

The Mythological Strain in *Cosmopolis* & *The Human Stain*

الجموح الخيالي في "المدينة العالمية" و "الوصمة الإنسانية"

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**Abstract:**

This article aims to unearth the mythological power lying beneath fictional writing of both American writers Philip Roth and Don DeLillo. The American myth of the New Adam at the core of this study is perceived as the common ground from which Roth and DeLillo inspire to write *The Human Stain* (2000) and *Cosmopolis* (2003). In fact, the Adamic myth which harbours this archaic concept of duality of Man with its promised rebirth and belying freedom is investigated by means of an assortment of psychoanalytical and existential views. The heroes' desire to transcend factual world is meant to strengthen their individualism and denial of reality. The urge to seek self-validation thereby ends in progression towards destruction and it is how Roth and DeLillo manage to question the dreamy side of myth.

**Keywords:** Denialism, consciousness, American Adam myth, innocence, Roth, DeLillo.

ملخص البحث

تهدف هذه الورقة البحثية إلى إبراز القوة الميثولوجية الكامنة في كتابة المؤلفين فيليب روث و دون ديليلو. وتنظر الدراسة إلى أسطورة آدم الجديد أو الأمريكي على أنها المنطلق الرئيس والمهم لكل من الروايتين "المدينة العالمية" (2003) و "الوصمة الإنسانية" (2000). في الواقع تعتمد الدراسة على فكرة ازدواجية الإنسانية في هذه الأسطورة والموسومة بالتطلع إلى الحرية والتجدد، وتتفحص ذلك من خلال المنظور السيكو-وجداني. إن الرغبة الجارحة لدى البطلين في الانتصار لأهوائهما وتجاوز العالم الواقعي يغذي فكرهما الاستقلالي المنكر للواقع؛ لينتهي سعيهما إلى إثبات الذات بالتقدم تدريجيا نحو الدمار وهي طريقة روث و ديليلو في استنطاق الجانب المظلم من الأسطورة.

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الكلمات المفتاحية: إنكار، وعي، أسطورة آدم الأمريكي، براءة، روث، ديليلو.



## I- Introduction :

Panel members at the twenty-first annual American Literature Association Conference, in 2010 who were representative of the societies of all of Morrison, McCarthy, Updike, Roth and DeLillo speculated on the importance of American fiction wrought during the last twenty-five years and articulated the remarkable input by the above authors (Royal,2011). The proximity between fictions of Roth and DeLillo namely was remarked by a number of studies and most of which often inspect their inclination to irony, pessimism (Green, 2005), existentialism and postmodernism (Sciolino, 2015). Catherine Morley (2009) for instance, interprets the 'great American novel' as the effort of Roth and DeLillo to form the novel in a modern epic, one obviously laden with irony in its speculation about matters of identity, history and myth.

Indeed, Philip Roth and Don DeLillo's fictions are recognised as repeated trials at some epic grandeur. Yet, it is also no secret this approbation of theirs for work which "attempts to be equal to the sweep of American experience". In hope to scribe this vastness in his work, DeLillo has "tried to bring a sense of our (American) strange and dangerous times into [his] work" (DeLillo, 2010)<sup>3</sup>. Interestingly, this view is in accord with Roth's who inscribes in his essay "Writing American Fiction" a repugnant description of American reality when he says: "It stupefies, it sickens, it infuriates, and finally it is even a kind of embarrassment to one's own meager imagination. The actuality is continually outdoing our talents, and the culture tosses up figures almost daily that are the envy of any novelist" (Roth,1961,2). The American has not been mostly able to act imaginatively in that world of experience, a social world fraught with sin and replete with technological advances, rendering it the world of the 'unreal'.

