to perceive it as something inaccessible and lost, thus anxiety becomes a stimulus targeting the *jouissance*.’⁸⁹ The relationship of Oedipus with the Other can be handled precisely on this level. The people waiting in front of Oedipus’ palace in Thiva and the priest of Apollo are waiting for the king to find out who the murderer is. Miasma will disappear with the expulsion of the murderer from the city. Here, as the Other there are the people and what the people represent. King Oedipus, as the Other for the people and others, attempts to unravel the mystery. The anxiety process for Oedipus has begun. Who is Oedipus in the eyes of the others? Bir kral katili midir? Or is he a hero who saved the city from the monster called Sphinx? As Oedipus is in the midst of unrevealing this mystery he is also in the midst of anxiety because all the arrows are pointing towards him. *Jouissance*, the target of Oedipus’ anxiety awaits him in his mother’s dress, who hanged herself when

⁸⁸ Žižek, S. (2006). *Fragile Contact*, (Translation: Tuncay Birkan). İstanbul Metis Yayınları. Pp.309.

⁸⁹ Salecl, R. (2013). *On Anxiety*, Londra: Routledge. Pp.31

when Oedipus was faced with the truth. The effect that takes Oedipus beyond anxiety will reveal the *jouissance*. The details of this issue will be discussed in detail under the title, Oedipus the King. Now we have a question to ask. Is ethics positioned against *Jouissance* a border that shouldn't be crossed?

1.2.6. *Jouissance* and Ethics

Lacan's concept of *jouissance* advances in conflict with the concept of ethics. The concept of ethics has an important part in the history of philosophy and is among the things which we frequently refer to and think about in our daily lives. Moreover, Social *gestus*⁹⁰ deals precisely with ethics. Freud's interpretation of this concept, which has such a wide scope, has been surprising. According to Freud, ethics is the superego.⁹¹ After Freud, J. Lacan opens a place of ethics from a field of psychoanalysis. Although ethics is discussed in the field of philosophy, Freud also places it at the center of his work called *Unrest of Civilization*.

‘What human beings do through science and technology in the world, where they first appear as a weak animal and where each individual of his species has to set foot as a defenseless baby, (one inch⁹² of nature!)* does only look like a fairy tale, but almost all – no, most of them – come true. Man can count these possessions as cultural gains. Man has created an ideal of absolute power and absolute knowledge for a long time and he embodied this ideal in his gods. He attributed to these gods everything that seemed unattainable – or

⁹⁰ The word *gestus* in Latin generally means movement of the limbs, posture of the body, bodily attitude, gesture or movement. As can be seen, the concept of *gestus* is the Latin form of the word “gesture” which is a theatrical term. Bertolt Brecht used the concept of *gestus* specifically to show that it differs from the concept of “gesture”. As a matter of fact, the term *gestus* is defined in dictionaries as gesture that expresses a social reaction, bodily movements and attitudes that show class, historical and political identity. Again, Brecht, in order to examine this difference especially emphasizes that not every gesture is a *gestus*.

⁹¹ ‘Freud expresses this situation with examples in many places. For example, there is a statement in Sigmund Freud's book *Id and Superego*: “Since the child was once under pressure to submit to his parents, the ego also submits to the categorical imperative of the superego. *On Metapsychology*, Harmondsworth: Penguin 1955 (The Pelican Freud Library, Vol, 11) pp.389

⁹² Freud S. *Uygurluğun Huzursuzluğu*. 2011. Translation: Haluk Barışcan. Metis Yayınları. Pp.50

forbidden – to his own desires. So we can say that these gods were cultural ideals. Now, man has come so close to reaching this ideal, he has almost become a god himself. Of course, however much the general destiny of humanity allows it to achieve its ideals: It has never been fully achieved, in some respects it has been completely unsuccessful, and in others it has been a partial success. Man has become, so to speak, a kind of a prosthetic god. It is quite magnificent when it is equipped with all its auxiliary organs; but they are not a part of his own body and from time to time he makes a mess of things.

In Freud's words, mankind emerges as: 'Prosthetic Gods' in the discontent of culture. Man will try to go beyond being human and produce more 'culture' by changing his existence and function. Considering the aspiration of 'Prosthetic Gods' for the people of the age together with the issue of 'ethics' it paves the way for us to discuss an issue that can't be tragic in our age and does not contain the tragic element. The gods Freud spoke of were idealized gods of the tragic universe. The hero of a tragedy is trapped in an invisible web woven with the *moiras* of the ideal gods and their laws. Because there is no exit at this point, the hero of a tragedy is advised to not go beyond the borders. On the other hand, the temptation of crossing the border is implicated in the actions of a hero. The hero of a tragedy is torn between the gods and humans in the 'ethical' world. He can neither dare to be a god nor go as low as being a human. Ethics here is closely related to Lacan's concept of *jouissance*. The actions of the hero of a tragedy emerge from the ground where *Jouissance* can't agree with the ethics. If we think of ethics in relation to the tragic border, we encounter the *pathos* of the hero of a tragedy at the border. On the other hand, this concept, which emerges in the functioning of the unconscious as a *sinthome*, is related to the pleasure. Tragic ethics, on the other hand, is the domain of the coexistence of pleasure and pain. At this point, we will have to take a closer look at the relationship between the concept of *sinthome* and emergence of the *jouissance*.

1.2.7. The Relationship Between Sinthome⁹³ and *Jouissance*

Sinthome (French: [sɛ̃tom]). Sinthome is a concept that connects the imaginary and the real. Lacan mentions it for the first time in his “Le Sinthome” seminar (1975 – 1976) while examining Joyce’s texts. Symptôme, which means symptom in French, was used as sinthome, succumbing to Lacan’s Latin and Greek naming curiosity. This, Of course, isn’t only a curiosity, just like in other naming studies, this word brings a new meaning to it. Sinthome stands on the enjoyer side in the ultimate relationship of the subject and the unconscious. It is in a similar place with *jouissance* in this aspect. In addition, there is another important detail in the symptom – *jouissance* relationship: Sinthome has a role in the manifestation and creation of *jouissance*. Sinthome is thus seen as the most important and only way to organize *jouissance*. Lacan says these about sinthome:

As for symptom, the fact that it also expresses something structured and organized like a language. It is clear enough from the hysterical symptom, which always provides something equivalent – but never univocal equivalent – to a sexual activity, starting with the simplest of them all. On the contrary, the symptom is always ambiguous, superimposed, overdetermined and in short constructed exactly as images are constructed in dreams. Here, there is an overlapping of symbols, which is as complex as a poetic sentence whose tone, structure, puns, rhythms, metre are all individually important. Everything happens at different levels and resembles the order and planeness of language.⁹⁴

According to Lacan, the “overdetermined” and “ambiguous” structure of sinthome, the difficulty in embodying the meaning of the real is positioned as binary opposition. *Jouissance*, on the other hand, is caught between these two

⁹⁴ Lacan, J. Baba-nın Adları, ibid. pp. 28.

contrasts. When it emerges in the bodily form with its intangible aspect in the *real*, its tangible side emerges as experience. “To lack *jouissance*” keeps us on the side of desire, while “realizing desire” transfers us to the side of *jouissance*.⁹⁵

*The unconscious works in a network that needs fuel to manifest itself. This fuel, this input energy, is jouissance for Lacan. Let's not forget that Freud would have used the word libido. As we might think at first glance, jouissance has nothing to do with orgasm and sexual lust. If Lacan were here, he would have corrected us: “No! Mr Nasio! I don't think jouissance can be compared to an energy, Einstein's E=MC2, a mathematical formula as physics define it. However, jouissance – Lacan would insist – had no symbol in which it is depicted. No formula can put it into writing.” I would also bow. “You are right Mr. Lacan. In fact jouissance as I perceive it is not the same as the energy defined by the sciences. I'm still using the word energy, but in a broader sense to describe what we call jouissance in psychoanalysis, the motor force that drives the operation of the unconscious.” The unconscious works, moves and reveals itself through jouissance.*⁹⁶

Lacan's theory of pleasure points to an energy that we can call mysterious to explain *jouissance*. The impossible gap between demand and need gives birth to desire, and the gap between pleasure and enjoyment creates *jouissance*.

Jouissance, which is also associated with the place of desire in fantasy, stands in this same void. It being indefinable may be due to the idea of this void creating an unsolvable universe. At this very point, the insoluble ambiguous structure of the tragic universe that creates the tragedies reminds *jouissance*. Having explained the meaning of *jouissance* and understood the relationship with the other concepts; we will look at the relationship of *jouissance* with the

⁹⁵ Zupancic, A. (2005). *Gerçeğin Etiği*, (Translation: Ahmet Süreyya Özcan). Ankara: Epos Yayınları. pp.275.

⁹⁶ Nasio, J. D. Op.cit. pp.51.

elements that make up the tragic universe. On the other hand, we will deal with *jouissance* of the tragedies, the hero of a tragedy and the audience with the three tragic plays we mentioned.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1. TRAGIC UNIVERSE

In order to understand the tragedies that emerged in fifth century Athens, it is necessary to explain the elements that make up the tragic universe and the concepts that build the fiction of the universe. Tragedy has not yet defined since its emergence. Many thinkers hold the idea that it seems impossible to define what tragedy is. On the other hand, when we look at the fifth century Athens, where tragedies emerged, we encounter the close relationship between tragedy and philosophy. On many tragic plays, we encounter many concepts from the field of philosophy. Philosophy feeds tragedies in understanding tragedies and producing meaning in tragedies. In this part of the study we will try to understand the tragic fiction and the tragic universe by including the thinking of the fifth century, which constitutes the tragedy. For this, we will discuss the concept of “tragic” and the dynamics that make up the “tragic universe”.

When we look at the tragic plays that compose the tragic universe and shape the tragic fiction, what we clearly see is this: The suffering of the hero who crosses the border. Tragic pain. Tragic pain occurs when a person goes beyond his own limit. This limit is the limit set by the gods. In the tragic universe, the world of gods and humans take place in two separate centers. Gods and humans live in separate universes. However, these two universes are intertwined. Most of the time, gods intervene into the world of ordinary people with their actions, they have a decisive role in the universe of man. Man, on the other hand, obliged not to cross into the universe of gods, especially not to interfere in the affairs of gods. The hero of a tragedies transgression of borders by *hybris*⁹⁷ (hubris) is upsetting

⁹⁷ [...In classical Greek tragedy, hubris was often a fatal shortcoming that brought about the fall of the tragic hero. Typically, overconfidence led the hero to attempt to overstep the boundaries of human limitations and assume a godlike status, and the gods inevitably humbled the offender with a sharp reminder of his or her mortality.] Retrieved June 10, 2021, from: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hubris#note-1>

for himself and those around him. This upheaval reveals the tragedy. So to speak, the core of the tragedy is the suffering caused by the violation of boundaries.

Jean-Pierre Vernant's work on myths and tragedies, in which he describes the fifth century Greek thought, will help us understand the tragic universe. The understanding of tragedy, which Nietzsche explains with 'Dionizak' and 'Apollonic', which he thinks constitutes the essence of tragedy, meets in the "tragic" partnership, which Vernant expresses as 'ambiguous'. However, Terry Eagleton's work, in which he deals with the tragic issue and interprets the tragic as a kind of "sweet violence", includes the concept of '*jouissance*'. There is an important point that Vernant, Nietzsche and Eagleton have in common in their tragedy issue, which formed the basic dynamics of this study: The *pathos* that emerges as a result of the hero of a tragedy, who is the subject of the tragedy to his *hybris* and hitting a "border". After explaining the tragic Universe with the partnership of these studies, we will look at the tragedies we have chosen by understanding the hero of a tragic universe better. On this occasion, we will be rethinking the concept of "*jouissance*" with the hero of a tragedy.

To understand the tragic boundary we will need to understand the strong relationship between Dionysus and the concept of tragedy. For this, let's see the origin of Dionysus.

The Olympian Gods; the new gods are the gods of Zeus. These new gods are related to the family life of Zeus. Chronos eats all his children after they are born. Because he knows that he will be killed by his sons. Chronos is the son of Uranus and Gaia. Desiring to be as strong as father, Chronos castrated and killed his own father Uranus, with the support he get from his mother, Gaia. After that, fearing his children will do the same to him, he eats his five children from Rhena. Rhena hides Zeus from Chronos. When Zeus becomes a strong adult, he finds a way to overthrow his father. This recurs and turns into a prophecy; the fear that fathers will destroy their sons or the sons will destroy their fathers, continues to frighten the person who sits on a throne. As a matter of fact, Zeus casts a curtain on his past by castrating his father and not having a son. Thus is the past of Zeus. As if he wanted to get rid of this vicious circle, he put an end to his 10 year war

with his father who was a Titan and established a new order based on the principle that domestic bloodshed is unforgivable. It is the time of new gods now. There were twelve Olympians Gods. Dionysus was one of these gods. Although his name is associated with wine, grapes, pleasure and delight, his presence represented both the tangible and the ecstatic of nature. Because of this, the existence of Dionysus and the abstraction of his existence were at the center of the tragic representations. These representations were formerly related to religious ceremonies. The position of Dionysus in religious ceremonies was supreme. Later, there was the representation of Dionysus under the human mask in the tragedies. For a work of tragedy, the following question could easily be asked: 'What does this have to do with Dionysus?' or 'This has nothing to do with Dionysus.' This question makes it clear that Dionysus has an inseparable relationship with the concept of tragedy. So, we can't talk of a tragedy without Dionysus. And we can't deny that the most powerful force of the tragedy comes from Dionysus.

'Dionysus represents not self-control, moderation, awareness of one's own limits, but instead a divine madness, a search for an ecstatic spirit invasion, a yearning for completion elsewhere; he does not represent order and stability but he represents miracles with some kind of magic and a flight into different horizons.'⁹⁸

According to Vernant's interpretation, Dionysus is a concept that is excluded in today's world, which the rational mind won't accept. Here we are talking about Dionysus acting behind the mask. On one hand with his movement; he acts or makes thing act; on the other hand he is abstracted even if it's a representation. It is the movement that brings out the tragedy. However, the 'action' that emerges with the movement opens the door to the tragedy. The character has to provide the movement. If he doesn't move himself, he has to cause the movement. But as long as he acts, the tragedy emerges. Oedipus destroys himself by his actions. He runs

⁹⁸ *ibid.* pp.250.

away from what is going to happen, leaves his home, becomes a king in another city, and enters into knowledge competition with The Sphinx. He moves on, returns and kills his father at the crossroads where this movement occurs. Oedipus is always on the move. When *miasma*⁹⁹ comes into the city, his movement ends. He remains motionless in the palace. He tries to solve the problems by questioning and acting without moving. He has done enough in his past. Now he is a mover. At the center of Oedipus' actions are some elements that make us think that it is related to pleasure. Let's recall Aristotle's interpretation of acting in the *Jouissance* part. "What is a non-moving mover?" Then putting movement at the center of pleasure, Lacan draws attention to the connection between Aristotle's mover and *jouissance*. We can say that Dionysus represents a kind of emotion that moves the hero of a tragedy even though he does not move himself. On the other hand, it should be noted that mover is also associated with *daimon*¹⁰⁰. According to E.R. Dodds, *daimon* describes god or the divine energy within a human being from birth to death in the distributive sense. Dionysus and *daimon* represent a kind of divine and the unmoving mover in a tragedy. In the tragedy plays, Dionysus was embodied in the Dionysus mask worn by the person on the stage and Dionysus isolated with the divine meaning represented the movement itself. Accordingly, the function of Dionysus and *daimon* in tragedy is closely related to the issue of movement in tragedy.

In the Poetics, Aristotle says this about tragedy, "it is imitation of an action, it is, *mimesis praxeos*." The Word drama comes from the Doric word, *dran* which in

⁹⁹ This word which is used in Greek as impurity, represents impurity along with things that can be called malignant such as a curse, a disease and the plague. Miasma has come to Thiva in the play Oedipus the King. Miasma here denoted the plague. On the other hand, it means that the city has been corrupted by someone who has a sin. In order to get rid of the miasma, the Thivans have to find the one who brought miasma to the city and remove it from the city as the prophet Tereseis said. Only this way the corruption could be removed.

¹⁰⁰ Daimon [δαίμων, Enf. daemon; Ger. Dämon] It seems to derive from the word daiō, which means to divide, to distribute a share of fate. Liddell & Scott, 1996, article "Daimon", p 365-366. Francis E. Peters, refers to daimon as "the supernatural being or thing that lies somewhere between God (theos) and the hero." See. Peters, 2004, article "daimon". Another interpretation is that daiō is referred to as god in E.R Dodd's book, *The Greeks and the Irrational*. It refers to the god or the divine in the person who distributes the fate share. Dodds, E.R. (1951). Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press.

Attica corresponds to *prattein*, which means to act.¹⁰¹ The tragedy writer introduces the character through his actions. The character takes action. This action puts the character in a dead end. The character gets stuck and takes another action or makes a choice while trying to resolve this situation. Prometheus laments to himself when he is cornered, “Yes, I, the unfortunate me, got myself into these troubles while I was trying to do people a favor.”¹⁰² Far from asking for forgiveness from Zeus, Prometheus no longer takes back what he has done, but provokes him even more, by prophesying how his end will come. When Oedipus gorges his eyes out, he tells that the gods did this to him, but immediately stops blaming the gods and takes the blame on himself.

All this moving state of desire is the desire of gods, albeit sometimes indirectly. From time to time the character wishes for himself and wants to share his guilt with the gods. Just as Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter Efienia so that the sails could take the wind; just as Orestes avenged his father by killing his mother, who shed blood in the family. While they do this, they appear in cooperation with the gods. However, the gods do not bear the consequences of these crimes, the heroes themselves bear them. On one hand, Io’s non stopping, and tiring journey, on the other hand the passionate philanthropy (!) of Prometheus, who has just come out of action; these makes us think about the movement issue. Io, who doesn’t respond to Zeus’ wishes, falls victim to the relationship between Hera and Zeus. While trying to hide Io from his wife Hera, Zeus turns Io into a cow. Hera, on the other hand, puts a horse fly after Io, causing Io to become the pathetic victim of a long chase. Io spins around escaping her own libido, in motion but where her movement serves no purpose. She doesn’t make a choice, because she can’t make one. She just moves. Prometheus can no longer move. The movement issue here works in reverse. These are a useless movement and useful inactivity. Nailing Prometheus to the Caucasus Mountain as a result of his arrogance is also associated with his refusal to move. Refusing to act is on the same level as asking

¹⁰¹ Vernant, J. P & Naquet. P.V. (1990) *Mit and Tragedy in Anticent Greek.*, (J. Lloyt, Çev.) Broklyn: Zone Books. pp.43.

¹⁰² Aiskhylos. (2013). *Zincire Vurulmuş Prometheus*, (Translation: Sabahattin Eyüboğlu.) İstanbul: Isbankası Yayınları. pp.6.

for forgiveness from Zeus. As Prometheus has no patience for this look from above, he tries to look at Zeus from above, with the strength he gets from being on the top of the Caucasus Mountain. It is seen that Daimon and Dionysus had their share in all these moving or moving actions. This is how the existence of Dionysus, who has an ecstatic desire on the one hand and a prudent view on the other; this is made visible in the tragedy.

Just like Vernant, Nietzsche considers Dionysus to be an indispensable element for the concept of tragedy. Moreover he explains the birth of tragedy as “Apollonic” and “Dionizak.” According to Nietzsche, he expresses the development of art with the representation of Apollo, the art of the sculptor, and Dionysus, the non-visual art of music. “A great contrast emerges between the Apollonian sculpture and the Dionysian music that isn’t based on external form.”¹⁰³ It is the art of the Apollonian sculptor. The sculptor’s art is the visible, real one. Apollo is also a dream interpreter and a singular singer. The Dionysian one represents the non-visual, invisible part of the music. There is spirit here. He is an artist of ecstasy and dreams. According to Nietzsche, there is no action in Dionysian art. However, Aristotle states in the *Poetics* that the hero of a tragedy absolutely acts and must be active. On the other hand, it should be, “moving even if it doesn’t move.” Lacan puts pleasure at the center of this idea of Aristotle. According to Lacan, the “moving” or “mover that doesn’t move” produces pleasure. Accordingly, Nietzsche’s interpretation of inertia stands directly opposite to Aristotle and Lacan.

