

**Tribhuvan University**

**Interplay Between Presence and Absence in Mailer's *The Deer Park***

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## **Abstract**

The present research is an inquiry into the major characters in *The Deer Park* who are caught in the interplay between presence and absence of pleasure, satisfaction and meaning in their lives. They want to achieve full presence of close human relationship, pleasure and satisfaction, establish family but are never able to fulfill. They are guided by never ending sexual desires and float with them in the chain of supplements with a hope to achieve 'pleasure in plenitude'. The absence of the 'signified' or full presence of sexual satisfaction forces them to suffer from alienation, breaks up in relationship and betrayals.

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## I. Vulnerable World of Norman Mailer

Norman Mailer was born on January 31 in Long Branch, New Jersey in 1923 from his parents Issac Bennett and Funry (Schneids) Mailer. He earned his graduation from Boys High School, Brooklyn, New York and B. A. degree from Harvard University when he was only sixteen. It was at University while majoring in Engineering that he became interested in writing and he published his first story at the age of eighteen. During the Second World War, Mailer served in the Philippines with 112<sup>th</sup> Cavalry from Texas; those were the years that formed his internationally best selling war novel, *The Naked and the Dead* (1948). His other books include *Barbary Shore* (1951), *Advertisements for Myself* (1959), *Death for the Ladies* (1962), *The Presidential Papers* (1963), *An American Dream* (1965), *Cannibals and Christians* (1966), *Why Are We in Vietnam?* (1967), *The Armies of the Night* (1969) for which he was awarded both Pulitzers Prize and The National Book Award. *The Deer Park* (1955) has been adapted into a play and successfully produced in Off Broadway. In 1955 Mailer co-founded the magazine *Village Voice*. He was the editor of *Dissent* from 1952 until 1963, and as both producer and director of the movies: “Wild 90”, “Beyond the Law” and “Maidstone” in 1968. Indisputably one of the most controversial, talented and popular author of postmodern time, Norman Mailer has been married four times and has six children.

Beginning in early 1950s and continuing to present, Mailer’s intellectualism and combative temperament drew him increasingly into Journalism. The interesting thing with Mailer is that the more he was concerned with marriage and divorce, the better literary output and fame he achieved. This has made him as one of the most distinguished writers of modern literary days. Mailer is not singular in his appearance, like the writers Yeats, Pound, and Joyce of the modern literary days he had to struggle a lot before he got the recognition in his literary career. Basically he is a humanist since his writings depict the war and its negative consequences. He became a figure in New York

and began to present the loop holes of American popular culture. Primarily his depiction of overt sexuality and hedonism in the writings made several publishing houses reject the manuscripts.

Despite his fame and all for his best sellers, Mailer was, as a result of his many failed marriage, in his dire financial straits; and it was only through lucrative but demanding multi-book contracts he was able to remain a solvent supporting the large extended family. Mailer in his sixties was increasingly placing himself in the role of elder Statesman of America. He was never satisfied with U. S. foreign policy and growing barbarity in American culture. However, Mailer claims that sex is essence of life and it is vital need but incest relation and lesbian and gay cultures are the poison seeds for a moral culture. In *Norman Mailer: Modern Critical Views*, Harold Bloom characterizes Mailer as “a historian of the moral consciousness of his era; and as the representative writer of his generation” (48). This supports the point that he was not in favor of growing overt nudity. Mailer is productive and holds the same kind of consistent view towards life at care level.

Norman Mailer as a writer of American mores and culture is a great literary battle, Bloom finds him “a most irritating author” (52). His public image is entirely powerful but not an embarrassing one. Sometimes his writing is too bawdy and morally offensive. Despite this kind of disgraceful writing, he is well applauded as a popular literary figure and perhaps the most influential novelist in post war American era.

Dorothy Nyrén Curely expresses his view on Mailer and his writing technique as “actually his novels deal with a close group of characters as *Wuthering Heights* because emotional and psychic presentation of characters is one dominant aspect in his writing” (271). As a novelist his prose is powerful but plain, complex in theme yet very near to reality and vulgar but artistic. Mailer’s attitude towards realistic literature is very positive but not always constant. In this regard Bloom adds, “Realistic literature had never caught

up with the rate of change in American life. Novelists were no longer writing about the beast but about the paw of the beast [...] or about the dream of the beast” (51-52).

The obvious metaphor in this comment is that writing does not visualize only what is obvious and general, it deals with the deeper and inner parts of society and an individual must be given a focus. For him the civilized human beings appear in their uglier form of immoral and cruel activities no lesser to a beast if one has to observe beneath the social appearances.

Mailer’s latest creative venture, apparently, is in the realm features films, and the author’s new role is as a director of films. All his novels and non fiction writings are evocative and visual in nature, a style that translates easily into the world of film. The collection of writings labeled as literary journalism forms an explicitly recognizable case of a “blurred genre”. Literary journalist has consciously combined the technique and style of fiction writing and journalism into dissociation, novelist-turned-journalist. Themes of literary novelists tend to be concerned with social and political issues, usually examined the context of contemporary culture. Language of hip is the key to Mailer’s style of literary journalisms. It is spoken by those who are aware of the absurdities inherent in modern life. His use of multiple narrative personae distinguishes his literary journalistic works from others associated genre. In describing the style of ‘hip’, it sees the context as generally dominating the man, dominating him because his character is less significant than the context in which he must function. Mailer’s response to the nugatory powers of powerful social contexts is to develop a narrator with multifaceted qualities.

Violence, sex and power are the major themes of Mailer’s novels. He writes about American culture, World War Second and Vietnam War, and other outstanding feature of the time of post war era. He also depicts the metaphorical vision of American culture and the human behaviour which applies to all human kind in general because



they share most common feature of day to day life. The configuration may change, but Mailer remain convinced that these are the dark tapestry threads of American Culture. With every manifestation of discontent with traditional concept of life and society, art and creation, he emerged in literary field drawing imaginatively the symbolic arsenal of literary post modernism. In 1950s, there was a political and civil rights movement, that caught much attentions but for novelists it was a period of new generation, a generation of writers who were concerned to depict the fatal practice and psychic vision of American culture. Writers such as Bellow, Mailer and some others were trying to differentiate between the American dream and its achievement. The beat generation writers of 1950s were escaping the false American dream values by countering with the real and revolutionary ideas. Their novels depict the bitter reality of American culture and human psyche that are essentially motivating all human activities. Admitting the unparalleled openness of the conflict between black and whites, Mailer appeared to leave the social matter at the spot and take more controversial subject matter of politics and psychology as the subject matter of his writing. So his novels are the details of the many levels of interplay between the subjective and objective world. He was true believer on god. But his writing frequently appears as if he is an atheist. Mailer has different kind of views in sexuality. The sexual relation between husband and wife is quite natural, but practice of homosexuality is a waste of seed which is a sign of cultural degeneration. For these points Mailer seems quite normal, traditional and believer in order and common approval of familiar ties. Mailer's heroes are destined to push against all limitations all that would repress. It is a novel of tests, and of extremes, but for all its dizzying heights of violence and absurdity, there was a disturbing sense that Mailer had seen contemporary American life steady and whole. He has all the elements that make for sticking powers: ambition, scope, and a willingness to explore the darker side of the psyche's uncharted vistas.

*The Deer Park* (1955), Mailer's third novel was written after World War II in the context of social, political and psychological visions of modern American society. The novel does manage to bring Mailer's sexual thesis into the open as political accusations and to yoke his imaginative powers, as if for the last time, to the formal conventions of dialogue, plot and characters that particular traditions of progressive realism to which Mailer had allied himself. For all its inconsistencies of rhythm and tone and its unsolved formal problems: such as what to do with its stick figure of a narrator, Sergious O' Shaugnssy. The book is also Mailer's only successful extended piece of sexual fiction, and the affair between Eitel and Elena his only convincing love story. Much of the strange and anguished quality of honesty in-avoidance that distinguishes Mailer's writing since *The Deer Park* has to do with his inability to face up one more time, without posturing and gimmickry, to those mysteries of sexual and emotional failure that he had begun to explore in that book. Indeed, it is the very fascination with success and the refusal to give any credit to failure that set Mailer apart from other Jewish writers (making him presumably more "American") and have prevented him from realizing some of his own best intuition about the deeper ironies of the American dream. *The Deer Park* is a study of moral confusion and despair among number of Americans and their locus Hollywood where such personal disasters are confined to movie land or to cafe society of post war era.

In Mailer's *The Deer Park*, the major characters: Eitel, Elena and Lulu can not develop human relationship, get pleasure and satisfaction, and establish family through their lives. In the beginning of the novel, Charles Eitel, a successful Hollywood film director, a blacklisted screen writer has just divorced his wife Lulu Mayers. Then he feels something lack and be alone, especially lack of sexual intercourse as well as relationship. After breaking up with Lulu, he closes with Elena, a beautiful waif who is searching a good husband with stable family and sexual satisfaction. For a long time they have been

convincing love affair with having repeated sexual intercourses but Elena suffers from the memory of past sexual relationships with many men. So she finds it difficult to accept that Eitel might be her permanent husband. Both of them have no confidence that life will be successful and permanent, Eitel says, "Marriage was the death of enjoyment" (143). After divorced with Eitel, Lulu Mayers involves in sexual relationship with Sergious, a young war veteran or a narrator of this novel. But both of them fail to make the permanent relationship and a stable family. They depart themselves, and then Lulu closes with Tony, a film actor, as a boy friend, or as a sex partner. Sergious goes to another way to complete his book writing but he can not. Then he moves to a love affair with a bullfighter girl. In the novel, Charles Eitel wants to involve in homosexual practice too. At last, Eitel and Elena marry each other to legalize the relation, but Eitel also involves in sexual relationship with his ex-wife Lulu when she has just departed from Tony. They feel their marital life is so empty and suffer from their loneliness. On the other side, Lulu suffers from her past memory of break ups but she further goes to search the presence of another sex partner or permanent husband.

Deconstruction will be used as a tool for this study. Deconstruction offers a radical vision of the activity of thinking. Our mental life consists not of concepts-not of solid, stable meanings-but of fleeting, continually changing play of signifier. These signifiers may seem to be stable concepts, they look stable enough when we here them spoken or see them written down! – but they do not operate in a stable manner in our mind. Every signifier consists of and produces more signifiers in a never ending deferral, or postponement of meaning. We seek meaning that is solid and stable but we can never really find it because we can never go beyond the play of signifiers. The self image of a stable identity that many of us have, just confronting self-delusion, which we produce in collusion without culture, for culture, too, one can see as stable and coherent, is highly unstable and fragmented. We don't really have an identity because the word identity

implies that we consist of one, singular self, when in fact, we are multiple and fragmented, consisting of number of conflicting beliefs, desires, fears, anxieties and intentions. Derrida seizes upon the fact that, “supplement” is paradoxical; it means substituting something by something already complete in itself, or adding something on something to complete a thing. But if something needs a supplement, there must be something ‘lacking’ in it in the first place- there must always already be the ‘absence’ in it. This aspect of supplementarity and indeterminacy of meaning or signified shall be the focal point of the analysis where the characters’ search for sexual ‘satisfaction’ is always postponed and delayed.

