



## In the Arms of Canada, the Uncanny Mother: A Freudian Reading of Richard Ford's Canada

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### ABSTRACT

This article intends to explore the potential traces of Freudian Oedipus complex in Richard Ford's large novel, *Canada* (2012), with a particular focus on its protagonist, Dell Parsons, and examine the existence of a potential Oedipus complex in him and in the way Dell's mother, Neeva Kemper, protects him in the absence of a father figure. Although Freud necessitates a certain type of animosity and a particular degree of feasible violence between the father and the son to actualise an expected kind of Oedipus complex, this paper hopes to show the fact that Dell Parsons and his connection with his mother proves to be different from the standard principles and codes of a regular Oedipus complex since not only the mother plays her protective role without a clash between the father and the son, but also she herself is replaced by three to four other mother-figure substitutes which embrace and harbour Dell Parsons just like an actual mother leading to the ultimate, grand, uncanny one: Canada. Therefore, corresponding to mother figure's satisfaction with phallus desire and reaching a consequently ultimate gratification, this article follows a relatively distinctive, symbolic version of literary example of Freudian Oedipus complex in Ford's *Canada*.

**Keywords:** Freud's Oedipus complex, Richard Ford's *Canada*, Psychoanalysis

### Introduction

Richard Ford (1944 - ) is an immensely reputable novelist and short story writer who is best known for his Badcombe books featuring a recurring, main character called Frank Bascombe starting with *The Sportswriter* in 1996 up to *Let Me Be Frank With You* in 2014. Ford is the only living writer who has received both PEN/Faulkner Award and Pulitzer Prize for fiction for *Independence Day* in 1996. Apart from his three successful story collections and a wonderful memoir, *Between Them* (2017), Ford has also written several Bascombe-independent, "stand alone" novels of which *Canada* is a recent, noteworthy one. First published in 2012, has received many positive reviews. In 2013, it won the American Library Association's Andrew Carnegie Medal for excellence in fiction.

Before beginning to examine the targeted elements in this article, I would rather commence the discussion with a brief introduction to the novel itself prior to stepping towards further close reading and text analysis. Richard Ford's *Canada*, which has been nominated and awarded in several national and international literary festivals such as Prix Femina Etranger and Andrew Carnegie for Excellence in Fiction both in 2013 partly underlies Ford's common concerns regarding American family break and the deterioration of familial relationship and passionate bonds among family members.

However, despite the expectable similarities found in Ford's many other long and short fictions, *Canada* illustrates a largely broader splinter since in it the American family not only gets shattered to pieces, but also each member of it - especially Dell, the son and the narrator - undertakes an unwelcome exile to a farther, northern land quite different from other states with only different names inside the US: Canada.

*Canada* is a distinguished example of modern realist American fiction. It narrates the story of fifteen-year-old Dell Parsons who is left alone to himself after his parents get arrested for bank robbery. His twin sister does not stay with him and runs away and leaves him with his mother's friend who takes him away to Saskatchewan, Canada. There Dell has to live with the American Arthur Remlinger, a hidden murderer and violent figure in Partreau who makes Dell feel imposed to a variety of threatening influences. However, Dell deals with all the difficulties he encounters in Canada successfully and eventually decides not to leave for the US; in fact, he marries a Canadian woman and becomes a high school teacher there.

The whole narrative follows a classic-like linear paradigm, although it is amazingly enriched with Ford's individualistic style, sense of place, scrutinised descriptions of the tiniest objects in the narrator's eyes common among almost all the authors who belong to American "dirty realism" stance. Despite the apparent classic narrative line of the novel, the whole story is narrated by adult Dell, probably in his mid-forties, as a Canadian citizen and school teacher which artistically project any linguistic shift or disruption in this matter and we do not get to realise this fact until the very end of the novel. And that is how Ford has not sacrificed the novel's narrative to make narrator's focalisation shift stand out, but he has masterfully presented a large, expansive piece of absolute realist literature captured with modern characterisation, thought-provoking moral dilemmas and intriguing story telling techniques.

### Literature Review

Despite all the years after the first publication of *Canada* and it being internationally acknowledged so far. The whole body of the researches and studies done over *Canada*, not many have actually highlighted Dell Parsons' psychological inner challenges and similar mental-behavioural epitomes. Of the mentioned studies, Jennifer Andrews attempts to regard Ford's *Canada* as simply a case study so as to argue about the traditional, stereotypical presuppositions by both Americans and Canadians' fear and worry towards each other. In her "Escape to Canada: Richard Ford's Fugitive Novel" she mainly intends to focus on late twentieth centuries legal and illegal immigration between the US and Canada and invert wrongly-held clichés applying borderline and hemispheric studies (2).