Dionysian and Apollonian art exist with two very opposing drives; *Eris* and *Philia*; love and hate. These opposing concepts appear in the way that prepares the ground for ambiguity, completes each other, integrates, covers, and are intertwined. The Dionysian wills to die, while the Apollonian wills to live. Freud’s interpretation of ‘Thanatos and Eros’ will help us to explain the meaning here. According to Nietzsche, the desire for destruction in man; the binary opposition of Thanatos and Eros,¹⁰⁴ the life instinct, are the elements that mak up

¹⁰³ Nietzsche, F. (2019). *Tragedyanın Doğuşu*, (Translation: Mustafa Tüzel) İstanbul: İsbank pp.17

¹⁰⁴ Eagleton, T. (2002). *Sweet Violence*. New Jersey: Blackwell. Pp. 87.

the Dionysian universe. And this opposition of togetherness points to the meaning of that madness, “Dionysian Madness”¹⁰⁵ that is the source of tragic art. In the structure of Nietzsche’s tragedy, humankind crosses the border when they are born and thus made its first mistake. So, daimon would say in this following quote; ‘it is best to have never been born.’ The hero of a tragedy tries to transcend the border of *hybris*. On one hand, Nietzsche, who envisages inaction, and on the other hand, Hegelian thought, which thinks that action is what creates human beings; they contradict each other.

The Dionysian Antigone and Prometheus both wished for death. Apollonian Medea, on the other hand, wants to live. The will to live and die is exactly at the starting point of these analogies. Nietzsche underlines this situation and gives the following example:

‘According to the legend of King Midas; he chased the wise Selanos, the companion of Dionysus, in the forest for a very long time, but couldn’t catch him. Finally, one day, when he managed to catch him, the king asked Selanos what is the best and most perfect thing for the people. Stiff and still, the diamond remained silent, until he was forced by the king; finally with ringing laugh, answered: “You are the member of a specie with one day to live, you are among the children of chance and grief, why do you compel me to say what is best for you? The best thing is completely out of reach for you: Not to be born, not to be, to be nothing. The second best thing is yours: To die as soon as soon as possible.”¹⁰⁶

Here we encounter the Dionysian attitude of willing to die. Because to be born means that you have crossed the border. This will bring suffering to the person for the rest of his life. This subject of “suffering” was the *sine qua non* of the tragedy.

¹⁰⁵ Eagleton, T. *ibid.* pp.89.

¹⁰⁶ Nietzsche F, *ibid.* pp.27.

The pain of life, the pain of to be alive. When we think about this situation with Oedipus, we see; what happened to Oedipus during his life or the disasters caused by his actions destroying his life. Oedipus, who had a will to live, will painfully will to die when he encounters the truth. This death isn't just a normal death. It is a painful representation of death with destruction on it. Because Oedipus prefers to not to perish, but to suffer by gouging out his eyes. In *Oedipus Kolonos*,¹⁰⁷ he will be entitled to die in a divine light and he will reach the light of the divine. Therefore, we can't call Oedipus a person who is willing to die. However, we can say that he is a person who desires destruction and pain after having the will to live with Eros. His will to suffer aligns with the will to live. Thus, the interpretation of Oedipus, which succumbed to the fate knitted by the *moiras* from the very beginning and hit the limit of life, comes into play. He appears to have erred not only by his actions, but by being born himself. But this interpretation stands in opposition to understanding the tragic act. Because we are in a position to understand and criticize Oedipus with his actions, we will ignore Oedipus, who made the mistake of being, "born." In other words, we will follow the Hegelian path, that thinks 'it is the action that makes the man exist.'

While Dionysus was a dream artist, there are gaps between the Apollonian art that interprets the image of a dream. "Dionysus neither tells the truth, nor hides it like the Oracle of Delphi, he just points the truth out."¹⁰⁸ But the brilliance of Apollo deceives people with one side: Nietzsche says, this is like the people deceived by the Mayan veil or Plato's man in the cave. Just like the medicine can be poisonous. Dionysian enthusiasm is just like that. Isn't it like sweet violence when pleasure turns into violence?

The tragic chorus looks at Dionysus and serves him forever: They see how the god suffers and therefore doesn't act, they are also wise as a sharer of suffering, they are the ones that declare the truth in the heart of the world. According to Nietzsche, Euripides abolished the Apollonian and Dionysian association in

¹⁰⁷ Sophocles' play. It is sequel to Oedipus to King. Blind Oedipus, who left Thiva as an exile will now live a life of exile. He is accompanied by his daughter Antigone. [Sophocles. (2016). *Oidipus Kolonos'ta* (Translation: Ari Çokona) Istanbul: Isbankası Kültür Yayınları.]

¹⁰⁸ Eagleton, T. (2002). *Sweet Violence*. New Jersey: Blackwell pp.47.

tragedy. He thinks that Euripides killed the 'gods' by putting the actor in the center of his own suffering and only doing his own act. Thus, the ideal tragedy has lost its form. It's shameful to act in the Dionysian form. Man destroy everything by his actions. Finally, he acts like King Oedipus and gouges out his own eyes.

There are two opposing ideas about acting in tragedy. Nietzsche's thinking, which negates action in the face of thinkers such as Hegel, Aristotle, Vernant and Eagleton, who think that tragedies are possible only through action. When we look at the examples of tragedy, it is unthinkable that there is no action in that what is tragic. Two things should be distinguished at this point. As we have mentioned before, just as the Dionysian rituals and the representation of the presence of Dionysus in tragedy are different things. What was that difference? Rituals were a field in which the ecstatic Dionysus existed with unlimited affections. Dionysus, who entered the tragedy into a fictional structure, is now reproduced in a different form. Not only as an ecstatic cry but as an element that contains moderation and ambiguity with the way it is embedded in the fiction of tragedy. The tragedy writer, who takes Dionysus from nature, brings him into the *police* and tames him. Perhaps this is one of the most overlooked issues. However, this is not the current debate. The inaction of Daimon and his universe, which presupposes inaction doesn't align with tragic action. The form of action in tragedy and Daimon's will to die, which we will call philosophical, are very different from each other in this sense.

Ultimately, this contribution and contrast of the Dionysian and the Apollonian creates a splendor.

'The Apollonian frees the Dionysian from pure formlessness. The Dionysian pulls the Apollonian out of the deadlock of being an expressionless form. The form is the warding off of Dionysus' mortal sublimity, but the serenity it contains is an image of death. The Dionysian is both life instincts and the death drive. For Freud and

Nietzsche, Eros and Thanos¹⁰⁹ are two sides of a deep rift that separates them.’¹¹⁰

In here, the effect of death and life are just like the pleasure and pain that feeds *jouissance*.

We can say about tragedy in our day is limited to the knowledge of the few tragic plays that have survived to the present day and the tragic content of the tragedy mentioned by Aristotle in *Poetics*. From this knowledge, the character of a tragedy is defined by the action that reaches the border. According to Nietzsche, inertia is; although it is called from a Dionysian origin of tragedy and “doing nothing is the best.” According to Aristotle and most theater theorists, action is indispensable. We are talking about the tragic element that emerges only with the hero who acts.

‘Tragedy is an imitation of an action. Since this action is represented by persons in action, who must have a certain characteristic terms of character and thought – because with these two factors, actions acquire a certain feature – then character and thought appear as two factors of tragic action; people achieve their ends or don’t (happiness) by complying with these two factors is their actions.’¹¹¹

As Aristotle said, the tragic and the action are inseparable from each other. On the other hand, we will look at the interpretation of Vernant who says that this action is related to the ‘suffering person.’ Although the etymological origin of tragedy seems to be the structure that created J.P. Vernant says that this isn’t true for the tragedy. Our traditional knowledge says that the word tragedy comes from the Greek word *tragoidia*; *Tragos* means goat and *oidia* means melody, so tragedy

¹⁰⁹ Tartaros, in Greek mythology, is the hellish prison where the defeated gods and heroes who insulted Zeus were thrown. Later, in Classical Greek period, this place is where sinful people suffered their punishments. This is the place where writers liked to dramatize. In Roman times, Tartaros was synonymous with afterlife.

¹¹⁰ Eagleton, *ibid.* pp.89.

¹¹¹ Aristotle (1987). *Poetics*. (Translation: İsmail Tunali) Istanbul: Remzi Bookstore. Pp. 24.

means “the goat song”.¹¹² Accordingly, these goats, which are the representation of the bearded sages in the tragedy, sometimes sing with soothing and sometimes provocative whispers with their folk songs. According to Rene Girard¹¹³, the tragic plays associated with the goat emerge as a reflection of the sacrifice of the scapegoat as a purification ritual. Therefore, it appears to be this goat representing Dionysus.

According to Vernant, neither a goat nor a billy was sacrificed either in the theater or in the great Dionysus. “The term, meaning a female goat, *aiks* was used instead.”¹¹⁴ Moreover, these representations imitated humans, not animals. A suffering human. Accordingly, tragedy is the image of the suffering person. Vernant, at this point, scrutinizes tragedy from the goat to the grieving person. Vernant’s interpretation of the tragic Universe stands in a place that can’t be rationalized with its polyphonic and ambiguous structure, with Dionysus at the center. We will have to talk about the areas where the ecstatic songs and dances of the times when the Dionysian rituals were performed, which brought pain and pleasure together with the ecstatic spirit of Dionysus, spread through the city and Dionysus’s entry into the theatric world. Vernant says the following words at this point and refers to the ‘secret of the tragic universe’ that we are discussing right now, with Dionysus infiltrating the theatrical world.

‘If one of the important features of Dionysus is to constantly blur the boundaries between dream and reality, to make the other side suddenly appear here, to make us pass out and go through self-transcendence – we think that – through this theatrical illusion game in which the tragedy first settled on the Ancient Greek stage, the word

¹¹²Vernant, J. P & Naquet. P.V. (1990) *Mit and Tragedy in Anticent Greek.*, (J. Lloyt, Çev.) Broklyn: Zone Books. pp.253.

¹¹³ Girard, R. (1979). *La Violence et le Sacre*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Üniversity Publishing. pp.171-172.

¹¹⁴ Vernant, J. P. & Naquet, P.V. *ibid*. pp.253.

it means that an ambiguous and enigmatic face of God is smiling to us.’¹¹⁵

Appearing as a threat in the face of the tragic “border”, Dionysus appears as a symbol that draws the “border” within the city state relationship.

While talking about the elements of the tragic in Aristotle’s *Poetics*, the one who determines the tragedy, the one who aims to cross the border; emphasizes that it is *hamartia*.

The subjects of tragedy are neither superior to other people in virtue and justice, nor have they fallen into misery because of their wickedness or cruelty; they subject of tragedy is a person who has a great reputation among people and lives happily, but has fallen into unhappiness because of a mistake [tragic mistake/hamartia].¹¹⁶

Aristotle says that Sophocles strictly followed the rules of the King Oedipus play. According to this, the character makes a tragic mistake, a *hamartia*.¹¹⁷ This mistake is related to the borders that he transcended. We have to say that the character has to make a choice here, although sometimes the situation changes, in general, the character makes a choice and what he chooses turns out to be a mistake. Hamartia here can be understood as transcending the limit and furthermore overcoming the limit by succumbing to its *hybris*. For example, Oedipus’s first tragic mistake was to run away from his family, which he thought was his own mother and father because of the fear of the prophecy coming true. Thus, he takes the first step against the possibility of the prophecy coming true.

¹¹⁵ Vernant, J. P. & Naquet, P.V. *ibid.* pp. 257.

¹¹⁶ Aristoteles, *Poetics*, pp.45.

¹¹⁷ *Hamartia* arose from the Greek verb hamartanein, meaning "to miss the mark" or "to err." Aristotle introduced the term in the *Poetics* to describe the error of judgment which ultimately brings about the tragic hero's downfall. As you can imagine, the word is most often found in literary criticism. However, news writers occasionally employ the word when discussing the unexplainable misfortune or missteps of übercelebrities regarded as immortal gods and goddesses before being felled by their own shortcomings. Retrieved June 10, 2021, from: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hamartia>

His biggest *hamartia* was that he killed his father. He wouldn't have been able to marry his mother if he hadn't killed his father. Here, two related tragic mistakes feed off each other. Oedipus' fortune (*perepetia*)¹¹⁸ runs out at this point. The mistake he makes not only turns his life upside down, but also starts the tragic effect. Oedipus acts arrogantly (*hybris*) through the play. Knowing the limits of his *Hybris* and human borders stops at a very important point. Vernant explains the boundary relationship with the *hybris* with the sign of Delphi Temple:

'The phrase "know thyself" written in the Delphi Temple, as we think, is through self-analysis and introspection; it is not a call to find a way back to a hidden "I" invisible to others, which stands as a secret area of personal privacy or a mere act of thought. The Cartesian *cogito* (I think, therefore I am) is alien to the Greek idea of self-knowledge. [...] The phrase "knows thyself" means to know your limits; know that you are a mortal and don't try to make yourself equal to the gods.'¹¹⁹

Oedipus ignores the symbolic word in the Delphic Temple and pushes his limits even more. He accuses Creon. He mocks the blind seer Tiresias and belittles him. He claims that Creon and Tiresias cooperates, thinking that they want to overthrow him. This arrogance prevents him from seeing the truth. The more arrogant Oedipus gets the more miserable he becomes. Oedipus' actions have already violated the limits of the universal order. This violation includes parricide, having sex with the mother and having children from that relationship. The

¹¹⁸ Perepetia: The turning of fortune from good to bad. "Perepetia is the reversal of actions. This, in our opinion, occurs in accordance with the laws of probability or necessity. Thus, in Oedipus, for example, the shepherd comes to Oedipus to deliver the gospel, to save him from fears about his mother. But by removing the veil covering Oedipus' past, it has the opposite effect of what he thought. In Lynkeus, the hero of the work is brought to death; Danaos follows him to kill him. But with the turn of events, Danaos dies Lynkeus is saved." Quoted by Aristotle. *Poetics*. Page: 36

¹¹⁹ Vernant, Jean-Pierre, "Greek man", *Bulletin of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences*, vol. 47, No. 8, pp. 44-50, American Academy of Arts and Sciences, May 1994, pp.44-45.

moment when all this is revealed is the moment when *catharsis*¹²⁰ is experienced for the audience. And Oedipus recognizes himself. He realizes that who he really is. And this is called the *Anagnorisis*¹²¹ (recognition) moment. His mother had already hanged herself when the end of Oedipus' research saw the truth in its entirety. Horrified by the truth, Oedipus does what he has to do and punishes himself. He gouges out his eyes with the pin he took from his mother's dress. He also uses the needles of his mother, with whom he shared the crime, for his punishment. They share their crimes and punishments. The moment when this terrifying event is resolved, it opens the door to catharsis. Oedipus sacrifices his eyes to emotionally purified, blood flows from his eyes. In the words of Rene Girard,¹²² his blind eyes have turned into a sacrificial scapegoat.

Vernant thinks that tragedy isn't just an art form, but that we should be aware of its power in relation to other disciplines in life. Accordingly, the relationship of tragedy with historical reality and law stands at a very important point. The indirect and direct presence of the Greek Law of the fifth century in the tragic plays shows the tragedies in the role of a real lawgiver (*nomathetes*)¹²³. The concrete existence of law and regulation and the lawless side of the ecstatic Dionizak spirit are presented together. The tragedy competitions held in the fifth century had a very important role in the conduct of the city state and state affairs. It was an institutionalized structure that made use of artistic expression, especially

¹²⁰ Catharsis: Emotional purification. Aristotle mentions catharsis in Part 8 of his Poetics, where he talks about music and other branches of art. He says that people can be purified through these arts. Religious rites and music may have a cathartic effect and some arts may have a cathartic effect too. The concept of catharsis in tragedy; it means the purification of the soul from evil. This purification is related to *psuke* of man. In Aristotle's Poetics he says, "The task of tragedy is to purify the soul from passions by the feelings of pity and fear it evokes." In every way, we see that the ritual of 'purification' is mentioned.

*On the other hand, Zupancic cites how psychoanalysts use this concept: "Psychoanalysts also describe this condition in psychoanalysis as the liberation of the patient from pathogenic emotions and neurotic symptoms by allowing the unconscious emotions to be experienced and discharged." Quoted by Zupancic, A, *ibid*.pp.199

¹²¹ Anagnorisis: Self-knowledge. Anagnorisis (recognition), as the name suggest, is the transition from ignorance to knowledge. This leads to either the friendship or the enmity of those destined for happiness or disaster. Beautiful recognitions in terms of art are also recognitions that occur together with the peripetie, as in the example of Oedipus above. Aristotle. *Poetica*, pp.36.

¹²² Girard, R. (1979). *La Violence et le Sacre*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Publishing. pp.171-172.

¹²³ In Greek, it means legislator.

in the fields of law and politics and tried to maintain the social order.¹²⁴ Therefore, the importance and power of tragedy is great. When we look at it from our day, we can't talk very much about the effect of the theatre play or another performance act. However in the fifth century, it had a prominent position. As a matter of fact, in the play *Oresteia Trilogy* written by Aeschylus, a legal proceed is shown in the *Eumenides*¹²⁵ part. At the end of the play, the goddesses of vengeance, The Erinyes, who don't let go of Oresteia, who killed her mother, demanded justice. To judge Orestes, the "Court of Areopagos"¹²⁶, consisting of the people, is established. But the tension between the old and new gods' understanding of *dike* (justice) persists throughout the play. The Erinyes can't pass their words as they are weakened, perhaps behind the times, with the side that represents the old gods. As Vernant comments, 'The Erinyes finally align with the new order of the city state at the end of the play.'¹²⁷ On one hand, the just legal system of the democratic city state, on the other hand the ambiguous and conflicting tension of the tragic world; the two dynamics of reality in tragedy and fiction establish the universe. This Universe is rich in being polysemous and ambiguous. The relationship of tragedy with law, its strength with its speaking side is closely related to the multi layered nature of its artistic structure. On the other hand, the ecstatic cries of the Erinyes in pursuit of Orestes, who wasn't

¹²⁴ Vernant J.P. & Naquet, P.V. *ibid.* pp.27.

¹²⁵ Eumenides (Auspicious Goddesses). In the court of Areopagos, the presence of the Erinyes (Goddesses of Revenge) is described as dreadful. In the play, "Eumenides", where Orestes is judged, the Erinyes comply with the decision of the court and locked in the underground vault that Athena gave for them. According to Vernant, they become the symbol of social cohesion and harmony by following the decision of the court. Their names are also now referred to as *Auspicious Goddesses*. That's why the name of the play changes to Eumenides, *Auspicious Goddesses*.

¹²⁶ Aiskhulos is the court where the bloody murder trial was held and the verdict was given by the jury made up of nobles. (2010) *Orestesia Triology* Istanbul: Mitoş Boyt Publishing. Pp.4. 'Also Areopagos; this ambiguity gives broad powers to the Areopagos, as an ancient institution, the Court of Areopagos, has vague powers to act as "guardian of the law."' Pelling, C. B. explains that Epihaltes made attempts to reduce the powers of the Court of Areopagos in 462, and that the court's powers were probably limited to dealing with crimes of murder from that date on. (1999) *Literary Texts and Greek Historian*. London: Routledge. Quoting from Page 168: Oğuz Arıcı. (2005) *The Idea of Modesty (Söphrosüne) and Harmony (Harmonia) in Anchient Greek Tragedy*. [Unpublished master thesis] Istanbul University, Istanbul. pp.84

punished, just like the horsefly chasing Io¹²⁸, don't want to leave following Orestes. At the end of the play, an underground altar is given to the Erinyes, who have to endure the result and wait to be honored. Athena says, "You weren't defeated, there was only an abstention from the ballot box." 'Reminding them of their part in the world of gods, the Erinyes stated that their *time*, their share of honor, wasn't lessened because they were staying in an underground world closed to the sun.¹²⁹ In this case, a message was given to the Erinyes and the forces they represented through Athena: Give your place to the new legislators. The ecstatic, terrifying presence of the Erinyes can't infiltrate the rule of the law. This binary opposition is taken into its corner as the symbol of the enthusiastic, painful victim who can't digest the rule set by the law in historical reality. The legal rule of the fifth century and the search for justice of the ecstatic Erinyes reach a conclusion together. The ecstatic state of the Erinyes is also the representation of the ugly side of Dionysus' soul. It is incarnated representation of the multilateral truth. This ambivalent situation, these two in between feelings require a lot of thought. This way of thinking hardly seems to belong to today's world. The fact that the 'proven to be exact' terms we are thought today occupy a lot of space in our lives, so that we are the masses who have left far from being reasonable, measured and balanced will suffice to explain this situation.

