The Schizoid Subject:

Filth and Desire in Samuel R. Delany’s *Hogg*
Abstract

This thesis investigates in which ways Samuel R. Delany’s novel *Hogg* challenges the discourse of normality as stipulated, supported and maintained by the capitalist Oedipal repression of desire. Drawing from Deleuze and Guattari’s theory of the Anti-Oedipus, this thesis explores how Deleuze and Guattari’s notion of desire as a free and productive force can be seen as a disruptive element in a society that relies on repression of the subject for its stability. Furthermore, this thesis explores how the novel questions the understanding of civilisation being dependent on the individual’s submission to the Oedipus triangulation and in extension the Oedipal capitalist separation between the public and the private sphere. Ultimately, the main argument claims that Oedipal repression of desire only allows desire to invest in a restricted number of representations, making other identities than the heteronormative suspicious or invisible.

*Hogg* depicts a society where capitalism commodifies everything, and need the Oedipal subject to ensure its stability. The characters in the novel that do not subject themselves to the capitalist discourse escape the subjection to the Oedipal triangulation, and are thus free to invest their desire in any way they choose, primarily in non-heterosexual and salirophiliac activities. These characters can be seen as schizoid subjects that are constantly threatening to expose the fragility of the social structure by embodying a contrast to the hegemonic discourse and therefore constantly question its authority as main creator of reason and reality.

Keywords

Deleuze, Guattari, Anti-Oedipus, schizoanalysis, Hogg, Samuel R. Delany,
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Introduction
In an interview, Samuel R. Delany states that he is “interested in ‘identities’ . . . of those who have fallen through the categorical cracks without having fully slipped wholly free of the nets of desire” (Rowell 255). That identity, especially in relation to subjectivity, and desire are two of the central themes in Delany’s work becomes evident when one reads his novels, specifically his three erotic novels *The Tides of Lust*, *The Mad Man* and *Hogg*. Delany’s characters are often marginalised by society because of their inability or reluctance to adapt themselves to authorised formations of identity. Instead of struggling to fit into society’s standards, they explore alternative spheres where identity and subjectivity have the possibility to form themselves without being heavily restricted by the hegemonic understanding of what it means to be human.

While discussing themes of identity and desire, the novels are depicting various deviant sexual practices in a graphic way, where *Hogg*, according to Aleksandra Bubilo, can be regarded as the most scatological, but also one of the most realistic in terms of social undertones (196). *Hogg* is, as Bubilo argues, indeed a novel that presents the reader with a literal mouthful of filth and bodily fluids. Narrated by a nameless eleven-year-old boy, only referred to as “the cocksucker”, *Hogg* tells the story of Franklin Hargus, nicknamed Hogg, who is a truck driver and self-proclaimed “rape artist”. After meeting for the first time in a dark alley where Hogg has raped and assaulted a woman, Hogg takes the boy under his protection and takes him on a journey through the underbelly of society, where capitalism has turned everything and everyone into consumer goods, and where public morality and strict regulations hold little or no authority. The narrator follows Hogg on hired jobs where he rapes and abuses women in the company of his like-minded friends. The sexual elements of the novel are plentiful
and described in detail including, but not limited to, scenes of sexual violence, domestic abuse, rape, incest and coprophilia which are at times hard for the reader to stomach.

Because of the high level of graphic violence and sexuality Mary Catherine Foltz, in her discussion of *The Mad Man*, argues that all critics who set out to deal with Delany’s erotic novels are in one way or another concerned with the reader’s response to the highly graphic sexuality and filth (45). It is indeed a narrow path that one can trail in discussing and analysing a text like *Hogg*. It is undoubtedly obscene, and the risk of being polluted by its content is not to be taken lightly. In fact, much time has been spent debating the concept of obscenity in terms of free speech and legal rights. Champions of morality have claimed that texts such as *Hogg* should be censored in order to be kept away from those whose weak sense of morality would risk corruption of the mind (“Obscenity– Further Readings”). However, *Hogg*, in its obscenity, is in good company. Works of other well-renowned writers have also been denounced as obscene. Most prominently, perhaps, James Joyce’s *Ulysses* underwent an obscenity trial in 1933, where the court ruling stated that is was not to be censored because its main purpose was not to be obscene, and therefore could not be said to lack literary value. Thus, one can conclude that even if a text is transgressive, it does not necessarily mean that its obscene status will remain static for all time to come. Quite contrary, transgressive texts are often a product of their society, and its status as obscene changes with the shifts in social discourse. Delany himself addresses this in an interview, stating that he offers no absolute approval of the sexual practices in either his own work or the works of others in the same style throughout history, but emphasises that the view of what is considered abhorrent or immoral changes over time: “I point out the difference only to suggest that all such moral approval is a social construction, not a God-given law” (Rowell 258). Considering that it took almost 35 years for *Hogg* to be published, one can conclude
that Delany’s comment has a strain of truth. In the decades between 1969, when Delany first wrote *Hogg*, and 1995, when Black Ice Books/Fiction Collective 2 published a limited edition of it (Stephenson n.pag), the American society experienced a massive emergence of critique aimed at minority oppression, and more and more minority groups began to speak up for fundamental human rights.

Delany finished the novel only days before the Stonewall riots took place in New York City. In the 35 years between the date of finishing it and its first publication, *Hogg* existed only as badly copied manuscripts, spread and shared exclusively within the American gay community (Delany, *Shorter Views* 298-310). *Hogg* can thus be seen as a product of a turbulent era where the gay community for the first time started to organise itself in order to claim a place in the public sphere. According to Domenico Rizzo, Stonewall can be seen as the culmination of the frustration that had been built up within the gay community due to the numerous raids of popular gay bars that the police had conducted. The Gay Liberation Front (GLF) was formed in the Stonewall aftermath, but it should rather be seen as a movement within a progressive era rather than an isolated incidence. Several subgroups were starting to struggle to make their voices heard. The Civil Rights Movements had voiced African-American concerns during the years previous, peaking with the murder of Martin Luther King in 1968. Simultaneously, Second Wave Feminism had emerged in the U.S during the 60s and had put the issue of women’s rights on the public agenda. These groups, Rizzo states, were the result of the post-war generation’s scepticism of the social structure. They were searching for authenticity and were rebelling against what they perceived as social alienation originated in consumerist society. They saw themselves as restrained by the concept of the nuclear family due to its submission to authority and rigid gender roles (212-13).
The GLF was inspired by the discourse of the other marginalised groups, and liberation emerged as the key theme in the movement. Liberation implied a certain vision of homophobia and the arguments with which to combat it. This also marked the beginning of a shift in discourse within the gay community itself. Before Stonewall, homosexuals had favoured an integrationist approach, but the gay liberation movement assumed a radically different approach. Their political agenda was based on a comprehensive analysis of cultural and socio-political structures that was heavily inspired by Marxism and Marxist criticism of psychoanalysis. The GLF saw homophobia (as well as racism and sexism) as an inherent effect of the white middle-class capitalist society; as instruments for exploitation by one social group over another. The GLF stance was that because of this oppression, liberation could not be achieved by merely requesting a homosexual ‘room of their own’; it could only be achieved by restructuring the social discourse in its entirety (Rizzo 213-14). This made the liberal white middle-class face a disruption in what could be considered as the most fundamental precept: the distinction between the private and the public. For homosexuals, ‘coming out’ no longer meant that one made oneself recognisable for other members of the gay community, but that one took a place in the public sphere (214-15).

The disruption of the dichotomy between the public and the private, and the non-conformist individual versus the collective, can very much be seen as central themes in much of Delany’s writing, both fiction and non-fiction. Because of the transgressive nature of the themes, it is easy to understand why Hogg has been largely neglected by critics and scholars. In fact, very few texts have been produced on it. Its pornographic nature is not without problems in terms of academic literary discourse
because, as Ian Frederick Moulton points out, pornography is not-art, not-literature, not-acceptable (9). This view, naturally, poses several problems for scholars in terms of analysing texts like *Hogg*, as its implicit nature, therefore, is not-academic. However, as Norman Mailer states on the back-cover of the 2004 edition of *Hogg*: “There’s no question that [*Hogg*] is a serious book with literary merit”, and he indeed has a point. *Hogg* is well-written, complex and presents themes that very much connote the GLF discourse of liberation. Gabriel Zinn makes an interesting observation, stating that *Hogg* contains a transition from paraliterature\(^1\) into literature precisely because of Delany’s refusal, when faced with “our moral anxieties”, to “mutilate his appalling creation” (Zinn 46). Because of its content, which can arguably be termed hardcore pornography, attempts to define it as literature would damage both the novel and the discourse of literature\(^2\) (47). Not willing to reduce itself to either the definition of literature or that of paraliterature, it can neither be classified as solely one or the other.

*Hogg* is, hence, a text that deals with themes of disruptive individuality and dichotomy between public and private spheres both in story and on a metaliterary level. The novel does not only question the system that divides and maintains the spheres, but the subject that is formed in its image. Similar critique of this division of society has been voiced by Deleuze and Guattari. Their Anti-Oedipus project emerged in the same type of revolutionary spirit as the gay liberation movement. Culminating in the May 1968 riots, the French academia had reached a point of exhaustion. None of the prominent thinkers of the time had been able to solve the problem with transcendental subjectivism, and phenomenology suffered from the inability to release itself from the Cartesian subject. The field of psychoanalysis was also having trouble, due to its view of the need for desire to be repressed in order to maintain stability in civilisation. The

\(^1\) For example comic books, pornography, science fiction etc.
\(^2\) Here, the discourse of literature should be regarded in terms of academic discourse.
psychoanalysts attempting to explore alternative views were denounced as outlaws, thus leaving psychoanalysis in a lock-down (Surin 26). Deleuze and Guattari’s project aimed sharp critique toward the psychoanalytic rigidness. Basing their arguments on theorists such as Nietzsche and Marx, they claimed that Western capitalist societies had taken advantage of the human being’s inherent disinclination to deviate from the collective. Furthermore, they argued that psychoanalysis trapped the free-thinking human consciousness in the familial triangulation of the Oedipus myth, thus denouncing all who resisted conformation as mentally ill. In contrast to psychoanalysis, Deleuze and Guattari claimed that it is precisely these people who can be seen as individuals in essence, because they are by nature separated from the collective. They dubbed their critique “schizoanalysis”, which is not to be seen as schizophrenia in the clinical sense, but as a state of pure individualism, liberated from the private sphere because its resistance to the Oedipal subject (Deleuze and Guattari, Anti-Oedipus). 

Because of the similarities between Delany’s and Deleuze and Guattari’s critique of societal organisation, this thesis will base itself on Deleuze and Guattari’s theory of the Anti-Oedipus, and argue that in Hogg, Delany seriously challenges the hegemonic discourse of normality as stipulated and supported by the capitalist Oedipal repression of desire. Delany does so because repression only allows desire to invest in a limited number of authorised representations, supported and dictated by capitalism. Such a rigid discourse makes other identities than the heteronormative either suspicious, dangerous or completely invisible. To support this argument, this thesis will explore how Hogg comments and challenges the discourse of the dichotomy between public and private spheres, by investigating in which ways Hogg challenges the status of the Oedipal triangulation as the main creator of reality and lastly explore in which ways Deleuze and Guattari’s theory of the Anti-Oedipus can be used to understand how
Delany sees desire as a productive drive that threatens to disrupt the novel’s hegemonic, heteronormative discourse.

**The Anti-Oedipus Complex**

To initiate an Anti-Oedipal analysis of *Hogg*, it is relevant to first investigate how psychoanalysis has influenced hegemonic discourse in terms of our understanding of what it means to be a subject, particularly in regards to repression of libidinal desire.

**The Oedipal Subject.** Fundamentally, hegemonic understanding of subjectivity formation originates in the works of Sigmund Freud, and the subsequent work of psychoanalysts like Jacques Lacan. Freud, in his theories on subjectivity, argues that our mental lives derive from biological drives and juxtapose the organisation of civilisation to drives of pleasure, energy, and desire. According to Freud, as the child develops into an individual, it learns to repress its biological drives in order to function in a civilised society (Rivkin and Ryan 389). Libidinal desire is irrational and unable to differentiate between reason and unreason. Therefore, libidinal desire has to be under strict regulation through the mediation between the conscious and the unconscious, or rather through the id, ego, superego division (391).

