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Portrayal of the Fragmented Self in Philip Roth's *The Professor of Desire*

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Abstract

Every human has two drives: an instinctual drive and rational drive. The former includes sexuality, impulses, desires, emotions; which is primordial, chaotic, and nature gifted. The later one includes reason, thought and controlling capacity, and it is ordered, logical and achieved through human efforts. Man has created his unique identity through his reasoning capacity. The protagonist in the novel is pulled by his instinctual drive from one side and his rationality from the other side. The aftermath of this inner tussle is fragmentation in his self. He becomes a torn personality who suffers from identity-paralysis. Through *The Professor of Desire*, Philip Roth creates a supremely intelligent, affecting, and often hilarious dramatization about the dilemma of pleasure: where we seek it; why we flee it; and how we struggle to make truce between dignity and desire.

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I: Introduction

The purpose of this research is to portray the protagonist's "Fragmented Self" in the light of how he creates his own impossibilities when he tries to get love through lust. The thesis will try to prove that the perfection of libidinal desire is just a mirage. David Kepesh, the protagonist of the novel, has to suffer from identity crisis when he cannot maintain the balance between instinctual lust and his intellectual status.

One of the most prominent and controversial writers in contemporary literature, Roth draws heavily upon his Jewish-American upbringing and his life as a successful author to explore such concerns as the search for self-identity, conflicts between traditional and contemporary moral values, and the relationship between fiction and reality. The scatological content of some of his work and his harsh satiric portraits of Jewish life have inspired considerable critical debate. While some commentators view his works as anti-Semitic, perverse, or self-indulgent, others laud Roth's skill at rendering dialect, his exuberance and inventiveness, and his outrageous sense of humor.

By 1950s and 1960s, as there was an economic boom in America and most of the Jewish people became economically stable; they developed exhibitionist tendency. So, Roth is very critical towards this tendency. Roth first garnered significant critical relation with his first work, *Goodbye, Columbus*. Thus, Jewish – American life in particular and modern American society in general are the subjects of his comedies of manners, which include *Goodbye, Columbus* (1959), *Letting Go* (1962), *When She was Good* (1967), *Portnoy's Complaint* (1969), *The Breast* (1972), *The Great American Novel* (1973), *My Life as a Man* (1974), *Out Gang* (1971) and so on. And, his later works elided the boundaries between fiction and autobiography. *The Professor of Desire* (1977), *The Ghost Writer* (1979), *Zuckerman Unbound* (1981),

The Anatomy Lesson (1983) and *The Counterlife* (1986) form a semiautobiographical sequence about education, sudden fame and subsequent disillusionment of a writer.

Hence, in Philip Roth, Norman Mailer and Saul Bellow, manners arise from psychological conflict; and this conflict arises from the collision of American Jewish way of life.

The Jewish writers and intellectuals appeared in American letters mainly after the great immigration of 1881-1924. When Jews entered America, they led a traditional life strictly following the Bible. But from the Eighteenth century onward, due to various waves of Enlightenment, liberation, Zionism, trade unionism and socialism, the Jews revolted against traditional life. The first and the second generation Jews in America detached themselves from holy books and got associated with the new ideas and moral challenges.

At present, Jewish writing has secured its important place in American literature. To know Jewish writing, we must know the “Jewishness” which is the cultural identity of Jewish group. This Jewishness is evident in the works of Norman Mailer, Bernard Malamud, Joseph Heller and Cynthia Ozick, though they have very little in common as writers. Jewish writers have written some of the most acclaimed fictions in American literature since World War II, like those of Saul Bellow, Norman Mailer, Issac Bashevis Singer, Philip Roth and Bernard Malamud.

The characters in Roth’s novels attempt to find through their intimacy with the cultural Other, some element of their essential identity, the true self, that they believe is stanchied through the ethnic or racial associations that define them. In *Portnoy’s Complaint*, *My Life as a Man* and *The Professor of Desire* depicting elements of his own marriage gone sour. Similarly, in *The Human Stain* (2001), Roth portrays characters who attempt to escape what they perceive as a shameful element of their

cultural heritage through their relationship with one of the many embodiments of his late wife Margaret Martinson Williams. These men's efforts to escape the associations of their ethnicity through the cultural Other ultimately alienates them from the identity that they hope to realize.

Roth's first book, a story collection *Goodbye, Columbus* (1959) aroused hostility in some critics, who lambasted him of portraying Jews in an unflattering way, a charge often repeated with respect to later books. Roth's defense, made to an Israeli audience in 1963 was that he did not write Jewish books, he was not Jewish writer, he was a writer who was a Jew. He further opined that the biggest concern and passion in his life was to write fiction, not to be a Jew. Although his portrayal of Jewish characters may have been unexpected, the narrative methods of the early stories and of the novels *Letting Go* and *When She was Good* are traditional and they introduce the characteristic Roth perspectives whether the point of view is first or third person, the narrator colors the world with the attitudes and prejudices of the main character.

Roth's comic novel *Portnoy's Complaint* marked a turn in his career that made him wealthy, famous and still more controversial. In it Roth presents a rambling psychoanalytic monologue, Portnoy's frenzied struggle against the restrictions of his Jewish heritage and his family.

Yet, even at his most comic Roth is never far from one of his major themes, the conflict between seriousness and self-gratification, moral purpose and rebellion. Franz Kafka's influence is obvious in *The Breast*, in which burlesque premise, at his high school reunion the darkness that has engulfed his boyhood athletic idol, a man whose life seemed to the whole community to be simple, ordinary, and therefore just great, right in the American grain.

Two more end-of-the century novels involve Zuckerman with individuals whose lives are impacted by national obsessions of the last half century. *I Married with Communist* (1998) concerns black-listing in the McCarthy era, and *The Human Stain* (2000) unfolds a tale of political correctness against a backdrop of the frenzied [Bill] Clinton impeachment.

The Professor of Desire displays the conflict between a life of scholarship and carnal adventure. The novel scrutinizes the protagonist's campus life like his other two novels – *The Human Stain* and *The Dying Animal* do. Whether writing in a melancholy, a semi-tragic, or a satirical mode, Roth challenges the simplistic reading of asymmetrical relationships so prevalent in campus speech and behavior codes. Using imagination and wit, he has produced this novel that goes far beyond the pieties of the moment and, instead, attempt to do justice to the mental and physical drives and complex motives that characterize human relationships in the academy and out of it. A brief synopsis of *The Professor of Desire* is given below:

In his graduate school, Kepesh meets Helen Baird, a femme fatale; immediately he falls in love with her. They marry, despite Kepesh's belief that she is still attached to her former lover in Hong Kong. Within a few years, each is locked into the other's worst image. They divorce, and Kepesh takes a job at the State University of New York on Long Island, and continues psychotherapeutic treatment on the east coast. He becomes lonely, but later, he makes friend with a resident poet and notorious womanizer, soon to lose his job, who believes propriety and respectability are the means by which women disarm and domesticate men.

Suffering from impotence, loneliness, and destitute Kepesh then meets Claire Ovington, who is physically alluring to him as Helen had been, but, at twenty four, devotes her energy to creating for herself as a stable and ordinary life as a school

teacher. She has had a disorderly and difficult childhood and has consciously crafted a life for herself in opposition to that experience. Claire cures him of his impotence, his loneliness and even his writer's block. Kepesh tries to tell himself this sweet and stable new life, this health and happiness, are worth the loss of his feelings of lust. He tries, in short, to convince himself that Claire is enough. Kepesh decides to teach a course on erotic desire in literature, and a fascinating part of the book contains an imaginary first lecture to his class, to whom he explains why he does not share the popular view that literature is fundamentally non-referential and to whom he wishes to disclose the story of the professor's desire.

Marveling at his contentment with Claire, at the regular life they lead and clear future that it portends, Kepesh argues with himself that the diminution of the passion is small price to pay. So perfect a partner is Claire that, without consulting Kepesh, she decides to have an abortion, so that he might remain free to choose whatever future he desires. She never wanted to be anyone's prison, as she opines. Now, at the age of thirty four growing more suspicious of these gentle, tender adoration that he shares with Claire, he is now sure that his suppressed self, his lustful self will return again.

What makes the novel moving and important is Roth's evocative and compelling prose. Thus, near the novel's end, after a beautifully depicted visit of Kepesh's father and a Holocaust-survivor friend, both representing the world with which has been in lifelong conflict, Kepesh mourns the loss he know inevitably lies before him.

From the above synopsis, we can conclude that David Kepesh, the professor (the hero) of the novel professes desire, declares its hold on him; takes pains to profess

what he cannot always feel; and PhD with lesson plans for a seminar on erotic novels. He is, in short, a professional.

Roth does not, of course, write about souls but about bodies and their endless needs. The novel constitutes an extended complaint about male plight, a plight finally spiritual though manifested through the physical. When the novel was published in the year of 1977, it acclaimed lots of critical reviews and controversies as well. The novel was basically critiqued for its issues of sex, race, class or the importance of ethnicity. So, now, I would like to envisage critical reviews delivered by some critics on *The Professor of Desire*:

The novel is a movement from comic gusto to melancholy. David Kepesh duplicates his combination of arrogance and self-disgust who moves between a life of scholarship and carnal adventure. In this regard, the critic Michiko Kakuutani opines:

David Kepesh, the novel's narrator, has become a mere shadow of himself. His personal history has been reduced to the bare bones of sexual appetite and perpetual dissatisfaction, his story stripped of the The Breast and denuded as well of the Chekhovian pathos of *The Professor of Desire*. (7)

David Kepesh, Roth's protagonist, first introduced in 1972 in a Kafkaesque novel *The Breast*, is also the narrator of Roth's controversial novel in 1977 *The Professor of Desire*. In *The Breast* Kepesh wants never to pay any price for his sexual indulgences and ego-centric behaviour. But his protest against age and infirmity, his insistence that desire continues, that sex can be an affirmation of life against the inevitability of decay and loss. So, *The Breast* is Roth's major aesthetic disaster. In *The Professor of Desire* he wants to correct this error. In addition to this, the novel further becomes the

imaginative prelude to his next novel *The Prague Orgy*. In this respect, a prominent critic Harold Bloom says:

Against the error of *The Breast* can be set the funniest pages in *The Professor of Desire*, where the great dream concerning “Kafka’s whore” is clearly the imaginative prelude to *The Prague Orgy*. David Kepesh, Roth’s professor of desire, falls asleep in Prague and confronts “everything I ever helped for”, a guided visit with an official interpreter to an old woman, possibly once Kafka’s whore. The heart of her revelation is Rothian rather than Kafkan, as she assimilates the greatest of modern Jewish writers to all the other ghosts of her Jewish clientele.(17)

Roth, in this work, reveals little awareness of women’s status as full-fledged human beings with possible purposes unrelated to men. Solipsism confines understanding and although Roth’s heroes note this fact as a general truth. They have trouble grasping its particular manifestations. Yearning to live ethical life if they cannot manage wonderfully wicked ones, such characters flounder less and for existing more comfortably with and in the real. Roth’s men endure the consequences of their inability to grant their women full and separate existence, self-doomed to satisfaction with the partial creatures they create.

The conflict between personal pride and the stigma that is associated with ethnicity and now race, plays an important role in Roth’s fiction. This tension is particularly pronounced in novels where protagonist attempts to come to terms with his own ethnic identity through his relationship with the hegemonic Other - the white Christian women who symbolize the American society that Roth’s protagonists consistently view themselves in opposition to. In this regard, Stephen Milowitz

opines, Roth's novels embody a modernist literary tradition "founded on the conventions of inward-looking ego-identity of the narrator, a place of inner dialogue with wider, incomprehensible word and with inner confusion and uncertainty" (58).