According to Vernant, the universes of gods and humans are intertwined in the tragic universe. The idea that there should be a limit in this transition and the principle that ordinary people should know their place has been the face of tragedies. However, the tragic hero makes mistakes in this transition. We witness the strandedness of the hero of a tragedy who wants to do his own will with the *moira*¹³⁰ (Goddesses of Share) lines determined by the gods. Before the tragedies,

¹²⁸ Io is a priestess in the temple of Hera. The desire of God Zeus, himself will be fruitless. Io chose to be a priestess and escaped Zeus. Moreover, Zeus's jealous wife, Hera, realizes this desire of Zeus. Zeus turns Io into a cow to hide her from Hera. With the ongoing events, Hera puts a horse fly after Io to disturb her. And this horse fly follows Io and bothers her all the time. This myth appears in Aeschylus' play *Prometheus in Chains*. Io embarks on a never-ending journey, escaping the chasing horse fly. Along the way, she encounters Prometheus in Chains.

¹²⁹ Vernant J.P. & Naquet, P.V. *ibid.* pp. 29.

¹³⁰ The Moiras. Moira means share or share giver. In Hesiod, Moira, the goddesses of fate, who are shown as three in the legend, were described as, "those who arrange our lives". The Greek

in the works of Homer, while the hero took on heroism with his excesses, these excesses were forbidden in the *police*. Tragedies take place in the *police*, where extremism is prohibited.¹³¹ The hero who wants to go to the extremes in the police will go to destruction. Just like what happened to Prometheus. On the other hand, we don't know what these excessively determined prohibitions are. In some cases, it isn't possible for the action to be completely prohibited. Just as Oedipus' marriage to his mother and murder of his father isn't the same as Agamemnon's. When Agamemnon returns victorious from the Trojan War, his wife Clytemnestra, spreads a rose colored silk carpet under her husband's feet. 'The tragic effect derives from the close relationship between the mundane act of walking on a rose colored carpet, with their overly human motivations, and the religious forces ruthlessly acted upon by it, as well as from the extraordinary distance.'¹³² It isn't forbidden to walk on such a carpet. But there is another piece of information here, which Lacan calls the unconscious; it is also a cultural thing. Rose colored carpet is a symbol and the magnificence of the rose carpet is worthy of the gods. Otherwise, you may draw the wrath of gods upon yourself. The rose colored carpet looks like a border in this sense. To cross it, is to cross a border. On the other hand, the image of Agamemnon's unstoppable passion for superiority is made visible by the rose colored carpet laid on the ground. Agamemnon is willing to sacrifice everything, even his own daughter for the desire to win the war. Agamemnon has crossed the border. There is not turning back from this road anymore. The hero of a tragedy who has surrendered to *jouissance* can point to *jouissance* with this border, because *jouissance* creates itself with this border. Tragedy, on the other hand, reveals the wrath of the protagonist, who again strikes these limits.

antiquity's view on destiny and fate is such: As soon as a person is born from the mother's womb, fate begins to twist the thread of his life. The three Moiras twist the thread of each person all the time and one day cut it, when the thread is cut, the person dies. On the other hand, Moiras were used together with the concept of metron (measurement) in Ancient Greece. Especially in wars, taking your share and this distribution with metron were determined accordingly to the principle of egalitarianism. Moiras then turn into goddesses that symbolizing fate.

¹³¹ Vernant J.P. & Naquet, P.V. *ibid.* pp.15-17.

¹³² Vernant J.P. & Naquet, P.V. *ibid.* pp.47.

Whatever the source and origin of this strong power, tragedy - which is from the fifth century and still fascinates us today - won't change the fact that it changes strong emotions. Although there is no definite answer to the question of what are the origins of tragedy is, the ecstatic presence of Dionysus and the concrete representation of the Apollonian¹³³ in Attica tragedy create a strong ambiguity.

Vernant thinks that there is a grand difference between what tragedy meant to the Greeks in the fifth century and what we understand today's tragedy. He argues that in order to understand the tragic plays of tragedy, it is necessary to understand the world of the fifth century. Because today we so easily use the term 'tragic' for all ordinary events that are sad. However, not every tragic event in Ancient Greece was described as tragic. The content of the tragedy was related to the 'sublime realm' of the tragic. We ventured into the issue of "what tragedy meant for the fifth century Greeks" that Vernant mentioned above. Accordingly, we will consider Vernant's thinking and Terry Eagleton's tragic interpretation together.

According to Terry Eagleton,¹³⁴ who deals with this tragedy issue by analyzing the ideas of other thinkers in his book *Sweet Violence*, there must be a "terrible" and "horrible" event in the tragedy. What happened to Oedipus is the best example for this. The concept of a sad event for tragedy is very inadequate. Anything can be sad or our mood can be sad too. The death of our aging grandfather can be sad, but the situation of a relative who had died as a result of an illness is also sad too. Yet, none of these have any terrifying factors in any of them. He who experienced this didn't make any tragic mistakes. Tragic mistakes aren't like other mistakes. It is about the destruction of one's spiritual world, of one's true universe. Thus, the tragic is vastly different from a sad thing. In a sad event, the holy law wasn't violated. Boundaries aren't exceeded. The ambiguous "polysemy" that Vernant speaks of and the sense of compassion and fear are

¹³³ Nietzsche, in his book, *The Birth of Tragedy*, describes the development of art through Dionysus and Apollonian. According to him, Apollo, which is the art of the sculptor, and the non-visual art of music are represented by the representation of Dionysus. It is the art of the sculptor that is Apollonian. The sculptor's art is the visible, the real art. He is also a dream interpreter and a singular singer. Dionysus represents the non-visual, invisible part of the music. There is spirit here. Dionysus is an artist of ecstasy and dreams.

¹³⁴ Eagleton, *ibid.* pp.21.

absent here. However, according to Eagleton, we feel compassion in the face of the hero of a tragedy's suffering in the tragedy. What happens to him is terrible. The fear of it happening to us too, is what terrifies us. In that case, the relationship between fear and compassion are other concepts that feed the tragic. Although the French writer Phillippe Lacouour-Laberthe said that "compassion and fear are not psychological concepts but political concepts" the Greek tragedy actually represents the politics of emotion. 'Compassion refers to the social bond, whereas fear names the danger of its dissolution.'¹³⁵ Although Lacouour-Laberthe says that 'pain is political', what political here is about the transgression of boundaries.

'According to Schiller, tragedy proves the dominance of supremacy over the senses, dignity over suffering and autonomy against pathos, in line with Kant's understanding of the sublime because the main character gets rid of the compelling forces of nature and enthusiastically affirms his absolute freedom of will in the face of dreary monotonous necessity. Far from being avoided, tragedy is the type of experience that is eagerly desired here.'¹³⁶

As can be seen in this interpretation, the issue of pathos seems to be inextricably linked with the tragic. Aristotle stresses the importance of the 'tragedy of suffering' in *Poetica*. Of course, the pain of the character is a consequence but there is something else which is the pain of the audience. And this painful pathos (*πάθος*)¹³⁷ is related to catharsis. This is also related to the *jouissance* of the audience.

Tragedy is 'the shaking of the moral universe by someone who realizes that he is above the gods.'¹³⁸ But at the expense of this moral universe, tragedy doesn't teach morality. This reveals the multidimensional side of the tragedy. If it had

¹³⁵ Eagleton, *ibid.* pp.208.

¹³⁶ Eagleton, *ibid.* pp.60.

¹³⁷ Páthos: It is used to mean suffering. It is derived from the word "feeling, emotion, especially the feeling of pain." Retrieved June 10, 2021, from: <https://www.etimolojiturkce.com/kategori/Antik-Yunanca/60>

¹³⁸ Eagleton, T. *ibid.* pp.210.

given a moral lesson, it would have been just like the medieval *cycle plays*.¹³⁹ According to Walter Benjamin, tragedy is powerful in its non-morality lesson. A shake of the moral universe and its destruction is also at the center of the hero of a tragedies suffering. The hero stands in an unprotected an uncanny realm without his moral universe.

Vernant and Eagleton are among those who think it would be beneficial to keep the tragedy within this limit. However, this limit can provide solidarity from person to society. In Eagleton's words, 'tragedy is means of regulating social sentiment.'¹⁴⁰ This order seems possible only with the 'boundary'. The same 'boundary' relates to *jouissance*. It is the 'boundary' that brings about the emergence of *jouissance*, just as in a tragedy.

2.1.1. Tragic Pleasure: The Other *Jouissance*

It is inevitable that Plato, who expelled himself from the world of ideas with the irrationality of tragedy and tragic art, feared such a tempting irrationality. The uncanny nature of this art and the pleasure it brought seemed very dangerous to Plato. Such ardent passions, being unreliable and unrestricted, carry danger with them. In that case, Plato uproots these arts from a grounded state order. However, as we shall discuss later, tragedy provides purification through *catharsis*. Thus, man is free from evil. The purified person can turn into the 'ideal' thanks to this feature of the tragedy.

According to Terry Eagleton, the tragic universe of tragedy consists of *pity, fear* and *compassion*. When these three are together, pleasure and pain emerges. The audience feels compassion for the character's suffering. On the other hand, the audience shuns what happened to the character with the feeling of 'fortunately it didn't happen to me.' "People instinctively hate someone else's

¹³⁹ A form of play that followed the written rules of the monotheistic universe in the Middle Ages. Horrible things happen to the character when he, who is in charge of doing what the God wants, breaks his word and the character regrets his actions at the end of the play. He is ashamed of himself and asks the God for forgiveness. With this aspect, they are organized plays that teach morality.

¹⁴⁰ Eagleton, T. *ibid.*, pp.208.

good fortune.”¹⁴¹ Then we suffer from the happiness of others. How the painful fall of the rising hero pushes the audience into delight. This is where sadism comes into play. Man carries with himself the paradox of affection. Only with this sadism can he reach *jouissance*. Nietzsche’s comment on this is quite extreme; ‘it is good to see someone else suffer; but it’s better to cause someone else suffer.’¹⁴² Although we don’t know how Nietzsche’s interpretation of ‘causing someone else pain’ can be explained within his thinking of tragedy, we should say that the main issue we focus on here is that we are people who enjoy the pain of others. On the other hand, the general opinion about this suffering; it is filled with the prediction that ‘the more tragic the situation, the deeper the pleasure.’¹⁴³

“Tragedy is nourishing because it allows us to enjoy destructive fantasies while realizing that we can’t be harmed, thereby releasing the pleasures of death drive in us under a culturally dignified guise. In an uproar of vengeance, this libidinal pleasure can become entangled with our moral understanding that there is value in pain.”¹⁴⁴

While the audience is devastated by the character’s pain, on the other hand, they reach *catharsis* by taking pleasure in the face of his pain. When suffering reaches *catharsis*, compassion is revealed. The audience will feel compassion for the character after these horrifying events. This happens in anticipation of a kind of self-compassion. The audience’s empathy associated with pain is sadistic. It is a kind of fantasy world in which he seeks the brutish side. This situation seems to be related to *jouissance*, which is referred to as the sadist in the fantasy world. According to Lacan, ‘the sadist is the representation of the *jouissance* of the

¹⁴¹ Eagleton. T. *ibid.* pp.232.

¹⁴² Nietzsche, F. (2006). *On the Genealogy of Morals*. (D. Steen, Çev.) Cambridge: CAMBRIDGE University Publishing. pp.172.

¹⁴³ Eagleton. *ibid.* pp.224

¹⁴⁴ Eagleton. T. *ibid.* pp.225-226.

other.’¹⁴⁵ The audience is fed by the pain and pleasure of the other (on stage), just like the sadist.

Compassion and tragedy evoke two opposite poles that can’t be combined. In tragedy, where compassion works to some extent for the audience, there can be purification only when there is pleasure that drives away compassion. According to Aristotle, a tragedy without purification can’t provide any emotional benefit. With this aspect, it even qualified to be included in Plato’s *Republic*. Because, on this occasion, the person who is purified from evils and pleasures is now cleaned and purified. This is how he was able to get these ‘malignant’ thoughts out of his mind. Because he is like the old people who has experienced, perceived, and tasted wisdom.

For the audience, witnessing the tragic events experienced by the hero of a tragedy is another way of equating the hero with the “other”. The audience, who is identified with the hero of a tragedy, reaches the *catharsis* and relives some of their feelings. This gives tragedy a function; relaxation by cleansing. On the other hand, for the audience who enjoys the hero of a tragedies pain, because the hero causes the audience to feel comfort by becoming the “other.”

Lacan says, ‘There is no need to know oneself as the other to be the other.’¹⁴⁶ What does knowing here add to this situation? How can I know that I am the other when I don’t know?

If my being the other not about my knowledge, what exactly is it? Am I not the subject of the other? I will not get into social norms here, but it is necessary to discuss this issue a little. Let’s take it through Oedipus. Oedipus is the other for everyone. And he does not know that he is the other. What happens to him is

¹⁴⁵ Transmitting: Owen Hewitson, <https://www.lacanonline.com/2015/07/what-does-lacan-say-about-jouissance/>

*Taking the example of sadism, Lacan argues that the sadist is in fact serving his own master rather than being the master of his object. Here again we find the theme of alienation from one’s pleasure, which Lacan considers very interesting in Kojève’s work on Hegel’s slave – master dialectic. The sadist is simply the representation of the jouissance of the Other. “I would like you to look at my article ‘Kant avec Sade’, Lacan says in Seminar XI, “where you will find the sadist himself occupying the place of the object, but without knowing it, from whom it is in the interest of another. The sadist practices the act of jouissance as a sadistic pervert. The sadist’s partner isn’t important only to the extent that he or she believes what the Other wants.

¹⁴⁶ Lacan, J. (2019). *Yine, Hâla*, (Translation: Murat Erşen). İstanbul: Metis pp.99.

because he does not know that he is the other. Oedipus has to know that he is the other and who he really is. But he understands this only when he learns/knows that he is the other. Being the other and knowing that there is no other, this information is stolen from him; this reveals his tragic issue. So the tragic universe arises when it doesn't know that is the other. Is the otherness here related to this tragic limitation? Or does it mingle with the inevitable limits of *jouissance*?

Jouissance's and Dionysus' ecstatic desires for infinity become expressive only when limits are set on them. This limit is the limit that also determines what they are. However, they can be determined only when they have a limit (not when they exceed the limit.) It should be said that this limitation is related to the relation of ambiguity in tragedy. As the tragic universe can only emerge with the destruction of the bound-real universe, we can understand that this movement that hits the boundaries in *jouissance* as a result of this impact. This is the 'limit' that determines tragedy and *jouissance*.

2.1.2. From the Tragic 'Boundary' to the 'Boundary that *Jouissance* Hits

The hero of a tragedy underlines the "border" phenomenon with his suffering side. It progresses simultaneously with exceeding the limit of suffering. According to Freud, this suffering is related to the father, who is primal. Therefore, the "tragic crime" repeated with tragedy causes this pain to emerge.

"The hero of a tragedy must suffer; this essence of tragedy has survived to the present day. The hero of a tragedy was accused of a crime called "the tragic crime", the reason for which are not easily understood and which we wouldn't see as a crime in our daily life. This crime, as a rule, involved defying a divine or human authority. [...] But why did the hero of the tragedy suffer? What was the meaning of his "tragic crime"? [...] The hero was suffering; because

he was the primal father, he was the hero of the primordial tragedy.”

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This important understanding of Freud is related to the cause of the hero of the tragedies suffering. The actions of the hero, who crossed the boundary by being caught in his *hybris*, are the cause of pain. As we mentioned before, according to Vernant, this border isn't separated by sharp lines. This border is ambiguous. Therefore, is there a limit, and where exactly it begins and ends; neither the hero of a tragedy, nor the audience can immediately notice it. The hero of a tragedy, who falls into the void in this uncertainty, takes actions that will excite the audience. This enthusiasm is closely related to the indispensability of the tragedy.

According to Vernant, the ambiguous structure of the tragedy creates the universe of tragedy. This structure constitutes the Dionysian meaning that we have discussed at length. The influence of the Daemons and Dionysus on the actions of the hero of the tragedy is invisible. The hero of a tragedy presents a kind of secret zone to the audience with his actions and his situation within the structure of the tragedy. Dionysus corresponds to the meaning of grasping *jouissance* as an image that provides enthusiasm in tragedy. The versatile structure of Dionysus makes the “ugly” and “moderate” and the hero of the tragedy experience pain and pleasure together. Being moderate stands against immodesty and ecstasy as a limit. In that case, the hero of a tragedy, who is the subject of the tragedy; on one hand tries to be moderated but on the other hand violates the limits with his excess. The action in which Oedipus stabs needles in his eyes can be interpreted as the act of the ecstatic side of Dionysus and the daemons. Violation of the tragic boundary that causes suffering and pleasure becomes open to connection with *jouissance*.

Dionysus has two meanings. The first is an archaic sense of nature. The Dionysus, who appears in religious rituals and does not only represent a single thing; which is very meaningful and ecstatic. The second is a new form that

¹⁴⁷ Freud, S. (2018). *Totem and Taboo*. London: Forgotten Books. pp.180-181.

emerged with the introduction of Dionysus, who emerged in these rituals, into the tragic plays as a “balancing” element. Thus, the presence of Dionysus creates two opposite meanings: Ecstatic and moderate. This creates a balance for the tragedy. Thus, a balancing element emerges with the meaning of Dionysus in rituals and nature and its new meaning in tragedy. This balance is fed by the imbalance within Dionysus. Dionysus, who is described as ecstatic, provides this balance with his ‘moderate’ side, as Vernant puts it. The ecstasy of Dionysus is full of traces of *jouissance*. Dionysus and daemons in the tragedies are made visible in the act of the hero of a tragedy. This act unleashes tragic pain. Tragic pain reaches *catharsis* by transforming into “pleasure upon pleasure, pleasure within pleasure”.¹⁴⁸ Thus, the hero of a tragedy’s pain turns into pleasure in the audience. Pleasure on the other hand, targets *jouissance*, which appears with pain and “qualifies as a kind of excitement.”

¹⁴⁸Gupta, A. (2010). Rethinking Aristotele’s Poetics: The pragmatic aspects of art and knowledge. *The Journal of Aesthetic Education*, 44(4), 60-80. Champaign, Illionis: University of Illinois Press <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5406/jaesteduc.44.4.0060?seq=1>

CHAPTER THREE

3.1. KING OEDIPUS

The play written by Sophocles (497 BC), which has a real name as ‘Oedipus Tyranos’, has reached our day as ‘King Oedipus’. It is referred to in Roman history as ‘*Oedipus Rex*’. Rex means king in Latin. And with this historical transformation, ‘rex’ and ‘*Oedipus Tyranos*’ turns into ‘King Oedipus.’ This transition and these names are important. Because there are traces of a historical change behind it and this change points to different meanings as a sign that defines Oedipus on the ground where language and meaning change. “Tyranos” in Greek describes a person who comes to power by himself or by his own right. Here, a tyrant and the next tyrant aren’t related by blood and in this sense, it also signals a historically significant change. Oedipus wins his tyranny in Thevai by using his own mind and power. He kills his father with his physical power and solves the riddle of the Sphinx with his power of his mind. Thus, he is entitled to sit on the throne as his own right. King... Rex... Tyranos... Although these words represent power, they distinguish in what way power is obtained. There is also a reference to the end of Oedipus as the doer and the actor here. In other words, Oedipus criticizes the problematic of ‘self’ in Apollo’s law as he brings his own end and gives his own punishment. The call to “Know Thyself” in the Delphic Temple is open to discussion in this context.

