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Escapable Nature of human desire in Edward St. Aubyn's *Some Hope* and *Mother's*

Milk

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By

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Recommendation for Acceptance

This is to certify that Mr. Prakash Neupane has completed this thesis entitled "Escapable Nature of Human Desire in Edward St. Aubyn's *Some Hope* and *Mother's Milk*" under my supervision and guidance from December 2013 to July 2014 A.D. I recommend the thesis for Viva voce for acceptance.

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled "Escapable Nature of Human Desire in Edward St. Aubyn's *Some Hope and Mother's Milk*" submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Mr. Prakash Neupane has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

This research explores the “Escapable Nature of Human Desire” which ultimately results into the cause of human downfall. This study examines the novels from the perspective of psychoanalysis in general and Freudian concepts of eros, thanatos and obsession, and Lacanian concept of desire as chain of signifiers in particular. An individual family and society gets affected. To prove into that fact, it studies the psyche and behavior of Patrick, Mary and Eleanor who are the aristocratic Melrose family. They are the major characters of St. Aubyn's *Some Hope* and *Mother's Milk*. Aubyn's above mentioned major characters have different desires and they try to achieve such desire. They obsessively run after their desires. As a consequence, there appears conflict in the family which invites downfall in the family as well as in the individual. Patrick wants to be materially prosperous and sexually satisfied sleeping with his wife. But Eleanor and Mary become obstruction for his desire. Mary is preoccupied with maternal feelings. She wants to be good mother. She confines herself in the childcare activities, and she ignores Patrick. Like his mother Eleanor at her old age wants to involve in religious and social work by donating family property of Sant Nazarie to the foundation. They have different desires but they cannot achieve because desires are the subjects to change.

Contents

	Page
Acknowledgements	
Abstract	
I. St Aubyn's writing and Human Desires	1-10
II. Metaphoric Desire in St. Aubyn's <i>Some hope</i> and <i>Mother's Milk</i>	11-41
III. Human Desire results into the cause of Human Downfall	42-43
Works Cited	

I. St Aubyn's Writings and Human Desires

This research is a critical discussion of Edward St. Aubyn's sequel novels '*Some Hope*' (2004) and '*Mother's Milk*' (2006) from the perspective of psychoanalysis. It tries to investigate the nature of human desire in general and obsession created by the desire in particular. Moreover, this research studies the inner psyche of major protagonists of these narratives. These characters have distinct desires and they try to fulfill it. They spend their lives in isolation. They run after their desires desperately which ultimately caused the obsession in Aubyn's characters.

In the aristocratic Melrose family, most of the major characters like Patrick, Eleanor and Mary pursue their desires at any cost without concern with the family interaction, co-operation and bond. Melrose family is divided because of their distinct desires. Patrick Melrose, the protagonist of the novel is obsessed with material and sexual desire. He endeavors to fulfill his desire throughout his midlife. Mary's self-centered and obsessed behavior increases since she gives birth to Thomas, a second child. She is pre-occupied with maternal feeling. Eleanor at her old age wishes to involve in social welfare donating all family property to the foundation. She is obsessed with philanthropist feelings. Patrick's material satisfaction is delayed as Eleanor has Philanthropist feeling and his sexual life is frustrated as Mary is obsessed with maternity. This study examines the novel from the perspective of psychoanalysis in general and Freudian concepts of eros, thanatos, and obsession and Lacanian concepts of desire as chain of signifiers in particular.

Aubyn's writing strategy is innovative and creative. He does not only incorporate romantic theme but also explores the social, political, moral, religious and psychological and gender issues of the modern world. As he is the British writer, he depicts the contemporary American political, social, and religious aspects artistically.

So he has gained the popularity in widespread of literary field. This prose style is clear and finest he is best regarded for his witticism in his writing. His word choice is clear so, dialogue he gives to the character is short and interesting. These words and dialogue provide fun and humor to the readers. He satires aristocratic and the upper classes family. He provides the entertainment to the reader till the end of his writing by portraying the trivial matters in everyday life of aristocratic family.

Aubyn's writings deal mostly with the psychological issues. He basically depicts the human temperament and inner struggle directly and indirectly. He brings the character's psychological condition into the light and tests to the human predicament. In these novels, major characters want to avoid the destiny that early generation faced but falls into the grip of same destiny. Patrick's father hates Patrick and ruins his life. Patrick wants to save his future children from being corrupted by the bad influence of the early generation but he fails to do so, as he himself starts acting as rival to his sons. He feels jealousy since Mary avoids sleeping with him and fully pay attention towards her child cares. Likewise, Eleanor was deprived of family property and she wants to avoid it to happen in her coming generation but she decides to give all family property to the foundation. While giving touch to psychoanalysis in his writing his creation becomes autobiographical. The best instance for it is his *Some Hope* and *Mother's Milk*. Edward St. Aubyn's both series have got various critical responses since its publication because of its diversity in themes and style.

One of the critics of Edward St. Aubyn is William Skidelsky. He interprets *Some Hope* novel as satire to upper class family, he further remarks:

Some Hope lacks is the sort of gleeful dissection of upper class life. Its satire is too often directed against easy targets: Robert's nanny a novena rich family the Melrose visit in France. St. Aubyn's book

contained description of vicious prejudice and snobbery without seeming snobbish or prejudice unfortunately, this is not always the case here. When the Melrose stays in Network, all they can talk about is how ghastly the place is. They endlessly joke about the “God Bless our Troops” Aubyn is doing here is mocking about what is in any case a stereotype. The satire in his works may not always have been subtle but at least it had bite. In documenting Patrick’s escape from the aristocracy has St. Aubyn thrown away his best subject? (54)

William Skidelsky views this novel as depiction of life style of aristocratic or upper classes. He sees this novel as the satire on the rich people who wonders and visits without any serious work. He finds Aubyn’s doing satire on the people of Europe. He mentions that this story is satiric, Ironic in the contemporary society of Europe and America. Europe is guided by the materialistic obsession; People’s mind is filled with money and property. They count their property as superior thing. Aubyn’s book contains the description of vicious, prejudice and snobbery matters which explicit that it is the cause of destroying family relation and family mutuality in the contemporary society.

James Wood another famous critic, in his critical essay. *Noble Savages*, reviews the novel *Mother’s Milk* and he remarks:

Mother’s Milk is a beautiful novel; the best of the quintet St. Aubyn’s ashen prose elegantly conveyed the bitter arrest of Patrick’s early forties. While his mother declined in a nursing home, Patrick drank himself senseless and fought long, enervating battles with his wife, all the while trying not to replicate his father’s alcoholic anger. Patrick only ally is his intelligence and it gives the novel their power. But it is

an ambiguous talent for him to have. Patrick would surely be monstrous to live with, but he is vital company in these novels. (2)

James wood in his critical essay studies about narrative of the novel. He praises St. Aubyn's prose style which has brilliantly captured the protagonist's midlife crises. Patrick is the protagonist of the novel. He is at his forties, he plunges into the crisis as his mother decides to give family property to the foundation and his wife Mary ignores him since she becomes mother of two sons: Robert and Thomas do not sleep with him in the bed. He has long struggle with his wife. He wants to get the wife's full attention to him but she is all the time preoccupied with maternal feelings.

James wood again interprets the text from another perspective. He re-reads the *Mother's Milk* from comedian perspective. He highlights the humor aspect of the novel. He writes:

One of the books's running Jokes is that Eleanor was a monster, but only her immediate Family knows it. At her funeral, Patrick must suffer the sight of his mother's friend supporters, and hangers- on eulogizing her world historical generosity. Beneficiaries' of her large include these connected to the foundation that has made use of her French house [---] Another of these Eleanor boosters, a women named Fleur, who worked in a charity shop set up by Eleanor, and who considers her patron "one of the every few good people I even met" asks Patrick if he is proud of his mother. He politely the mock-stern response: "What do you mean you 'suppose so? You've worse than my children absolute Monsters". (3)

James wood in this regard views that, this novel is comedy. He attaches intelligences of Patrick but he comments Eleanor's behavior as childlike. He imagines the funeral

sight of Eleanor. Wood thinks that Patrick would respond in the question of attendants that his mother is monster. Eleanor wants to be generous by giving family property to the foundation. The foundation member praise Eleanor's generosity so that they can take advantage from Eleanor but Eleanor can not understand the sentiment of foundation members. St. Aubyn satirizes so called generosity of aristocratic upper class people like Eleanor. In the society there are so many supporters and followers to praise basically in the aristocratic European society.