On the other hand, Robert H. Brinkmeyer, Jr. takes Ford's *Canada* as a new idea beyond a geographical notion and asserts that the whole new environment helps the protagonist, Dell Parsons, see things differently and experience a new sense of desire and freedom (3) However, one of the most recent studies on Ford's *Canada* might be the tiny chapter, "Canada and the Hazards of Normality" on the novel in Ian McGuire's *Richard Ford And The End of Realism* which mainly focuses on Ford's Emersonian view of presenting ordinary, normal life as something fascinating and even hazardous. In fact, McGuire's major concern in this chapter revolves around Dell's sense of freedom followed by disorienting, moral consequences within a challenge to balance the normal and the abnormal (93-4) However, it is worth noting that besides all the above scholars who have published on different aspects of Richard Ford's fiction, Amanda Bourne's perspective is tangibly closer to what I intend to argue in this paper. In her short article on Ford's notion of masculine identity and the role of marginalised women in his fiction, Bourne believes many of Richard Ford's fictions hold an uncertain approach towards the mother or wife figure who are either pushed aside before the commencement of the narrative or "exploited by the text." (1) Nonetheless, since Bourne's only focus is mainly on Ford's short fictions, especially the ones in *Rock Springs* collection, her approach does not necessarily accords with the function of female figures in Ford's *Canada* published years after *Rock Springs*.

### Dell Parsons, the Fatherless Oedipus

In *The Interpretation of Dreams* Freud states, "If a little boy is allowed to sleep beside his mother when his father is away from home, he may easily begin to form a wish that his father should always be away, so that he himself could keep his place beside his dear, lovely Mummy." (257) This could make some of us recall the illustrious Jewish joke in which a son returns home after his first analytic session telling his Jewish mother he was diagnosed with Oedipus complex. Then his mother looks at him and says, "Oh, Oedipus! You'll be all right as long as you love your mother!" (S. Zepf, D. Zepf, Ullrich, Seel xi) Taking the above quote as the corporeal conception of the Freudian Oedipus complex (Freud himself introduced it as part of human's heritage (160)), one needs to remember that the idea of Oedipus complex was found progressively throughout the second period of Freud's work which led to establishing the differences between the sexes and generations (Perelberg 2)

According to Green, any type of Oedipus complex case holds some common, symbolic concepts such as the murder of the father, ego ideal establishment, the presence of superego, sense of loss and castration plus a noticeable feeling of sublimation (56) of which Perelberg finds the oedipal triangle, the law (dead father), desire

(lost object) and identification (with both parents), crucial to the structure of any conceptual Oedipus complex (31). However, Lacan is considered the first psychoanalyst who conceptualised “dead father” out of Freud’s *Totem and Taboo* referring to equivalence between the symbolic father and the dead one (11) which led to the further research by Jacques Hassoun who finally differentiated between “murdered father” and the “dead” one (17) to the smallest detail.

Nevertheless, despite the fact that few scholars like Max Hernandez suggest that the object of the central desire in an oedipal case is not only a matter of such harsh implication, but it is simply a desire to own with no intervention leading to the emblematic depiction of love and comprehensiveness free of any difference of sex, gender or oedipal solution (100), many other thinkers still tend to stand to Freud’s structural sexual distinction and refuse to discard the fact that Oedipus complex is basically a child’s love for the opposite sex parent (M. Fear xvi). Interestingly, one of these scholars who disagreed with Freud’s male formulation of Oedipus complex is Klein who claims that the infant internalises his/her mother through breast feeding from very early age which resulted in the creation of Kleinian oedipal interpreters since 1950s (Slipp 62).

From Klein’s point of view, every child receives an inner unconscious awareness towards the existence of his/her mother. Giving the example of young animals’ attachment to their mothers, Klein notes that human animal is no different in this matter at all and bases this particular knowledge for any child’s primary connection to their mother (Ford 247). Interestingly, she contends that this early childhood conception leads to the development of superego onwards along with spreading power of life and death predispositions (Ford 246). That is, since both good and bad come from the mother’s image, both feelings of frustration, desperation and failure as well as pride, joy and comfort are simply related to the figure of the mother who not only supports the child with food, but also enriches passion and understanding from the very early stages (Ford 247).