### **Critical Views on *The Deer Park***

*The Deer Park*, the third novel by Norman Mailer, has remained something of an enigma to the literary critics since its publication in 1955. The work is of particular interest because it underwent a major revision after Mailer had once decided it was ready for publication, and because he has been able to let it lie, reworking it over a period of years into a play of the same title which was produced in New York city in 1967. In the book *Structured Vision of Norman Mailer*, Barry H. Leeds says:

It is always interesting to compare two forms of the same work, and in the case of *The Deer Park* such comparison is central to an understanding of Mailer’s artistic development. Certain significant shifts in emphasis condition Mailer’s current vision as opposed to that of a decade earlier, and these are reflected in basic differences between *The Deer Park* as novel and as play. (106)

It shows that Mailer had to struggle so much for the development of his literary career, but he also challenged representing what he wanted to reflect in the play version of *The Deer Park*. In *Harvard Guide to Contemporary American Writings*, Leo Braudy says, “Mailer still embraced the image of the writer as outsider, and after censorship problem

with *The Deer Park*, brought out his most resonant challenge to the gray – fanned anonymity of the 1950” (114).

These are some alleged evidences that prove the novel’s meaning in terms of Mailer’s biography, politics and contemporary culture. The early responses of the text and novelists by the reviewers and critics were based on Mailer’s own political affair in which he was involved till 1950. Because Mailer himself was something an enigma for the contemporary world as he was breaking away from the convention and norms, there may be no better example of the way the world has changed around Norman Mailer than the recent critical esteem showered on his writings and his world view. Even though critics ironically claim that Mailer’s literary status has declined in recent years, key features of his particular brand of social criticism have become common aspects of the contemporary thought, and this fact alone makes him a figure still of consideration under political lens.

*The Deer Park* represents the political issues in terms of social and individual level, for before and after Mailer has experienced the World War II and worked as a political thinker. Frederick Karl in *American Fiction 1940-1980* says, “The political dimensions those were so earnest in *The Deer Park*, give way to images and symbols of a politicized American” (12). Because of the many images and symbols in *The Deer Park*, political vision of Mailer is major theme for his novel. For the critic Mark Shechner, “*The Deer Park* is Mailer’s only extended work of fiction to take the human quest of politics with any dramatic credibility” (229). He focuses upon the representation of the political overview of post-war America.

The kind of novel Mailer chose to write reflected post war culture and its most obvious aspects. After the war, American political situation has changed into social and individual revolution. That situation has been captured in *The Deer Park* by Mailer, Barry H. Leeds further argues:

This then is what *The Deer Park* finally was about: individuals in a “cure”, “poor” and “unjust” world. And the novel proceeds on two major levels: the social, in which the particular evils of American society are condemned; and the individual, in which the inability of each character to escape from this alienation through love is traced. (110)

It shows that the vision of social reality and the political condition of American society in terms of poverty, crime, corruption as well as domination have been the major issues raised by Mailer.

*The Deer Park* is a war-novel. Mailer has experienced more of World War II. The effects and revolution aspects of war are the major themes of his novels. He is not only a novelist but also a soldier, so he depicts the war situation in his novel *The Deer Park*. To response this theme, Shechner adds:

Just after the war, as a rebellious you intellectual Marxist, Mailer came on the scene as a write of intermittent genius and, more consistently of unfulfilled promise. His initial literary ambition was to become a major American novelist, a younger Hemingway and his first three books were novels of a conventional sort, done with varying degree of power and skill: *The Naked the Dead* (1948), *Barbary Shore* (1951), and *The Deer Park* (1955). (227)

So Mailer shows his genius and intellectual as a novelist and a social worker for changing social norms, values in his novels. Similarly Peter B. High sees the novel as a vivid description of the post war American culture. In this regard he says, “*The Deer Park* (1955) [...] describes this post war world. Both American fear of communism and the movies dreams of Hollywood, make it very difficult for people to see the reality of their lives” (186). It means the post war American life is very complex, hopeful and dreamy of the materialistic prosperity.

Mailer's *The Deer Park* evokes the human existential condition. The problem of individual alienation is integrally connected to Mailer's personal conception of American existentialism. For this response Leeds further says, "Position intermediate between those despair and mitigated hope in regard to the human condition are evident in *The Deer Park*" (4). It provides a clearer view of the shift in the author's developing vision of existentialism, and that in this existentialism is an implicit hope for the salvation of the individual. Leeds adds, "*The Deer Park* as a definitive part of Mailer's existential position" (109).

The critic Barry H. Leeds again sees the novel with psychological perspective in the human or characters. According to him, "the concept of psychic out law and murder with in oneself inform the later fiction. But the importance of experience just recounted is most immediately reflected in the changes Mailer made in *The Deer Park*" (107). For him, Mailer has dealt with different vision of psychology of the characters in the novel *The Deer Park* rather than other novels. He represents his own experience as psychological insights of human beings who are guided by their own unconscious desires.

*The Deer Park* is a novel which deals with the concept of American Dream after the 1950s. All the characters like modern Americans have survived with their own dream world. This novel is a most successful novel representing Hollywood movie dream and its reality. Mailer describes a place Desert D' or where different kinds of individuals and characters gathered, that seems the cultural reality and overall manifestations of different individuality of the Hollywood. Desert D'Or is a fashionable resort in southern California, a town for Hollywood's glittering elite when they want to get away from the city of celluloid dreams. It is an incestuous hothouse— a world of manipulators: film stars, lovers, pimps, producers, ambitions, whores, black listed, lusts, hopefuls, gamblers, match makers, scriptwriters, cheats-and still, despite everything, dreams.

Mailer's *The Deer Park*, is a novel about sexuality. Mailer has a very unusual kind of view about sexuality. For him heterosexual behaviour between husband and wife is natural but social restricted relation is barbaric in its consequences. For him practice of homosexuality is a waste of seed like masturbation. Therefore, he is against this practice though many critics adopted it as a culture growing within American life. Mailer sees American culture as degenerated. Frederick R. Karl says, "The discussion of sex in Mailer's novel is metaphysical dialogue" (238). It seems that he does not depict sex as direct way but metaphysical dialogues of the characters. Karl further argues:

Mailer, evidently caught by the fifties, wanted to write in *The Deer Park* a vast philosophical treatise of good and evil, virtue and vice, decency and corruption. Desert D' Or is legendary place where Acadian fantasies these to tarnished gold. His epigraph on the historic Deer Park, where the innocent were thrown to the sexual lions, comes from a life of Louice XV, but his real meaning is derived from Dostoyevsky. The devils that lurk within are not only sexual but the demonic ideas that govern everything we do. (239)

It shows that the subject of sex is described in terms of both moral and immoral things which are existing in the societies. Some are activated from it and some are getting pleasure with in it, so sex is as the matter of game as human behaviour, Karl adds, "Sex is the last frontier [...]. In art as in life, sex is the only area left where men can find full expression of their individuality, full freedom" (238). Mailer also expresses his sexual views in his novel with freedom of expression. The reality of sexual discourse in the society is openly depicted in his novel *The Deer Park*.

According to Shechner, "The sex should turn out to be a sticking point for many Jewish novelists may be because the Jewish family takes to discover it on his or her own, in pioneering spirit of adventure and forbidding" (233). For him, Mailer shows sexual



reality of the Jewish society in his novel *The Deer Park*. Similarly, another critic Frederick R. Karl, critically comments that Mailer has freely presented the relation between sex and time in this novel. He says, “The freeing process that line of liberation in which Mailer was to explore the connection between sex and time-comes in the form of a home pornographic movie” (241). For him, Mailer has understood the modern people’s psychological insights about behaviour and sex which is conditional of time. In this regard Josephine Hendin says:

Norman Mailer’s sexual novel, *The Deer Park*, offers characters caught in their own sexual schizophrenia, going from strong, successful women who become symbols of their power, to waif life, sweet girls who make them feel genuinely strong, but do not satisfy their need for status for acquisition. (272)

It means that even in so traditionally “masculine” a writer as Mailer there is a profound ambivalence about his life as a man, either as the “protected” husband of a wealthy, powerful woman, or as the protector of a weak and loving one. According to Mr. Hux in the book *The Structured Vision of Norman Mailer*, that sex and time which seem to be existential hope in search of Mailer’s own sexual desire of the good orgasm, which Mailer tries to represent in the novel *The Deer Park*. In this regard he writes:

The close of *The Deer Park* presents us with the hope of the “enormous present”. Sex is time and time is the connection of new circuits. The most intense living of each present as it comes, and primarily the present sexual intercourse, provides a “hope to us noble human for more than one night”. It is at this point the Mailer’s existentialism becomes clearly programmatic- search for the good orgasm. (qtd. in Leeds 167)

According to this remarks, Mailer’s conception of sex is a significant human action in the *The Deer Park*. However, Mailer does not always keep clear distinction between the

valuable and the fantastic between sexes which gives hope for one more night and sex as the way to God. Mailer's intuition is that sex is somehow connected to hope and god. That is the distinction between meaningless sex and sex as an expression of total commitment to love represents one of the major thematic elements of the novel.

Some critics take Mailer's *The Deer Park*, as a novel breaking social norm and value existing in American culture. Mailer presents "sexuality" as an 'open' subject which was restricted at that time. For this reason, Mailer's *The Deer Park* was rejected by the publisher. Social reality of sexual subject in the novel is discussed in depth and with certain openness. He tried to present original exploration of what was left in the novel *The Deer Park*, in the play version. In this regard Leeds adds:

The decision was precipitated by the author's refusal to delete six lines in which, without graphic obscenity, the sexual relations between a young call girl and an old producer are implied, rather than described. There is considerable irony in the fact that the passage is not only devoid of any word which might be considered obscene but is rather well executed in this very avoidance. After rejection from six other publishers, *The Deer Park* was accepted without revision at G. P. Putnam. (107)

So, the experience had precipitated in Mailer an emotional realization of something he had previously known only at an intellectual level.