Above mentioned features, which Milowitz viewed, can be found in the narration of the professor in this novel:

My father doesn't understand me, the F.B.I. doesn't understand me, neither the sorority girls nor the bohemians understand me – not even Louis Jelinek ever really understood me, and, unlikely as it sounds, this alleged homosexual (wanted by the police) has been my closest friend. No, nobody understands me, not even I myself. (*The Professor of Desire* 26)

David Kepesh is a philanderer who always seeks for new women; Helen represents the "femme fatale" that he had searched for since college. Mark Schenner says, "*The Professor of Desire* is a mopping up operation [...]. It is a novel of convalescence" (238). Stephen Wade further compares Kepesh with another protagonist of Roth's novel. As Tarnopol in *My Life as a Man*, David Kepesh in *The Professor of Desire* feels compelled to change precisely those things about Helen Baird that initially drew him to her. Like Tarnopol, Kepesh cannot recognize that it is not his race that he is trying to escape through his wife but an element of himself. This precipitates his own disillusionment by "conceiv[ing] of [Helen] as a self in need of idolization" (66).

Another critic Murray Baumgarten who also compares Tarnopol with Kepesh. He notes that in beating his wife he "achieve [s] an American standard of masculinity" though he is ultimately "unmanned" by this act (qtd. in *Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Writing* 142). Tarnopol's brutality towards Maureen is similar to Kepesh's parodic involvement with the denouncement of his wife's adventures. In

attempting to change the Other to fit on ideal, both protagonists are drawn deeper into the world of their respective temptresses. Both men are left reeling in situations that further alienate them from themselves by forcing them to recognize in shame, the uncontrolled masculinity of the gentle Other that they had initially sought to emulate.

We can find family resemblances among the characters of Roth's novels. They seem as if they have sibling relationships. For instance, we can find the same protagonist in *The Breast* and in *The Professor of Desire*; similar in the case of *Zuckerman Unbound* and *Zuckerman Bound*. A critic George Stade views this essence in *The New York Times* (1981) in this way:

There are family resemblances among these characters, as there are among Mr. [Philip Roth]'s other heroes, Gabe Wallach of *Letting Go* (1962), David Kepesh of *The Breast* (1962) and *The Professor of Desire* (1977) and Philip Roth of the interviews and essays collected in *Reading Myself and Others* (1975). These are men whose aspirations are literary; who grew up just outside New York, in Westchester or Catskills or "Jewish New Jersey"; whose parents are loving, smothering and emphatically Jewish, whose women are gentle and mainly of two varieties, one vicious and alluring, the other virtuous and boring; who suffer from [...]. A disorder in which strongly fact ethical and altruistic impulses are perpetually warring with extreme sexual longings. (9)

A central irony that runs through Roth's work is that where his protagonist attempts to evade the importance of ethnicity, he ultimately makes it the defining element of his personal relationships. To underpin this fact I would like to cite Samuel C. Heilman's some lines in the book *Portrait of American Jews*:

[A] major study of Jews in the mind of America commissioned by the American Jewish committee in the first half of the [1960s] demonstrated [that] the Jews had melted so well into American that American public awareness of them quite sharp even fifteen years earlier, had declined markedly. (54)

As above mentioned by Heilman the professor in this novel is plagued by personal insecurities, seek in the Other's mettle the courage to transcend the limitations that would have realistically been largely an element of his own imagination. Negative criticism of Roth's works has included charges of anti-Semitism, degradation of women, obscenity bordering on pornography, and repetitiveness of theme. Positive response to his work, however, is equally strong, and Roth's supporters have consistently mentioned that he is a deeply moral writer. They argue that his books are humorous in fantastic sense, and that his satires, while written into the foibles of American life. Recent critical studies of his oeuvre discuss Roth as an autobiographical and Jewish-American author, investigate the impact of anti-Semitism and the Holocaust on his fiction, place his work in a sociohistorical context, several of his novels. The quantity and variety of critical opinion that greets each new book clearly indicates Roth's stature as a major contemporary novelist.

Issues of sex, class, race, ethnicity are the elements of Roth's novel. The critics had already talked much about such issues. My claim in this research is that Kepesh is the person who is doomed by excessive sexuality within him. They even talked about the protagonist's split personality caused by class, race and ethnicity. But how a person [David Kepesh] suffers from identity crisis when his "Self" is fragmented because of extra sexual activities is not yet talked about. Because of the imbalance between sexuality and intellectuality his self explodes. In my research,

class, race, ethnicity are hardly the cause of his predicament; they are only external facts. Indeed, Kepesh is victimized internally by himself.

Before entering next chapter, I would like to define some key terms briefly related to my study. For instance, “Self”, “Identity”, “Desire”. Self is the identity of anything/anybody regarded abstractly. Moreover, self is the unity (ego, subject, memory, mind, I, awareness, consciousness-knower) that endures throughout change and is aware of its unity, its endurance and change. Therefore, self is the entire sequence of mental events of which one can be aware at any given moment. Self and identity usually come together. There is proximity between them.

The identity is oneness which endures as a self-regulating unity throughout change. Inasmuch, identity is that which can be identified as being the same from among a diversity or plurality of things. Self is fragmented or torn when the unity is subverted. Consequence of “Fragmented Self” of a person is crisis in his identity. David Kepesh, the protagonist of my research novel, for instance, is devastated since his Self is fragmented because of excessive sexuality in him. He becomes self-alienated and circumcised by identity crisis. Desire - sexual desire is the cause of his plight.

Simply, Desire means a strong wish to have or do something. And in the context of my research this wish is sexual one. To become a “Self” the individual must seek recognition by demanding the other to recognize him – self or his desire. In this regard there is unalienable relationship among self, identity, and desire. For Lacan desires necessarily linked to phallogentrism because the child desires the mother’s desire and thus identifies himself “with the imaginary object of this desire in so far as the mother herself symbolizes it in the phallus” (*The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* 198). Desire is, moreover, according to Lacan, constituted by the hysteric in the very moment of speaking. “So it is hardly surprising

that it should be through this door that Freud entered what was, in reality the relation of desire to language and discovered the mechanisms of the unconscious”(12).

The research has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter presents a brief introduction including the literature review and a discussion on the propriety and significance of topic and its hypothesis. The second chapter will deal with the discussion of theoretical tool that shall be applied to the text. The major tool will be the Lacanian psychoanalysis for analyzing the “Fragmented Self” of the protagonist. The third chapter will apply the theoretical tool to the text and prove the hypothesis. Finally, the last chapter will be the conclusion of the research on the basis of chapter three [Textual analysis].

II: Psychoanalytic Scrutiny on Self

The theoretical tool of Lacanian psychoanalysis is chosen to picturize how the protagonist is maneuvered in the play of illusion/desire. It is hypothesized that perfection of libidinal desire of the protagonist becomes a mirage because the more he tries to possess it, the farther it slips away. Lacanian view of “desire” is similar to Derridian idea of “meaning”. Both of them are slippery in nature. Desire, according to Lacan, is like a signifier but, having no signified. Meredith Skura, in “Psychoanalytic Criticism”, writes, “Desire, for Lacan, is never assuageable in reality. Lacan’s call is to question what passes for reality, not to accept it, and certainly to question all authoritative versions of it” (qtd. in 354).

If we analyze the history of study on “Self”, Enlightenment is the period when human subject was considered as a unified individual with a center, an inner core that was there at birth and developed as the individual grew, while remaining essentially the same. This core of the “self” was the source of the subject’s identity. However, contemporary philosophy has followed the natural sciences in shattering this notion which was linked with a cosmology that put “man” at the center of the universe and has decentered the subject itself. In Enlightenment period, the subject was constructed in the interaction between self and society. The postmodern subject, by contrast, has no fixed, essential, or permanent identity. Subjectivity is formed and transformed in a continuous process that takes place in reaction to the ways.

Psychoanalysis studies the oftentimes skewed ways in which the mind expresses feelings. Ryan Michael views that it is also “concerned with the dynamics of interpersonal relations and with the way self is formed through interactions with its familial and sociocultural environment” (Michael 103). Depending on the school of psychoanalysis one needs the study of the mind’s operations in literature should be concerned either with the unconscious and the instincts or with the family, personal

history, and social world that shapes the self. It is the talking cure that takes place in the presence of patient (analysand) and doctor (analyst) through patient's behavioral activities. The focus of the psychoanalysis is, therefore, unconscious part of mind. It can help us better to explain literary relationships, actions, motives, and the very existence itself of the text. Moreover, it engages in the interpretation and source of information therapeutically. Themes and motives central to psychoanalysis are desire and loss, delay and repletion of doubling, lack and so on. In his book *crits* Lacan opines:

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

Nineteenth century is the period of transition when many changes took place. Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913) broke with the idea of language as a tool to express thought about reality and pointed to how the speaking subject was thoroughly embedded in an always already preexisting language system. According to him, “the bond between signifier and the signified is arbitrary, hence the whole is arbitrary, too” (Salovoj 23). The second characteristic is the linear nature of signifier; the signifier being auditory is unfolded in time. Signifiers form a chain. Saussure's disruption of the picture of language as a neutral tool is accompanied by Sigmund Freud's questioning of the rational, transparent character of human thought itself. Lacan furthers:

It was in fact the so-called Copernican revolution to which Freud himself compared his discovery, emphasizing that it was once again a question of the place man assigns to himself at the center of universe. (*crits* 165)

For Freud, consciousness is not primary but only the aspect of the unconscious. This is how the birth of psychoanalysis took place.

Freud believed that unconscious motives and the feelings people experience as children have an enormous impact on adult personality and behavior. He was the first modern psychologist to suggest that every personality has a large unconscious component. Life includes both pleasurable and painful experiences. For Freud, experiences include feelings and thoughts as well as actual events. He believed that many of our experiences, particularly the painful episodes of childhood, are forgotten or buried in the unconscious. But, although, we may not consciously recall these experiences, they continue influence our behavior. The “unconscious” is the mental realm into which those aspects of mental life that are related to forbidden desires and instincts are cosigned through the process of “repression”. Freud theorized that all of life moves toward death and that the desire for final end shows up in human personality as destructiveness and aggressive. But the life instincts were more important in his theory, and he saw them primarily as erotic or pleasure-seeking urges.

Freud had described what became known as the structural components of mind: “id”, “ego” and “superego”. Though, he often spoke of them as if they were actual parts of personality, he introduced and regarded them simply the model of how the mind works. In other words, id, ego and superego do not refer to actual portions of the brain. Instead, they explain how the mind functions and how the instinctual energies are regulated. The id is the reservoir of the instinctual urges. It is the lustful or drive-ridden part of the unconscious. The id seeks immediate gratification of desire, regardless of the consequences. The id is, therefore, treasure house of such desires and buried thoughts which are guided by “pleasure principle”. The personality process that is mostly conscious is called the ego. The ego is the rational thoughtful, realistic personality process. The part of the personality that would stop us is called

the superego. This is guided by “morality principle”. Rules, regulations, standards, values, and codes of society are the concerns of superego.

The ego’s job is so difficult that unconsciously all people resort to psychological defenses. Rather than face intense frustration, conflict or feelings of unwillingness, people deceive themselves into believing nothing is wrong. If the demands of the id and the ego cannot be resolved, it may be necessary to distort reality. Freud called these techniques defense mechanisms because they defend the ego from experiencing anxiety about failing in its tasks. Freud felt that these defense mechanisms stem mainly from the unconscious part of the ego and only ordinarily become conscious to the individual during a form of psychoanalysis. A few of the defense mechanisms he identified are shortly discussed below.

According to Freud, “Dream is the royal road to unconscious” (*Interpretation of Dreams* 45). Dream uses two main mechanisms to disguise forbidden wishes: “Condensation” and “Displacement”. Condensation is a whole set of images packed into a single image or statement when a complex meaning is condensed into another. Displacement occurs when the object of an unconscious wish provokes anxiety. This anxiety is reduced when the ego unconsciously shifts the wish to another object. The energy of the id is displaced from one object to another.