The American author turns back to the transnational past in search for means to explain the present of the New World. For that aim, mythology was appropriated -by Emerson, Cooper and other 19<sup>th</sup> century literary figures- who clutched from Europe's formal national histories, Morley (2009)believes, some deserted accounts and subversive stories building them on popular life and experiences of individuals to create a separate history for the New World. In similar vein, D. Hoffman (1994) talks about national consciousness formed out of the European past and the American present day

of Irving, Hawthorne, Twain who employ both high and popular culture. Therefore, it is appropriate to claim that the correct move of fictions of Roth, DeLillo and others, is not to aspire to epic and mythic order of the old world but rather start from there and bring its influences down to mix with American experience. Perhaps their best efforts settle on fitting non-American matter to the present American experience as did their forebears in the likes of Emerson and Henry James; an effort radiant with myth revisions and ironic intentions.

*The Human Stain* (2000) and *Cosmopolis*(2003), by Philip Roth and Don DeLillo respectively manifest their writers as romancers whose exertion at defining the American perplexing condition required entanglement of their characters in mythic settings and meaning-chasing predicaments. The subject in much contemporary fiction of the new millennium is a mobile “seeker”, who as Ihab Hassan (2012) contends,

[He] knows real America. He knows therefore, that in venturous quests he may recover reality, constitute significance, maintain his vigor, all in those privileged moments of being when life vouchsafes its most secret rewards. Is this not the whole sense of Emersonian experience?(p.15)

DeLillo and Roth’s subjects are “selves at risk” to use words from Hassan’s title. Likewise, the passage above underlies existential and psychological meanings which reclaim the 19<sup>th</sup> century tradition, though unnecessarily hopeful as ‘Emersonian’ thought. The subjects typically journey from real to ‘unreal’ America then back, in an episode of American self-fiction brushing with death in their attempt to constitute significance. The article at hand, attempts to examine this glide towards illusion and myths of purity and transcendence. It shows that Philip Roth and Don DeLillo who are known for their curve back towards 19<sup>th</sup> century literature, share less with the hopeful purveyors of the American myth as Emerson, Thoreau or Whitman and perhaps more with Henry James for his leaning towards “tragic optimism” (Lewis, 1955, p. 7). DeLillo and Roth reflect this dialectical nature of the human experience and the American mind successfully but also the ironic gap between myth and realisation. They have chosen to be overtly critical of the American myth by focus on the underside of exceptionalism and self-made manhood.

## II-

The uniqueness of 19<sup>th</sup> century American fiction lay considerably in its romantic mythology. Crafted prettily with an essential component of

existential pathos, the nature of this literature gave it a touch of universality. The mythic dream of freedom from all limitation (religious, biological, historical...etc.) is a universal dream regardless of probabilities of its realisation. It is before all, the dream of Adam which\_ in the estimate of Noble and Lewis\_, was lived as a reality. America's is a dream of a 'New Adam' of moral innocence, free from sin and starting on a new dawn in his prelapsarian Eden. Paradoxically, the dream, as alleged, has been Europe's dream before it was taken and appropriated by American culture which later on grew to a defining image: that of the 'American Adam'. Two centuries back, David W. Noble (1968) advocates, the theme of 'Adamism' was the central myth in the American novel since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Likewise, R.W.B. Lewis in his *American Adam*(1955), declares interest in psychology of myth, and argues that this image embodying "the most fruitful contemporary ideas was that of the authentic American as a figure of heroic innocence and vast potentialities, poised at the start of a new history" (Lewis,1955,p.1).

At the dawn of a new century, *The Human Stain* and *Cosmopolis* contemplate the obsolete human duality of soul/body –inherent in Adamic myth—which is Man's peculiarity and simultaneously his dilemma. Philosophy has long considered this fact the essence of man but it came to the foreground more visibly with the Renaissance. Soren Kierkegaard, who has long been praised for bringing this existential concept into psychology, has utilized the myth of Adam and Eve to divulge this eternal paradox to the Western mind (Becker, 1973,p. 26). Sartre, Camus, Freud, Jung and others who have, in some way, influenced Don DeLillo and Philip Roth are claimed to have written books that are deemed "vital" *only* for they have understood this paradox. Through their assimilation and interest in ontology and psychology, Roth and DeLillo create their protagonists in the image of the new Adam. They revisit this old metaphor to highlight the American predilection towards myths of individualism, creation and self expansion instead of mere affinity to melt in or identify with the cosmos.