Accordingly, the integral argument in this paper attempts to relate an interconnection between the chain of four different female powers beginning from the mother continuing in her daughter, Berner, her friend, Mildred Remlinger and Florence La Blanc in light of mixed Kleinian-Freudian interpretation of Oedipus complex regarding phallus castration and (motherly) female anxiety of its absence. Freud’s self-analysis of this complex is essentially founded on one basic, generative motive: son’s attraction to mother which in this paper concerns the way Dell is engaged with his mother’s mutinous secret plans and her gradual realisation of her inner hatred towards her marriage.

Apart from his mother, who plans the whole idea of transporting Dell (and his sister) to Canada through her friend, Mildred, his sister seems to serve as the second piece of the above-mentioned chain of female powers which directly or indirectly are supportive of the only promising phallus to survive and develop. Showing occasional signs of slight transgression, Berner seems to have absorbed her mother’s rebellious interactions with masculine environment. In an early scene in the novel when Mr. Parsons, Dell and she are getting back from their failed attempt to go to the local fun fair, Berner who has gone bored to death, bursts into tears after several willful arguments with her father and suddenly remarks, “I wish I was a long way away from here.” And once mentions Russia in her imagined list and even a farther place in the US like California (Ford 261), her father immediately relates this to her mother’s character and says, “We all wish that sometime, sweetheart. But you and your mother seem to wish it more than most. You two’ll have to discuss it.” (Ford 262)

After the police take their parents away, Dell and Berner have to deal with their unwantedly new experience of loneliness in a large, parentless house. Although the same age, Berner once returns to Dell and reassures him, “Mother told me I have to take care of you.” (Ford 322) It is during their lonely, anxious and confusing stay at home that one of the most striking scenes of the novel, or let us say of Ford’s all fiction writing record, occurs and develops as Berner’s most significant (protective) closeness to the only surviving phallus figure. On a Saturday night, after Rudy Paterson, her boyfriend, leaves once he is done with his dance, drink and dinner, Berner sneaks in Dell’s bedroom and lies in his bed with her arms around him in both scare, confusion and desperation (Ford 358 – 9) in a way as if she has just served her transitory duty of phallus protection taken from her mother and then leaving for her own wild, dream life and perhaps tend to treat her own, individual phallic desire other than somebody else’s, even her mother’s since she whispers in his ears that she has finally made up her mind to run away with Rudy (Ford 357). And this way the family phallus transmission is left to the next piece of the chain: Mildred. In addition to such female potentialities observed in the novel, it is quite noteworthy that it is Dell Parsons who narrates the whole story to the reader and he shares his own personal sensations regarding how he would prefer to be sheltered by his mother rather than his farther, Bev Parsons, heeded the least by Dell.

As Debra Modellmog writes, “when Sigmund Freud chose the Oedipus myth to exemplify his theory of infant development, he changed forever the way we look at the myth and the way we might read myths in general” (100). That is, Freud established a brand new looking glass for watching an archaic type of drama which was used to be observed from the view of legendary heroes and their struggles so as to take the crown and rule the universe; what he introduced in the early 20th century as infantile sexual development in terms of primary desire was a total revolution through the whole expansion of literary analysis. That is why this paper intends to consider Dell Parsons

in Richard Ford's *Canada* to be another kind of Oedipus so that to reflect the traces of his behavior in light of Freudian psychoanalysis reexamined by many different scholars after him of which Klein in the 1960s is a major one.

In general, an ambivalent attitude to the father and an object-relation of a solely affectionate kind to the mother makes up the simple content of Oedipus complex for the son (2005, p. 161). Significantly, what appears to be the most crucial aspect of the narration of *Canada* in terms of Freudian theory of Oedipus complex is that the narrator is the son of the family who has already observed and recorded all the ups and downs of his family ruination in his memory and now as an almost middle-aged teacher remembers the very ruination. However, one needs to bear in mind that Dell is mainly obsessed and shadowed, at the same time, by his mother's plans and management process throughout the whole novel.