Though the afore mentioned critic has observed and interpreted the novel from the different critical perspectives but none of the critics have observed it from the Freudian concept of obsession and Lacanian concept of desire as chain of signifiers. Without a proper study of this novel from the perspectives of Freud and Lacan the meaning of this novel will be incomplete. Therefore, the present researcher purposes to carry out the research from this angle by analyzing the above mentioned critic's statement related to this novel.

St. Aubyn's these two novels presents human desire is not attainable. Excessive devotion to achieve, desire that causes obsession in the individual. Which can proved through the observation of adult psyche of Patrick, Mary and Eleanor of Melorse family in Aubyn's narratives. Aubyn's character's Patrick, Mary and Eleanor strive to achieve their desire. They strive to achieve that desire and ultimately they suffer from psychological problem and obsession.

The dynamic form of psychology that he called psychoanalysis as a means of analysis and therapy for neuroses is developed by Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). Psychoanalysis is the therapeutic method applied in the medical field in the treatment of patient of mental illness especially neurosis and hysteria in the early decades of 19th century. Its basic purpose is to see how neurotic personality develops in individual

and determine a sort of treatment. But today's widespread psychoanalytic criticism since 1920s, where premises and procedures were established by Freud is extended form of psychoanalysis. Its increasing expansion to account for many developments, like religion as well as literature and other arts took the form of psychological literary criticism. In the broader sense of psychoanalysis, Freud does not limiting in the treatment of neurosis: "The use of analysis for the treatment of neurosis is only one of its applications; the future will perhaps show that is not the most important one" [*Freud qtd in Rieff 32*].

Freud views that, relevance of psychoanalysis in treatment of neurosis may not be most important but its relevance, in broader sense, like socialization, family, religion, sexuality, childhood, personality, relation, literature, love and hate may become most important.

In the same regard, Robert Bocoock in the book *Sigmund Freud* argues; "In So far as Freud developed a new subject area of research and clinical practice, if not a new science, he can be seen as contributing to an area of theory and therapeutic practice which has been of value and interest, to many" (14).

This citation exposes that psychoanalysis provides support to broaden our horizon of perception in a novelty manner. This theory has come to become milestone that discusses every aspect of human beings emotion and behaviors. Through this means psychoanalysis, we become able to understand the inner human sentiments and feelings.

Freud influences many other thinkers, those influenced thinker are Jacques Lacan, Carl Gustav Jung, Julia Kristiva and so on. Lacan develops different psychoanalytical view twisting the Freudian view. Lacan describes psychoanalysis in his book *Ecrits* as:

Psychoanalysis is the science of the mirages that appear within this field. A unique experience, a rather object one after all but one that cannot be recommended too highly to those who wish to be introduced to principle of man's follies, for, by revealing itself as a kin to a whole gamut of disorders, it throws light upon them. (119)

In the above quoted line focuses Lacan views psychoanalysis as science of mirages. Mirage means only the confusion to viewer. Whatever the viewer thinks as real and approaches to perceive real that escapes and again appears mirage in the distant. According to him, psychoanalysis is unique experience only. Psychoanalysis throws light upon the miraculous psychic apparatus of each individual.

Lacan rewrites Freud's account of unconscious using linguistic terminology and posits three states of human mental disposition. They are 'imaginary order', 'symbolic order', and 'real order'.

The imaginary order is a pre-oedipal phase where an infant is yet unable to distinguish itself from its mother's body or to recognize the lines of demarcation between itself and objects in the world. So, the imaginary phase is the unity between child and its surroundings and of immediate possession of mother and objects. In the mirror phase, the child can recognize itself and its environment in the mirror. This mirror phase breaks down the imaginary phase pushing the child into symbolic order. It is the world of predefined social rules and gender difference, the world of subject and object, the world of language.

Most important concept of Lacan used in this project is the concept of desire. According to Lacan human desire is like signified of signifiers. Signified slips away all the time and again searches signified (*Ecrit 25*). Under the impact of contemporary linguistics particularly, the work of Saussure, and Jakobson, Lacan followed Freud by

re-thinking the unconscious in relation to language. Lacan's famous principle is the unconscious is structured like a language. For Lacan the unconscious is neither primordial nor institual rather it is something that happens when coherent language becomes dislocated. Lacan's view is that from the time we enter language, we always have to pass through the signifiers (Ecrit 79). Lacan has burrowed terms from the structural linguist Roman Jakobson's metaphor, one word for another and metonymy, 'Word to word connection which correspond to Freud's condensation and displacement respectively. Our desire for pleasure is beyond reach but not dead. So, the desire unconsciously comes in dreams, jokes and literature with the help of signifier either in metonymy or metaphor form. Individuals are captured in the play of desire. Expectation of desire becomes a mirage because the more people try to pass it, but the more it slips away. The signifiers slide over signified, which is like jellyfish. The desired object is never possible to acquire, signifiers seek for signified which has previous harmony but again signifier emerges eventually after one signified is fulfilled. There is always mismatch between language and desire. So, desire is never fulfilled. There are multiple signified and desires and so the duality remains forever.

Freud forwards the notion of two instincts that are the play in human. These two instincts eros and thanatos are the force operating in human beings life. According to Greek mythology, the first one denotes the life force and the later denotes the force of death. The instinct of eros perpetuates the life of an individual and the motivating force of life of an individual is libido which means I desire in Latin.

In this regard, Lois Tyson argues; "our sexuality is a part and parcel of our identity and thus relates to our capacity to feel pleasure in ways that are not generally

considered sexual"(24). Tyson shows the importance of sexuality which has multy dimensional aspects. Eros is like fuel to run individual's life.

Similarly, thanatos is death instinct that is located under beside the life instinct as claimed by Freud. Freud views death is biological drive which he called death drive or thanatos: Because of this death drive every human being follows the path of death. One the Freud's concept of thanatos, Tyson explains:

Freud's attempt was to account for the alarming of self- destructive behaviour he saw both in individual: Who seemed bent on destroying themselves psychologically if not physically, and in whole notions, where constant wars and internal inflicts could be viewed as little other than a form of mass suicide. He concluded that there must be some things in our biological makeup as a species to explain this death work, this psychological and physical self-destruction. (22)

Tyson argues that death wish is the product of biological make up, because of this instinct people go to the extent of psychological and physical self-destruction. When the life is painful and exhausting death instinct starts activating. The feeling and behaviors of human being such as aggressive behaviour, destructive will and revenge and hostility motive reveal death instinct.

Another Freudian concept is obsession. Obsession is the state in which a person's mind is completely filled with thought of one particular thing. In this state, person can not think other thing; such recurring thoughts into the mind cause loss of control over the mind. Great degree of frustration that, causes phobias or obsession. This obsession dominates the behavior of individual. He is obliged to think or perform it again and again and it becomes his/ her way of living.

To sum up, this research work has been divided into three major chapters. The

first section of this research has includes the brief introduction of the project, writing technique of the novelist in general, some critical views on the novel, departure made by this researcher from those critics, the hypothesis of this research, a brief introduction to the tool and an outline of the whole research work. The second chapter is all about analysis of the text from the theoretical perspective that is from Freudian and Lacanian concept. The third or final chapter of the research has contains the conclusion of the whole work particularly.

II. Metaphoric Desire in Edward St. Aubyn's *Some Hope Mother's Milk*

This research explores 'Escapable nature of human desire 'which ultimately results into the cause of human downfall. An individual family and society gets affected. This can be proved through the critical examination to the nature of human desire that Aubyn's characters destined to follow. As a consequence of escapable nature of human desire and excessive devotion of the characters to peruse for it, Aubyn's major characters like Patrick, Eleanor and Mary are suffering from obsession.