Adam peculiarly aspires towards immortality in the first place, or in other words pursues the uniquely symbolic altitude of the human dualism. In *The Human Stain*, Colman Silk represents Adam who in Lewis' terms is an "individual emancipated from history, happily bereft of ancestry, untouched and undefiled by the usual inheritances of family and race" (p.5). Born into a black family in the 40s of the last century, Coleman has come to hold the precept of individualism as his religion and proceeded to dismember from all his bonds of color, family and society altogether. He had in sight the creation of a brand new future as Adam did when he was descended to earth following

his wilful disobedience. As Zuckerman contends, college buildings where Coleman Silk was dean would have been renamed in his honour to glorify him “forever”, had not the incident caused his fall. Great knowledge could not guarantee him immortality in an America turning foolish “by the hour” (Roth, 2000).

Equally, in *Cosmopolis*, Eric Packer, the enormous billionaire springs from unknown origins and the narrative opens with sketches from his daily life casting his very Odyssean bragging. In her exciting talk about ambitious forms of life on disks and microchips, Kinski, his chief of theory, reveals to Packer that immortality has been all great men’s dream; men of grandiose visions and prideful deeds. In fact, *Cosmopolis* hardly about anything other than immortality realised by way of technological transcendence. This is “a promise of life lived in the hubristic confidence that the human limits of time and death can be eluded through one’s ownership and manipulations of technology” (Bonca, 2012, p.1). Nevertheless since Adam, this historical dream has constantly had tragic dimensions. This unrealistic thought of men who dream of a forever is only a reflection of the wish to evade consciousness of death which starts from infancy. This evasion also emerges in a clear pushing towards freedom and self reliance that Lewis depicts as essential in the characterisation of Adam.

Moreover; Roth and DeLillo alike accentuate freedom and individualism by means of self-creation that springs from America’s mythic capacity of ‘self-fiction’. Lewis’ (1955) subsequent excerpt is illuminating for a reading of the discussed protagonists in the shadow of ‘New’ Adam;

an individual standing alone, self-reliant and self-propelling, ready to confront whatever awaited him with the aid of his own unique and inherent resources. It was not surprising, in a Bible-reading generation that the new hero was most easily identified with Adam before the Fall. (p.5)

Both Packer and Coleman are as if tailored on the innocent and tragic model of Lewis’ description. They are New Adams who have escaped history and then commenced their way to freedom, to a new history of wish fulfilment by means of their self-reliance and individualism.

Lewis speaks significantly of Adam’s act of (self)creation as expressed through language itself<sup>4</sup>. In *Cosmopolis*, Packer forges his way into the cyber market of financial dealings, and names all things the way he wishes like Adam in his garden designating things for the first time. How items in Packer’s world like “the smell and the feel of the concave bar make him who he is because he names the fragrance, amandine” (DeLillo, 2016,

p.117). Michael Oriard's words (1978) emphasise a playful element in use of language by DeLillo showcasing his other novel *End Zone*:

A distinct play element is evident in DeLillo's use of language. Many words are spoken for their own sake, for their feel in the mouth of the speaker, for the harmony of their sounds, and for their originality. The book is filled with splendid vulgarity.... (Oriard,1978, p. 9)<sup>5</sup>

It is for this 'originality' that Packer plays creator, constantly naming stuff amidst his interaction with the world of things or while turning scenes in mind during sleepless nights: "he entered the enclosed space of the courtyard, mentally naming what was in it..." (DeLillo, 2016, p.16). This relation between him and the world seems interestingly defining of his identity for the narrative repeats after each act of naming that Packer "knew who he was" (p.20). This is one facet of the dream: to become a master of one's destiny. The new Adam was the conveyor of the new American scene of a fresh beginning during the first decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and a living and nurturing imagery in much of recent fiction.