"But she was strange. Which doesn't explain why she didn't Bundle Berner and me onto a train to Tacoma ( or Chicago, or Atlanta, or New Orleans ), and didn't let our father come home an empty house, and have that be what brought him to his senses - if he had any." (Ford 138)

And this is the beginning of the process in which Dell and his twin sister, Berner, are magically treated by their mother according to what Freud founded as being desired and desirable. Freud stressed that children of both sexes tend to behave differently following their sexual discovery: the boy who feels possessive of penis acts in a certain way to be desirable, while the girl who undertakes the lack of penis in her learns to desire in the outside world finally (2008, p. 13). And this clearly explains how and why Dell tells us, "Berner looked like my mother but was taller, even at fifteen- five foot eight. She had a sweet side like our father, but she guarded it and mostly acted as if it wasn't there, which I'd say was like our mother." (Ford 198) In fact, the family is basically constructed on Freudian principles in Dell's view. He'd rather observe Berner a female derivation of his father, whereas he almost always takes sides with his mother whenever positive projections and thought lines are concerned.

Borrowing Freudian projection and introjection while dealing with children's psychoanalytical treatments, Klein asserts that this double process of introjection and projection is very likely to lead to both internal and external influences. She maintains that this interaction continues within every stage of one's life just like the way introjection and projection continue to be during maturity without losing their importance in one's connection to the outside world to the extent that even an adult is not free from the effect of his inner world (250).

One of the first moments that triggers Dell's potential sense of introjection occurs when he finds his sister running off with her boyfriend (Ford 393); practically speaking, although Berner might have now realised well enough to project her desire towards something outside domestic environment, Dell is left alone with nothing but his mother's projection: her well-organised plot to send him away somewhere safe and out of Great Falls' reach. One could imply that Dell can be signified as an unsheltered phallus here who has lost the opportunity of his mother's attendance and protection since she has been imprisoned for the robbery committed along with his father (Ford 298). It is also impossible for Dell, as the only male element of this Oedipus complex, to seek protection from the father side due to his unavailability and being captured by local police.

All the protection Dell looks for from his mother - gone to jail and left him and his sister home alone - could be originated from his progressively slight sympathies and common sense with his mother before being jailed. Indeed, Dell seems to be Phallus the signifier whose thirst for motherly or feminine integrity remains unrequited (Nasio 80). "Man and son commit bank robbery. Both are killed." This is a line of thinking he didn't treat himself to plus "a fate my mother saved me from" (Ford 202). This is how Dell recurrently feels sheltered either by his mother's attendance and or her female replacements through her plan of sending him to a "strange" place called Canada. The plan of the bank robbery by Dell's parents fails as the children lose their home and family and Mr. and Mrs. Parsons also get arrested and imprisoned consequently. Therefore, the Freudian bipolarity of Dell and his mother which is already strengthened on the grounds of phallus trust relationships proceeds forcefully as the narrative unfolds gradually.

On the one hand, sympathy and common sense between phallus the signifier and its protector in addition to the element of trust between these two account for the most influential causes for the great escape of the phallus to Canada.

"I've decided I'm going to write something." She nodded at me as if this was news I'd like. "What is it?" I asked. The deputy put his hand on my shoulder. He was pulling me away. "I'm not sure what it will be yet," she said. "It'll be a tragic-comedy, whatever it is. You'll have to tell me what you think. You're a smart boy." (Ford 388)

The mother has finally revealed her intention of writing something similar to a novel or whatever to her son when meeting him in prison for the first and the last time. This is where one sees the validity of the phallus emerging in the mother (2004, p. 84) who is regarded as his only protector as well. Similar to the ground of trust between the mother and the son, the final step of the mother's plan surpasses all the possibilities and lets the reader recognize how the son semi-consciously and the mother consciously turn the plan into reality. "He mashed

the accelerator, and we lurched away into the dark. It was Canada where I was now. It was my mother's plan." (Ford 434)



### Neeva Kamper: The Uncanny Mother

Donald Capps suggests that when the loss of object is identified with the loss of mother for the phallus, anxiety would be aroused more (20) and, therefore, one of the elements affecting Dell's motivation towards his mother's tendencies could be pursued in the loss of his mother who feels rather uncanny from the commencement of her presence in Dell's narration of the novel. But why uncanny? There are three explicit and one implicit potential mother figures within the novel who resist stability and indifference, especially treating the masculine space of the environment: one is the certain, presupposed paradigm, the mother, the second could be her offspring, Berner, the third is undoubtedly the lady painter, Florence La Blanc and the implicit one is suggested to be Florence's daughter-in-law who never appears in the novel, but she is supposed to receive Dell after Florence's part comes to a close. The mother and the daughter both reveal such potentialities from the commencement of the novel, especially when Berner, the sister, occasionally comments on their parents' mismatch and failed partnership: "She believed she and my father should never have married- she should've seen ahead that they both would've been happier if they hadn't." (Ford 110)

In Kate Millet's perspective, if women want to survive the patriarchal environment, they are obliged to act feminine: to resist and make headway (65) and the way Neeva Kamper resists is tentatively tangible in her son's narration. She regrets marrying Bev Parsons and Dell manages to hear or listen to her frequent complaints concerning how free she always wanted to be and how confined she feels by her married life.