Repression, hence, is to be seen as the fundamental mechanism in civilisation and subjectivity. Repression proceeds from the ego, or more precisely from “the self-respect of the ego” (Freud, *On Narcissism* 415). Developing this argument, Freud argues that the same impression, impulses, experiences and desires that one person indulges in is met with utter disgust by another. The difference between the two, which for Freud contains the conditioning factor of repression, is explained by the libido theory. Freud states that:

> We can say that one man has set up an *ideal* in himself by which he measures his actual ego, while the other has formed no such ideal. For the ego the formation
of an ideal would be the conditioning factor of repression (415 emphasis in original).

In this statement, one can see that what psychoanalysis does is to position itself in relation to a discourse that defines and conditions precisely what it means to successfully repress desire, and therefore one can also conclude that there has to exist predetermined notions of concepts such as subjectivity and civilisation. For Freud, these notions are conditioned and mediated through the Oedipus Complex.

The Oedipus Complex can be seen as a phase that all humans have to go through in order to form an identity (Rivkin and Ryan 391). Roughly summarised, the Oedipus Complex is the process wherein the father figure steps in as an authority that prohibits the child’s sexually founded attachment to its mother. Learning to give up its unnatural attachment, the child instead forms an identification with the father, and refocuses its desire for the mother onto other women and objects (Freud, Group Psychology 438). The repression of desire is essential, because if libidinal desire comes into conflict with the subject’s ethical and cultural ideals, desire will undergo a pathogenic repression (Freud, On Narcissism 415) resulting in a breakdown of the conscious, thus placing the individual in a state of psychosis or schizophrenia (Rivkin and Ryan 391).

Lacan, developing Freud’s work, claims that desire plays an important role in the process of self-identification. Processed in a way that resembles Saussure’s theories of the signifier/signified, Lacan believes that a desired object always signifies something else, and that it is desired solely based on the satisfaction of urges that resemble our primordial experience, that is the child’s narcissistic unity with the mother (Lacan 447). Because of Lacan’s linguistic division of signifier/signified, one can see the father as the introductory mechanism to language and communication that disrupts the narcissistic unity with the mother, who in this process becomes the unattainable
signified. The father, thus, creates a blockage in the path to the signified by the “essential difference between the realm of interconnected signifiers and the realm of meanings or referents that are of a completely different order and that can be signified in their absence from language only through conventional arguments” (447). For Lacan, this linguistic separation between the signified/signifier can be seen as the same mechanism of separation as that between the conscious/unconscious. The content of the unconscious, like the signified, can be “signified obliquely” (447) but never be revealed as such.

To summarise: what psychoanalysis does is to place the subject within a triangulation with the father as a policing and regulatory force with which the (male) child identifies, and which assesses the mother with the prohibition of incest taboo. Desire, because of its strength, constitutes both the drive with which civilisation is formed and the barrier that must not be transgressed if one is to have a place in a civilised society.

**The Anti-Oedipal Subject.** In the introduction to *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, Mark Seem identifies one of the crucial hypotheses in Deleuze and Guattari’s arguments: the reason why desire is repressed is hardly because it has an inherent nature as a barrier for the Oedipal subject. On the contrary, desire is diminished into that only because of repression. The real danger that desire poses to society, Seem states, lies in desire’s ability to disrupt the social structure. This threat exists not because desire is antisocial, but precisely because it is social. Seem concludes that desire “is explosive; there is no desiring-machine capable of being assembled without demol-ishing entire social sectors” (xxii). Desire, for Deleuze and Guattari, is to be seen as a free, decoded flow that infuses everything and everyone, but that psychoanalysis, supported by the ever-increasing capitalist society, reduces this flow by coding it into
predetermined concepts and understandings that confirm and maintain the capitalist psychoanalytic structure.

Therefore, Deleuze and Guattari, drawing inspiration from both Marx and Nietzsche, form an extensive critique of the psychoanalytic subject’s reduction into the Oedipal triangulation, and especially criticise psychoanalysis’ limitations and restraints of desire. They claim that because the economic and political spheres are dependent on the Oedipal subject for their stability, they form a strict discourse where the only option for the subject is to form itself accordingly. If one chooses to not subject oneself to hegemonic discourse of subjectivity for one reason or another, one poses a severe threat to society and must therefore be denounced as schizophrenic, psychotic or neurotic. Deleuze and Guattari strongly question this systematic repression of desire in general and of the individual in particular and argue that instead of regarding desire as the supportive barrier of the conscious reason and social structure, desire is to be seen as production that acts as a creative force in the production of the real.

Opposing the psychoanalytic conclusion that the subject must be formed upon an essential lack, Deleuze and Guattari argue that if desire produces, what it produces must be real. They see desire as a set of “passive syntheses that engineer partial objects . . . that function as units of production” (26) and what is produced is the real. Desire, thus, is the main drive for all aspects of the universe. They regard desiring-production in terms of a factory model, which does not see desire as a lack, but as a productive force. Every aspect of the universe is therefore to be seen as machines: circuit breakers in desiring-production, but also as creators of their own circuits which produces flows of their own. (Deleuze and Guattari, Anti-Oedipus 1). What these machines produce, Deleuze and Guattari argue, is real, not metaphors for something that exists extrinsically to our world (2). This poses a sharp contrast to psychoanalysis, as what psychoanalysis
does is to code desiring-production into predetermined understandings of what can be produced in terms of, for example, society and subjectivity.

Contradicting Freud and Lacan’s theories, Deleuze and Guattari state that as the concept of desire was reduced into a barrier protecting the subject within the Oedipal triangulation, it became hidden under a new brand of idealism. Heavily critiquing the idea of the unconscious as simply a production of reason and societal emancipation, they claimed that “a classical theatre was substituted for the unconscious as a factory [and] representation was substituted for the units of production of the unconscious” (Deleuze and Guattari, Anti-Oedipus 24). In contrast to Freud, they state that the traditional logic of desire is wrong from the very beginning because it brings on a choice between acquisition and production. They claim that from the moment desire is paired with acquisition, it is regarded as a lack. This is problematic, because if desire is conditioned upon a lack of essence, it merely produces a fantasised object, which in turn challenges the understanding of the social production. On a basic level, it suggests that an extrinsic social production must exist and that desire intrinsically produces a fantasy object that functions as a double of reality (25). Thus, when theory diminishes desire-production to a production of fantasy, it is “content to exploit to the fullest the idealist principle that defines desire as a lack, rather than a process of production” (26) and must therefore always also suggest that there exists a doubleness, as reality will always lack an object that is located elsewhere; an elsewhere that holds the key to desire (26).

Desire, Deleuze and Guattari stress, does not lack anything. On the contrary, it is “the subject that is missing in desire, or desire that lacks a fixed subject; there is no fixed subject unless there is repression. Desire and object is one and the same thing: the machine, as the machine of a machine” (26). Thus, for Deleuze and Guattari, to diminish desire to merely represent a lack is to completely disregard its significance
within the production of reality. They stress that they do not deny that there is an Oedipal sexuality, both heterosexual and homosexual. Neither do they deny the existence of an Oedipal castration, complete objects, global images, or specific egos. What they deny is that these are productions of the unconscious (74). Essentially, what they argue is that desire does not need to be repressed, sublimated or desexualised in order to work as a supportive factor in the socio-political or economic field. Instead, they identify desire as the main flow in the production of the real. Deleuze and Guattari “maintain that the social field is immediately invested by desire . . . and that libido has no need of any mediation or sublimation . . . in order to invade and invest the productive forces and the rela-tions of the production” (29). Fundamentally, what they argue is that there is only desire and the social, nothing else (29).

**The Dichotomy Between the Private and the Public.** What Deleuze and Guattari do in their critique of psychoanalysis is to expose how psychoanalysis serves as support for a societal organisation that relies on an Oedipal subjectivity for its stability. The psychoanalytic organisation acts as a stabiliser for social hierarchy and discourse because it codes the flows of desire to mean only that which supports it, that is the Oedipal triangulation. The result is an understanding of both society and its citizens as having an inherent division between their public selves and their private selves. Deleuze and Guattari’s argument, on the contrary, indicates that no such division exists in the production of the real, but only exists as social discourse. Deleuze and Guattari instead present their theory of schizoanalysis, which suggests a non-hierarchal organisation of society. Such an organisation, naturally, threatens the psychoanalytic subject in its very core, because decoding desire in the way that they do disrupts the entire foundation of authority that society needs to keep all the gears of the Oedipal desiring-machines in order and working together.
**Capitalist Psychoanalytic Discourse.** Eugene Holland argues that for Deleuze and Guattari, the concept of capitalism is the most prominent example of how repressed desire and desire as production are one and the same, as they make a concrete connection between desiring-production and social production by connecting the libido with Marx’s theory of labour power\(^3\) (Holland 57). Deleuze and Guattari argue that the connection between psychoanalysis and capitalism is as relevant to that of capitalism and political economy. Capitalist coding of political economy into that of subjective abstract labour and the psychoanalytic coding of desire into that of the Oedipal subject can be seen as the same type of process. Paraphrasing Marx, they state that in capitalism, the essence becomes subjective. The activities of production and abstract labour produce a real from which all social formations stem. The same correlation can be seen between the abstract libidinal desire and psychoanalysis (Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* 302) as psychoanalysis represses desire to indicate only that of the Oedipal. They stress that one should not see the correlation as a simple comparison between desiring-production and capitalist social production, or the flow of money and the flow of desire. The relationship between the two is in fact much closer: “desiring-machines are in social machines and nowhere else” (302). Holland, elaborating on their argument, states that capitalism privatises production while simultaneously exercises ownership over the means of production within the economic sphere (57), resulting in a correlation between the private and the public sphere. However, despite of their correlation, the two spheres develop separate discourses and modes of separation, which distinguish them from each other (58). Worth mentioning in relation to this discussion is, though, that the private sphere should not necessarily be understood in terms of the private home, but a sphere where all other discourses than the hegemonic exist. All the

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\(^3\) Here, labour power should be understood in Marx’s definition of wealth. According to Marx, wealth is measured as the amount of labour-power that is invested in a commodity (Holland 57).
voices of minority groups, non-hetero-cis sexualities, or political revolutionary ideas are all crammed together into the tiny space of the home: the familial centre stage. The separation between the private and the public is important to capitalism, as it needs the Oedipal repression of desire to maintain its stability. The Oedipal subject, because it is dependent on repression, is trained in upholding the incest taboo and is taught to invest its desire in the means of production within the economic sphere. “The nuclear family”, Holland states, “appears as the perfect training ground for asceticism, by denying desire the object nearest and dearest to it” (58). Thus, Holland concludes, the reason why the subject can desire its own repression is because capitalist representation inculcates asceticism within the subject form birth (58).

The familial theatre, Deleuze and Guattari argue, raises the Oedipal to a universal structure. It pushes all the underlying abstract essences of desiring-production to the wings, hiding it beyond an insurmountable wall. The result is a displacement of desire. Instead of oscillating between desiring-production and objective representations, it oscillates between infinite imaginary representation and finite structural representation (Deleuze and Guattari, Anti-Oedipus 307). Thus, if desire was to be freed from Oedipal repression, it would act as a destabiliser within the capitalist organisation of society precisely because it no longer would be sublimated through authorised representations of desire. Consumerist society, where not only goods but services, labour and ideas are commodified, would then find itself overthrown by a desire that is free to invest itself in all social aspects, undirected and unrestricted.

**Schizoanalysing the Odeipus: The Schizoid Subject**

Because of the capitalist discourse’s restrictions on the subject there are, naturally, individuals who are not as willing to acknowledge or subject themselves to neither the societal organisation nor the barrier between public and private. Deleuze has paid a
considerable amount of attention to their function as revolutionary destabilisers within
the organisation of society. Leaping from Hegel’s idea that the consciousness can
perceive immediate sensing-data, but is unable to convey it because of the limitations in
language⁴ (Lambert 46), Deleuze forms his critique of the subject as the main mediator
of thought. Deleuze critiques Hegel’s theory, arguing that the main issue with this
understanding of representation is that “the identity of the concept is still retained as the
central reference point for thought” (47), thus still indicating that there exists a division
of signifier/signified. Deleuze challenges this for two reasons. Firstly, he disagrees with
Hegel that there exists something that can be regarded as an essential nature of things.
Secondly, he rejects the idea that identity should be the mediator with which the ideal
between thought and object is measured. He does this because he rejects the notion that
the “aim of thought is to represent” (47) what is already understood as existing.