The analysis of the different criticism on the novel *The Deer Park* by Mailer is criticized and understood by different critics focusing on different themes such as: novel of social reality and political condition of post-war American society, Mailer's autobiographical history, American dream, psychological insights about human behaviour and sex, and human existential condition. However, this research raises the problem about the never ending sexual desire and the change of sexual partners one after another in search of pleasure in plenitude by the characters. They try to get presence of it

which is always already absent. Instead they suffer from alienation, breaks up in relationship and betrayal. They are guiding by sexual desires which float in the chain of supplements without being fulfilled in plenitude. They substitute their sex partners one after another- one signifier to another signifier in search of final signified-pleasure in plenitude, but never get it. The final satisfaction is ever needed but never presents the problem that will be answered in this research paper.



## II. Deconstruction, Supplementarity and Deferred Desires

### Introduction

In the 1960s, structuralism, which had dominated French intellectual life since the mid-1950s, began to be replaced by another more antinomian movement that eventually would be called first Post-Structuralism, then Post-Modernism. If Structuralism emphasizes order, structure, and rules, Post-Structuralism argues that language is subject to contingency, indeterminacy, and the generation of multiple meanings. For this reason, rather than discipline, and social control, all the values, ideals, and norms of western philosophy and western social life—from truth conceived as a clear idea present to the conscious mind to the individual conceived as a free agent who determines his or her own destiny- it denies the materiality and contingency of existence, which is characterized by movement, change, and multiplicity, rather than logic, regularity, and identity. In this regard Michael Ryan says:

The structuralist desire to describe the invariant structures of literature gave way to the Post-Structuralist emphasis on those dimensions of language, psychology, and social life which undermine precisely those stable orders of meaning, identity, and truth that Structuralism seeks to establish. Post-Structuralist critics would be more concerned with the contingencies or identity, the undecidability of meaning, and the indeterminacy of the world. (67)

In the mid-1960s, the writers and critics around the journal *Tel Quel*, many of them, like Jacques Derrida and Julia Kristeva, would become important Post-Structuralist thinkers, began to link the study of signification to radical political critiques.

The formal beginning of deconstruction was in 1966, when the french philosopher Jacques Derrida delivered his lecture on structuralism in John Hopkins University, America. He was presenting the paper on structuralism but all of a sudden he

came to the establishment of new critical thought by depicting weaknesses of structuralism itself. There, quite unexpectedly, he cast the entire history of philosophy in the west in doubt. As Jim Powell in *Derrida for Beginners* writes:

At this lecture given at the Johns Hopkins University entitled ‘Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of Human Sciences’, he has caused a stir in American Academia. His thought struck a new chord that caused many previous philosophers to be re-assessed, and it sets a tone for the thought to come. (6)

Doubtlessly, from that date the whole western philosophical thought came into question. It gave birth to a new era in the field of intellectual history.

In the field of literature also he questioned the already established tradition of authoritarian criticism and canonical writings. He focused on multiplicity, plurality and reader based criticism and that new style of reading came to be known as ‘deconstruction’. After that day, the days of Derrida or the days of deconstruction began. In this regard Jim Powell further says, “From there Derrida became the philosopher of the day, the new *infant terrible*, the new philosopher punk, of French intellectualism. And then after the American debut of Johns Hopkins, deconstruction and Derrida took America by storm, turning much of the world views topsy-turvy” (6). Of course, Derrida’s new thought brought a radical turn in the whole history of western metaphysics. It challenged the Christian religious principles, its values as well as the westerners’ concept of so called superiority.

Derrida’s immediate attack was directed towards Levi-Strauss’ structural anthropology. But later he turned towards the language and also the whole of western metaphysics. In 1967, Derrida showed his domination in writing by publishing three very famous historical books on deconstruction. These famous books are: *Writing and Difference*, *Of Grammatology* and *Voice and Phenomenon*. Since then, the new

intellectual movement deconstruction, has gained both admirers and detractors worldwide. It brought the global change in the way one used to think about truth and knowledge.

### **Influence of Heidegger and Nietzsche**

Derrida's main influence was German philosopher Martin Heidegger. He was greatly influenced with the Heideggerean 'ontology' which questions the concept of 'knowledge' and 'identity'. Even the word 'deconstruction' was taken from Heidegger's '*Destruktion*'. In this regard Jim Powell say, "The word 'deconstruction' Derrida uses was brought from Heidegger's concept of '*Destruktion*', his call for the loosening up of the old tradition of ontology - the study of ultimate rock bottom reality - through an exposure of its internal development" (16). Derrida also borrowed from Heidegger the practice of crossing out (X) the terms after he has written them. But the main thing what influenced Derrida was Heidegger's question mark on fundamental philosophical concept such as 'knowledge', 'truth' and 'identity'. In Heideggerean philosophy of "Ontology" he questions on the existence of being itself without its own realization. He says existence depends on time and moment. So, every time truth and knowledge is in inconsistency. By putting this notion in consideration Derrida questioned the concept of established truth.

Friedrich Nietzsche was another main influential figure for Derrida. The concept of "skepticism" and the reversal of binaries are more Neitzschean. Skepticism is a branch of philosophy which questions the concept of pure or absolute knowledge. It says that no knowledge is absolute, unquestionable, trustworthy, certain, complete, and moreover knowledge does not have its perfect form. It also questioned about the existence, about the ultimate reality and certain religious beliefs. In *Dictionary of Philosophy*, Dogbert D. Runes writes:

It is a proposition about a method of obtaining knowledge: that every hypothesis should be subjected to continual testing; that the only or the best or reliable method of obtaining knowledge of one or more of the above kinds is to doubt until something inducible or nearly inducible as possible is found; that wherever evidence is indecisive, judgment should be suspended: that knowledge of all or certain kinds at some point rest on unproved postulates or assumptions. (517)

Knowledge formed by testing of hypothesis is always changing. It is continuous and always unproven. From here Derrida's concept of 'play' develops. While talking about Derrida and Nietzsche Jim Powell says:

Derrida shares with Nietzsche skepticism about philosophy in general but specially its style and its truth claims. Derrida, like Nietzsche, is aware that we are prisoners of our perspective. Both reverse (and re-reverse) opposite such as subject/object, truth/error, moral/immoral. Both Nietzsche and Derrida write in a style that emphasizes the dance of thought on the playground of knowledge - a dance that is playful, waltzing between extremes such as absolute certainty and absolute doubt. (14)

This shows that Derrida was greatly influenced by Nietzsche. He even brought some concepts of Nietzsche in his critical practice. The concept of the rupture of the hierarchical binaries Derrida emphasized most was brought from Nietzsche.

### **Inconsistency within Binaries**

The trend of establishing hierarchical binaries has been practiced since last hundreds of years. It has carried a stigma among the people in the world. In fact, this widely avowed inherent nature of binary opposition – the system of privileging one of the poles of opposition at the expense of the other – has invited a deep crisis not only in



the socio-cultural practice but also in the concept of binary itself.

Jacques Derrida's three books of 1967 – *Of Grammatology*, *Writing and Difference*, and *Speech and Phenomenon* – provide the crucial analytic devices and concepts for much of the later Post-Structuralist critiques carried out by such thinkers as Jean Baudrillard, Luce Irigaray, and Jean-Francois Lyotard. Derrida, whose work is known as deconstruction, argues that western philosophy claims to speak for reason, truth, and knowledge, but that in fact it consists of violent acts of opposition and hierarchization, value judgments that unjustifiably subordinate one set of terms and privilege another. The valued terms are truth, the presence of ideas or of objects in the mind, reason, rationality, meaning, logic, authenticity, originality, speech, immediacy, the living, identity, etc. The devalued terms are difference, signification, nonidentity, repetition, substitution, writing, imitation, representation, artifice, metaphor, etc.

Derrida claims that deconstruction is a political practice, and that one must not pass over and neutralize this phase of subversion too quickly. For this “phase of reversal” is needed in order to subvert the original hierarchy of the first term over the second. But eventually, one must realize that this new hierarchy is equally unstable, and surrender to the complete free play of the binary opposites in a non-hierarchical way. Then we can see that both readings, and many others, are equally possible. Powell further says:

There is no central configuration that attempts to freeze the play of system, no marginal one, no privileged one, no repressed one. [. . .] we should continuously attempt to see this free play in all our language and texts-which otherwise will tend toward fixity, institutionalization, centralization and totalitarianism. (29)

Derrida argues that in western culture, people tend to think and express their thoughts in terms of “binary oppositions”. So, the longing for a center spawns binary

opposites, with one term of the opposition central and the other marginal. Furthermore center aims to fix, or freeze the play of “binary opposites”-something is white but not black, masculine and therefore not feminine, a cause rather than an effect. Other common and mutually exclusive pairs include beginning/end, homo/hetero sexuality, conscious/unconscious, “presence/absence” and speech/writing. In this connection Ross Murfin and Supriya M. Ray say:

Derrida suggest these dichotomies are not simply opposition but also hierarchies in miniature, containing one term that Western culture views as positive or superior so. (Presence, for instance, is more clearly preferable to absence than ‘speech’ is preferable to writing). Derrida does not seek to reverse these opposition, however, because doing so would mean falling in to the trap of perpetuating the same forms that he seeks to deconstruct. (76)

So he instead aims to erase the boundary between binary opposition- and to do so in such a way that the hierarchy implied by the oppositions is thrown into question.

Deconstruction is a tactic of decentering, a way of reading which first makes us aware of the centrality of the central term. Then it attempts to subvert the central term so that the marginalized term can become central. The marginalized term temporarily overthrows the hierarchy. As J. Hillis Miller, the prominent American deconstructionist, in an essay “Stevens’ Rock and Criticism as Cure” (1976), has explained “Deconstruction is not a dismantling of the structure of a text, but a demonstration that it has already dismantled itself. Its apparently solid ground is no rock but thin air” (Murfin 75-76).

Deconstruction rejects any singularity, fixity or ultimateness. While talking about deconstruction, Alex Thomson says:

Deconstruction troubles out notions of definition because of its intense concern with singularity: with what makes things individual or unique. Governed by something like principle of respect for singularity, it makes more sense to think of deconstructions in the plural: a series of responses which seek to be as faithful as possible to their various objects, whether a particular text, author, or historical event. (299)

Thomson makes the point that deconstruction which always puts question mark on singularity can be taken as plural in itself. That means everything from its existence cannot be fixed. It becomes rather dynamic or fluctuating. Thomson further says:

Deconstruction is very interested in the ways in which identity is never simply complete or given but it is the product of these kinds of decisions and assumptions. Rather than seeing the world in terms of specific, fixed and concrete entities, deconstruction sees it in terms of dynamic process of differentiation [. . .] the ideality of written or verbal signs - that which allowed them to be repeated, used and understood in new context, to mean things quite different from what was originally 'intended' by them. (300)

He emphasized on contextual differences of an event and its impact. Same thing can be understood differently. For this reason Derrida always focuses on multiplicity, plurality and dynamic nature. While talking about the nature of deconstruction M.H. Abrams says, "Deconstruction as applied in the criticism of literature, designates a theory and practice of reading which questions and claims to 'subvert' or 'undermine' the assumptions that are adequate to establish the boundaries, the coherence or unity and the determinate meanings of literary text" (55). This statement clearly shows that deconstruction always questions the already established norms, tradition, Truth, knowledge, unity and most importantly it questions the concept of center but his focus is only in literary text or

literature. Anyway it is clear that deconstruction never believes in singularity, fixity, static nature or ultimate truth.