Other defense mechanisms discussed by Freud are: “repression”, “reaction formation”, “projection” and “regression”. When a person has some thought or urge that causes the ego too much anxiety, he may push that thought or urge out of consciousness down into the unconscious. This process is called repression. The person simply forgets the thing that disturbs him, or pushes it out of awareness without ever realizing it. Reaction formation involves an unacceptable feeling or urge with its opposite. Another way the ego avoids anxiety is to believe that impulses coming from within are really coming from other people. This mechanism is called projection because inner feelings are thrown, or projected outside. It is a common

mechanism which we have probably observed in ourselves from time to time. Many people, for instance, feel that others dislike them, when in reality they dislike themselves. Lastly, regression means going back to an earlier and less mature pattern. When a person is under severe pressure and his other defenses are not working, he may start acting in ways that helped him in the past. For example, he may throw a temper tantrum, make faces, cry loudly, or revert to eating and sleeping all the time the way he did as a small child. Transferring of feelings originally associated with the infantile object, childhood trauma or other object of psychoanalytic investigation, from its sources to investigating psychoanalyst. That is why, transference activities are regressions.

Studies on Hysteria provides the example of Freud's concept on transference. Closely related to his discovery of the unconscious and his development of the first version of psychoanalytic theory and practice was his identification of the phenomenon of transference. In an effort to probe the unconscious mind, Freud found that his patient's responses to him were, in many cases, distortions based on their earlier experiences with other, usually parents or associated with "image of the father and through transference patients unconsciously re-dramatize their relationship to the parental figures of the past in the analytic process, therefore, revealing Oedipal structure" (The Dynamics of Transference xii).

These transferences, defined as distortions of unconscious feelings, thoughts and behaviors from the past projected onto the present figure of the analyst, became central to the psychoanalytic cure.

According to Freud, transference is a process of exploration of the unconscious mind, exploration of the self-experience of patients, which is referred to as self-object transferences. It reflects deprivation in the early childhood and early objects. In the self-object transference the past emerges in the present.

In recent literary theory the concept of transference is sometimes broadened to include any process whereby the analyst of a text becomes inextricably involved in the object of his or her process of analysis. This method of transference is becoming very popular in the research of literary text. Moreover, transference is acknowledged as ubiquitous in human interactions. Its meanings have provided a basis for life span development of the psychology of the self.

It should be noted, however, that whereas in Freud's writing it is the person analyzed who is responsible for the transference. But in the extended concept it is the person doing the analysis who is responsible, so that, perhaps, countertransference might be more appropriately involved. This notion first appeared in Freud's writings in 1910: "We have become aware of the 'countertransference', which arises in [physician], as a result of the patient's influence on his unconscious feelings [...]" (*International Journal of Psychoanalysis* 144). He further suggests that the analyst should "begin his activity with a self-analysis and continually carry it deeper while he is making his observations on his patients" (144). Freudian concept of countertransference is based on and inherently developed from his theory of "transference". He regards it as a dangerous phenomenon that jeopardizes the analytical process. In *The Future Prospects of Psychoanalytic Therapy*, Freud defines countertransference in terms of desires that arise in the analysis "as result of patient's influence on [the physician's] unconscious feelings" (144-145). To keep the psychoanalytic discourse scientific and neutral, Freud insists that the analyst must resist analysand's unconscious transference toward him and overcome the analysand's influence or interference. He believes that all transferential reactions are determined by unconscious, irrational wishes and desires based on person's own faculty of past, and insignificant relationship. Likewise, countertransference is manifested through anxiety, inappropriate and defensive behavior, and distorted perception based on counselor's unconscious conflict. In this regard, countertransference is essentially an

obstacle to be overcome. The physician unconsciously experiences the patient. Freud argues that this reaction is caused by an unconscious and intolerable wish of the counselor to love the client which must be defended against through distancing punishing behavior. This Freudian view is commonly referred to as narrow perspective, and it is still espoused by some modern classical analyses.

In modern psychoanalysis, Freud's concept of transference is questioned. What Freud does not realize is that countertransference might occur before rather than after transference, the cause instead of the effect of transference. In place of other's desire through countertransference and the narrative of the unconscious, thus, inserted into the analysis and eventually reverts to his own: tautological and narcissistic. This characterizes, what J.B. Pontalis called, "death of Oedipus, and triumph of narcissus" (78). Freud's attempts cannot discover at all the unconscious of the other, but the desires of himself. Instead of a reaction to transference the other's unconscious desires, countertransference initiates an intra-subjective relationship within oneself in narcissistic space of self reflexivity.

Thus, the concept of subject had been decentered, fragmented, and split through the attempt of Saussure and Freud. Fragmentation in human self is also fueled by Marxist view that life is not determined by consciousness but vice versa. Similarly, Darwin's theory of species refused the existing view that man is a son of God. He rather proved human as an ape. Similarly, Nietzsche's work about Death of God questioned the immortality of God (center). In addition to this, feminist theories also decentered the phallogocentric tradition. Likewise, Derridian concept of deconstruction totally ruptured the idea of unified self.

Jacques Lacan (1901-1981), a new Freudian, also naturally opposes the idea of a whole self that serves as an agent of strength, synthesis, mastery, integration and adaptation to realistic norms. Lacan has unflinchingly insisted that human subject is neither unified nor unifiable. But, Lacan delimits consciousness and makes

consciousness and language themselves defenses against unconscious meaning. The Lacanian subject (*je/moi*) is not unified in consciousness. The ego, however, is intrinsically unified-except in dreams, psychosis, and other unravelling manifestations – and projects itself into consciousness as the principle of individuality. Because it emanates from the unconscious and yet must continually verify itself through the very means of its occultation – consciousness and language – the *moi* cannot ‘see’ itself as it really is. “The ego is a function, the ego is synthesis, a synthesis of functions, a function of synthesis” (*crits* 131).

Freud sees the subject as decentered and marked by a lack. Lacan follows Freud in this regard. He moves from the individualist orientation of Freud to a more social view, with the concept of big Other (the symbolic order). He does this by incorporating Saussurian insights concerning language into his work alongside Freudian concepts of unconscious. Hazard Adams, in his book *Literary Theory and Criticism*, writes, “[Lacan] privileges the Saussurean signifier over the signified, thus decentering both unconscious and language and calling and old style empirical analysis”. He further adds on the same paragraph, “Analysis cannot escape from the chain of signifiers to point to any origin beyond signification itself (897). We can think of Lacan as the symposium of Freud, Saussure and some reasoning of Derrida. However, his main influence is Freud. Lacan reinterprets Freud in the light of structuralist and poststructuralist theories, turning psychoanalysis from an essentially humanist philosophy or theory of mind into a poststructuralist one. His concept of psychoanalysis aims to understand the unconscious of human mind in terms of language which he derives from the growth of infant to adulthood. For Lacan, the unconscious undermines the subject from any position of certainty, and from any relations of and simultaneously reveals the fictional nature of the category to which every human subject is none the less assigned. He divides human growth into three

phases: Mirror, Imaginary and Symbolic (Real). These three are the phases in the constitution of the psychic subject.

Lacan states that the mirror stage is far from a mere phenomenon which occurs in the development of the child; it illustrates the conflictual nature of the dual relationship. “It is an experience which leads us to oppose any philosophy directly issuing from the *cogito*” (*Mapping ideology* 193). The mirror stage describes the formation of the ego via the process of identification, the ego being result of identifying with one’s own specular image. In this regard, Lacan opines in his book *crits* in this way:

The mirror stage is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation – and which manufactures for the subject caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body image to a form of its totality that I shall call orthopaedic – and, lastly, to the assumption of the armour of an alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject’s entire development. (4)

At six months the baby still lacks coordination, however, he/she can recognize himself/herself in the mirror before attaining control over his bodily movements. He/she sees his/her image as a whole, and the synthesis of the image produces a sense of control with the uncoordination of the body; which is perceived as a fragmented body. This contrast is first felt by the infant a rivalry with his/her own image, because the wholeness of image threatens him/her with fragmentation, and, thus mirror stage gives rise to an aggressive tension between the subject and the image. To resolve this aggressive tension, the subject identifies with the image: this primary identification with the counterpart is what forms the ego. Thus, at first, the infant identifies himself with his mother. Gradually, he begins to see a visual image in his mother. The spatial distance is created between the child and the mother because of this reflection. Now,

the child finds himself in the series of gestures. He looks his own experience in the mirror (mother). So, the first phase in the mirror stage is called Gaze phase. In this regard Lacan points out:

We have only to understand the mirror stage as an *identification*, in the full sense that analysis gives to the term: namely, the transformation that takes place in the subject when he assumes an image – whose predestination to this phase – effect is sufficiently indicated by the use, in analytic theory, of ancient *image*. (*crits* 2)

The spatial distance between the child and the mother gives birth to illusion. He can not distinguish himself and his [m] other.

The imaginary order is the formation of the ego in the mirror state. In this phase a child becomes jubilant. Jubilant phase is full of illusions and gazing activities. The child sees no gap between him and his image. Later, the ego is constructed by identification with the specular image. The subject becomes aware of the spatial gap between him and the image. Then, the alienation phase begins. The relationship between the ego and the specular image means that the ego and imaginary order itself are places of radical orientation. Therefore, alienation is constitutive of the imaginary order. In this regard, Lacan states:

[T]he spatial and temporal categories in which the ego and the object are constituted, experienced as events in perspective of mirages, as affections with something stereotypical about them that suspends the workings of the ego/object dialectic. (*crits* 17)

As a result, ego is formed. Imaginary state is the field of images and imagination and deception: the main illusions of this order are synthesis, autonomy, duality, similarity. The narcissistic relationship develops in this phase. .

Imaginary stage, thus, overlaps with mirror stage and forms a path to symbol stage, which starts from eighteen months (of child), but properly begins after two

years. To underpin his concept Lacan provides the concept of “other” and “Other”. The little other is the other who is not really other but reflections and projection of the ego. The big Other designates a radical alterity and Lacan equates this with language and the law: the big Other is inscribed in symbolic order. The big Other is, then, another subject and also the symbolic order which mediates the relationship with that other subject. In this respect, Lacan states in his book *crits*, “It is *the name of the father* that we must recognize the support of the symbolic function which, from the dawn of history, has identified his person with the figure of the law” (67).

In short, the “other” is the conceptualized image of a substitute object of desire, whereas, the “Other”, which opposes the subject’s initial desire, is the law of father or language. But, as the “center” in Derridian term, the other cannot be merged with. Nothing can be in the center with the other; so the position of the other creates and sustains a-never-ending lack, which Lacan called desire. Desire is to be Other. Therefore, “the satisfaction of human desire is possible only when mediated by the desire and the labor of the other” (*crits* 26).

The last stage in which an infant comes across in his childhood is the symbolic phase. In this phase the child arrives at a sense of identity. Gaps between the child and the mother and signifier and signified is further disclosed. “The Symbolic conceived as the order of orders, as the separator (as well as the agent of separation)” (*Returns of the French Freud: Freud, Lacan and Beyond* 103).

Desires on language are spatially distanced. Here, Lacan states that “the desired affect may be obtained merely by placing the individual within reach of the field of reflection of mirror” (*crits* 3). The child, indeed, enters into the world of “lack” and “anxiety”. Dreams for him become the patches of fragmentation. He, in this stage, recognizes his “Father” and the “Law of his Father”, that is language. To crystallize this concept of Lacan, Martin Jay states:

[A] difference between normal and psychotic behaviour which depends on the partial transition from the imaginary to a further stage, which Lacan termed 'the symbolic'. Coincident with the resolution of the Oedipus complex, the symbolic meant the child's entry into language. (349-350)

The more an infant grows the more fragmented his/her self (ego) becomes. In addition to this, the primal oneness with the mother's body becomes possible only at the cost of death. The child enters into and finds bound by all man-made rules and regulations of morality, religion and of social affairs. He maneuvers from "the 'I' to socially elaborated situations" (*crits* 5). This means there is the existence of two "I" individual or subjective and social. This process is, in other words, "the deflection of the mirror I into the social I" (Salvojev 97).