Contrary to the traditional understanding of the subject as the main creator of
thought, Deleuze argues that thought only occurs at the edges of a given system, and is
created when one is forced to form thought outside of the signifying chain. Thus,
according to Deleuze, thought is always revolutionary in itself, reacting to flows of
desire that provoke and negotiate the terms and conditions of thought as set up by the
capitalist psychoanalytic discourse. Furthermore, this displaces the Oedipal subject as
the main creator of thought and civilisation, and pushes it from the main stage to the
peripheral. What Deleuze achieves is what, as mentioned, both philosophy and
psychoanalysis have failed to achieve: a rejection of the subject as the main creator of
reality.

In Deleuze’s displacement of the subject lies also a part of Deleuze and
Guattari’s fundamental critique of psychoanalysis: “The first error of psychoanalysis”,

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⁴ Here, the term language should be understood as the Saussurian linguistic organisation of the
signifier/signified.
they argue, “is in the acting as if things began with the child” (Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* 275). They argue that things begin with the paranoiac father that Oedipalises the child, projecting guilt onto it long before the guilt becomes an inherent feeling experienced by the child (275). This is fundamental to their criticism of the Oedipal because it implies that the subject is never the creator of its own reality, only the reproducer of a discourse that continuously uses mechanisms of repression such as guilt and disgust to keep the subject inside the familial theatre.

**The Schizoid Subject.** Representation, thus, is too restricted because it is limited to only reproduce in line with preconceived requirements; the flow of desire gives way to a simple representation, in the process as well as in theory (54). Therefore, in contrast to psychoanalysis, Deleuze and Guattari present the concept of schizoanalysis. They regard schizophrenia as an enforced neurosis that exists to maintain normality. Simply speaking, because of their essential revolutionary threat to the established discourse, those who are not subjected to the Oedipal triangulation must be assigned a state of schizophrenia and undergo strict regulatory surveillance. Therefore, what can be identified in Deleuze and Guattari’ critique of the Oedipal subject is, firstly, that the subject requires its own repression, because it is its only option. Knowing no other, or refuting every other option, representational thinking, which forms discourse, can only reproduce desire as repression and therefore always trapping it within a never ending production of Oedipal familial theatre. Secondly, this reproduction of representation must assign those who are located outside or in the margins of it a state of schizophrenia. This is a must, as the schizoid does not confirm the structure, the molar organisation of society, as a repression of the libido. Instead, the schizoid distinguishes itself as a molecular partial object; a revolutionary force that threatens the structural stability in the very core. The schizoid will always embody an ambiguity, forever
questioning whether it is cut off and distanced from reality because it lacks something that can only be found in the Oedipal triangulation, or if it is sick because it is surrounded by institutions and structures that join forces to force it to submit (Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* 90). “The revolutionary”, Deleuze and Guattari claim, “is the first to have the right to say: ‘Oedipus? Never heard of it’” (96).

Moreover, because schizoanalysis disregards the Oedipal repression, Deleuze and Guattari also challenge the Oedipal understanding of sexuality, which is limited to only invest in pre-determined cells of family, object or person (293). They state that:

By joining sexuality to the familial complex, by making Oedipus into the creation of sexuality in analysis—the test of orthodoxy par excellence—Freud himself posited the whole of social and meta-physical relations as an afterward or a beyond that desire was incapable of investing immediately (58).

Frida Beckman, expounding on this claim, states that desire will remain as a manifestation of a lack if the pursuit of pleasure stays related to the “deplorable fact of orgasm” (Beckman 12), which means that as long as pleasure is to be seen as sexuality’s *raison d’être*, it will be forever reduced to repression. Therefore, the understanding that sexuality must always be the reproduction of the subject’s repression of desire for its mother has to be altered. Of course, Beckman’s reflection also suggests a clear understanding of why social structure feels obliged to trap sexuality inside a rigid hegemonic discourse: desire is revolutionary in essence. Deleuze and Guattari exemplify this by arguing that sexuality is manifested through the way a business man maintains the circulation of monetary funds, or how Hitler aroused the masses; “Flags, nations, armies, banks get a lot of people aroused” (Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* 293). Here, one can detect the essence of Deleuze and Guattari’s discussion: sexuality cannot, and should not, be seen as separate from that of desire, or the social, it is one
and the same thing. Sexuality is everywhere.

Hence, instead of regarding sexuality as a merely private affair, Deleuze and Guattari argue that sexuality should be regarded as the main drive in all of the subject’s social investments as the force of productivity and creativity. What Deleuze and Guattari portray is a desire that does not threaten a society because it is a desire to sleep with the mother, thus transgressing the incest taboo, but a desire that causes a circulation of flows that will not be caught up in an established order (Deleuze and Guattari *Anti-Oedipus* 116). In consequence, a sexuality that does not abide itself to the hegemonic discourse of sexuality can no longer be divided in terms of binaries of right/wrong, or authorised/prohibited. This indicates that sexuality does not have to submit or restrict itself to the hegemonic understanding as being strictly heterosexual, but can instead be regarded as a multitude of desiring-production machines that can create an equal multitude of flows. Furthermore, sexuality can no longer be limited to a physical interaction between human beings, but as a sexuality that is manifested in all social production. The schizoid sexuality, then, acknowledges no castration anxiety, as it does not acknowledge any lack. On the contrary, it never ceases to produce, as it does not depend on the culmination of pleasure for continuity, but is ever-forming new alignments and constellations. Schizoanalysis sees sexuality as non-human, represented not as one sex, but as *n* sexes within the subject, and for this reason, the molecular unconscious escapes the Oedipal incest family. Therefore, as Deleuze and Guattari so famously put it, “[m]aking love is not becoming as one, or even two, but becoming as a hundred thousand” (296).

In contrast to the Oedipal social organisation, which differentiates and distinguishes identities in terms of hierarchy, Deleuze and Guattari propose an alternative view that instead is rhizomatic and which therefore undoes orders and
hierarchies. Understanding structure in terms of the traditional root-tree division, they argue, is an endless reproduction of the Oedipal only resulting in a binary logic (Deleuze and Guattari *A Thousand Plateaus* 3). Such a system of thought, they clarify, has never reached an understanding of multiplicity (4). Instead of the root-tree structure, they propose a rhizomatic structure. A rhizome is a subterranean root system, grass for example, that consists of multiple roots and that can expand in all directions on a surface. This system, Deleuze and Guattari argue, can make any point of a rhizome connect with any other, which strongly differs from the root-tree, which only allows for a connection to be made based on one pivotal point (5-6). Multiplicity, they state, lacks a unity. It has neither a subject nor an object, “only determinations, magnitudes and dimensions that cannot increase in number without the multiplicity changing in nature” (7). This, naturally, disrupts the entire organisation of the subject formation, because it can allow the subject to form itself in connection to not only two other referential points, but a myriad of them. Furthermore, because of its lack of an original, fundamental root from which the organisation can originate, the rhizome structure rejects all hierarchies, which means that it can no longer identify a topology that organises the binary hierarchy. What Deleuze and Guattari suggest, in consequence, is an organisation of the subject that is not subjected to the Oedipal triangulation, but that is formed as an assemblage of a multitude of factors and therefore, desire can no longer be trapped within the private, familial sphere, but acts as a free flowing drive, a Body without Organs that infuses the entire structure.

That sexuality is relevant to consider in an analysis of *Hogg* is perhaps evident because of its numerous detailed depictions of sexual practices, but it is also relevant to consider in terms of clarifying the novel’s opposition between the schizoid subject and social discourse of subjectivity. According to Delany, power is what distinguishes the
Oedipal discourse of desire from the rhetoric of sex. The rhetoric of sex, he continues, is what forces people to search for “gap[s] in the [communicative] wall which desire may somehow show” (Delany, *Shorter Views* 20). Albeit not mentioned explicitly, what Delany suggests here is that desire is such a strong drive that it makes people search for places located precisely beyond the insurmountable walls of the Oedipal theatre, outside of the chain of signifiers that Lacanian psychoanalysis has set up as the symbolic order of reason and civilisation. People do so simply because the rhetoric of sex is too rigid to allow a multitude of sexual identities and orientations. Beyond the signifying chain, and thus outside of the language used to form social discourse, desire is decoded and free to invest in partial objects that are not representations of the Oedipal triangulation. Desire, as Deleuze and Guattari have established, has the strength in itself to redefine, destroy and shape everything according to its whims. Therefore, Delany states, it is paradoxical that desire constitutes the barrier to sexuality that the rhetoric of sex is a part of (20).

The discourse of desire, which Delany also connects to that of patriarchy, is therefore not fool proof. Here and there, because the hegemonic discourse of sexuality also defines the anomalous, there are elements that subvert and disrupt it (23). Those elements that are made invisible by the social rhetoric’s exclusion are constantly there to attempt to alter the discourse, as their very existence challenge it. All identities and sexualities that are not identified as hetero-cis are thus to be seen as embodiments of the gap in the communicative wall, and which the decoded desire seeps through.

The hegemonic hetero-cis discourse of desire creates a border between itself and the Anti-Oedipal desire, identifying the latter as abnormal in order to define itself as normal. However, precisely because it does so, the Anti-Oedipal sexuality will always pose a threat to the Oedipal discourse of desire (Delany, *Shorter Views* 25). In every shift of discourse, the abnormal sexualities possess the power to hold up a comparison
between the hegemonic discourse and themselves and demand to know why their sexualities must be policed and restricted, while the hetero-cis sexuality remains so unchallenged and free. To paraphrase Nietzsche, the hegemonic discourse of desire is constantly tempted to stare into the abyss, but is therefore also constantly risking the possibility of the abyss staring back (Nietzsche 141). What Delany voices in this discussion is relevant, because it compares the normative to the non-normative while seriously questioning the hierarchal binaries that define them. What Delany argues is that the binary relationship that societal discourse produces is merely an arbitrary division without any legitimacy. Non-normative sexuality, Delany states, is only seen as perverted because of discourse.

Non-including discourses cause significant problems for those who fall outside of the normative definition, that is gays, lesbians, queers, kinksters and fetishists. Pointing out what several other theorists also have noted, Gert Hekma states that the main problem for gays and lesbians is that society largely defines itself on notions of heterosexuality. This, Hekma argues, makes all other alternatives invisible or marginalised and even in more tolerant societies “public life remains straight: heterosexuality is the norm and homosexuality is viewed as a second-class option” (Hekma 350). Heteronormativity, Hekma continues, enables a rise to a dichotomy between private and public life, where the former reduces homosexuality to a private affair and the latter equates the public sphere with heterosexuality (350). Gretchen Riordan agrees, and, basing herself on Deleuze and Guattari, argues that as long as non-normative sexuality remains marginalised because of the Oedipal system, it will always be “stymied with respect to genuine liberation” (65). Even if the Oedipal discourse would loosen its rigid censorship, it would still repress the flow of productive desire into the Oedipal code, making any advancement toward a liberated sexuality futile (65).
**Schizoanalysing Hogg**

Taking Deleuze and Guattari’s proposition of the Anti-Oedipal subject, Deleuze’s theory of thought as revolutionary and Delany’s discussion of discourse and challenging of binary hierarchy into consideration, one can conclude that it must be within the groups that are marginalised by the hegemonic discourse that the gaps in Delany’s communicative wall exist. Not being fully subsumed by the over-arching structure, they can be classified in terms of schizophrenia, in the Deleuzian sense, and in consequence be seen as holding a revolutionary position in relation to society, a possibility to break down the monolithic structure of discourse in their mere organisation of the Anti-Oedipal subject. *Hogg* can be seen as an example of how these schizophrenic subjects break all preconceived notions of how individuals act and for what reason they do it. By indulging solely in spheres of filth, graphic descriptions of non-heteronormative sexuality and violence, *Hogg* can be said to challenge the entire concept of normality in general, but also identifies how desire is constantly attempting to break free from its restriction as a barrier within the capitalist Oedipal subjectivity and instead flow freely.