Jacques Derrida sees 'presence' in language as an illusion. In *The Literary Theory: The Basics*, Hans Bertens says, "Presence is the basis of the last pieces of true knowledge that you have and language allows you to convey that knowledge to the outside world" (123). This trust of combination of presence and language is what Derrida has called 'logocentrism' or 'metaphysics of presence'. According to Derrida, our trust in language is based upon what happens – or what we think happens – when we ourselves actually use it. It is manifestly not based on hearing others speak: we know from experience that hearing them does not necessarily bring us in touch with their authentic situation – they may be lying for instance, or may not be able to explain what they really want to say. And our trust is certainly not based on writing: writing may be as unreliable as speech, and as unintelligible, and it does not even offer us the opportunity of finding out the truth if we fail to see it. Hans Bertens adds:

When people are talking to us, we can interrupt them and ask questions if we do not understand what they are saying and we can watch them closely for tell-tale signs if we suspect that they are lying. Although we can never be finally sure that we have access to what they really think – the authentic truth behind the words they use – we have a better chance than we have with writing to get to the bottom of things. (123)

The meaning we see in words is the product of difference, that meaning is always contaminated. Derrida argues that the same holds for words: every single word contains traces of other words – theoretically of all the other words in the language system. Bertens further says, "The signified concept is never present in and of itself, in a sufficient presence that would refer only to itself. Essentially and lawfully, every concept

is inscribed in a chain or in a system within which it refers to the other, to other concept.” (125)

Moreover, since words are not determined by their relationship with what they refer to, they are always subject to change. Derrida tells that the process that gives them meaning never ends. Words never achieve stability, not only because they are related to, and take part of their meaning from, the words that have just preceded them, but also because their meaning is always modified by whatever follows. The word that is next to the words are looking at, or a word later in the same sentence, or even paragraph, will subtly change its meaning. Meaning, then, is the product of difference and it is also always subject to a process of deferral. In fact, a word's – or sign's – relations to other words and to words that will follow are a 'condition' for meaning without those relations meaning would not be possible. In this response Bertens further says:

The movement of signification is possible only if each so-called 'present' element, each element appearing on the scene of presence, is related to something other than itself. Thereby keeping within itself the mark of the past element, and already letting itself be vitiated by the mark of its relation to the future element, this trace being related no less to what is called future than to what is called the past, and constituting what is called the present by means of this very relation to what is not. (125)

The 'presence' of a word we speak is therefore not the true present, which forever eludes language: 'spacing' and 'temporization' intervene. Derrida captures this in a self-coined term, 'différance' that contains both the idea of difference and the process of deferral of meaning. Derrida destabilizes the relationship between 'signifier' and 'signified'. The 'signifier' –the word we hear or read – is of course stable enough, but what it signifies –the 'signified' –is according to Derrida subject to an inherent 'instability'. We all know that this 'instability' exists at another level: the meaning of

words may change over time, for instance, and phrases that once contained “vivid metaphors” may now have lost their “metaphorical edge” “- who thinks of and actual crack in phrase ‘at the crack of dawn?’” (Bertens 126). From Derrida’s perceptive, then, language never offers us direct contact with reality. It is not transparent medium, a window on the world. On the contrary, it always inserts itself between us and the world like a smudgy screen or distorting lens. In this regard, Harry Blamire in *A History of Literary Criticism* says, “The signifier’ does not lead us here to a single ‘signified’ but to a batch of ‘signified’, any one of which might lead us to another batch. Chains of meaning, interwoven chains of meaning emerge whenever we try to pin down the relation between ‘signifier’ and ‘signified’” (362). So, with this regard, the signifier one utters, refers to chain of signifiers in one’s mind and evokes chain of signifier in the mind of the person who hears one’s utterances. And each signifier in those chains is it constituted by another chain of signifiers, and so on. So, for deconstruction, language doesn’t consist of the union of signifiers and signified; it consists only of chain of signifiers.

### **Supplementarity**

It shows that the coupling of ‘writing’ and ‘speech’ is an example of what Derrida calls a ‘violent hierarchy’. Speech has full presence, while writing is secondary and threatens to contaminated speech with its materiality. Western Philosophy has supported this ranking in order to preserve presence. But, the hierarchy can easily be undone and reversed. For they share certain whitely features: both sides of such binaries are signifying process suffering from the lack of presence.

Derrida uses the term ‘supplement’ to convey the unstable relationship between binaries such as speech/writing. For Rousseau writing is merely a supplement to speech, a dangerous supplement to; it adds something inessential. In French, ‘suppleer’ also means ‘to substitute’ (to take the place of), and Derrida shows how Rousseau’s argument

deconstructs itself, that writing not only supplements but also takes the place of speech, because speech is always already written. All human activity involves this supplementarity (addition-substitution). When we say that the ‘nature’ preceded ‘civilization’, we are asserting another violent hierarchy in which a pure presence lauds itself over a mere supplement. For Rousseau writing is both something that is added on to speech, which is supposedly already complete and full of presence, and it is something which makes speech complete. But speech is obviously not complete if it needs writing to supplement it.

Rousseau also writes ‘secret vice’ masturbation, is a dangerous supplement – for it substitutes or perverse, solitary and weakening pleasure to the normal, natural presence of erotic experience with lover. The masturbator has fantasies about absent beauties with his imagination, supplementing them for the real thing. And both sex and masturbation, realizes Rousseau, may be just a substitute for his foster-mother, his original object of desire. Thus the masturbator, the fantasist, is engaged in an endless quest. For his fantasies-end even his lovers – can never replace the full presence he enjoyed with his foster-mother. And what Derrida reveals is that throughout the *Confession*, Rousseau relies upon the dangerous *supplement*, fantasy – because he admits that at the very core of “natural” sexual desire-there is lack, *absence*. Rousseau admits that his “natural” erotic experiences with women have never been as passionate as exciting and fulfilling, as his erotic dreams and daytime fantasies. Sex can not live up to fantasy. So like speech and melody, the presence of sex is always already inhabited by a certain lack, by an absence, which then must be filled in with a dangerous supplement-fantasy. Rousseau favours speech, melody, nature, sex. But then Derrida notices how Rousseau finds a dangerous supplement in all of these- in harmony, in writing, in civilization, and in fantasy or masturbation, homosexual, regarding all the supplements as marginal. The central are: melody, speech, nature, sex, heterosexual, and harmony, writing civilization,

fantasy, masturbation, homosexual are marginal. For this response, Jim Powell adds, “And this how Derrida brings about the deconstructive reversal for inversion, slowing how the marginalized terms can be central” (55).

According to Derrida, writing is dangerous from the moment the representation there claims to be presence and the sign of thing itself. And there is a fatal necessity, inscribed in the very functioning of the sign, that the substitute make one forget the vicariousness of its own function and make itself pass for the plenitude of a speech whose deficiency and infirmity it nevertheless only supplements. In this regard Derrida says:

For the concept of the supplement – which here determines that of the representative image-harbors within itself two significations whose cohabitation is as strange as it is necessary. The supplement adds itself, it is a surplus, a plenitude enriching another plenitude the fullest measures of presence. It cumulates and accumulates presence. ( Adams 318-19)

It is thus that ‘art’, ‘*techne*’, ‘image’, ‘representation’, ‘convention’ etc. comes as supplements to nature and are rich with this entire cumulating function. This kind of supplementarity determines in a certain way all the conceptual oppositions within which Rousseau inscribes the notion of “Nature to the extent that it should be self-sufficient” ( Powell 19). But the supplement supplements. It adds only replace. It interviews or insinuates itself in-the-place-of; if it fills, it is as if one fills a void. If it represents and makes an image, it is by the anterior default of a presence. So Derrida further says:

As substitute, it is not simply added to the positivity of a presence, it produces no relief, its place is assigned in the structure by the mark of emptiness. Some where, something can be filled up of itself, can accomplish itself, only by allowing itself to be filled through sign and proxy. The sign is always the supplement of the thing itself. (Adams 319)



Through this sequence of supplements a necessity is announced: that of an infinity chain, ineluctably multiplying the supplementary mediations that produce the sense of the very thing defer: the image of the thing itself, of immediate presence, of origin perception. Intermediary is what is indeed “in conceivable (to reason).”

So Derrida adds, “If something needs a *supplement*, there must be something *lacking* in it in the first place – there must always already be *absence* in it” (Powell 55). It seems that in everything that Rousseau found fullness of *presence*, there was, in Derrida’s view, always already an original lack, an *absence* at work. Yet Rousseau’s whole argument depends upon maintaining that melody, speech, sex or heterosex etc. are present with a presence. Derrida shakes up the stability of these pairs of binary opposites, by playing upon the double meaning of the term *supplement*. In French it can mean to add something on to a thing already complete in itself, or to complete a thing by adding on to it. *Supplement*, then, can not be defined simply. Like the ambigraph of the faces and the scandals, it is two things at once.

### **Sexual Desires and Supplementarity**

After 1945, and increasingly since the 1960s, the terms ‘bisexual’, ‘gay’, ‘lesbian’, and ‘straight’ have also been used to index a connection between sexual desires and identity. It is unusual, however, to find criticism which deals with heterosexuality in the same way in which homosexuality has been investigated and understood in lesbian, gay and queer studies. ‘Heterosexual’ or ‘straight’ studies of, for example, literature or the media are few in number, largely because most theory and criticism has been governed by, and connected within, hetero-normative frames of reference.

Michel Foucault’s *The History of Sexuality* (1976) which pointed as either more or less repressed, or more or less liberated than the present. He argues that “Sex and Sexual acts were subject to a whole range of repression and prohibitions is to misread the evidence that highlights the extent to which sexuality has always been on social, cultural,

and political agendas in one form or another” (Waugh 428). But perhaps how subjects think and write sex and sexuality, and how subjects relate to the cultural and material dimension of sex, has changed and is changing.

