

Exploring the Nature of Desire in Andre Aciman's *Call Me By  
Your Name*: From Page to Screen by Luca Guadagnino

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the requirements for the degree of

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## Abstract

Adapted by James Ivory from Andre Aciman's 2007 novel, and directed by Luca Guadagnino, 2017 film "Call Me By Your Name" is recognized for its sensual rendering on the romantic love between the seventeen-years-old musical prodigy Elio and twenty four years old doctoral student Oliver. Both the film and the novel are masterful depictions of pure and unflinching nature of desire. Both the novel and movie depicts a wild romp between two same sex lovers in an enticing sexual setting of Italy. *CMBYN* is a coming of age of seventeen years old boy who unapologetically embrace his bizarre nature of desire. This film and novel both are the pinnacle of desire, depicting love in its truest form. This is an unrequited love story about two people who pursue two distinct paths in life, yet the essence of their desire remains indelible. *CMBYN* is journey from an unabashed tale of desire to an emotional abyss. This paper aims to delve into Elio's plethora of desires, his voyage towards this twisted skein of desire and best out of his desire. As Aciman's novel is adapted for screen by Luca Guadagnino, I will examine whether the film does enough justice to the text or not.

**Keywords:** twisted skein, desire, homoerotic, linguistic tropes

## **Dedication**

I'd like to dedicate my thesis to Mayaboti, my little princess who waited for me until late at night so that she could sleep in my lap while I was sitting in front of my laptop hours after hours.

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## List of Acronyms

*CMBYN*      *Call Me By Your Name*

## Chapter 1

### Introduction

Based on André Aciman's 2007 novel of the same name, Luca Guadagnino's 2017 film *Call Me by Your Name* captures the story of a homoerotic summer romance between two male characters. Elio, a reserved seventeen-year-old musical prodigy, and Oliver, a twenty-four-year-old American doctoral student fall in love in Italy. The film centers on their developing romance, which comes to a devastating denouement. Both the novel and the film depict the story of this queer romance amid a host of classical tropes and allusions, but they each do so in a different way. The most intriguing feature of both the novel and the film is Elio's unwavering longing for Oliver. As a result, the primary goal of this study is to investigate the multifaceted nature of human desire. This paper will also investigate how homoerotic desire is expressed through language tropes. Elio explores the plausibility of Oliver's interest in him throughout by delving into the meaning of Oliver's language trope. This linguistic trope begins with attempting to decipher the meaning of the word "later." Elio seeks for hints in every language trope so that it may disclose Oliver's remark on him. Elio remains restless when Elio gets notes from Oliver, "Grow up. I'll see you at midnight." (Aciman120), to grasp Oliver's intent, Elio repeats this sentence several times. Aside from language motifs, this article will also look at Elio's transition from a bizarre teen to a mature adult. Furthermore, this paper will depict a comparative study between the film and text in order to understand the effectiveness of the adaptation. Despite the fact that the novel has a strong aesthetic backdrop, the film is also artistically whole. The film's ending is significantly superior to the novel, but the novel goes one step further in exploring the essence of desire. The film shares much of the novel's sensuousness and can be described as an epitome of the fidelity of transformation. Following its Oscar win in 2017, this film has ignited a

discussion over whether it should be classified as a "gay classic" or a "queer classic. In the final chapter I will demonstrate that *Call Me by Your Name* is a "queer film" rather than a "gay film" because Elio's sexuality remains ambiguous throughout the film and book. The novel *CMBYN* is a novel of reminiscence what Ronald Barthes calls "anamnesis"<sup>1</sup> in *A Lover's Discourse*. Barthes's *A Lover's Discourse* and Aciman's *CMBYN* goes hand in hand. Elio's anticipation for Oliver propels him to a condition of delirium in which can be defined through Roland Barthes' "attente."<sup>2</sup> This state of delirium causes him dream Oliver in almost every night. Because, "if the other does not com, I hallucinate the other: waiting is a delirium."(Barthes 39). The novel is a love letter that has been painstakingly composed in order to ruminate about the past. The film, on the other hand, is about Elio's metamorphosis from a rebel to a tranquil, sensible lover. Elio is the perfect epitome of Barthes's "attene" whose fatal identity is he "*is the one who waits*" (Barthes 40). Instead of having much difference, both the movie and novel are an ardent love letter to desire.