King Oedipus should be considered as a myth before it is considered as a tragedy. It is Sophocles who made it into a tragedy. What happened to Oedipus, the future was shaped in Apollo’s (Delphi) temple. Accordingly, news comes from Delphi to the king and queen of Thevai, Laios and Jacosta. Their newborn son will kill his father and marry his mother. In response to this news, the parents want to get rid of the baby. They have the baby tied by its foot and hand it over to an attendant and ask him to leave it on Mouth Kitherion. The attendant, who couldn’t kill the baby, gave it to a cattle herder from the city of Corinth. The cattle herder gives the baby to the childless King Polybos and his wife Periborea. When

Oedipus grows up, he thinks that he belongs to this family. But one day he hears that he is adopted. He goes to see the priest at Delphi Temple to find out who he is. But he doesn't learn who he is but he learns what he should do; this clouds Oedipus' mind. According to the prophecy, he will kill his own father and marry his own mother. In the light of this information, he moves away from his adoptive parents Polybos and Periborea and goes to a journey thinking that he will prevent the prophecy from coming true. The road brings him to a three way junction near Thevai. He argues about the right of way with a cart and four attendants. Oedipus kills an old man and three attendants and after a while he comes to the city called Thevai. The city is in the brink of destruction. The king of the country isn't around. Moreover, a monster named Sphinx appeared out of nowhere. The Sphinx is famous for asking people riddles, killing them when they don't know the riddle. This reputation has haunted the city. The Sphinx asks this riddle: "What is four legged in the morning, two legged at noon and three legged in the evening?" Oedipus answers the riddle of The Sphinx. A human! Thus, he saved Thevai from this curse. Because the city was idle, this virtue was enough to make him a tyrant. And he marries the widowed queen Jacosta. Thus he fulfills his destiny. Sophocles' tragic play *King Oedipus* begins like this. At the front of Oedipus' palace in Thevai. Addressing the crowd gathered in front of the place, Oedipus says:

"Young sons of Great Cadmus! Why did you kneel before my palace with these branches of simplification? Smoke from frankincense, mourning and groans are rising all over the city. I didn't want to hear your troubles from others, my children. And I, Oedipus, whom you all know so well, came before you myself."¹⁴⁹

Then a priest of Apollo speaks as a spokesman and says that a curse (*miasma*) has come to the city. Corps and herds are destroyed, children are stillborn. The plague has wreaked havoc. Now the issue is clear. There is a *miasma* in Thevai, where Oedipus is king and it is Oedipus' duty to end this

¹⁴⁹ Sofokles. (2009). *Kral Oidipus*. İstanbul: Mitos Boyut. (Translation: Yılmaz Ögüt). pp.19.

miasma as a king. The dramatic structure gradually drifts towards the opposite of the fiction. Various information comes to Oedipus' way. The most important one is this one. The king of the country was Laios before Oedipus and he was killed; so the curse spread to the city because the person who killed him was still in the city. So there is a 'scapegoat' in Thevai.¹⁵⁰ There is a prophet who says that the scapegoat must be removed from the city in order to clear the curser: Tiresias. Oedipus will go back step by step and solve the mystery of this murder that was committed years ago in one day.

It is known by everyone that Oedipus was a wise, intelligent and strong person. His people loved him. He was a powerful tyrant. Now, thanks to this intelligence, knowledge and experience (the power of logos) this event will undoubtedly be solved easily.

Oedipus is in great *hybris* while searching for the murderer. He doubts everyone, and everything but himself. He mocks the blind Tiresias, accuses Creon of trying to overthrow him. His anger grows stronger gradually. Ultimately, all signs turn back to him. There is no doubt that the author thus paves the way for being a confessor and his own lawman in the construction of the moral universe. Nobody can blame a smart, strong man like Oedipus. Oedipus only blames himself and gives his own punishment by being virtuous. Ultimately, killing himself isn't acceptable either. Because the nature of the punishment is clear at the very beginning of the play: Exile from Thevai. His mother, Jacosta acts swift and kills herself. Oedipus, on the other hand, stabs his own eyes with the needles from his mother's dress. Knowledge has given way to violence. Oedipus will soon leave Thevai, thus ending the curse. Indeed, it does.

The play conveys the horrific events that Oedipus goes through in this course. Oedipus' reluctance to see the truth and his constant accusations seem like a way of escaping the truth. In the last instance, it is possible to explain with the pleasure of pathos that he blinded his own eyes with a needle as soon as he confronted himself, after the whole process and learned the truth. Oedipus did this

¹⁵⁰ R. Girard. In his books titled, *The Scapegoat, The Secret and Violence*, he refers to this situation as the 'scapegoat'.

to himself. But as Oedipus says: “Apollo, my friends, Apollo! He is causing me this unbearable suffering. But it’s not other hands that blinded me; it’s done by my hands.” Here we see the pain Apollo inflicted on Oedipus. Actually this is not true. Apollo is the representative of the Delphi Temple. In the Delphi Temple, the following scripture is written. “Know Thyself” (γνῶθι σεαυτόν). What happened to Oedipus is because he didn’t “know himself”

3.1.1. The Bitter Pleasure of Self Punishment

Lacan underlines the ‘excitement of self-punishment’ when talking about the pleasure in pain.¹⁵¹ Here he talks about not only the act, but also the excitement of this act that can’t be grasped. This missing pleasure is never satisfied. It can’t reach its destination. It encounters *jouissance* on the way he set out to arrive. According to this interpretation of Lacan, the act in which Oedipus gouged his eyes is very compatible with his desire to inflict pain on himself. But the excitement he experiences while doing this action, that is, punishing him, manifests itself as *jouissance*. *Jouissance*: “This word denotes a kind of ‘excitement’ that one can derive from punishment, self-punishment or by doing something painfully pleasurable (in example, sexual ejaculation).”¹⁵² Oedipus’ self-punishment doesn’t come from a drive. In fact, it is an action that underlines the fact that he keeps his word. Exiling himself will be enough to remove the *miasma* in Thiva. But this doesn’t satisfy Oedipus’ suffering. Oedipus wants to embody his suffering. He wants to leave a mark on his body. This is not just self-punishment; it is an act that the Other believes that he contains in his desire.

The question of “What am I in the desire of the Other?” comes to importance in this point. He has caused such a horrific thing that he himself must suffer in the eyes of others. But whatever Oedipus does, his pain and punishment are doomed to remain incomplete. Because even though he wants to die, he can’t

¹⁵¹ Homer, S. (2013). *Jacques Lacan*, (Translation: Abdurrahman Aydın). Ankara: Phoenix. pp.125.

¹⁵² Fink. B. (2016). *Lacancı Psikanalize Bir Giriş*. (Özgür Öğütçen, trans.). İstanbul: Encore.pp.34-35.

kill himself. As he promised, he leaves the city. There is a layered suffering here. The first layer is that he marries his mother and kills his father; the second is his search for the person who is the cause of this *miasma* from far away and his suspicious, malicious and humiliating behavior especially towards Creon and the blind seer Tiresias. Oedipus shares what happened to *moira*. According to Alenka Zupancic, Oedipus isn't at fault for what happened to him. It could only be the arrogance in his behavior during the investigation of his own crime. However, this alone isn't enough to declare Oedipus guilty. 'Because he isn't guilty, he doesn't suffer either.'¹⁵³

According to Hegel; this is the opposite. Hegel goes on to say that the characters in question never claim that they do bear the sin of their actions. On the contrary: The greatest insult we can do to a true hero of a tragedy is to think he is innocent; it's an honor to be guilty for famous tragic characters.¹⁵⁴ According to Hegel, the hero of a tragedy is guilty. This guilt is considered an honor for the hero of a tragedy. And finally, when we think about this situation for Oedipus, he suffers with the feeling of guilt and wants to prove his pain by leaving a 'mark' on himself. The way the character punishes himself in the face of this terrifying event also creates a painful cathartic effect for the audience.

Lacan's desire to punish himself is present from the very beginning of the play, even if he doesn't know that his subject is himself. Oedipus realizes that the punishment will return to himself as soon as he recognizes (*Anagnorisis*) himself. He does not only recognize himself, but also recognizes the punishment he has imposed on himself.¹⁵⁵ In fact, he is not satisfied with this punishment, and this very moment – *Anagnorisis* – causes him to suffer a new punishment. Because the other punishment will not be enough anymore. Oedipus chooses to gouge out his eyes. Nobody wants that from him. But he knows that he must be killed. He doesn't kill himself; he wants to be killed...

¹⁵³ Zupancic, A. *ibid.* pp.191.

¹⁵⁴ [Hegel, G.W.F. (1975). *Aesthetics: Lectures on fine art*, (Translation: T.M. Knox) Oxford: Clarendon Press, vol. 2, pp.1215.] Quoting from: Zupancic, A. *Gerçeğin Etiği*. pp.192.

¹⁵⁵ Vernant, J.P. & Naquet, P. V. *ibid.* pp.289.

“Oedipus: [...] For God’s sake take me quickly; kill me, throw me into the sea, take me to places where no one can see... Don’t be afraid to touch a very poor, unfortunate person. Believe me, there is no other person in this world who can endure my pain but me!”¹⁵⁶

The above quote is some of what he said after he had his eyes gouged out. His great *hybris* before learning the truth is replaced by this pathetic state. Now he will only lament pathetically and enthusiastically talk about the extent of his suffering. But there is a hidden pleasure in this great suffering. This pleasure finds its way just like the blood flowing from his eyes. The end of Oedipus is an incomplete suffering, an incomplete happiness and an endless ordeal. In *King Oedipus*, the play doesn’t end in a usual sense. We are faced with an incomplete character. His wish is to die. He cannot die. His wish is to inflict greater suffering. He cannot suffer more. He is already suffering. The ongoing pain can’t reach to its destination. It wriggles. *Jouissance* is in the wriggling eye of Oedipus.

According to Alenka Zupancic, Oedipus creates a law when he learns what will happen to him. This law is related to the field of morality. It is about the limits of moral law. Oedipus acts with this knowledge, which has now become law. For him, it has already become a law that he will sleep with his mother and kill his father. Oedipus’s part in this law is not to get tricked by some ethical actions. Now, a cold blooded war has begun. According to some people, this was is about the fate of the gods and the attitude of man towards the fate. However, we have to say that this is not the case in reality. Because Oedipus doesn’t take part in this tragedy simply as someone who accepts the law of his destiny as the law and later flees. This law exists as a performer-acting-one. However, Oedipus’ actions carry out the law. Oedipus does everything himself. Nothing like this had ever been done before he does it. As the *Big Other (Other)*, here is something more than the fate game of the gods; ecstatic soul which can’t be understood and can’t be

¹⁵⁶ Sofokles. *Kral Oidipus*. (2009) Mitos Boyut: Istanbul pp.64.

explained by reason. Oedipus presents his eyes to the law with ecstatic spirit, which is Dionysus' gift to the tragic universe. At this point Alenka Zupancic also listens to Lacan and says:

‘If the law is to be constituted as Law only by the act of the subject and the subject is to add a piece of himself to the law, ‘it is emphasized that this piece of himself isn’t seen by the subject in this way (as his own).’¹⁵⁷

Just as Zupancic says, ‘Oedipus, by a misunderstanding, gives a piece of himself to the law in question.’¹⁵⁸ Here is a reference to the ‘thing’ which isn’t known by misunderstanding. On the relation of the unknown to the unconscious, Lacan says these in his 1963 lecture: ‘This unknown is something that can only be called the cause of the unconscious, or the cause of unconscious desire: This part of our flesh that is necessarily caught in the formal mechanism.’¹⁵⁹ Accordingly, the act of Oedipus, all of his acts, perhaps unconsciously appear in the causality of desire. Accordingly, Freud’s “Oedipus Complex” can be evaluated within this decision.

3.1.2. Limping in Language: *Jouissance* in Oedipus

“Levi Strauss, in his book *Structural Anthropology*, is the first person in the Labdakas lineage to draw attention to the importance of traits common to three generations of his lineage – and imbalance in gait, lack of symmetry on both sides of the body and a defect in one of the two legs. Labdakas is the lame character whose legs are not the same length and strength, Laios is an asymmetrical, clumsy and left

¹⁵⁷ *ibid.* pp.188.

¹⁵⁸ Zupancic, A. *ibid.* pp.184.

¹⁵⁹ Lacan, L’Angoisse, Lecture of March 8, 1963. As I could not access the printed version of this speech, I only found a certain part of it on page 188 of Alenka Zupancic’s book *The Ethics of Truth*.

handed character, and Oedipus is a character with a swollen foot.”¹⁶⁰

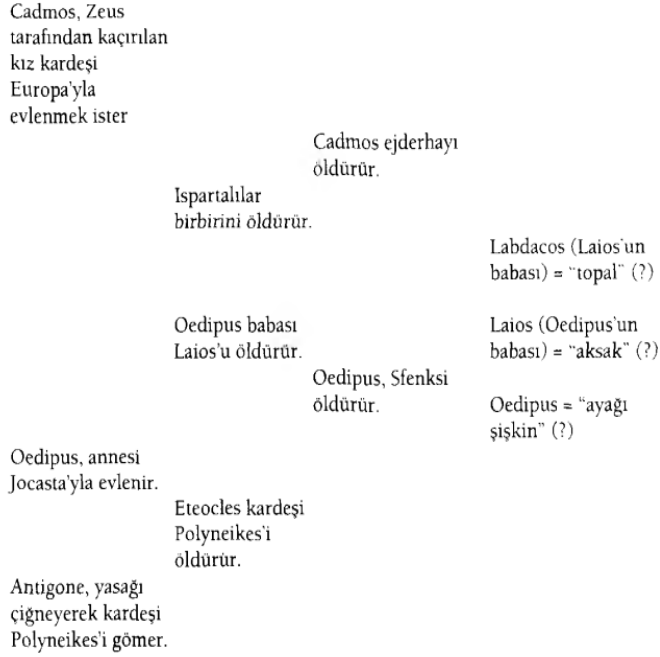


Figure 1 Levi Strauss Structural Anthropology

Strauss thinks that it will be easier to see the relationship between kinship bond and network of events by proposing a formulation. According to him, the table above will help us see some things more easily.

First of all, the connection of events here draws attention. Just as Cadmos wanted to marry his sister Europa, who was kidnapped by Zeus, Oedipus married to his mother Jacosta. In this way, Cadmos kills The Dragon and Oedipus kills The Sphinx. After that, it makes us think about a kind of disability image structured like the structuring of language and unconscious in Freud and Lacan. According to Strauss, there is an assumption that the Labdakos lineage shared some sort of problem with their feet. Accordingly, on the disability of three generations; Laios' father says that Labdakos is lame, Laios is lame and Oedipus, as it is named, has a structural disorder caused by bloating at his feet. We can say that the 'imbalance' in the feet of these three generations progresses in parallel

¹⁶⁰ Vernant, J.P.& Naquet, P. V. *ibid.* pp.281.

with the 'imbalance' in their lives. We are going to be concerned with Oedipus' foot and his 'imbalance.' Moreover, when we remember the question The Sphinx asked: "What is four legged in the morning, two legged at the noon, and three legged in the evening?" As an answer to this question of man, in a way Oedipus himself is also referred to the terrible link between this question and the answer. This question is also about the ability of the foot. Vernant calls this very situation a, 'limp in language.'¹⁶¹ Freud, on the other hand, calls this situation *repetition compulsion*.¹⁶² What the tongue says fulfills the prophecy and in a way the perfect expression in the language leads to the defect in their lives. When Oedipus gives the correct answer to The Sphinx's riddle, his tongue will set his own life on fire. Here, the (im)balance and (non)measure are the image of a kind of *miasma* that creates the natural universe of the myth.

This *miasma* is also an indicator of the ongoing miscommunication throughout the play. Let's look at the play, Oedipus promises to find the person who cursed the city and exile him out of the city. This person is himself. He is hostile to Creon and Tiresias out of fear of dethronement and he dethrones himself. The woman he married and his mother who left him are the same woman. The murderer in the city is himself. In this way he is also the murderer of his own father. He is the uncle of his children, son of his mother and murderer of his father. All these ridiculous looking equations show what Oedipus isn't. And, as a result, an incomprehensible language, including misunderstanding, fell into the play Oedipus throughout the play. Tiresias, far from telling the truth as if mocking him, provokes Oedipus even more. Wasn't Oedipus sacrificed to the *moira* of the gods with this overlook before he even committed these crimes? The Ancient Ate, has hidden itself in this linguistics game. Just like this miscommunication that continues throughout the play, the wise question of the Sphinx turns into a symbol of lack of communication.

¹⁶¹ Vernant, J.P.& Naquet, P. V. *ibid.* pp.282.

¹⁶² Freud defines *repetition compulsion* as 'the aim of eliminating the neurotic effects caused by the trauma by recreating and reliving a traumatic experience in some way under similar conditions.'

On the other hand, the scene has something else to say about extremism. Traces of domestic incest and excessive love; the circle of love. This excess and transcendence is all about transcendence. Oedipus is united with his mother, Jacosta and has four children; he crosses the border with this. Two boys, Eteocles and Polyneikes; and two girls, Antigone and Ismene. Later, Antigone dies out of love for her brother Polyneikes. Cadmos searches for his sister Europa tirelessly for this cause; just like Oedipus, he defeats The Dragon and reaches Europa after great efforts.¹⁶³ This attainment comes from the excessive love of a divine union. In these two events, which can also be seen as an initiation myth, the stages have similar characteristics, with a very important difference. Oedipus lacks a very important piece of information and doesn't know who he is. The transcendence of Oedipus is related to self-confidence, confidence in power and confidence in mind. While Oedipus was still crawling on fours, he was unaware of what would happen to him, he became the toy of a debt game with the swelling in his feet. For Lacan, this is a 'symbolic debt.'

3.1.3. *Jouissance in the Möbius Strip*

'We are no longer guilty only by means of a symbolic debt... What can be taken from us is the debt itself in which we find our place and this is where we can feel completely alienated from ourselves. The Ancient Ate undoubtedly made us guilty of this debt, but to renounce it as best as we can means we are left with a greater misfortune. Fate can no longer be invoked.'¹⁶⁴

In *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, Lacan emphasizes the lack of Oedipus' reconciliation with his destiny: It is emphasized that, 'Oedipus was born into a

¹⁶³ Vernant, J.P. & Naquet, P. V. *ibid.* pp.283.

¹⁶⁴ [Lacan, J. (2001). *Le séminaire, livre VIII Le transfert (8) (Champ Freudien) (French Edition)*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil. pp.316.] Quoted by Zupancic, A. Gerçeğin *Etiği*. pp.191.

kind of a debt game.’¹⁶⁵ Just like Vernant, Lacan talks about the ambiguity about the tragedies, especially the situation of Oedipus. Although Lacan doesn’t blame Oedipus, the hero of a tragedy is guilty of his actions. In both cases we see that a signifier is excluded. Oedipus refuses to recognize his own actions. However he punishes himself. There seems to be another misunderstanding underlying this, which we might call self-misconception. What is self-misconception? In tragedy plays, it is called *Anagnorisis*.¹⁶⁶ The situation that Oedipus is not the person he thought he was. The state of being someone else by rebending the bent point on a band, resembling a Möbius strip. When talking about the ‘Möbius Strip’, Lacan describes the issue of desire through this strip as follows: ‘This image allows us to visualize desire as the point where sexual reality meets the realm of demand – where we capture the existence of moments when the unconscious is interrupted and then returns.’¹⁶⁷ Here it will be necessary to think of the Möbius Strip as an image. The moment of bending is a ‘moment’ that is interrupted. Lacan expresses this ‘moment’ as the demand of desire and a sexual experience. I think Lacan is talking about a union when he says that it is sexual. In this case, by making us think that this is the drive to satisfy desire, he adds: ‘All this is linked to demand and the line we call desire, which enables the sexual event to come into being in experience.’

At first, Oedipus is next to his real problems, with his parents, whom many of us think he can trust. We can’t pretend that this situation never happened. So Oedipus first existed where he was born and as who he was: Oedipus was an infant before he got the name Oedipus. Then, his parents decided to eliminate this child because of a prophecy that he would kill his father and marry his mother.

¹⁶⁵ “For Oedipus, the absolute reign of his desire is consumed between the two, something sufficiently demonstrated by the fact that he is shown as unyielding, demanding all, giving nothing, absolutely irreconcilable.” [Lacan, J. (1992). *The ethics of Psychoanalysis*, London: Routledge. pp.310.] Quoted by: Zupancic, A. *ibid.* pp.198.

¹⁶⁶ Anagnorisis is when the hero of a tragedy becomes knowledgeable in a state of ignorance in the story. For Oedipus, this is where he learns about who he really is. Right after it comes the part of *perepetia*, which is, the return of luck. With this new knowledge, the character’s luck returns; accordingly to Aristotle, the situation goes from good to bad in tragedies and in comedies, from bad to good.

¹⁶⁷ Lacan, J. (2014). *The seminar of Jacques Lacan. Book X: Anxiety* (Translation: A. R. Price). Cambridge, UK: Polity Press pp.165.