At the beginning of 1990s, Judith Butler’s *Gender Trouble* (1990) sought to question what she describes as ‘the heterosexual matrix’, that “grid of cultural intelligibility through which bodies, genders and desires are naturalized. Her argument is initially posed via a series of interrogatives: “can we refer to a ‘given’ sex or a ‘given’ gender without first inquiring in to how sex and/or gender is given [. . .]? And what is ‘sex’ anyway? It is natural, anatomical, chromosomal, or hormonal [. . .]? Does sex have a history? Does each sex have a different history or histories?” (Waugh 429). Responses to these questions, as well as resistance to Butler’s particular answer, have informed and structured many of the debates which continue to surround question of sex and sexualities. Butler, Freud and Psychoanalysis were forming their own questions of sex and sexuality and providing equally irresolute answers.

It is to Freud writings, principally though not exclusively his *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1905), that many of today’s accounts of sexuality refer in theorization of the relations between the body, sex and pleasure. Waugh says, “The link between sexual desire and language is one of Freud’s most important contributions to theories of sexuality” (130). Although, the ‘activity’ and ‘passivity’ in sexual relations are structured, masculine sex equals an active/penetrative position, whereas the feminine equals a passive/receptive one. But Freud’s contribution to the understanding of sexuality is important because of the ways in which sexuality is accorded central status in his attempts to understand human relation, pleasure and satisfaction, and the place of sexual subject in culture.

For Foucault ‘sexuality’ is no longer simply one aspect of identity, and no longer conceived in terms of sexual acts, is now viewed as a principle truth of the self.

Something which has to be brought into cultural visibility, sexuality is not simply the natural expression of some inner drive or desire. The discourses of sexuality concern the operation of power in human relationship as much as they govern the production of personal identity. By stressing the way in which sexuality is written in or on the body, and in showing how the homosexual is forced in to cultural (in) visibility. Foucault dismantles the notion that “sexuality is a transparent fact of life” (Waugh 435). If sexuality is inscribed in or on the body, then it is texts and discourses which make the sexual into something that sexuality and textuality are linked is to propose that the sexual is conceived in relation to words, sign systems, discourses, and representation. However, the multiplicity and plurality of signs which have served to structure how sexuality is conceived suggest that no sign adequately appropriates or contain what sexuality is.

Aristotle situates desire as a culturally produced activity, one that takes place in relation to how to make deliberate choices in the midst of ethical life. Spinoza will later claim that ‘desire’ is the passion in human beings from which all emotions are derived, and that basic to all human striving is a “desire to persist in one’s own being” (Butler 378). For liberal political theorists such as Hobbes, this formulation will turn into view of desire as acquisitiveness or human selfishness. But there is a critical distance between a self-acquisitive and self-preservative desire in Spinoza’s view, and later in Nietzsche’s Spinoza, “desire will seek to enhance itself through reflection of the world that establishes its internal harmony with that world” (Butler 378). But with Hegel, a persistent question arises whether desire is to be figured as an effort as self-duplication or as an effort to exceed, or even contest, the pure view of the subject itself.

Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit* introduces the notion of desire as the very movement by which consciousness redoubles itself as self-consciousness, “self-consciousness is Desire in general” (Butler 379). The possibility of having oneself reflected back to one self is the inaugurating lure of desire; the lure of reflexivity, of

mimetic reflection that initiates desire but immediately precipitates desire into life and death struggle. For the Other, who will reflect back the subject's desire and whom, therefore, the subject desires (precisely as the reflection she or he promises), will inadvertently reflect back the subject's own duplicability, exchangeability, non singularity, and will, with very power of reflection, threaten the singularity of the subject. To regard with Hegel, Butler says, "This prospect appears less gratifying. The redoubling of consciousness produces a desire for reciprocal recognition, only then swiftly to transform this very desire into an effort to destroy the Other" (379). So, the desire for destruction is thwarted by the sudden realization that the Other who mirrors the subject, wields the power to destroy him in return. Such as Hegelian resolution proves impossible for those such as Jacques Lacan, who will claim that the subject can never recognize himself in an Other but remains in a permanent relation of misrecognition. For Lacan, "'desire is for the desire of the Other' works in at least two ways: the desire to the Other's desire, to its object, but also to mime its ways and, in miming, to assume an identity other than one's own" ( Butler 381).

In this sense, the "negativity" that marks the Other, the not-me in Hegel, remains insuperable for Lacan and returns him to a thwarted Platonism, "as much as desire seeks to recollect or recover one's origins in an effort to achieve a metaphysical oneness, it is thwarted from that recovery by a primary separation or loss" ( Butler 379). In the place of that return, desire acquires an imaginary trajectory. Butler represents the Aristophanic myth which implies that desire emerges on the condition of division, it also imagines all manner of sexual arrangements resulting from this ontological separation. For him this original separateness is reconceived as the division into two sexes in need of each other, and desire is rendered as a function of sexual difference. Desire is thus defined as displacement, and also as an endless chain of substitutions. If desire is irreducible to appearance, then it is also true that however desire appears to the subject is not

necessarily the true aim and trajectory of desire. The subject may well be the last to know it he or she ever does, what it is that he or she desires. The subject is constituted in the dislocation of desire. Prior to the splitting off of the subject which is the fissure by which the subject is inaugurated, there is only this unbounded and differentiated pleasure. In this response, Butler adds, “With the individuation of the subject (which takes place first through the mirroring production of the imaginary “ego”), desire emerges, but only in relation to need (which can not appear in language) and demand (the symbolic effort the subject according to law” (380-81).

Desire is the site in which demand and need never reconcile, and this makes of desire a permanently vexed affair. Further he says, “Desire is never fulfilled, for its fulfillment would entail a full return to the primary pleasure, and that return would dissolve the very subject which is the condition of desire itself” (381). Hence, the fulfillment of desire would be its radical self-cancellation. Desire thus emerges at an infinite distance from pleasure, indeed, always at the cost of pleasure, but also always at the cost of a conformity to the symbolic law.

Desires are multiple, creating one after another desire. In the desiring process second desire is more desirable than primal one. According to Freud, human are guided by unconscious sexual desires. Desires supplement one after another in chain of substitutions. The object of desire is also replaced by another object, in terms of desire of subject. In search of final fulfillment, or presence or pleasure in plenitude, the subjects are floating in the chain of supplements of desire objects, one signifier to another signifier. But final signified or pleasure in plenitude is never achieved. The researcher is to apply this theoretical modality to prove the hypothesis that the major characters of the novel *The Deer Park* are guided by sexual desires which float in the chain of supplements without having pleasure in plenitude. Thus, they can not develop human relationship, get the pleasure and satisfaction, established family through their chain of

sexual relationships with one sex partner to another. Instead they suffer form alienation, break ups in relationships and betrayals. What they want to have the full presence is always already absent. To fulfill that gap, they are forced to search another presence, which they do not want in their lives.

### III. Interplay Between Presence and Absence in *The Deer Park*

#### Introduction

The major characters Charles Eitel, Sergious, Lulu Meyers and Elena in *The Deer Park* are caught in the interplay between presence and absence of pleasure, satisfaction and meaning in their lives. They are always in search of the presence of pleasure in plenitude which is always already absent. They want to achieve full presence of close human relationship, pleasure and satisfaction, and establish family but are never able to fulfill. It is that they search for 'transcendental signified' through the multiple sexual intercourses without having its fullness of presence. They are guided by never ending sexual desires which float in the chain of supplements. The supplementarity, inconsistency nature, and unstable pattern of their life make them unsatisfied. Their never ending sexual desires supplement one after another-without having final signified. The love affair, marriage, sexual relationship and job are their desired objects for the presence of ultimate satisfaction. Their desires are multiple. They are involved continuously in multiple marriages, love affair and sexual relationships but none of them get the full satisfaction in their lives. They have the presence of temporary pleasure and satisfaction which is not enough for the fullness of presence which shifts to yet another momentary presence which is always already displaced. As a result they suffer from alienation, breaks up in relationship and betrayals and are caught up in the interplay of simultaneous presence and absence of the pleasure they are searching for.

The title *The Deer Park* signifies a sexual place of human in where they sexually act like animals in the jungle which symbolizes immorality, for it is unrestricted, open and multiple with many. They have no boundary or restriction in the society for their sexual fulfillment. *The Deer Park*, the title, is taken from a huge private sex resort maintained by Louise XV of France where the ladies used to talk just like the boys in the jungle as well as act like the animal in it. In the novel most of the characters are like the

boys and girls of that sex resort who are sexually involved with many partners substituting one by another to get 'pleasure in plenitude'. The 'Desert O' Door' in the novel is a place like the sex resort of Louise XV of France whose many stories of sex are enacted by the characters. They have the stories of multiple sexual experiences, multiple marriage, divorce, love affairs etc. They are totally indifferent to the social norms, values, thoughts and systems. Unable to get 'the presence' or the ultimate pleasure from the socially constructed sexual boundary between husband and wife, they shift to the animal type-plural and different sexual experiences with the multiple sex partners.

### **Eitel, Sexual Pleasure and the Chain of Supplements**

The protagonist, Charles Francis Eitel tries to get ultimate pleasure and satisfaction through marriage, love, sex and job during his life. He is engaged with multiple marriage, love affairs, sexual relationships and different works but he fails to get that 'transcendental signified' because in everything he is engaged, he finds some problem and thus he desires, for yet another substitute in the hope of attaining the final pleasure, but ironically, only to desire for more of such options.

When Eitel has finished his graduation in a college, he drifts around New York looking for work. Though he is not so handsome and good looking, a girl comes to his life. They fell in love, got married and established a family. It is natural that they feel very much love and satisfaction in married life:

He was not a good looking young college graduate, and he was shy, and so he fell in love with the first girl who fell in love with him. She was studying to be a welfare worker, and she lived at home, and wanted to marry him to get out of her parents house. It was natural they should fell they were very much in love. (38)

Their life begins from such a transformation of bachelor to married life, and departure from the parents to their own small family. For them love and marriage is natural



because they both need a good family with heterosexual union. In society, marriage is moral for sexual intercourse through which both have fulfilled their sexual desires. It is social construct concept in which they are bounded with social norms and values.