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<sup>1</sup> "anamnesis"-which recovers only insignificant features in no way dramatic, as if I remembered time itself and only time: it is a fragrance without support , a texture of memory."

<sup>2</sup> Attene/waiting is tumult of anxiety provoked by waiting for the lived being, subject to trivial delays (rendezvous, letters, telephone calls, returns).

## Chapter 2

### Literature Review

The word desire has often been a pejorative slur from the outset. In order to incorporate the idea of queer desire, I have borrowed extensively from, Judith Butler, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Ronald Barthes's concept of desire in order to incorporate those concepts in *Call Me By Your Name* both for film and novel. The concept of desire has been a matter of radical concern for many; however, the recent study of desire has recognized desire as a positive human drive. The idea of desire seeks its root from Plato's account of desire in his seminal books *Symposium* and *Republic*. The trouble with the Platonic concept of desire is that it associates it with 'lack' and 'void,' and therefore portrays desire in a poor context. Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari use the phrase 'desiring machine' to define desire and challenge the Platonic concept of desire. They think desire is not is a sense of 'lack' or 'void'. This Freudian and Platonic negative notion on desire is subverted in Deleuze and Guattari's book where they claim:

“...the traditional logic of desire is all wrong from the very outset: from the very first step that Platonic logic of desire forces us to take, making us choose between production and acquisition. From the moment that we place on the side of acquisition, we make desire an idealistic (dialectical, nihilistic) conception, which causes us to look upon it as primarily a lack: a lack of an object, a lack of the real object.” (Deleuze and Guattari, 2000,p. 25).

Jean Baudrillard in his essay “Forget Foucault” article claims that desire is neither an acquisition, nor a lack but the positive dissemination of flows (Baudrillard, 2007, 25). In *Republic* Plato divided desire into three components, “reason, spirit and desire, in which desire is the opposite of reason and is to be governed by reason.” (Jihai Gao, 407). The concept of desire can be further demonstrated through Jihai Gao’s concept analysis on “Deleuze’s Conception of Desire.” In this article, Gao explains how Deleuze discards Plato’s notion on desire in his seminal book *The Republic*. Gao says, “Plato in his *Republic* takes desire as opposite of reason, something to be control.” (Gao 406). He adds, for Deleuze, desire is neither opposite to reason, nor a negative force, rather it is “not purely psychic, not a lack as usually understood but productive in nature” (Gao 407). Thus, Deleuze believes in universality of desire. His notion of desire is not confined to any particular object. Rather, it can be for anything and everything. In “The Desiring Machine” chapter, Deleuze and Guattari mentioned, “man and nature not like two opposite...rather they are the one and same essential reality.” (Deleuze and Guattari 4). Thus if anyone practices same sex desire, they do not perform any act that is against nature. As man is a part of nature, man to man desire is as natural as man to woman desire. In “The Desiring Machine” chapter, Deleuze and Guattari identifies two types of desire: the paranoid and the schizophrenic. Both of them emphasize mostly on schizophrenic desire because it is liberating and according to them “The schizophrenic is the universal producer. There is no need to distinguish here between producing and its product.” (7). This schizophrenic desire liberates society from the oppression of capitalism. This is also connected to human desire as there is no hierarchy between subject and object of desire, at the same time “producing and its product.” Thus, they suggested an alternative theory of psychoanalysis and named it “schizoanalysis”. Deleuze and Guattari say, “A Schizoanalysis is schizophrenizes in order to break the holds of power and institute research into new collective