Regarding Freud's interpretation of Condensation and Displacement Lacan opines:

Verdichtung, or 'condensation', is the structure of the superimposition of the signifiers, which metaphor takes as its field, and whose name, condensing in itself the word *Dichtung*, shows how the mechanism is connatural with poetry to the point that it envelops the traditional function proper to poetry [...]. *Verchiebung*, 'displacement', the German term is the closer to the idea of that veering off of signification that we see in metonymy, and which from its first appearance in Freud is represented as the most appropriate means used by the unconscious to foil censorship. (*crits* 160)

The quoted excerpt clarifies that Lacan interprets Freud from the eye of linguistics. "It is the world of words that creates the world of things" (*crits* 65). For him the interpretation of dreams by Freud by constituting condensation and displacement is nothing but linguistic in nature and they correspond to metaphor and metonymy. But

Lacan goes a step further and goes on proving that the so called stable structure is, in fact, fragmented, and thus, Lacan gives the deconstructive study on Freud. For Lacan unconscious is structured like a language. “The unconscious is neither primordial nor instinctual; what it knows about the elementary is no more than the elements of the signifier” (*crits* 170). As Lacan opines condensation and displacement both are essentially linguistic phenomena where meaning is either condensed in metaphor or displaced in metonymy. Lacan states that the contents of the unconscious are actually aware of language and particularly of the structure of language. He points out this fact in *crits* in this way:

This signifying game between metonymy and metaphor, up to and including the active edge that splits my desire between a refusal of the signifier and a lack of being, and links my fate to the question of my destiny, this game, in all its inexorable subtlety, is played until the match is called, there where I am not, because I can not situate myself there. (166)

Lacan further states, “What one ought to say is: I am not wherever I am the playing of my thought; I think of what I am where I do not think to think” (*crits* 166). Lacan, in this way, he decenters the “self” through linguistics.

Saussure paved the way for Lacan regarding the concept of signifier and signified. Lacan modifies his concept further. Whereas, Saussure talked about the relationship between signifier and signified, Lacan focuses on relations between signifiers only. Because of this lack of signified the chain of signifiers is constantly sliding and shifting and circulating in the play (in Derridian sense); there is no way to stop this sliding down of this chain. Rather, one signifier only leads to another and never to a signified. Lacan further clarifies that “signifiers are taken from the material to which the second give the signification” (*crits* 141).

This signifier will, therefore, be the signifier for which all the other signifiers represent the subject. That is to say, in the absence of this signifier, all the other signifiers represent nothing since nothing is represented only for something else. Language is the distinctive form of human communication, both in life and in analysis, but it is coupled with emotional induction at every turn. Lacan revises Freudian notion of transference and argues for a symbolic relationship between the subject and the unconscious in his book, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*. Hence, 'transference' is the actualization and dramatization of the unconscious subject. Lacan states in his book *crits* as below:

It is memory, a comparable to what is called by that name in our modern thinking machines (which are in turn based on an electronic realization of the composition of signification), it is in this sort of memory that is found the chain that *insists* on reproducing itself in the transference and which is the chain of dead desire. (167)

Lacan's revision of the Freudian transference eventually leads to the other presence of the unconscious subject or the total effect of speech on the subject. He says:

[I]n psychoanalytic anamnesis, it is not a question of reality, but of truth, because the effect of full speech is to reorder past contingences by conferring on them the sense of necessities to come, such as they are constituted by the little freedom through which the subject makes them present. (*crits* 48)

Therefore, transference is a theory where we transfer our feelings and expectations for help onto another (an analyst). Because we think they know something about who we are and who we should become. Lacan argued that the analyst does not have the correct reality paradigm to help on analysis and with his or her impasses in knowledge and desire, but he maintained, the phenomenon itself (including the fact that it includes feelings of love and hate) tells us more about an unstable base for knowledge

in being, than it does about who actually has the correct theory. The analyst is like a role player who sits silent, the patient knows and that he/she can speak only in the (logical) time it takes to unravel repressed traumata, drop harmful to live by.

In Seminar XI Lacan says that “through transference [...] the analysand “acts” out of the reality of unconscious” (158). It is essential to relocate Lacanian countertransference from the imaginary into symbolic realm, into the locus of the other. It involves not only the presence of the analyst and the analysand, but also the co-presence of their different subject positions and repetitive unconscious. The subject is not a person but a position, an “I” defined relatively, by his or her difference from the “you” he or she addresses. In the countertransference “the analyst returns to the sum of the prejudices, passions, embarrassments, even insufficient information which characterize the analyst at a given moment in the dialectical process (xi-xiii). Lacan offers this definition in the course of his examination of the Dora case, in which he attributes Freud’s failure in the case of countertransference. Freud’s failure, according to Lacan “was to recognize Dora’s love for Frau K. as a function of his countertransference belief that Dora ought to have fallen for Herr K., instead of Frau K”(Intervention and Transference 42).

Lacan notes that had Freud utilized this wrong material in a transference interpretation (relating Dora’s relationship to Freud to that of Herr K.). It would have kept the case moving by virtue of her response to it. Thus, Freud’s mistake here is two fold: one, the wrong “understanding” of the case, caught up in the imitation of Freud’s view of the case; and two, the failure to act decisively, even with that, in his interventions.

In *Hysteria and Feminism* Lacan discusses the concept of countertransference written as below:

[T]he analyst does have passions, wishes, whims, prejudices and so forth, with regard to the analysand in treatment. The analyst has

desires, as it were. But, the analyst also has a stronger desire, a desire brought about by the change in his desire through the very process of analysis, which has dubbed the desire of analyst. And, further, it is the desire of the analyst, a desire focused on the treatment – the exigencies of the treatment – that maintain the treatment purified, as it were, from these other more pedestrian desires. (viii)

Countertransference is partly determined by the therapist's preexisting internal object world and partly influenced by feelings induced by patient. The concept is now regarded as inevitable, and minor enactments of countertransference may provide valuable information about what is being recreated in the therapist- patient dyad.

Self-disclosure of countertransference may be useful in some situations, but the sharing of some feelings will overwhelm patient and burden them in a way may be destructive to the therapeutic process. P. Heimann suggests that "the analyst's total emotional response to the patient is not simply an obstacle or hindrance based on the analyst's own past, but an important tool in understanding the patient's unconscious (31). This view is often referred as the broad or totalistic perspective on countertransference.

In fact, Lacan implies that resistance comes primarily from the analyst who tries to reify the past and unconscious and to freeze the flow of analytic dialogue into answer. The notion of projective identification enables the connection between intrapsychic and the intersubjective field of the analytic process. Grigoris Vasiamatzis opines, "The communicative aim of projective identification and the metaphor of the container-contained relationship between the mother and her infant"(116). When the infant is overwhelmed by unmodulated effects, it tends to project them into the mother. The mother receives the infant's feelings, and her own capacity for reverie modulates, transforms, and finally returns to the infant in a more tolerable and structured experience. In this way, containment is not a passive reception of what is projected.

Thus, countertransference is to articulate a double relation: the subject's relation to the Other (the other subject) and to the other (the unconscious). In

“Intervention and Transference”, Lacan insists that “what needs to be understood regarding psychoanalytic experience is that it proceeds entirely in a relation to subject” (93). The Lacanian subject, who is determined by the unconscious desires configured in the symbolic system, emerges as the other to itself. Lacan further says, “[T]he subject appears first in the Other, in so far as the first signifier, the unary signifier emerges in the field of the other” (218). Unlike Freud, Lacan views countertransference effects positively. He opines that analyst’s emotional response to the patient is not just an obstacle based on analyst’s own past but also an important tool in understanding the patient’s unconscious. Hence, countertransference focuses more on intra-personal or intra-subjective relation than inter-personal or inter-subjective relation. The unconscious in terms of the Other constitutes the other scenes in countertransference which articulated a relationship of the other. (the subject of the unconscious) to the other (the symbolic structure of desires). In this respect, here, psychoanalysis’ focus is on person’s self.

Overall, my study of psychoanalysis, especially Lacanian psychoanalysis, escorted me to analyze my research novel, *The Professor of Desire* pensively. Of course, there is no one-to-one correspondence between Lacanian psychoanalytic theory and my application as such, nevertheless, understanding of his principle will help to analyze the novel. I am trying to theorize my analysis with the help of some of key concepts of Lacanian psychoanalysis such as, his phase-wise development of a child (mirror stage, imaginary state and symbol stage) will be compared with the protagonist’s age of twenties and his age of thirties respectively. Similarly, his concept of countertransference will be applied in the light of therapeutic relationship of analyst and analysand. Use of language will also be viewed. My attempt in this research is to depict how the protagonist is fragmented by analyzing his less interpersonal and more intrapersonal behaviors. Above mentioned ideas will help me to accomplish my study.

In his twenties, David Kepesh, the protagonist of the novel, engages in illusory activities like an infant in Lacanian mirror stage. The syndrome of imaginary stage can be seen within mirror stage where Kepesh sees his image in other. As in symbolic

stage of a child, Kepesh's age of thirties is the period of disillusionment. In my thesis, Lacanian m(other) is replaced by girlfriends of Kepesh. Kepesh always wants to be one with his beloved. As a result, he frequently seeks for new woman to reflect his self. Similarly, his scholarship is applied as Lacan's concept of language. His intellectuality/scholarship becomes the barrier to saturate his libidinal desire. Transference is the concept where a person transfers his feelings to other. Whereas, in countertransference an analyst is affected by his analysand. He/she goes back to his past and compares his present moment with his events of bygone. Effects of countertransference are more visible in the novel. Here, Kepesh is compared with an analyst and his women are as analysands. However, sometimes, the effects of the transference are also discernible in the novel where his role is an analysand. The protagonist in the novel indulges with several women. He is an utter philanderer who always tends to reminisce his past romance at the moment of his present lovemaking. Feelings of past haunt him. Lack in his present beloved throws him back toward past romances (through his memory) but the thirst of his desire for saturation never quenches. He cannot unify his self. His identity of a professor is jeopardized because of his extra-sexual activities like a cupid. Lacanian concept of language is also applied to portray how Kepesh fails to express his desires through other's language. Language is made by our fore-father. Then, how a person can express his feelings and desires through others' language? Thus, language use in the novel will also be discussed in next chapter.

III: David Kepesh: A Fragmented Personality

In *The professor of Desire*, David Kepesh, the protagonist of the novel is squeezed between his life of intellectuality and instinctual desire within him. He spends his youth for physical pleasure at the cost of his academic career. While much of the focus is on Kepesh's love life, his professional and family life are entangled with his love life. At his choice, romantic relationship becomes the focus. The title itself speaks that David Kepesh is the professor-“The Professor of Desire”. In this sense, Philip Roth himself crippled his protagonist's identity. In spite of being the professor of English literature, Kepesh is baptized as “The Professor of Desire”. The writer himself bestowed dual identity to his protagonist. Disregarding his scholarship, Kepesh wanders to find love through lust. Predilection in sex is his weakness. The professor is very desirous in the matter of sex. He has strong sex drive even though there is nothing that he wishes for satisfaction in this drive. The fate is that his wishes go reversely because of his wandering libido. His life is deteriorated by carnal adventures. He becomes a pariah among his colleague intelligentsia. The professor's scholarship becomes a burden for himself. He cannot maintain his intellectual position in academic society. Nonetheless, he is proud of desire within him. According to him, his desire “is not to be belittled or despised” (23). The fire of desire is further fuelled by fantasy.

The novel explicitly draws the connection between sexual/social and comic potency. Kepesh's lecherous desires do not prevent him from having a satisfying relationship with a single partner. He spends his twenties for his bodily needs. If anything moves him in this period that is lust. Towering demands of libido dwarfs his reputation as a professor. Consequently, his life becomes hollow and chaotic forced by impetuous motives and desires. His life of thirties becomes an ordeal. His past misconducts take revenge severely at present life. As a result, the professor hovers continually between collections of his youth and adolescence. The play of desire and illusion puzzles Kepesh's life ceaselessly.