The biblical story of Adam before the Fall shows not only the fact to take one's fate in both hands and head for a life of self-reliance. It also reveals distancing from nature where error and shame of the human body as something estranged in nature are discovered. Inspiring is the understanding of essence of man in the Renaissance, for it brought to light the symbolic or spiritual side together with his physical or bodily existence. The Adamic dream seems rather to stress the symbolic level for it flies away from all that is nature, inheritance or history. It expediently concurs with Ernest Becker's (1973) contemplation<sup>6</sup>: "Man has a symbolic identity that brings him sharply out of nature. He is a symbolic self", he trusts, and a creature with a personal life history. "He is a creator with a mind that soars out to speculate about atoms and infinity; one who can place himself imaginatively at a point in space and contemplate [...]. This immense expansion, this dexterity, this ethereality, this self-consciousness gives to man literally the status of a small god in nature, as the Renaissance thinkers knew" (p.26). This certainly recalls the Greek tragedies against which Roth is usually read, yet this is most likely a great evocation of Shakespeare's "Hamlet".

In that order, Martina Sciolino(2015) refers to Hamlet and praises his psychological depth as a way to put herself up with those critics who mark down Packer's 'flatness'. "Just as Shakespeare is credited for depicting a deeply psychological subject in the early modern era with *Hamlet*, so *Cosmopolis* ers the flattened character", Sciolino(2015) writes, "so familiar



to DeLillo's readers and arguable a symptom of the late modern era, that is, postmodernity"(p.215)<sup>7</sup>. Packer is entitled to Sciolino's rendering of Guy Debord's definition, "a kind of spectacle in itself", or to Fredric Jameson's labelling of the postmodern subject as an "effect of late capitalism". All this enforces reading these heroes in themselves as 'fictions'. The former description applies well to Roth's anti-hero. Rightly, Derek Parker Royal (2011) believes with Debora Shostack (2004) that Coleman is a mere 'fiction' and that his story is like many Zuckerman tales constructed from "mere fictional imaginings" (Royal, p.119). Narration could be another meeting point for the authors and their emphasis on the discussion of fiction-making.

Both stories are brought up to readers in frame story manner, opening after both protagonists have met their tragic deaths. *Cosmopolis* presented in free indirect narration but some of what we come to know about Packer towards the end is conveyed to us via Richard Sheets (Benno Levin), a disturbed ex-employer who interprets events freely in his diaries. In a more inclusive fashion, Zuckerman narrates Coleman's life story and participates actively in the narrative by way of 'fictionalisation' needed to fill the gaps in autobiographical material which becomes later the novel we are reading. With the novel opening in summer of 1998 we find out about all the events and secrets of Coleman Silk; two years after everything has happened. In another of Roth's metafictional gestures, many of the scenes described in the novel are mere reflections of Zuckerman who proves that the personal and the professional can hardly detach. Both authors however cast mystery over the demise scenes of their pretentious protagonists which occur possibly as a way to invite more thought about protagonists' pathways or to merely bestow some fancy effect on their stories.

Apart from this narratologist consideration, the narratives charter these protagonists themselves as 'creators' and fiction makers, given their high level of intellectuality. Their knowledge tempts them not only to create their own narratives, but also to be in a Faustian control of the world via acts of self-assurance. Coleman approaches his plan of dismemberment fearlessly, investing much confidence in his doggedness and readiness for self-invention. His consciousness of the country's frenzy of racism has been precocious and strong as was his grasp of the necessity of racial passing. This witty kid who happened to be a "star-athlete" and "straight-A student" could not resist living under the shadow of the past but ventured to create *his* own reality (Roth, 2000, p.103, *italics added*). Leslie Fiedler's pointing (1997) to the contrast between this idealism and innocence typical of the American mythic subject, and society which abandoned this purity for the sake of cruelty and

corruption explains this need to be on a constant move as referred to earlier by Hassan.