subjectivity and a revolutionary healing in mankind.” (Deleuze and Guattari XXI) If someone’s subject of desire becomes the producer and the outcome of that desire becomes product and he/she does not differentiate between desire and the outcome of our desire, it will liberate us from power practice. If sex and gender identity comes in between the subject and object, it creates a discourse of subordination. Judith Butler says, “Gender should be overthrown, eliminated...because it is always a sign of subordination.” (Butler xiii). Deleuze and Guattari’s “schizophrenic” aspect of desire is capable of liberating this subordination. This is very much applicable to *CMBYN* because the schizophrenic desire between Elio and Oliver breaks the boundary between them and they call them each other by their name. There is no self and other divide between them. Elio considers there is not self and other divide between Elio and Oliver, they are inseparable. Elio says, “...me and him, the longed for words from his mouth to my mouth, back into his mouth, swapping words from mouth to mouth...he repeated after me...call me by your name and I’ll call you by mine.”(Aciman 134).

Ronald Barthes, in his book *A Lover’s Discourse* has analyzed numerous aspects of human desire. He addresses some important concerns about desire in this book, the most important aspect among many, is the taxonomy of desire. Ronald Barthes says, “I have loved or will loved several times in my life. Does this mean, then, my desire...is linked to a type? Does this mean that my desire is classifiable?” (Barthes 34). In chapter three of my thesis I will answer this question through analyzing the characters in *CMBYN* both in book and film. In that novel and film, Elio encounters Oliver's desire in varieties of ways. Elio is a rebel in order to encounter his love for Oliver. His confrontation of desire and confession depicts this defiance. This protest of a lover can be demonstrated through Ronald Barthes’s concept of rebellion. Elio has been adamant about his desire for Oliver since the beginning. This stubbornness is according to

Barthes, “is love’s protest: for all the wealth of “good reasons” for loving differently, loving better, loving without being in love.” (Barthes 22). Elio’s rebellion is to keep loving Oliver and growing through this love. Elio thus says, “I look back on those days and regret none of it, none the risks not the shame, not the total lack of foresight.” (Aciman 161) Barthes expresses this rebellion of a lover by saying, “I am simultaneously and contradictorily happy and wretched; “to succeed” or “to fail.” (Barthes 22). Elio’s desire can be further demonstrate through Ronald Barthes’s concept of language. Barthes says, “To try to write love is to confront the muck of language: the region of hysteria where language is both too much and too little.”(Barthes 99). As language cannot do enough justice to express someone’s desire, Oliver has taken the path to express his desire through his coded gesture that Elio needs to find out throughout the book and the movie. In both the movie and the film, Elio says, “Why didn’t you give me sign? (160) and Oliver says he did give him sign “After tennis once. I touched. Just a way of showing I like you.” (Aciman 160). Throughout novel and film, Elio looks for the meaning of Oliver’s coded gesture. The novel starts with Oliver’s signature word “*Later!*”(Aciman 3). Throughout the book and the film, Elio keep searching on the meaning of this “later.” Elio juxtaposes it with Rabbi Hillel’s famous injunction, “If not now when?” (Aciman 51). This injunction sounds like, “if not later, when? Later offers an unanticipated complexity to their bond, and it sounds a lot like now. This tropes of language is one of the main aspects of this novel and film where both Elio and Oliver attempts to hide their relationship from Mafalda’s gaze. Both in the movie and the novel, Mafalda keeps her eyes on Elio and Oliver several times. Elio says, “Her eyes followed me every step of the way as if ready to pounce on my knife before I slit my veins with it.” (Aciman 89). This language trope is further demonstrated by Barthes, “In the sensual language, all minds converse together. They need no other language, for this is the language of nature.” (Barthes 99).