Zinn argues that *Hogg* opens up to a discussion, and questioning, of normality, which means that any analysis of the novel that deals with the issues of identifying the binary opposition of normal/abnormal also has to “call into question the very meaning of the word [normality] itself” (Zinn 48). Zinn makes an interesting point here, as the novel rejects any attempt to divide the sexually deviant and those who can be deemed sexually normal in terms of authorised, heteronormative discourse. At first, the novel can give the readers a sense of hopelessness in any attempt to find any character that can be considered as normal or sane, but as the story progresses, one can begin to realise that what Delany is describing is an environment of liminality where the topological binaries are eradicated in favour of an alternative organisation of both the subject and reason. This eradication, as we shall see while investigating these matters further,
presents an alternative vision of morality and normality that does not originate in the Oedipal discourses, but instead is located in the decoded flows, thus bringing the deviant subject out of its peripheral position in relation to societal discourse and instead placing it as an equal mediator of reason. Of course, it is possible to distinguish between normality and abnormality; as discussed, there are characters that can arguably be seen to uphold the Oedipal structure that distinguishes normality in opposition to abnormality, but, as Zinn questions: “‘normal’ to what purpose?” (48).

**Capitalist Discourse and Capitalist Desire.** The hegemonic societal structure in *Hogg* can, at first, be perceived as virtually non-existent, or, as Bubilo claims, a “dark pornotopia” where reality is portrayed as the stage for exclusively sexual activities and where social and human institutions are understood to exist only as a conductive for further sexual activity (197). Upon further analysis, however, one can detect a prominent, yet subtle, over-arching structure of social organisation that mediates the conditions of the dichotomy between the public and the private, and which pushes all unauthorised understandings of society to the margins where they cannot disrupt the social stability.

One example of the stratification of society in *Hogg*, which perhaps is one of the most striking discoveries upon a first reading of the novel, is the lack of personal names for the characters that are portrayed as marginal to society. The characters are rarely called by their names, even though one can conclude that they must have one. Instead, the characters are usually referred to by their ethnicity, or personal attribute. For example, Hogg himself is primarily referred to as Hogg, because “a hog lives dirty” (Delany, *Hogg* 36) and he does not wash himself. The same types of nicknames are used for his friends: racist nicknames like Nigg and Dago, to mention a few examples. At first glance, their use of these names could give the impression that they are reducing
themselves in the same way as society does. However, the nicknames are rather to be seen as a narrative device set up by Delany to create a distinction between the marginalised characters and those who are not marginalised, and indicates when a character transgresses the barrier between the public and the private. The effect that this narrative device creates is a depersonalisation of marginalised characters that is solidifying the distinction between the characters that can be seen as Oedipal subjects, such as Mona, Harry, Red or Rufus and characters like Hogg and his friends, with Denny being a notable exception. To have a name is the fundamental representation of the perceived self, the signifier with which one can state: “This is me. That is you”. To not have this fundamental signifier is to not have the possibility to exist as a subject within the Oedipal discourse; one is reduced to a part-object, an uncanny Other that must be kept at distance to ensure the safety of the Self.

The characters can thus be said to embody representations of Otherness that are not accepted as a part of societal discourse, and who therefore must be kept beyond a barrier that the Oedipal subject constantly must define itself in relation to: the barrier of disgust. To elaborate on this relationship, we must return to Freud’s theory of the Oedipus Complex. As mentioned, Freud argues that in order for the child to take its place as a subject within a civilised society, it must repress its desire for its mother and sublimate it into representations that are appropriate and authorised by this civilisation. In order to maintain this repression, the subject experiences emotions of disgust when he/she is too close to transgressing a taboo. Desire, thus, is what makes the subject remain within the boundaries of civilised society, and is largely restricted by notions of disgust. According to William Ian Miller, Freud connects notions of disgust with feelings of shame and morality. Freud treats both these concepts as reaction formations, which are part of the mechanism of repression of the unconscious, functioning to inhibit
the consummation of unconscious desire (5). Important to add to this discussion, though, is that the mechanism of repression is not a natural, inherent ability of the human being. On the contrary, Miller claims that disgust is an emotion that is produced by culture and manifests in objects that a culture charges with moral and social significance (9). Feelings of disgust must therefore be accompanied by a specified type of danger that exposes the subject to the risk of pollution and defilement (8). Because of its connection to morality and defilement, disgust serves to maintain the hierarchal binaries as set up by the hegemonic discourse. “To feel disgust”, Miller states, “is human and humanizing” (11). Considering this statement, one can conclude that those who are not upholding this barrier are in themselves disgusting. However, important to note here, too, is that because of the Western societies’ rigid, heteronormative white discourse, to be deemed as disgusting is not always a choice. To not fit into this tightly fitted frame of normativity is to automatically be made suspicious and to some extent being regarded as primitive or even subhuman (12). “Disgust”, Miller states, “helps define boundaries be-tween us and them and me and you. . . . Disgust, along with desire, locates the bound of the other, either as something to be avoided … or … as something to be emulated, imi-tated, or married” (50). Thus, when the characters of the novel are called by what makes them different from the white, heteronormative discourse, it is to make them suspicious and potentially defiling. In consequence, when the characters refer to themselves as Nigg, Dago, Hogg or “the cocksucker”, they are distinguishing themselves from the rest of society. They do not do this because they internalise the Otherness that societal discourse projects onto them, but to distinguish themselves as characters that are precisely what they are: Anti-Oedipal characters.

This distinction between Hogg and his friends and the rest of society creates a strict division between the public and the private spheres. The society they live in is
primarily concerned with maintaining a capitalist discourse where everything and everyone is to be considered consumer goods, as wealth, and therefore can be used and abused. At the same time, capitalism must also keep itself distanced from the actual ongoings to remain stable. The novel’s capitalist society protects itself from the actual events by acting under the pretence of the actual work taking place in the private sphere, thus being separated and without any relation to the capitalist public sphere. The lesser capitalism knows of what takes place outside of the actual business transaction, the better. Most prominently, this division can be seen in the conversation between Hogg and Mr Jonas, when Hogg comes to claim his payment and get a new job assignment. Mr Jonas, Hogg’s employer, is depicted as a typical business man: grey suit, yellow tie and patent leather shoes (Delany, *Hogg* 42). He seems uncomfortable as he speaks to Hogg, and is reluctant to go into detail about the job that Hogg has done for him, just commenting that the customer is happy with the result, and that “[i]t sounded like [Hogg had] done a very competent job…very efficient” (43). Mr Jonas’ evident discomfort in speaking of Hogg’s work makes it clear that he is aware of Hogg’s defiling abilities, and that he does not really want to interact with Hogg, not forming an affiliation between them, but interact with him because the business requires it. This becomes apparent when he speaks of his clients, whom he calls his “friends” (42, 44, 45), while he pretends that Hogg is a mere brief acquaintance: “What is your name again, Hogg? . . . Francis Hargus?” (43). Mr Jonas is a business man and makes good money on the work he pays Hogg to do, but he does not want to know any details, does not want to be associated with the horrible and brutal assaults that he has hired Hogg to perform. Similarly, Hogg, being a business man too, is not interested in knowing anything of the reasons behind the cases he is assigned to. For example, when Mr Jonas attempts to explain about the underlying reasons behind one of the cases, Hogg says:
“Shit . . . You know I don’t like to hear no pretty stories, Mr Jonas. Just tell me who they are and where to find them” (44). Likewise, when Hogg tries to tell Mr Jonas about his friends, Mr Jonas responds with equal unwillingness to gain insight to details, saying: “I’m not interested in stories either, Hogg” (46). Their mutual reluctance to be included in the other’s business shows an awareness of the division of the private and the public, and that they are both interested in keeping the spheres separate, hence avoiding responsibility for the entire chain of events.

Instead of openly investing desire in everything, the society in *Hogg* can be seen as only allowing desire to manifest as an undertone filtered through authorised channels, thus maintaining the separation between the private and the public. Among the most prominent examples of this are the broadcasts that have been aired on the news during Dennis “Denny” Harkner’s killing spree. Denny, a teenage boy who hangs around Hogg and his friends, sometimes following them around on jobs, goes on a rampage caused by a schizophrenic reaction to him piercing his penis with a nail. The newscaster does not spare the public any details, from the number of casualties down to the state of one of the victim’s cars (Delany, Hogg 178-81), but are at the same time careful to point out that Denny is not convicted, but only an alleged killer, as he has not been caught or sentenced yet. The news reporter, however, forgets him/herself repeatedly on this point, and therefore has to correct him/herself: “Young Harkner . . . has been on an afternoon and evening-long rampage– allegedly been on an afternoon and evening-long rampage” (178). Contrasted to the carefully detailed descriptions of the murders, this avoidance of determining Denny as a brutal killer creates a discrepancy in the narration that makes the reader sense that the news that are conveyed to the public is carefully worded, edited and directed before reaching the public ear. The excitement shown in reaction to the killings is not a strange. Emotions of disgust, as the brutal murders evidently evoke, are
not without ambivalence. Miller makes a point on the subject, claiming that the disgusting is also alluring: “it attracts as well as repels” (22). Miller goes on clarifying that what is disgusting is also fascinating to us to such an extent that it is hard for us to not indulge in gory depictions in horror films or to avert our eyes at a horrible accident (22). We look because we cannot suppress the impulses that such events provoke in us, impulses caused by desire that is located just beyond the barrier that keeps the Oedipal subject intact. This attraction, of course, makes it hard to for advocates and mediators of the public sphere to keep themselves within the authorised discourse. The news is supposed to be objective and true, but as the society also has the urge for juicy, gory details, what is essentially conveyed through the media is desire’s attraction to the repulsive mediated through a discourse that makes claims of holding universal truths.

This discrepancy between editing and polishing the discourse of truth and the impulses of desire is further emphasised as a news crew arrive at the Crawhole after Mona and Harry have been murdered. The news crew are there to do a live-cover of Denny’s killing spree, particularly to cover of the search for Mona and Harry’s baby, but are given a delay. When one of the crew members asks why, the producer says that it is because “people get excited at these things” (Delany, Hogg 213) and they therefore need to have a delay so they can edit it before it reaches the air (214). The producer goes on, stating that at such an extreme event as this, people are bound to say things that are not appropriate for the public, possibly even things that are worse than cussing, and that she has never directed anything as extreme as this (214). Considering Miller’s claim, one can deduce that the delay and the way the crew speaks indicates that their work is not only just a report of an occurrence, but a full-on stage production in itself, directed by the news station to create a report that is both exciting as well as within the frames of official discourse. The public wants detailed descriptions of the events, as the
ones who have been aired on two occasions prior to the news crew’s conversation (160-62, 178-81) because the drives of desire are too strong for them to not derive excitement from the disgusting elements. However, the public need be informed of what happens without the risk of more people getting triggered to disrupt the social structure, and therefore the events that are reported have to be edited, directed and coded to the appropriate language and representations so that the subject, to paraphrase Deleuze and Guattari, can exclaim: “So that’s what it was!” (Deleuze and Guattari, Anti-Oedipal 20). More precisely, desire has to be coded into representations of capitalist psychoanalytic discourse; trapping the libidinal desire in the Oedipal triangulation, in order to keep up its own authority as a sense-making machine that advocates truth and reality.

However, even though attempts are made to uphold the societal order, it is evident that there is a conflict between desire and the Oedipal structure that infuses society as a whole. The news crew’s conversation shows how the societal repression of desire indeed works as a drive that is sublimated into authorised representations that are non-threatening to the social stability. They speak of the killing as if they were something the listener would want to indulge in detail. Upon arrival, one of the news crew members states that the live coverage of Denny’s rampage “ought to keep the ghouls out there in Radio Land happy” (Delany, Hogg 213). Another remarks that it is “[t]oo bad it isn’t TV” (213) because if it were, they could go inside the cabin where Mona and Harry’s bodies are and show the audience the mess Denny has caused (213). Furthermore, speaking of their boss, Martin, they joke around stating that it would “make his week” (Delany, Hogg 214) if the crew were the ones who discovered the dead baby that is missing. Moreover, of the crew members remark that they think that Martin is “getting a charge out of all this” (214). The way the news crew speak suggests
that the excitement that Denny’s killing spree causes to the public is not due to their moral or social concerns of order as much as due to the underlying excitement provoked by desire. Within the very language, they all imply that desire is the main drive, but that this desire must be repressed into comprehensive representations not to threaten the capitalist Oedipal discourse.