In Aubyn's narratives, these major characters are from the aristocratic Melrose family. Each of the characters has different desire within the same family. While pursuing their desires, they are in conflict with each other as one's desire becomes obstruction to another. Patrick Melrose, the protagonist of the novel is obsessed with material and sexual desire. Patrick's wife, Mary is preoccupied with maternal feeling and Eleanor, the guardian of the Melrose family wishes to involve in social welfare by donating all family property to the foundation, she is obsessed with philanthropist feeling. As they have distinct desire, there appears the tripartite conflict in Aubyn's narrative.

In the novel, the protagonist, Patrick Melrose lives his life in obsession as none of his desire whether sexual or material gets fulfilled in the course of novel .That is why he becomes a psychologically obsessed person. Patrick is hindered from all his desires whether his profession of solicitor, or conjugal life and sexual life with his wife, relationship with his children or parental love care and material property. St Aubyn's basically presents the long run struggle of protagonist to seek his pleasure and meet his desires. The narrative shows protagonist's psychological journey attempts to get back material prosperity and sexual life with his wife Mary. On the

other hand, St. Aubyn shows obsessed life of other characters in his novel. Mary, wife of Patrick, is obsessed with maternal feeling only after she gives birth of second child, Thomas. There emerges a distance between husband and wife as Mary fully devotes herself in nourishing of her sons Robert and Thomas respectively. Mary indulges only in maternal feeling; she cuts other inter personal relationship. She has only the desire how to provide maternal care and love to her sons. How to become a good mother than good wife is her present matter to be obsessed. Patrick's sexual attempt becomes obstruction on her way. In the similar way, in Melrose family, Eleanor is philanthropist. She is preoccupied with feeling of generosity. She, at her old age has religious wishes. She wants to handover family property to the foundation disinheriting the Patrick. Since, there appears conflict between mother and son.

In the narrative of Aubyn's novel, each major character has peculiar and distinct desire. In psychoanalysis, particularly in Freudian sense, desire is produced as eros instinct activates in individual. Here in the case of members of Melrose family, they are driven by their eros instinct. As Lois Tyson argues in *Critical Theory Today* there are two types of instincts or drives: Eros and thanatos which is play in all the time in human's life. There are instinctual drives which propel human's life to end. Eros is the contractive life force by which people wish to produce desire and strive to pursue pleasure. Eros propels human life with creativity, healthy, survival and optimistic whereas, thanatos, as distinguished by Freud from eros, it is destructive force. Aggression, dissolution and death are destructive. Passivity, conflict, war, hate and physical and psychological self-destruction are the products of thanatos or death drive. Eros in nature is libidinal but it is basic energy of life. It is drive and pushes individual forth with different desire and hope. In this regard, in the essay 'strangers to ourselves: psychoanalysis' Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan write:

Freud spent most of his life studying the boundary and dynamic movement between the conscious self, which he later comes to call the id. The id is the site of energy of the mind, energy that Freud characterized as combination of sexual libido and other instincts such as aggression that propel that the human organism through life, moving it grow, developed and eventually die. (121)

Rivkin and Ryan, in their study of Freud, clarify that id acts as reservoir of two type of wishes; constructive and deconstructive, libidinal wishes are sexual wishes that Freud sees as constructive force of life. As Rivkin and Ryan argued; individual is motivated for the good acts due to functioning of eros. He grows up and develops; he acquires different human skills and keeps balanced tie with society and culture. In this sense, eros keeps individual protected from negativity which builds the good life of an individual.

From the perspective of psychoanalysis, Melrose family members' desires can be seen as a product of eros instinct that has dominated their lives. Patrick's desire to have sexual relationship with his wife Mary and to have material prosperity and to gain moral standard in aristocratic society of Europe is an outcome of his eros drive. In the same way Patrick strives to get pleasure by meeting his desire in reality. Mary, as a good mother wants to provide good maternity and to save her sons being corrupted by the influence of aristocratic family values. She wants to sacrifice her sexual life so that her children should not be influenced by their father Patrick. The eros instinct pushes her to obtain pleasure from maternity. In the same way, Eleanor tries to drive pleasure through generosity.

Aubyn presents Patrick's material desire in the opening chapter along with the protagonist entry. As Patrick gets newly born child from Mary, he realizes his desire

to be fulfilled at any cost. Patrick feels financial insecure as his mother prepares legal documents to disinherit him from family property. After he gets newly born baby, he feels more responsible towards his new generation. In the meantime, he falls in economic crisis. Regarding his material desire, the narrator narrates in *Some Hope*:

But we adore him', said his mother, her eyes swimming with tears. Isn't that enough? 'Being adored by two trainee parents with in adequate housing? Thank goodness he's got the back up of one grandmother who's on permanent holiday, and another who's too busy saving the planet to be entirely pleased by this additional strain on its resources. My mother house is already too full of shamanic rattles and "power animals" and inner children" to accommodate anything as grown up as a child 'we'll be alright', said his mother 'we're not children any more, we're parents 'we're both', said his mother, 'that's the trouble', Do you know what my mother told me the other day? [...]. If we'd the self-restraint to have two hundred and thirty nine Bangladeshi children, she would have given us a warmer welcome, but this gargantuan westerner, who is going to take up acres of land fill with his disposable nappies. (8)

Patrick deep interest increases to achieve material independence as he becomes father of his children. The narrator reveals his material desire that prevails into his mind from the past. He has no authority to utilize his old family castle of southern France. New parents are homeless as Eleanor donates that French and family castle to the foundation. Where as orphan children live in the castle. Patrick calls those people who are old living they are acting as children. He calls them shamanic rattles (*Mother's Milk* 8). He comments on novelty of his mother. Mother's dignified vision

of being citizen of developed country is not worthwhile as she does not provide even warm welcome to her children. He criticizes of his mother's so-called richness.

Patrick Melrose has conflict with his mother. Patrick mother, Eleanor also has her shamanic desire to uplift the homeless children. At her old age, she wants to get virtue through the donation of her family property. As a consequence, there emerges the conflict in the family relation. Patrick hates her too much as she becomes the obstruction on his way of material prosperity. St. Aubyn remarks about mother and son's relationship:

She was always a lousy mother, but I thought she might take a holiday towards the end of her life feel that she'd achieved enough by the way of betrayal and neglect, and that it was time to have a break, play with her grandchildren let us stay in the house, that sort of thing what really terrifies me is realizing how much. I loathe her when I read this letter, I tried to loosen my shirt so that I could breathe, but then I realized it was already loose enough, I just felt as if a noose was tightening around my neck, a noose of loathing. (Mother's Milk-69)

The above expressed hate by Patrick to his mother its shows that he never felt maternal care and love. He remarks his mother as lousy mother. Which indicates his true feeling emerged as his mother legally deprives Patrick from the right of property. He feels a noose of loathing on his neck. He does not concern his responsibility towards his sick mother it indicates that Patrick is excessively driven by his desire. His desire is material desire. He finds his mother taking a break to play in his desire. But she has taken a break to play on his desire, as she is now playing with new generation; Robert and Thomas' children of Patrick. Patrick is too much furious at his mother as she even does not stop to spoil the future of new generation.