Even when Oliver and Elio get intimate for the first time, they don't speak much. Their body is the medium through which they communicate. This linguistic trope has a strong link to heteronormativity. Their same sex desire will be revealed if their language flourishes, and there is always the dread of being ridiculed. This heteronormative politics can be demonstrated through Judith Butler's concept of gender and sexuality. Tracing Butler's idea on body and bodily inscription Butler asserts, "and those who don't do their gender right are constantly punished." (522). In the Preface section of *Gender Trouble*, I sought to understand some of the terror and anxiety that some people suffer in "becoming gay," the fear of losing one's place in gender or of not knowing who one will be if one sleeps with someone of the ostensibly "same" gender. (Butler XII). This statement of Butler regarding same sex desire is applicable in *CMBYN* as Elio is terrified about performing some bizarre sexual act with peaches. When Oliver discovers the peach that was wet with Elio's sperm, Elio sobs. Instead of having a sexual encounter, the film skillfully captures a gloriously weird emotional moment between Elio and Oliver. After masturbating with peaches, Elio says, "I'm sick, aren't I? (Aciman 148). Elio also becomes disintegrated and becomes confounded to deal with confronted with the same sex drive. Butler's remark explains Elio's predicament situation since Elio isn't ready to be labeled as "gay" and isn't sure where he belongs. Butler explain there are consequences to not "performing" our (gender, sexual, etc.) identity according to societal norms. The final conversation between Elio and Oliver sheds light on such consequences. During the conversation, Oliver tells Elio: "My father would have carted me off to a correctional facility."(Guadagnino, 2:0:00). This emphasizes the role that the society and our family play in shaping our identity or in pressuring us to conform to a certain identity. In the *Preface* (1999) of *Gender Trouble*, Butler further adds the normative view on sexuality and gender: "sexual ordering of gender maintaining that, men

who are men will be straight, women who are women will be straight.” (Butler xiii). Elio’s anxiety and nosebleed are caused by the fear of his losing his status of being “straight.” He overcomes this fear of being not “straight” according to the normative view, and gradually becomes a sexually fluid person who does not believe in sexual ordering of gender anymore. Elio’s sexual fluidity can be demonstrated through MacKinnon’s concept of sexuality and gender, quoted in Judith Butler’s *Preface 1999*: “To have a gender means (sexuality too), to have entered already into heterosexual relationship of subordination.” (Butler xiii). In both the novel and the film, Elio’s sexual fluidity is illustrated numerous times. He does not involve himself into this subordination and maintains a fluid sexual impulse. Elio doesn’t confine his desire to one particular sex or gender; he gets close to people of all sexual orientations, not only that, he masturbates with peaches. In the book Elio says, “I began to feel we were not even two men, just two beings.” (Aciman 132). Elio does not perceive his relationship with Oliver to be gay, but rather a queer one. In chapter four, I will go over queer and gender fluidity in greater depth.

In the *Epistemology of the Closet*, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick also has pointed out that “Silence is as important as speech.”<sup>3</sup> In a discourse of same sex desire, silence plays a crucial role to communicate with others. Sometimes the language tropes between same sex lovers should perform through silence. Sedgwick quotes from Foucault that, “there is no binary division to be made between what one says and what one does not say. We must try to determine the different ways of not saying such things... There is not one but many silences...and they are an integral part of the strategies.” (Sedgwick 3). Silence is another linguistic trope to convey same sex

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<sup>3</sup> Dellamora, Richard. “Reviewed Work(s): *Epistemology of the Closet* by Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick.” *Journal of the History of Sexuality*. Vol. 2, No. 4, pp.667-70. University of Texas Press, 1992. [pront](#).

desire. Elio in *CMBYN*, both in the novel and film, Oliver recognizes Elio's yearning for him, thus he remains silent. Elio on the contrary says, "Can't stand the silence." (Aciman 117).