Not unlike Coleman, Packer questions all his surrounding and never falls under the imprisoning rule of normality or routine. Only twenty-eight years, he thinks in terms of a universal scope and dares contemplate technological transcendence. Packer's ambitious dream is "transcending his body mass" and to "live outside the given limits" (DeLillo, 2016). In their narratives, Roth and DeLillo give the impression of mocking the enlightenment tenets like rationality and transcendence. Marni Gauthier writes generally about DeLillo's undoing of America's mythical history and the quote below illustrates this view:

While the celebration of unrestrained innocence might have been good for the soul, compelling fiction required moral darkness, or at least ambiguity. The American Adam that Whitman made perfect, Herman Melville and Nathaniel Hawthorne had already begun to make more fully human, an undertaking carried on in the decades that followed by the likes of Henry James and Mark Twain (Griffin & Hebert, 2017, p. 6)

What is essentially problematic about such transcendental dreams is that they are only a manifestation of Man's denial of and blindness to his human nature which in turn indicates a denial of reality of life *per se*. To eliminate the anxiety stemming from this condition of Man's duality and shrink his being into either symbolic or physical existence is to fantasize, or in other words, to be untrue to reality. Indeed, to escape this unresolved paradox and the anxiety resultant from man's consciousness of his animality leads Man to lose the right way to freedom. Psychologically speaking, the more Man fears death, the worse this will affect the quality of his life, making it a frightening experience and thus life will be spent, in a sense, as a battle for self-validation. In light of Becker's (1973) rendering of Keirkegaardian and Freudian views, Coleman and Packer are on trial to protect their self esteem or their 'false heroics' by means of 'character defenses' to evade confronting the terror and reality of their 'creatureliness'. In view of that, and contrary to animals, humans are not saved from misery of what they view as nonsensical -if not atrocious- situation because of their consciousness of their animality, and the unresolved ontological contrast between it and the symbolic self.

One's creatureliness, that biological burden and limitation that is the body which man aims to flee, has been repressed by culture. Indeed, there is a



point in reading Packer and Coleman's acts as reflections of an unconscious repression of death which philosophers argue is a unique drive in humans. It is this new perspective on psychoanalysis which is displacing Freud's theory of sexuality (Becker, 1973). Seen from this lens, culture is problematically built on this repression. In the first pages of *The Human Stain*, Roth (2000) in a Hawthorne-like symbolic style, sums up, not very briefly, how a culture's repression translates in exaggerate tendency toward purification—evoking Clinton's "incontinent carnality":

Ninety-eight in New England was a summer of exquisite warmth and sunshine, in baseball a summer of mythical battle [...] and in America the summer of an enormous piety pinge, a purity pinge, when terrorism—which replaced communism[...]—was succeeded by a youthful middle-aged president and a brash, smitten twenty-one-year-old employee carrying on in Oval Office like two teenage kids in a parking lot revived America's oldest communal passion, historically perhaps its most treacherous and subversive pleasure: the ecstasy of sanctimony. (p.2)

Nothing is more urgent in America's culture of the 90s more than maintaining an illusion of 'sanctimony' and purity which has historically dominated America since its start. During that decade also, DeLillo inscribed *Cosmopolis* and injected it with an ironical commentary on human knowledge and the hubristic fantasy of Man in God's image. The authors' engagement with this thought recalls how 19<sup>th</sup> century fictionists were also conscious not only of the strong urge to perfection but also of the dark side of human nature and the gap in between. For example, Frederick Crews in *sins of the Fathers* (1989) discusses Hawthorne as a perfectionist and a psychologist who bents on exposition of the double dimensionality of his characters:

And, in fact, one of the abiding themes of Hawthorne's work is the fruitless effort of people to deny the existence of their "lower" motives. The form of his plots often constitutes return of the repressed—a vengeance of the denied element against an impossible ideal of purity or spirituality" (p.17)

Like Hawthorne who highlighted pursuit of sanctimony and purity from 17<sup>th</sup> century Puritan culture and perfectionist rationality of his day, DeLillo and Roth are perfectionists in the sense they measure their characters—usually

blind to Man's ultimate fall—"against the perfectionist possibility" (Crews, 1989, p. 589).