Eleanor despite of being old and sick she has golden dreams of getting spiritual pleasure through the social work. She is hospitalized; however, her consciousness regarding her desire of generous work is still waking up. She is in bed at nursing home in France but her old grown up desire is clearly revealed. Her expression, at the first meeting of her grandchildren indicates her desire which is lingering inside her. Even at her last days in the bed of hospital. She is not overwhelmed in her family connection through she sees her own grandsons for the first time. She loves herself in her thought and she has fight to bring the connection with the children into her memory

. St Aubyn regarding her expression in *Some Hope* asserts:

His grandmother's expression wavered as she tried to negotiate between the strangeness and the intimacy of his presence. Her eyes made Robert feel as if she was scudding through on overcast sky, breaking briefly in to clear space and then rushing back through thickening veils into the milky blindness of a cloud. She didn't know Thomas and he didn't know her, but she seemed to have sense of her connection with him. It kept disappearing, though, and she had to fight to get it back. [...] When she was about to speak, the effort of working out to say in these circumstance wiped her out. She could not remember who she was in relation to all the people in the room. Tenacity didn't work anymore; the harder she grasped at an idea, the faster it short away. (67)

Eleanor could not completely ignore the new visitors. Robert and Thomas are new visitors for her. She is in the verge of confusion and dilemma. She negotiates between strangeness and intimacy. Temporary her sense of connection comes into her memory

but flash away and she loses her sense of intimacy to the children. She can not remember the relation she has with the people living in that hospital room. She is pre-occupied with her philanthropic feeling.

Freud argues that human are born 'polymorphous', that any number of objects could be a source of pleasure (*Freud quoted in Rieff 56*). Tyson further argues in his *Critical Theory Today* that any number of objects could be a source of pleasure. He argues that even infants are sexual being who passes through different stages; oral, anal, and genital in which pleasure is emerged from the body. In the process of human development, source of pleasure is not all the genital; source of pleasure can be various. In the process of human development, individual has different desire and he/she attempts to fulfill it. In nature, human beings are polymorphous, they pass through different stages and they make different desires. In Freudian lens Edward St. Aubyn's major characters are in the different phase according to their age. They have different desires to achieve, their desire is different because of their age factors. Obviously, according to psychoanalytic view their source of pleasure is different. Eleanor wants to get pleasure involving in to social work. She wants to uplift the worse condition of Irish children. Her desire is related to religious and spiritual sentiments. Patrick has material as well as sexual desire and Mary has maternal feeling. She wants to get pleasure by caring her sons Thomas and Robert.

According to Sigmund Freud's instincts of theory, till individuals eros instinct activates in them, they make different desires and always struggle to gratify the pleasure (*Habib 577*). Freud defines Eros as the 'self-preservative instinct (Freud quoted in Habib577) such self-preservative natures keeps individual protected from self-destruction of physical and psychological. Freud has differentiated two types of instincts. In this regard M.A.R. Habib in *A History of Literary Criticism and Theory*

argues:

Freud considered a new account of the operation of the two instincts. He used this word Eros (Greek for love) to designate the instincts of self-preservation as pertaining to both individual and the species. He opposed this instinct to another instinct of death or destruction, which he called 'Thanatos' (Greek for death). He viewed these two forces as engaged in contrast struggle, which is the broader context of our mental experiences. (577)

Habib expresses his view on Freud's distinction of two instincts always play in individuals. Eros instincts preserve the life. It builds the life of individual, people live with healthy survival and creativity. Thanatos is another instinct which destroys the human life. Individual's self-physical and psychological destruction is determined by the thanatos instincts. These two instincts are always present in opposition.

From the Freudian concepts of eros, Aubyn's characters presume their life. Eleanor, despite her old age and sickness dreams of welfare of Irish homeless children. She determines to provide donation to the foundation. There is no hint of her mental disposition. She takes the risk to bear the family conflict caused by her decision to donate the foundation. Old people generally could not make such decision which brings negative sense in the family and society. Passivity and regression are the common psychological issue found in the mental realm of old people. Eleanor does not regret in her action of making own line age homeless.

Though, from the Freudian lens, Patrick, Mary and Eleanor from aristocratic Melrose family derived the pleasure to build up. They achieved minimal lifelines through the eros instinct. The eros is defined as life building element which always keeps individual protected from the psychological and physical self-destruction.

Regarding eros or sex instinct Freud defines sex in broader sense, it is not only coition rather it represents love, kindness, harmony, peace, sympathy willingness, enthusiasm, energy and so on and so forth that brings human being into ties.

Regarding sex and sexuality, Freud argues; ‘The concept of sexuality and at the same time of sexual instincts has to be extended so as to cover many things which could not be classed under the reproductive function’ (Freud qtd in Rieff 45). Lois Tyson has similar view regarding sex and sexuality. He remarks:

Freud realized that our sexuality is part and parcel of our identity and thus relates to our capacity to feel pleasure in ways that are not generally considered sexual. This is why he believes that even infants are sexual beings who through stages: oral, anal and genital in which pleasure is focused in different parts of the body. (24)

Freud and Tyson clarify that no reproductive do not seem sexual/genital under the classification of eros or sexuality. It means sex and sexuality signifies greater meanings than the act of genital intercourse. The non-sexual pleasure we perceive through different means in everyday life which works as fuel for the life. They are the products of eros.

From the psychoanalytical point of view, Aubyn’s narrative presents Patrick being dominated by the eros instinct in greater degree in comparison to other characters. Patrick Melrose a passionate young man is strongly guided by eros or pleasure principle from the novel. Though he has a wife, because of her maternal feeling, he is deprived of sexual pleasure. After Thomas was born to them, Patrick does not get chance to sleep with Mary. His deprive of sexual pleasure it does not mean his sexual instinct or eros is dead rather it is repressed in to his unconscious mind. When, his old girl friend Julia comes back in his life to stay in one of the

holiday at French castle. He again finds Julia as an object to fulfill his repressed desires but it is not easy excess to do so because of reality principle or his ego. So he always wants to get back Mary as a sexual object.

When Mary completely gives her time only her son Thomas and Robert, there is total communication gap between them. There is not love and harmony which is necessary to every husband and wife in order to live happy conjugal life. About the relationship between Patrick and Julia in *Mother's Milk*, the narrator remarks:

Robert decided to ask his mother whether this was true, or whether Julia was being well, like Julia. She came to stay every year with Lucy, her quite stuck-up daughter a year older than Robert. He knows his mother wasn't wild about Julia, because she was an old girlfriend of his father's. She felt a little bit jealous of her, but also a little bit bored. Julia didn't know how to stop wanting people to think she was clever. 'Really clever people are just thinking aloud; his mother had told him, 'Julia is thinking about what she sounds like. (35)

Where, Julia enters into the life of Patrick in his state of psychosexual repression. He gets little support to gratify urgent needs of his eros instinct. Mary has sunk into the maternity and Julia comes with her own daughter to stay in the French castle. She divorced mid aged lady. She also suffers from psychosexual repression and comes to fulfill her sexual desire with old boyfriend Patrick; their relationship has increased jealous in Mary. Her son Robert reads the psychology of his mother Mary. Mary is not too much wild towards Julia though she has come to be a rival occupying her position. Mary has no concern about sexuality with Patrick but she feels little jealous with Julia. She found Julia being clever so much.

Julia is sexually repressed as she gets divorced with her husband Richard, so

she immediately comes to Patrick to satisfy her libidinal wishes. Narrator asserts; “Since divorcing Richard she said, “I get these horrible moments of vertigo. I suddenly feel as if I do not exist” (35). Patrick as narrated in *Mother’s Milk* used Julia as substitution of his desire of sex and Julia vice versa. Patrick tried to fulfill his sexual desire by substitution. Narrator about this asserts:

‘We’re none easily distracted’ said his father, ignoring her last remark, ‘more used to a culture of substitution, more easily confused about exactly who we do love; ‘Are we? Said Julia, smiling. ‘That’s nice.’ Up to a point’ said his father. He didn’t really know what they were talking about now, but Julia seemed to have cheered up. Substitution must be something pretty wonderful. Before he got the chance to ask what it meant, Julia and Patrick talked about the distraction to the culture of substitution. (104)

People even do not know whom they exactly love. They go on the process of substitution. They themselves accept that they are in touch with each other for the substitution of their derived object. It is obvious from the Patrick’s view about substitution that he loves and wants to have sex with Mary but he has this relationship only for substitution. For Julia, substitution is pretty wonderful. It means she has no derived object at present as she has divorced with Richard. She seemed cheered up to the Patrick. In psychoanalysis view, Julia’s sexual desire is clearly revealed by her behaviours while talking with Patrick. Julia talked with children and Patrick “playing with sugar, spooning it back and forth in the bowl” (35). Her act of playing with spoon shows her sexual desire. In psychoanalysis, object like bowl symbolically refers female fallus. Julia’s act of spooning in bowls indicates her sexual passion.