In Elio's case, Sedgwick's "act of coming out" occurs through Oliver's response towards his desire. This coming out has referred by Sedgwick as "having come out to someone else." (Sedgwick 4). Although Harold Bloom has pointed out that, "sexual passion is no longer dangerous in us," (Bloom 99), Sedgwick has pointed out that, "Our culture still sees to it's being dangerous enough that women and men who find or fear they are homosexual...are physically and mentally terrorized through the institution of law, religion...mass culture." (Sedgwick 58). Although Harold Bloom's notion of same sex desire is partially correct, however, I will not disaffirm with Sedgwick either. When we look at *Call Me By Your Name* closely, we can see that religious and social pressures are still strong enough to keep homosexuals in control. Although Elio's parents are enough liberal about Elio's desire, Oliver has to back off from his same sex desire due to his familial obligation. In the movie, Oliver talks about Elio's father that, "He made me feel like I was a part of the family. Almost like a son in law. You are so lucky" (Guadagnino 02: 05:00). And immediately after, Oliver talks about correctional ceremony. It clearly indicates that Oliver's parents are strict and his Star of David necklace indicates may be he has some religious obligation as well.

The unique employment of classics *CMBYN* can be demonstrated through Sedgwick's thoughtful insight on Greek aesthetic and its relationship with Christianity. In "Greek/Christian" chapter, Sedgwick implies that "Classical and Christian culture became a surface suffused with meanings about the male body...the romantic rediscovery of ancient Greece cleared out-historically under furnished imaginative space in which relations to and among human bodies might be newly a subject of utopian speculation." (Sedgwick 136). This is also stressed in *Call*

*Me By Your Name* movie when Mr. Perlman shows the images of Greek sculptures and say “While examining some Hellenistic sculptures in the slide show, Mr.Perlman says, these sculptures have “Ageless ambiguity, as if they are daring you to desire them.” (Guadagnino, 89:00:30). Those Greek sculptures have a romantic inclination with male body. Sedgwick says, “...the passion of the romantic spirit, all the perfection of the Spirit that is Greek. The harmony of soul and body-how much that is! We in our madness have separated the two, and invented a realism that is vulgar.” (Sedgwick, qtd. from Basil Hallward, 137). It indicates that in the name of vulgarity, how human desire is suppressed and how we separate our soul and desire from our body, but we do not realize that human soul and body are inseparable and our body is the home for our desire.

Adaptation from literature is not a recent phenomenon. Linda Hutcheon in her book *Theory of Film Adaptation* has pointed out that, you should not understand adaptation only through novel and film. Hutcheon claims that, “The Victorians had a habit of adapting just about everything...poems, novels, plays, operas, paintings, songs...”(Hutcheon XIII) Film adaptation is the process of adapting any literary source from page to screen. Although an adaptation can deviate from the source text, Hutcheon believes that it should not be completely self-contained. In Hutcheon’s words, “*A Theory of Adaptation*” begins its study of adaptations *as adaptations*; that is not only as autonomous works. Instead, they are examined as deliberate, announced and extended revisitations of prior works.” (Hutcheon XVI). Although faithfulness was formerly a source of concern, Linda Hutcheon draws up the current concern of cinematic adaptation. Hutcheon claims, although “fidelity debates” were an ongoing process and audience wanted to know “how close and how close or far from their “original” or “source” text” (XXVI), however, recent audience is accepting deviation for the quality of adaptive strategy. Hutcheon adds that,

instead of searching for “fidelity,” “perhaps it is time look instead to such things as popularity, persistence, or even the diversity and extend of dissemination for criteria of success.” (Hutcheon XXVI). According to Hutcheon, Adaptation should not examine for its fidelity, rather it should be studied for its intertextuality. She adds, “When we call a work adaptation, we openly announces its overt relationship to another work or works.” (Hutcheon 6). In *Call Me By Your Name*, There are numerous intertextual components, and this paper will investigate whether or they can be effectively adapted in the film. This paper will also explore the nature of human desire and Elio’s coming of age by experimenting with his desire.

