

Introduction

A Skilled Practitioner at Composition

The present thesis has explored the de-mystification and subversion of Jewish tradition through Philip Roth's works. The novels throw light on the Jewish American culture and the significant elements that formed the basis for the evolution of its character. The present work has shown how Roth's characters are repeatedly unsettled and disturbed rather than stabilized by the choices of identification they make, and by their evolutions within the multidimensional space of ethnic cultural constructs. The texts are viewed as the works that conflate fiction and non-fiction or demonstrate the fictionality of all realistic narrative descriptions in compliance with distinguished postmodernist theories. Moreover, the texts represent a series of diverse methods for the author to transform his own life into written form. A creative art is revealed in both fictional and non-fictional writings.

Jewish American Literature holds an important place in the literary history of the United States. The Jewish writers and scholars appeared in American literature mainly after the great immigration of 1881-1924. However, many Jewish writers started showing their appearances in American literature in the 1920s and 1930s, but the major contemporary Jewish writers made a mark only in the 1940s. It was mainly between 1945 and 1975 that the Jewish writers in America came forward as producers and representatives for an influential modern literature.

Jews had survived under the rule of other people for many centuries, both in the Land of Israel and when they were expelled in Europe, Africa, Asia, and South America. They for a short period took pleasure in phases of tolerance, endurance, wealth, and quasi-autonomy, but repeatedly had to suffer oppression, domination, poverty, deprivation, brutality and violence. The talents of the Jewish people are extraordinarily and remarkably clear in the areas of literature, ethnicity and culture. In reality, it is very difficult to imagine these fields in the twentieth century without Jewish artists and authors. Out of the seven American Nobel Laureates in literature since the end of the Second World War, two of them are Jews-Saul Bellow and Isaac Bashevis Singer.

Ever since 1654, the presence of Jewish people in America is continuous as groups from Portugal and Spain came as colonists. Though the major Jewish migration took place in the century when around 2.5 million Jews were estimated to be migrated

from the Eastern Europe. The Jews in America form one of the important parts in the multi-cultural mixture of the United States constituting more than two percent of the American population. The Jewish population is divided into different groups like Jews by Religion, which includes those who pursue Judaism as their religion. Then there are ethnic Jews who declare themselves as Jews but do not have any religious inclinations. There also exists Jews by Choice, which either are transformed into Judaism or assert to be Jewish individually. The ideological point of reference characterizes people in terms of religious self and presents information about ethnic compatibility of Jews in the American world.

In the course of the century, a new aspect of Judaism was aroused called as Reform Judaism, originally developed in Germany. This Reform Judaism mainly implies that Jewish traditions should be modernized to certain degree and made compatible with surrounding culture, intermediate concept of Orthodox Judaism and also with secular Judaism. This Reform movement in the United States had its roots in Charleston, South Carolina, that quickly developed into a national happening and therefore became the dominant belief system of American Jews of that time. Major American figures of this movement were Rabbi Isaac Mayer Wise, David Philipson and Kaufmann Kohler. This movement rejected the biblical beliefs of Jews being in exile and remained as the leading aspect of American Judaism until the 1880s, when a new movement of Jewish immigration changed the Jewish American background greatly. The Jews staying in America until 1880 were generally native-born Jews who came from Middle or Eastern European countries, but culturally they were more of Protestant than Jewish, outside of Yiddish ethnicity.

The assimilation of Jews in American society was a very slow and distressing course. Although American Jews were ultimately accepted in the forefront of American culture, but the way was met with a lot of struggle. There were very less prominent and famous Jewish American writers at the beginning of the twentieth century. The Jewish immigrants tried to be assimilated in this new environment at the stake of their original identity. Nathaniel West, the first great Jewish American author, an atheist and son of Russian Jewish immigrants, has changed his name from Nathan Weinstein and wrote

about those characters that were not Jewish. He hid his Judaism so that he is accepted by American tradition. Whereas other writers like F. Scott Fitzgerald and Ernest Hemingway concerned their works with Jewish characters, but were often treated with a lot of dislike and disrespect. The dominance of Anti-Semitism in American culture was established in the arrogance of literary world, until so a number of Jewish writers achieved inarguable greatness. If one looks at the assimilation of the Jews in American life, it is observed that they were taken as useless and unwanted and it is only because of desire to succeed that they forced their way to the top of every area of American life.

The education has played an important part since eras, as it became a key factor for the survival of the Jews all around the world. In spite of dispersal and spreading, the Jews belonging to ancient times are connected to each other with the core of ethnic beliefs and conventions, internal feeling of uniformity and equality, with calmness that helped them to deal with the antagonistic and aggressive world. The constant and determined effort for endurance and stabilization of the Jews, paved a method for various revolutionary and innovative accomplishments in the structure of western people and society.

The very first stage in the education of Jews was the middle period as well as the biblical period when the holy books became essential and necessary tools of education for children. The holy book of Jews 'Torah' has taught the essence of education. The biblical directions and instructions were put forth to be carried out. In the biblical period, learning as well as teaching were parts of religion and had strong basis in it. The second part in Jewish education is the Talmudic era. The teachings of this era indicate a longing for returning to the motherland.

Further, the development of the important script of Rabbinic Judaism, 'Talmud' indicates the connection of Jews to their beliefs. The sacred book 'Torah' became a transferable homeland in expulsion with Talmud that function as a barrier around it. During the period of dispersal, the Jewish people were more associated with the book rather than to their native land and this became a significant basis for the fusion and preservation of their own culture and ethnicity. The middle age of the Jews came to an ending through the end of the Enlightenment in Europe. In this period, the Jews were

broadly detached all through the Western world and later they separated themselves in their confined societies. This emerged out as the intermediary phase for the Jewish people who are tattered between the reminiscences of the celebrated past and a Messianic faith of brilliant forthcoming times, which leads towards a fictional, an imaginary world.

It is seen that orthodoxy played an important part in the Jewish American fiction and the works of most of the writers were engrossed with it. Like in Abraham Cahan's *The Rise of David Levinsky* (1917) and Anzia Yezierska's *The Bread Givers* (1925), the protagonists continue to view orthodoxy as the standard of true Jewish existence. Moreover, the texts written during eighties support neo-orthodoxy, that deals with effect of feminism on Judaism. These works also are related to other subject matters like the themes of encouraging depiction of rabbis, and scholarly Jews. An important characteristic of such works of fiction is to inform the Jewish society of their forgotten traditions by giving detailed information about their rituals. The classical tale of Cynthia Ozick's, *The Pagan Rabbi and Other Stories* (1983), expresses the unbridgeable gap between Hebraic and Hellenistic cultural examples.

The industrial revolution in Europe had a reflective influence on the Jewish culture. With time, the Jewish learning opened the doors for new feeling and absorption, thus declining the old holy and spiritual, conventional and established ethnicity and traditions. Afterward the Jewish people began to travel to capitalist nations and city areas directing towards proletarianization. This proletarianization as well as the related powers of communism, trade unionism destabilized the long-established religious Jewish tradition.

It was between 1945 and 1965 that the American Literature went through huge change, in which the Jewish thinkers, novelists, and critics play a very important part. With the coming of European learning, there came a change and the American Literature was completely Europeanized. The two significant journals of Jews *Partisan Review* and *Commentary* turn out to be the means of new receptivity. Jews thus became the individuals of all textual structures, and it is only because of their enlightenment. Such development and upgrading of the Jews in America helped them to enter into the creative and rational sphere. The new compositions, with the intellectual relocation, provided a

latest strength and quality that was dissimilar to the Jewish writings created before the World War II.

Many Jewish American writers were shifting their stress from the restrictions of their cultural societies to the greater areas of the national ethnicity. Not like earlier writers such as Abraham Cahan, Henry Roth, Anzia Yeziarska, Michael Gold, and Sholem Asch, all these second and third generation Jewish authors connected themselves not so much with the Eastern European ideas of the Lower East Side but also to the modern culture principles of Hollywood and Disney World. Similarly, the literary fashion during the period was migrated in the same style. All the twentieth century Jewish American writers had certainly established an impressive and astounding canonical existence.

Later in the eighties Jewish American fiction struggles with the Jewish problem. It involves a strong theological imagination as the writers deal with classical texts and traditional figures. The era of eighties is related to the Jewish identity, and its authenticity. This period include various writers like Cynthia Ozick, Chaim Potok, Hugh Nissenson, and Anne Roiphe, Allegra Goodman, Rhoda Lerman, and Steve Stern. The writings of these authors deal with Holocaust and the tales of children of survivors. They explore the importance of being Jewish from the Jewish viewpoint rather than from that of American perspective. They discuss about the Jewish family relations, about Israel, and role of history. They also include search for redemption, significance of covenant, and human encounter with divinity.

The Jewish American work of fiction has been described in number of definitions based on writer's origin. Most probably, such works of fiction depict Jews who have experienced such problems in their life, which are significant, but not wholly theirs. These difficulties and troubles refer to disbelieve and distrust about religious faith and ideas, generational opinions, assimilation and adjustment into the American way of life. These problems later give way to a unified and interconnected, repeated set of amazing and extraordinary settings. The largely arguable and uncertain difficulty that Jewish-American text presents is the Jewish ethnic, cultural and religious assimilation. The acculturation of Jews cannot in reality be achieved by power and strength. Another

different and typical element of Jewish-American novel is the psychology of Jewish fictional works. This literature tries to discover the significance; it tries to fill up the emptiness that goes along with the fast modification and the loss of traditional principles and morals and significance that existed in small Jewish village life.

The era 1940s and 1950s was pronounced as the entry of Jewish Americans into the typical American literature. After suffering the decades of anti-Semitism, and then observing the World War II and the Shoah, the Jewish American authors actually depicted immense obsession about the issues of Judaism in the American perspective and about the devotion and faithfulness for Jewish values. The period of late 1930s to the early times of 1950s can be perceived as the time of change and is related to how these Jews in America distinguish themselves. All that they indicate in their works is just what Wade says, “first, there is a reassessment of the 1930s and of ideological change; then Saul Bellow initiates a defined way of placing Jewishness within urban culture, and finally, a ‘new wave’ arrives with the early work of Philip Roth” (51). Thus, various intellectuals acknowledge the era of 1950s as the Jewish decade of American literature. There originated many important authors who shaped the standards of the second half of the 20th century:

Themes of anti-Semitism the workplace, Jewish social life, intellectual life in America’s universities, religious crisis, assimilation, the Jewish humanistic legacy, the disappearance of Yiddishkeit, political disillusionment, retreat into the private realm, consumerism, McCarthyism, black/Jewish race relations, and a host of related topics preoccupy these writers... These second generation children of immigrants were writers whose notes lay in the moment of the Great Depression, the spiritual devastation of World War II, the Shoah, and the establishment of the fledging state of Israel in 1948. (Cronin/Berher 20)

The era has experienced an advantage of Jewish culture over and against American mainstream tradition. It has observed the clear example of shifting effects of postmodernism, that is amazingly been presented by the new group of Jewish American women as well as some male writers who all continue to discover the results of the

Holocaust as well as of Jewish identity by making use of allegories, symbols and language of the Jewish tradition, and its religion and theology.

Apart from male writers, the Jewish American women writers also discussed about Holocaust in their works. Norma Rosen, a Jewish-American writer stressed Holocaust in her texts. But later she declared not to invent Holocaust scenes as it might add more pain. In one of her works *Touching Evil*, a Gentile woman attempts to understand and sympathize with the victims of anti-Semitism.

Anti-Semitism was coined in Western Europe in 1870. The term gradually came into usage in the United States but later some of the American Jews wished to be referred as an Israelite or Hebrew rather than a Jew. Here the victimized Jew saw himself as a sufferer of religious discrimination. The Jews were first targeted in the European countries. The Nazis were the biggest enemy of the Jews. They became the enemies of Jews. Many political anthropologists, sociologists, and the historians exposed the horrible Nazi racialism.

During the contemporary times in America, anti-Semitism continued. There developed an anger and hatredness towards Christianity, which became a base for Anti-Semitism. Jews were seen as targets during economic crisis, social and national stress. Jews were treated as the ones who are unfamiliar and strange. Later the Great Depression, the Civil War and the World War II augmented the anti-Jewish behavior. But later a change came in the American society where some started supporting the civil rights movement. Slowly and slowly, anti-Semitism became unfashionable. By the end of 1962, the tradition of constraining Jews from resorts of Americans almost ended, thus giving a new hope to them.

The nation and the Promised Land are of great significance to the Jewish society, as they have continuously faced challenges throughout their history to attain it. The Jewish people living in America and in other countries have their nationalistic attitudes. The Zionists openly confess that it is misfortune not to have a country of their own. They struggle to correct the misfortune. For them it is a natural problem and thus sticks to territorial separation to preserve their culture. Wherever they live, with or without a

specific region they remain as a culture-within-a-culture. The Jewish culture appears as an obstruction to the host culture and they take it as a parasite, a problem for the normal functioning.

History observed the cruelty, killing, bloodshed, and mercilessness of the anti-Semitic movement, for over many years. Here holocaust became a synonym for genocide in order to refer to the mass murder of Jews. A number of people including children were killed. The Holocaust stands as an allegory of radical evil. Holocaust is termed as Shoah in Hebrew. It is recognized as a period of killing and brutal action against Jews by Hitler and the Nazi Party. This dreadful incident disturbed the entire world with horrific murder and violence. It led to the deaths of nearly six million people. This period marked as one of the cruelest age the modern times could ever witness.