We wonder with Packer's insights as with Roth's narrator about how astonishing what passes for knowing while death the "disaster ahead" (p.209) remains unknown. "The flaw of the human rationality" Kinski admits to Packer, is that "[i]t pretends not to see the horror and death at the end of the schemes it builds" (DeLillo, 2016, p.53). Commenting about the anti-capitalist protest, her apt remark is that this effort at death denial is a protest against the future itself which seems of absurd end. In her realism, Kinski argues for heroic death against the dream of immortality which haunted most great men in history (61). However, men may turn against the artificiality of culture by falling back to the physical; calling thoughts to earth; reducing all to its basic chemistry to find 'real America'.

Actually, Packer and Coleman's self-consciousness is evident through their wit as well as through this recognition of a close relationship between the self and the sense-world. Importantly, this fact widens their knowledge thanks to consciousness of the body and narcissistic focus on their inner world which in all result in isolation of their person from "the form of social order" (Hoffmann, 2005, p.432). Following Wilson's expression, solipsism or indulgence in self consciousness leads to bankruptcy of moral idealism and thereby to the ultimate reversal of the quest order and a failing of the journey of transcendence. Under the conditions set by the defamiliarization of the world and the alienation from society, the characters revert back to the physical they have first escaped to find meaning when they sought mythic America. Hit by absurdity and the contradictory nature of unreal America, they halt from running behind transcendence and self-invention and turn to self-destruction. Marni Gauthier is right in her remark about DeLillo's undoing of the mythical history, "[DeLillo] invokes and engages neglected histories and forces them up against these quintessential American Mythologies of innocence primarily" (as cited in Royal, 2011, p. 152). She notices that the Adamic character employed in his novels ends tragically which is not dissimilar to Roth. It is quite a repeated pattern in Roth that his heroes –like Oedipus—are struck by the discovery that purification must begin with their person. This recognition eventually constitutes a turning point in the path deathward.

Suitably, after the incident of resignation caused by machinations of propriety in academia— Coleman opts for a life of a solipsist immersed in the realm of desire, much like a child rebelling against a parent. Rightly RossPosnock(2006) calls this "self-unmaking" for he mindlessly celebrates

his unmodified self within his affair with the young janitor and farm carer, Faunia Farley. The later harbours the meaning of the pastoral. Setting their 'edenic' atmosphere in the farm with milking cows listening to music from old times, away from external world and more into their pastoral, Roth expresses noticeably this Adam and Eve imagery: theirs is "the world before the advent of Adam" (Roth, 2000, p.354). They want to welcome death their way instead of letting agonies of time invite it.

Like a Dionysus or an Eros, the primeval Greek god of love and power, old Coleman, as Zuckerman thinks, was "taking what was strongest in him and wisest in him and tearing it apart" (p.178). Much a maniac heading vigorously towards death as if for life, this Ahab-like figure surrenders all his rationality and discipline after the multiple life disappointments. As a matter of fact, his quitting of the battle for significance and legitimacy stands in the context of Greek tragedy for America's disarray is between Apollonian rule of normalcy and Dionysian temptation to let go. Zuckerman puts this in poetic phrasing: "This *was* a new Coleman. [...] the Coleman contaminated by desire alone" (p.20, *italics in original*). His reconcile with "the horrible, elemental imperfection" is a stark opposition to the 90s culture of propriety and perfection, which unluckily does not reflect the disorderly, fluctuating American reality (p.242). Roth's point of view on the tragic fate of man is expressed through Faunia who recognises that the irreducible "human stain" which precedes Adam's disobedience is the only way to be in life.