His foot swelled because he was tied so tightly. And he was given to a cattle herder to be destroyed. ‘Oedipus meaning swollen feat is because of that.’¹⁶⁸ The first life of Oedipus on the Strip continues for a very short time on the other surface of the Strip. Until Oedipus becomes an adult and makes sense of what was said to him. Oedipus is now an adult and someone tells him that he is adopted. For Oedipus, the first conscious confusion of self-awareness begins at this moment. After that, the question of ‘who am I?’ is forgotten immediately, and it includes the ‘me’ in another life. The question he forgot to ask is reminded by The Sphinx by asking him again. We will look into this question and The Sphinx, later. Oedipus gives the correct answer to The Sphinx’s question. The general and correct answer, which is eternal, which is what the Möbius Strip, cannot change: Human. According to Varnant, this answer includes Oedipus himself.¹⁶⁹ He, himself as a human. Along with all the surfaces in the strip. Then he goes on his way again, this time twice more unknowingly. He forgets about the question once again. The question is asked again to Oedipus in a different way at the end of the play. Who is the king slayer who brought the *miasma* to Thevai? The answer to this question is Oedipus too. What is Oedipus’ fault here? We are still in a tragedy built on such a strong ambiguity. Oedipus has to punish himself because of this ambiguity. This is not his wish too. He does not deserve a punishment. But what happens is so horrific that he punishes himself or the king slayer he finds at the cost of emanating the *miasma*. For Lacan, this is not only a punishment. ‘It is the assurance of the law.’¹⁷⁰

Oedipus punishes himself as ‘who?’ Now we will have to dwell on this question. When the events come to an end, Oedipus experiences this pain in the bend, where it interacts with the other side of the Möbius Strip. The pain of self knowledge. And he feels the excruciating suffering of this pain. He confronts the question he forgot to ask when he knew himself. All that reminds us of

¹⁶⁸ A. Erhat. (2015). *Mitoloji Sözlüğü*. İstanbul: Remzi. Title: Oedipus. pp.226.

¹⁶⁹ Varnant. *ibid.* pp.291.

¹⁷⁰ [Lacan, J. (2001). *Le séminaire, livre VIII Le transfert (8) (Champ Freudien) (French Edition)*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil. pp.316.] Zupancic, A. *The Gerçeğin Etiği*. pp. 192.

jouissance, as a representation of that ungraspable, unobtainable “moment” of the transition from one surface of the Möbius Strip to the other. Oedipus won’t be able to grasp his place on the Möbius Strip, nor will he be able to realize that he had passed into the part that turns into pleasure with the pain he suffers. Here, I would like to add that following comment to the Möbius Strip, which is different from Lacan’s. The displaced surfaces in the Möbius Strip can be read as the inverted surface of pain and pleasure; which marks the “moment” of Oedipus’ self-punishment. What I mean by that is that the displaced part of the Strip is difficult to articulate, capture or mark; I’m talking about the impregnable side of *jouissance*.

3.1.4. Three Crossroads; Introduction to *Miasma*

Oedipus kills his father at a crossroads where three roads diverge. At the crossroads, he angrily clings to his knife at the crossroads of his father, his destiny and his past. The road literally becomes a symbol of separation from the father. This is a second and a real separation. This ends with the destruction of the father. For Thevai, it is inevitable that the father’s name is associated with the *miasma*. Oedipus killed his father to become a father and married his mother. The crossroads which enables *Miasma* to come true is a dramaturgical installation. It is the successful construction of fiction in which the meaning is multilayered and cleverly placed. This three crossroads are the place where the answer to the question asked by the Sphinx goes. Four legged first; Oedipus kills his father Laios and puts him on fours.¹⁷¹ On the other hand, it is a reference to the state of Oedipus on all fours when he was a baby at the beginning of his destiny. The two and four leg phases of the father and the son and their connection with each other; their effects are in the first place in the tragedy where the luck of the character, Oedipus, turns from good to bad. Then two legged; Oedipus took the first full of *hamartia* with his two legs and set out to take the *miasma* in Thiva. Then three

¹⁷¹ Vernant. *ibid.* pp.290-293.

legged; Oedipus learned the truth and blinded himself and left Thiva with the help of a stick, that is, with three legs.

The same *miasma* haunts Agamemnon and Orestes. The Troy's victory, just as Oedipus's defeat on The Sphinx and him getting cursed with the correct answer; after a wait of ten years Agamemnon's wife Clytemnestra waits at his back with a poised dagger. Just when Clytemnestra was relieved that she avenged her daughter Efigenia, she violated Zeus's law of non-familial bloodshed and incurs the curse. Clytemnestra's *jouissance* snores like a raging bull hidden under the rose colored rug.

3.1.5. Oidipus; Desire, Law, Knowledge and Guilt

Lacan talks about *King Oedipus*' relationship with knowledge in his *Seminaire XVII*. 'Lacan takes the thesis of knowledge has two sides as his starting point: 'Self-aware' knowledge and 'not self-aware' knowledge.¹⁷² 'Knowledge which isn't self-aware is itself knowledge which is useful or (in the subject) "does the work" knowledge and is "a means of pleasure." He refers to this aspect of knowledge to pleasure (or, more precisely to 'surplus-pleasure', the Lacanian variation of Marx's 'surplus-value').¹⁷³ So, we can't ignore the pleasure that Oedipus takes in the relationship between knowledge and power.

This knowledge isn't self-aware (which remains unknown) but still does the work, constitutes the point at which we reach *jouissance* and truth, as long as it is "lost": "Doing what that has meaning, an ambiguous meaning, is through knowledge as a means of pleasure. This ambiguous meaning is that of the truth."¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² 'Le savoir qui se sait et le savoir qui ne se sait pas.' These two formulas which we translate as "self-aware knowledge" and "not self-aware knowledge", can also be more commonly understood as "knowledge that one knows (about)" and "knowledge that one does not know". Quoted by Zupancic, A. *ibid.* pp 221.

¹⁷³ A. Zupancic. *ibid.* Page: 221-222

¹⁷⁴ [Lacan, J. (1991). *Le séminaire. l'envers de la psychanalyse (17) (Champ Freudien) (French Edition)*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil. pp.57.] Zupancic, A. *ibid.* pp.222.

Lacan states that Oedipus who tries to access the last knowledge as a means of pleasure can access *jouissance*. On the other hand, we will have to pursue what is true, real knowledge. Lacan gives the answer to this very well in the following excerpt:

‘If analytic experience finds itself in a position to owe some of its nobility to the Oedipal myth, it is because the prophecy retains its sharpness in pronunciation. And I will say more: The interpretation in the analysis remained at the same level and became true only in its results, just as in the example of prophecy.’

Here, the second of Lacan’s two understandings of knowledge can be seen: The information that is spoken and said is the real information. This is a kind of prediction. In Lacan’s words, it is “identity preparation.” The first is the knowledge behind an explanation, as self-knowing knowledge. Lacan gives an example of the first knowledge for the case of Oedipus. “Identity preparation” is explained by the prophecy. However, we will be talking about a true information which emerges when the prophecy comes true. Above, we tried to explain that Oedipus’ identity was predetermined by prophecy based on the predetermination of what would happen to him. Another issue is that there is a point where knowledge intersects with the law. On this subject, Zupancic quotes Lacan’s idea of the law and the relationship of *jouissance* to the law as follows:

‘He does not assert the *Jouissance* as a demonic force capable of opposing the law. On the contrary, he sees in *jouissance* the very essence of the law: Is it sufficient, he says for *jouissance* to take the form of suffering, for the whole situation to completely change its character and for the very meaning of the moral law itself to be completely changed.’¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁵ Zupancic, A. Gerçeğin Etiği. *ibid.* pp.117.

In Lacan's point of view, 'Guilty is what the Other knows and the subject is allowed to know what he knows'¹⁷⁶ and it points out that according to Lacan Oedipus doesn't appear guilty. Although what Oedipus knows is the same as what all the others know, it is not the same knowledge. Another piece of information is that the subject is shown as variable as in the Möbius Strip. The Other, Oedipus' birth parents, knows the following information spoken by an oracle: You will have a son; he will kill his father and marry his mother. This is what Oedipus knows. Both parties take the extreme action so that this knowledge/prophecy is not fulfilled. Thus, the law creates itself. The two others have strayed away from main knowledge. The moment of the prophecy is said to be expressed and the moment they repeat what it is said is where the information is displaced and turned upside down; thus, there is now *knowledge* and a *pleasure* in its place. 'Tragedy' does not refer to all that has to be lost and the price to be paid to gain access to the symbolic here. It does not refer to all that is heroically, painfully sacrificed (for example, complete *jouissance*) in order to reach one's proper place.¹⁷⁷ It will be necessary, then, to look at Oedipus, who, as Zupancic noted above, "painfully relinquishes his right to tragedy, the price to be paid," and *jouissance* that comes with this renunciation. The eyes that Oedipus renounced. So *jouissance* appears precisely in what he painfully gave to the law in return for Ate, stabbing his own eyes with needles. His own eyes.

Oedipus acts in the light of the above mentioned information given to him. He does not act on the basis of his desire. But there is one place that is the product of Oedipus' arrogant pure desire that he can't overcome. Defeating The Sphinx. Oedipus doesn't have to defeat The Sphinx his path. Because nobody asks him for the diamond behind Mount Kaf and it isn't The Sphinx who protects the diamond. So, what is it that compels Oedipus to face the Sphinx and to fight? It is Oedipus' taste for knowledge. His mind and *hybris* and these two eliminates the most important obstacle – The Sphinx – that caused him to marry his mother. Then the doors of Thevai open to this wise and powerful man and make him a

¹⁷⁶ Zupancic, A. *ibid.* pp.206.

¹⁷⁷ Zupancic, A. *ibid.* pp.211.

tyrant. Oedipus' desire to defeat The Sphinx is fulfilled; so the desire to be with his mother will be fulfilled as a symbol.

How does Oedipus relate to the symbolic phallus? How does Oedipus' desire work in reverse? These two questions will open up each other and allow us to move forward. When Oedipus was tied by his feet as a baby and handed over to a shepherd to be killed, neither the imaginary phallus nor the penis made any sense. He became a prisoner of the imaginary phallus in this first dubious discourse about himself when one of his friends said that he was a bastard. Instead of asking his parents about this, he wanted to go to the oracle and find out who he was. What the oracle said was going to cause his question and what he would do, to change quickly. While the real question was 'who am I', he was nothing but a poor person who would harm his family with what the oracle said. Oedipus no longer asked the question 'who am I', to himself. Moreover, he accepted what the oracle had said. On the contrary, his attempt to escape from where he was as who he was and to turn this prophecy upside down was what turned him upside down. Finding out who he was, was now overshadowed by the desire to go backwards. He just had to run now. As he ran away, his desire was reversed. And this desire was the representation of desirelessness. Because running away wasn't something to be desired by Oedipus. But on the way to his escape, killing an old man – his father – and married his mother – as in the prophecy – was what would make him happy on the way to his desire, even if it wasn't desirable. So, what was Oedipus' desire? Or did Oedipus have a desire? We can safely say that there is no desire to be seen. But there was something hidden somewhere and captured Oedipus' soul. Maybe it was something close to a desire. This was Oedipus' relationship with knowledge. The desire for knowledge. At this point everything was doomed to turn around once again. Just like the Möbius Strip, whose surface changes. Oedipus has a desire to know. He wants to know that who he is. He can't learn this and leaves this question hanging, that is, without knowing who he is, he continues his life with enthusiasm. However, a long time had passed before the question of 'who am I', which the play wanted to know in its problem, was answered. It was a question of the past. Oedipus diverted his desire to know

elsewhere. The wise, strong, determined person, who didn't know who he was but knew the difficult riddle of The Sphinx, became a guest in the bed he wouldn't want to be with, with his skill. Yet the answer to The Sphinx's riddle was himself: A human. A human with desires. Thus, Oedipus' desires were blown away by the wind and gone to the fields where he was expelled as an infant.

3.1.6. Reverse Initiation

Jean-Joeseph Goux, in his book *Oedipus Philosopher*, makes statements about Oedipus that we haven't encountered before. Although we consider Oedipus from the field of psychoanalysis, we encounter Goux's interpretation with his criticism aimed at dismantling this very structure. According to him, this myth is a kind of initiation ceremony.¹⁷⁸ As a matter of fact, the origin of the initiation ceremony seems very important for the tragedies. In particular, George Thomson, in his book *The Origin of Tragedy*, thinks that the plays of Aeschylus can never be understood with today's knowledge and intelligence. He says that all the elements and social life of the Athenian state must be known and moreover understood in order to understand Aeschylus' tragedies. There is an idea that these two authors have in common. It is Initiation. Although Thomson doesn't express this clearly, the fact that he talks about initiation ceremonies and the contribution of these ceremonies in detail in his book leads us to think like this. Then we can think of what happened to Oedipus as this initiation ceremony. Since we will never know whether Sophocles built such a structure at the time of writing, we can say that these interpretations only add variety and richness to the Ancient Greek Tragedies. This richness shows that the meanings are important in terms of going deeper and being reinterpreted in many layers.

So, let's look at Goux's interpretation of Oedipus. According to Goux, what happened to Oedipus, the difficulties he went through and overcoming these

¹⁷⁸ Goux, J. J. (1993). *Oedipus Philosophy*, board of trustees of the Leland. Stanford: Junior University California. pp.26.

difficulties, especially defeating The Sphinx as a symbol, are the signs of the initiation ceremony.

A. In the case of Oedipus we do not see the typical motif of the ordeal imposed by a king; Oedipus voluntarily decides to meet The Sphinx.

B. This encounter with the female beast itself has the following anomalies:

1. Oedipus defeats the Sphinx without the help of gods (unheard of, to be honest) and even without the help of mortals (without consulting a wise man or an oracle).

2. The ordeal itself isn't divided into stages where the hero (like the other heroes) defeats the monster step by step; it's not structured in this way.

3. Defeats the beast without using physical force, using just one word ('anthropos' (human)) as a weapon.

C. He eventually marries his own mother, not the king's daughter.¹⁷⁹

All these are the theme of an initiation ceremony, as Goux clearly states. Although there are sometimes deviations from this path. But what does this change in Oedipus? It changes that this inversion is an initiation. While initiation symbolizes the transition from ignorance to knowledge, physical and spiritual development, what happened to Oedipus doesn't seem to be like that. On the contrary this initiation pains Oedipus. Initiation loses its real function here at this point. And if it is permissible to ask this question; is it this malicious desire in our roots, reflected in our actions, which psychoanalysis is also concerned with, that we cannot resist? Was Oedipus' true desire on this road to his own destruction? On the other hand, this situation, which appears as a reverse imitation, also points

¹⁷⁹ Goux, J. J. (1990). *Edipe philosophe*. Paris: Aubier pp.24-25.

to the following: Let's remember that Thevai was in a *miasma*. A king who came into adulthood to a ruined city that was in a really bad condition because of the plague. The second king. The *miasma* of the city and the society infects Oedipus and the initiation myth is reversed again. It seems extremely surprising, then, whether Oedipus caused or resolved the *miasma*, not to mention that the fact they were both the same person, not at all involved in the prophecy that actually gave birth to this *miasma*. Oedipus, the hero of a tragedy who tries to cross Ate's limits, hits Ate in a bad way. It is in this border that Oedipus, experiencing his own *jouissance* whispers what does not sound good at all. Who did this to us? The Gods! Dionysian, Of course, the gods beyond the death drive.

Ultimately, what happened to Oedipus is related to his distinctive *hamartia* and *hybris*. This paves the way for "border" violations. Oedipus can't be blamed for this transgression simply because of what happened to him. In fact, the punishment he gave himself is the most important indicator of this violation. While punishing himself for his acts of extremism, he also contains extremism. The excess here is associated with pleasure, hence *jouissance*. We are talking about *jouissance*, which turns into action with the thought that the pain it inflicts is unbearable, and moreover, I should be punished 'more' and hits the limit of the body. Oedipus' eyes are the most important part of the body. Perhaps we should say it is the part of his body that should be punished. Because what happened to him is because of his blindness. Just like the "limit", "out of boundaries" that determines the tragic universe and fiction, the last act of self-punishing of Oedipus, who doesn't know himself, shows the ecstatic, unlimited side of Dionysus. Oedipus' eyes become the symbol of a boundary violation. Just like Prometheus' liver turned into a boundary violation.

Oedipus is the hero of a tragedy about whom the most comments are made. Freud takes the base of his work from the myth of Oedipus. And now psychoanalysts have said a lot about Oedipus. On the other hand, the myth of Oedipus is always included in every field of cultural relations, from philosophy to anthropology, from literature to cinema. Our encounter with Oedipus today still

contains the same horror. Oedipus, with the success of creating a timeless feeling, terrifies the reader/viewer every time.

This study envisaged to say something about Oedipus and his *jouissance*. Of course, we couldn't help but indicate comments that deal with Oedipus from other angles. There were many studies that we could not include. As a matter of fact, we don't think that the work will be finished, and while writing these lines, Oedipus has become more famous as a legend. The limitation of this study has tried to narrow the framework in order to deal with what we will say on this subject in the relationship between the borders and the suffering. Oedipus, however, can't be explained and understood without some concepts and meanings; the power of his art can't be reached with these deficiencies. Approaching Oedipus with this anxiety creates a great uneasiness in the person: Whatever we say, it will always be incomplete for Oedipus. We are aware that we have concluded our study with such a deficiency.

3.2. PROMETHEUS IN CHAINS

'Prometheus is a tragedy set in the world of gods. Zeus is a tyrant and Prometheus is the slave.'¹⁸⁰ According to Hesiod,¹⁸¹ Prometheus is descended from the Titans: He is the son of Iapetos and Cymene, both are Titans. Prometheus has three siblings: Atlas, Menoitios and Epimetheus. 'All of their fates are gruesome.'¹⁸² Prometheus is the wisest and the smartest of sons of Iapetos. The meaning of the name Prometheus is having foresight. Prometheus foresaw that his own race would be defeated in the revolt of the titans and by convincing his brother Epimetheus, he sided with Zeus and the other Olympians. 'He knows that Zeus

¹⁸⁰ Vernant, J. P & Naquet. P.V. (1990) *Mit and Tragedy in Anticent Greek.*, (J. Lloyt, Çev.) Broklyn: Zone Books. pp.347.

¹⁸¹ George Thomson says that Prometheus isn't mentioned in the Homeric poems. Only Hesiod mentions Prometheus. The next source is Aeschylus, he says. For details; Thomson, G. (1941) *Aeschylus and Athens: a Study in the Social Origins of Greek Tragedy.* London: Lawrence & Wishart. Pp. 333

¹⁸² Erhat, A. *Mitoloji Sözlüğü.* İstanbul: Remzi Prometheus chapter.

will one day be overthrown by his son, just as Gaia saw that Chronos would be overthrown. But Prometheus avoids telling this secret to Zeus.’¹⁸³

“Prometheus, who foretells the fate of Io, the only human character in tragedy, is both victim and master of the secret upon which Zeus’ future depends. Humankind is his past; the salvation of Zeus is his future, what will make him a character of a tragedy is his present pain and the rift between the past and the future.”¹⁸⁴

All these gifts and foresight of Prometheus was also noticed by Zeus. Zeus always admired Prometheus’ mind and intelligence and gave him immortality. Thus, for the first time, a non-god Prometheus, attained immortality. Although it seems a good thing that Prometheus has immortality but we will see that it isn’t a good thing in the future. Because, while he was punished by Zeus, we will see that his immortality will turn into an indefinite punishment. ‘Zeus had him pinned onto a rock. And on this rock he was tortured until he was freed by Heracles: An eagle came every day and ate his liver.’¹⁸⁵ This makes the pain of Prometheus, who is an immortal, unending. Prometheus’ long and passionate suffering is associated with this immortality. This situation passes by the “never diminishing” *jouissance*, whose liver is eaten by birds every day and which is repeated every day as the liver *renews* itself and becomes whole.

While living under the rule of Zeus, Prometheus tries to go beyond the rule of Zeus. ‘It was Prometheus who stuffed a fennel stalk into it and gifted people the fire he brought from the sun.’¹⁸⁶ This situation is filled with the desire to interfere in people’s lives. His secret desire is to be the God of man. Prometheus violates the law among the gods by stealing fire and giving it to humans. This law is associated with *logos* and *the sex drive*. Fire is the initiating element of

¹⁸³ Thomson, G. *ibid.* pp.202.

¹⁸⁴ Vernant J.P. & Naquet, P.V. *ibid.* pp.351.

¹⁸⁵ Thomson, G. *ibid.* pp.333.