The main predicament for the writers was dealing with the theme of the Holocaust. The leaving out of the subject could only mean to exclude the major happening of the twentieth century. There are some novels that deal with anti-Semitism like Miller's *Focus* (1945), Bellow's *The Victim* (1948), and Malamud's *The Assistant* (1957). The wartime destiny of European Jewry was dealt in Jerzy Kosinski's *The Painted Bird* (1965) and Bellow's *Mr. Sammler's Planet* (1970).

Likewise, in the Jewish fiction, Zionism too occupies very important place. It has been derived from the word 'Zion' that refers to Jerusalem, the holy city of Jews and Christians. According to the Holy Bible, Israel is considered as a promised land of God, a promise made to Moses. The book of Exodus in Bible describes the freedom of God's special people from slavery to the Promised Land, i.e. the land of Zion. The postwar decades witnessed the dangers of anti-Semitism shifting the attention to Zionism and Israel. It became a dynamic force demonstrating an unerring instinct for what lies at the center of Jewish sensibility.

The anti-Semitic movement was so powerful that Jews were dispersed throughout the world and were disconnected for some time to their ancestral homeland. They were isolated in different parts of the world without any security and there was a need to go back to their homeland in order to preserve their culture, identity, and freedom. The

Zionist movement began in Europe by the numerous groups promoting the national resettlement of the Jews in their ancestral homeland of Israel. Zionism was basically established with the goal of creating a separate Jewish state. Zionism as a national revival movement emerged in the late 19th century in Central and Eastern Europe advocating the need for Jews to return to Israel, as Mazur says:

Zionism is the Jewish national movement of rebirth and renewal in the land of Israel - the historical birthplace of the Jewish people. The yearning to return to Zion, the biblical term for both the Land of Israel and Jerusalem, has been the cornerstone of Jewish religious life since the Jewish exile from the land two thousand years ago, and is embedded in Jewish prayer, ritual, literature and culture. (10)

The ideology of Zionism concentrated on philanthropy and spoke very less about rewriting of the Jewish people, of relocation in Israel with a non-nationalistic ideology, away from physical danger and anti-Semitism.

The American fiction in the post Second World War times was marked by an emergence of an important trend. The racial and cultural differences have come to fill the place in earlier times, which was enjoyed by regionalism. There were writers of the First World War like Scott Fitzgerald and Sinclair Lewis, who came out of that disagreement and clashes with an intense disappointment and disillusionment. However, after the World War II, the writers with no such delusions felt a feeling of confusion, chaos and uncertainty. A number of writers who belong to the times of post-war like Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac relate themselves with the theme of quest of the divided individual self for an identity.

When the Jewish American literature began to flourish at the very beginning of the 20th century, the most important themes in the works were the sufferings due to dispersal, fragmentation, migration, absorption and the issues related to redefining identity. The most significant and influential Jewish writer of the early twentieth century was Abraham Cahan. However, he speaks Jewish much better than English, but he was successful in publishing a book in English in 1917- *The Chosen People and The Rise of*

David Levinsky. It has been called as the most important novel that was written by a Jewish immigrant. In it, the character Levinsky becomes an American millionaire after sacrificing his Jewish tradition and upon becoming first painstaking and careful secularist. He depicts in his novel the worthlessness of Levinsky's life in spite of his rise to money and recognition. He illustrates the huge tension and strain that is generated by people who are caught between the Jewish culture and American modernity and then had to deal with this doubleness and internal disturbance. Moreover, the matters of assimilation as well as acculturation became the major ideas for Jewish American authors of the late 19th and early 20th century. Though the rise of Davis Lewinsky was celebrated with a great achievement at the very beginning of the 20th century, American writers with Jewish history represent a minority among other American authors.

During 50s and 60s, various Jewish American authors began to write particularly from the viewpoint of Jewish characters. The significant and revolutionary works of contemporary American culture are creations of Jewish American experience and understanding. Some of these significant works are: in drama we have Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*, David Mamet's *American Buffalo*, Lillian Hellman's *The Children's Hour*; then in film, can be included Woody Allen's *Annie Hall* and Steven Spielberg's *E.T.*; further in poetry, Adrienne Rich's *Diving into the Wreck* and Allen Ginsberg's *Howl*. In fiction, important authors include Gertrude Stein's *Three Lives*, Philip Roth's *Goodebye Columbus*, Saul Bellow's *Herzog*, Nathaneal West's *Miss Lonely Hearts*, Paul Auster's *New York Trilogy*, and the stories of Cynthia Ozick and Grace Paley. All these works have significant advantage, but they also ask queries that are appropriate until present day. The Jews are now no longer considered as distinct from the typical American life as they are there in all areas of American society.

The postmodern era has experienced a benefit of Jewish culture over and against American mainstream tradition. It has observed the effects of postmodernism, that is remarkably been reflected by the new group of Jewish American writers who all continue to discover the results of the Holocaust and of Jewish identity by making use of allegories, symbols and language of the Jewish tradition, and its religion and theology. Stephan Wade argues in reference to postmodernism:

If postmodernism means anything, then it must indicate the culture of confusing choice. We are able to choose allegiances and denials as well as choosing minority or majority views in a pluralistic world. Jewish-American writing has an important part to play in the question of how the literature of a global village deals with minority voices. (11)

Andrew Furman believed in the future of Jewish American Literature. He is an author of a book *Contemporary Jewish American Writers and the Multicultural Dilemma: The Return of the Exiled* (2000). In his work, he suggests that a renaissance in Jewish American Literature is not a recovery of traditional Judaism, but transformation of it, as contemporary Jews in America explore through their works ways of establishing a meaningful Jewish ethos in a secular country. He is fascinated with potential of young Jewish-American writers.

Other contemporary writers like Thomas Pynchon, Joseph Heller, J.D. Salinger, Bernard Malamud, and Kurt Vonnegut, Jr. have created such characters in their works that seem to be working outside the influence of society. They are typical victim of dehumanizing social forces. Instead of vigorous commitment in the social development with an examination to deal with the outer strengths to their benefit, the characters are found to be wandering inertly in a social vacuum. The knowledge and understanding of withdrawal from society is more distressing and intense in the postwar Jewish American fiction. The second-generation immigrants to America have observed the hysterical struggle of their parents in the new world in order to fulfill the cherished American fantasy of success. Due to racial, cultural and historical setting, their parents had to face different conflicts in this new land. The earlier Jewish writers of this immigrant generation were worried more about the matters of economic and communal safety. However, later after the Second World War the intellectuals who belonged to the Jewish background had started distributing the American success and thus establishing themselves in the new way of life.

The turning feature in the past of the Jews and the idea of changing settlement, impermanence and division is vital to the appreciation and consideration of the Jewish American literature. As the immigrants were literate as well as ambitious, thus the huge

arrival of these Jews introduced certain Yiddish ethnicity and language into majority of American culture. These Jews ultimately influenced newspaper, entertainment, radio, movie, and the literary culture in America. The young authors are engaged in the postmodernistic approach while analyzing the present times. They deal with the themes of assimilation, acculturation, identity crisis, inner conflicts, subverting traditions and with duality that exists in Jewish American literature.

Nearly all works that were written on the history of Jewish American literature and authors appear to begin with this wave of new migrants. Allen Guttman tries to find out the reasons where he claims that:

In the first place, approximately 90 percent of the Jewish population of the United States at the present moment is made up of this group and its descendents. In the second place, American Jews have made their major contributions to American literature since the arrival of the 'new immigrants' from Eastern Europe. (13)

The young and new generation of Jewish American writers is gaining interest in the modifications and transformations in America's particular descriptions of modernity and also in some of the important features of postmodernism like development in communication, disturbances in the personal life, secular as well as religious pluralism, challenges to stability and power and in addition the mass media. The young authors are engaged in the postmodernistic approach while analyzing the present times. They deal with the themes of assimilation, acculturation, identity crisis, inner conflicts and with duality that exists in Jewish American literature, as Wade said:

This is perhaps the most exciting and rewarding time to study the literature of Jewish-Americans. As each generation of immigrants has moved further into assimilated American life, the more the deeper and wider religious and political meanings of being Jewish have been preserved and studied. (3)

Jewish American writing has found the renewal and force through the historical experience of their ancestors, though a new attitude has been stressed in Jewish American literature.

The three writers Bernard Malamud, Saul Bellow and Philip Roth mark a distinguished achievement in the field of American Jewish Literature. This trio received esteem and important awards in the area of literature. They occupied a major place in American letters, motivating significance of in the American Jewish novel. Novel gave an incomparable choice to the writers to demonstrate their thoughts, interests, passions, styles, and accomplishments. The mid-century Jewish writers presented literary significance, resourcefulness, and superiority in developing their themes and fictional voices. The fictional ways of these writers expand and widen ahead of the narrow restrictions of Jewish feeling to the universal human situation. The protagonists in their fictional works are as much a sufferer of an unknown and unfamiliar opposed culture as their own foolishness and apprehensions. Saul Bellow's Leventhal, Bernard Malamud's Harry, and Philip Roth's Sabbath- all symbolize the typical Jewish hero, described by their feelings of ethical righteousness, worldly breakdown, extreme pains and meaningless behavior.

There were other writers with popular success like Leon Uris, Herman Wouk, and Chaim Potok who stressed on various important issues like World War II, Holocaust, rebirth of Israel, the battles fought in defense of the Jewish state, challenges faced by Jews with the modern culture. The compositions of these authors became popular and in particular, *Exodus* (1958) by Leon Uris received great appreciation, in which the Israeli is portrayed with a positive image more than any other American work of fiction.

The main aim of this thesis is to understand Jewish-American society, Jewish tradition and its de-mystification and subversion through the lens of Philip Roth's Zuckerman novels. The compositions of Philip Roth are no doubt outstanding and brilliant examples of denial of traditional and established Judaism. Just like the non-Jewish contemporaries as well as the predecessors, the Jewish writers in the last half of the twentieth century have contributed a great arrangement to the secularization of Jewish and American life. Philip Roth has also shown his inclination to open his fiction to the

challenges of Israel, dealing with the themes of Zionism and Israel in his novels. His novels present the enormity of the American Jewish trouble in relation to Israel and Arab conflict over the Promised Land. His works mark a new current in Jewish American fiction. The concept of 'the Promised Land' has conflicting versions with some claiming the holy land of Israel as the Promised Land and the other claiming America to be their promised land.

A number of Jewish writers, along with Roth, opposed their Jewish heritage and treated it with contempt, disdain and slander. Roth, of course, did to the Jewish world what non-Jewish writers had already done to the Christian world for a century. He secularized the sacred, ridiculed the divine. Further, he insulted the tradition and he vulgarized his "in-group." Thus, Roth, and so many other Jewish - American writers, contributed mightily, not only to the secularization of Judaism and America in general, but also to the de-mystification and subversion of the Jewish tradition. This means that both for non-Jews and for Americans of Jewish origins who had left the tradition behind, Roth provides insight into 20th and 21st century Jewish life as it is lived each day. He explains what is important to contemporary American Jews. He shows that Judaism is not one of the important ideas in the lives of American Jews but that Jews have substituted membership in clubs and organizations for membership in synagogues.

Philip Roth is an established Jewish-American author whose work is considered both provoking in its truthfulness and merciless in the projection of the moral frailties of its character. Roth's fiction is largely conceived with an effort to acknowledge the Jewish presence in the American society and it depicts the Jewish distress attached to either assimilation or isolation from the major society. Therefore, a thorough knowledge of Roth's Jewish background is in many respects capable of explaining his major and fundamental motivations for writing about Jewish issues and in particular about Jews themselves. Philip Roth is a Jew and this presumption largely defines the implication of his compositions. In addition, it is necessary to classify Philip Roth in terms of the development of American literary thought. Philip Roth belongs to the period of the 1950s and 1960s, which was significant for the rise of minorities and violence, for the United States' participation in Korean War, for the rise of the youth culture, the counter-culture

and domestic disorder in general. The cultural revolution of the time provided Roth with enough material to outline some of the most problematic aspects of the American society. The problems are nonetheless only illustrative of the situation in the United States and they primarily depict and describe the Jewish-American reality.

Philip Roth was born in 1933 in Newark, New Jersey. His grandparents from father's side were immigrants from Austria-Hungary and his mother was a Jewish-American citizen. Young Roth attended Weequahic High School in Newark and subsequently went to Newark College at Rutgers University. Between 1951 and 1954, he was studying at Bucknell University where he took his BA in English. In 1955, Roth took his MA at the University of Chicago and was enlisted in the army, where he worked in the Public Information Office in Washington. Roth was released from the army service in 1956 and then returned back to Chicago. Later he took a PhD while teaching in the same University.

Roth has described himself as:

A good, responsible, well-behaved boy, controlled rather willingly by the social regulations of the self-conscious and orderly lower-middle-class neighborhood where I had been raised, and mildly constrained still by the taboos that had filtered down to me, in attenuated form, from the religious orthodoxy of my immigrant grandparents. (RMAO 3-4)

As regards such an evaluation of his personal qualities framing his boyhood, Roth became more self-aware during the course of his college studies. At some specific and individual moments Hermione Lee said that Roth felt “embarrassedly oscillating between high seriousness and vaudeville knockabout, feeling fundamentally ill-at-ease in, and at odds with’ both his childhood and adult environment” (24). The high seriousness and burlesque knockabout is in many respects significant for Roth's entire literary career. In actual he was describing the self-consciousness of the contemporary Jewish-American author.