Since Julia is substitution for temporary sexual pleasure, Patrick struggles to

get pleasure from physical relation with Mary. In the one hand, he is frustrated for not getting Mary as his sexual object. He is driven with sexual passion to have with Mary, so he felt condemned. Narrator regarding his sexual frustration remarks:

Also as usual, Mary had gone to sleep with Thomas, leaving Patrick split between admiration and abandonment. Mary was such a devoted mother because she knew what it felt like not to have one. Patrick also knew that what it felt like, and as a former beneficiary of Mary's maternal over drive, he sometimes had to remind himself that he wasn't an infant any more, to argue that there were real children in the house, not yet horror-trained; he sometime had to give himself a good talking to. Nevertheless, he wanted in vain for the maturing effects of parenthood. Being surrounded by children only brought him closer to his own childishness. He felt like a man who dreads leaving harbour, knowing that under the deck of his impressive yacht there is only a dirty little twin-stroke engine, fearing and wanting, fearing and wanting. (84)

Mary's over drive of maternal obsession is the major causes of Patrick's sexual frustration. As Mary only cares her children and keeps no concern with Patrick's sexual urgency. At the time Patrick becomes frustrated. When Mary does not care to him, she goes to sleep with her sons leaving Patrick alone. Patrick's mind is filled with the sense of abandonment. This sense towards Mary splits between admiration and abandonment. Admiration in the sense that he had got married Mary leaving old girl friend Julia and he wants to sexual relationship. He wants Mary would care more than her son.

Patrick's self-loathing starts since Mary cuts her connection with him. The

narrator says; but at night he was either aching with nostalgia or writing with self-rejection (87). Patrick is nostalgic, he indulges into the past. He remembers the past Patrick forgets everything about Mary in the day time when he plays with children but when it becomes night, he is filled with self-loathing. At present he is distracted because of Mary's maternal feelings. Patrick remembers the past especially sexual life, narrator makes clearly saying:

He tried to remind himself what his youth had really been like, but all he could remember was the abundance of sex and the sense of potential greatness, replaced, as his view closed in on the present, by the disappearance of sex and the sense of wasted potential. Fearing and wanting, fearing wanting. (87)

From the above citation, Patrick's internal feeling is exposed here. He thought of his part and glorified his past and found only fuel of sexual activities. It means he is deprived of sexual relationship due to his wife's ignorance. He had the feeling of greatness and potentiality but now he feels empty without greatness and sexual enjoyment. Present life has been wasted for him. It hints that he has undergone through psychosexual repression. Disappearance of sex in present has forced much him in the direction of sexual search. His mind his intermixed with fear and want. It suggests that he neither quits the desire nor strive to fulfill.

Driven by the sexual desire, he tried to fulfill his wish keeping relationship with Julia. In this regard, narrator asserts:

He was going to go to Julia's room. He was going to turn the narrow allotment of his life into a field of blazing poppies. He opened the door slowly, lifting it on its hinges so that it didn't whine. He pulled it closed again with the handle held down so that it didn't click. He

released the tongue slowly into the grove. The corridor was glowing with child-friendly light. It was as bright as a prison yard. He walked down it, heel-to-toe, all the way to the end to Lucy's partially open door. He wanted to check first that she was still in her room, yes fine. He doubled back to Julia's door. What was he going to do next? What would Julia do if he went into her room? Call the police? Pull him into bed whispering, 'what took you so long? Perhaps it was a little tactless to wake her at four in the morning. Maybe he should make an appointment for the following evening. His feet were getting cold, standing on the hexagonal tiles. (98)

Aubyn presents one of the attempts of Patrick trying to solve his sexual need. Patrick, with the fear family members, goes to Julia's room in the night. His fear shows that he has conflict in his mind whether doubtlessly consummate with Julia. He is also guided by the reality principle. Society's permission to have sexual relationship is to get married and live with wife but his wife's behavior compels him to keep relation secretly with Julia.

While observing the psyche of Mary through Freudian psychoanalysis, her gloomy face and self-centeredness is an outcome of psychosexual development. She escapes from the responsibility that she has to do, to her husband. She does not even like her own mother kettle. She neither keeps relationship as other normal wives do their husbands. Mary's father loved her very much and Mary loved her father's than mother. Her father Henry died of cancer when she was child. She was greatly shocked at her father's death but mother is not touched by Henry's death. In Freudian sense, in the process of psychosexual development, she was attracted with her father. So she hates her mother in adulthood as Habib argues in an essay '*The Oedipus complex*'; "as

in fancy progresses, sexual development undergoes the Oedipus complex the boy focuses his sexual wish upon his mother and develops hostile impulses towards his father” (575). Every child undergoes through the common state in which a child finds conflict with his father mother becomes the object of desire and feels possessive to mother but he finds father as disturbing and threatening.

Daughter also under the same kind of attraction to her father but she finds mother as an obstruction. She feels castration complex. Female’s organ ‘uterus’ acts as male penis. In this regard, Habib argues; “At this stage Freud thought that girls underwent an analogous development” (252). Habib’s idea suggests that female child grows up with penis envy and desires father as a sexual object. Mother’s presence caused her to repress that desire to have father as a sexual object, as female child grow up in the society. She acknowledges the social reality and starts to be attracted with opposite sex. Regarding the idea of Freud’s about the Oedipus complex; Habib further argues:

Under the threat of castration, the male child repress its desire for the mother and accepts the rules laid down by the father Freud saw as unique in human sexuality the fact that it was diphasic; the first climax, as described above, occurs in the fourth or fifth year of a child’s life. This followed by a young period of latency which lasts until puberty, which is the second climatic phase; during this interim period certain repressions have taken effect and reaction formations impelled by morality, such as shame and disgust, are built up. (575)

Habib clarifies Freud’s idea that a child represses these sexual desires produced in the phase of psycho sexual development. According to social taboos and codes a child repressed desire and that desire which remains as repressed is revealed in adulthood,

in indirect and accepted form. In this sense, St. Aubyn shows that kind of behavior of Mary towards mother and late father he asserts:

Mary remembered him vividly but her memories were embalmed by his early death. She was fourteen when he died of cancer. She was 'protected' from his illness by an ineffectual secrecy which made the situation more worrying than it was anyway. The secrecy had been Kettle's contribution, her substitute for sympathy. After Henry died, Kettle told Mary to 'be brave'. Being brave meant not asking for sympathy now either. There would have been no point in asking for it, even if the opportunity had not been blocked. Their experiences were essentially so different Mary was utterly lost in loss, lost in imagining her father's suffering. (154)

Mary's imagination to father's suffering shows her sympathy towards her father. She felt great loss in father's death. Mother does not have to be such state of feeling all the time about loss but daughter bereaved a lot. Mother had to encourage her to be brave. It means Mary is still in the state of bereavement whereas mother wears and talks as fashionable women. She is watches breast of women in the plane and train and comments on their loose breast. Whereas Mary rejects mother's argument and mother should show maternity to the children is her intention.