Their married life runs smoothly with satisfaction. Eitel has developed his career as a successful playwright, director and an actor of popular pictures in the capital, “A lot of people heard his name for the first time. He was offered a career in the movies. So he had gone to the capital” (38). Though he has a name, work, reputation, profit or money and wife, “He continued to make pictures which are better than most; they even showed profit. Yet he was becoming dissatisfied” (39) which resembles his desire is to become a superman in terms of name and money. He becomes more materialist than simple or ordinary people. He is very busy in meetings, helping to gather contributions and making pictures but he has no time for the family or his wife. Gradually he longs for the woman who is more attractive, intelligent and more his equal. His mind is absorbed by the materialistic life and the capital that takes him away from his wife. As a result, the wife also develops a sort of dissatisfaction:

She was unhappy and she hated the capital. She felt he did not want her any longer and it was true; he did not; he wanted a woman who was more attractive, more intelligent, more his equal; he wanted more than one woman. He saw so many in the capital that he could have, and it made him anxious to be free. (39)

Both develop dissatisfaction in marital life. Eitel’s search for a very attractive, beautiful and an intelligent girl is the supplementary nature of the pleasure, he was searching for. He tries to escape from marital life. On the other, the wife also is dissatisfied with him, for she also wants to transform her life. She is not getting desired pleasure from the metropolitan and marital life with Eitel. She also develops an interest on supplement and pleasure from the transformation of life.

However, Eitel feels guilty about his wife. He has needed her at one time and they have been good friends, she has taught him so much, and it is not her fault that now he knows more. At times both of them begin to quarrel, consider each other responsible for their trouble. However, they honestly tell each other about their affairs, "For they swore they must be honest with one another. Yet they quarreled" (40). He wants to make a good amount of money and a secured position in the studio to make the movies he wants, however, his wife wants a divorce because she has found somebody else as her new partner:

He had dreamed for years of such a solution, yet to his surprise, he could not let her go; they had one of those final reconciliations, and a half year later they divorced. Everything she moved to another city and married a labour organizer and Eitel never saw her again. By now he could hardly remember her. (40)

The first marriage breaks up. She searches for the ultimate satisfaction rather with her new husband, labour organizer. Eitel also does not live without supplement. He marries second time with an actress from the social registrar. While it lasts, he makes movies, many movies; he buys a 14 rooms' house with a library, a wine closet, a gymnasium, a swimming pool. There is a four car garage, a volleyball court, a badminton court, and a tennis court; vines grow on the terraces and a row of cypresses leaned toward the ocean, there is a kennel for a dozen dogs, a stable for two horses. He thinks that he is getting heavenly pleasure from the bungalow and his wife. He keeps the house long after the wife. But this relation also can not continue for a long time. He again searches the meaning of marriage but could not. Therefore, a divorce becomes the ultimate solution:

His second divorce coincided with his commission into the army. In Europe, he made training films and combat films and traveled the cocktail circuit of generals and beauties and black marketers, a politician and

movie producer and statesmen. He even made the last of his good films, a documentary on a parachute troops so different from all battles one saw on the screen that the Army novel released it. (40)

Eitel's second marriage ends with divorce, "From the wife he had picked up what he wanted, and paid for it of course" (40). He lacks something without woman. Then he goes to the war for making war movies and documentary.

When he comes back from the war, he takes on the last of his reputations, "There was a year or two when he was supposed to have slept with half the good-looking women in the capital and it was rare week which did not have his name in the gossip column or another" (40). To fulfill his sexual desirer, he joined with other women found. Yet, all the time passed them in making money and spending it. He has earned more money from directing films with his good reputation, but he could not see his life meaningful without a woman. His desire needs the presence of the woman and sexual satisfaction. Then he easily gets married. He marries third time with an actress. He thinks marriage is ultimate solution for pleasure and satisfaction but always lacks from it. Third marriage is the substitution of the second marriage for the new experience and satisfaction in his life. But it can not go forever, again his third relation with the actress ends with divorce, "Last year began with his third divorce. He always married out of pity and he had come to distrust pity" (41). Eitel evaluates himself as a player of multiple marriages and why he always fails with the relationship to his wives. He has temporary union with women; the cause is not anything but himself. He is always guided by sexual desires which float in the chain of supplements. The third marriage with his wife Lulu Meyers is just another supplement in his sexual life and satisfaction, nothing more than that. Eitel says, "I'm the archetype of the John who marries five or six times because he just cannot believe the poor girl will live without him" (41). Eitel is just like John, he cannot live without a woman too. He always runs after woman who comes in his life in

the form of substitution. “The third wife had been beautiful. She was Lulu Meyers, she comes down here between pictures, Lulu was very young, and he had really believed she needed him. It is subtle when a marriage ends” (41). Eitel did not believe that she left him because he thought that she needed him very much. Before the marriage with Eitel she had had one of those horrible lives that she could not ever dare to think about for, “Her first husband, the young love, was killed in a street accident, her second husband stole her money” (41). It is grim. It is true that she really needs a good husband for pleasure, satisfaction and happy life, but Eitel could not be the one. She also needs the supplements for the final meaning of married life:

‘The worst thing about my Rumanian’, Eitel continued, she had been beautiful once, and too many men had been in love with her. Now, ‘I’m afraid, it was the reverse. She had lost her looks and so she adored me’. He could not stand her, and therefore he felt obliged to be as nice as possible. (42)

From the departure with his third wife Lulu, Eitel experiences some sort of depression in his relations as well as a sexual gap. He blames that the cause of that breaks up is nobody but himself. But both are equally responsible for the divorce because they have better experience of past marriage life as well as its inconsistencies. However, they try to get pleasure and satisfaction from the connection between them. As Eitel says:

An affair like that can go on forever. It went on for a whole year. I’ve never been the kind of man who can be faithful with any regularity. I’ve always been the sort of decent chappie who hopes from one woman to another in the run of an evening because that’s the only prescription which allows me to be found of both the ladies. (42)

His affair is multiple because he has many affairs with women at a time. He runs one woman after another for new sexual experiences. He is searching the woman who can

give him full sexual satisfaction. He always encompasses one after another experience but is never fully satisfied. His sexual desire is never ending which float in the chain of supplement:

I was faithful in my way to the Rumanian. She would like to see me every night for she hated to be alone, and I would have liked never to see her again, and so we settled for two nights a week. I did not matter if I were in the middle of a romance or between girls, whether I had a date that night or not-on Tuesday night and Thursday night I went to her apartment to sleep. (42)

Not only Eitel but the Rumanian is also passionate for sexual pleasure. When she feels the lack, she goes with Eitel to have it. But he is not satisfied with her. He goes to other women for new or extra sexual pleasure. Although they have depression in the marriage and divorce, they even try to fulfill their sexual needs from their multiple intercourses. Eitel says, “It was not really passion, and that’s why it left me low. She was hungry that’s all” (43). He is no more passionate with her because he has alternative relations with other women. He is an object for her desire. He adds, “As I say, I believed I went to see her because I did not want to hurt her. But looking back, I can see I was wrong. I needed to see her” (43). Just like he is an object for the fulfillment of her sexual desire, she is no more than an object for him. In the past, he never thought or believed the married life with Lulu will be broken. His desire was to get the ‘presence’ of established family for “When Lulu and I got married, I know it could never last” (43). He does not get the presence of real family and happy life from her. He further says, “Why, our marriage was the meeting of zero and zero” (43). He realizes that he always fails to achieve a satisfaction of married life because he has no stable or single desire to be fulfilled. Finally, divorce becomes the only solution for his freedom to have pleasure and satisfaction with yet another substitute.

After the divorce with Lulu, Eitel becomes depressed and feels guilty himself. He says, “My work was going to hell” (43). He feels alone and his work is not going on so well. It has come on him after fifteen years and twenty-eight pictures that he would never be powerful enough to make only those pictures he wanted to do. Instead, he would always be making the studio pictures. He is not even surprised to decide that he has no real desire to make his own limbs. For better or worse, his true marriage is with the capital, and he knows nowhere else to go. The commercial reputation to which he has sneered is being lost. It has hung over him for months. He even fails to get satisfaction with his work when he departs with his third wife:

Lost in the middle was ‘the Eitel touch’; here and there a scene with studio composition, intricate shadows and a patch of atmosphere. It went on like this for three weeks of shooting until one morning, with the picture not half done, everything went wrong, and everybody, producer, director, actors, cameramen, and grips, dance director and chorus milled over the sound stage. Eitel, his nerves out of control, walked off the set and left the studio. (45)

Eitel’s reputation and efficiency is lost because of his depression. He is unable to give time and skill in making films. His problem is the memory of his wife as well as lack of sexual satisfaction. The absence of sexual intercourse makes him depressed and unable to fulfill his duty in his work. He loses the money too. Even he goes to other women for the fulfillment of his sexual gap. When he leaves his work he becomes free to search about girls and sexual pleasure:

On a wide beach where the smell rolled in long even waves, he stopped his car, sat on the edge of the shore, and watched the surfboard riders. They were all young, somewhere between eighteen and twenty. Hair was bleached by the sun. The boys resting their heads on the hips of the girls.

Eitel watched them, became absorbed in studying a tall girl with round limbs and around breasts. (49-50)

The body and activity of the girls arouse him more desire to have sexual relation. His mind and body is more passionate for immediate sexual intercourse. Then he thinks, “She seemed so confident of her body and sport of being alive. I must love to that girl” (50). He forgets all things of his past when he sees the girl on the beach. Eitel develops new sexual feeling to have her. Her presence makes him exciting and erotic. He adds, “I was ready to anything, to tell her my name, to tell her what I could do for her” (50). He wants to scarify everything to her because he sees the ultimate pleasure in her body.

Eitel’s life makes another shift when he keeps in touch with Elena, a womanly waif. After she breaks up her love affair with a film producer, Munshin, Elena has found Charlse Eitel for another alternative at the Desert O’ Door. Eitel and Elena are engaged in sexual intercourse from their first meeting after the night party, “He had never had a woman gave so much the first time. It was one of the best experience of his life” (105). Eitel always feels that the way a woman makes love is a good guide to understand her character as any other way, and from the distance of an inch Elena is a woman of exceptional beauty. When at last they are done and Eitel can glow from a show of skill more valuable to him than the pleasure itself, they lay side by side smiling at each other. Elena says, “You are a king. I just never see [. . .] it never happened like this” (105). They feel complete satisfaction that night because of their extra experience which happened all of a sudden.