The deaths of the gods, the rupture of traditional bonds of moral and manners, the crises in philosophy in its modern forms, the inroads of materialism – all are cause and symptom of the fragmentation in person's self, the uncoordinated self. The external facts potentially impact the psychology of any person. The person's identity lies in his (unified) self, when it becomes fragmented, he loses his identity. David Kepesh is the person who suffers identity crisis because he cannot maintain his self as unified whole. His instinctual drives go beyond his achieved intellectuality. His professorship is questioned repeatedly. Kepesh cannot choose between his summer self which succumbs to a spell of unruly desire and his winter self – which embraces society's rules.

The first word of the novel is "Temptation", the last is "bed"; those are the points its kinky line connects. The novel foreshadows the illusoriness of the protagonist from the opening pages when his first mentor, Herbie Bratsky, proves to be a virtuoso of illusion, within thirty pages the novel provides the nature of the protagonist vividly. The description is found in first person narrative. Rest of the book traces serial episodes undertaking the discovery of desire that never seems to last. Kepesh is the person who always wants to echo his identity through "other" (beloved). He wants to be one with those women whom he loved. He is a dreamer who says, "nowhere is not where I am expected to go" (8). But the plight is that he cannot go anywhere from the imprisonment of his own passionate desires.

The role of desire is seminal in the novel. It is an effect on the protagonist of the condition which is imposed upon him through the defiles of signifiers. Need is directed toward a specific object, is unmediated by language, and unlike desire can be satisfied directly. There is difference between need and desire. Kepesh's desire is the voracious want of sex.

We can relate desire with Lacanian idea of metonymy and metaphor. Kepesh's desire in this novel is working as metonymy and metaphor both. It is metonymical in a sense that desire is part of our life; which is here compared with whole life. The professor is presented as if he is made up of desire only. His whole personality is equivalent with desire. It is also equated with beloved he loves. His lust to love them

goes beyond the limit. He wants to echo his desire through his maidens. Therefore, the ladies he establishes his rapport is just the aftermath of his illusory desire. The professor wants to marry his desire with the desire of his ladies. He thinks that the maidens are his desires. Desires only make the chain: Kepesh's desire - his beloved's desire – he himself as desire – his beloved as desire. He narrates, “Lo this is [Helen] was the world's desire” (211). The professor valorizes the desire. His fate is anatomizing the emotional perplexities of a man whose capacity for fantasy enables him constantly reinterpret his experience, shaping his own experience inexorable reality which he can finally neither comprehend nor avoid.

The title itself proves that the professor is equal to desire. Kepesh and his desire are taken as interchangeably. Where there is desire there is the professor. He is always in the angst whether he has to lose it. “I will be without desire” (261). It is unalienable to him. He cannot control it but it governs him. It is also playing the role of metaphor because desire represents “lack”. The desire, followed by lack can be equated with lack in person's self or lack in his/her “being”. The absence of lack is the presence of desire. We desire something when we lack. In this aspect, desire is metaphorical as well. The play of Derridian presence and absence is similar to the play of desire and lack in the novel. David Kepesh is the subject who is victimized by this play. “When you can't have something you want” (63). If there is no desire there is no wanting (lack). Thus, desire is displaced by lack and it is condensed in a person as well.

The biography of the protagonist in *The Professor of Desire* is described from his adolescence. He is blindfolded by the fantasy of sex. Kepesh's “penchant for mimicry” (9) leads him towards dilemma. He turns his deaf ear to the voice of rationality that triggers him toward “the shade of melancholia” (249). Kepesh's life is divided into his age of twenties and his thirties. The twenties is compared with Lacanian “Mirror Stage”, and the thirties as “Symbolic Stage”. The mirror stage provides different kinds of illusions, desires and infatuation of the professor. “Imaginary Stage” overlaps the mirror stage, in which state Kepesh wants to be one with his maiden. He “is a murderous, conscienceless womanizer” (125). Kepesh is a

hedonist person. In his life of thirties, he realizes his wrong doings, however he can do nothing to unify his scattered self.

The twenties of Kepesh illustrates the conflictual nature of dual relationship. In which the formation of his ego takes place through the process of identification. The ego of Kepesh is the result of identifying with one's own specular image. He is in the illusion that his lady partner can reflect him – "I am one thing or I am the other" (12). The "other" is equated with his beloved. "I" (Kepesh) is not alienated from the "other". There is binary relationship between "I" and "other". The professor's identity is determined by his lady partner. He is unknown that such ambitious desires to be one with "other" is just a mirage. He narrates, "Thus, at twenty, do I set out to undo the contradictions and overleap the uncertainties" (12). Though he lacks coordination, he recognizes himself in front of the mirror or his maiden as if he can attain control over his contradictory desires and uncertainties of life. His condition is similar to Lacanian infant. He sees himself as "whole" without noticing holes in his personality. Kepesh is mesmerized by his own reflection in his beloved. He is blinded by the sexuality of woman. He acquires "a "terrible" reputation among the sorority girls" (23). His "collaborationist instincts" (22) always desire to be unified with the woman he loves. His love is not indeed a love but that is his lust upon woman sexuality. He flatters, his maiden's sexuality, as "Your ass is sensational" (23).

Thus, his twenties is like a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation. The synthesis of the image produces a sense of contrast with the uncoordination of his body which is perceived as a fragmented body. This contrast is first felt by David a rivalry with his own image because the wholeness of image threatens him with fragmentation. Thus, his age of twenties gives rise to aggressive tension between him and his beloved. He states, "At twenty I must stop impersonating others [beloveds] and become Myself, or at least begin to impersonate the self I believe I ought now to be" (12). To resolve this tension, the protagonist further identifies with his woman; the primary identification with the mistress is what forms the ego. In this way, Kepesh's identity is determined by his mistresses in his adolescence.

By and by, he begins to see a visual image in his beloved. The spatial distance is created between him and his beloved because of the reflection. Now, he finds himself in the series of gestures. He looks his own experiences in his beloved. So, the first phase in this stage is Gaze phase; where the protagonist becomes overwhelmed by the beauty of his lady friend. For him, “Her [Elisabeth] face *alone* is so lovable” (43)! He becomes dumbfounded in front of his maiden. “Undeflectable gaze comes around to question [him]” (21). In this period, illusion of the professor reaches to its apotheosis. He cannot help but praises his beloved Helen as:

Is she not the single most desirable creature I have ever known? With a woman so physically captivating, a woman whom I cannot take my eyes from even if she is only drinking her coffee or dialing the phone, surely with someone whose smallest bodily movement has such a powerful sensuous hold upon me, I need hardly worry ever again about imagination tempting me to renewed adventures in the base and bewildering. Is not Helen the enchantress whom I had already begun searching for in college. (64-65)

The above mentioned lines illustrate that how the professor is spellbound by the illusion of carnal adventure. He is unknown about the transitory nature of his desires. Helen is the lady to whom he is, at first, wishing to reflect his image. She is the embodiment of erotic “*femme fatale*” (96). Kepesh just runs for her physicality. He tries to win her love through lust; which leads him toward a marital fiasco. The spatial gap between him and Helen gives birth to illusion. But he is unaware about this gap. The phase is so illusory, however, he is blindfolded by “shameless carnal force” (50). In this phase Kepesh becomes jubilant disregarding the plight which he has to undergo in future. The coming days become very expensive to him. He disregards the way of the world because of his pleasure seeking tendency. The professor is immersed in his own inner world of illusion and falsity. He never introspects his self in this stage. Instead, he takes his self to echo it with the “other”.

The narcissistic relationship develops in Kepesh’s character. Self-love emerges in his character. This foreshadows his inevitable disaster. Like in Greek myth

Narcissus, a beautiful young man fell in love with his reflection in a pool. He died and was changed into the flower which he bears. Kepesh also tries to see his reflection in his beloved. Later, this activity leads him towards disaster like the mythical figure Narcissus. He says, “I am absolutist – a young absolutist” (12). He repeats the word “perfect” in the novel numerous times as if it is his cliché. He becomes the prince of his own inner world. The outer world is unknown to Kepesh. He is an unconscious scholar who forgets his professorship, his social reputation. Kepesh forms, not so much a false or narcissistic self to avoid a real self but, rather, an exaggeratedly desperate, angry and often enraged pre-self, or frozen latent self, fearfully and anti-socially trying to assert its emergence into existence in annihilating environment. In such conditions, the professor impulsively or unconsciously acts out. He cannot tolerate frustration and his fantasy of omnipotent control of others (his women) leads to self-destructive behavior.

The ego is constructed by identification with the specular image. Later, he recognizes his father’s law. He realizes his position in society. The professor becomes aware of the spatial gap between him and “other”. However, Kepesh cannot do anything for his torn self. He knows “how narrow and cloistered [his] life has become” (57). His sky-rocketed desires fall down to the earth. He gets the chance to criticize his own defamatory act. He realizes – “I am overcome with the most unruly and contradictory emotions” (34). His parochial view towards women makes him base and mean. He states:

I have from the start been overcome by physical beauty in women, but by Helen I am not just intrigued and aroused, I am also alarmed, and made deeply, deeply – uncertain – utterly subjugated by the authority with which she claims and confirms and makes singular her loveliness, yet as suspicious as I can be the *place*, thereby bestowed upon her in her own imagination. (57)

From the above extracted lines we come to know that Helen is not a mirror in which David can reflect his self. Illusion is sweet but realization is quite bitter. He questions himself why did he “try to reason [his] way into her shoes?” (35). Helen’s deception

escorted him toward disillusionment. He is “finally extracted from the rubble of [his] divorce” (95) from Helen. Helen is no more in his present life but the memory of past always haunts him. He realizes the fact that he is “sadly deluded and mistaken” (52) from the relation of Helen. He misrecognized Helen.

We come to know that Kepesh, at first becomes conscious about his fragmented image of his body after then he recognizes the desire to be one with the beloved is mere the way to fragmentation. Thereafter, he feels alienated, destitute and lovelorn. The hatred towards Helen increases. He despises “Helen’s kind of words, Helen’s kind of thinking” (87) when she betrays him. This is how alienation phase begins. The ego of Kepesh and imaginary order of Helen themselves are the places of radical alienation. Therefore, alienation plays the constitutive role. The main illusions of this order are synthesis, autonomy, duality and similarity. This phase is full of confusion. Dual mentality always follows him. He behaves the way Lacanian child does in his imaginary stage. Similarity, as David feels, between he and his girlfriend further invites duality in his personality. He wants to be autonomous but usually synthesis between and the reflection further increases the distance from his real self.

The imaginary stage of Kepesh overlaps with mirror stage (his age of twenties) and forms a path to symbolic stage (Kepesh’s thirties). In symbolic stage, David comes to be conscious with his letter or his scholarship. He realizes that he is not the person who he is to be. He finds himself “rake among scholars, a scholar among rakes” (17). The professor comes into consciousness that his instinctual drive is excessively ruled over him. He feels shame seeing his own state. Kepesh is circumscribed by his physical urges. Instinctual animality kills his intellectuality. His “misery is raw and colossal” (27). He states his transformation from mirror stage to symbolic stage in this way:

By the time we are into our thirties we have so exacerbated our antipathies that each of us has been reduced to precisely what the other had been so leery of at outset, the professorial “smugness” and “prissiness” for which Helen detests me with all her heart – “You’ve actually done it, David – you are a full-fledged young foggy” – no less

in evidence than her “utter mindedness”, “idiotic wastefulness”,
 “adolescent dreaminess”, etc.” (71)

The professor generalizes his individual situation to all. During the imaginary phase he comes to realize small “other” the ladies whom he wanted to reflect his self. Thereafter, he also recognizes big “Other” i.e. his scholarship. Therefore the “other” is the conceptualized image of substitute object of desire, whereas, the “Other”, here, is the protagonist’s scholarship (his intellectuality), which opposes his initial desire. In Lacanian term the Other (Kepesh’s professorship/his scholarship) is the “Law of Father”. The professor again generalizes his situation – “The young man is in his middle thirties, having recovered finally from the mistakes of his twenties” (259). Kepesh comes into consciousness of his scholarship. He becomes practical in this stage to some extent. But lack does not leave him to chase. In his thirties, he pours his desire toward Claire. She is also a teacher. But he comes to realize in the last part of the novel that she also lacks. He cannot find her as “perfect” as he desires. Kepesh rushes for “*Only an interim*” (251) stuff. The play of “other” and “Other” squeezes him bitterly; he cannot get rid from this play.