In the Melrose family, Mary likes to remain alienated and she prefers to be limited within the responsibility. She does not like to even mother's visit to her. It means Mary has deep sentiments connection with her father but father's sudden death makes her feel unbearable loss. Mary's attachment towards father is portrayed by narrator. The narrator further presents:

Lost the madness of knowing, that only he could have understood her

feelings about his death. At the same time, confusingly, so much of their relationship has been spent in silent communication that there seemed to be no reason for it to stop. Kettle only appeared to be sharing the same bereavement. She was in fact suffering from the latest installment of her inevitable disappointment it was so unfair. She was too young to be a widows and old to start again an acceptable terms. It was in the wake of her father's death that Mary had got the full measure of her mother's emotional sterility and learnt to despise her. The crust of pity which she had formed since then had grown thinner when she had children of her own. (163)

Mary despised her mother since she found she was emotionally dead, in the funeral wake of her father's death. She observed her mother's emotionality and measured her emotions. Kettle was not moved and touched by Henry's death. Mary suffered a lot at father's death but that loss still lingers within her even at present. So, in psychoanalytical view, she over drive of maternity is the result of her attraction to father in her childhood. Father's death brings her in present state of isolation. Mary escapes from Patrick attachment. She does not keep sexual relationship with him after she gave birth Thomas. Family degraded economically since Eleanor donated all family property to Seamus organization but Mary does not show any reaction in that case. Her neutral role in Patrick and Eleanor's financial conflict shows she has no concern with other aspects happening in the family. Patrick strongly opposed mother action of donating but Mary does not oppose that. She likes to care her children and wants provide good care. So, that her children are never corrupted by the influence of Patrick.

Mary confined herself within the periphery of her child care. At present, she is

obsessed with maternity. Before she became mother, she had enjoyed the pleasure of sexuality but after she gave birth to Thomas her desire has shifted from sexuality.

About the confinement of Mary, the narrator narrates:

Sally, Mary's American friend, was her greatest ally; also a mother showered in useless advice, also determined to give her children uncompromised support, to roll the boulder for her own upbringing out of the way so that they could run free. This task was surrounded by hostile commentary: stop being a doormat; don't be a slave to your children; get your figure back; keep your husband happy; get back 'out the there; go to a party, spending your whole time with your children drives you literally mad; increases your self-esteem by handling your children over to someone else and writing an article saying that women should not feel guilty about handing their children over to someone else. (159)

Sally, one of the aristocratic friends of Mary suggested her not to sink into the world of children. Mary always thought of children and she spent whole life in the caring of her children. Children are cared with full time devotion. So, children are dependent to Mary in all aspects. Maternity has engulfed creativity of Mary confining within family, only with the children. There is shift of desire in Mary. She had sexual desire, and therefore, she participated in the course of giving birth of two sons regularly. Later, she is attracted by the instinct of love, thus she cared her children, she remained around those two children perceiving this only her world. Sally persuaded her to come into this broad world and act as she has been fully fitted in the world.

In the Lacanian view, individual does not have fixed and solid subjectivity. Desire is escaped as subjectivity is changed of an individual. So, through the Lacanian

view, Mary's subjectivity is not fixed and her desires have been changed. Narrator says regarding her past desire; "First, there were the times when she was overwhelmed with nostalgia for the erotic life they had shaved before she become a mother" (157).

She is nostalgic. She remembered her erotic life with Patrick. It suggests she had sexual desire in the past before she became mother. Her passion had revealed naturally, when it was organizing its own extinction during the time when she was trying to get pregnant (*Mother's Milk* 157).

Changed desire of Mary is a subject matter of study in the hands of psychoanalyst. Before being pregnant she has one type of desire such as sexual desire and at present, she has different desire of child care. In Lacanian view, subjectivity of individual never fixed, it changes in course of time and desire will be formed in accordance with the subjectivity of an individual. Mary has that kind of subjectivity before being mother but she became mother, her subjectivity changed and she has motivated with maternal instinct. While clarifying Lacan's view of subjectivity, Habib argues:

In Lacanian view, subject is empty, fluid and without an axis and centre, and is always recreated in his encounter with other, with what exceeds his own nature and grasp. Influenced by Hegel's master-slave dialects, as well as by his account of objectivity, Lacan sees the individual's relation to objects and as mediated by desire and by struggle. (590)

Above expressed idea of Habib suggests that, subject is the matter of changes. It is formed with encounter with other. It is empty and fluid. It does not have any centre to move around. So, subjectivity is always in under construction. It takes a form for

certain as it counters with the object. Mary's cause about her subjectivity and desire is same as Lacan's idea on it. As she got married with Patrick and had no children, she wanted to have sexual pleasure and when she became mother, she had more things to do with her children. Patrick and children are those factors that contributed to build up her subjectivity and desire. Similarly, Aubyn's major characters like Patrick and Eleanor faced the same kind of human destiny.

The Lacanian sense, argued Patrick and Eleanor's subjectivity is presented in different time. Patrick has material quest since his mother does not provide him family property. Once, he was materially prosperous having aristocratic family property, thus he had been enjoying his life in full length. As mother deprives him from family property his life falls in crisis. Aubyn's presentation on him exposes the material establishment and that his subjectivity falls in crisis and his desire to possess that lost property from his mother. Patrick has conflict with his mother and Seamus who has run the foundation together. He argued a lot with Seamus who utilized all Patrick's property in his favour. Eleanor is waiting her day for last breathes in the hospital. There is not argument between Seamus and Patrick on the matter of donated family property. So he wants to finally return back it in his possession. The narrator about this tussle remarks:

You've tried to billet your sidekicks on us and you've tossed Eleanor on the scrap heap because there is nothing more you can screw out of her. Anyone who thinks that 'Patient' is the word to describe that sort of thing should be doing English as a foreign language rather than singing a book contract. I don't have to stand for these insults; said Seamus. 'Eleanor and I created this foundation, and I know that she wouldn't want anything to undermine its success. What's so tragic, in

my opinion is that you don't see how central the foundation is to your mother's life's purpose, and you don't realize what an extraordinary woman she is. (185)

Here Patrick doubted to Seamus who runs the foundation Seamus utilized the property given by Eleanor. Eleanor is lying in the bed. Patrick told that Seamus could not take any benefits from Eleanor because he has already emptied the Eleanor and pushed her into the heap of bankruptcy. Seamus goes on praising Eleanor's generosity and philanthropy say her extra ordinary women of the world. Seamus told Patrick to be 'Patient' but Patrick could no longer tolerate Seamus's kicking from side backs to this extent because of his interaction with object. Here in Lacanian view object is Seamus and Eleanor who acted as other and pushed his life into the economic crisis.

Moreover, though he was married to Mary but he has to search for the sexual partner to quench his sexual thirst. Although his old girl friend assisted in this matter, the reality principle does not allow him to enjoy fully. He has sexually deprived by his wife Mary. Patrick was sexually enjoyed in his conjugal life before they have child but later Mary only cared her children. So his subjectivity formed in that manner, there came changed. In the subjectivity as Lacan defined subjectivity is fluid. In this regard, Aubyn asserts, "Despite his revolution he felt his lust running on, not unlike a beheaded chicken. He had now achieved the pseudo-detachment of drunkenness. The little hillock before the swamps of self-pity and memory loss"(107). Patrick became obsessed with sexual need, he tried to keep sexual relationship with his wife but she didn't provide him. So, he drunk most of his time and nearly lost his memory.

Narrator further narrates his erotic feeling even in his mid- life crisis:

Julia grazed his thigh discreetly with her fingernails, Patrick felt a half-erection creep its way into the most inconvenient possible emotion

among the folds of his underwear [...] As soon as they heard Johnny entering the house, and Julia climbed astride Patrick's lap, facing him with her hand dangling lightly over his shoulders. (128)

Patrick was driven by the erotic desire, to fulfill it; he took the help of old girl friend Julia. Julia's sexual activities gave him little consolation while his wife ignored him.

In the course of changing his sexual life, Patrick's relationship and sentiments towards his sons also got changed as his sexual life remained unsatisfied. Though, he wanted to stop the flow of poison from one generation to the next. He did not want his children being corrupted by the early generation but he failed, as himself, in his later life started to hate his own children. Robert and Thomas were rival for him as they fully drew attention of Mary leaving him isolated in the family. In this regard, Aubyn claims; "He was obsessed, it was true with stopping the flow of poison from one generation to the next, but he already felt that he had failed, determined not to inflict the causes of his suffering on his children, he could not protect them from the consequences" (72). Here Patrick was too much conscious about the future of his sons but as he could not achieve sexual pleasure by the relationship with his wife. He started to hate his own children for the sake of himself. He forgot that once fought to stop the inflection to transfer from early generation to the next generation. His major concern about the future life of his own children has been shifted. Now, he fights with whole family for his own sake. He does not have any concern with others problem and future. Through the novel, Aubyn presents Patrick's conflict with each of the member of his family. Patrick own children now, have become the obstruction on the way of desire's fulfillment. So his subjectivity is differently formed.