"A young man in a tan suit and carrying a briefcase entered through the two sets of barred doors, let in by another deputy. He came in our direction but stopped in our father's cell. One of my father's hands extended out, and the man grabbed it and shook it. My father laughed and said, "O-kay, O-kay." Seeing this man talking to my father made me realize my parents had less to do with each other now. This may have been why my mother felt light. Something had left her." (Ford 385)

On the one hand, Dell is alarmed by castration anxiety which has always been following him since his mother's regular absence began to threaten her intensely and, on the other hand, he has utterly observed how free his mother feels whenever the shadow of his father is faded away. That is why Dell sympathizes with his mother ardently enough to make him wonder if he may quench his phallus desirability with the promised presence of his own mother. This way, he endeavors to form his own self and obtain his mother's company. Freud introduces this pattern as the "Depression Pattern" in which the male child of the family attempts a role play of his self-oppressed by his parents hoping to regain his own good self.

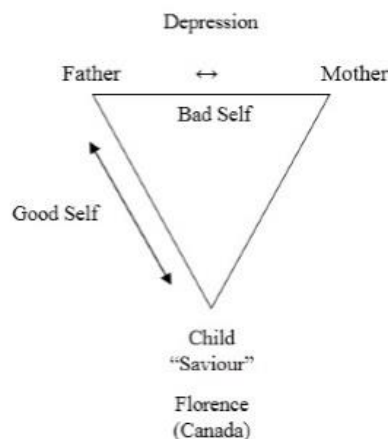


Figure 1. Freudian "Depression Pattern"

As can be seen in the above chart, it is not difficult to realise how one's spouse perceives the other as a failure. The very spouse (the mother) who has always struggled to transfer the sense of bad self to the other and preserve the dominance in the family, plays the role of a hazard to the child (the son) who is made to pursue the so-called dominant parent so as to be saved and feel able to regain his own good self. This way, the child (the son) finds himself in no dilemma as the predicament looks to be removed by the very parent's rebellious supervision (Slipp 454).

"When my mother was in the North Dakota Women's Penitentiary in Bismarck, where she was imprisoned after her and my father's trial, she wrote about the next days and the ones preceding them in her chronicle—an account that goes into great detail about what she and my father did. She'd had aspirations to be a poet when she was in college at Walla Walla, and possibly she thought a well-written version of their story would offer a future for her when she got out of prison which she never did." (Ford 109)

This is how regression and disappointment motivate Neeva Kamper not only to set off but to plan to save her compatible phallus from the chaos left behind since although being an adult woman, according to what Freud developed about the female aspects of Oedipus complex confirming the never-ending process of phallus desire for a woman throughout her life, (Nasio 121) Neeva will permanently feel uneasy without saving her only potential phallus figure. Evidently, Dell's empathy with her mother's lost opportunities of an unrestricted and blissful life without being married accords with the certain trouble that the masculine subject of desire does not gain from the female object inexplicably (Butler 17). For that reason, Dell finds any feminine rebellion originated from her mother in compatibility with his far-fetched phallic desire of which one could be his twin sister, Berner, who does not manage to fulfill their mother's plan and consequently leaves Dell alone much earlier than the actual enactment of the plan.

"Berner, as usual, stayed in her room, listened to her radio, tried on cosmetics, shaped and reshaped her hair, used the long cord to talk privately on the telephone to Rudy, and began (I'm sure) to plot her escape, from which she'd never come back, since very soon there would be nothing to come back to." (Ford 134)

Along with what Ernest Jones notes regarding the "unconscious loved sister" as a "substitute for the mother" (128), Dell also seems to consider his twin sister to be a truly loyal reflection of his mother's feminine rebellion and resistance in terms of leaving the masculine world behind. In fact, Berner proves to be a splendid duplication of her own mother to the extent that her passion for lawless freedom from the manly world around her abounds in her vividly. As a matter of fact, whenever Dell looks at Berner, he may find a little Neeva Kamper in her who has already decided not to get trapped in matrimony as her mother did.