¹⁸⁶ Thomson, G. *ibid.* pp.333.

knowledge and civilization. So, why did this man among the god – Prometheus – try to help people by sympathizing with them? What is it about the people that impressed him? We can answer this question from Prometheus' words as: "Humans are mindless and helpless beings." Prometheus is attracted to the fact that he is superior to people in return for their weakness. As we will see in the excerpt below, Prometheus tells people how helpless beings were before he gave fire. Afterwards, he puts this amazing act he has done for them against this very ignorance. On one hand they are an ignorant and unconscious flock of people, but on the other hand knowledgeable and powerful gods. Prometheus isn't a god. But he will imitate being a prosthetic god with his ecstatic liver. His *hamartia* and *hybris* cause him to perform his actions. Disturbed by his position, he hopes to be elevated, exalted to be admired, obeyed, to be praised and prayed for, to be eternal, to be respected. On the other hand, the representation of the libidinal intensity of his sexual urge, which he can't resist, and the unsatisfaction of his urge makes him commit his crime. The punishment he received from Zeus, in the words of Prometheus was for the good he did for people. Prometheus is always doomed to remain dissatisfied. Both his suffering (*pathos*) and his pleasure are in the hands of an impossible drive.

Zeus chains Prometheus to the Caucasus Mountain so that the birds eat his liver every day. The birds eat the liver of Prometheus and the next day the liver regenerates itself and the birds eat the liver of Prometheus again. This situation will continue forever. What Freud called the '*repetition compulsion*' describes precisely the workings of Prometheus' punishment. This is beyond punishment. And moreover, Prometheus is always conscious and allowed to suffer. Prometheus prides himself on reinventing his *hybris* without putting it aside. He doesn't admit that this is a crime. The issue now is beyond Prometheus. It's almost like a trap set up to reveal the power relationship between gods and humans. Yet Prometheus, with all his *hybris*, says:

“In contrast, how fond the mortals were
and I to these silent, dumb, childlike beings,
How did I give the mind, the thought...
[...]
Who can say I found them before me?
No one. He who says, that he found it, lies.
Long story short, know this:
Prometheus gave people all the arts.” (Aeschylus 2009)

Zeus presents Prometheus’ liver to sacred altar stone (The Caucasus Mountain). There is a sacrificial aesthetic in this pain with the liver gifted to the Caucasus Mountain, the altar stone of the gods. The sanctity of knowledge, the inaccessibility of the sexual drive and the impurity of Prometheus’ liver embody ‘*violence and the sacred*’ in Rene Girar’s understanding. On one hand the sanctity of a liver sacrificed for humanity, on the other hand, the issue of eating the liver, which in Prometheus’ phrase has no value for “humanity that is not worth it” undoubtedly turns into a paradox; giving out his liver, his liver being taken piece by piece from Prometheus, and the liver renews itself, torment that never ends.

3.2.1. Fire, Transcendence, Liver

If you are talking about a concept in psychoanalysis, you are talking about more. It is something that has a constant successor and points to the real reason behind it. If we say that Prometheus gave fire to the people after sealing it from the gods, the situation becomes boring. However, Prometheus, who steals what fire represents, emphasizes exactly that ‘something’ moreover, the most painful side of his actions. Max Müller says, “Fire was the offspring of two pieces of wood.” How did such an image find its place in Lacanian psychoanalysis? It will be necessary to consider a completely different dimension of the relationship between Prometheus and fire. First of all, we have to remember that we are talking about a ‘baby’ and see that what this baby symbolizes. With the

knowledge that wood is one of the easiest means to burn, we encounter a paradox when we think about the state of wood, just like a person who feeds the fire in his bosom, just like a person who feeds his snake in his own bosom.

Gaston Bachelard's comments on the archaic meanings of fire in his book, *The Psychoanalysis of Fire* require considering the Prometheus-fire duality together. According to Vachelard's quote from Max Müller: "Fire was the offspring of two pieces of wood."¹⁸⁷ According to this:

The second thing to be told about this primitive fire is how "as soon as he was born he swallowed his parents, that is, the two pieces of wood from which he sprang." The Oedipus complex had never been better or more fully specified: If you don't light the fire, the scorching failure will gnaw at your heart, the fire will remain inside you. If you light the fire, the mysterious beast will burn and destroy you. Love is just a fire that is passed on to someone else. Fire, on the other hand, is a love that can only be caught.¹⁸⁸

It is hardly surprising that the fire came out of Prometheus and reached Oedipus. On the other hand, it will be necessary to reconsider this interpretation of Lacan, who defines love in the relationship between fire and love, as "to give to someone else what one does not have, even though he does not demand it." Accordingly, should we call the destruction caused by fire, love?

The way first fire appeared seems rather difficult to think about with its simple usage today. According to K. Abraham, 'Fire, released by the kinetic energy of prolonged friction, expresses intimacy where friction can be expressed through sexual intercourse.' Accordingly, Müller's interpretation, which equates love and fire with each other, seems quite appropriate. Thus, this criticism, which

¹⁸⁷ Müller, F. M. (1879). *Origine et développement de la Religion*, (Translation: J. Darmesteier). pp. 190.

¹⁸⁸ *ibid.*, pp.190.

will enable us to see that Prometheus' relationship with fire can also correspond to Prometheus' relationship with love, is quite special. Prometheus' love is the love of superiority, the love of divinity and that of Oedipus is love of wisdom, which again makes it transcendent of humanity. What they have both in common is that their love sets their lives on fire; Prometheus scorched his liver and Oedipus burned his eyes with fire. Ultimately, the fire of Prometheus's anger towards the gods, and indeed Zeus, was suffocating him. An extremely fiery anger seared Prometheus' liver.

Emphasizing her fertility in the face of the destructiveness of fire, C.G. Yung refers to "a fertile archaic mess." The meaning of contrasts here reminds us of Dionysus' omnipresent power that occurs through opposition. How better to prove that this, according to Gaston Bachelard, 'must break down painful ambiguities in order to better reveal the living dialectics that give the imagination its true freedom and its true creative spiritual function?'¹⁸⁹

It is impossible to avoid this dialectic: To be conscious of being burned is to be cold; to hear violence is to alleviate: There must be violence without realizing it. **This is the bitter law of the main in action.** Only this ambiguity is conducive to understanding passionate hesitations. So much that fiery complexes, after all, painful complexes, are both neurotic and poetic complexes, reversible complexes: Heaven can be found in motion or rest, in flame or ash. (Bachelard, 1995.101)

According to Karl Abraham's sexual interpretation of fire, 'The first man discovered fire by reverting it with kinetic energy. For this, a piece of reamer rod and recess were needed. These two materials, two materials that evoke sexuality, stand at the starting point of the fire. And Prometheus was also called by different

¹⁸⁹ Bachelard, G. (1964). *The Psychoanalysis of Fire*. (A. C. Ross, Çev.) Boston: Beacon Press.pp.101.

names before the name Prometheus. The first of these was Pramantha. This name has two different meanings in itself. The former means “the first engraver” and the other means “male genitalia”.¹⁹⁰ Although fire may seem to represent knowledge at first glance, in Lacanian terms, fire refers to the image of the phallus. In *Prometheus in Chains*, Prometheus’ liver turns the impregnable part of the body into a scrap. On one hand, it is obtained and at the moment it is obtained, it is lost. The liver regenerates itself. What is the powerful paradox here? We will see that the answer to this question will turn into a powerful statement with the meaning of *jouissance*.

The liver is extremely important. Why was liver chosen in the myth? Looking at this will lighten the fires on our path. Liver. Not the lungs. We wouldn’t be wrong if we continued by saying that the liver is associated with pleasure. If you are not very active as a result of foods full of sugar and fat, your liver enzymes will increase, and a layer of fat will surround your liver. This pleasure takes the body to a negative place. Prometheus’ liver is punished. It’s like his liver, which is exactly what he desires, in the face of which he takes great pleasure. His unending liver... As Homer says; the main difference that separates ‘*jouissance*’ from desire is; it is not that he desires, but that he cannot prevent the drive that forces him to desire.’¹⁹¹ Prometheus’ desire is not to steal the fire. His desire lied in the idea of being the god of men. It is necessary to come to the point that Homer describes as driven: The idea that in order to become a god, you have to give a piece of your liver. Just like Lacan’s ‘law’. Lacan speaks about the relation of the subject to the laws that emerge through this culture in societies that produce the ‘law’. Accordingly, as a being that produces the culture, mankind also produces the law. Moreover, with his actions and thoughts he creates a new law. This law, just as in Freud’s example of primal father, tells the person, who reproduces the crime the first time, this: You produce your own law; Of course, he says this by taking inspiration from the past, our ancestors. Thus, the hero of a tragedy creates the law by giving a piece of himself – his eyes or his liver – to the

¹⁹⁰Abraham. K. (1997). *Güneş Kralının Psikanalizi*, (Translation: Ali Nahit Babaoğlu). İstanbul: Afa Publishing. pp.51.

¹⁹¹ Homer. S *Lacan*, pp.109.

law. Oedipus recreates the law by giving his eyes to the law. Just like someone who damages his liver by eating harmful things; Prometheus causes Zeus to harm himself with his actions and with his sharp tongue. On the other hand, Freud and Lacan, who establish the relationship between eating and sexuality, can be references at this point. We mentioned that it is a well-known fact that savory foods cause fat in liver. By savory foods we mean all foods that have more sugar in them, which causes obesity nowadays. Of course, there is an addiction relationship in these kinds of foods. The self-renewal of the liver is explained by changing what we eat. For example, vegetables such as broccoli and artichoke are good for us. These are foods with no sugar or fat in them. Why are we talking about all these? Of course, we are talking about Prometheus' liver to evaluate it in this pleasure/non-pleasure relationship. The liver of Prometheus continues to exist as a relationship with pleasure. Throughout the play, Prometheus has a good liver and throughout the play Prometheus is very brave and arrogantly discussing the punishment that Zeus inflicted on himself. What comes next is the sheer suffering of Prometheus when his liver is eaten by birds. And what Prometheus cannot prevent is precisely his *hybris*. Prometheus' *hybris* constantly drives Prometheus, just like what Homer's describes as drive. What he is driven towards is the desire to become a god. This drive remains unsatisfied. In this dissatisfaction the *jouissance* emerges.

In *Prometheus in Chains*, it is *hybris* of Prometheus who speaks through the play. Throughout the play, Prometheus has no desire to get rid of the chains and save his liver from being eaten. Moreover, he constantly and constantly brags about his work and tell about the good he has done for the humanity; then we understand that he is very pleasant with the suffering he endures. On one hand there is the suffering that he complains because he helped humans; on the other hand he has done many 'good deeds' for the humanity. It seems possible to explain the fact that Prometheus disclosed the secrets of the gods and especially Zeus in the shadow of his act of stealing the fire from the gods and bringing it to the people. On one hand, the delight that the demigod took from the pain he

suffered in the adventure of deification with the unstoppable instinct of *jouissance*.

The liver of Prometheus. The liver (as an organ) is impossible to reach. But it is constantly being tried to be reached. Because the birds rip a piece of it every day. And the liver regenerates. The liver appears to here as the image of insurmountable phallus. It is eaten one day and renewed at night. It does not end, it is interrupted. It is between what is and what is not. Existing and nonexistent. In the organ created, opened and pierced as a residue.... And the void... We are talking about the void, the constitutive, at the core of every signifier. In Prometheus, the act of eating the liver of Prometheus, the price he gave of himself for the existence of a certain law, acquires a libidinal intensity. Lacan's view that, "there is no diminishing *jouissance*" for *jouissance* gets stuck in the unsatisfaction of missing pleasure. Because the eating of Prometheus' liver is lost in endless time and doesn't come to an end, because this isn't possible. The lack of pleasure isn't completed and the end of the play it is not met.

It will be necessary to add that by presenting the following excerpt where Prometheus describes his actions. What he did opened the door to a great pleasure. Prometheus takes great pleasure from what he did. According to him, the suffering that comes with the punishment he receives in return for this pleasure is extremely unfair.

Just listen to what else I have to say, and you will be astonished even more by the ideas and skills I came up with. The greatest one was this: if anyone was sick, they had no remedies at all, no healing potions, food, or liniments. Without such things, they simply withered up. But then I showed them how to mix mild cures, which they now use to fight off all disease. I set up many forms of prophecy and was the first to organize their dreams, to say which ones were fated to come true. I taught them about omens—vocal sounds hard to understand, as well as random signs encountered on the road. The flights of birds with crooked talons I classified for them— both

those which by their nature are auspicious and those whose prophecies are ominous— observing each bird’s different way of life, its enemies, its friends, and its companions, as well as the smooth texture of its entrails, what color the gall bladder ought to have to please the gods, and the best symmetry for speckled lobes on livers.* I roasted thigh bones wrapped in fat and massive cuts of meat and showed those mortal beings the right way to read the omens which are hard to trace. I opened up their eyes to fiery symbols which previously they could not understand. Yes, I did all that. And then I helped them with what lay hidden in the earth—copper, iron, silver, gold. Who could ever claim he had discovered these before I did? No one. I am quite confident of that, unless he wished to waste his time in chat. To sum up everything in one brief word, know this—all the artistic skills men have come from Prometheus.¹⁹²

As we have said before Prometheus desires to become a god. As can be seen in the quote above, all these things he did for people should have changed his position. Hegel’s comment on this subject is as follows:

“Prometheus taught people not ethics, but only the cunning of mastering things in nature and using them as means of human satisfaction. Fire and the skills it serves are not ethical. They appear only in the service of private benefit, without any relation to the community of human existence and the public side of life. Because Prometheus was not in a position to impart anything more spiritual and ethical to humans, he belonged to the Titans, not to the new gods.”¹⁹³

¹⁹² Askhylos, (2013) *Zincire Vurulmuş Prometheus*, (Translation: Furkan Akderin). İstanbul: Mitos Boyut pp.20-21.

¹⁹³ Hegel, G.W.F. (2015). *Esthetic II*. (Translation: Taylan Altuğ and Hakkı Hünler). İstanbul: Payel . pp.213.

Prometheus thinks humanity is from his own soul after what he has done for them. And he thinks himself as of the spirit of Zeus. If we can talk about the *jouissance* of *psyche* – and Lacan would have mentioned *psyche* when he was talking about the *jouissance* of gods, then this equation doesn't seem quite wrong – we will also be talking about Prometheus' *jouissance*.

We have talked about the hero of a tragedy who acts in the tragic universe section. 'Prometheus in Chains' doesn't act at all because he is chained. He carried out his action and was pinned to the rocks as a punishment. Throughout the play, we see the actions of others. The most important of these is the movement of Io – She is constantly in motion. Prometheus represents a kind of "moving motionless" in Lacan's point of view. So he is a god. Io is constantly moving due to the discomfort of the horse fly that disturbs her. She escapes. However, this action has no value in the tragic element. Yet, Prometheus, even though he is not moving, creates the tragic element throughout the play. Prometheus doesn't quite fit the example of the hero of a tragedy. Because he doesn't move at all throughout the play. This situation is almost like a reference to the tragic element which envisages action. An irreversible reference. The fact that Prometheus, who doesn't move, thinks that he has the element that provides the movement allows us to rethink the play from another angle. Prometheus doesn't need any movement. His relationship is chained to the mountain with his knowledge and prophecy mastery. It expresses the results of Io's movement without moving. As a matter of fact, the moved liver of Prometheus, that no longer moves, finds a reference to *jouissance* as a symbol. The pain he suffers, when his liver is eaten and the pleasure of mastering knowledge is in the liver, which is the symbol of Prometheus.

3.2.2. Sacrifice, Reason, Power

Vernant thinks that the sacrifice is one of the most important symbols that initiate the relationship between god and man. According to Vernant, "Prometheus is the

first to initiate the sacrifice.”¹⁹⁴ Accordingly the hero of a tragedy Prometheus makes a choice about whom to give the “victim” to: Humans. This choice is a wrong choice. Because, as Vernant said, the relationship between sacrifice, human and god should be about being related. However Prometheus, by giving fire to people and if we think fire as a sacrifice, he overturned this relationship. Therefore, Prometheus took an action beyond his limits, prevented man from relating to God, and tried to destroy the “Big Other” in Lacanian terms. God sent Pandora’s Box as a *miasma* to the people in return for Prometheus’ choice in favor of the people. Accordingly to Girard’s theory of Sacred and Violence, the victim has turned into violence. Prometheus gave fire to humans in his second act of transcending the tragic limit. And precisely in this situation, with the knowledge that fire is a means of conveying the sacrifice to God, it has put “this holy act that separates the divine and the human position”¹⁹⁵ into a position that prevents man from relating to God. As a result, Prometheus, with these two actions, which are close to human beings, intended to disrupt the relationship and hierarchy of the gods with humans, even before Zeus did. This result tries to have a rather shocking effect: Disrupting the tragic universe. In other words, the action of Prometheus not only angers Zeus, but also intends to disrupt the ‘law’ and the universe established by the ‘law.’ Considering all these together, Prometheus has a desire for the ‘symbolic father’ to disappear with his effort to violate the ‘law.’ Prometheus aims to create another ‘law’ by giving his liver to the ‘law’ in the sacred debt game. What Prometheus gave to humans; Zeus will take it back in another form. By ripping out Prometheus’ liver. This is another sacrificial ritual. Of course, there is paradox here: While people sacrifice for the gods, Zeus tries to nullify the existence of Prometheus by sacrificing Prometheus’ liver to the ‘Other’, the birds. In that sense, Prometheus stands as a representation of binary opposition in this tragedy as he can both be sacrificed and even if he is sacrificed, he can turn into a ‘*homo sacer*’.¹⁹⁶ Prometheus wants to destroy the presence of

¹⁹⁴ Vernant J.P. & Naquet, P.V. *ibid.* pp :55,71.

¹⁹⁵ *ibid.* pp: 55-71.

¹⁹⁶ Agamben, G. (1998). *Homo Sacer*. California: Stanford University Publishing. Agamben speaks of man who can be declared holy when sacrificed by “*homo sacer*” and is declared holy not

Zeus with all his might as the ‘symbolic father’. This is another factor that will enable us to think about the power and reason relationship together.

In the story of Prometheus and mythology, Zeus is the representative of power. This power is about strength. The fact that the power that nailed Prometheus to the rock appears here as a tangible entity, through Bia, is also related to how Zeus solved the problems he faced. On the other hand, where Prometheus tells how Zeus will end, he uses the phrase “someone stronger than him” will emerge. Zeus’ power can’t be reconciled with Prometheus’ mind. Many tragedies argue that Prometheus is the personification of reason, and Zeus the personification of power.¹⁹⁷ This is another expression of saying that reason and power can’t be found together in the same place. On the other hand, we can say that reason and power are in constant conflict. Just as in the relationships of Chronos and Uranos, Zeus and Chronos, Oedipus and Laios the end of existence of the ‘father’ is the condition of bringing the subject into existence. In that case, they were able to bring themselves into existence by Chronos killing Uranos, Zeus killing Chronos and Oedipus killing Laios. Oresteia, on the other hand, didn’t have the pleasure of killing the father, just as in Hamlet (whose fathers were killed by others: Hamlet’s father as his uncle, Orestes’ father as his mother and lover) and they fall into the realm of “missing pleasure”. “Missing pleasure” is the very essence of the dissatisfaction, of limitlessness. ‘A little more’ that will satiate and satisfy us beyond the missing pleasure we experience; that’s what *Jouissance* is. We don’t know what it is, but we assume it must be there. Because we are always in a dissatisfaction.¹⁹⁸

In Greek mythology, the gods are not referenced to ‘creativity.’ In that sense, the relationship between the humans and the gods is interpreted differently

because he is holy but because he is sacrificed. The issue of bio politics as the politicization of bare life is the main discussion of this book. On the other hand, the distinction between an animal existence (zeo) and a political life (bios) becomes blurred. What enables this is discussed in this book.

¹⁹⁷ Joachim Latacz, Jan Kott, George Thomson, and J-P. Vernant are on the same level in this subject.

¹⁹⁸ Homer. S. *Lacan*, pp.126.

from the invention of religions that are considered sacred today. In ancient Greece, man did not obey the gods in this sense, as the creator of his being. The act of ‘creation’ in ancient Greece appears within the sexual relationship. In Lacan’s point of view, we can’t speak of a “creation” from the earth, from the sun, or any fantastic invention “unless the fish climbs on a tree.” Creation has a relationship with sexuality just like that fire is the offspring of two pieces of wood. Sexuality, on the other hand, is related to the ‘father’. The father on the other hand, is associated with the symbolic. In all these relations, Prometheus produces the “missing pleasure” with his action. This missing pleasure is associated with *jouissance*. Prometheus stole the fire, in return revealing what would make him unsatisfied with his liver being eaten. The end of Prometheus, the inability to come to an end, is related to this ‘missing pleasure.’