Even, Aubyn presents the changed subjectivity of Eleanor. Eleanor in her early life is disinherited by her step father. She hated her own stepfather for making

her empty handed by disinheriting. So she had thought of prosperous future of Patrick in the future. She had decided not bring such situation in the future of her children in this regard narrator says:

Eleanor had pushed on to the next generation that parts of her experience she wanted to get rid of; divorce, betrayal, mother-hatred disinheritance and clung to an idea of herself as part of the world's salvation, the Aquarian Age, He return to primitive Christianity, the revival of shamanism. (106)

Eleanor did not like the trend of disinheritance that she was compelled to face and decided not to see its occurrence again the next generation. She reached to such state of her life to involving in repeating same action by her own hands. She wanted to stop mother hating, betrayal, shamanic work etc but, at her latter life she preferred to repeat the same destiny. Patrick hated her a lot. She betrayed Patrick making him penny less.

While noticing the Aubyn's presentation of his characters desires through the Lacanian perspective, their desire is escapable. In their different stages of life, they have different desires. Their latest desire is conflicting with each, and thus they have experienced individual decadence and family decadence. Their progress and achievement has been postponed due to the fragmented family relationship and each declined moral standard. Regarding the ideas of Lacan's desire Habib argues:

Indeed, the desire that comprises the unconscious, a desire that makes philosophy and the infinite, a desire that associates knowing and dominating with jouissance, is an endless journey through an infinite chain of signifiers. The subject is caught in the trails eternally stretching forth towards the desire for something else of metonymy.

(598)

Habib argues that individual is trapped in the trail as he/she moves through an endless chain of signifiers. Making a desire is to move through an endless chain of signifier. Habib hints that desire is never finally achieved. Patrick, Mary and Eleanor move through such endless journey of signifiers. They strive to achieve their goal but they never achieve. So their subjectivity is trapped within the difficult trail, but do struggle to set their way future. According to Lacanian view, after the mirror stage, the subject is on an endless quest for unity, for wholeness, for security, a quest that must take metonymically along a chain of signifiers, on being displaced for another. From the mirror phase, a child starts to recognize himself and the thing around him' (*Ecrits* 1). The otherness cannot develop. In this phase with his perception of unity between mother and him that developed in imaginary phase. It means individual finds unity with the object in that phase of mirror. In this regard, arguing in *Ecrits* remarks:

This act, far from exhausting itself as in the case of the monkey, once the image has been mastered and found empty, immediately rebounds in the case of the child in a series of gestures, in which he experiences in play the relationship between evolutions, and between this virtual complex and the reality it reduplicates-the child's own body, and the persons and things around him. Lacan's mean to say, in other words, monkey sees his own image in the mirror as the other monkey whereas, simply a child sees reflected himself and his relationship with environment. Environment means object. In Lacanian view subjectivity is formed from the recognition of himself in the mirror stage, with the recognized object in the mirror. Basically Lacan stresses to 'understand mirror stage as an identification which results in

a transformation in the subject.’ (Habib 59)

Lacan’s view is that, mirror stage occurs prior to the child’s actual acquisition of a sense of self, sense of itself as subject in the distinct from objects in the world: the child experiences, as projected in its mirror image, itself and its sounds as an integrated unity. The feeling is illusory (Habib 591). Tyson argues:

This is not the world of the imagination, but a world of perception. It is the world that the child experiences through images rather than through words. As child enters into the world of symbolic order, he perceives himself through the language. ‘I am the separate being’ is the realization done by the child in this order. (Tyson 28)

This is the distinct development of subjectivity. The feeling of isolation goes on locating in the psyche of individuals and thus isolated/alienated individual. This phase pushed individual with subject formation that we are never complete human beings.

Patrick searches out to gain material prosperity and get abundant sexual pleasure sleeping with wife. Mary wants to stay in alienation only caring her children. She tries hard to provide better care to the children, which just addressed with the trend that aristocratic female want to physical fitness though they are mother. Eleanor, who is in the verge of death, wants to contribute following shamanism. Aubyn’s characters have idiosyncratic desire their subject formed in the meanwhile. Lacan’s views that, desire of individual starts to escape and be repressed from the infancy. After child passes pre-verbal stage and enters into symbolic order, he starts to find himself alienated from the objet particularly mother. He cannot find unity that he thinks in pre-verbal stages.

First, he finds his false connection with his mother that he perceives earlier. From the same stage, his desire cannot be fulfilled and he grows up alienated subject.

In the study of Lacan, Tyson argues:

For Lacan, the child's acquisition of language means a number of important things. He refers to the child's acquisition of language as its initiation into the symbolic order, for language is first and foremost a symbolic system of signification that is a symbolic system of meaning-making. Among the first meaning we make or more correctly, that are made for us-are that; i am a separate being ('I' am 'me', not you) and that I have gender (I am a girl, not a boy, or vice versa). Our entrance into the symbolic order thus involves the experience from others, and the biggest separation is the separations the in the imaginary order.

(28)

Tyson above mentioned remarks signify that, our feelings of separation starts in symbolic order. It means our subject changes and it makes different wishes, as it goes on being formed. Rivkin and Ryan about the desire in *Strangers to Ourselves* argue:

It is though the child's original symbolic relation with the mother is himself, and his primary desire is for her desire (of him). Desire and its realization only appear immediate, however, and what Lacan calls the Real, an impossible wholeness of self, plenitude of desire satisfaction Jouissance, and continuity of signifier and signified or word or object, is never possible. The mother is a congeries of part of objects and partial fulfillment like the breast. (123)

According to Rivkin and Ryan what Lacan calls real is the impossible wholeness of self, what a child thinks of real becomes ultimately unreal as he enters into the world of symbolic order. Rivkin and Ryan means to say that what think about real achievement of plenitude of satisfaction is impossible. Thus, according to their

opinion about the desire of the Lacanian perspective, Melrose family members' desires never become possible. Eleanor though she decided not to give Patrick to be corrupted from the influence of his early generation. She could not take her strong determination to do so, instead she was moved with the whelms of philanthropic ideas. She collaborated with Seamus to establish foundation which made the plan to uplift the miserable condition of Irish children. She decided and gave family property to the foundation. Again she was overwhelmed by the religious feeling and tried to get satisfaction by donating her property. She herself put her family children aside thinking herself as alienated. According to Lacanian perspective, it is the cause of her identification with the outer world.

For Lacan, unconscious is structured like a language. "The unconscious in neither primordial nor instinctual what it knows about the elementary is no more than the elements of the signifier" (*Ecrits* 170). As Lacan says that condensation and displacement both are essentially linguistic phenomena where meaning is either condensed or displaced in metonymy. Lacan says that the contents of the unconscious are actually aware of language and particularly of the structure of language. Lacan further states that; "what one ought to say is: I am not whatever I am playing of my thought I think of what I am where I don't think to think," (*Ecrits* 166). In this way, Lacan decenters the 'self' through linguistics.

Lacan uses the term from Saussure and Roman Jakobson to analyze the unconscious. Saussure, in his *Linguistic signs* says that the sound pattern or written word is called the 'signifier' and concept is known as the 'signified' (*Ecrits* 72). According to him; "the bond between signifier and signified is arbitrary, hence the whole is arbitrary too; the relationship between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary, and is determined by social conventions" (*Ecrits* 74). Meaning does not

reside individual sign but in the relationship between sign in the language system itself. Language creates a differential system whereby any given sign acquires its meaning by virtue of its differences from other signs. A sign does not refer to a specific object in the real material world but rather to another sign which in turn refers to another sign.