**Denny and the Killing of the Father.** Denny’s killing spree is an outstanding example of how social desire is repressed while at the same time being revelled in. Society understands violence because it is included as an authorised representation in discourse as an indication of both evil and justice, and because of this, people are allowed to direct their desire to indulge in it wholeheartedly. It does not threaten society, on the contrary, the reports of Denny’s pursuit are a reassurance that society works and serves to protect its citizens from harm. However, the event of Denny’s killing spree is also a good example of how society’s repression can cause the subject that has trouble repressing the flow of desire to reach a state of schizophrenia. From the very first introduction of Denny, he seems to be conflicted by an extensive drive of desire. For example, Denny is having trouble differentiating between private and public behaviour, which has caused him to end up in correctional facilities on several occasions (Delany, *Hogg* 254). The bartender at the Piewicket bar, Ray, calls him strange and a little “dim” because he has masturbated in the bar, out among the customers instead of choosing to do it in the back, where it is private (53). Already in this observation, one can understand that Denny is likely to have trouble understanding the limitations of society, because the clients at the Piewicket are Hogg’s friends who are all generally portrayed just as sexually deviant as he is.

Furthermore, Denny seems to have a constant erection (65) that never goes down and therefore, he is very useful for the kind of “work” that Hogg does. However,
he does seem to be troubled by his over-stimulated libido and therefore, the event where he pierces his penis can be perceived as an attempt to relieve himself from an over-flow of desire that never lets him relax and make sense of the world in accordance to the Oedipal subjectivity. Hence, as he pierces his urethra with a six-inch nail, he exclaims that for the first time in a very long time he does not have an erection. In his own, meagre vocabulary, he states that: “First time I ain’t had a fuckin’ hard-on in goddamn I don’t know how . . . I couldn’t get rid of that fuckin’ hard-on no way, cocksucker” (131). After the nail is secured and in place, Denny shows it to Hogg for approval:

‘It’s all right, huh, Hogg? Hogg...? I mean, it’s all right now, isn’t it?’ He pushed himself away from my shoulder. His other hand was down at his dick—which was sloping away from his pants again—not fully hard yet, but about half. Denny dug out his bloody testicles. ‘It don’t matter, now. Anything. Anything’s all right. That’s what you said. It’s all right. It don’t matter.’ (135).

In this, Denny’s self-castration can be seen as attempt to subject himself to the Oedipus, a way to find stability in himself as a subject rather than be controlled by his constant sexual drive. However, his comment to Hogg hints that his attempt is ineffective. His choice of words is interesting here. At first, it sounds like a way to reassure himself that everything is going to be okay, but upon further analysis what he says is not that everything’s all right, but that “[a]nything’s all right”. In this semantic diversion lies a world of difference. It implies that Denny is not going to be able to find relief inside the Oedipal structure, because what he has done is not a repression of desire, but an interruption of the flow of desire. He is, and will remain, in a state of schizoid identity that completely disregards the Oedipal order: he does not understand nor recognise any borders or barriers at all, he has just created a plug that will make desire build up to become an uncontrollable force, and the statement that anything is alright foreshadows
his subsequent rampage. The nail causes Denny’s penis to swell and become infected up to the point where it puts Denny in a state that resembles catatonia. The narrator seems to be the only one who understands that this is problematic and therefore instinctively attempts to relieve the pressure that the nail causes (Delany, *Hogg* 153). However, the narrator is taken away by Nigg and Hawk before he can make Denny come and release all the pus, and the next time the reader hears of Denny is on the first radio broadcast reporting that he has shot several of the men at the bar and is on a killing spree around town.

Thus, the result of Denny’s attempt to castrate himself leaves him in a state of psychosis because he ceases to be a desiring-production machine, and instead becomes a fragmented psyche that cannot assemble a comprehensive understanding of reality. Therefore, one can understand his murders as an attempt to create other orifices for desire to flow through. The puncture wounds he leaves on his victims are multiple and the weapons he chooses are often piercing, like guns or fire pokers. His victims are brutally assaulted, and one of them are said to resemble a “water-melon somebody’s taken an ice pick to—for about an hour” (210). Denny’s attempts to liberate desire from the Oedipal can be seen in the killing of Mr and Mrs Stevens. In Phyllis Stevens’ witness statement, she tells the reporter how “Dad” attempts to fight Denny by hitting him with an ornamental fire poker, but that Denny hits “Dad” back and kills “Dad” by poking holes into his body before writing “THAT’S ALL RIGHT” (180) in blood and departing from the scene. Here, his graffiti “All Right” (161) is not an attempt to reassure the society, but to challenge it. All right, in this sense, should not be understood as indicating that he is alright, or that what he is doing is all right, but that anything is all right; that there are no rules, no regulations.
Essentially, the reason why Denny becomes crazy is because of his attempt to repress the flow of desire, not the other way around, and therefore, it is the Oedipal that should be seen as the harming influence rather than the decoded flow of desire. Desire should be free, flowing and ever producing, invested in everything, not just certain representations and spheres, but in everything. This becomes evident at the end of the novel, when Denny shows up in Hogg’s truck. Hogg asks him how long it was since he ejaculated, and Denny responds by saying: “I . . . I killed ’em….” I kept on killin’ em… But I didn’t come, you know? It hurt . . . But it didn’t make me shoot” (244). He has attempted to submit himself to the Oedipal, repress his libidinal drive to only invest the authorised representations, and failed. It has not achieved the desired result: him being a normal person in the eyes of society, and therefore, he has returned to Hogg because he is the only one who understands what he has done and therefore is the only one who can help him. And Hogg does. Hogg, Denny and the narrator engage in sexual intercourse where Hogg sodomises Denny while brutally smacking him, and the narrator performs fellatio (244-49). In the climax, Denny’s penis releases the tension and pressure that has built up inside due to the nail, and the libidinal desire can finally flow free once again (249). Afterwards, he slowly regains consciousness and seems more relaxed and with Hogg’s help he is able to escape from the police chasing him.

**The Public Sphere Made Private.** Denny’s rampage is heavily covered by the police, the news media and the citizens. His every move is retold in detail and with a massive police operation, and it stands in sharp contrast to all the other instances of violence that take place in the novel. Hogg’s rape and assault of a woman and her disabled daughter is merely mentioned briefly on the news report, as is a road accident caused by Hawk and Nigg’s motorcycle\(^5\) (252-53). The difference between the events is that Denny’s

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\(^5\) Although stretching the frame of the thesis, I feel that I briefly must address the subject of objectivity. In a novel so closely focused on subjectivity, it is perhaps easy to draw the conclusion that no elements of
rampage is a transgression of the borders between the public and the private. His victims are not exclusively belonging to the marginalised groups of society, but are instead seemingly random targets that do not signify any hierarchal distinction. That is the reason why society reacts so strongly to that incidence of violence and not to the others. Denny’s killing spree is an indication of how strong the flow of desire is, and exposes the fragility of social stability. Therefore, he is the one who must be stopped and controlled while the others are let be.

This continuous repression of desire can be seen throughout the novel, showing evidence of a discourse that strictly regulates the social desire in general and deviant sexuality in particular. What this rigidity in public discourse does, as Deleuze and Guattari point out, is to create a sharp discrepancy between what is to be regarded as private and what is to be seen as public. In public, there are only certain representations of sexuality that are allowed to exist, while the slightest deviance is not only hidden, but made completely invisible. Social desire, once again, is trapped within the private theatre of Oedipal sexuality, and the only type of sexuality that is authorised by discourse is heteronormative. Any deviance from it must either be ratified by the discourse of reason or be repressed and pushed into the realm of the private, where the public discourse can choose to remain ignorant of its existence.

The dichotomy between the public sphere and the private infuses all of the characters in *Hogg*. The novel does not treat the separation between public and private spheres as different locations, such as the street or the home, but rather as a state of mind defined by discourse. The public spheres in *Hogg* are those places where society’s consciousness reaches, outside of which there exists a whole world of not only sexual deviance, but also poverty, racial minorities and domestic abuse. As the novel mainly

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objectivity exists. However, the violence that passes unnoticed in the novel can be seen as being structurally infused. Because of it’s marginalised victims, it is justified by the mechanisms and hierarchies of society and therefore regarded as deplorable, but a natural part of society.
focuses on those who are located in the margins of, or completely outside of the public awareness, one can also argue that the characters themselves are holding positions as being private or public themselves because of their willingness or reluctance to submit to the capitalist Oedipal discourse. Those characters that are not willing to submit to the Oedipal subjectivity and instead are driven by desire indulge in non-normative behaviour. They do so, however, in the margins of society, which in the novel is to be seen as the private sphere. These characters are let be by society precisely because they exist under the pretence of being separate from the public. Society does not attempt to curb this marginalised space. On the contrary, society needs it to remain intact. Instead, this division can be seen as an outlet for the flow of desire where the Oedipal subject can transgress the strict borders between the public and the private as well as the disgust barrier. This is allowed as long as the barrier itself remains intact, that is, as long as the transgressors acknowledge and respect that what happens in the private sphere, stays in the private sphere. It is due to this separation that Hogg can rape people for a living and never get caught by the police. It is because of this separation that two young men can take the narrator to a burned out building (on Federal Street, ironically) and do things to him that he does not like for three days without anyone being arrested6 (Delany, Hogg 192).

Two of the most notable characters who are transgressing the implicit barrier between public selves and private selves are Red and Rufus, the two garbage men at the Crawhole. In their conversation with Mona and Harry, one can see how both of them are making rigorous attempts to curb their desire into appropriate behaviour for interacting with other people. On the reader’s first encounter with them, the radio has just aired the first reports of Denny’s killing spree. Mona and Harry are standing out at

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6 Even though it lays outside the framework of this thesis, one can, of course, also conclude that the reason Hogg and his friends escape under the radar is due to the genre itself. In terms of narrative devices as well as themes and social undertones, Hogg can be seen to resemble the picaresque genre.
the docks with their baby to have some air and Red and Rufus initiate a conversation with them about the murders. Rufus asks if Mona and Harry have listened to the radio reports of Denny’s rampage, and Harry states that they have, but that he and Mona got so upset that he had made her turn the radio off, and that it is “terrible stuff to put on the radio” (184). Mona confirms Harry’s statement, saying that she “just [does not] want to think about people doin’ stuff like that” (184). Red and Rufus, on the contrary, continue to discuss the murders in detail (185-86) and do not drop the subject until Mona puts her foot down, stating that she “[does not] even like to think about it” (186). In this conversation, one can detect a discrepancy between Mona and Harry on the one hand, and Red and Rufus on the other. Mona is clearly disturbed by the brutality, and does not want to speak of the matter. Her reluctance to speak of it at all indicates that this is something that lies outside of discourse, as she does not seem to have words to speak of it with. In her reality, such an abominable event does not happen and it makes her feel bad just speaking of it, because voicing it would make it a reality. She furthermore states that she feels sorry for the victims, and for Denny, too, who apparently is so disturbed that he resorts to killing other people (Delany Hogg 184). Red, on the other hand, is seemingly less clear about his feelings regarding Denny. He first has to seek confirmation in the others before he says that he does not like to think about it either (186). Here, one can detect the first hint that he does not have a clear understanding of what is considered appropriate, normal behaviour, as the Denny killings do not seem to have the same effect upon him as on Mona. They do, however, eventually drop the subject, which implies that they understand that Mona’s reaction is the appropriate reaction.

Upon further analysis, drawn from the narrator’s description of them, there are signs in their appearance that strongly suggest that Red and Rufus do not fit into the
discourse of normality. For example, Red picks his nose, something that perhaps would not be considered as proper conduct in the company of others, but still, as Miller specifically points out, is not particularly disgusting (92). However, as the others look away, he uses the “opportunity to put his pickings in his mouth, sucking at his thumb and forefinger” (Delany, *Hogg* 187), which would be considered disgusting by others, because allowing body fluids to re-enter the body is polluting (Miller 97). Furthermore, the narrator notices that Red has the same type of dirt underneath his fingernails as Hogg: “[f]rom the oval dirt around each, I could tell that he bit his nails too—about as bad as Hogg” (Delany, *Hogg* 187). Rufus also displays improper conduct, as he has one of his hands in his pocket and it looks like “he even could have been playing with himself” (187). The small implications that they in any way resemble Hogg foreshadow the event that happens a bit later, where they follow the narrator and have intercourse with him (191-208). However, the fact that they both attempt to hide their deviances suggests that both Red and Rufus are aware of the boundaries of what is okay and not, but that their own values differ from that of hegemonic discourse. Red eats his snot when the others are not looking, and Rufus hides his self-fondling inside his pants rather than fondling himself in public. In the conversation with Mona and Harry, the things they do must be hidden because they otherwise would indicate that they are not the good and decent guys they want to be perceived as.