## Chapter 3

### Analysis

#### 3.1 Twisted Skein of Desire

The concept of human desire is arduous to pin down. *Call Me By Your Name* uses contemplative narration to demonstrate that Elio's desire is muddled with conflicted identifications. In this chapter, I'll try to unravel the Gordian knot of human desire through Elio's experimentation with desire. It's a journey that commences with Elio's sexual awakening and ends with his spiritual affinity with Oliver. Within an exquisite retrospection, their yearning leads to an emotional complexity of same sex desire. The concept of desire is rather complex and Elio's twisted nature of desire can be demonstrated through his and Oliver's Linguistic trope.

#### 3.2 Commentary on Parenting

A queer retrospection is given to this novel with the intense monologue of Elio's father with Elio. Jack Halberstam has pointed out that, "For this novel queer time exists in opposition to the patriarchal family lineage, so Elio's father's advice takes on a particular tint, having repressed his own desire" (Halberstam 1). Elio's father bemoans his ineptitude to "I may have come close, but I never had what you had. Something always held me back or stood in the way. How you live your life is your business. But remember, our hearts and our bodies are given to us only once. Most of us can't help but live as though we've got two lives to live, one is the mockup, the other the finished version, and then there are all those versions in between. But there's only one, and before you know it, your heart is worn out, and, as for your body, there comes a point

when no one looks at it, much less wants to come near it. Right now there's sorrow. I don't envy the pain. But I envy you the pain.” (Aciman 225)

In this passage, Mr. Perlman, Elio's father avoids imposing a label on Elio and Oliver's relationship. Instead, He clears out the air to open up in front of his queer son. While speaking to Elio about Oliver, he skillfully avoids discomfort... Instead of pointing out their homoerotic passion, Elio's father laments on his inability to venture on queer desire. This monologue is made better in the film than to the novel. In the film, Elio's father says, “I envy you” for not having such kind of friendship, Elio's father admits that he too had the same sex desire that he decided to repress, most likely for the fear of being ridiculed in public and being ostracized. When he says “something always held me back” I can connect it with Oliver's fear of being exposed in a public discourse. Elio's father's monologue implies how a parent of a queer son should communicate.

### **3.3 From *Symposium***

In *A Lover's Discourse* Ronald Barthes talks about alteration of images between two lovers. For that he traces example from Plato's *Symposium* by saying, “It is as if the alteration of the image occurs when *I am ashamed for the other*. (The fear of the shame according to Phaedrus, kept the Greek lovers in a way of the Good, each obliged to care for his own image in the other's eyes)” (Barthes 26). The *Symposium* emphasizes the need of two lovers maintaining a positive image of each other in order to avoid becoming trapped in the aphorism of social world. In *CMBYN*, both the movie and the novel, Oliver confesses his concern of being ridiculed because of Elio's casual attitude toward his desire. When both of them meets after the confession in Elio's favorite spot, Oliver admonishes that, “We can't do this-I know myself. So far we've

behaved. We've been good. Neither of us has done anything to feel ashamed of. Let's keep it that way. I want to be good." (Aciman 82). Oliver is someone who is caught up in Barthes words, "the platitude of the social world." (Barthes 26). Elio's casual demeanor may affect Oliver's reputation, so he resolves to keep their relationship private. Oliver wants to keep their relationship between themselves. Their connection is analogous to the shared washroom that connects both of their rooms. There, Oliver is stripped naked, and Elio appears from his chamber. Both Elio and Oliver have access to the washroom, but no one else can. It is a true element of their connection that they are willing to test their desires in that private arena. The arena where both of them can express their true self. Elio says, "He was my secret conduit to myself-like a catalyst that allows us to become who we are, the foreign body, the pacer, the graft...that sends all the right impulse." (Aciman 143).