Lacan accepted the arbitrary nature of the linguistic sign but questioned two of the fundamental premises of Saussurian linguistics: the invisibility of the sign and the prioritization of the signifier over the signified. Lacan regarding it writes; what a signifier refers to is not a signified, as there is always a barrier between them, but to another signifier. In short, a signifier refers us to another signifier, which in turn refers us to another signifier in an almost endless chain of signification. (*Ecrits* 106).

Signification is always a process of chain. None of its elements actually consists of the meaning or the signified but rather each signifier insists on a meaning, as it process forward to the next.

St. Aubyn depicts his characters inner psyche. To say in the terms of Lacan, their unconscious is structured like language (Lacan qtd in Habib 954). As the meaning is always deferred due to the arbitrary nature of sign, signifiers always slide over signified (qtd Lacan in Habib 597). As the signification process is always incomplete. The achievement of the desire is also impossible because there is no unity between subject and object in Lacanian sense. Thus Aubyn's characters desire never come to be true because, as signified is the superimposed concept from outside which seeks another signified. Human desire always escapes. Subject and object never come in harmony. Patrick wanted to get his lost French castle but his relationship with his mother is negative, full of hatred. His sexual life all the time remained the frustration because his wife wanted to devote herself in the responsibility of childcare.

Patrick's subject is alienated type. Eleanor wanted to get pleasure utilizing her property for uplifting the condition of orphan children collected in French castle. Seamus in the one hand planned secretly to possess the French castle of saint Nazaire showing the shamanic sentiments along with Eleanor. On the other hand, Patrick strongly opposed her act of donating property. He is putting forward the case legally in the court. He has the right of heritage of the property. Mary's maternal sentiment is all the time attacked by Patrick's sexual attempts.

Aubyn's characters could not entertain their long term searches desire. They are moving desperately. In the study of Lacanian criticism, Rivkin and Ryan in this regard argued. "Lacanian criticism shifts attention to the language and sees it and the unconscious is almost identical. Human desire is carried by signifier which stands for lack than can never be filling in" (*Ecrits 126*).

Rivkin and Ryan argue that our desire is never fulfilled because it stands for signifiers. Signifiers does not have final signified as Lacan deconstruct Saussurian Linguistic of sign. It escapes and always becomes again signifier which sees next signifier. So, Aubyn's character's destiny is similar. They never got their desire in reality. Aubyn has ended his novel without showing their success pursuit of desire. Neither Eleanor becomes success in her philanthropist work, nor do Patrick and Mary become able to meet their goal.

Aubyn's major character's desires are the merely metaphoric in Lacanian view. Metaphores are the merely substitution. Whatever, they carry their desire as their desires are merely the signifier which seeks another signified. Sound image or word can not represent the outer world's object. Only we give meaning, in the same sense, Patrick's sexual and material desire are metaphor. Mary's maternal desire and Eleanor's philanthropic desire are also metaphoric in that sense.

About the metaphoric nature of desire, Rivkin and Ryan argues; ‘The other side of the air can enter our consciousness only in the form of substitutes, as metaphor that can indicate it only as in its absence because the conscious can never be present to the mind’ (35). Similarly, all desire is inherently metaphoric, inherently a matter of a substituted object. That stands for the initially absent mother object, and no metaphor can embody, what we ultimately desire anything (*Ecrits* 230).

According to Rivkin and Ryan view, about Lacan concept on metaphoric desire, Aubyn’s character’s desire merely metaphoric. Desire never present in the mind but comes as substitute signifiers. Referred object is always absent so desire presented by Aubyn is metaphoric.

As Patrick, Mary and Eleanor exist in a chain of signifiers of desires that never arrive at real. They keep on rolling with process of signifying system, they have no point to come to an end. Patrick is obsessed with his desire of material and sexual. He is obsessed as he fights with mother and his wife till the end of the novel. Eleanor is not ready to help own son Patrick though her property is being misutilized by Seamus. Mary has no concern with degraded family states and economic status. Mary does not show any sympathy to Patrick deconstructive behavior caused by alcohol. Aristocratic Melrose family is fragmented due to their unattainable desire. Aristocratic moral standard has declined as each suffers from obsession. There is no bright sign for the Robert and Thomas’s generation. Patrick strives to get sexual pleasure through illegal and immoral sexual relationship with Julia. Patrick becomes alcoholic when his mother is deprived to him gain family property.

Patrick himself takes on children as rival in the way of searching sexual pleasure with his wife. The decadence seems in the aristocratic family because of their distinct unattainable desire. Each individual’s subjectivity or self is just like a

metaphor which never presents as real. Melrose family member undergo which causes them obsession and finally decadence in the family status. Thus, decadence is the outcome of their unattainable distinct desires.

To sum up, St. Aubyn's these novels show the family decadence as the result of unattainable human desires. Major characters in the novel like Patrick, Mary and Eleanor who are from aristocratic class of Melrose family are suffering from such escapable human desires. As they are possessed with different desires and excessive obsession ultimately it causes destruction in family and their individual.

III. Human Desire Results into the Cause of Human Downfall

While studying Aubyn's novels *Some Hope* and *Mother's Milk* through psychological perspective at issues of Melrose family characters. It is noticed that human desires is unattainable and long run attempts to grasp it, which causes the decadence in family and individual. In the same way, Aubyn deals with the destiny of his characters; Eleanor, Patrick and Mary in his novel. Although this family is aristocratic with high moral standard but they seems to keep on perusing their desires. Ultimately the same desires cause the family destruction because of their unfulfilled desires. The root causes of family decadence are their own distinct desires.

St. Aubyn presents his character's psychic condition in the novel. While observing their adult psyche through the perspective of Freud and Lacan, they are obsessed with their desire. They are obsessed because, according to Lacan, individual's subjectivity is always fluid, empty and undermined. It goes on being changed. According to their subject formation, they make different desires. Desires never come to be true because of its escapable nature. It is just signifiers which have no ultimate meaning, it is always absent. The major characters like Eleanor, Patrick and Mary of Aubyn's novel are dominated by eros instinct so they actively produce their desire and strive to fulfill it. So, they struggle to get pleasure through their desire is portrayed in the novel. Eleanor wants to involve in social work. Her philanthropic feeling can be seen in the novel. To succeed in her determination, she disinherited Patrick from the right of inheritance of French castle of Sant Nazarie. She involved in welfare foundation, a social organization to uplift the condition of homeless, miserable Irish children. She collaborates with Seamus to involve in social work. On the other hand, Patrick and Mary have different desires. Their eros instinct pushes them to strive a lot to search the desire in real achievement. Patrick wanted to be

materially strong as his mother legally made him penniless. So he had strong desire for material prosperity.

In the novels it seems, Patrick has conflict with his mother in the name of property. He has deprived of the family property. Throughout the novel, Patrick is trying to get back French castle. In Freudian sense, such is the result of eros instinct. Active life is the result of eros. Passivity, aggression, death are the result of thanatos instinct. Patrick not only tries for material desire but also tries for the sexual desire. He wanted to sleep with his wife to get sexual pleasure. But he is sexually frustrated as Mary does not go to sleep with him. She is mother of Robert and Thomas. But after being mother of two sons, she disconnects her communication with Patrick, so Patrick falls in crisis of sexuality. However, he gets temporary sexual satisfaction keeping sexual relationship with his old girl friend Julia. Mary is obsessed with maternal sentiments. She wants to provide proper care to her children. She confines within the four walls of the house just caring Thomas and Robert.

In the novel, Aubyn presents the family tripartite conflict among the major characters. Patrick hates his own mother and his own children and ignored to Mary. Earlier, they had different desires; Eleanor wanted to provide bright future to Patrick but in her later life throws him in the trouble and disinheritance way. Patrick also wants to stop his son from being corrupted from early generations influence. Mary had sexual enjoyment with Patrick before she had children but at later life they are acting just oppositely. In Lacanian sense, self is never fixed; it goes on changing and forming.

Patrick, Mary and Eleanor, without concern of family relation, they are conflict each other. Aristocratic family is fragmented and fall from the moral and economical standard in St. Aubyn novels.

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