Most of his works contain memoirs of his childhood days spent in the Weequahic neighborhood of Newark, New Jersey. Roth worked at the University of Iowa and

Princeton University where he taught creative writing and continued his career at the University of Pennsylvania. He met Saul Bellow, a leading novelist, and also Margaret Martinson in Chicago. Later he got married to Margaret Martinson who became his first wife. However, the relationship did not last long and they had to part ways. The separation with Martinson and her death had a profound impact on his literary output. Martinson became an inspiration for the female characters in most of Roth's works, such as Lucy Nelson in *When She was Good*, and Maureen Tarnopol in *My Life As a Man*.

He is considered as one of the best-known and widely acclaimed American novelists. His different works have been published for more than forty years and they have always been a subject of discussion and extensive research. In addition, Philip Roth is a Jewish author, which actually provides his works with a significant and very distinguishing element of expression. He is an author of twenty-seven books. Even though the general thematic course of his novels quite differs, there is nonetheless the prevailing sense of Jewishness in all of Roth's compositions. Ever since the first book, *Goodbye, Columbus* and *Five Short Stories*, Philip Roth has been writing about American Jews who encounter various difficulties while trying to integrate and assimilate either culturally or ethnically within the major American society. Despite Roth's effort to present American Jewry honestly and as much as possible, objectively there has always been a controversy associated with the perception of his books due to Roth's unflattering portrayal of Jews. Philip Roth has been constantly writing about Jews as ordinary people, which stands elementally far from writing about them as the members of an unobserved and disturbed minority.

In different ways, Roth fulfills the definition of a Jewish American novel, but on the other hand creates an entirely diverse, yet unclassified idea of Jewish-American novel. There are plenty of definitions, which characterize the Jewish-American novel more or less based on authors' origin. Presumably, such novel describes Jews who experience various problems, which are largely, but not wholly theirs. The problems refer to doubts about religion, generation disagreements, and assimilation into the American society. All these troubles consequently yield an interconnected, constant set of dramatic conditions. Moreover, a Jewish family has an important role in the Jewish-American

novel. The urban American environment creates another theme for the Jewish-American novel. The protagonists are challenged by collective attitudes of enclosed urban or suburban Jewish communities. Philip Roth describes a suburban community in the short story *Eli, the Fanatic*. The story generates aggressive character Eli who opposes the will of the Jewish majority, even though the majority might be a family. The most vague and doubtful problem presented by the Jewish-American novel is the Jewish with both cultural and religious combination. The acculturation of Jews cannot be indeed achieved by force and he discusses about this acculturation by means of economic and social progress in his story *Goodbye, Columbus*.

The utmost significance of Roth's Jewishness is emphasized by his childhood experience, which determined his honest but not strict or orthodox approach to Jewishness. Roth attended Hebrew School on Sunday afternoons but as he admitted he did not come from the school mainly enlightened, nor had his sense of the holy being much developed. A logical presumption of the contribution of the Hebrew School to the definition of Jewish identity of its students was mistaken owing to the systematic Americanization of the entire Jewry. The vague difference made it possible, specifically for Roth, to diminish the awareness of his racial exclusivity, his racial status, and to literally open eyes and see through all the questions of faith, morality and religious hypocrisy, which inevitably define ethnic minorities and its ethnic identity.

Roth's motivations for his savage liveliness, which is reflected in his works, are firmly set in his experience of being the member of the American ethnic minority. One of his greatest inspirations is the memory of the 1940s and 1950s, when an atmosphere of an ethical significance was strictly defined by moral and ethnic boundaries. He has described one of the major subjects of his novels as "individuals struggling to get through and beyond the boundaries that seem to be set down for them" (Lee 19). The implied boundaries are particularly signifying for the Jewish identity, which was still derived from old Jewish qualities and traditions, and it had almost nothing in common with the new Jewish generations. However, Roth does not attempt to resist the tradition or the old principles but he definitely wants to reveal its established misinterpretations as applied

within the American society and the American Jewry. Jewishness recognized as an intellectual resource works perfectly well in cooperation with a gifted author.

Moreover, this intellectual resource used in Roth's fiction influences the perception of the work and it is also beyond dispute that the Jewish features of Roth's compositions are both depreciated and acclaimed. Readers who are quite negative to Roth's portrayals of Jewish community are basically concerned with lack of respect for traditional values in the narrative line of his books. Thus, the readership seems to have a propensity for claims that Roth disapproves of Jewish folks. He has refused the idea that he as a writer and a Jew would disapprove of the American Jewry and he quite radically stands against such a stern opinion by saying:

What readers have taken to be my disapproval of the lives lived by Jews seems to have to do more with their own moral perspective than with the one they would ascribe to me: at times they see wickedness where I myself had seen energy or courage or spontaneity; they are ashamed of what I see no reason to be ashamed of, and defensive where there is no cause for defense. (RMAO 159)

As a novelist, Roth is also aware of the problematic aspects of his works. He does not provoke without a purpose. Roth understands that his readers share certain preoccupation with his truthfulness as he says in *Reading Myself and Others* that: "I had informed on the Jews. I had told the Gentiles what apparently it would otherwise have been possible to keep secret from them: that the perils of human nature afflict the members of our minority" (161). However, eventually he repels any doubts about him disapproving of Jews by uttering that "fiction is not written to affirm the principles and beliefs that everybody seems to hold, nor does it seek to guarantee the appropriateness of our feelings" (RMAO 151).

Being a second-generation Jewish writer, Roth searches for a post-religious identity. His works earned critical acclaim along with broad popularity. They discuss many questionable places in the harsh and unfriendly world. The writer has an incredible talent of looking into the perceptions of human nature. His writings reflect pain,

suffering, and predicament of the social life. Roth's success principally depends on the ability to articulate profound issues like faith, marriage and family. As a novelist, he was able to differentiate between truth and fancy of American Jewish life. His works explored problems of contemporary Jewish life.

A gifted writer, he implements wit with other elements of satire and a wicked sense of humor. His comic novels bring out the seriousness of life with the help of satire and explore moral complications of the contemporary world. In order to deal with the violent, tumultuous and the cruel twentieth century, the writer intertwined art, desire, and the moral imagination in his characters. The works of Roth explore and cross-examine the modern history. Psychoanalysis becomes an important tool in his novels to uncover the flaws of Jewish values and customs. An outsider plays a vital role in his fiction as it brings out the Jew in him. He is able to present the heart and mind of the cultural group and the waves that regenerates its inner soul.

A critical review of Philip Roth's works including his short stories, plays and novels presents a kaleidoscope of diversified opinions. He is widely admired by the critics for his works. All the views incorporated in the published scholarship on Philip Roth illustrate the view that Philip Roth has been critically acclaimed as a writer with a depth of vision and has unparalleled skill. Reviewers have praised Philip Roth's ability to portray the lives of Jewish people. Roth's works, especially his satiric portraits of Jewish life, have inspired a considerable amount of critical debate. But his works always came out as strong assertion, maintaining that Roth is a deeply moral writer, that his books are fantastically humorous, even if darkly so, and the satires, however written in Jewish perception, present imperfections of American life.

Elizabeth Hardwick in 1962 gave a review of Philip Roth's novel *Letting Go*. Elizabeth considered it a very interesting novel. Here at first one thinks of Malamud's *A New Life*. But his work is a rich book, full of incident, and genuinely novelistic complications. Roth reminds one a bit of Saul Bellow in this book, even if he is less intellectual and experimental. The dialogue is unusually good and *Letting Go* seems in every way a book worthy of Roth's first promise.

Arnold H. Lubasch in an article "Philip Roth Shakes Weequahic High" (1969) provided the focus for the fiction of Philip Roth, the novelist who evokes his era at Weequahic High School in the highly acclaimed *Portnoy's Complaint*. Besides identifying Weequahic High School by name, the novel specifies such sites as the Empire Burlesque, the Weequahic Diner, the Newark Museum and Irvington Park, all local landmarks that helped shape the youth of the real Roth and the fictional Portnoy, both graduates of Weequahic class of "50."

Further, Roth enjoyed critical acclaim and popularity for his book *Reading Myself and Others* (1975). It is an anthology of essays, interviews and criticism by the author Philip Roth. The first half of the book is built mainly upon Roth's assessment of his own published works at the time of the anthology's publication. The second half of the volume consists of essays and introductions by Roth about other authors. Roth even conducts a self-interview about the origins and intentions of his work.

Bernard F. Rodgers's Twayne study of *Philip Roth* (1978) presents Philip Roth as unquestionably one of the major literary voices of time, one who has combined critical acclaim with a wide readership. Roth's oeuvre has expanded considerably both in bulk and in range, with the publication of such major works as *The Ghost Writer*, *The Counterlife*, and *Patrimony*.

Judith Paterson Jones and Guinevera A. Nance in *Philip Roth* (1981) give a detailed analysis of Philip Roth's texts as well as of short stories. Further, it is accompanied by a discussion on how he deals with the fame and controversy that surrounded his career.

Hermione Lee in *Philip Roth (Routledge Revivals)* (1982) presents full-length study of Philip Roth as a major twentieth-century writer. As well as setting, he also talks about Jewish-American writing and Jewish-American families and twentieth-century American politics. Lee explores the characteristic paradoxes in Roth: self-disgust and self-consciousness, restraint and letting go, nausea and appetite, energy and frustration, stylishness and vulgarity, surrealism and the mundane. Roth is presented as a highly literary and referential character and an assessment is made of the conflicting influences

on his work of Kafka, Checkov, Gogol, Henry James, Melville and Henry Youngman, a Jewish nightclub and Vaudeville comic.

Jay L. Halio in his work *Philip Roth Revisited* (1992) talks about entirely new look of Philip Roth. It interprets Roth as fundamentally a comic writer in the tradition of that great "sit-down comedian". Halio said Roth has always, for instance, been a writer deeply concerned with characteristically Jewish themes, often controversially so, as in his outrageously comic *Portnoy's Complaint*. Halio places Roth in his Jewish-American milieu, explaining both the similarities and the differences between Roth and other Jewish-American writers, and discussing the reception of Roth's work by the Jewish community.

George J. Searles's *Conversations with Philip Roth* (1992) is a collection of interviews that reveals the intellectual and artistic life of one of America's contemporary masters of fiction writing. These conversations between them reveal a thoughtful man who shows great intelligence, confidence, and wit, moreover, an admirable sense of humility and perception.

Alan Cooper in *Philip Roth and the Jews* (1996) examines the use of Jewish ideas and materials in Roth's novels, taking into consideration all the responses that came to Roth's texts and also to his relations with the Jewish society and contemporary Jewish writers. This book presents Philip Roth's secular Jewishness, with its own ambiguities and humor, as most representative of the Jewish American experience. Cooper presented Philip Roth as the ironist, the master of absurdity, one for whom twentieth century America and modern Jewish history resonate with each other's achievements and apprehensions. The Jewish works of Roth have taken in them the desires of America and read the difficulties of the world.

Steven Milowitz in his work *Philip Roth Considered: The concentrationary Universe of the American Writer* (2000) surveys Philip Roth's published and unpublished works, focusing on the thematic unity which binds them together: the memory of the Holocaust and the altered universe born of that memory. Steven discusses Roth's obsession with questions of the Holocaust, questions of responsibility, meaning, and

powerlessness, that explains his recurring discussion of entrapment, dehumanization, nihilism, guilt, and coercion. It presents Roth's allusions to the Holocaust. Steven presents Roth's specific concentrationary universe to the larger world.

Gabe Welsch, Harold Bloom in *Philip Roth* (2003) brings together the best criticism on the most widely read poets, novelists, and playwrights. It presents complex critical portraits of Philip Roth as one of the most influential writers in English.

Debra B. Shostak in *Philip Roth-Countertexts, Counterlives* (2004) presents Nathan Zuckerman, Philip Roth's alter ego, in *I Married a Communist*. She finds that while Roth he frequently returns to issues related to ethnic past, selfhood, and to literary history. Shostak pursues a complex thematic investigation of the concerns that preoccupy Roth's masculinity, embodiment, American Jewish identity, the effect of American history on the self, and narrating the story as an act of both fictive imagination and quasi-autobiographical disclosure.

Derek Parker Royal in *Philip Roth: New Perspectives on an American Author* (2005) presents Philip Roth as the most ambitious. For his brilliant achievements, Philip Roth has been awarded many literary honors, and in the 1990s alone, he won every major American book award. Derek Parker focuses on the central issues in the specific work, several larger themes that run suburbanization in post-war America, the problems and prominence of the family, American (Jewish) ethnicity, comedy and satire, the costs of literary celebrity, the promises and failures of the American dream, and others.

In *Philip Roth's Rude Truth: The Art of Immaturity* (2006) Ross Posnock presents Philip Roth as a major American novelist in a literary tradition that goes back to Emerson and Henry James. Posnock clearly defines the writer whose heartening motto is, 'We are here to be insulted.' Ross Posnock gives a powerful and original perspective on Roth, placing him in the mainstream of American literature from Emerson and Whitman to Ellison. Posnock sees him as an antinomian writer, ruthless, outrageous, mind-bendingly complex yet deeply consistent. Roth is still at his serious "pursuit of the unserious." Ross Posnock examines Roth's "mature immaturity" in all its depth and richness.