Despite Red and Rufus’ unwillingness to publicly let desire flow free, it does not keep them from frequently transgressing the border between the private and the public. For instance, they tell the narrator that he can come down to their boat any time he wants to have more sexual intercourse with them. Rufus states that the narrator can take out Rufus’ penis and “nurse on the big, black fucker anytime, day [or] night” regardless whether Rufus is “sleepin’, walkin’ [or] workin”. He says that he would not care when
or where it happened as long as it is “someplace where we wouldn’t get in a whole lot of trouble” (205). In this quotation, albeit rather bluntly, Rufus explicitly shows an awareness of the restrictions that society has placed on sexuality. He is aware of the transgressions he makes when he engages in scatological sexual intercourse with the narrator, but he does so anyway, because he is unwilling to fully suppress his desires. However, since he acts in the private sphere, a little transgression is all right as long as it does not transgress the border between private and public too much. For instance, Rufus tells the narrator that he derives pleasure from getting caught masturbating and has been seen several times by Mona. She, however, pretends she does not see him, so he pretends that he has not seen her either, even though he likes it (Delany, Hogg 206). In the public masturbation, he severely transgresses the implicit understanding of the restrictions in interaction between people who are not intimate with each other in any of the authorised constellations of relationships. Mona’s reaction of choosing not to see him is a perfect example of how society chooses to remain ignorant of rare occurrences of transgressions between the private and the public, but it only does so because Rufus, too, chooses to pretend that he is not aware of the fact he transgresses the boundaries. This argument is further supported as Red and Rufus speak of an incident when Rufus is caught by the police for masturbating in public. He tells the narrator that when he was caught, he let them think that he was crazy instead of being a criminal, so they would put him in a hospital instead of in prison (205-6). This strongly implies that society understands and can deal with notions of insanity, because in insanity, society can identify that a person deviating from the Oedipal organisation, and therefore safely categorise him/her into a division of normal/abnormal. But to do such a thing as to masturbate in public just because one wants to is much more complicated for society to handle, because then it would have to negotiate the conditions of normality.
Another notable example of how society is selective in the choice of which transgressions to police is seen when one contrasts Red and Rufus’ sexual intercourse with officer “Whitey” and the narrator with society’s reaction to Denny’s killing spree. Red and Rufus first pursue the narrator and start having scatological, sexual intercourse with him in the bushes behind the dock. They are discovered by officer Whitey, who at first questions the on-going, exclaiming that Red and Rufus are “two low motherfuckers” (199) but soon enough joins them (201). In this scene, the police officer, who should be the guardian of the Oedipal discourse of justice and peace, instead turns out to be as driven by desire as Red and Rufus. He is not more morally anchored in society, no more resistant to temptations than anyone else. In this scene, the one of the novel’s main themes becomes evident: Oedipal discourse is arbitrary and hollow. The flow of desire is seeping through the capitalist psychoanalytic discourse in all instances of society because the human subject is not the main production within this discourse. The Oedipal subject is merely the enabler of capitalist desire-production. The illusion of desire as lack is the only stabilising factor for capitalism, and without it, all of society risks the possibility of collapse.

**The Schizoid Desire.** In contrast to the Oedipal subject’s hypocrisy of allowing transgressions of non-normative behaviour because they occur in the private sphere, there are characters who can be seen as standing outside of discourse and who can therefore be said to have the ability to expose society’s arbitrariness and fragility. Not being fully subsumed by the overarching structure, they can be classified in terms of schizophrenia, in the Deleuzian sense, and in consequence be seen as holding a revolutionary position in relation to society, a possibility to break down the monolithic structure of discourse in their mere organisation of their Anti-Oedipal subjects. Because it is narrated from the perspective of the marginalised characters, *Hogg* exemplifies of
how these schizoid subjects break all preconceived notions of how individuals act and for what reason they do it. By indulging solely in spheres of filth, graphic descriptions of non-heteronormative sexuality and violence, *Hogg* can be said to challenge the entire concept of normality in general, but also identifies how desire is constantly attempting to break free from its restriction as a barrier within the Oedipal subject and instead flow freely.

Even though told through a first person narrator, the story is mostly focused on Hogg as the main protagonist. The narrator starts of his tale by stating that “[t]his story is mostly Hogg’s” (Delany, *Hogg* 13). The choice of words is peculiar, because it indicates that the novel is not simply about Hogg, but that the story is Hogg’s in the sense that the narrator gives very little away of his own opinions and instead chooses to let Hogg exclusively take the centre stage in the narration, implying that the narrative ‘I’ is not the main protagonist in his own narration. This is, of course nothing unique for *Hogg*, but is frequently used as a narrative device that can create suspense, insights to the narrated events or to provide partial judgements of other characters. However, none of these things are seen in *Hogg*. In contrast, the boy plays a small role in the story itself. His narration makes a strong difference in terms of the reader’s understanding of the novel. His comments on other characters’ reactions are sparse to say the least. If any, he relates their reactions as if he was very naïve or lacking an understanding of anticipated reactions, perhaps partly due to the fact that he is an eleven year old boy. He makes small remarks sometimes, stating that someone’s arms are in a funny angle (Delany, *Hogg* 82), or that he does not know how people react to the violence and sexual harassment that they are exposed to. His sparse remarks or reactions show very little emphatic tendencies within the narrator, and strongly conflict with his detailed descriptions of the sexual activities. This narrative mechanism is no coincidence. What
Delany does is to denounce the significance of subject, because any reactions or comments from the narrator would automatically place him in a direct relation to the Oedipal psychoanalytic discourse. Instead, in the absence of authorised discourse, one can see the decentred, schizoid subject in action. The narrator does not feel the need to take the centre stage, chooses to not be the mediator through which all events are filtered. Instead, he lets Hogg be the main protagonist of his story. Because of this discrepancy between events and reactions in the narrative, the reader only gains a limited understanding of why things happen as they happen. The reader is deprived of an emotionally based understanding of what happens, and therefore is deprived of any predetermined judgement of the appropriate reaction as well as any possibility of preconceived reasons that explain why the events take place.

This approach makes Hogg stand out from other texts of what Scott Herring calls “slumming literature”, which traditionally often preoccupies itself with categorisation and exploration of non-heteronormative sexual practices under the pretence of scientifically investigating the subject (10). Several attempts to chart and explain sexual deviance have been made, for example in the work of Freud, but perhaps most prominently in Krafft-Ebing’s *Psychopathia Sexualis*. Such attempts, however, have never had an approach which intended to provide the marginalised groups with a voice, but rather to define and authorise the hegemonic discourse of normality. In *Psychopathia Sexualis*, for example, Krafft-Ebing argues that sexual perversion should be seen as disease because it is an instinct that is not focused on procreation, and therefore lacks “morality, aesthetics and law” (Krafft-Ebing 52-53). In direct contrast to texts such as *Psychopathia Sexualis*, Hogg does not make any claims to define or locate any deviances in Hogg and his friends. Because the narrator does not show any difference in attitude or understanding in any of the graphic sexual activities, he
deprives the reader of the comfort zone which allows one to regard the brutality from a moral high ground, safely ensconced in the reassurance that one is located on the normal side of the margin. Instead, the narrator throws the reader into his own indifference toward the events, forcing the reader to partake in the activities completely unfiltered and unsheltered. This creates an instability in the narration that puts the judgement and responsibility on the reader to make up his/her own mind of not only precisely where the border between normality and abnormality lies, but if there is any border at all.

In the introduction of the 2004 edition of Hogg, Stephenson argues that the narrator is not to be seen as a corrupted child, but rather that he is to be regarded as corruption in itself (Stephenson n.pag). To begin to understand what Stephenson means, we must return to the discussion of the psychoanalytic understanding of the Oedipal child. As mentioned previously, the child must separate itself from the mother in order to form an understanding of itself as a subject in a world constituted by surrounded objects. In order to do so, it must repress its desire for the mother, and instead invest it in authorised and approved objects that ensure the stability of social structure. If the child is not policed by paternal law, the child can get trapped within a state of psychosis, unable to distinguish itself as a subject and therefore unable to form a comprehension of reality. However, this is not the case with the narrator. His indifference to disgust does not originate in an inability to distinguish a self, but his disinterest in subjecting himself to, and invest desire in, the hegemonic discourse. Contrary to the psychotic, he is fully aware of what he is doing and is a part of, but he is indifferent to the disgust and deviance that take place.

Due to this indifference, the narrator willingly experiences anything that Hogg or other adults literally or figuratively throw his way. He drinks their urine, eats their
faeces, gets penetrated and penetrates and follows Hogg around to several places, like biker bars and rape scenes that no child should be exposed to. Nothing is forced on him; nothing is seemingly too much for him to stomach. He is driven primarily by desire, and because of this, he seems to not feel the need to comment or reflect on the events as much as invest his desire in experiences that fuel and produce it. Like a corrupted Rosseauian Émile, he seems to not back away from anything that social psychoanalytic discourse denounces as disgusting, but instead seems to be intrigued by the senses and smells that he encounters, not wanting to understand them, but experience and relate them to the reader with a particularity to detail that connotes the descriptions and scrutiny in the work of Krafft-Ebing. This can be seen in his descriptions throughout, but most prominently in his first encounter with Hogg. He describes Hogg’s smell and appearance, but pays less attention to sketch out a complete picture of Hogg as a character:

His cock, hanging wet from his fly, was wormy with veins. So were his big, big hands. His broad nails were bitten so far up they were three times side-to-side as from thickened, dirt-lines cuticle to bulging, grease-rimmed nub—which, on his thumb at least, went on another horny half inch. His fingers were immense and chiseled, the upper joints clouded in yellow. He was a big man, with the start of a gut. Yellow hair tufted between the missing buttons at the bottom of his shirt, and all up around a neck thick as a scrub pail. . . . He smelled like a stopped toilet-stall, where somebody had left six months of dirty socks, in the back of a butcher shop with the refrigeration on the blink, on fire. (Delany, Hogg 33).

Such a description, which would have made the Oedipal subject draw back in horror due to the risk of defilement, instead makes the boy approach Hogg and not only engage in intercourse with him on the spot, but also gladly drink his urine (33-34). His actions
strongly imply that he is not subjected to the Oedipal triangulation, as this can arguably go against all regulatory mechanisms of disgust as a barrier. The elements of Hogg contained in this description should, due to their polluting abilities, drive people away from him, but the narrator’s actions indicate that he has not repressed desire to act as a foundation of the disgust barrier. Simply, he does not recognise Hogg’s polluting tendencies at all. On the contrary, he gladly engages in the filth and dirt to such an extent as to choose to follow Hogg back to his truck and be taken away on more potentially defiling adventures. What the character of the narrator implies, thus, is that unless forced by the Oedipal, desire is not mediated into limited representations, but can be directed any way its wants.

Furthermore, it is not only in his indifference to disgust that the narrator displays tendencies that indicate that his character has been formed outside of the Oedipal triangulation. His descriptions of characters and events suggest that his understanding of them is not a top-down process where discourse functions to form a comprehension of what is perceived, which further implies that his identity is formed outside of the Oedipal mould. Returning to his initial description of Hogg, one can see that he rarely takes in Hogg’s entire person at the same time, resulting in a vague description of Hogg as “big”. Instead, he provides the reader with an incomplete and very partial description of him. Mainly, the narrator focuses on the body parts that subsequently penetrate, gets sucked on, or that have mustered up a certain amount of dirt. This can also indicate that the narrator does not have the ability, or interest, to form a fully comprehensive understanding of people as whole subjects. Not assembling the fragmented object parts to form a comprehension as an object that is wholly separated from the self, the narrator call into question the very formation of himself as an ‘I’. This analysis is further supported by the fact that he completely lacks the ultimate confirmation of identity: a
name. In Lacanian terminology, his character should be regarded as being trapped in the pre-Oedipal stage, however, for Deleuze, his character can instead be seen as the disregard for the Oedipal formation in essence. What the narrator comprehends in his interactions with others is not part-objects of the Oedipal whole, but partial objects that are complete in and of themselves. Partial objects, thus, cannot be seen as representative of anything. Partial objects are not signifiers of a greater whole, located extrinsically in fantasy; they are not representations of the parental law that the ego continuously has to define itself in the image of. They are complete objects in and of themselves and are parts of desiring-production with which the schizoid subjects are connected rhizomatically.