However, he begins to doubt himself; as he is getting older he becomes sensitive to the small ways in which women refuse his body even as they accept it, and this has made him fragile. He thinks that in a few more years this part of his life will be gone. Before having sex or during the night, they are happy with each other but after the fulfillment of sexual desire they are depressed in the morning, “In the morning, both

were depressed. They were strangers after all. When Elena came without make up, her long hair hanging forlornly over her cheeks, he was almost forced to laugh. If she had been beautiful the night before. She looked sullen at this movement and not at all attractive (106)". During the night they just think about sex and pleasure by which they are unconsciously guided but in the morning they think of their future. Elena says, "I'm always in a bad mood in the morning'. 'O, so am I, we've alike', Eitel said. Then he reached to kiss her and she offered her cheek" (105). It seems that both are not so satisfied with their relation but they can not detach from each other. They have a little hope for the future even though they are still living alone. For Eitel, she has given herself to him in order to humiliate her ex-boy friend Munshin. But now, the next day she realizes that she has only humiliated herself. Her choice of Eitel as supplement to Munshin has no possibility to offer what she expects. She says, "I am having such a terrible time today, I was almost always acting with other men" (111). Her desire is not fulfilled and is dissatisfied with herself. She realizes that she is just like a doll for other men who can play with her body in whatever way they want. However, she is also guided by sexual desire that she enjoys their company. In the presence of Elena, Eitel becomes encouraged to live with happily:

Eitel fell into a deep sleep. Like most cynics he was profoundly sentimental about sex. It was his dream to bounty, and it nourished him enough to wake up with hope that this affair could return his energy, flesh his courage, and make him the man he had once believed himself to be.

With Elena beside him he thought for the first time in many years that the best thing in the world for him was to make a great movie. (112)

In the absence of sex Eitel always suffers and even forgets his duty, work and responsibility. 'Sex' for him is a power and strength to be a happy man. Both Elena and Eitel are naturally satisfied from the heterosexual union even they are unmarried.



Socially they are not allowed to have sexual relationship because they are not a married couple. They fear from it and are troubled that what they have done is an immoral act, “Elena begun to weep again, ‘I’ worship you, she sobbed. Nobody ever treated me the way you do. She was kissing his hands. ‘I love you more then I ever loved anyone; she said with final abandon. So their affair really began and Elena consented to live with him” (119–20). Now both see the ‘presence’ of happiness, love and sex in their relationship at present well as in the future, “At night, full of the warmth of the sun they would lie in bed, delighted with each other, caught each time with surprise at how they had forgotten how nice it was, every movement seeming more perfect than the one before. Poor memory is so indispensable to passionate lovers” (124). When they are unconsciously involved in sexual intercourse they forget all things about their past and future. They find perfect happiness in sex or physical relationship. Their night becomes perfect as full of warmth of the sun but the day lacks the pleasure and becomes like the darkest of the night. So they have no complete satisfaction at all. Except sexual pleasure at night they do not get anything in the day. So they feel depressed, fell lonely and often involve in quarrels. They just settle on a compromise to fulfill their sexual desire. Elena says, ‘you can do what you want and I’ll do what I want’” (114). They have no boundary between themselves because they can’t live alone, but they ever understand each other. Eitel is hopeful to Elena and desires more then what she is. Once the desire remains incomplete itself or unfulfilled, their relation ends in break up, “So he could see their affair hopefully. Eitel could see her becoming one day the wise mistress of his home, confident in herself and hat she could give him. So, at the end of fantasy, was his return to the world after all” (126). Eitel desires to have a good family relationship with the wise mistress of his house. He desires more than the reality itself which he fails to achieve. On the other hand, Elena wants to get the full presence of happiness through marriage and legalize the relationship. She says, “It left you because you would not

marry me, it would mean I did not really love you” (127). They only believe in their love affair and sexual relationship which lead them to break- up. They search for yet another supplement for pleasure and satisfaction, “One night, in the contrast to the usual drama with which she announced she would leave him, Elena said quietly that it would be better if they broke up. ‘I could live with an ordinary man. I could be happy with somebody else’, Elena said. Eitel bothers her, ‘of course you could’” (171–72). They can’t see the presence of happiness and satisfaction in their artificial relationship. So Elena wants her partner be replaced by an ordinary man rather than Eitel. Eitel agrees because he is not comfortable with her too. Eitel further says, “Elena, you can’t know the emptiness you have left in the way I live. I don’t exist for you any more” (173). It seems that they are going to depart because they don’t see their relationship will be long lasting yet; they still have sexual relationship. Eitel does not feel her body as attractive and beautiful as it used to be, “One night when they were lying in bed, Eitel noticed that Elena’s thighs were beginning to show dimpled hollows. It was the only blemish on her, and yet it depressed him deeply” (234). Her body does not look beautiful for the sexual satisfaction so he tries to escape from her. Similarly, Elena can’t get anything from him as well as from her past lovers; and she has no hope for better persons in the future. So she wishes to become a nun and escape from the relationship with men who are the main cause for her dissatisfaction, “She wished to become a nun. ‘Are you crazy?’ Eitel asked her ‘you’d make a honey of a nun’, Elena said, ‘a nun is never alone’” (235). Though she has passed her life with many men, lovers and sexual partners, she becomes alone. For her, life of a nun is more comfortable and solitary than the life of pain and sufferings in love, sex and marriage.

Elena and Eitel always are in dual to live the rest of their lives together. They had even a little hope for it but now always talk about breaks up. One day, they go to the night party at Don Bedda who is a film producer as well as a director. He has invited

other guests in the party. Beda introduces his wife Zenlia and other women to them. When Eitel sees Zenlia he becomes so passionate for the fulfillment of his sexual desire with her that, “‘Very beautiful’, Eitel said. At that moment, drunk, close to being sick, he thought she was a beautiful as any woman he had ever seen, and it was such expensive beauty” (242). She arouses the desire for sexual intercourse in him. At that time he thinks that she is an object for ultimate pleasure, “One night on an evening at Beda’s house, Beda had offered him his wife. Eitel had been out with the girl he barely knew and Beda suggested they switch for the night. It had been agreeable to all four and Beda’s wife had said to Eitel, ‘I’d like to see you again’” (242–43). Temporarily his desire is fulfilled by Zenlia as a supplement of his never ending desire. After having sex he more often longs for her. Beda has planned to have sex alternatively among the four for new taste or pleasure at a time—Elena with Beda, Eitel with Zenlia or vice versa. Beda says, “Charley. I tell you we have got to get together. We will all know more when we are done” (243). Beda arouses another desire of extra sexual taste in Eitel. Eitel begins to imagine that kind of sexual pleasure. It seems he could not satisfy himself with repeated secret heterosexual intercourse with Elena as well as other women. Then, his desire is transferred to another for the group sex. For it, he is seeking a suitable time. But the night is uncomfortable for him, “Eitel started to back out of the corner. ‘Not tonight, Don’, he said, ‘really not’. Done, you’ll to excuse,’ he said lamely, but I’m under the weather tonight’” (244). When Beda continues to grin at him, Eitel finally says, “Elena’s complicated” (243). Because Eitel thinks that Elena does not like this kind of sexual intercourse, Beda realizes his apology and suggests him for another suitable night. He questions “you want to make it another night for the four of us?” (244). Eitel supports him and says, “If I change my mind, I’ll give you a ring” (244). Beda Emphasized, “I will call you” (244). After the agreement for another night they depart. In the party of Dorothea, Lulu has come there. Eitel meets Lulu, his ex-wife after a long time. They

frankly share about their present life as well as their past. Both feel very odd and uncomfortable because they are ex-married couple. Lulu says to him about her present affair with Tony. She doesn't have any kind of feeling for their past because she has got Tony now. But Eitel has the feelings to have sex with her:

What are you thinking? Lulu asked sharply.

He could feel himself swaying on the tips of his toes.

'I was past deciding', Eitel said, 'that it's impossible to remember what an ex-wife's body looks like.' (247)

He remembers his past sexual intercourse with her and now he has desire to have again.

Then he forces her to leave the party for sexual intercourse.

'Lulu. Let's leave the party', Eitel said.

'What for?'

'You know exactly what for.'

'And leave Elena behind?'

He hated for asking that, 'yes, and leave Elena behind', he said

Charles, I think you are very attractive tonight, but I want to remain faithful to Tony.'

'Balls.'

You're mean to ask me. I have to learn on thing at a time.

'Let's get out here,' Eitel said, 'I will show you a new encyclopedia.'

Then he was aware of Elena at his shoulder. (247-48)

Lulu has an objection with him; she does not want to remain unfaithful to Tony because she wants a good relationship with him. She thinks Tony is her future life. But Eitel is blind for sexual fulfillment; guided by 'id', he forgets even Elena. He needs another supplement but he comes to be conscious that Elena is with him. When Elena and Eitel depart and go home, Elena said, "'you're coward'. You wanted to say and you didn't. He

sighed, ‘Oh, baby, not you, too’. ‘Oh, sure. Not me to. You wanted to take Lulu somewhere and I ruined it, didn’t I? Why do you lie to me this way?’ I can live with out you. She said, ‘I hate you’” (249). She directly opposes Eitel’s behaviour with Beda and Lulu in the party. She thinks he has no stable thoughts for anything. She even tries to improve him to be a good man but he torturers her more by that. Her belief on him is lost:

‘I want us to be married’, Eitel said. She sat up then and turned her face to his, ‘you see what I thought is that we could go on like this, and when you felt that it was not good anymore, well then, before we broke up we could get married and then we could get divorced. I mean I know much you’d like to get married because you feel that no one cares about you that much, and I want to show you that I do’. ‘You have no reject for me,’ she said in a wooden voice. (250–51)

It seems that Eitel does not understand the feelings of Elena. He wants to marry her but he has no respect to her. He only suffers to have sexual pleasure from others. For her, if marriage is for divorce, it is better to break up the relation before it. She says, “You see, Charley, it’s really not so bad. I can always find another man” (251).

Elena tries to escape from him because she can not get anything from him except pain and suffering. Her fingers tap on a table in a monotonous irritating rhythm. She says, “I’m getting out of here, I am going to pack my stuff. Thank you for a lovely time” (291). But Eitel can not leave her, he says, “You can stay here for a while. It is your place too” (291). Then she says, “It is not my place. It never was” (291). She begins to cry in such a terrible condition then Eitel says, “Elena we can still get married” (291), but Elena does not answer. She does not believe his words. At last, she decides to leave him. In the last abandon, the narrator observes her speech and condition and explains, “Her eyes were doll. This was one time he knew she would not burst in to tears. ‘In fact

you always thought of me as a prostitute', Elena said, 'By you don't know what I think of you. You think I can't live without you. May be I know better'" (293). She challenges Eitel that she can live with others too, and finds another man, Marrion Fye, a pimp.

When Eitel realizes that they have broken their relationship, he feels pain and depression, "He sat drinking, too tired even to pour and ice-cube from the tray, and as it got dark, he sighed to himself not knowing if he were realized that he was free, or if he were more miserable than he had ever been" (293). He feels being alienated in the absence of Elena but at the same time feels free to search another partner as a supplement.

After the end of their relationship, Elena sends a long letter to Eitel in which she exposes the misunderstanding of Eitel to her and she also realizes her mistakes to know the life. Eitel becomes frustrated after reading the letter. He tries to meet her again but he cannot.