Nothing can be in the center with the “other” (Derridian idea); so, the position of the “other”(mistress of David) creates and sustains a never ending “lack” which Lacan names as “Desire”. David Kepesh, the professor of desire, lacks whatever he desires to attain, therefore, in other words, he is the professor of Lack. Kepesh’s developmental lacks and failures have caused an inability to distinguish or differentiate between fantasy and reality, inside and outside, self and other, and who is often in a chronic and acute state of mind body confusion. As he reveals, “I feel half in, half out of deep anesthesia – immersed back in the claustrophobic agonies of the recovering room” (109). The personal and interpersonal relations and behaviors are presymbolic and antisymbolic, destructive and disordered. The professor’s professorship (his intellectuality) becomes villain to fulfill his carnal desires independently. In this situation he lambastes scholarship and scholars in the following excerpt of the novel:

I hate libraries, I hate books, and I hate schools. As I remember, they tend to turn everything about life into something slightly other, than it is – ‘slightly’ at best. It’s those poor innocent theoretical bookworms who do the teaching who turn it all into something worse something ghastly. (59-60)

Kepesh’s intellectuality is the realm of the Law which regulates desire in the Oedipus Complex. The triangular relationship between Kepesh, his beloved and his intellectuality furthers the tussle like Oedipal conflict. The hangover of instinctuality never leaves him. He “puts aside logic, wit, candor [...] and literary scholarship [in order] to clear the way for those piercing erotic pleasures” (25). The conflict between his professorship and his carnal predilection is a-never-ending project.

Furthermore, we can say that symbolic is the domain of culture as opposed to the imaginary order of nature. In imaginary phase nature (instinctuality) dominates the culture (intellectuality). Whereas, in the symbolic stage nature is dominated by culture. An “I” is defined relationally by his or her difference from the “you” he or she addresses. The gaps between Kepesh and his beloved and signifier (desire) and signified (perfection of desire) further distanced. Kepesh enters into the bitter experience of “lack” and anxiety. His life is marked by “doubting – hoping – wanting – and – fearing” (66). He is hurled toward the world of vast wilderness caused by his “sexual frenzy” (67). Dreams become the patches of fragmentation for Kepesh. He, in this stage, recognizes his Father and his Law: his scholarship and social norms. The triangular tussle among “I”, “other” and “Other” begins.

To get hold of proper saturation of “His Royal highness [...] lust” (199) merely becomes a mirage for David Kepesh. The more mature he becomes, the more fragmented his self becomes. Moreover, the primal oneness with other’s body becomes possible only at the cost of death. He enters into and finds him bound by all man-made rules and regulations of morality, rationality and social affairs. Nature (instinct) is encroached by culture i.e. intellectuality or education. Man is culturally bound. But Kepesh is the person who is on the frontier of his instinctuality and his academic position. Kepesh cannot temper them properly. Sometimes he swings in

between them; he becomes impotent because of this disorder. This circumstance invites crisis in his identity as in his narration – “No, nobody understands me, not even I myself” (26). He further reveals his paralyzed identity as he opines, “I feel that I am in the presence of a parodied projection of myself – a possibility” (140). His personality is parodied. He further impersonates his self with Baumgarten and says:

I am a Baumgarten locked in the Big House, caged in the Kennels, a Baumgarten Klingered and Schonbrunned into submission while he is a Kepesh, oh, what a Kepesh! With his mouth frothing and his long tongue lolling, leash slipped and running wild. (140)

The above lines clarify that Kepesh is the person who is losing his individuality. He introduces Baumgarten to address his own fate. He wanders from individual “I” to socially elaborated situations. His ego or “I” shattered in two-fold: “Individual” or “Subjective” and “Social”. Individual “I” is instinct/impulse guided, whereas, social “I” is guided by cultural aspects. According to Lacan entering language is to be socialized. However, in the case of Kepesh his consciousness of his position, that is his professorship or academic stance is his entering into social “I”. This feature of transformation can be found in the very last page of the novel:

I pit all my accumulated happiness, and all my hope, against my fear of transformations yet to come, I wait to hear the most dreadful sound imaginable emerge from the room where Mr. Barbatnik and my father lie alone and insensate, each in his freshly made bed. (363)

Kepesh is suspending between his past hedonistic life of carnal adventure and the frustrated hellish life of present. He is frightened from the coming psychic transformations in his self. This stance of the professor can be equated with his journey from innocence to experience. He has to undergo several ordeals to purify his self albeit the purification is procrastinated forever. Kepesh has to face myriad of crises in his life of thirties. He hesitantly accepts his responsibility of professorship.

In imaginary stage the professor recognizes other as illusion; where he desired to be one with “femme fatale [by] defataliz[ing] her” (96). Later in symbolic stage, he comes into consciousness his intellectuality that is his professorial position which is

working as big “Other”. His desirous nature always traps him in the net of illusion. When disillusionment occurs into him he becomes disappointed. Helen’s reminiscence haunts him time and again. He cannot forget her no matter how much he tries. When Helen goes away from his life by betraying him he becomes an utter misogynist. He begins to hate woman and generalizes every woman as Helen. Whole woman race becomes his subject of hate. He also hates himself. He thinks that “No woman alive thinks of [him], certainly not with love” (120). This is how the death of narcissism and the birth of play of hatred begins. Life becomes burden to him. He becomes psychotic. “[L]ife is confusing enough” (228) to him.

When hate becomes a part of someone’s identity, that person can not help but defines himself in terms of the things he hates. The belief structure of any bigot is contingent upon having a victim available to victimize, even if that victim remains an abstract concept. In case of Kepesh, hate becomes the part of his life. He calls Helen a “femme fatale” whom he used to respect as “priestess of Eros” (99). He not just hates Helen but also whole woman race. His voracious sexual appetite makes him schizophrenic. Kepesh forgets reality of the world by immersing into his own world of fantasy. He tries to come in the surface of reality but fantasy overtakes the actuality. The professor loses balance of his psyche normality. His potency is also at stake. Kepesh continues his therapeutic treatment with Dr. Fredrick Klinger. He hates his past playful misbehaviors though reminiscence never leaves to follow him. He is circumcised by self-humiliation. This essence comes in his narration as “A nobody like me, from nowhere” (245)!

The professor is dying twice because self-humiliation or self-hate is suicidal in its symptom. To be more explicit, self-humiliation is like self-murder. Self-hate erodes person’s self like a slow poison. He murders himself again by his act of hating woman whom he used to think as “one” with his self. In “[his] hopeless and de-energized state [he] continue [s] to think of as “murdered”” (102). His two selves are dying together. Then, who is Kepesh now? Where is his self-identity? Where is his professorship/scholarship? How about his poor desires? Hatred is circulated in the blood of Kepesh now. All the answers of above questions are further problematized

by hate. In this deplorable circumstance, the novelist figures out the professor's hate upon women in this way:

It seems that at a dinner party at Schonbrunn's the hostess had announced to all in attendance that Baumgarten has become David Kepesh's "alter ego", "acting out fantasies of aggression against women" David harbors as a consequence of his marriage and its "mortifying" ending. (126)

Hate of Kepesh is primarily caused by himself and secondarily by his lady partners. Kepesh was darkened by his desirous passion. His misrecognition of Helen leads his disastrous marriage. Helen is also guilty which she realizes after separating from Kepesh. She reveals that, "[She] sometimes think of [David] as the only friend [She has] got left" (127). Baumgarten is one of the friends of David Kepesh who also suffers the problem of aggression towards woman. The novelist connects his details to identify the fate of David Kepesh. His illusion of "perfect" personality (Herbie Bratasky) from the very first page of the novel falls flat during the last part of the novel. He questions – "Is there a man alive, I wonder, who has led more exemplary life? Is there an ounce of anything that he has withheld in the performance of his duties" (245)? At present, he is so skeptic, doubting becomes his part of life. The life of twenties he spent becomes very expensive to him. He is so hollow that he cannot bear his bygone.

In the middle of the novel we can find epistolary technique to depict the condition of Kepesh as suggested by his friends and his well-wishers. Kepesh's misogynist behaviour makes them worried who is intimate to Kepesh. Arthur is one of his friends who understands Kepesh's plight. In a letter, addressing David Kepesh, he writes, "you are arguing only too well for the truth of Deborah's observation about the aggressive nature of your attitude toward women these days" (131). Debbie is another well-wisher of Kepesh who is also anxious about his misbehavior upon women. The professor is now stigmatized by the 'aggressive fantasies against women' (127). The professor's exciting fantasies for women contrarily turns aggressive in the course of time. He is distracted by women; he maintains distance from them. Helen is the cause

for his doom, however, his desirous activities too play seminal role in his present fate. His problem is, therefore, interpersonal and intra-personal both. Kepesh blindly generalizes every woman as Helen. In this situation, Arthur asks Kepesh (in the letter) – “Why did you prefer instead to jeopardize our friendship in order to beat [Helen] over the head with her alleged misconduct” (131)?

Moreover, a hater is in a sense bound by the person he hates. Since hating is a crucial part of his identity, it is very complex. Thus, we have multiple identities at once, and these different identities do not always fit neatly form some over arching sense of self. Hate is also related to identity in the context that it shatters person’s unified self. And, when the self can’t remain intact, there will be multiple identities. Sometimes, it is as equal as “no identity”. In this way, if hate is a part of human experience, we must marshal any and all the tools that can help us understand why such a common human emotion can bring about such destructive and catastrophic behavior. Kepesh is the person who is either in the whirlpool of hatred (toward women) or in the ridiculous “drama of self-disgust” (34).

In addition to that, we can fully realize the potential of hate studies by using its framework to integrate existing psychoanalytic accounts with other inquires into self-hate. Kepesh comes to know that he is mere “A parody – a possibility” (140). The trust in self vanishes from his mind. Kepesh is the best instance of self-hater of Philip Roth’s works. He is a stereotype, yet he possesses such bewildering idiosyncracies that he resists easy classification. The professor may be fictional but seems real enough to some of us.

If we analyze the novel from the perspective of its language, the chain of signifiers or the play of words obstructs the meaning. Kepesh’s desirous instinct comes through the medium of language. Language itself is arbitrary then how his desires convey through it? Language lacks to communicate the exact meaning. Actually, language cannot represent our feelings without distorting them. For language is given to us by our forefathers. In this regard, how a person can express his desire through others’ language? Therefore Kepesh curses his intellectuality/ scholarship which is gained through language harshly. Kepesh desires and desires for

saturation from his beloved or, perfection in lady whom he loves but he is always distanced from those fortunes. Desire, here, is working as signifier, perfection of it is like signified. There is only the chain of such desires but no any saturation or perfection of such desires. Like Lacanian signifiers, desires make chain only; lack always chases those desires of Kepesh. His lust is “eager and unconscious and so clearly begging to be satisfied (25).

The word “perfect” is repeated twelve times in the narration of Kepesh of this novel. The word becomes a cliché to Kepesh. In this repetition either there is some connotative meaning or some importance in the characterization of David Kepesh. Those are: “perfect! I tact it to my bulletin board” (17), “Your ass is marvelous. It’s perfect” (23), “Elisabeth is perfectly right” (36), “charming perfect strangers” (46), “perfect grammatical constructions (48), “the perfectly brought up child” (50), “It was never anything but perfect” (64), “most perfect of all lovers” (66), “the perfect little palazzo” (73), “she was absolute perfection” (80), “perfect strangers” (127) and, lastly “so perfect lair” (207). Irony is that protagonist’s uses of “perfect” in his speech mismatch in his modus operandi. There is a vast abyss between his speech and his performance. Perfection is his hypothesis which goes far from him whenever he attempts to grasp it. Thirst for perfection leads him no where but towards a desert of lack. “Perfection” is sometimes substituted by “absolute” in Kepesh’s speech. For instance, “I am an absolutist” (12), “I would absolutely be a voice in the wilderness” (234-235), “but I absolutely did not want to be a fanatic” (257). In this way, the word “perfect” mostly used in the early thirties of Kepesh’s life. After thirties he, to some extent, knows what the “perfect” is. Therefore "perfect" is embodiment of illusion. During his thirties he realizes such illusions.