In *Mocking the Age: The Later Novels of Philip Roth* (2006), Elaine B. Safer explores all that makes the texts of Roth from the early twenty years both so funny and so spot-on in their examination of American as well as Jewish American cultural life. It includes discussion on major texts like *The Counterlife*, *Operation Shylock*, and *Sabbath's Theater*, Roth's American Trilogy, and the recent *The Dying Animal* and *The Plot Against America*. Each chapter draws significantly and skillfully on the whole of Roth's career. Here Safer also links Roth with other comic writers, postmodernism, Jewish themes, and Roth's long dialogue with his Jewish interlocutors. The comprehensive knowledge of Safer about literature, theories of comedy, Jewish history and also of Roth's biography presents a new area for discussion and study.

David Brauner reviewing *Philip Roth* (2007) provides a groundbreaking study of the most important contemporary American novelist, Philip Roth. He reads alongside a number of his contemporaries and focuses particularly on his later fiction. After having close study of Philip Roth's novels, Brauner gave an informative and persuasive view of Roth as an intellectually adventurous and stylistically brilliant writer who constantly reinvents himself in surprising ways.

While analyzing the novels of Roth, Timothy in *The Cambridge Companion to Philip Roth* (2007) provides the most comprehensive and thorough introduction to the works of Roth and also to his thoughts in a collection of newly commissioned essays from distinguished scholars. These essays trace Roth's imaginative and creative engagement with questions about ethnic identity, postmodernism, Israel, the Holocaust, sexuality, and the human psyche itself.

Recognizing Philip Roth's place in America, Ross Miller in *Philip Roth: Novels and Other Narratives, 1986-1991* (2008) presents four novels that recount the story of budding American writer Nathan Zuckerman. It includes *The Ghost Writer*, *Zuckerman Unbound*, *The Anatomy Lesson* and *The Prague Orgy*. The novels of Philip Roth have re-energized American fiction and redefined its possibilities, leading the critic Harold Bloom to proclaim Roth a foremost novelist since Faulkner. Roth as comic genius, his imaginative daring, his courage in exploring uncomfortable truths, and his assault on political, cultural, and sexual orthodoxies have made him one of the essential writers of

our time.

Joseph Benatov in the essay “Demystifying the Logic of Tamizdat: Philip Roth's Anti-Spectacular Literary Politics” (2009) critically examines the West's and specifically the United States' fascination with tamizdat. It analyzes Roth's 1985 novella *The Prague Orgy* and the theoretical implications of the book's central plot device—the narrative of a failed tamizdat mission. The article argues that Roth's work exposes the patterns in which tamizdat, together with the fate of the Eastern European political émigré, becomes a homogeneous, metonymic image for the totality of life under Communism. In *The Prague Orgy*, Roth situates himself in stark opposition to the representational practices of Milan Kundera by resisting the easy sensationalism of such “writing for the West.”

Dr. Suchi Agrawal in her book *A Study of Philip Roth: An American Bestseller Novelist* (2011) offers an exciting study of Philip Roth, a Jewish American novelist, who has re-energized American fiction and redefined its possibilities. The Jewish novelists in America primarily deal with the clash of psychological forces at the pressing points of character, and explore erotic cravings, taboos and inhibitions. However, Philip Roth turns these into the very topics of his penetrating and perceptive investigation. He assiduously fathoms frustrated yearnings and paralyzed desires, probes the enigmas of sex and scruples, and pursues the relentless search for meanings and solutions in the labyrinth of lost longings, ferocious marital strife, grim inner conflict, turbulent and tortured emotions, repressed wishes and the unconscious. He indefatigably explores the innermost recesses of psyche and truth to unravel its depths and secrets.

David Gooblar in *The Major Phases of Philip Roth* (2011) discussed about different stages of Philip Roth's fifty-year career. There is a diversity presented by David by accounting each stage of Rothian preoccupation, from the comedy and seriousness to the Judaism and psychoanalysis. It reveals the changing face of liberalism, and the rise of the New York Intellectuals.

Visualizing the text of novels of Philip Roth, Debra Shostak in *Philip Roth: American Pastoral, the Human Stain, the Plot Against America* (2011) discusses Philip Roth's multilayered perceptions of twentieth-century America as a place, a culture, and an

idea that shapes its inhabitants in profound ways.

Pia Masiero in the work *Philip Roth and the Zuckerman Books: The Making of a Storyworld* (2011) outlines Nathan Zuckerman's fictional birth in his novels in order to explore how Roth has been gradually creating and refining this mask and his voice as means to come to terms with his own biography, history, and his self as a writer. Masiero clarifies Roth's art of fiction through detailed analysis of Roth's ambitious aspiration of creating a complete narrative microcosm. The present text has unique stress on the inner logic of the fictional world presided over by Nathan Zuckerman.

While critically examining the life of Roth, Aimee Pozorski's book *Roth and Trauma: The Problem of History in the Later Works* (1995-2010) which was published in 2011, is a critical reception of Roth's recent fiction that has stressed mainly on an interest in America post World War II. It presents that the novels of Roth wrestle more widely with US history in their fascination with America's disturbing and shocking beginnings and also with the heritage of American Revolution. Aimee in the work reveals the problem of history in Philip Roth's later novels to be unexpected. Moreover, the repeated appearance of historical disturbance relates the still unfulfilled American Dream with terrifying and strange quality of recent history.

Philip Roth has grown into one of the most renowned and distinguished living American writers. Roth has demonstrated a unique ability to not only sustain his literary output, but also even surpass the achievements of his previous writings. His latter fiction is arguably his best work, as demonstrated by the succession of awards he received in the 1990s. Two of his novels have been awarded with National Book Award, and the other two were finalists. Other two famous books won National Book Critics Circle Awards and again the two were finalists. He also won three PEN/Faulkner Awards for his fictional works-*Operation Shylock: A Confession*, *The Human Stain*, and *Everyman*; then a Pulitzer Prize for Fiction for his 1997 narrative, *American Pastoral*. Again, in 2001, *The Human Stain* was awarded the United Kingdom's WH Smith Literary Award for the best book of the year. Then in 2002, he was honored with the National Book Foundation's Award for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters. *The Plot Against America* won the Sidewise Award for Alternate History in the year 2005 as well

as the Society of American Historians prize. Critic Harold Bloom has categorized Philip Roth among the four major American novelists who are still at work, next to Thomas Pynchon, Don DeLillo, and Cormac McCarthy. Again in 2006, he was given the PEN/Nabokov Award, and in 2007, the PEN/Faulkner Award for his work *Everyman*. Afterward in April 2007, Roth was selected as the receiver of the first PEN/Saul Bellow Award for his Achievement in American Fiction. Later in 2009, he was awarded with the Welt-Literaturepreis of the German newspaper Die Welt. In 2011, U.S. President Barack Obama awarded him with 2010 National Humanities Medal in the East Room of the White House. For lifetime achievement in fiction on the world stage, Roth was honored with Man Booker International Prize in 2011. Further, he also received the Prince of Asturias Award for literature in 2012 and PEN/Allen Foundation Literary Service Award for lifetime achievement and advocacy in 2013.

The fiction of Philip Roth has been broadly divided into two major series i.e. Zuckerman Bound series and the American Trilogy series, with two other novels: *The Counterlife* and last novel *Exit Ghost*. Zuckerman Bound series deals with the artist's life—the exploration of the artist's nature, the growth of the artist, his triumphs and failures, trials and problems. The theme of oedipal conflict between the father and the son dominates the Zuckerman Bound series and *The Counterlife*. Roth's works have created hostility against him, among the Jewish society and especially among the Rabbis who condemned him as an anti-Semite. He defended his writings in many of his essays, interviews, and in fiction. The confusions that Roth once criticized, later on, brought a beam of hope to look at the American promise of freedom through the context of Jewishness. Roth's writings go beyond the chronicles of the last stages of assimilation. The novels deal with Jewish Americans struggling with their customs and traditions, in search of reality and truth. Moreover, the writings discuss about the Jewish culture and the identity struggle which invariably received appreciation and criticism simultaneously from across the globe. In his fiction, the Jew is portrayed as an individual and not the individual as a Jew.

As a social realistic writer, though he barely sees the positive aspects of American life, he is resolute and optimistic in his writings. Roth deals with the state of

Jewish life and the American ethos where corruption is a part of its culture. Berman gave his views on this perspective where he says:

Writing at full force in his late sixties - he could be a poster child for Social Security or the AARP - his books ooze pain, and yet he hasn't, like so many older writers, turned sour on life. Even when he sounds unbalanced, he's amazingly there. His work refutes all the clichés about 'what fiction used to mean' but supposedly doesn't anymore.
(52)

His knowledge of Jewish life makes him examine the actions of the characters and strike a balance without interference in their lives. Instead of idealizing the Jew or elevating him to sainthood, Roth talks about the flesh and blood, which is the basis for human existence. Representing ordinary people with their failures and successes, and their continuous struggle with faith, reality and imagination makes him a brilliant author with humanism.

Roth's confrontation with American ways of life paved a technique to discover his artistic ability. He believes that the writers of America need to take up issues like corruption, vulgarities, and the treacheries, which are impediments to the society. Discussing Roth's concern for America, John N. McDaniel in *Modern Critical Views* says:

Roth's assault on the American experience—his exploration of moral fantasy, his concern for moral consciousness, his willingness to confront the grander social and political phenomena of our time- is, I think, the most significant aspect of his art. Despite the diversity of Roth's fiction, despite the variety of themes, values, and characters that emerge from his novels and short stories, we see an abiding faith beneath Roth's pessimism, a faith that leads him to answer one of his critics by saying, 'I find that Mr. Liptzin's view of the universe is negative; I think of my own as positive.' Roth has demonstrated a willingness to explore the limits of his artistic creed with a deeply felt

concern for man and society, a concern that is detectable beneath his ponderous realistic novels and his most vitriolic satire. (117-18)

Roth's fiction deals with immoral impulses from the viewpoint of a Jewish-American male. They discuss about sexual promiscuity and disobediences of Jewish Americans. Roth's characters strive for liberation by ridiculing Judaism, engaging in immoral sexual activities.

Furthermore, in his novels, the theme of transgression and sex played an important role as the characters break their bonds and demonstrate their freedom. In order to live a secular and liberal life, the protagonists in the novels of Roth reject their own religion. They strive to get autonomy and freedom through masturbation, sex, and eroticism. Though, they struggle to distance from their own culture, but understand that it is not possible to escape from it and hence become a victim of the very culture. Roth moved to the echelon where he started writing hot sex scenes with artistic creativity, which created waves in American fiction. He has learnt to identify with the characters and write about mutual encounters, which infuse realistic obsessions. Roth too got a reputation of a bad boy with his writings as it has been stated by Berman that 'Roth had the rep of a bad boy' who cared only about sex and was indifferent to higher values, to politics, to larger human happiness' (51). Roth's view about sex is apparently similar to Freud's opinion of sexual love. He gives great importance to the matters of sexual (genital) love and treats it as the greatest source of satisfaction and happiness. The novel *Sabbaths Theater* focuses on a man who puts himself into chaos with his selfishness. Roth makes him a loser in a classic New York 1956 obscenity case. The novel ends with a stunning epiphany. On the other side, his novel *The Human Stain* presents a transgressive love affair of an older established dean and a young janitor leading to serious consequences.

Shechner made a realistic study of Roth's works, where he says that Roth's books served him, 'as windows on the one hand and a home base on the other: a certain renegade sensibility that answers to my own need for a familiar, reliable, and above all intelligent rebelliousness' (96). Roth displayed his artistic skills by portraying his memoirs and nostalgic events in a sophisticated way. The depiction of his childhood

place, his mother's kitchen, the Jewish family and his romance, the American radicalism and the popular front, nourished by the immigrant working-class brings back the life of the sixties. Roth's father played an important role in making his fiction realistic. Roth was able to write about his neighborhood and look into the identity politics with the help of his father. He also speaks about the working class and the bourgeois who are caught up in their busy schedule. He also had hopes that the downtrodden class will be elevated by a new hope. Roth's Nostalgia is embedded in a better understanding of his neighborhood and the cultural transformation of the 1960s.

The work of Philip Roth has much in common with other authors in its manifestations and explorations of Jewish anxieties. Perhaps the most obvious similarity noticed is bitter portrayal of the stereotypically domineering and anxiety instilling Jewish mother figure. The complexity and undecideability with which Roth treats Jewishness both encourage and frustrate the obsession and are a primary source of the anxiety.

As per to Philip Roth the only way by which the Jews can be saved is if they are converted after de-mystifying and subverting their Jewish tradition. The change, here, is the subversion of traditional Jewish identity and the forced acknowledgment, among Jews, not of Jesus as the Messiah but Jesus as the king of the Jews, that is, the epitome of Jewishness. The great tradition of Jewishness, through Jesus, is the subversion of traditions.

The autobiographical novels, the names of family, the house, the neighborhood, all of it resemble the real Philip Roth. They suggest a kind of self-exploration, or self-exposition. In many ways his novels might be more autobiographical than any Roth has written, simply because they go furthest in, and is perhaps the most deliberate attempt at, clarifying and explaining the sources of this new, mid-twentieth-century Jewish anxiety over Jewish identity with which Roth has been struggling for nearly fifty years. However, in typical Roth fashion, these autobiographical explorations are made through a fictional alter-reality.