She always feels the lack of happiness in her life. She becomes so alien that she attempts to commit suicide but death too does not become an alternative solution for her problems. She wants to continue her life with Marrion. She hopes for the 'presence' of happy life with him but she does not want to marry Marrion because "marriage is only joke to her." She says, "I want to be a call girl" (324). But Marrion rejects and proposes to marry. Elena does not believe in marriage. She thinks marriage is only a fun to man. They regularly engage themselves in sexual intercourse without any commitment. She thinks that Marrion takes her just like a whore because he is a pimp. Therefore she does not see the permanent life but just a sexual supplement in her.

During that period, Elena falls in a street accident and joins hospital. At the hospital, Marrion is under police guard, and they will not admit anyone to see Elena until morning. No one is there to pay the bill at the hospital. Then he calls Eitel by phone and gives all details about Elena's conditions. Then he agrees to come to the hospital to visit Elena. The narrator says, "In the morning Eitel arrived at the hospital before me, and I

met him on the steps as he was coming out from his visit to Elena. 'I'm going to marry her', was the first thing he said to me" (335). Eitel feels heavy without Elena and he decides to marry her and live together which he thinks will be the true solution for him. The narrator says, "They were married a week later on the day she was discharged from the hospital, and I read about it in the newspapers. He took Elena to a town outside the limits of the capital and they had the ceremony thus with Collie Munshin for the best man-which on reflection did not surprise me too greatly" (337). After that marriage, Elena feels that her lost desire to get the 'full presence' of pleasure and satisfaction in her life with Eitel has regained its strength. Now, Eitel is busy in making films and feels melancholy. At that time, though he is old he feels a lack in sexual intercourse. He meets his ex-wife Lulu and they involve in sexual intercourse. Both of them, for the time being, substitute their sexual partners. This time Lulu also plans to divorce her husband Tony:

'Charley' let's make love', Lulu said. 'Right now you look good enough to eat.'

They spend a pleasant quarter of a house, and when we were done. Lulu gave him three quick kiss on his bald spot.

'You're the youngest man I know', she said

He felt comfortable. It was warm in the room and warm next to her body and the tension of the day's work had passed from him. He held Lulu fondly and smiled when she began to know like a kitten.

Lulu stirred in his arm and he sighed for her. (353)

It is their reunion in sexual intercourse after a long time. Though Eitel has a family with Elena and his son Victor but it seems that he has not achieved that complete satisfaction at all. Lulu is now just a supplement for his sexual satisfaction but he does not get full presence of happiness in his life. He always suffers from dissatisfaction and depression.

### **Lulu, Sexual Pleasure and the Chain of Supplements**

After divorce with Eitel, she shifts her life to the narrator, Sergious. At the first meeting, they involve in sexual intercourse after the end of the party. Though Sergious is a best friend of Eitel, she also sees him as good and handsome for the sexual fulfillment. She chooses him in that party and goes out for it, they are just two in a room with full passion. The narrator states:

I'm scared, she would say, and give her mouth me again. She coaxed me forward, she pushed me back, she allowed me a strip her clothing only to huddle away like a bothered virgin. We could have been kids on a coach. My lips were bruised, my body suffered, my fingers were thick and if I succeeded finally in capturing what clothing she wore beneath here evening dress, pushing it behind me in sit like a mad joy stuffing its nest, I still could not inspire Lulu to give up her gown. Though she allowed the most advance forays and even let me for one, two and three beats of the heart, she sat up with a little motion that pushed me away. (98)

Although, they are stranger for each other, they are fully involved in several sexual intercourses. It seems they are searching for new kind of sexual pleasure and satisfaction. After this sexual relationship, their love affair begins. It goes for a long time. Sergious is a supplement of Eitel. Sergious has extra sexual romance with Lulu what he had never in his life before, "I had never known like Lulu, nor had I ever been in such a romance" (131). Then both Lulu and Sergious decide to marry and establish a family but he realizes that, "She had given me the best she could, and I could love her how can there be love without some weakness? All I knew was that I wanted to give her all I had, and it hurt that I had so little" (224). He feels his life is better with Lulu. She loves Sergious, but one thing she dislikes about him is that she wants to see him as a film



actor but on the contrary he wants her to leave the film line. Because of which she rejects his marriage proposal:

‘Lets go away. Give it up. Give up the movies.

May be you can act on the stage, and I’ll do something, I swear I will.’

Lulu began to cry. ‘It’s not possible. Sergious’ she said.

‘It is. You hate the movies. You told me so’.

‘I don’t really hate them’, she said in a little voice.

‘Then we will live where you say. But marry me’

She stirred to nod. This is as just what she had wanted a month ago, but once we want more, we can hardly want less. ‘It could not work, Sergious’.

‘Lets try’, I said at last. (225)

Slowly and gradually their conflict begins to grow then she tries to escape from the life of Sergious to have another man, an actor Tony. Tony is a supplement in the place of sergious to get the ultimate sexual satisfaction. She makes love with Tony before her break up with sergious. She says in a broken voice, “Sergious you have the rights to know I slept with Tony Tanner” (233). Sergious suddenly asks, “But where? When?” To learn that is most important of all. She replied, “In a telephone booth” (223). Saying these words, she becomes helpless with grief. “I will never be anything good”, she weeps in the darkness. Next day she leaves Desert D’or and goes to the Capital. Sergious tries to contact her, “For a week I tried to reach her by telephone but she never answered the message and she was always out.” (233), unable track her down, he goes to complete his book writing.

Her romance with Sergious comes to an end and she desires Tony for sexual satisfaction and as a suitable man to get marry. She finds more things with Tony that Sergious did not have. She even talks about Tony with her ex-husband Eitel in a night

party at once. She says, "I am serious, Charles. There is a lot potentiality in Tony. Underneath, he is more sensitive than you think, and I like that combination in a man" (245-46). She thinks Tony is her ultimate desired subject. Ten days after breaking up with Sergious she married Tony.

Herman Teppis, a reselectable person in the society, also purposes Lulu to a film actor, Teddy Pope. At first both rejects the proposal of Teppis because Teddy Pope is a homosexual. They do not think the possibility of marriage between a heterosexual and a homosexual. Teddy always fear from heterosexual union but once he is convinced by Teppis he accepts and prepares his mind to live a married life. After long conversation Lulu is also convinced that Teddy Pope is a homosexual who has a human sentiments too and she can live with him as a wife. But she rejects to marry him instantly because she has just married with Tony this morning:

'Would you marry Teddy Pope?' Teppis asked.

'I'd even marry Teddy Pope. I want to marry Teddy after the way you explained it, Mr Teppis.'

'I'd marry Teddy in a minute now', Lulu sobbed

'But I can't.'

'Of course you can', Teppis said. 'Why not?'

'Cause I married Tony Tanner this morning.' (272)

She realizes that she can get everything from Teddy Pope, even if he is a homosexual. She can get reputation, love, a good family from him. But she decides to live with Tony for the time being.

After sometime, she feels certain lack in Tony and her satisfaction. When Lulu meets her ex-husband Eitel she expresses her dissatisfaction towards Tony, "Charley, there is a crisis on. Tony's in Trouble. I could kill him" (350). She does not get what she had expected from Tony. Now she feels guilty of rejecting marriage proposal of Teddy.

She is totally dissatisfied with Tony and she needs another man as a supplement. She says, “Charley, there is one trouble. Well you know I was planning to divorce Tony, and now I won’t be able to. Not for a year at least” (353). After breaks up she feels certain lack her sexual pleasure and even her future life without a man appears meaningless. When she meets Eitel after a long time, she becomes so passionate that she makes love with him several times to fulfill her unfulfilled sexual desires. Though they are ex-married couple they have no genuine affection to each other but just a little compromises to share the meaninglessness of their lives with each other.

Because of the inconsistency, supplementarity and unstable nature of the sexual desire Lulu Meyers remains incomplete to achieve ‘pleasure in plenitude’ or ‘full presence’ of satisfaction in her life. She runs after many men in the chain of supplements who remain just a temporary sex partners. No one gives her ‘pleasure in plenitude’ or complete meaning to her life. She always suffers from certain lack in those supplements that become unable to fulfill her intended desires. Though she spent her nice time with many men in her life, she always became alone, suffer from alienation, breaks up and betrayal.

#### **IV. Supplements, Indeterminacy, and the Lack of 'Meaning'**

The prominent figures of the novel have standard life, reputation and are working at Hollywood film industry. They have everything to live a happy life. But they always suffer from certain lack. Their existence depends on time and moment. In every step, the meanings of their lives have been changed. They try to determine the meaning of their lives from the activities like love, sex, marriage and job, but always suffer from the lack. The signified they are searching for always displaces itself in the form of supplements and they are thus caught in the chain of supplementarity.

Both Eitel and Lulu are unable to achieve the true meaning of life as they have expected. Eitel always drifts around New York changing wives, trying different sorts of jobs and professions. He always searches for the ultimate sexual satisfaction and even gets married four times, but always remains dissatisfied and returns to his ex- wife Lulu, only to be betrayed and deserted. Lulu also is a drifter, always in search of established family and a gratified sexual life; engages herself with different men only to realize that she even doesn't know what exactly the words marriage and love mean to her. Elena like Lulu changes her life partner(s) to continue living with one of them. Time passes then she realizes that what she is searching for in different men is/was no longer there. In search of ultimate pleasure and love she dangles circularly and surroundings of New York City. The narrator Sergious, who keeps on watching the circularity of his friends and colleagues, finds himself being caught up in the chain of supplementarities of sexual desires. No partner he had chosen gives him the ultimate 'pleasure' he is searching for. And like others he also becomes a drifter, a social outcast searching for the full presence of meaning in life, despite the knowledge that it can never be achieved.

Meaning of marriage, love, sex, and relationship of the characters is determined by the divorce, hate, dissatisfaction, and break up. They are always searching full sexual satisfaction from those aspects of life but are caught in the chain of supplements and

their own circularity of desires. But if something needs a supplement, there must be something lacking in it in the first place—there must always already be the absence in it. The final meaning or signified of the characters' search for sexual 'satisfaction' or 'pleasure in plenitude' is always postponed and delayed because they could never go beyond the circular sexual movement within themselves. They don't really have a stable and coherent identity because in fact they are multiple and fragmented, consisting of number of beliefs, desires fears, anxieties and intentions. Since every signifier consists of and produces more signifiers in a never ending deferral, or postponement of meaning, everything they have done to achieve the intended meaning in their life which is always postponed. As a result they suffer from alienation, break ups in relationships and betrayals.

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