Kepesh’s silly act of seeking “perfection” in his desire is like act of making mansion of sand. Significantly, Kepesh’s professorship emerges as a crucial component in his struggle for autonomy. Doing things with his words replaces being able to do what he wants with his life. Therefore, he always hates his scholarship. He states that he “should have gone all the way and become Birgitta’s pimp” (101). In

this response, his therapist assimilates his thought and says “yes? You would rather be a pimp than an associate professor” (102). True to Lacanian theory, the penis is not just a corporeal implement of sexual pleasure, but to a totemic phallus representing language (of male). Sexual performance is conflated with manifestations of power in speech; which in turn conflated with the issue of his stance that is his scholarship and professional background. Kepesh’s speech – “fucking is such a lovely thing to do” (61) proves that he is beyond his intellectuality. His natural instinctuality is castrated by his intellectuality. The consciousness of scholarship encroaches his passionate desire to be one with his beloved. Intellectuality of Kepesh is his father of law. The professor reveals his unconscious by saying, “I suddenly see myself struggling my father [...]” (110). He comes to realize rift in his professorship. Man is born free but every where he is chained. Rousseau’s saying is appropriate here in case of David Kepesh. He further states, “the tremendous distance between my father [i.e. his scholarship] and myself will have to continue in the same perplexing proportions as have existed all our lives” (247)! Kepesh is pierced by the thorns of intellectuality from one side and by his inner urges from other side.

The uses of tautological sentences in the novel convey no new meaning. For instance “my desire is *desire*” (23), “Gittan is Gittan, Bettan is Bettan” (36), “but if that’s your taste, that’s your taste” (243) impart no new meaning at all. This is only the play of words. Similarly, the use of past tense in person’s name instead of verb fuels the contradiction to the reader; such as “Klingered”, “Schonbrunned” (140). Use of “[...]jed” in Kepesh’s friend’s name puzzles us. We can only guess that Kepesh’s sense is to show how he is suffering like Klinger and Schonburn. The novelist is playing with words by his use of wit.

Desire and language are similar in nature. Both of them try to impart something but fracture in its middle. Kepesh runs for the perfection in his desire; a writer rushes to impart some meaning from his text, but the tragedy is that both meet

only cul-de-sac before reaching their destinations. According to Lacan, the language we use is not ours; this the language of our fathers, then how a writer could convey his essence? Likely, the hero of this novel is manipulated twice: At first, he is shaped by his author; and secondly, by the language given to him. He cannot properly communicate his desirous thought through other's language. This "de-energized state" (102) maneuvers him in the nexus of Other and other. Kepesh becomes subject only by speaking other's language. His intellectuality (Other) is also achieved through man-made social institutions. Being subjected to the particular limitations and restraints that only language-guided intellectuality creates.

The protagonist is not a person but a position. An "I" is defined relationally, by his difference from the "you" others address. Language makes his desires ambiguous. The signifiers (desires) spoken through language never materialize into reality. The very act of speaking creates a split-off aspect of the hero that cannot be communicated directly but only in the non-referential play of the signifiers – the word play. The word is spoken to be acted according the speech act theory. Contrary to this theory, the use of "perfect" in Kepesh's speech has no act at all. The essence or the implementation of word use slides away. The professor's speech sounds ridiculous to us though he, actually, is pouring his feelings of agony. He says "[...] within a year my passion will be dead. Already it is dying and I am afraid that there is nothing I can to save it" (261). His way of telling and our way of conceiving contrasts one another.

The story of the novel is told in first person narrative. Since the accounts of women in the novel issue from the protagonist. He can be understood as emphasizing the characters' terrible inability to escape the limits of his own imaginations. Kepesh is an interpreter of women. As he interprets woman sexuality: "I observe the breast beneath her blouse push softly into her folded arms. How I wish I were those arms" (22)! He attempts to manipulate the docile body of woman. In therapeutic term he plays the role of "analyst" and his beloved as "analysand". He is an utter philanderer

who always tries to identify his self the lady with whom he loves. The consequence of this behaviour is paralysis in his identity. He is “overcome with the most unruly and contradictory emotions” (34).

The novel is teemed with the features of transference/countertransference effects in the behaviors of Kepesh and the persons with whom he maintained his rapport. Kepesh, the analyst, not only analyzes the psyche of women but is affected by the lady he analyzes. He cannot prevent him from the impact of his analysand. He blends his nostalgic tone with her experience. This kind of effect on analyst is countertransference one. Not only Kepesh but also his lady partners are responsible for the transference of feelings. Whereas, in “transference” patient is responsible, and this method is patient oriented.

As Lacan opines in analyst-analysand relationship both are responsible for the transference effects. We can see the effects of “transference” at a few places though the book is not devoid of this feature. Actually, transference and countertransference go together. Sometimes we cannot recognize who is transferring whose feelings to whom. In spite of that, the effect of countertransference is more noticeable than the transference. “Rubbled” by divorce from Helen. The professor becomes the patient of psychiatry. Kepesh pours his lovelorn past experience to his therapist Fredrick Klinger. Past feelings re-emerge in him once again during his cure session. He shares his complaints to Klinger which penetrate him recurrently – “Having failed at being a husband to Helen a wife – it seems I would rather sleep through my life now than live it” (96). Kepesh was hypnotized by the beauty of Helen in his bygone; and he is still in the hangover of that. In this situation his therapist Klinger tries to dehypnotize by demythologizing the legendry of “Helen”. He says “Too divine for details, was she? Look she isn’t the Helen born of Leda and Zeus, you know. She is of earth, Mr. Kepesh – a middle-class Gentile girl from Pasadena [...]” (97). In this situation Klinger is analyzing Kepesh. So Kepesh’s role here is a patient. After losing his

potency Kepesh is severely in tension about his future life. He is tortured by his past events. He “can’t go ahead” (100) because the past is transferring in him hysterically. The “Libidinous fallacy” (100) still pierces him bitterly. At the same page he says that, “Birgitta that’s on my mind.” He is sickened by “fit of hopelessness” (102) caused by perverted “sexual prodigy” (99) of his past life. Kepesh transfers his feelings and expectations to help his therapist to cure. He thinks that Klinger knows something about who he is and who he should become. However, the matter of fact is that Klinger does not have the correct reality paradigm to help Kepesh with his impasses in knowledge and desire. But he maintained, the phenomenon itself tells us more about an unstable base of knowledge in being, than it does about who actually has the correct theory. Klinger’s role, then is to sit silent only Kepesh knows and he can speak in the logical time it takes to unravel repressed traumata, drop harmful to live by.

In the application of countertransference, Kepesh’s role is “analyst” and his lady partners as “analysands” Kepesh is dominant in his position and his mistresses are dormant ones. Kepesh returns to the sum of prejudices, passions, embarrassments, when he comes in contact with another maiden. He always compares and contrasts his past and his present events dramatically. At the time when he is making love with Helen he recollects former lover like this – “[Birgitta] knew very well enough that her hair cut carelessly, nicely enhanced her charming furtiveness” (56-57). Similarly, he compares another lady as, “Elizabeth, with an abundance of hair no less praiseworthy than Helen’s” (57). The professor is a womanizer who always falls in love (but never rises in satirically saying) to be one with maiden he loves. However, the problem is that his search for “perfection” in his beloved tends him to compare and contrast with one another. The possibility of his dreamgirl procrastinates forever.

Countertransference feelings of past affairs intervene him to be one with his latest beloved. Desires, illusions within him play the crucial role to disintegrate his

self. Perfection is only possible in illusion therefore dreaming is the only path to reach in perfection. When Kepesh cannot find perfection in his beloved in reality he goes back toward his past to soothe his tender desires. He laments for his past experiences in nostalgic manner. Kepesh states, “*For all I know maybe [Helen] is right*” (57). He is lamenting for the past relation of Helen. The professor re-thinks whether his separation from Helen is right.

The protagonist is always in the pursuit of actualization of the repressed desires in the women. He makes women as the subject of his study. David attempts to penetrate into women’s psyche to explore unconscious. He is interested in interpreting desires of his lady partners through his own desires to pierce their psyche in order to attain perfection in his desires. The protagonist seeks to quench all his desires from women. Nevertheless, he cannot get saturation from none of them. He “hope [s] to clear the way for those piercing erotic pleasures” (25) by the means of woman’s physicality. Kepesh is maintaining the role of addressor and his beloved’s position is just an addressee. In spite of that, the girls he loved are not totally passive ones. They stimulate Kepesh’s desire to its zenith. The displaced feelings, those Kepesh experiences in association with his beloved, have their origin in an earlier relationship in his life.

Inasmuch, countertransference effect in David is partly influenced by feelings induced by his analysands. Kepesh not just undergoes countertransference experience in his love affairs but also realizes it in his friendly relation. He assimilates his misery with his friend Arthur in this way:

Arthur spoke his own personal life almost as though we were men of same age rank. In his twenties, when he was an instructor at Minnesota, he too had been involved with “a wildly neurotic and destructive woman.” Scandalous public quarrels, two harrowing

abortions, despair to enormous that he had actually come to think that suicide was the only way he might ever be able to extricate himself from his confusion and pain". (122)

Kepesh is in suicidal stage after his separation from Helen. He becomes impotent after his separation from Helen. Depression in his married life is the cause of his impotency. His past misbehaviors cost him very expensive.

David Kepesh emotionally participates to echo the emotion of his lady partner. It allows him to believe that she actually understands him. Then, he begins to pour his past moments (events) to her. This feeling may have originated from his narcissistic (or self) experience or an interpersonal relationship. Helen easily penetrates Kepesh's heart by her erotic physicality. She is an illusion for Kepesh what he realizes later. In spite of that, he cannot forget her easily. When he is in trouble caused by any lady he recalls Helen. In her remembrance he cries, "Yes I miss Helen! Suddenly I want Helen! How meaningless and ridiculous all these argument seem now! What a gorgeous, lively, passionate creature! Bright, funny, mysterious – and gone" (133)! Kepesh is so frustrated by Helen's betrayal, he becomes a psychotic.

The analytic relationships, like all relationships, is a tangled web of mutual influence. Kepesh is shaped by Helen's actions, in return, he shapes her thought as well. This is found in Helen's details in the last part of the novel. She meets David, her ex-husband, after few years while she is happily married with another person. She realizes her guilt to Kepesh and says, "I was mad, David, I was crazy" (205). Helen came to know his value after her divorce from him. She further discloses that, "I sometimes think of you as the only friend I've got left. I did when I was sick. Isn't that odd" (217)? Kepesh also regrets for the doomed relationship with Helen. He says, "Instead of being enemies, of providing one another with the ideal *enemy*, why

couldn't Helen and I have put that effort into satisfying each other, into steady, dedicated living" (109)? These kinds of self-questioning from both sides prove that countertransference is bilateral effect, not unilateral impact. Both, analyst and analysand are responsible for their psychic condition.

To the extent that, countertransference in this novel is to articulate a double relation: Kepesh's relation to his beloved and to his desire. Kepesh's feelings about the women grow out of the interplay of his subjectivity with his partner's, not out of any supposed realistic response to his women. Considering this fact, countertransference in this novel focuses more on Kepesh's intrapersonal relationship. Kepesh's expression of his feelings determines whether the analysis is another in a long string of repetitions or becomes the road out.