3.3. ORESTĪA: ‘AGAMEMNON’, ‘CHOEIPHOROE’, ‘EUMENEIDES’

It is reported that Aeschylus, who thought to be the founder of the Greek tragedy, staged the *Oresteia Tribology* in 458 BC (525/524 BC – ca. 456/455 BC). According to Aeschylus, there are elements in tragedy beyond the relationship of gods and humans. Accordingly, it is not the will of the gods or humans that’s been valid; it’s the determination of the ‘law’. This law is: “Necessity” (*Ananke*¹⁹⁹), “destiny” (*Moirā*) and the “curse of fate” (*Ate*²⁰⁰). *Ananke* is referred to as a goddess before the gods of antiquity, but with the gods of Olympus, no one saw her as a god. She is now referred to as a symbol of the principle of necessity and the one who is beyond destiny, the one who gave birth to destiny. *Moirā* as we have mentioned before means “the one who gives a share”. In the tragedies of Aeschylus, *Ananke*, *moira* and *ate* created a “thing” together. This is a complete

¹⁹⁹ *Ananke* is referred to as the god of necessity. On the other hand, she is also mentioned as the mother of the goddesses of fate. She is older than the Olympian gods.

²⁰⁰ *Atē*, *Atē* or *Aite* (/’erti:/; **Ancient Greek**: ἄτη) is the **Greek** goddess of mischief, delusion, ruin, and folly. *Atē* also refers to an action performed by a hero that leads to their death or downfall.

ambiguity. As we will see what we examine in the plays, these concepts will appear in the actions and situations of the hero of the tragedy. When Oresteia kills her mother, *moira* will send the Erinyes to give her, her share, while Orestes' actions will proceed with *Ananke*. Same necessity will come into play when Agamemnon sacrifices his own daughter. It will be seen in Clytemnestra and Aigisthos killing Agamemnon as their own obligation. The murder of Agamemnon in this way will appear as the result of *Ate*. In the face of the hero of a tragedy, *Ate*, he will have to take his share as the law of *Ananke*. The *Ate* of Oresteia is his violating the law of "thou shalt not shed blood of the family" by killing his mother. The reward of his *Ate* will be undoubtedly be the Erinyes.

Oresteia is staged three years after the Court of Areispagos was abolished. Based on this, we can safely say that, as George Thamsen emphasizes, there is a very close interaction between the tragedies of Aeschylus and the historical background, and Aeschylus wrote this play to criticize the abolition of the authority of the Court of Areispagos. With the abolition of Court of Areispagos, Athens' understanding of justice begins to change radically. The authority of the nobles to judge the "bloody events" was taken from this court and transferred to the people's assembly, thus, the transition to democracy, which Athens faced for the first time, was recorded in history as a milestone. With the transition of the city state to the people's assembly, the first step of a radical change was taken. This situation reminds us that we should not ignore Vernant and Thompson's relationship with tragedy and the historical background of the fifth century Athenian city state.

The first play of the trilogy, *Agamemnon*, is about the murder of Agamemnon, returning from The Trojan War, by his wife Clytemnestra and her lover Aigisthos. According to the legend, Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter, Ephigeneia, in order to go to The Trojan War; Clytemnestra also waited for Agamemnon's return from the war with his lover Aigisthos to avenge his daughter's death. In the first play of the trilogy, the wait for Agamemnon, his arrival to the city and his murder is explained.

The second play of the trilogy is *The Suppliants*. Orestes, avenging the murder of his father, kills his mother and her mother's lover. Then, the followers of the mother killer, the Erinyes, don't stop following Orestes. In the third and final play of the trilogy, Erinyes are going to become good goddesses: The '*Eumeneides*.'

Oresteia, who killed her mother in the play of *Eumeneides*, escaped from the Erinyes and took shelter in Athena's Pallas Temple with Apollo's suggestion and asked Athena to help her. Athena, on the other hand transfers this case to the Court of Areopagos. Four votes in favor of Oresteia and three against: Oresteia is both guilty and not guilty. Athena's vote removes Oresteia from being guilty. The first play of the trilogy, *Agamemnon* contains murder; the second play is the *The Suppliants*, contains revenge; and the third play, *Eumeneides* is a tragedy of judgment, forgiveness and seeking justice. With this aspect we see the area where the domestic bloodshed debate has spread to the law and has become public.

3.3.1. Agamemnon: The Terrible Splendor of the Rose-Colored Carpet

Agamemnon is the brother of King Menelaus of Mycenae. Agamemnon is known as a strong soldier, a good warrior and with this virtue he is in the leading unit of The Trojan War. The famous Trojan War victory is referred to as the success of Agamemnon. When the Greek armies set out to Troy by sea, there was no wind to keep the sails moving. In order for the wind to blow and the army to advance, Artemis (Goddess of the Hunt) demands sacrifice of Ephigenia, the virgin daughter of Agamemnon. In this case, Agamemnon makes a choice. Either his army won't be able to advance, so he won't be able to win this war, or he will have to sacrifice his daughter's life for this cause. Agamemnon sends word for his wife Clytemnestra and daughter Ephineneia to come to Aulis. Before going to war in Troy, he says that he is going to betroth his daughter to the commander Achilles and this will keep his family safe. Clytemnestra was very happy about this and took her daughter to the place called by Agamemnon. But when she sees what is going to happen, it is already too late. Ephigeneia is brought to the temple,

where she will be sacrificed, by her father, her hands tied. The sacrifice is ready. Then Agamemnon fills his sails with the blood of his daughter and sails towards Troy. This story, which has been the subject of this tragedy, is different in mythology; according to this, when Agamemnon was going to sacrifice his daughter, Artemis brought a female deer in her place and this female deer was sacrificed instead of Ephygeia. Ephygeia becomes a priestess in the temple of Athena.

In this story, we will have to look at Agamemnon's past in detail.

Agamemnon's accursed lineage has set the things up for him. Tantalos' grandchildren, Agamemnon's father and Thyestes quarrel over the dominance of the Mycenaean Kingdom. On the other hand, Thyestes seduces Aerope, the wife of Atreus. The issue has now turned into a two pronged war. Atreus is closer to the kingdom, but that doesn't stop him from having Thyestes' children killed and served as food to their father. As a matter of fact, Thyestes stole his precious wife from him. On the other hand, Thyestes has a relationship with his own daughter Pelopia and a child named Aegistos from this relationship. As it is known, Aegistos will later kill Agamemnon. Agamemnon, who was cursed with his father and descendants in this horrific event, will one day be punished. Indeed, in the world of the gods, mortals must receive their punishment. This sequence of events is a situation brought by Ananke. This situation, which is repeated as the "curse of fate", can also be understood as another expression of the "repetition compulsion."

Freud's image of the son who wants to eliminate the father is full of traces of archaic history.

"Mythically, - which is the meaning of the '*mythical lies*' - the father can only be an animal. The first father is the father before the prohibition of incest, before the Law, before the emergence of the order of kinship structures; in a word, before the emergence of culture.

This is why Freud made the father, in keeping with the animal myth, the leader of the tribe whose satisfaction knows no bounds. Freud's naming of the father as the totem gains all its meaning in the light of the progress brought by Levi-Strauss's structural critique, which you know reveals the classifying essence of the totem."²⁰¹

We mentioned that the symbolic *father*, who is expressed by Freud's archaic father interpretation and Lacan's 'names of the father', is different and we said that the father is symbolic in Lacan. "'The names of the father' is a signifier that disrupts the mother-child pair and introduces the child into the symbolic order of desire and lack."²⁰² Ultimately, it is essential that we look to the 'fathers' for the reading of *Agamemnon*. Of course, it will be necessary to trace the myths about the father in the tragedies. Let us consider the past of Zeus, the God of Olympus, who is in opposition to the story of Agamemnon, on this ground.

3.3.2. The Act of Eating

Chronos eats the children born of Rhea so that the prophecy that he will be overthrown by his son in return for what he has done to his father Uranus does not come true. But to save her youngest son Zeus, Rhea gives a piece of stone wrapped in swaddling cloth to Chronos as Zeus. Thinking that he ate his son Zeus, Chronos swallows the stone. Thus, Rhea both saves her son Zeus and deceives Chronos. Then Zeus asks Metis to help him poison his father and with Metis' help, Chronos is poisoned and dies. The murder of Chronos by his son, with a cunningly and intelligently designed plan, in the face of the direct and open act of killing, is also a harbinger of the new order to come. With his actions, Chronos represents old fashionedness and brute force. However, Zeus' actions are related to his mind and intelligence. Thus, Zeus as the chief of gods of Olympus had already begun to create a new meaning on earth. However, Zeus' work hasn't

²⁰¹ Lacan, J. (2012) *Babanın Adları*, İstanbul: Monokl Publishing, (Translation: Murat Erşen). pp.78-79.

²⁰² S. Homer, *Lacan*, pp.75.

been done. He must fight the other Titans. Defeating the Titans, Zeus imprisons them into Tartaros and the reign of the Olympians Gods begins. Zeus starts a new age, a new form of life by killing his father. Since he thinks that what happens to the *fathers* will also determine his own fate, bloodshed within the family is completely prohibited. This is no longer the universe of fathers who eat their children, but of children who kill or want to kill their fathers. Despite this, the act of bloodshed within the family, which is also the subject of tragedies, will continue to take place. The ‘law’ of Zeus will be repeated as the ‘*repetition compulsion.*’

With the terrible trap that Agamemnon’s father Atreus set against his brother Thyestes, the act of the eating father’s child takes place. Just like in the story of Zeus, the father continued to eat his children. This action remains as a mnemonic ‘*repetition compulsion.*’ This partnership in the past of Zeus and Agamemnon reveals an important piece of information. Zeus’ law that “thou shalt not shed blood of the family” works in two different ways in the case of Agamemnon. First, Agamemnon, who sacrificed his blood related daughter, becomes the ‘law’ when he is killed by his wife because of this. In the second the situation is reversed. Orestes wants to take revenge from his mother who killed his father, kills his mother regardless of blood ties between them and isn’t punished for the defense of Apollo as a result of the trial. The following words of Apollo about blood ties indicate the mother has an invalid nature as a blood tie. In other words, this idea is dominant in the eyes of Apollo and Of course, in the historical background of that period.

“Apollo: So listen, I will say one thing; you will understand what the right law is!

The woman you call mother isn’t the one who gives life to the child, the mother only protects and nourishes the sperm of the father.

The females part is to carry the man’s child, temporarily, her work is like a bearer – like a carrier – and it is the male part that makes the child, the ram and the bull.

Whatever. The mother carries and gives birth to the child, whom the father gives life to, for the father, that's all.

I immediately show the proof of what I have said: There is even a child who doesn't have a mother but only a father.

Here is the example: Athena, daughter of Zeus, King of the Gods of Olympus."²⁰³

Then, in this tragic play, the fictional and dramatic structure is reestablished by justification. These words that Apollo said in order to distort the truth weren't directly accepted and discussed at the time, and the most important indicator of this can be observed in the voting of the court. Athena's vote, on the other hand doesn't find Oresteia guilty by breaking the tie. However, she doesn't see her as innocent too.

Going back to the act of Atreus' brother feeding him his children, it will be necessary to think of the act of eating in terms of pleasure. On one hand, the pleasure experienced while eating is the nauseating and terrifying truth; the pain that comes with realizing that he is eating his own children. Thyestes' condition is extremely dire. Atreus' unbridled action, as someone who relentlessly takes pleasure in the suffering of his brother, will later appear in the path of his son Agamemnon as a rose colored carpet and will distract him from life with the dizzying effect of the bath steam. The act of eating the children of Zeus and Agamemnon in the story creates a paradox. This paradox points beyond 'Ananke' and 'moira.' Taking their share, the legal term for *jouissance* with the meaning of "to benefit from the right" and the existence of "moiras" and the "Other" who distributes and gives their share will enable us to consider these two concepts together. Ananke's law is suitable to be mentioned with the concept of *pathos*. Tragedy creates *pathos*. *Moiras*, on the other hand, 'give a share' while this share indicates a negative rather than a positive meaning. Its counterpart is *pathos*. It means tragic suffering. With the concept of *Ananke*, this share becomes the 'law'

²⁰³ Aiskhylos, (2010). *Oresteia*, (Translation: Yılmaz Onay) İstanbul: Mito Boyut. pp.142.

of tragic suffering. Moreover, this ‘law’ continues by repetition, and thus the ‘law’ renews commemorates, repeats its own ‘law.’

3.3.3. Clytemnestra

Among the trilogy of plays, where the tragic suffering and pleasure is most visible is the murder of Agamemnon. Let’s look at the murder of Agamemnon from the point of view of Clytemnestra. Because the tragic pleasure is related to Clytemnestra.

Clytemnestra awaits the return of her husband, Agamemnon from the ten year Trojan War. The watcher, having been on the guard for ten years ‘like a dog’, finally gives the good news to Clytemnestra. With this news, Clytemnestra enjoys the idea of murder. She celebrates Agamemnon’s return enthusiastically by laying a rose colored carpet on his way. Then Agamemnon sees Clytemnestra. Clytemnestra starts to speak. She tells about how she is madly in love with Agamemnon and the gossip about him. She lets him in with a glorious welcome. Agamemnon hesitates to step on the rose colored carpet:

Agamemnon: [...] And do not make me walk this envious way and draw the waiting wrath down from Above. These things are honors for the gods, not men. The man who walks and soils such silken gear— a fool does this; a twice-fool, with no fear. I am no god. Give me a human's due.”

[...]

I do not like to offer something to glorify myself, know this well.²⁰⁴

Agamemnon is extremely cautious about knowing his limits. With his victory, which he had benefited from the help of gods before he won, he chose to live worthy of humanity as a warrior. However as a result of Clytemnestra’s

²⁰⁴ Aiskhylos. (2010). *Orestia*, (Translation: Yılmaz Onay) İstanbul: Mitos Boyut. pp.41.

provocation, he had to step on the rose colored carpet. Agamemnon's last words bring Clytemnestra to point of not being able to hide the truth.

Clytemnestra: So, do you make a vow to God out of fear?²⁰⁵

This conversation remains in the air as a tension. It doesn't come to an end. But Clytemnestra continues to make implications. In the end, Agamemnon, afraid of "looking like a god who would make the gods jealous" walks over the carpet and enters the palace.

Celebrating his victory, Agamemnon mentions that such a boast will make the gods jealous, as if he understands what will happen to him before he walks down the carpet. Punishment is what the rose colored silk carpet, which is impossible to step on, envisions in the symbolic order. It symbolizes death. As a matter of fact, despite this information, Agamemnon walks on the symbolic order with all his *hybris*. Considering the sacrifice of Agamemnon's daughter Efidenia and him walking on the carpet together, we encounter hesitation from Agamemnon. This hesitation isn't just about making the gods jealous or drawing their wrath. This is an unspeakable hesitation; it is a contradiction in the fact that someone who sacrificed his daughter has the right to walk on such a carpet. The same image combines the color of the carpet with the blood of his daughter. Clytemnestra will soon kill Agamemnon, who was walking on the rose colored carpet.

Two concerns lie behind Agamemnon's refusal to walk on the rose colored carpet. The first, is the anger of them, as we already know, as a mortal who would make the gods jealous; and the other is the guilt of having walked through the capet laid out in front of him as if it were a reward for sacrificing his daughter. It is the guilt for sacrificing his own daughter. This guilt can be seen from the fact that he never mentions his daughter throughout the play. Because what he hides is the fact that he isn't worthy to walk on this carpet. This fact is in Agamemnon's hesitation about his feared end. It is related to this knowledge that Agamemnon

²⁰⁵ *ibid.* pp.41.

was aware of his limitations. As a matter of fact, this limitation is invalid when he sacrificed his daughter.

Clytemnestra premeditated the “murder” of Agamemnon, as historians call it. She tells in cold blood how she killed Agamemnon:

“Clytemnestra: I did it like this—and why should I deny it?—
so he could neither run nor fight for his life.
I throw an endless coil of ill-rich cloth,
a noose, a net, a murderous snare, around him.
Then twice I run him through, and twice he screams
then slides in limp collapse. Once he is down
I shaft him with steel once more, this time as a prayer
to subterranean Zeus, the king of the dead.
How quiet he sinks now—his soul starts from his mouth:
with one jerked gulp he brings up his own blood,
spatters me dark with the scarlet dew in his breath.
And that dew falls on me as the gods' spring rains
fall and bless harvest back to the long-parched earth.”²⁰⁶

Clytemnestra’s anger results in a delicate murder, which she commits with pleasure, out of pain for the sacrifice of her daughter by Agamemnon. Clytemnestra has prepared this trap with care, taste and great aesthetics. This murder is the painful and harsh revenge of the mother who can’t reach her daughter’s body and spirit. But killing Agamemnon isn’t enough to retrieve her daughter; she wants to smash him with a terrifying delicacy. Simply killing Agamemnon will never satisfy Clytemnestra. Whatever she does, it won’t satisfy her. Because she won’t be able to take over her husband’s body, which is with a concubine Cassandra and is no longer even hers, nor will she be able to bring her daughter back. It is this unsatisfied desire that drives Clytemnestra crazy because

²⁰⁶ *ibid.* pp.59.

the desire can't be fulfilled. While the pain here turns into pleasure after she kills Agamemnon, this also opens the door to *jouissance* as well.

Clytemnestra can be described as someone who takes delight in the act of killing. What distinguishes it from all the other acts in Aeschylus' tragedies is that Clytemnestra is in limitlessness. Although it is claimed that human passions came to the stage through Euripides, especially with Euripides' play *Medea*, the existence of Clytemnestra can be excluded from this situation, and moreover, it may become open to discussion. Because the justification for Clytemnestra's action goes beyond the law of necessity. This is evident in the details of Clytemnestra's execution of the murder: "*How quiet he sinks now—his soul starts from his mouth: with one jerked gulp he brings up his own blood, spatters me dark with the scarlet dew in his breath. And that dew falls on me as the gods' spring rains fall and bless harvest back to the long-parched earth.*" It is just as the ecstatic and limitless being of the Erinyes is implicated in the actions of Clytemnestra. "*His own blood, spatters*", "*scarlet dew in his breath*" manifests itself as a joy pointing to resurrection, similar to the bursting of the bud, moreover, the joy of the bud bursting. Clytemnestra's femininity and filial pain create an euphoria with this joy: Resurrection, regeneration, the 'little death'*(*little death-orgasm*) and the inevitable result of the death drive. The purification of death as the inaccessible terrifying, transboundary act of pleasure and pain. Clytemnestra's act of murder is full of passion, especially passions about life, also appears when news of her son's false death comes. Clytemnestra represents the side that unconditionally wishes to live. The act of killing, in which *jouissance* is revealed in the relation of the *law* to the *death drive*, is for Clytemnestra a principle of tasted pleasure. Clytemnestra knows there is more to her plan to kill Agamemnon. She knows it's a form of killing that will make her enjoy it more. And she does them one by one. Cassandra refers to Agamemnon as a bull in the narrative in which she sees Agamemnon being killed.²⁰⁷ She says: "Keep the bull away from the cow." Agamemnon represents a bull with his masculinity, ferocity and warrior aspects. In this case, "Clytemnestra who is

²⁰⁷*ibid.* pp.49.

playing the dangerous game with the bull” is depicted as a cow, just like Io, who escaped from her own libido. The cow of Clytemnestra and the cow of Io are not the same. Here we will have to say that the cow represents a harmless, docile and useful woman; a mother. On the other hand, Io, with her own libidinal energy, symbolizes a kind of energy that can’t be stopped and is difficult to cope with accompanied by the image of a horse fly chasing after it. Clytemnestra believes that Erinyes will protect herself, or at least preserve her memory, as the defender of her actions. Here, Clytemnestra will provoke the Erinyes, who will appear on the scene even after her own death, against her son Orestes to avenge her own death. This unbridled passion for vengeance that transcends Clytemnestra’s death is significant. As she warns the sleeping Erinyes, we encounter a very important sign. She orders her son Orestes to die while escaping: “Let him die while escaping!”²⁰⁸ Erinyes do not have an ability to kill. The existence of Erinyes is like a kind of thought that haunts a person and doesn’t leave him alone, just like a bad delusion and ghosts. This, on the other hand, points to the depression caused by an endless, repetitive act of escaping. Dying while escaping seems to be beyond normal death. It means dealing with the situation all the time. With this request Clytemnestra will perhaps rejoice in another way of dying that her soul will enjoy, even after her own death, just as she did when she killed her husband Agamemnon: With Orestes’ ‘death while escaping.’