It is interesting how the return of the repressed informs reading of the two recent novels:

The unregenerate man who lingers in inwardness is like a child whose only world is himself, whose primary interest is attending to his own wants, who feels little responsibility for those other than himself, and who as a stranger in the larger world, sacrifices almost nothing of himself to it. (Johnson, 1973, p.591)

This is a perfect description of the anti-heroes' solipsism. In *Cosmopolis* (2003), DeLillo also makes his anti-hero revolt against "old puritanisms", against rationality and orderly thought patterns and also against technology which he depicts as "semi-mythological" (p.117). It is thought that Packer's evasion of death and thought of immortality mainly via technological transcendence made him forgot how to live. Freeing himself from hopeful dreams, he surrenders to the illogic of the speculative markets and heads towards death in hope for his cold heart to revitalize. A "trembling

pleasure to be found, and joy at all misfortune, in the swift pitch of markets down". DeLillo (2016) maintains, "But it was the threat of death at the brink of the night that spoke to him most surely about some principle of fate he'd always known would come clear in time. Now he could begin the business of living" (p.62).

To live is to be one with one's body sensual, sexual and chaotic, for Packer came to admit that "the frenzy...it's simply how we live" (p.50). He now listens more to his asymmetrical gland, and wants to live "in the scalding fact of his biology" (p.31). In DeLillo, the urge to destroy is capitalist and it has only come to view -more patently- in Packer. Since its start, Eric Packer's one-day journey responds to one desire: to have a haircut; i.e. to self-destruct. Disregarding the anti-capitalist riots, a pop star's funeral and especially the president's visit blocking the street, Packer's insistence on his request which should be done at Anthony's, his father's barber rather than any other shop nearby is existential. He shoots his security guard ridiculously. Packer even shoots his own palm to feel "authentic" and it is because he could *see* the world only when in pain: "He'd come to know himself, untranslatable, through his pain" (p.117). The narrative's concluding note is delightfully explanatory: upon dying, "[h]e stared into space. He understood what was missing. The predatory impulse, the sense of large excitation that drove him through his days, the sheer and reeling need to be" (p.117). Eric Packer's hyper-maniacal will in the likeness of Ahab's was the reason behind his counsellors' advices to hold off his crazy burrowing of yen.

### III- Conclusion:

In conclusion, it is thought, that American characters in contemporary fiction at the start of the new century still revolve or at least touch upon this drama, of a self-created rebel. This mythic figure is noted to rely on some unconventional traits as Faustian pride or so and which ends always tragically in the real world, in the hands of history like the first Adam. Through their narratives which reflect a psychological insight, Roth and DeLillo come together in the attempt to mend the one-sided-myth of innocence with sin, and purity with tragedy, and the symbolic with the physical altitude of man. The dream of new Adam ultimately ends as that of the first; by showing its real face and peeling off its mythic shells. Kierkegaard's solution to this eternal drama is confrontation of that human fear of death to sooth the anxiety engendered by consciousness and paradoxical nature of Man. Instead of a false heroics and a hubristic self-esteem, a leap of faith in a higher power of creation poses as a safer rather than an absurd end.

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<sup>3</sup> In an interview with Kevin Nance run by *Chicago Tribune*(2012), DeLillo summed up the experience of many authors writing in our century, in a trial to give general shape to what he is doing: “Yes, I think my work is influenced by the fact that we’re living in dangerous times. If I could put it in a sentence, in fact my work is about just that: living in dangerous times”.

<sup>4</sup> For another perspective of language as meaningless see, Sean McCann

<sup>5</sup> Sean McCann’s “Training and Vision: Roth, DeLillo, Banks, Peck, and the Postmodern Aesthetics of Vocation” (2007) discusses language from a different perspective in different novels by the authors: “Meaningless language allows DeLillo's protagonist, like Roth's, to learn that he inhabits his own distinctive world” (319).

<sup>6</sup> Becker’s idea on the paradoxical nature of man is built on Erich Fromm’s *The Heart of Man: Its Genius for Good and Evil*, (1964).

<sup>7</sup> For more discussion about this and the Greek parallels, see, Patrice D. Rankine (2005), “Passing as Tragedy: Philip Roth’s *the Human Stain*, the Oedipus Myth, and the Self-Made Man”, 47(1),p.108.