After the convalescence, Kepesh regains his potency. He is once again rejuvenated in the hug of Claire Ovington. He reveals that he "cannot imagine anyone happier or luckier than [him]self" (200). His "rehabilitation back into society" (155) renews his disturbed self. In his thirties now, Kepesh once again experiences his days of twenties, this time with Claire. He senses "the renewal of desire, of confidence of capacity" (150). He is in the illusion that "Claire is enough [...] 'Claire' and 'enough' – they, too are one word" (165). Kepesh again becomes a dreamer like his early days. He cannot erase his past memory from his mind. The professor recalls his past affairs in the presence of Claire. He is now celebrating "the triumphant foundation of a sweet and stable new life" (161). The facts of present and past mixes together in his narration. He states:

Yes, sitting across from Claire, who has said that my semen filling her mouth makes her feel that she is drowning, that this is something she just doesn't care to do. I am remembering the sight of Birgitta

Kneeling before me, her face upturned to receive the strands of flowing semen that fall upon her hair her forehead, her nose. “*Har!*” she cries, “*har!*”, while Elizabeth, wearing her pink woolen robe, and receiving on the bed, looks on in frozen fascination at the naked masturbator and his half-clothed suppliant. (161)

The above lines narrated by the protagonist are very sexually presented. Philip Roth is the expert in presenting sexuality in literature. The professor in the novel is intrigued by woman sexuality. The lines depict the moment of cohabitation between Kepesh and Claire but he is memorizing his past events of sex with his former girl friends Birgitta and Elisabeth. Present moment pushes him back toward past experience.

When Kepesh is overwhelmed by unmodulated effects, it tends to project him into his lady partner. The patient’s projective identifications influenced the therapist’s state of mind by projecting into him uncomfortable feelings that she had difficulty dealing with. Kepesh interprets his girlfriend, “Looking steadily down at this large, green-eyed girl in her thin summer clothes, at her pale, smallish, oval, unmarred face, her scrubbed, unworldly prettiness – the beauty, I realize, of a young Amish or Shaker woman” (165). Intrapsychic experience, usually painful or negative feelings, is projected and sojourns in the psyche of the analyst. In *The Professor of Desire*, Kepesh feels the impasse, that he has been invaded by feelings he cannot deal with, that he has been “colonized” or that his actions, such as interpretations, are based on this sojourns. This is the ridiculous fact that Kepesh, the interpreter of woman is in need of his own interpretation. He himself becomes the prey while hunting. Desires shape his personality; he cannot shape them.

The terror of fact is that Kepesh brings about the plight he fears. The repetition of the loss of love object, an exposure of the sense of lack in his being. What the

professor wants in his life that he loses shortly. Soon he has to lose Claire; he is alienating again. Kepesh comes to acknowledge that desire for her “has mysteriously vanished” (262). Now, he is disillusioned in the fact that he “must learn to live without [desire]” (263). Nevertheless, the truth is unbearable to him. Kepesh is chased by aloofness albeit he no more wants to be lonely in his life. His desires are trampled with no mercy. Alienation becomes his destiny. Kepesh is victimized by his own dreamy desires. He bemoans his destiny by saying that “It always comes down to myself” (261)! The professor is again in need of Klinger for the psychiatric treatment. He is tortured mentally when alienation gets married with his self.

When he is sick, every man wants his mother, if she is not around, other women must do. Kepesh does want with four other women in the absence of his mother. Each and every moment in his dejection, he longs for women he loved. Kepesh is always betrayed, this time by Claire who aborts Kepesh’s baby without asking him. The countertransference of Helen encroaches Claire’s place in the memory of Kepesh. He narrates, “Why is Claire here? Why not Helen and our child?” (255). He himself becomes “beweeper of [his] outcast state” (255).

David Kepesh’s thesis on Romantic Disillusionment on Anton Chekhov’s stories is actually his own disillusionment. As a professor of English literature, philosophy is his subject of interest. The coincidence is that the topic of his thesis and his biography match each other. However, the protagonists of Chekhov’s stories are less erotically and more emotionally motivated. But in this novel the professor is erotically motivated who is the slave of his own lusty desires. Nonetheless, ways of realization match each other. Both types of hero acknowledge at last that the achievement or attainment is not so easy in reality. Love is to be sacrificed not to be achieved: Chekhovian disillusionment. Similarly, illusion is to be desired but not to be

perfected in reality: Rothian disillusionment. The professor assimilates Chekhovian essence by saying, “I am sufficiently imbued by new with Chekhovian bias to suspect as much myself” (100). Perhaps Kepesh wants to sublimate his own repressed innermost desires by writing the thesis on Chekhov’s stories. He, at last, realizes that getting love through lust is no more than a mirage. Love is to be felt but not to be possessed, is the actual theme of Chekhovian stories. Kepesh’s biography has proximity with Chekhov’s fictional heroes’ lives. Disillusionment undercuts Kepesh’s illusions. He states that “Yes I miss Helen! Suddenly I *want* Helen! How meaningless and ridiculous all those arguments seem now” (133)!

The professor’s realization of his past sexual prodigy triggers him toward horrific feeling. Transference of past frightens him time and again. Finally, he realizes that:

I have the sense that all my chances have been used up; Indeed, pondering my past over that pathetic little enameled saucepan, I invariably feel as though I have not simply been through all the female sex, and that I am so constructed as to live harmoniously with no one.

(133)

All the past experiences missile him toward frustration. His self explodes pathetically. He, at this juncture, understands the value of his self-identity and pettiness of his base desires. The professor’s inclination upon his scholarship makes him conscious about his fragmented self. Kepesh decides “no longer scumb to desire” (199) in his life.

The professor teaches eroticism; this is also the way he sublimates his own experiences. When he sees the students Kepesh recalls his past life which makes him easy to present his subject matters. Perhaps, Eroticism is the only subject Kepesh can

teach well. This tempers his sexuality with his intellectuality. He recounts his plan for teaching as:

I have decided to organize the first semester's reading around the subject of erotic desire, beginning with the disquieting contemporary novels dealing with prurient and iniquitous sexuality (disquieting to students because they are the sort of books admired most by a reader like Baumgarten, novels in which the author pointedly implicated in what is morally most alarming) and ending the term's work with three master-works concerned with illicit and ungovernable passions, whose assault is made by other means: *Madame Bovary*, *Anna Karenina*, and "Death in Venice." (179)

In this way, by teaching eroticism, he facilitates himself to divulge his desirous past. He discloses his past when the context comes to exemplify. In the seminar he says, "I would like to tell myself that I have never before divulged to any of students" (181). This is how transference effects are becoming the instrumental to disclose the nostalgic past of the protagonist. At present, he is enjoying by teaching. His habit of regression never leaves him. He is "grafted and nurtured back toward something like mastery over [his] life" (261). The professor confesses his past erotic adventure to his students by saying "[T]he time has come to begin to disclose the undisclosable – the story of the *professor's* desire" (184). In this way, Kepesh exemplifies his own autobiography for the understanding of Eroticism to his students.

The students' role here is like catalysts who facilitate Kepesh divulge his past experience. The subject Eroticism stimulates him to disclose his past abundantly. The past experiences of sexual prodigy is blended in his present lecture about Eroticism. Any moment of the novel, the effects of countertransference circulate in the activities

of the protagonist Analyst – analysand relationship continue at the last event of the novel. When Kepesh teaches he maintains the role of analyst and his students as analysands. The subject eroticism is itself the stimulus that forces Kepesh to disclose his bygone – experiences. According to the professor, his bygone is “in fact, the most suitable setting for [him] to make an accounting of [his] erotic history” (185).

IV: Conclusion

Philip Roth's *The Professor of Desire* picturizes the predicament of the protagonist who cannot temper impulsive instinctuality and intellectuality in his life.

Any person does have his individual drives and needs which come in conflict with the demands of society. Irrational impulses can be an expression of basic drives and needs. Human beings are regarded as the most civilized creatures in this planet since they have developed their own culture to differentiate them from the rest of the animals in this earth. However, the fate of the protagonist in this novel is that, he is overtaken by his instinctuality (natural impulses) disregarding his intellectuality (cultural phenomenon). On one hand, he is a scholar, the professor of English literature; he is also a notorious womanizer, on the other hand.

Roth presents the dilapidation of the protagonist triggered by his desire for seeking perfection in his libidinal desires through his girlfriends. So far, the saturation is not his cup of tea. He attempts to sugarcoat the bitter pill of his life experience. Of course, extreme inclination towards impulsive desires darkens human personality. David Kepesh's life becomes a fiasco caused by the slippery nature of desire within him. He tends to reflect his desire in his beloved; which is, indeed, the action of making castle in the air. Nothing is perfect in this world; despite that Kepesh dies for "perfection" in his life. He swings in between illusory desire inside him and the bitter reality outside the world. He does never know the way of the world. Aftermath of this circumstance is paralysis in his identity. He no more can prevent his self intact. The professor styles himself "a rake among scholars, a scholar among rakes". Little does he realize how pathetic or how damning this motto will be.

Dual identity jeopardizes Kepesh's personality. He is imprisoned in the labyrinth of his own passionate world. The recognition of his own self procrastinates

constantly. Predilection in sex erodes his intellectual prestige. The professor becomes unaware about his scholarship which throws him into wilderness of sexuality.

The novel visualizes the contemporary postwar scenario of America. The western world of 1970s was marred by erosion of cultural values and degradation in person's self. Kepesh is a particular model to generalize the whole human psyche of contemporary America. Instability and chaos were governing every human mind. People were terrified by possible World War III. In such horrific condition they began to hate human progress and his scientific achievements. Nothing is valuable than life. The so-called civilization became burden for them. They preferred a primordial savage man to a destructive modern man. The slogan of back to nature gained high value. The exposition of Kepesh's instinctual impulses in the novel underpins this fact. He represents the whole psyche of American people during the postwar 1970s. Intellectuality/scholarship is the property of human civilization, yet when we disregard that, what will be the consequence of human civilization? What would be the difference between a man and an animal if a human forgot his cultural values? Instinctual pleasure seeking tendency hurls the person suffering from agitation, frustration, and inner mental conflicts which have been great threats to the civilized world. The similar circumstances of the protagonist hints such threats in *The Professor of Desire*.

Lacan's concept of phase wise psychic development of an infant and his principle of transference and countertransference are applied to analyze David Kepesh's fragmented self. Kepesh is obsessed by illusory desires in his twenties like Lacanian infant in his mirror stage. Kepesh tends to echo his self in his girlfriends as the infant tries to reflect himself/herself in his mother in imaginary stage. Likewise, he comes into consciousness of his scholarship as the child recognizes his/her father's law-language in the symbolic stage. This is the period of disillusionment. In addition

to this, I have applied the theory of transference and countertransference to strengthen my hypothesis. Therapeutic relationship between Kepesh and his girlfriends/friends. In transference, Kepesh's friends and well-wishers transfer their feelings to him. The effects of transference can be found dormant; where Kepesh's role is a passive analyst. In countertransference his role is an analyst; this effect can be found dominantly in the whole novel. Nostalgic experiences of past transfer into him unknowingly. When he engages in lovemaking activities, Kepesh automatically memorizes his past romances with his former girlfriends. He tries to attribute their sexuality to erase the lack of his current girlfriend. However, his attempts of eradicating lack of his lady partner goes in vain. The saturation he seeks always slips away. He cannot shape his thought, which is shaped by his beloveds. Kepesh wants to be loved by his maidens but it is pretty difficult, and almost impossible in his case. Since desires are corrupted due to his sexual malpractices. His ambitions have been reversed; his position at the end appears to be the apotheosis of the hurt child saying "nobody loves me".

He is an interpreter of the women, but the terror of fact is that he himself is in need of analysis. He must introspect his self. Helen, a "femme fatale", is responsible for Kepesh's disaster to some extent. She plays the seminal role to disintegrate Kepesh's self. He is now powerless to become what he is. The professor cannot alter his hedonistic self. Kepesh's present bitter experiences invite the haunting nostalgias of his past events frequently.

In this way, the hypothesis of this dissertation: Perfection of Kepesh's libidinal desire becomes a mirage because the more he tries to possess it, the farther it slips away, hence, he is a fragmentary self is proved.

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