The coexistence of the mother and then the daughter regarding how they daydream about leaving home and reaching their idyllic existence prepares a susceptible potentiality for the son to smooth the idea of Freudian man in his future; the man who has to distance himself from women in his life and control them in order not to be threatened by castration anxiety (775). This female potentiality reaches its most extreme harmony when even the father realizes how he is possibly trapped by two feminine rebels at home. The following quotation, remembered and narrated by Dell, implies the same notion to an understandable extent:

"I wish I was a long way from here," Berner said mournfully. "I wish I was in California or Russia." "We all wish that sometime, sweetheart," our father said. "You and your mother seem to wish it more than most. You two'll have to discuss it." (Ford 261)

Juliet Mitchell argues that feminist enmity with Freud should be reconsidered because psychoanalysis is not merely a recommendation for patriarchal society but an analysis of one (53). To state it differently here, one may clearly infer how castration anxiety - elicited publicly by Freud for the first time - is allocated to corporate with female disloyalty in family boundaries. That is, the more feminine potentiality of escape and regression becomes larger and motivated, the more the son's castration anxiety is lessened since he confidently verifies that he'd be a successful Oedipal case having managed to leave the father behind. That's why there is no doubt that *Canada's* Dell Parsons would empathize with his genuine source of phallus protection in his vicinity (his mother) as someone who has always been banned and banished by a father who suits belonging the bad self to himself.

"If that purpose had been achieved, there's no doubt she'd have begun her new life (with Berner and me) somewhere else. She was only thirty-four. It's not far-fetched to think of her as a teacher in a small college somewhere—less alienated, probably unmarried, in basic agreement with her lot—her bank robbery left far behind." (Ford 203)

According to what Millet considers to be true about Freudian theories, which are mostly analytical and not anti-feminist, it is fairly justifiable to claim that to believe castration anxiety in terms of phallus objectivity *Canada*, a true gynocriticism facet is manifestly appeared on the other side of Parsons Family. In other words, many significant sections of our literature is either masculine or displaying women as completely cliché images who have proved themselves as they have always been expected to. Josephine Donovan postulates that this is mainly because patriarchy has not only been expansive through our culture and literature, but almost all feminine images have been an anticipation of masculine desires (267). On the contrary, the only coalition here that runs with confident tranquility is the son's observation of his mother's regression and desire is to run away; Neeva Parsons could not be merely taken as a simple and cliché image of a woman, but she is actually a rebellious, divisive and resisting one, what Freud names "uncanny".

In a letter to Wilhelm Fliess, Freud claims that what he recognised and developed in terms of Oedipus complex in his psycho-sexual theories was rather universal in early childhood (180) and such universality is always pursued by the son of the family through a female figure. Dell's mother partly achieves the qualities of this figure for him; interestingly enough, even when she is in jail and fails to cover her phallus objectivity within Dell's projection of existence, she lets her friend, Mildred, takes the place of a temporary phallus protector in her own absence. Such protection is truly realized by Dell when Mildred reassures him at the right time that "They're looking for you to put you in an orphanage. You better think on that. I'm trying to save you." (Ford 405).

### Canada: the Uncanny Mother

The defensive walls of Dell's mother along with potential incentives observed by her sister's motivation to escape from the mess their father has provoked at home in addition to how Mildred plays the role of a transitory messenger as the last resort in this triangle, whose upper head is the mother, drive Dell forwards into the arms of Canada. Canada has always been an approachable, but considerably unrespectable destination in Dell's view that draws him to itself in line with what his mother has already decided. In fact, Dell finds himself lurched away into the darkness, into Canada which was his mother's plan (Ford 434); this is how the overwhelming castration anxiety is removed and replaced by phallus protection the mother fundamentally fulfills. Eventually, the son is pushed through the darkness of Canada to which one may attribute the organic similarities of the womb and the uncanny mother who takes the responsibility of bracing the young phallus until Oedipal period is successfully passed.