The Schizoid Subject: Hogg, Self-Proclaimed Rape-Artist. Hogg can arguably be seen as more developed version of the narrator. He, like the narrator is also unconcerned by filth and dirt, but since he is more vocal about his thoughts and opinions, he also can pose a more direct challenge to the Oedipal discourse. Precisely because of the fact that he benefits from the capitalist society’s commodification of his services as a rapist, he is undoubtedly a character that due to his desire-driven sexual brutality poses a severe threat to social stability, and therefore exists in the undercurrents of the hegemonic structure.

However, Hogg is aware that his person does exist in conflict with the Oedipal discourse of normality in general and sexuality in particular, which becomes evident when Hogg tells the story of his upbringing in detail to a man named Jimmy, whom he subsequently kills. (Delany, *Hogg* 112-16). Jimmy asks Hogg why he has ended up being a rapist-for-hire, implying that he must have a reason for doing what he does (112). On the surface, Hogg’s story provides the listeners with a story resembling the almost confessional manner as set up by psychoanalysis, however, scrutinising his
story, one can detect that he does not really attempt to provide Jimmy with an extensive and serious explanation for his actions, but rather parodies the psychoanalytic need for authorised explanations. Hogg’s story begins with him raping his sister, Betsy, and getting caught by his father:

Daddy came in and swore he were gonna beat the the two of us to death. But he got to laughin’ over it – Daddy had a real sense of humor–and beat us too. But he hit us twice, then he’d get to laughin’ so hard he’d have to go and sit down.

He’d take a drink, then he’d come back and start beatin’ all over again (112-13). The brutality aside, his father’s reaction shows an awareness of appropriate behaviour in relation to such an event, however, the subsequent reaction of laughing at it completely subverts the initial threat of punishment. What Hogg does to his sister is an abomination, and his father knows that, but his humour indicates that the execution of the punishment transitions from a policing exercise executed in the name of the father to a farcical parody of the original intentions.

The comical attitude is prevalent throughout Hogg’s story. Hogg tells the others that his father and mother are engaging in a destructive cycle of fighting and having sex while all the children are sneaking peeks through their bedroom door. At first, they all submit to the boundaries of inter-familial roles and relationships, upholding the incest taboo, until an event where the father tells the oldest son that he is allowed to “stick it to the old lady if he [wants] to” (113) because he is tired of her and believes his daughter to be old enough to be a suitable substitute for the mother. The scene ends with the mother, son, daughter and father all having sexual intercourse in the same room (114). Another example is Hogg’s description of his brother Piper, who at first gets beaten by their father for having oral intercourse with his siblings, with specially brutal beatings whenever he performs fellatio on his brothers (114), but during a drunk night where
Piper runs up to their dad and drinks his urine and performs fellatio on him too, the father neglects to reprimand him for it and instead seems to enjoy it, as “he let him suck on it and suck some more well after he’d finished his damn beer” (115). The story’s pretence of upholding the incest taboo while continuously transgressing it can be seen as a direct challenge to the Oedipal precondition of psychoanalytic therapy. The story has the same type of confessional tone as the case descriptions by Freud or Krafft-Ebing, but instead of drawing conclusions from it, Hogg challenges the notion that his abhorrent or deviant behaviour is the result of a psychotic familial constellation. The difference between Hogg’s story and what the patient story as s/he lies on a divan in the psychoanalyst’s office, is the humour with which Hogg tells it. Using traditional stereotypical clichés of the authoritative father and the angelic child and perverting them, and because of the extremeness of the events Hogg describe, his story transitions from a confessional tale of his innermost secrets to that of a parody, a mockery of psychoanalysis’ original intention to rationalise one’s neurosis by placing it in the Oedipal triangulation. An Oedipal explanation is not what Hogg intends with his story. His story might be true, or he might be giving Jimmy what he wants to hear, but he does not believe in the explanation himself. He knows that his behaviour is not anchored in any mental illness or instability. He just does not subject himself to the capitalist psychoanalytic discourse that constantly craves reason and representations for its stability. Thus, his confessional story becomes a mere parody of psychoanalytic theory.

Hogg’s awareness of other people’s need for submission to authorised discourse adds to the understanding of his actions and complete indifference to other’s opinions of him. Because he is driven by desire as a creative force instead of a mechanism for repression, he does not regard filth, body fluids or faeces as objects that are disgusting. Instead, he indulges in them, not because they are defiling, but because that is the way
he is. As mentioned, Hogg does not wash himself (Delany, Hogg 36), and find it amusing to soil himself in public to provoke the disgust in other characters (50-51). This is important, because in this, he shows a complete disregard for the repression advocated by hegemonic discourse. If he were to enjoy filth because he saw it as a way to pollute himself in terms of morality and place himself in the lowest strata of the hierarchal structure, he would still remain as a reproductive part of discourse. Here, also, lies the difference between Hogg and, for example the characters in de Sade’s 120 Days of Sodom. Where de Sade uses blood, faeces, urine or violence to show bishops, judges and other prominent societal characters in compromising activities, he does so to defile their positions of authority. Hogg, in contrast, indulges in his own waste, and others, because they are desiring-productions machines in themselves. The snot that he eats, the pee that he drains his trousers with, the worm-infested faeces that comes out of the anus he never wipes (Delany, Hogg 36) are all partial objects in the ever-flowing desiring-production. His body is a machine that works itself like an ecosystem of desiring-production where all partial objects serve to add further stimuli. Thus, where de Sade uses filth and dirt to defile others, Hogg uses it to defile the system that uses disgust and dirt as signifiers of immorality and perversion.

This non-stop circulation of desire is also evident in Hogg’s sexuality. Even though he frequently ejaculates, he does not regard sexual activities as the pursuit of pleasure that culminates with the orgasm. In fact, the ejaculation seems to strengthen his libidinal desire. For example, he states that he “can come every twenty minutes, all fuckin’ day long. . . . After about seven or eight times the fucker just won’t go down. I got to walk around with a damn hard-on till I go to sleep” (38). This could, of course, make Hogg look like the embodiment of the phallic Oedipal order, but should rather be seen as another divergence from the Oedipal organisation of sexuality for the reason
that Oedipal sexuality must always regard the phallus as the only symbol, the One signifier. Hogg denounces the understanding of the phallus as he only symbol for sexuality, and instead explores a sexuality that is both unrestricted and social. For example, he often derives sexual pleasure from all types of sources: from his own bodily waste and fluids, as mentioned, or getting fingers, heels or other body parts stimulated. Often, he sticks his fingers in the narrator’s mouth while he is performing fellatio, or lets the boy suck on his dirty toes, finding it as arousing as if the boy was handling his penis:

‘Take my shoe off.’ [Hogg says] . . . His sock was the black that one-time white socks get if you wear them steady for more than a month. . . . From a hole, two toes stuck out that were pretty black too. . . . ‘Lick it, boy.’ . . . Damn—the way you work my toes and fingers boy, I tell you it’s about as good as a blowjob any day” (41).

What this passage does, despite its extreme wording, is to de-signify the phallus as the One symbol. In reducing it to a partial object among a multitude of other partial objects, Hogg also denounces the importance of ejaculation, as the male ejaculation of semen is associated with the loss of self-control and its proximity to narcissistic unity of the self, culminating in the little death of orgasm (Miller 105). Since Hogg does not subject himself to the Oedipal triangulation, this fear of losing self-control, which should be understood as the fear of being reduced to a pre-Oedipal fragmentation of the self, does not hold any significance for him. Semen, and the act of ejaculation, are merely two more partial objects of desiring-production.

Moreover, because Hogg does not repress desire in the Oedipal triangulation, he does not subject himself to society’s discourse of hierarchy and is very sceptic towards notions of justice and regulations that originate from outside of the individual. Hogg
knows that in terms of societal discourse, he belongs to the lowest strata of societal hierarchy, but he does not care because it does not mean anything to him. He makes this clear when he states: “I’m shit, cocksucker. Hogg is all shit, won’t ever be nothin’ but shit; I’m shit all through and proud to be shit” (Delany, Hogg 141). His statement of pride shows a strong aversion to social structure, but it also shows an awareness of his position as a threat to society because of it. He is literally shit, the matter that society continuously attempts to make invisible and push aside in order to remain morally pure and ensure structural stability. He is dangerous to society, but also free from its laws and restrictions, because society always must make him invisible to not risk pollution, but at the same time needs his “services” as a rapist to maintain hierarchy. He, on the other hand, sees what he does as more direct and honest because he does not hide himself behind hollow chimeras of justice, peace or truth. For example, he does not see his job as nearly as bad as the imperialism and profitable armed conflicts that capitalist society invests in. The difference, for Hogg, lies in terms of responsibility. He says that:

when you’re hurtin’ someone, you’re hurtin’ ’em. You look ’em right in the eye and do it . . . you ain’t droppin’ no bombs on five hundred people you ain’t never seen. . . . you can look at any TV newscast or listen to any radio report . . . and know you’ve got more sense of duty than they do! (62 emphasis in original).

Because of his awareness of the discrepancy between discourse’s repression of desire and desire as flow, Hogg holds a liminal position from which he can comment and criticise society’s representations of normality, much like de Sade’s characters and Delany’s notion of abnormality discussed earlier. Not only can he see the same desire-production in others as within himself, he also holds a position where he can see how other characters are trying to hide their desire in their attempts to submit to social discourse.
One of the most prominent examples of Hogg’s position to criticise the hegemonic discourse occurs at one of Hogg’s jobs. While raping and assaulting a woman and her disabled daughter, a man walks in the door. At first, Hogg and his friends are suspicious, but the man, Jimmy, soon joyfully participates in the abuse, explaining that he is the one who has ordered it from Mr Jonas in the first place and that he has been “looking for an excuse to get [his] face in [the disabled daughter’s] pussy . . . for so long” (Delany, Hogg 101). He continues to be verbally interactive throughout the rape and makes several attempts to explain to the others his reasons behind his actions. Leaving the scene of the crime, Jimmy follows the others to Hogg’s truck and expresses his admiration for the work that Hogg and his friends have done. Furthermore, he tries to present an explanation of his reasons behind him hiring them, but Hogg stops him abruptly, not wanting to know:

Jimmy got to his feet. ‘You know why I wanted Mr. Jonas to get somebody to get that bitch back there? When we was doin’ work for Mr. Jonas, she and some motherfuckin’ boyfriend – ‘I don’t know why you wanted to,’ Hogg said, ‘and I don’t want to know’ (Delany, Hogg 101).

Jimmy repeats his attempts to rationalise his actions several times (102, 105, 106, 112, 117) but is consequently silenced by Hogg, who grows more and more impatient with him and eventually shoots him in the head. When Denny questions Hogg’s motives, Hogg exclaims: “That fucker was crazy, man! … You heard the way he was going on about his reasons? … You’ve got to shoot a crazy motherfucker like that, … [o]r he’s just gonna get guilty and go to the police” (120). In this exclamation, Hogg calls out the problem of authorised representation as the main mediator of reason, pointing out its inherent hypocrisy: “The fucker is up there with us, beatin’ on the bitch and fuckin’ on the bitch, and just getting into the whole thing. Then he’s gonna turn around and tell us
he’s got *reasons* for actin’ like he’s doin’?” (121 emphasis in original). Jimmy has taken part in the beating and raping of two women with who he has a relationship, women he knows, yet he indulges himself in brutality that should make every sensible person quiver in disgust and horror. However, to do what he does without justification would make him a pervert and a beast, as it would mean that he basis his actions on an intrinsic, decoded flow of desire rather than an extrinsically coded, authorised representation. Therefore, he bases his actions on reasons provided by a hierarchal society that stabilise him firmly in a discourse that can sustain and authorise his subjectivity within it. Hogg, on the other hand, sees this over-reliance on the psychoanalytic discourse in his need for coherence as an abomination:

> Now you do somethin’ like that, man, ‘cause you *want* to. ‘Cause you get your fuckin’ jollies that way. ‘Cause that’s the way you like it. But can you think of a goddamn *reason* for doin’ something like that, the way we done them women? – of somethin’ they could of possibly done to someone else to make that all right, like he’s tryin’ to tell us? (121 emphasis in original).