### **3.4 Iacta Alea Est**

The concept of desire is further demonstrated through memory and space. Space and desire are inextricably linked. People we formerly desired may not be present in any exact location, but their aura and intangible presence continue to torment us via memory stupor. In Elio's memory can sometimes overtake his mind and take him to a vividly remembered past. Elio is well aware that this summer of love will soon be over. When Oliver will be absent, desire will morph into a survival need that will render Elio vulnerable. Elio thus says, "All this means is that in ten days when I look out to this spot, you won't be here. I don't know what I will do then. At least you will be elsewhere, where there are no memories." (Aciman 155). This statement is about longing for a moment when Elio plunged into a delirium of desire in the hope of falling for one another through Elio's memory. When Oliver will depart, the summer house will be filled with void. Elio will be haunted by Oliver's memory, which will compel him to travel back to the



time they spent their summer together. This film is a call to its viewers to delve within themselves and confront their memories in a specific setting. The concept of memory through desire can be further crossed the river, he says the proverb, “iactaalea cast” which means “to die is cast.” (Aciman 119) Our memory implies the same phrase, there is no coming back from the stupor of our memory. Many event passes a point that there is no return from it. The movie ends with a four minute long mise-en-scene shot, and “vision of Gidion” song is played in the background, it says, “Is it a video? (Guadagnino 2:06:56) it demonstrates how Oliver’s memory is still vivid in his mind like a video and there is no coming back from those memory.

### **3.5 Desire through *A Lover’s Discourse***

Elio's unabashed, frank, and honest account of the trajectory of desire is the most intriguing aspect of this novel. This absence between two lovers can be explained through Ronald Barthes’s *A Lover’s Discourse*, where Barthes incorporates Greek concept on lover’s absence. Barthes says, “But isn’t desire always the same, whether the object is present or absent? Isn’t the object *always* absent? This isn’t the same languor: there are two words: *Pothos*, desire for the absent being, and *Himeros*, the more burning desire for the present being.” (Barthes 15). Although, Elio anticipates he will be plagued by Oliver’s memory in his absence, however, Oliver thinks otherwise. Oliver says, “The way you think sometimes...You’ll be fine.” (Aciman 155). Oliver is aware that his presence is causing Elio more susceptible. Elio’s “pothos” will be less bizarre than his “himeros” for Oliver. Even if Oliver leaves, Elio’s desire gets intense with his absence. Thus, Barthes says, “I make the others absence to my worldliness.” Elio substitutes Marzia for Oliver while he is absent. Elio is equally at blame for Marzia's loneliness, yet he embraces Marzia because they both endure the same agony. Barthes says, “The subject painfully identifies himself with some person who occupies the same position. When Elio blames Oliver

saying “Traitor” Elio says, “It never crossed my mind that I too was a traitor, that somewhere near her home, a girl had waited for me ...and that I, like Oliver, hadn’t given her a second thought.” (Aciman 96). Two lost lovers revive their romance just because they share similar pains. Another important aspect of desire is shown through Elio’s lack of confession and failure of language. Robert Barthes says, “...the more I experience the specialty of my desire the less I give it a name.” (Barthes 20). This statement assimilates with Elio’s twisted nature of desire. Elio is troubled by his desire for Oliver, which is warped to the point of obsession. He is also riddle by the twisted nature of his desire. His bizarre urge for Oliver has left him bewildered and has caused him to wonder about himself. Elio says, “Did I want to be like him? Did I want to be him? Or did I just want to have him? (Aciman 68). Initially Elio is intimidated by Oliver’s body and he also wants to be like him. He then feels compelled to have Oliver physically. Finally Elio considers both of them as an inseparable being. Elio's character is evolved through his experimentation of desire. He grows with desire, it never went away but it gets better with time. In an interview at “Talks at Gs”<sup>4</sup>, Andre Aciman explains Elio’s desire by saying, “It may not last forever, but don’t snuff the flame. Don’t kill it soon.” Desire is portrayed via numerous layers in both the text and the film. Both Both Elio and Oliver are reluctant to engage in sex straight away. Both of them take their time to express their desire, and the confessional process has a linguistic trope from the start. Even Aciman concedes that the scene depicting the Battle of Piave was the most challenging to write since it was at that point when confession begins. Confession is the most pivotal moment for everyone with any form of desire. The word "love" does not appear in Elio’s or Oliver's mouths once, yet Elio shows his desire without openly stating it. In that interview Aciman also admits that, “if there is a mission in my book, I would