To be a Jew and to have this distinctive perspective provides Roth with the ability to define and explain what it is to be a member of an American minority. Roth bears in

mind his identity and fully exposes the Jewish reality regardless of sentiment or glorification. In his insightful and sometimes troubled contemporary writings, Philip Roth demonstrates a nuanced understanding of how the development of Jewish-American identity is a painful and often hilariously paradoxical journey of discovery as Jewish traditions intersect with the American ideal of vertical advancement. Since the successful fulfillment of the American Dream requires some measure of assimilation into the majority American culture known as Americanization, Roth's Jewish-American characters are continually ill balanced between retaining and abandoning their Jewish heritage in favor of a new American identity.

Thus, if Americanization necessitates Anglo-conformity and the abandonment of immigrant mores, the Jewish characters in Roth's stories and novels attempt to assimilate by replacing their own cultural identifiers with those of the majority American culture. Yet this form of cultural surrender is shown to be a conversion in the name of upward mobility; a change which forsakes foundational identity to engage in the formation of a new, and often inauthentic, American identity. The perverse conversion of Jew to American necessitates a ritualistic performance involving the adaptation of particularly American forms of competitive interplay, cuisine and language. However, Roth, as authorial commentator on the situation of the Jews seems to suggest, through his characters and story lines, that to be wholly American and to be wholly Jewish actuates a perilous cultural split personality.

The thesis discusses about the mid-century generations of American Jews and how they have been created by absorption and separation, the sources of the new Jewish apprehension regarding Jewishness. It offers insight into the mid-century emergence of a new Jewish identity that involves and maybe even requires the rejection of traditional Jewish identities that include the Jewish tradition of assimilation.

It is not possible to deny that his Jewish background has greatly influenced Philip Roth's oeuvre, whether we call him a Jewish American author or not. Roth himself has indicated this on several occasions. He is set apart by virtue of his disaffected and caustic handling of Jewish American culture, his suburban settings and his third generation. He is in many ways a postmodern writer. While his narratives may not overtly resemble the

metafictional absurdities of Donald Barthelme or emphasize the cultural frivolousness found in Thomas Pynchon, they nonetheless betray characteristics that are not dissimilar from the work of these authors.

The fiction of Philip Roth deals with the Jewish tradition and its de-mystification, and is read under the light of postmodern theory. Postmodern art bases itself upon the theory of "disappearance of the real", makes a wide-ranging use of the techniques of parody, pastiche, inter-textuality, metafictionality, magical realism, faction etc. It denies the universal truth and objective reality as projected by the enlightenment ideals. His works are exactly examined as being postmodernist. Postmodernism is a way of approaching traditional ideas and practices in non-traditional manner that deviate from pre-established super structural modes as seen in the works of Philip Roth. His works present his exploration of Postmodern Ethnicity. Philip Roth is also paralleled with other postmodern writers.

By saying that the present time is postmodern era, it actually means that the wave called Modernism is no longer visible anywhere in the modern world in the simple shape as before. The term Postmodernism has been a very debatable one ever since its first use. Not like Modernism, which has raised little controversy about its meaning, Postmodernism, has led to different opinions regarding its existence as well as meaning. Critics also differ in stating when exactly Postmodernism begins. In its widest sense, the term has been used to describe the socio-cultural currents in Europe and America since the late 20th century.

Stuart Sim observes in *The Routledge Companion to Postmodernism*:

In a general sense, postmodernism is to be regarded as a rejection of many, if not most, of the cultural certainties on which life in the West has been structured over the last couple of centuries. It has called into question our commitment to cultural 'progress' (that economies must continue to grow, the quality of life to keep improving indefinitely, etc.), as well as the political systems that have underpinned this belief. (7)

It is not just a philosophical school or system but refers to various developments that happened in culture in general and particularly in the realms of literature, film, architecture, art. Postmodernism raises its voice against the liberal humanist ideology that had dominated culture since the eighteenth century.

Postmodernism is also applied to various disciplines ranging from culture to architecture and mass communication. Thus, it has different implications for sociologists, anthropologists, art critics, architects, film - makers, philosophers and linguists. This makes it difficult to define Postmodernism. An attempt has been made to explain the term 'Postmodernism' in the following definitions. The Oxford Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms defines Postmodernism as under:

In its simplest and least satisfactory sense, it refers generally to the phase of 20th century Western culture that succeeded the reign of 'high' modernism, indicating products of the age of mass- television since the mid 1950s. More often, though it is applied to a cultural condition prevailing in the advanced capitalist countries since the 1960s, characterized by a super-abundance of disconnected images and styles- most noticeably in television, advertising, commercial design, and pop video. (Baldick 201)

J. A. Cuddon also defines Postmodernism as: A general {and sometimes conventional} term used to refer to changes, developments and tendencies which have taken place {and are taking place} in literature, art, music, architecture, philosophy, etc. since 1940s or 1950s (733-734). According to Wendell V. Harris, Postmodernism is "The complex of dominant cultural characteristics of the period from World War II to the present" (291). Thus, as the definitions suggest, postmodernism is the label given to the conditions, ideas and attitudes at multi-disciplinary level in the second half of the 20th century.

Among the thinkers who anticipated Postmodernism is Friedrich Nietzsche. His concept of nihilism closely corresponds to the postmodern belief in the multiplicity of realities and the inauthenticity of absolute truth. It is an attack on rationality, whether in

art, philosophy or in science. As Lyon explains, “when the restless doubting attitude of modern reason turns on reason itself, nihilism results” (11). Another significant scholar leaning towards postmodern thought is Martin Heidegger. Like Nietzsche he too, attacked modern reason and rationality. Other major names associated with the history and development of Postmodernism are Michael Foucault, Derrida, Lyotard and Baudrillard. The term ‘Postmodernism’ was first used in the 1940s. On its first use in the 1940s and then in the 1960s the term signified only special aesthetic practices. Harry Levin and Irving Howe were perhaps the first to apply the term ‘postmodern’ to literature written after World War II. However, Ihab Hassan popularized the term in relation to literature. Gradually it was used in several disciplines like Architecture, Politics, Economics, Art, Culture and Sociology.

Postmodernism refers primarily to a variety of responses towards life, culture and values and a reaction against those beliefs, which became prominent with the advent of modernity. It proposes to examine the goals and aspirations of modernity and is visibly anti-authoritarian. Jean-François Lyotard in his influential book, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* Lyotard defines postmodernism as incredulity toward metanarratives (24).

Postmodernism cannot be studied in isolation from Modernism. It grows from Modernism. Anthony Cascardy explains Postmodernism as follows: Postmodernism may be understood in a dual sense; first, postmodernism represents the consequences of tendencies embodied within the paradigm of modernity and second, postmodernism is the site of those transformations that remain open to us through a reinterpretation of the modern age (14). Here Postmodernism is perceived from two different angles; firstly, that it follows modernity that means following Enlightenment and secondly that it develops from the modern age. As Peter Brookner writes, the term Postmodernism is “a name for the series of social and cultural tendencies provoking the definition of modernism” (3). Thus, Postmodernism grows from Modernism. It can be well understood and studied only with a proper understanding and analysis of Modernism.

The postmodern literature reflects fragmentation and loss of omniscient, absolute truth. A postmodernist text is in fragments both, thematically as well as technically.

There is no linear progression of time. There are frequent and sudden shifts from present to past and vice versa. The story is revealed in fragments through discontinuous conversational pieces, abrupt suggestions and soliloquies. Moreover, the postmodernist personality is also fragmented. There is no one, unified self but a fragmented self who has lost the sense of time. A postmodern personality often has no rational outlook; it is tossed between past and present and has no sense of linear progression of time. It ends up being not a distinct individual but a mass identity. Such a self is unable to make a satisfactory choice in life; he is always in a state of dilemma, confusion. Such a fragmented identity is called schizophrenic. A schizophrenic postmodern persona lives in a world of illusion, rather a world of hallucination; he is in a state of doubt; also, his behavior, then, tends to be abnormal. According to Frederic Jameson, the stylistic features of postmodernist culture are a fondness for pastiche, collage of styles, and retreat from the idea of the unified personality to the schizophrenic, split personality with a lost sense of linear progression of time.

Hegelian idealism and many other philosophies of modernity tried to find a solution to this problem, but had failed to achieve complete success. In Nietzsche's writings, we find an ultimate proclamation of this fragmented society that was devoid of any universal sacred values and meanings. As Sim observes:

Postmodernism has drawn heavily on the example set by antifoundationalist philosophers, perhaps most notably the iconoclastic nineteenth-century German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, whose call for a 'revaluation of all values' constitutes something of a battle cry for the movement. (3)

Different philosophies like Marxism, existentialism, Phenomenology and psychoanalysis also depict the estrangement of the individual from his or her authentic modes of experience of fragmentation and meaninglessness in an increasingly technologizing and industrializing world.

Postmodernism has developed as a movement, which has contributed to the development of a cultural and intellectual environment, which stresses decentering,

contradicts all kinds of metanarratives and criticizes the conception of a unified self and the idea of a common rational ideal for all men. With postmodernism, art became more and more diverse. The postmodernists have challenged all traditional differences in art like high-low, fine-commercial, truth-seeking modern avant-garde-superficial, classical-popular etc. Hence, the impact of postmodernism is felt more intensively in the area of art and culture and the difference between the two approaches of modern and postmodern can be brought out by highlighting how modern and postmodern artists have approached their profession.

The term Postmodern literature further is used to describe certain characteristics of post-World War II literature like fragmentation, paradox, questionable narrators, etc and a reaction against Enlightenment ideas implicit in Modernist literature. Instead of the modernist quest for meaning in a chaotic world, the postmodern author avoids, often playfully, the possibility of meaning, and the postmodern novel is often a parody of this quest. This distrust of totalizing mechanisms extends even to the author and his own self-awareness; thus, postmodern writers often celebrate chance over craft and employ metafiction to undermine the author's presence of a single all-powerful storytelling authority. The distinction between high and low culture is also attacked with the employment of pastiche, the combination of multiple cultural elements including subjects and genres not previously deemed fit for literature. Background Notable influences Postmodernist writers often point to early novels and story collections as inspiration for their experiments with narrative and structure. Playwrights who worked in the late 19th and early 20th century whose thought and work would serve as an influence on the aesthetic of postmodernism include Swedish dramatist August Strindberg, the Italian author Luigi Pirandello, and the German playwright and theorist Bertolt Brecht.

This literature represents a break from 19th century realism. In character development, it explores subjectivism, turning from external reality to examine inner states of consciousness, in many cases drawing on modernist examples in the "stream of consciousness" style of Virginia Woolf and James Joyce, or explorative poems like *The Waste Land* by T. S. Eliot. In addition, the literature deals with fragmentariness in narrative and character construction. *The Waste Land* is fragmentary and employs

pastiche like much postmodern literature. Postmodernist literature sees fragmentation and extreme subjectivity as an existential crisis, a problem that must be solved, and the artist is often cited as the one to solve it. They, however, often demonstrate that this chaos is insurmountable and the artist is weak and incapable, and the only way out against ruin is to play within the chaos. Moreover, it is seen that playfulness, with postmodernism becomes central and the actual achievement of order and meaning.

The concept of postmodernism finds a more reasoned explanation and description in Linda Hutcheon's philosophy. She asserted that postmodern fiction as a whole could be characterized by the ironic quote marks, that much of it can be taken as tongue-in-cheek. Linda Hutcheon, a Canadian researcher is working in the fields of literary theory and criticism, opera and Canadian studies. She is particularly known for her important and influential theories of postmodernism. She has discussed about the concepts of irony and parody in *A Theory of Parody* (1994) and of postmodernism in *The Politics of Postmodernism* (1989) and *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (1992). Her description of postmodernism is contrasted with that given by Fredric Jameson. Hutcheon highlights the methods in which postmodern modalities actually help in the course of critique, whereas Jameson has lamented at the lack of critical capacities to which postmodern subjects have access, and examines the present capitalist cultural production in terms of a de-historicized spatial pastiche.

Hutcheon relies heavily upon literary texts as manifestations of postmodernity. The most amenable literary genre for this task is what she calls "historiographic metafiction" which includes novels that "are both intensely self-reflexive and yet paradoxically also lay claim to historical events and personages" (5). According to her, the study of postmodernism is directed at either of literature, history, or theory and is narrative in all three. Historiographic metafiction, therefore, is the best source for understanding postmodernism. Other theorists such as Fredric Jameson has misinterpreted it where he says that it focuses on the past "as a negative. . . . imprisoning of the text in the past through pastiche," (11) but Hutcheon counters this criticism by characterizing the explicit revisiting of history as "liberating" in its challenging of "a

definition of subjectivity and creativity that has for too long ignored the role of history in art and thought” (11).

A common criticism of postmodernism is that it is ahistorical since it is preoccupied with the idea that history can only be known through text. This has led many to believe that postmodernism’s revisionary project is an assault on history rather than what it truly is: an examination of how we come to know history and everything that knowledge implies. Hutcheon says that history is “being rethought. . . . as a human construct” and that “in arguing that history does not exist except as text, it does not stupidly and “gleefully” deny that the past existed, but only that its accessibility to us now is entirely conditioned by textuality” (16). History is a real object but it is impossible to recover the “real story” because history is always mediated through texts that, for all their pretensions to coherence and unity, cannot free themselves from the very history they record.