Since Neeva Kemper's actual access to her only phallus defense is lost after ending up in prison (and committing suicide in jail) and because her trusted female friend, Mildred Remlinger, also cannot satisfy an enduring image of a replaced mother figure and only plays the role of a transition – she picks up Dell and delivers him to Canada where her brother and all his vaguely infamous community are awaiting Dell – the only revivification of the mother figure Canada offers to fill the loss of an actual (and perhaps metaphorical) mother is no one but Florence La Blanc. In all those chaotic, weird and murderous-some atmosphere that Arthur has brought up in his little territory of Saskatchewan, Canada, which indeed partly engages Dell with an ultimate experience of witnessing the murder of two so-called American official authorities who have made it to Canada in search of Arthur Remlinger, the only light of hope is Dell's mother's Canadian substitute: Florence.

Many years later, Dell who has now become a high school teacher in Ontario, Canada, advises his own students "to look as much as possible straight at the things they can see in broad daylight." (Ford 396), in other words, to observe their surrounding just like Florence did while painting:

"Florence was painting in the middle of Manitoba Street. Her picture was nothing more than the view straight back past the vacant post office and a pair of broken-in-houses to the backs of the commercial row where I walked and that had been alive when Partreau was a whole town ... I couldn't see why this would be a subject for a painting, since it was right there for anybody to see any time, and wasn't beautiful – nothing like Niagara Falls in the Frederic Church picture, or the flower arrangements my father painted with his numbers kit. (Ford 291)

As apparently the last piece of the phallus defense chain starting from Dell's mother, Florence, definitely plays the role of a safe, sane and normal female replacement to Dell whose last two morals concerning the fact that life is "handed to us empty" and "what you see is most of what is there" (Ford 395) both derive from his encounters with Florence in Canada (Ford 95). Amazingly enough, when she finally decides to send Dell to live in Winnipeg with her own son and daughter-in-law openly allows Dell to run away from his past and Arthur, go and educate himself (Ford 396) and very much likely get nourished by another mother substitute figure, the Florence's daughter-in-law, in order to stay the very phallus figure his mother always desired to shelter and preserve in the arms of a newly-grown, grand mother called Canada which finally make him tell us, "Canada was better than America, she said, and everyone knew that – except Americans. Canada had everything America ever had, but no one was mad about it. You could be normal in Canada, and Canada would love to have me." (Ford 324)

### Conclusion

Regarding the points mentioned in this paper, it can be concluded that despite what some postmodern feminist scholars consider Freudian theories to be exclusively misogynist, after almost a century now such philosophies concerning human psycho-sexual's growth and development in terms of unconscious expansion and concealed desires still prove to be curiously multidimensional if one intends to take an utterly fresh standpoint studying Freud in cases of literature or sociology. This papers, serving as a proper instance, clearly indicates that when Richard Ford's *Canada* is thoroughly broken down into parts on purpose of Freudian analysis, one may closely reach deeper aspects of the psychology of the novel; taking Oedipus complex as the centre of the circle, one can broadly penetrate through every single midpoint and then discover a vast amount of unexplored insights.

Once Dell is identified as a Freudian disheartened son in his family and other relationships like the ones between his parents are examined, there will be no end for a broad range of studies to excavate a chain of causes and consequent results. The sphere of female forces to protect Dell's castration anxiety by his mother, sister, mother's friend, Mildred Remlinger, Florence Le Blanc and even her daughter-in-law whom we do not get to know much about and her role to fit in this category is only mildly suggested in this paper, can be recognized as a more tangibly extensive female (mother) figure which all settle down and resolve in Canada, the ultimate mother. Therefore, Canada, which takes the responsibility of embracing Dell as a master mother, holds him tightly and, despite all its strangeness and rebellious milieu and wild natural forces around it, proves strongly to function as a descent replacement for Dell's imprisoned (and then dead) actual mother so as to defend him in her expansive, uncanny shelter. That is how Freudian theories and investigations are not only forsaken in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but they



are taking the role of a more valuable and profound touchstone of human psyche once applied to great works of literature. In other words, the more literate advances aligned with modern psychology and psychoanalysis, the more Freudian philosophy is recognized as an important, key competent of today's knowledge.

Richard Ford uses his particular stylistic techniques and attributes so masterfully that they seem to be well-placed in the novel which, consequently, make this large work of fiction a splendid read in dirty realist genre. The issues, desperation, contradictions, questions of fate and determinism, the matter of free will and American family crisis provoked by divorce and crime are all reflected in Dell Parsons, the protagonist, who could simply represent a modern, white, middle-class layman in broad speaking. That is how *Canada* presents an image of a general picture of a white American man in the chaotic world of modernism turning to a semi-refugee in the strange unknown hands of Canada that turns out to be his ultimate home.

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