Orestes’ escape from the Erinyes and Io’s escape from the horse fly that followed her show significant similarity. Io wishes to know what her end will be. Constant running has kept her from her death, from the sweet inaction of death. The does the same writer, Aeschylus, wants to tell us with this image of escape and the pain of escape? This escape concept looks like an unsatisfied drive. The drive that resembles *jouissance* because of that it is not satisfied. Is pain exactly what this escape brings, maybe what life like escape brings?

²⁰⁸ *ibid.* pp.122.

3.3.4. Prey, Sacrifice

According to René Girard, ‘some Greek texts speak vaguely of any community, such as a city or an army, offering human sacrifice to a god. Those concerned agreed to offer sacrifices, but they couldn’t agree on what sacrifice to offer.’²⁰⁹ Ephigenia finds her place in tragedy as the victim of this incomprehensibility. Clytemnestra expresses her grief over her husband Agamemnon’s sacrifice of their daughter Ephigenia to his sails for a victorious war. Her hatred for his husband starts at this point. The sacrifice of Efigenia and the murder of Agamemnon may seem like a complementary sacrifice. According to Girard, the act of sacrificing is common to the Greeks with a sacred-sacrifice mechanism but it has some rules of its own. Agamemnon’s murder of his daughter is also considered correct within their rules and not questioned. This unquestioned situation would later bring violence to Agamemnon and his family.

Let’s consider the dramatic structure as follows. Clytemnestra resents her husband’s murder of her own daughter by shedding domestic blood, and ten years have passed since this horrible event. Later, when she kills her husband Agamemnon with his lover, she is relieved by the false news that Orestes is dead, against her anxiety that her son Orestes will follow her to avenge his father. She knows that her son is a threat to her life and that of her lover. As a matter of fact, Clytemnestra will inevitably encounter her son Orestes and one of the will inevitably kill the other. At this moment being twice lucky makes Clytemnestra burst with happiness. Clytemnestra who is relived and happy after the news of her son’s death and who kills her husband which is responsible for her daughter’s death; goes beyond her identity as a mother who suffered from her child’s demise. However, most of the time it takes the woman who is comfortable under the mold of this compulsion, out of her shell. Clytemnestra knocks down the universe, where the mother will unconditionally suffer the death of her child, with one move. We need to decide with such an ambiguous structure that we cannot look at

²⁰⁹ Girard, R. (1979). *La Violence et le Sacre*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Üniversitesi Publisher.pp.176.

it from one side. The decision we want to make as the audience or the reader is made by the legislators on behalf of: Abstention. At the end of the play, Athena's vote breaks the tie and she acquits Orestes for killing his mother. Although this acquittal may seem like a mandatory "father law" acquittal, it can be understood from the voting result that it is not. These equal votes seem like an effort to reveal the uncertainties and inextricable situation in the whole process.

Ultimately, Agamemnon hunts his daughter as a sacrifice. Clytemnestra hunts down Agamemnon, sacrificing him to her daughter's revenge, moreover, to her own unquenchable anger. As the oppressed party in the revenge case of the fathers, Aigisthos avenges Agamemnon and hunts Agamemnon's wife Clytemnestra.

3.3.5. The Suppliants

When we look at *The Suppliants* section, we can say that it is based on a *law* and legal relationship. This law also shows the historical background of the city state of Athens, just like the story of Zeus who defeated the Titans and established a new order. In this way, we see the first example of the functioning of the new legal system, which emerged with the conflict of the mind (*logos*) represented by Apollo and the Erinyes, the representation of the driven. The Erinyes, being boundlessly passionate avengers, occur in place that has given in to their drives. The rule of the law, which produces *logos* and *namos*, is confronted with their unlimited ecstasy, just like Dionysus. Thus, we see that the transition from tribal society to a new state order is produced by the unity of man and the mind.

Just as we cannot throw away the historical background, it is necessary to give its share and its due. *The Moiras* take their place as a showpiece that ensures the functioning of the new order. Justice has now opened the doors of the universe distributed by the Moiras and where we can exist with the share we have taken from it. We do not know who created a new monster for the new order from the crumbs of the old order, the playwrights of the ones conveying these myths? It is precisely at this point that G. Thomson shows the existence of the *Moiras* in a

dangerous and uncanny spot. ‘*Moirai* indicates the equal ‘share’ that constitutes everyone’s birthright, while *Metron* indicates that man has a right to a limited ‘measure’ which must not be exceeded.’²¹⁰ *Metron* (Measure) is a concept that secures *Moirai*’s existence. According to Vernant, temperance in tragedy stands against ambiguity. These two opposite looking concepts give birth to each other. Tragedies say that although the measured should not be ambiguous, the ambiguous should be measured. *Metron*’s relationship with *Moirai* complements each other with its meanings in the tragedies. *Moirai*, in the sense of giver, gives the share together with *Metron* as the predecessor of the share. In this case, the share should be measured. In other words, this punishment-share given to man includes moderation. Thus, the testing or questioning of the new *dike* is constructed in the ethically unshakeable field.

Thus, the idea that the old order should adapt a new cover to the old it contains while establishing the new order may prevail. In this intricacy, the *Moiras*’ position with their regulatory side against the driven positions itself as the condition of measure and moderation.

3.3.6. Eumenides; Erinyes, *Jouissance*, Law

“*Jouissance* is a boundary.” *

“Once, the gods divided the world among themselves. This was a sharing without a fight.”²¹¹ The battle of Zeus, the God of Olympus, with the Titans is the most important indicator of this sharing. It is quite clear that the goddess of vengeance, Erinyes, who pursued Orestes, was not from this new order. They represented the ecstatic, unrestrained nature of the old order through *dike*. Here the danger of the indefinable was recognized by Zeus, who wanted to expel them from his new world just as Plato had expelled art from its ideal state. Because at the end of the play, Athena assigns the Erinyes, who are not satisfied with the decision, to a

²¹⁰ Thomson, G. (1997) *ilk fFilozoflar: Eski Yunan Toplumu Üzerine İncelemeler*, (Translation: Mehmet H. Doğan). İstanbul: Payel Publishing, pp.258.

²¹¹ Platon, *Kritias* (2001), (Translation: Erol Güneş) İstanbul: Sosyal Publishing, pp.12.

*Lacan, *Seminer Encore*. pp.108.

shrine which is underground, invisible to the eye, non-living and only lives in memories. She honors them and buries them underground. Thus, reconciliation is achieved without any quarrels. Now the Erinyes were sent underground with the presence of *dike*, and they had their share in the Ancient Greek way of saying.

With the granting of the rights of the new order to the uninhibited (Erinyes) through *Moirai*, the order has now been restored. Just like Oedipus goes to Colonos after the horrific things that had happened to him and there he was purified in a beam of light and passed away from this world, sooner or later he was handed what was his right. As a matter of fact, this handing of the right is nothing but the confession of the gods if considered with the fate. ‘On one hand, the rationalization of the law, on the other hand, the irrational situation.’²¹² The effort of Aeschylus to show this binary opposition together is closely related to his political thinking. “According to Aeschylus, it is possible to resolve this opposition with moderation. The origin of temperance (*Sôphrosûnê*) makes room for itself in tragedy as a kind of responsibility imposed on man by the gods. Accordingly, man should be sensitive to limitations in the face of gods and the society. Man should know his limit and shouldn’t exceed this limit. “It has a strong tie to middle way thinking and its implications are more overtly political than those of the other two poets.”²¹³ In Aeschylus’ plays these concepts show their presence intensely. Being moderate, knowing your limits and taking your share are the inevitable references of tragedies. So what is the place of *jouissance* in all this limit and limitlessness?

The meaning of *jouissance* to enjoy the right (*jouir de droit*) with a ‘right to benefit’ is very suitable to be considered together with this issue. It points at the legal claim discussed in the *Eumenides* chapter of the Trilogie, a right situation that Orestes will benefit from. Here, there is a situation of ‘shared, distributed and given right.’ Orestes takes advantage of this right and is acquitted in this way and stands in the temple of pleasure. Desiring more, the Erinyes, (goddesses of revenge) limit their infinity and become well-meaning goddesses, *The Eumenides*.

²¹² North, H. (1966) [*Sophrosyne, Self-Knowledge and Self-Restraint in Greek Literature*. Ithaca-NY: Cornell University Press.] Quoted by: Oğuz Arıcı, *Tragedy and Ambiguity* pp. 75

²¹³ *ibid.* pp.75.

²¹⁴ The *jouissance* relationship of both Orestes and, now Eumenides converges on the border where their rights benefit. The Erinyes choose moderation and become part of the new order. For both Zeus and the rulers of the new order, the danger was tamed, transformed and thus made useful. Thus, we encounter Eumenides who have given up *jouissance* and transformed into a new life form. Undoubtedly, it seems inevitable that the Erinyes will be associated with *jouissance*. Just like in Dionysus, there is a “surplus” in Erinyes. This redundancy occurs with transcendence of the borders. Let’s take a closer look at the origin of the Erinyes:

The origin of the Erinyes is revealed in the story of Zeus, destroying his father with the help of Rha; with the help of her mother Gaia, castrates her father Uranos. Erinyes are part of the body of Uranos, burning with desire.²¹⁵ This piece recreates itself with pain in return for its pleasure. He now incarnates in the Erinyes, who want to avenge the pleasure stolen from him.

“Mighty Uranos came with the night, / He landed on the ground, burning with desire / (...) Bu his son who was waiting in ambush, / He stretched out his left hand and with the scythe in his right hand / He suddenly cut off his father’s testicles / And threw them somewhere behind him. / (...) Blood gushed out of them / And they were all buried in the bosom of the Earth / And the Earth that

²¹⁴ The name of the third play of the trilogy is Eumenides. (Auspicious Goddesses) When the Erinyes, the Goddesses of Vengeance, who pursued Orestes, got their shares from Athena, change their names, they become Auspicious Goddesses. The Erinyes’ job was to punish people who killed their own kin, who took false oaths, who abused their parents and who didn’t welcome their guests. (...) (Other than murder) It corresponds to the ‘three unwritten laws’ of the Orphean mysteries of secret cult, of Eleusinia: Honor the gods, honor your parents and respect the stranger. Quoted by Thomson, *Tarihöncesi Ege II* (Translation: Celal Üstün) Istanbul. Payel Publications. Pp.66.

²¹⁵ Hesiod describes this situation in *The Birth of Gods*. The reference is quoted above.

conceived of them years later / She gave birth to the fierce Erinyes, the goddesses of vengeance.”²¹⁶

Another issue is related to the existence of the Erinyes outside of tragedy. Although not mentioned in the play *Oedipus the King*, it is the Erinyes themselves that brought plague to Thiva.

“Whoever killed a clansman would be banished from the community, the curses of his relatives, to put it in their way, the vengeful spirits of his victim, the Erinyes (...) who drove him crazy and sucked his blood until there was nothing left but a pile of bones out of him.”²¹⁷

The existences of Erinyes, as expressed by the descriptions were terrible. However, with the transition to the city state, their assets were limited. And the Eumenides (Auspicious Goddesses) they were rendered harmless at their new altar with the help of Athena.

‘What Agamemnon is forced to do under the token of Ananke (Goddess of necessity and fate) is also what he wants with all his soul, even if he can only win by paying the price. What Agamemnon claims to be religiously permissible is not an act that he has to do against his will, but rather his deep desire to do whatever might lead to his army.’

²¹⁸

What is Vernant talking about is, what will Agamemnon’s desire and the guilt he feels by sacrificing his daughter cause? The life of Agamemnon.

²¹⁶ Hesiod. (2018). *İşler ve Günler / The Birth of Gods*, (Translation: Furkan Akderin) Istanbul: Say Publishing. pp.175-185.

²¹⁷ Thomson, G. (1941) *Aeschylus and Athens: a Study in the Social Origins of Greek Tragedy*. London: Lawrence & Wishart. pp.51.

²¹⁸ Vernant, J. P & Naquet. P.V. (1990) *Mit and Tragedy in Anticent Greek.*, (J. Lloyd, Çev.) Brooklyn: Zone Books.pp.64.

Agamemnon will become the victim, while he is the perpetrator of a game produced by the bloody law.

There is another desire here. This is related to the lineage that Aigisthos avenged. Aigisthos desired vengeance on Agamemnon, just like his lover, Clytemnestra.

Hegel emphasizes that in the plays of Aeschylus; especially the signs in Oresteia are full of riches.

“We may cite Aeschylus’ Eumenides as the clearest example of this point. The terrifying maidens [Furies or Eumenides] go after Orestes for killing his mother; the new god Apollo commands Orestes to kill his mother so that the murdered husband and king Agamemnon won’t be unavenged. So the whole drama takes shape in a battle between these divine forces that appear in person against each other. On one hand, the goddesses of vengeance are called Eumenides (...) and they have an essential right to pursue Orestes and therefore they are not merely vengeful and cruel in the torments and tortures they forcefully impose. However, the right they claim against Orestes is only the right of the family rooted in blood ties. The substance they defend is the most sincere bond between the mother and the son, which Orestes shattered. On the other hand, Apollo opposes the right of the husband and the prince, whose deeper rights have been violated, to this natural ethical order, which is felt and grounded in a very sensuous blood relation. At first glance, this difference seems external, because both sides defend the ethical order within one and the same field, namely the family. However, the substantive richness of Aeschylus’ imagination, which we have to appraise here also in this respect, is not superficial at all, but reveals an essential kind of opposition from beginning to end.”²¹⁹

²¹⁹ Hegel, G. W. F. (2019) *Esteteik: Güzel Snatlar Üzerine Dersler*, (Translation: Taylan Altuğ, Hakkı Hünler) Istanbul: Payel. pp.214-215.

According to Lacan, only the existence of children who can become subjects can be seen through the endangerment of the existence of the “*father’s jouissance*” with the mythical father image. The actions of Chronos, Zeus and Agamemnon regarding border crossing that are common to *jouissance*, together with pleasure and pain, knock these three powers down at once. Agamemnon kneels on the rose colored carpet, Chronos drinks poison as the painful victim of his son’s game and Zeus succumbs to fear that gnaws at his soul, worried about how his end will come.

CONCLUSION

The tragic Universe and tragedies have one very important point in common with psychoanalysis: They are concerned with the pain that must be endured. Tragedies, while showing the hero in pain to the audience, refer to the person who knows his limit, that is, “knows thyself” as written in Delphi Temple, who needs to know himself and know his limit. Today, we resort to psychoanalysis on many issues that we think are painful to us. The “boundary” we arrive at is a warning. Sometimes we say, ‘I can’t endure this anymore.’ At that point we need to know ourselves. Seeing the hero who has crossed the border just like us in tragedies brings us closer together. Because people both want to violate this border and are afraid to cross it. People sometimes have dreams of violating this border. The suffering of the hero of a tragedy, whom we witnessed in the tragedies written in the fifth century, is related to the violation of this limit; today it is a rich mine on which psychoanalysis still speaks new ideas. This study is shaped by the concepts produced by Lacanian psychoanalysis, with the concept of *jouissance* in the center, by looking at the tragedies again. The concept of *jouissance* underlines a ‘limitation’ with the *pleasure* and *pain* it contains. Again, the hero of a tragedy goes through painful experiences if he goes beyond his ‘limit’. The audience, on the other hand, is positioned in the place where they sadistically ‘enjoy’ the hero of a tragedies pain. Why are we still affected by the tragedies written in the fifth century? Isn’t today’s world horrible enough? We often ask questions like these. When asked why gives pleasure, Eagleton gives us the following answer:

Tragedy is pleasurable because it is in itself pleasurable to let go of an extreme emotion. We take pleasure in *mimesis*, albeit with the representation of a disaster; for it shapes the tragic art into a meaningful pattern, limiting pain while making it appropriately

intelligible; or because tragedy puts out little problems in a corrective perspective.²²⁰

Dionysus, who created the tragic universe, contains *jouissance*. The pleasure and pain, mild and ecstatic, calm and provocative aspects of Dionysus serve to describe Dionysus with contrasts. The formation tragic universe and the hero of a tragedy are determined by Dionysus' contrasts. With this determination, the existence of Dionysus is just like the emergence of *jouissance*. The "limitlessness" of the hero of a tragedy can be explained by their inability to limit their *jouissance*. The boundless energy in the extreme actions of the hero of a tragedy creates *jouissance*.

The indirect relationship we establish with tragedies as spectators or readers, allows us to experience pain and pleasure. This relationship creates a simulation as if we are experiencing pain that we cannot experience. On the other hand, we are relieved that the terrifying events that we fear that will happen to us do not happen to us. Having compassion for the suffering of others is a form of bad pleasure. Pitying others confronts us with the fact that all these calamities haven't happened to us. Pitying is a bad feeling in this sense. A person's desire for justice or fear of justice creates tension. We get moral and intellectual satisfaction from seeing a harmoniously renewed balance of justice; a universal justice, but we also like to identify with the rebellious and mischievous people who disrupt it.²²¹ On the other hand, the symbolic 'death' experienced by the hero of the tragedy is exciting. The fact that death cannot be experienced always keeps this excitement at its peak. Moreover, imagining those who will experience painful experiences of our own death underscores our enjoyment of life. There are those on the stage who are suffering about this death at that moment. All these pain creates a tremendous sense of importance. When the excitement and pleasure of, "dying as an important person" appears, Of course, with a symbolic death, that is, the destruction of the tragedy and the hero of a tragedy on the stage, we rehearse this

²²⁰ Eagleton, T. (2002). *Sweet Violence*. New Jersey: Blackwell. pp.225.

²²¹ *ibid*, pp.226.

experience due to the empathy we have with the hero of the tragedy. Moreover, we welcome the condolences of those who mourn for this death with pleasure. 'There is a pleasure derived from rehearsing our own deaths on a symbolic level and thus rendering them harmless and imaginary representation of death allows us to do that.'²²²

I tried to explain the concept of *jouissance*, which emerged in the relationship of the tragedies that I discussed above with the tragic. On this occasion, I tried to reinterpret the concept of *jouissance* through its effect on tragedies. While doing this, I traced the *hamartia* of the main characters (protagonist) in the tragedies in question. I tried to deal with the self-creation and the self-destruction form of *jouissance*, which is in relation to Lacan's concept of *Real* and the 'impossibility of the real.'

Real has an inseparable relationship with the 'thing' that *pleasure, desire* and *jouissance* produces together. *Jouissance* flutters in satisfaction that desire seeks... This obstacle or limit is related to *jouissance*. The inaccessibility of the border is closely linked to the inaccessibility of *jouissance*. Both of them are unattainable. The 'thing' that corresponds to or serves to describe pleasure, pain and desire is also closely related to the inaccessibility of *jouissance*. The inaccessible limit of pleasure of death... In the partnership of being unreachable, death and *jouissance* are alike.

It is possible to see that this inaccessibility created by pain and pleasure and the hero of the tragedy being in a dead end are in the same line. This situation, which is common to Oedipus, Prometheus and Agamemnon, is also related to how they ended. Oedipus paid for his *hybris* with his eyes; Prometheus paid for giving humans fire with his liver; and Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter for victory. In the actions of each one appears the boundless presence of *jouissance*. While Oedipus is gauging out his eyes with the needles; while Prometheus' liver is being eaten by the birds; and Agamemnon walks over the rose colored carpet... They are all in contact with *jouissance*. While Clytemnestra, kills Agamemnon in the

²²² *ibid*, pp.226.

steamy bath... While the Erinyes want to take the revenge of Clytemnestra from his son Oresteia...

In the last instance, when we consider *jouissance* together with the tragedies mentioned above, it would be appropriate to say that the influence of the tragedies in these Tragedies become stronger. However, we can say that this concept progresses in an interlocked manner in terms of effect of tragedy and tragedies contribution to this concept. I have completed my work by taking advantage of the opportunities that interdisciplinary work provides to each other. I hope to have at least opened up the meanings in tragedies, with this work that emerged with the combination of psychoanalysis and textual dramaturgy.

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