Another important literary technique along with self-reflexivity that is used to analyze the rationalist historical view is that of ironic parody. Hutcheon calls it as a “perfect postmodern form” because “it paradoxically both incorporates and challenges that which it parodies” (11). This is one of the more difficult ideas to grasp about postmodernism, that it uses what modernism has to offer but is not modernism itself since postmodernism is a critique of that logic. Postmodern parody is no mere exercise in literary technique. Its purpose is ambitious and vitally important because it forces a reevaluation of the foundations of unquestioned narratives that are problematical in their exclusionary logic. Hutcheon says that “postmodern culture. . . . has a contradictory relationship to what we usually label our dominant, liberal humanist culture. It does not deny it, as some have asserted. . . . it contests it from within its own assumptions” (6). What this means is that the grand narratives of human reason and progress that have functioned as a cover for so much irrationality and regression are no longer untouchable. To question the truths of liberal humanism or any other meta-narrative is not to default to impoverished relativism; it is to say that truth is provisional and contingent. People can still believe in certain truths, but what they can no longer do is believe those truths uncritically and without the contextualizing process of self-reflexive consciousness.

Hutcheon wants to make it clear that “there are no natural hierarchies . . . only those we construct” (13).

Linda Hutcheon is concerned with constructing a particular way in which one can talk about postmodernism, not a rigid theoretical framework but what she calls a “poetics.” The function of this poetics is to “offer, as provisional hypotheses, perceived overlappings of concern... reading literature through its surrounding theoretical discourses rather than as continuous with theory” (14). She demonstrates what she means by this in a lengthy passage where she has accused both Terry Eagleton and Fredric Jameson for presenting their opinions against postmodernism in theoretical terms that do not touch the world of practice. She also goes through some of Eagleton’s criticisms of postmodernism in order to give her own textual examples that seem to defy his claims. She is putting into practice her definition of a poetics of postmodernism that constantly engages both theory and practice, a poetics that does not “place itself in a position between theory and practice . . . but rather . . . seek[s] a position within both” (17).

While talking about the concept of parody, it becomes important to repeat again, what she has already said about postmodern art: that it is “art marked paradoxically by both history and an internalized, self-reflexive investigation of the nature, the limits, and the possibilities of the discourse of art” (22). Parody, she further suggests, is actually that which can relate the “aesthetic . . . to the political and the historical” (22). According to Hutcheon, postmodern architecture is “the one art form in which the label [postmodern] seems to refer, uncontested, to a generally agreed upon corpus of works” (22). Backtracking, Hutcheon again cites the historical and political, pointing out that postmodern works are both “precisely because they are formally parodic” (23). She takes this idea a bit further by suggesting that the parody that results in the historical and political aspects of postmodern art actually “use and abuse, install and destabilize convention in parodic ways, self-consciously pointing to both their own inherent paradoxes and provisionality and, of course, to their critical or ironic re-reading of the art of the past” (23). She further shines her postmodernism through the lens of structuralism/poststructuralism “in an extension of the meaning of ‘language,’” (25) which finally bring her to the subject of architecture. Hutcheon sees the need to define

her use of the word “parody,” that is, “repetition with critical distance that allows ironic signaling of difference at the very heart of similarity” (26). This is to say, parody does not ridicule, but in fact allows for critique, once again because parody causes postmodern art to be both historical and political.

Linda Hutcheon claimed postmodern fiction as a whole could be characterized by the ironic quote marks that much of it can be taken as tongue-in-cheek. This irony, along with black humor and the general concept of “play” are among the most recognizable aspects of postmodernism. They became central features in many postmodern works. In fact, several novelists later to be labeled postmodern were first collectively labeled black humorists: John Barth, Joseph Heller, William Gaddis, Kurt Vonnegut, Bruce Jay Friedman, etc. It is common for postmodernists to treat serious subjects in a playful and humorous way: for example, the way Heller, Vonnegut, and Pynchon address the events of World War II. A good example of postmodern irony and black humor is found in the stories of Donald Barthelme; “*The School*”, for example, is about the ironic death of plants, animals, and people connected to the children in one class, but the inexplicable repetition of death is treated only as a joke and the narrator remains emotionally distant throughout.

In addition to Linda Hutcheon, supporters of postmodernist theory like Charles Newman’s *The Post-Modern Aura: The Act of Fiction in an age of Inflation* (1985), Lyotard’s *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (1984), and Ihab Hassan’s *The Postmodern Turn: Essays in Postmodern Theory and Culture* have further diversified the function of postmodern thought in all areas of human efforts.

Charles Newman begins his provoking and challenging book *The Post-Modern Aura* (1985) by defining postmodern art as a “commentary on the aesthetic history of whatever genre it adopts” (44). This would, then, be art, which sees history only in aesthetic terms (57). While assuming an American form of postmodernism, he discards metafictional intertextual description to call American literature a “literature without primary influences,” “a literature which lacks a known parenthood,” suffering from the “anxiety of non-influence” (87). He argues that postmodernism at large is determinedly parodic; but on the other hand, he also affirms that the American postmodern deliberately

puts “distance between itself and its literary antecedents, an obligatory if occasionally conscience-stricken break with the past” (172). Newman is not alone in viewing postmodern parody as a form of ironic rupture with the past, but, as in postmodernist architecture, there is always a paradox at the heart of that ‘post’: irony does indeed mark the difference from the past, but the intertextual echoing simultaneously works to affirm, textually and hermeneutically, the connection with the past.

Frederic Jameson in his work *Postmodernism: The Cultural Logic of Late capitalism* (1991) describes Modernism and Postmodernism as cultural formations that accompany particular stages of Capitalism. He outlines three stages of capitalism: Market Capitalism, Monopoly Capitalism, and Consumer Capitalism, in the Western history, citing particular cultural practices. According to Jameson, right from the year 1700 culture has corresponded to capitalism. Both, Modernism and Postmodernism are stages of capitalism with the difference that in each the nature of capitalism is different. Jameson lays out the differences in culture between the modern and postmodern periods. He also devotes a lot of time to the effects of these changes on the individual. Jameson is concerned with the cultural expressions and aesthetics associated with the different systems of production. He is not interested in a mechanism of change. He draws on the fields of architecture, art and other culturally expressive forms to illustrate his arguments. It is essential to grasp postmodernism as discussed here not as a style, but as a dominant cultural form indicative of late capitalism.

Further, he differentiated Postmodernism from other cultural forms by its emphasis on fragmentation. Fragmentation of the matter thus changes the alienation of the issue, which characterized modernism. Postmodernism is therefore related to all surface, no substance. There is a loss of the center. Postmodernist works are often characterized by a lack of depth, flatness. The liberation from the anxiety, which characterized anomie, may also mean liberation from every other kind of feeling as well. It does not mean to say that the cultural products of the postmodern era are utterly devoid of feeling, but rather that such feelings are now free-floating and impersonal. Also distinctive of the late capitalist age is its focus on commodification and the recycling of old images and commodities.

The postmodern literature is studied on the basis of various characteristics which include:

1. Meta-fictional: The Postmodern literary work often questions its own fictional status thus becoming metafictional. It means that a literary work refers to itself and the principles of its construction by using various techniques and narrative devices. It is simply defined as a fiction about fiction but postmodern fictional work is far more and about more issues than only about fiction. An American author and critic William Gass coined the term, but it can have various meanings. Metafiction, metafictional elements, and metafictionality are a dominant feature of a postmodern literary work. Patricia Waugh has defined metafiction, which seems to be most suitable to understanding its working in literature. As she says:

Metafiction is ...a term given to fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artifact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality. In providing a critique of their own methods of construction, such writings not only examine the fundamental structures of narrative fiction, they also explore the possible fictitiousness of the world outside the literary/fictional text. (2)

By using metafictional elements, the postmodern authors point out a difference between reality and its linguistic representation and they emphasize the fact that a language works on different principles than reality. At the same, the use of metafictional elements point out the fictionality of fiction, involve a reader in a creation of meaning of the artistic text, and shows a difference between the past and contemporary forms of art, between the past and present sensibility and the vision of the world. The direct addressing a reader and the comments on the fictionality of fiction become metafictional elements through which the author emphasizes a fictionality of his fiction, draws a reader to participate in the construction of meaning, and a difference between the past and present forms of arts and sensibility. The author here refers to a traditional work, then does its metafictional conversion into a postmodern and at the same time, also makes the use of realistic form like the characters, setting and sensibility based on rationality and their

transformation into postmodern characters through the use of contrast, irony and parody, thus illustrating a difference between the past and present sensibility and forms of art. The past sensibility is based on rationality and a belief in objective truth, which is contrasted with the present sensibility based on plurality, openness, radical doubt and skepticism towards any unifying visions of reality.

Metafiction can be expressed not only through a direct addressing to a reader, but also through other means such as a quotation, allusion, false, fake quotation, paraphrasing, parody, pastiche, irony, intertextuality and many others. All these devices point out a certain connection between the literary text a reader reads and other works of art, documents, historical records or theories. This connection with these texts is not mechanical or random like in traditional literature, but by a transformation of the meaning of alluded or parodied texts, by their putting in an often-contemporary context, postmodern authors transform and create a new meaning that is often based on the allegorical principle within which this meaning is created.

2. Historiographic Metafiction: Linda Hutcheon has coined the term "historiographic metafiction" in order to refer to works that fictionalize actual historical events or figure. Examples include *The General in His Labyrinth* by Gabriel García Márquez, *Flaubert's Parrot* by Julian Barnes; Thomas Pynchon's *Mason and Dixon* also employs this concept. In regards to critical theory, Roland Barthes can relate this technique to *The Death of the Author*. Hutcheon suggests that historiographic metafiction "keeps distinct its formal auto-representation and its historical context, and in so doing problematizes the very possibility of historical knowledge, because there is no reconciliation, no dialectic here – just unresolved contradiction" (106). She elaborates on the relationship between art and historiography. She references Aristotle's belief that a historian can only focus on events from the past, while a poet can focus on what might happen, allowing he or she to deal with more "universals" (106). Thus, many historians have incorporated "fictional representations" (106) into their works, allowing them to "create imaginative versions of their historical, real worlds" (106). Hutcheon states that the postmodern novel has also taken these opportunities. She writes:

It is part of the postmodernist stand to confront the paradoxes of fictive/historical representation, the particular/the general, and the present/the past. And this confrontation is itself contradictory, for it refuses to recuperate or dissolve either side of the dichotomy, yet it is more than willing to exploit both. (106)

She further addresses the fact that writers of fiction and historians can include or exclude certain events and people. Thus, women are excluded from many traditional historical accounts, an issue of plurality in postmodernism (107). She discusses the concern in historiographic metafiction between what is fictitious and what is untruthful, providing Rushdie's narrator in *Shame* as an example of an "insider/outsider" who is writing about Pakistan from his view in England. She writes, "The eighteenth-century concern for lies and falsity becomes a postmodern concern for the multiplicity and dispersion of truth(s), truth(s) relative to the specificity of place and culture" (108). Thus, Hutcheon focuses on the postmodern concern of the subjectivity of those who write history (108).

3. Intertextuality: One of the most important features of a postmodern literary work that is closely connected to metafiction is intertextuality. A Bulgarian/French theorist Julia Kristeva has coined the term. It expresses a connection between the texts through various devices and techniques discussed above. It is not a single mechanical connection, but rather an artistic conversion of the referred texts in different linguistic and cultural contexts. As Julia Kristeva's presents, that literary work is not only an outcome of single author, rather an association to the other texts and structures of language. Julia Kristeva derives her theory of intertextuality from Michael Bakhtin's idea of a "polyphonic novel" which is open to a number of voices and interpretations and understands a literary text as part of other literary texts in the history of the literary tradition. Thus, what stems from it is the undermining of the idea of authorship, as the work is not a creation of an author, but it exists within specific literary and cultural contexts and thus is open to various understandings and interpretations. In this sense, the author's role has been diminished, as is the study of his biography as in traditional criticism.

Hutcheon focuses more explicitly on the idea of intertextuality. Hutcheon points out that intertextuality is the concept that all texts refer back to prior texts and derive meaning from an understanding of the discursive environment in which those prior texts were produced (126). The construction of intertextual meaning is complicated by the fact that the reader of a text in the present is also fixed in a discursive context, which necessarily influences his or her interpretation of text. Hutcheon notes how an intertextual view of literature, by positing that texts are not spontaneously brought into being but rather refer back to prior texts, subverts the humanist understanding of originality. She also recognizes how the concept of intertextuality undermines the modernist notion of closed, singular meaning by acknowledging the presence of multiple meanings and discursive elements within texts (127). While showing the social implications of intertextuality in the present age, Hutcheon points out how the parodic reformulation of “canonical” texts can contribute to the postmodern project of de-centering the dominant narratives of the “white, male, middle-class, heterosexual, Eurocentric culture” (130).

4. Use of Parody, Pastiche and Radical Irony: Another important aspect of a postmodern literary work is the use of postmodern parody, pastiche and radical irony. Postmodern parody was theorized especially by Linda Hutcheon in her work *A Theory of Parody*, (1985), Margaret A. Rose, and partly by Frederic Jameson. The main purpose of postmodern parody is not to ridicule the parodied author or style for its own sake, but this parody lacks this mocking, ridiculing aspect and by using irony, it emphasizes a difference between the past forms of art and sensibilities, a distance between the past and present. Such a critical characteristic, in Hutcheon’s view, manifests itself especially in the use of irony. It seems Hutcheon often uses a term modern parody to actually refer what could be labeled as postmodern parody. It is often difficult to identify irony within parody in postmodern literary texts since they are often closely connected and even inseparable.