In this discussion, Hogg clarifies the distinction between the schizoid subject and the Oedipal subject. The Oedipal subject, because of its repression of desire, always filters its comprehension of events through the top-down process of discourse. Every perception of events and partial objects are understood in relation to preconceived notions of logic and reason mediated through discourse because this is its only option for the subject to remain stable in the sense of self. Desire as a flow, thus, must be rationalised and projected onto external objects, because if it was not, the Oedipal subject would have to be re-evaluated at its very core. The schizoid subject, in contrast, does not have to go through this process of repression. It does not identify itself in terms of self and other, but in terms of self in everything. It sees desire as a drive that does not
recognise the hierarchal binaries of the Oedipal discourse, and therefore, it does not have to sublimate its impulses of desire into representations of reason. This is emphasised in Hogg’s subsequent discussion with Ray, the bartender at the Piewicket Bar, only moments after he kills Jimmy:

> You know what I think, Ray –? … I think I ain’t never met a normal, i mean normal, man who wasn’t crazy! … Every normal man – I mean sexually normal man, now – I ever met figures that the whole thing runs between two points: What he wants, and what he thinks should be. Every thought in his head is a directed to fixing a rulestraight [sic] line between them, and he calls the line: What *Is* (Delany, *Hogg* 150 emphasis in original).

Here, one can see the opposition between hierarchal Oedipal subject and the schizoid subject more clearly. According to Hogg’s example, the ‘normal’ man’s sense-making operations run between the pole of the One signified, that is the Oedipal discourse’s paternal law, and the pole of desire as a productive drive. Taking Freud’s argument of the difference between the man setting up an ideal for himself and the man not doing so, as discussed earlier⁷, *What Is*, can arguably be seen as the Oedipal subject’s self-mediation and repression oscillating between these two poles. The result is ratification between the regulated symbolic law and chaos understood through the subject, and because this subject is Oedipal, it is conveyed through the hegemonic discourse. The schizoid subject, on the other hand, has set up no such conditions for itself, and do not need repression and mediation between the two poles to negotiate its status as a subject. It can therefore take a step back and scrutinise the Oedipal organisation from a distance.

Furthermore, according to Hogg’s discussion, the crucial difference between the Oedipal subject and the schizoid subject is sexuality. He stipulates that in this

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⁷ See the full-length discussion on page 7.
discussion, he means “sexually normal [men]” (150 my emphasis). Because of its constant repression of desire and its comprehension of sexuality as based on the forbidden desire for the mother, the Oedipal sexuality can never deviate from the Oedipal structure whose only representation of sexuality is that of the heterosexual, male libido. To step outside of that repression is, as already stated, to threaten the entire subjectivity, and therefore, the Oedipal subject has to recreate the hegemonic representation of sexuality at all times. In contrast, those who deviate from the heteronormative sexuality are able to not only invest their desire in any desiring-production of their choice but also to regard the straight line of What Is from a distance, and understand that just because one applies authorised reason to one’s actions it does not necessarily mean that what one does is right. Hogg emphasises this aspect of the argument when he says that:

That’s what a normal man thinks is reality. On the other hand, every faggot or panty-sucker, or whip-jockey, or SM freak, or baby-fucker, or even motherfucker like me, we know – . . . that there is what we want, there is what should be, and there is what is: and don’t none of them got anything to do with each other unless . . . we make it [so]. . . . And the only way you can get from one to the other is to know that (Delany, Hogg 151 emphasis in original).

Hogg’s vocalisation of this critique does not necessarily imply that Hogg himself is to be considered morally normal, because his logic is located outside of the hegemonic polarisation of right and wrong. What it means is that he has, perhaps contrary to what his actions might suggest, a notion of what is right or wrong, but it strongly differs from Jimmy’s in the sense that it originates from his own, individual interpretation of the aspects of his surroundings. He does not invest in the hegemonic view of justice; does not base his understanding of reality on the reason of others because he sees that its
structure is arbitrary. Outside of the Oedipal triangulation, desire flows free and decoded, and the schizoid desire-production machines that Hogg and his friends arguably can be taken for are not subjected to either the morality or the logos of society’s authorised sense-making machines. In fact, what Hogg’s discussion concludes is that people like him cannot be judged as crazy at all because they are not at all involved in the reproduction of discourse. Therefore, he differentiates between what he would feel if a man like Jimmy were to turn him in to the police and if one of the women whom he rapes would do it. The latter, according to Hogg, would somehow be okay (Delany, Hogg 120), whereas the former “would just turn [his] stomach” (120). The abused woman, according to Hogg’s logic, would have justifications for doing it because of the immediate effect his actions have had upon her person. Jimmy, on the other hand, would go to the police because of his feeling of guilt regarding his transgression of proper conduct in terms of morality.

Essentially, Hogg’s discussion of Jimmy can be seen as a return to Delany’s discussion of the marginalised, disgusting abyss staring back. Hogg, positioned from the margins of capitalist society in general, and outside of the Oedipal triangulation in particular, has the ability to expose the fragility of the social structure. Commenting and criticising the hegemonic order, he is calling out all the hypocrisy and fragility that it attempts to hide behind discourses of reason, truth and hierarchy (Delany, Shorter Views 25). Precisely because he regards it from across the barrier of disgust, repression and sublimation, the Schizoid subject of Hogg can reject all pretences and idealism of Oedipal triangulation and threaten the social stability in its core essence. He does not threaten to disrupt society by attempting to break it, but simply making the ideals it is founded on, the walls that encloses it, disappear. What is left when all preconceived representations of authority have crumbled is the human being: a partial object among
many other; a free-thinking, independent and liberated consciousness that has the ability to form attachment and interactions with all aspects of the universe.

**Conclusion**
What Delany does in *Hogg* is to place his perspective in the eyes of a pre-pubertal boy. This gives the novel a unique vantage point, as it allows him to explore the marginalised world he has sketched from within. This sharply differs from the traditional depiction, which has always approached the marginal underbelly of society with a birds-eye perspective under the pretence of having a moral high ground. *Hogg* deviates significantly from the traditional approach, and it leaves the reader alone to face the brutality and salirophilia described. It forces the readers to form their own comprehension and take responsibility for their own reactions to the story instead of assuming the society’s standards and moral. One can therefore see *Hogg* as an attempt to make its point both within the text itself and on a meta-literary level: that social structure is an illusion. It exists only because the hegemonic discourse makes every effort it can to make people believe that there is something that is normal, something that everyone should strive for in order to be a part of the collective. Both the novel itself and its themes can be seen as manifestations of the emergence of a new attitude towards grand narratives and absolute truths provided by a strict governmental and social structure. Speaking from a marginalised position, *Hogg* can therefore be said to destabilise and challenge the traditional, white, heteronormative discourses that have long been the only representations of society in the public consciousness.

If one is to detect any real irony within this novel, it is to be located within the language and the graphic depictions of sexual practises. Like Hogg’s “confessional” story of his family, the novel ironises over society’s moral panic regarding sexuality and alternative identities. If the narrative had taken the moral high ground, the novel could
easily have been a problematic depiction of all morally disgusting horror stereotypes of non-heteronormative sexualities and identities, but because of its narrator, it does not make any such claims. Instead, one can see the novel as a parody of all the studies that have been conducted throughout history in order to define the human being into a neat and well-structured organisation that validates and confirms the social stratification of society. The graphic depictions of homosexuality and sexual deviances are detailed and sometimes disgust-provoking, but they are supposed to be. It is pornographic because it is meant to arouse. It is, however, also well written, complex and articulate, and because of this, it cannot fully be denounced as paraliterary. Therefore, *Hogg* will challenge the hegemonic discourse of literature, forcing it to scrutinise its own structure and expand its definition of literature.

*Hogg* strongly challenges all establishments and institutions advocated through social discourse, but most prominently it challenges society’s constant attempt to stabilise itself on the abstract illusion of normality, similar to how Deleuze and Guattari’s criticism of the Oedipal subject punctures the psychoanalytic need for the repression of desire. In the novel, the notion of normality has been completely punctured and reduced to an idealised mirage of representation, only reproduced in the public consciousness because it remains oblivious to every other alternative. Societal institutions of law enforcement and public media work as powerful advocates of truth and justice. The truths these institutions produce lie only within concepts already authorised as public matter by societal discourse. Therefore, all other possible truths and representations are made invisible. This is, as Hogg points out, not a society that fully bases itself on notions of reason and thought, as it does not allow thought to be formed outside of discourse. On the contrary, it is an entrapment of the individual within a capitalist society where the main purpose of the human being is to further fuel the
capitalist desiring-machines, which entrap the desiring-production into the tightly fitted familial theatre. The individual has no option but to adapt him/herself, both in thought and sexuality, to the stipulated representations of what it means to be a subject, and therefore has no choice but to create itself in accordance with the Oedipal triangulation.

Therefore, original, revolutionary thought and alternatives to heteronormativity can only be found in individuals located in the margins of, or outside, of society’s norms and structure, in people who are either unwilling, or unable, to mould themselves to fit into the rigid notion of normality. In this marginalised position, the reader finds all types of groups: people that do not identify as hetero-cis, non-Caucasians, poor and those who by society have been diagnosed as mentally ill. These groups of individuals are Deleuze and Guattari’s schizoids, those who have the ability to think for themselves and therefore also have the inherent ability to potentially threaten to disrupt the entire social structure at any hint of fragility. This structural fragility, *Hogg* shows, is most prominently seen in sexuality and the strength of libidinal drives. Sexuality is such a strong drive within the individual that it is impossible to fully repress and sublimate it into appropriate representations. Society shows an awareness of the libidinal strength and therefore allows for it to express itself to some extent, but only in the realm of the private, safely out of the public consciousness. This means that non-heteronormativity is allowed as long as it keeps itself hidden, but as soon as it attempts to make itself known publicly, it must be brought down immediately to ensure stability. This is the reason why people like Red and Rufus are allowed to maintain their transgressive sexual activity: it does not threaten the foundation of discourse because it does no attempt to claim public recognition. This is also the reason why Hogg and his friends escape repercussions even though they rape and assault people for a living. Those who risk being exposed to their violence are those who are already in such a marginalised
position that attempting to turn to law enforcement for help will likely be met with silence and ignorance.

However, as the novel suggests a correlation between original thought and sexuality, it also implies that if sexuality will be able to move more freely and be allowed to manifest in a greater variety of representations, it will enable society to progress. Taking Deleuze and Guattari’s thoughts on sexuality as non-human into consideration, one can deduce that the graphic sexual practices in Hogg, involving fetishising body parts, dirt, filth and body fluids serve the purpose of decentring the phallus as the only signifier of sexuality. In this decentring, the entire discourse of sexuality as exclusively heterosexual is challenged. This can especially be seen in the scene where Hogg and the narrator help Denny to come to his senses, both literally and figuratively. In this, the non-heteronormative sexuality is depicted as a the facilitator of thought and reason, as it helps Denny to realise that his attempt to repress desire by investing it in authorised representations only was destructive and harmful.

This understanding of non-heteronormativity as a way of liberating the subject from the Oedipal can also be detected in Hogg’s discussion of Jimmy, or in the way he gives his reasons for believing his job to be better than other types of work. Jimmy, and people who like Jimmy need authorisation of the objects of their desires, are being trapped in the Oedipal triangulation. Their desired objects can therefore never be anything other than representations of the father and the mother, part-objects and in extension never escape the notions of incest taboo that regulates and represses thought and reason into Oedipal representations. In contrast, a liberated sexuality, as stated by Hogg in his conversation with Ray, means that a liberated thought can form a reason that does not originate in public discourse, but from within the individual itself. This, of course, also means an immediate deconstruction of society, as society always will be
dependent on a collective consciousness for its stability. However, this is a necessary move for society to move forward and realise that what it does to remain stable is to restrict its citizens from being true to themselves up to the point where social structure will cause its own implosion.
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