Hutcheon has emphasized the political and ideological aspects of parody because of their subversive impulse, as she said, “Postmodern parody is both deconstructively

critical and constructively creative, paradoxically making us aware of both the limits and the powers of representation—in any medium” (228). She further adds:

As a form of ironic representation, parody is doubly coded in political terms: it both legitimizes and subverts that which it parodies...Parody can be used as self-reflexive technique that points to art as art, but also to art as inescapably bound to its aesthetic and even social past. (231)

Therefore Postmodern parody becomes self-reflexive because it draws the attention not only to the parodied works of art, but implicitly also to the whole process of depiction of reality through the literary works, that is a process of linguistic representation. By re-writing, transforming and changing the motifs and styles from the parodied literary works, postmodern parody gives an alternative vision of reality, history and a position of different social, ethnic and other minority groups which forms a playful and creative alternative to the official version of history or reality as depicted through traditional narrative techniques and styles. This alternative is a playful and artistic re-examination and relativization of it. This is also one of the reasons why postmodern authors often parody histories, religious books, biographies of authors, myths, and works of traditional and popular literature. The postmodern parody also shows a difference between the past and present sensibility and can give a critique of various aspects of what is believed to be a typical aspect of some national identity.

In a postmodern work, postmodern parody is strongly associated with pastiche. Pastiche comes from the Italian word *pasticcio*, which means a mixture of various ingredients, a sort of hodgepodge, a muddle, a farrago. This implies a similarity with a postmodern literary work consisting of different styles, genres, each of which has its significant function in the composition of the book. But the original meaning of this word as used in arts was rather disparaging. The artists referred to as the users of pastiche were understood as the authors uncreatively and mechanically imitating other works of art, styles, or ways of writing. In postmodern literature, this term has positive meaning since the older works of art, styles and authors are first imitated. Pastiche can be loosely called a blank parody as Frederic Jameson has suggested. Although Jameson’s understanding of pastiche is close to Linda Hutcheon’s understanding of postmodern parody and he

himself defines pastiche as a kind of parody. Postmodernism rejects strict definitions and especially in a postmodern but also in other artistic works of art it is difficult to describe parody and pastiche as they frequently overlap and are rather inseparable.

Moreover, Pastiche is also seen as a representation of the chaotic, pluralistic, or information-drenched aspects of postmodern society. In it, there is a combination of many genres to create a unique narrative or to comment on situations in postmodernity like William S. Burroughs has made the use of science fiction, detective fiction, westerns; the use of science fiction and fairy tales by Margaret Atwood; Umberto Eco uses detective fiction, fairy tales, and science fiction and so on. Metafiction and temporal distortion are common in the broader pastiche of the postmodern novel. Like Thomas Pynchon includes in his novels elements from detective fiction, science fiction, and war fiction; songs; pop culture references; well-known, obscure, and fictional history mixed together; real contemporary and historical figures; a wide variety of well-known, obscure and fictional cultures and concepts.

Parody, pastiche, impersonation and intertextuality are closely connected with radical irony. Radical irony does not necessarily manifest itself on the verbal level, but also on the level of a text as a whole, in the juxtaposition of different styles creating an ironic effect, or in the use of travesty or burlesque or satire. Burlesque meant not as a genre, but as a trope or an approach to a depiction of character as part of the parodic mode.

5. Postmodern literature emphasizes depthlessness and surface. In Frederic Jameson's view, "a new kind of flatness or depthlessness, a new kind of superficiality in the most literal sense—perhaps the supreme formal feature of all the postmodernisms" (60). Postmodern authors thus reject the possibility to find and reflect on a deeper meaning and emphasize the free play of signs and signifiers leading to the suggestion of textuality. It means that the language is not understood as expressing material objects or deep truths, but to other signs and thus it acquires a manipulating power by influencing people's or characters' vision of the world. This is connected with postmodern sensibility since the textuality points out a semiotic and manipulative nature of a sign creating reality as perceived by a postmodern man. In a postmodern world, a man is entrapped in various

signs manipulating her/his vision of the world within which it is difficult to find an orientation, objectivity and truth and distinguish between the true and the false, between reality and its manipulation.

Moreover, in postmodern literary works, depthlessness related to language can imply a critique of language deprived of its referential function in a postmodern world as well of another aspect of postmodern condition that is consumerism and commercialism. This manifests often itself in American postmodern authors' works by John Barth, Thomas Pynchon, Donald Barthelme, Richard Brautigan and others. Stuart Sim has added to the inventory of motifs and techniques, which point out the language instability and disorder in postmodern fiction. In his view, "Temporal disorder, involuntary impersonation of other voices (pastiche), fragmentation, looseness of association, paranoia and the creation of vicious circles are symptoms of the language disorders of schizophrenia as well as features of postmodernist fiction" (133).

6. In the postmodernist literary works, chaos, disorder, paranoia, obsession and relativity frequently manifest themselves in the use of the ideas like muddle, mask, mirror, disguise or the library, records and documents. The confusion also becomes a metaphorical expression standing for the process of writing and a status of a literary work, which becomes always unfinished, provisional and waiting for the completion by a reader.

7. Fabulation: It is a term sometimes used interchangeably with metafiction and relates to pastiche and Magic Realism. Robert Scholes coined the term in his work *The Fabulators*. It is a rejection of realism, which embraces the notion that literature is a creative work and not bound by concepts of mimesis and verisimilitude. Thus, fabulation challenges some traditional notions of literature, the traditional structure of a novel or role of the narrator, and integrates other traditional notions of storytelling, including fantastical elements, such as magic and myth, or elements from popular genres such as science fiction. An example of fabulation is Salman Rushdie's *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*.

8. Poioumena: In plural, it is called poioumena and is taken from Ancient Greek word that means "product". Alastair Fowler coined it in order to refer to a specific type of metafiction in which the story is about the process of creation. Common examples are Thomas Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus* and Laurence Sterne's *Tristram Shandy*, which is about the narrator's frustrated attempt to tell his own story. The self-conscious narrator in Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* parallels the creation of his book to the creation of chutney and the creation of independent India. Other postmodern examples includes Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*; John Fowles's *Mantissa*.

9. Radical plurality and Relativism: It is associated with distrust to the possibility of reason to explain to the world either objectively or subjectively, to any unified visions of the world, to any eternal truths, any unifying concepts of truth. The postmodern literary works use the mixing of genres as part of their systematic building of the postmodern meaning.

The authors often use a palimpsestic technique of rewriting of the old texts by putting them in different linguistic and cultural contexts. Palimpsest is a paper or a parchment on which the new and creative text has been partially wiped out or destroyed so that a new and innovative text can be written on it while leaving parts of the original still observable. Relativism manifests mostly itself in the text's rejection of a close and clear ending in favor of the open ending in which a reader has a space to participate in the creation of the meaning of a text; in offering multiple and relative rather than clear and unifying perspectives.

10. Temporal distortion: It is a common technique in modernist fiction. In the postmodern narratives, temporal distortion is used in a variety of ways, often for the sake of irony. Historiographic metafiction is taken as its example. Distortions in time are central features in many of postmodern authors like Kurt Vonnegut, Robert Coover.

11. Magic realism: Literary work marked by the use of still, sharply defined, smoothly painted images of figures and objects depicted in a strange and unreal manner. The themes and subjects are often imaginary, somewhat odd and fantastic and with a certain dream like quality. The characteristic features of this kind of fiction are the

mingling and juxtaposition of the realistic and the fantastic or strange, skilful time shifts, complicated and even complex and obscure narratives and plots. There is a miscellaneous use of dreams, myths and fairy stories, expressionistic and even surrealistic description, mysterious learning, the element of surprise or abrupt shock, the horrific and the inexplicable. Colombian novelist Gabriel García Márquez is regarded as a notable exponent of this kind of fiction, especially his novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. Postmodernists such as Salman Rushdie and Italo Calvino commonly use Magic Realism in their work. A fusion of fabulism with magic realism is visible in such early 21st century American short stories as it is seen in Kevin Brockmeier's *The Ceiling*.

12. Technoculture and Hyperreality: Fredric Jameson called postmodernism the "cultural logic of late capitalism" in his work. Here "Late capitalism" implies that society has moved past the industrial age and into the information age. Likewise, Jean Baudrillard claimed postmodernity was defined by a shift into hyperreality in which imitations have replaced the real. In postmodernity people are inundated with information, technology has become a central focus in many lives, and our understanding of the real is mediated by simulations of the real. Many works of fiction have dealt with this aspect of postmodernity with characteristic irony and pastiche. The cyberpunk fiction of William Gibson, Neal Stephenson, and many others use science fiction techniques to address this postmodern, hyperreal information bombardment. Moreover, Steampunk, a subgenre of science fiction was popularized in novels and comics by writers like Alan Moore and James Blaylock, who demonstrates postmodern pastiche, temporal distortion, and a focus on technoculture with its mix of futuristic technology and Victorian culture.

13. Paranoia: Possibly demonstrated most famously and effectively in the works of Thomas Pynchon, the sense of paranoia, the belief that there is an ordering system behind the chaos of the world is another recurring postmodern theme. For the postmodernist, no ordering system exists, so a search for order is fruitless and strange. This often agrees with the theme of technoculture and hyperreality. For example, in *Breakfast of Champions* by Kurt Vonnegut, the character Dwayne Hoover becomes violent when he has convinced that everyone else in the world is a robot and he is the only human.

14. Maximalism: It is a reaction against minimalism, is an aesthetic of excess and redundancy. In postmodern works, it is associated with digression, reference, and elaboration of detail occupies a great fraction of the text. It can refer to anything seen as excessive, overtly complex and showy, providing redundant overkill in features and attachments, grossness in quantity and quality, or the tendency to add and accumulate to excess.

15. Minimalism: Literary minimalism can be characterized as a stress on a surface description where readers are expected to take an active role in the creation of a story. The characters in minimalist stories and novels tend to be unexceptional. Usually, the short stories are considered as slice of life stories. Minimalism, the opposite of maximalism, is a representation of only the most basic and necessary pieces, specific by economy with words. Minimalist authors hesitate to use adjectives, adverbs, or meaningless details. Instead of providing every minute detail, the author provides a general context and then allows the reader's imagination to shape the story. Among those categorized as postmodernist, literary minimalism is most commonly associated with author Samuel Beckett.

16. Faction: This postmodernistic trait is very similar to historiographic metafiction as its subject material is very much based on real and authentic incidents. However, the authors using faction blurs the line between fact and fiction to the level that it becomes almost impossible to find the difference between the two, as opposed to metafiction, which often draws attention to the fact that it is not true.

17. Fragmentation: It is another important feature of postmodern literature. A variety of factors, concerning plot, characters, themes, imagery and factual references are fragmented and dispersed throughout the entire work. It claims, however, to depict a metaphysically unfounded, chaotic universe and can occur in language, sentence structure or grammar. A sense of alienation of character as well as of the world is created by a language medium, which complements the illustration of the main character's subconscious fears and paranoia in the direction of his exploration of a seemingly chaotic world.

The thesis also shows how Philip Roth's ranges as a writer, combines characteristics associated with postmodernist writing which include metafictionality, self reflexivity, inter-textuality, plurality, instability of both text and self. Philip Roth's 20th century literary achievements express themselves largely through experimentation with the distinction between fiction and reality, which is trying to meet rapidly changing social experiences. He stands as one of the most unsettling, and even one of the most offensive, novelists living today. He has been read as a political radical, an anti-communist, a stand-up (or sit-down) comedian, a misogynist, a liberal apologist, a solipsist, a communitarian, a literary pornographer, a Jewish godfather, and even an anti-Semite.

The works of Phillip Roth are undoubtedly excellent examples of the rejection of traditional Judaism already exhibited by the Yiddish writers a generation earlier. Like their non-Jewish contemporaries and predecessors, Jewish writers in the last half of the 20th century contributed a great deal to the secularization of America and Jewish life as well as they created a distinction between Judaism and Jewishness, which their grandparents never knew and which has become the Great Divide within the Jewish community in the twenty-first century.

The ghettoization of the Jews in Eastern Europe and in Germany was an effort, to subvert Jewish identity and weaken the strength of the Jewish society. But Roth's treatment of Jews and Jewishness is highly subversive. The present study highlights how Roth is subverting the Jews by asserting Jewish self-hatred, agreeing that self-hatred is anathema to Jewishness. It explores a new, complex, and complicated Jewishness that is not alienated by, but incorporates or embodies its self-hatred. Moreover, while exploring all these complexities, postmodern techniques have been used in abundance.

Besides Introduction and Conclusion, the thesis has eight chapters. The chapter first is titled "*The Counterlife* - Authorial Self-Representation". It discusses Philip Roth's thirteenth novel *The Counterlife* (1986) as an autobiographical text written in postmodern times. It portrays the embattling self, and the narrative as series of images and ideas.

It speaks of the various directions that a life can take, about the inspirations behind the choices that a person makes, and the consequences of those choices. The work

represents postmodernist reality as chaotic and fragmented. The novel has changed from the early realism and modernism to postmodernism. This work is divided into five different titled sections and these sections can be explained by counterpointing the different parts much as one examines a symphony (work of art): movement to movement. Each chapter seems expressively true but is embedded within a meta-fictional structure. The novel is considered as the beginning point in Roth's exploration of postmodern tradition. The emphasis is on the issues related to the individuality of a person and the means in which the character is portrayed.

A complete model of postmodernism with specific categorization of imagination, ethnicity and philosophies is created into the minds of everyone through the fictional narrative of *The Counterlife*. The self of the novelist contradicts his own creator and thus draws the concentration on identifying the intertextuality, which exists under the gathered clear truths, and in this procedure, it also penetrates the subtext of the autobiography.

The second chapter is titled "*Deception: A Novel - Self-Reflexive Representation of Jewishness*", where it presents the novel *Deception* (1990) as one of the famous autobiographical work overloaded with post-modernist culture. The stress is on the ways by which Roth has subverted the conventions, ideologies, and runs away from categorization, repeatedly reinventing his illusory selves in an unexpected and surprising ways. The novel develops out as a fictionalized autobiography, a creative work of Roth's imagination. The protagonist, here shares Philip Roth's age, his background, his occupation, and ethnicity. The tale at the heart of the story is "the story of an imagination in love" (183).

The central character is named Philip who is a Jewish American just like the author himself, along with mistress, wife, and many other characters. The title of the text is therefore aptly applied to the protagonist as he betrays his wife as well as his readers also. His disconnection with his tradition and background lead him to complete destruction and isolation. It also made him betray his family and fall in another relationship. As a postmodernist character, he often is empathized with other displaced persons from other ethnic backgrounds living in England.

Metafictional self-reflexiveness and multiple points of observation are being applied to the fragmented self of Philip in this contemporary world. By applying the technique of postmodernism, Philip Roth here explores the issues that are related to racial and cultural identity, sexuality, the Holocaust, American history and more important the real meaning of being a human being. *Deception* gives a representation of an artist as an adulterous and disloyal Jew.

The third chapter of the thesis is titled “*Operation Shylock: A Confession – An Autobiographical Metafiction of the Self*”. *Operation Shylock: A Confession* (1993) is a story in true postmodernist style. The text deals with the issues related to identity crisis. The novel not only creates a text of the self and then countertext of the other, but also the countertexts to the text of the self. Roth’s present text reveals that the connection between fiction and autobiography is most descriptive when it provides the means to examine how writers build their truth and in the same way their lives.

Here the real and true structure can hardly mask the surrealistic nature of a story that concentrates on the enigmatic look of a man who claims to be Philip Roth. This particular man looks like Roth not just physically but also in each little description of clothing and characteristic. He has combined both imaginary and real characters. Roth’s use of imagination, references, reality and authenticity leave the reader with a strange and mysterious déjà vu but they have no complete knowledge of what actually took place.

The typical postmodern metafiction promotes and presents itself by its self-reflexivity as fiction; it always makes us remember that it is a book, and the individuals here are just typographical black inscriptions on the white page and nothing exists outside the novel. The book simply plays the role of an endless story of inter-textual signifiers. Philip Roth has also planned an inversion that is, imaginary events, unbelievable happenings and ridiculous and absurd incidents. All the aspects of fiction that can happen in reality take place, in the lives of other people and also in Roth’s life.

The novel is most innovative and postmodern work. It is a fragmented, kaleidoscopic, surreal version of realities, feelings, and thoughts, told by an individual whose very character remains extremely hypothetical. It is completely impossible to part

the real and authentic from the fictional and imaginary, moreover, is an example of metafiction, it means that one of its themes is the creative process of writing itself, while the narrator plays with the comic perception of his/her own fictivity.

The chapter fourth is entitled as “*Sabbath’s Theater: Struggling with Inner Demons*”. This chapter discusses one of Roth’s most risky and outrageous ventures *Sabbath’s Theater* (1995). The present text stresses upon a number of different opposing ideas, which are warning to split apart the postmodernist American ways of life. These include life and death, loyalty and infidelity, wife and mistress, dishonesty and severity, moral sublimation and sexual satisfaction.

The postmodern Jew was so adapted to outcast, homelessness, and struggle that he could never be satisfied by the comforts, supports of absorption and material happiness, the state of being at home in America. As compared to other books of Roth, the present novel is considered as largely masked because of its controversial subject matter. For Philip Roth, Mickey is a substitute for the postassimilationist Jew who experiences the failure of the ancient times as an obliterating power beyond his control.

Despite the Jewish background, the main stress is on the ethical predicament of modern man confused by the aggressive and hostile forces in the microcosm of American society. The text serves as a frame of reference to evaluate and reinforce Roth’s experience of social reality. The victimized and alienated Jew in American society is a recurrent figure in this work of fiction. The feeling of death and mistreatment is considered as a common heritage of this Jewish immigrant in postmodern times.

The abiding aspect of the text is that the whole thing is connected to the deep miseries of a human being who is scared of dying. This experience has been presented through language that frequently increases to extreme lyricism although its complete act is rude and revolting. This lyricism forces to empathize with Mickey Sabbath though he is not so likeable individual.

Sabbath is presented as a paradox ensnared in a process of self-division. He is a strict moralist who dedicates himself to the life of immortality. Moreover, he appears out as a man intolerant of other people’s broadmindedness, an impatient with other people’s

patience. All morally wrong acts of Sabbath are devoted in the service of a morality. The protagonist pretending to be someone else and mysterious is a typical dweller from a postmodernist society of deculture and disturbance, discontinuity and disorder.

The chapter fifth is titled “*American Pastoral* – An Amalgamation of Postmodern Authorship and Jewish Novelistic Affinities”. It focuses on the novel *American Pastoral* (1997), Roth’s twenty-second book. It is also associated to the ideas of an idealized America; simple, basic and uncomplicated by disagreements or uncertainties. These might also take the form of references and allusions to a simple agrarian society, American exceptionalism; a historical analysis of race and ethnic group, certainly the ‘American Dream’ in all of its demonstrations.

The constant stress has been made on the history, and America always emerges out as an idea, a protection, and a secured land in the descriptive imagination of Philip Roth. He merges the theme of an individual into the structure of history, in which the individual character is at the sympathy of surrounding communal, political, and ethnic forces. The present story functions as a source by which Roth tries to recover and re-create his Jewish tradition. It is only through this act of retelling the traditional stories of Jewishness that he is able to observe Jewishness as well suited with postmodernism.

The novel charts America’s path from postwar success to happy domesticity in the 1950s to chaos, violence, and disillusionment of the 1960s and 1970s. The beautiful imaginary world of Seymour collapses in 1968 when his daughter Merry, “the daughter who is chaos itself (231),” performs the terrorist act by blowing the local post office and killing a local doctor. The actions of Merry are a result of the ethnic revolution that took place in 1960’s. The conflict of two periods in American cultural and political history becomes clear in these two characters. The metafictional self-reflexivity, seen in Roth’s different characters, becomes more prominent in the Swede as he struggles to free himself from a terrifying past.

Roth gives an insight into the historical time in which each person gets involved directly or indirectly. Roth thus gives a theoretical way out and ends the novel without any inference. There is a summer dinner party organized at the end of the novel, where all

the problems are raised and discussed without a conclusion. The novel is open-ended like a postmodernist text.

Just like a postmodern fictional text, the concept of originality, uniqueness, and realism is destabilized, parodied, and misrepresented in *American Pastoral*. There is development of only disillusionment and disappointment when ethics of capitalist and the peaceful utopia intersect each other. The Swede is not able to escape from his Jewish identity and comes out as a fallen Jew who is representing Adam and Job. His sufferings are because of his rejection of Judaism and such rejection of traditional dedication ultimately brings the Swede to face its worst consequences of being a fallen person.

The alter ego discusses about the issue of counter-truths that sublimate the actual realities within historic recollection. Roth ends up sticking to some pastoral beliefs despite of the destruction that has been caused by the American Dream. He compares the lost America of his childhood times while in Newark in 40s, to the collapsed America of the 50s and 60s. Roth has also praised the greatest generation, Jews, who lived their life with a heritage of the counter-pastoral desire, where the historically as well as literarily great meta-narratives are held doubtful. *American Pastoral* emerges as an instructive tale of idyllic innocence and purity.

The sixth chapter is titled “*The Human Stain* - The Society versus Individual”. It stresses on one of the critically praised novels *The Human Stain* (2000). The story is about the American Dream of main protagonist in the contemporary context, it is a communal phenomenon of great promise and of great cost. An experience that is very powerful and to fulfill it, the protagonist has to abandon the nation, which has given birth, to him; he has to discard his own traditions and culture. The novel also deals with another age in American history through its protagonist. In this age, Roth particularly speaks about the discourse of political correctness.

The stress is on the universal values as well as there is a quest for the truth that rises above the fragmental issue, together with it, there are discussions on the main, fixed functioning of human nature and of personally obsessed and repeatedly mysterious and strange actions in a historical perspective. Roth has persistently explained the historical

context in *The Human Stain* where he specifies the point that one can never ignore and disregard the past, nor universal values, nor the quest for truth.

There are other postmodern techniques used like temporal distortion, and fragmentation of the story through flashbacks, especially flashbacks to the times before the story started. It takes to the times when the story was written, the year of 1998, then to the 1940s, and 50s, and then it moves to the early times of the protagonist when he was young. Temporal distortion and fragmentation are important traits of postmodernism and the present novel is seen under their influence. It creates suspense in the story, and helps in the development of Coleman Silk in the novel.

Roth suppresses the subjective nature of white supremacy by diminishing it through a worldly superiority of arrival to America, but this whiteness is just a public creation. Roth gathers the idea and then subverts it by presenting different characters who consider vague and indefinite outlook towards it. This outlook is other than those of Jewish in both their appreciation and contemptuous modalities.

The chapter seventh is titled “*The Plot Against America – A Blend of Historiographic Metafiction*”. This chapter discusses Roth’s vivacity, life, creativity and metafictional proficiency being a practitioner of postmodernist fiction. It remained at its top fifteen positions for weeks. Many critics too agreed over the point that the novel is a great and remarkable postmodernist work in which a number of ideas and themes are talked about, like the issue of history, Judaism, war, identity, trust etc.

Roth’s reflection of the history is more psychosomatic and it observes the way historical incidents inspire and then shape the lives as well as the thoughts of his characters, the invented and autobiographical family of Roth. Philip narrates the present historical work, acts as an autobiographical protagonist. The work moves around historical reinterpretations and makes queries against political beliefs. The combination of fiction and history produces transgressive effect and this outcome has to do with the examination of the genre of alternate past. The text places itself in a discursive context refuting any claim to universality. It questions, subverts, and deconstructs what is assumed a historical real.

The Plot Against America is in a way a plot against the citizens as they were separated by the government, through particular programmes designed by them. Hatred and uneasiness was spreading all around scaring people. It is the plot by the government that if people start fighting against each other, then it will become very easy to overpower them and take over the country. Therefore, the people start choosing the safest side by associating themselves with the masses. Thus, the plot is against the people as a whole, however mainly it was against the Jews who were staying in America.

The novel represents an important framework for the examination of the general and basic characteristics of alternate history by Roth. However, it has the metafiction subject, but it also inclines towards the mimetic autobiographical form. The strong and influential autobiographical idea that appears is completely invented and is fictitious that results from the existence of vital and essential factor of autobiographical principle.

The last chapter of the thesis is titled as “*Everyman – A Morality Parable.*” It deals with novel *Everyman* (2006). It is more of a short story than a fully developed novel. The novel can also be taken as a form of scripture for all those Americans who were managing to separate their lives in the wake of tragedy. Moreover, through this work, Roth proves himself as a source of moral truth.

By presenting autobiography as fiction becomes, with Roth, the epicenter of his postmodernist self-reflexive metafiction. *Everyman* is analyzed as an outcome of unconscious course directed either by the personal or combined instinctive, one might ignore the chance of the deliberate inspiration of the author to write the novel that would be read as a morality parable modeled on the play of medieval times bearing the similar title. This factual explanation presents the 15th century English play named *Everyman*. The meaning and significance of the novel is clear and is easily determined. Similar to the morality play for which it is titled, the novel stresses Everyman’s, considering mortality and humanity.

The present thesis ends with the conclusion. It puts together the findings of the above chapters. These chapters were an attempt to justify the topic of the thesis that all these novels discuss the demystification and subversion of Jewish tradition. In the present

texts, there is the combination and mixture of two diverse cultures-Jewish and American where a Jew comes up and tries to be assimilated in the American way of life. The stories offer a forceful and convincing consideration on the possibilities and confines of self-making in contemporary American way of life.

Philip Roth breaks the old forms and taboos of Jewish literature. In his novels, it has been observed that in the beginning when Jews entered America, they led a traditional life. However, from the 18th century due to various waves of Enlightenment, liberalism, socialism etc, the Jews revolted against the traditional life. The first and second generation Jews in America detached themselves from holy books and got associated with the new ideas and moral charges. Moreover, the second generation Jews not only broke away from the tradition but also brought secular revolutionism. Philip Roth is analyzing and negotiating a Postmodern, Post-assimilationist and Post-ethnic Jewish identity for some sixty to seventy years. He is attempting to provoke a sea change in Jewish self-consciousness by subverting the old fixed categories of Jewish traditions and customs to which most Jews adhere.

This study concentrates on the development as a novelist of the American writer Philip Roth from realistic approaches, to the experimental writing of *Deception* and his latest work, *Operation Shylock*. The book sets out to relate Roth's work to American Jewish literary traditions and styles, traces some sources and influences on his work from Dostoievski to Kafka, and attempt This study concentrates on the development as a novelist of the American writer Philip Roth from realistic approaches, to the experimental writing of *Deception* and his latest work, *Operation Shylock*.