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<sup>4</sup> “Andre Aciman, “The Meaning and Message of ‘Call Me By Your Name’” *Youtube*. Uploaded by Goldman Sachs, 11 March 2018 <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mObuAkTOG\\_A&t=978s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mObuAkTOG_A&t=978s)>

like that to be my mission.” Elio, too, is on a mission to show desire without saying I love you outright. Apart from that, Aciman didn't want Elio to rush into sex. In that interview, Aciman states that, “In today's world, sex comes right away.” As a result, Aciman portrayed Elio as someone who had to wait for his much-cherished love. Not only that, but his yearning is centered on Oliver's phrase "Later." Elio's desire has been described by Aciman as a "twisted skein," in which Elio's incapacity to confess causes him to believe erroneously. One day when Oliver went for fishing with Anchise and was not coming home, all of Elio's family members suspected that may be he is drowned, Elio says something very unexpected: “...almost to my shame, that part of me didn't mind his dying.” (Aciman 19). Elio's inability to articulate his desire became so bothersome that he wished for Oliver to die at this moment so that he could overcome his longing for Oliver. He also thinks that may be Oliver's death can liberate himself from dying for Oliver. In Barthes's word from Keatsean notion of death, “death liberated from dying.” (Barthes 12). Elio's desire for Oliver may fade away once Oliver is gone forever. Elio's desire began as a bodily drive, but it starts to evolved into something more. Elio says, “...no one in the world wanted him as physically as I did...no one had studied every bone in his body, ankles, knees, wrists, fingers.” (Aciman 39). This physical drive becomes so intense that Elio used to dream about him and used to have a hallucinatory physical union between him and Oliver.

The most important component of Elio's desire for Oliver is that it is unrestrained and it does not seek any viability. At a certain point, Elio overcame the dread and discomfort of his desire. He's no longer concerned about Oliver's reaction to his longing. He eventually gets over his apprehension to proclaim his desire. Elio says, “Nervous or not nervous, I no longer cared to cross-examine every one of my impulses. If I am stupid, let me be stupid. If I touch his knee, so I'll touch his knee.” (Aciman 130). Both the novel and the movie are Elio's journey from being

a “social catastrophe” to a nonchalant youth who successfully evolved from “To hug, not to hug” to “If I want to hug, I’ll hug.” (Aciman 129-30). Furthermore, Elio recognizes the inevitability of their connection. Despite knowing Oliver will depart and their relationship won’t have any viability, Elio still desires for Oliver. Their relationship can be explained through Ronald Barthes’s concept of love. In *A Lover’s Discourse*, Barthes says that, “I emerge from it neither victor nor vanquished: I am tragic. Someone tells me: this kind of love is not viable. But how can you evaluate viability? Why is the viable a good thing? Why is it better to last than to *burn*?” (Barthes 23). This statement perfectly encapsulates Elio’s love towards Oliver. He isn’t looking for feasibility; rather, his desire for Oliver is twisted and multi-layered. In the movie, when Elio’s nose was bleeding and Oliver becomes anxious if it is happening for him, Elio replies no “I am a mess, aren’t I?” (Aciman 85). Mess in a sense that, he has knowingly chosen to “burn” than to “last”. As Deleuze and Guattari points out that, there is desire and social and nothing comes in between, Elio is the one who prioritizes desire over being social. When he says I’m bizarre, he’s also implying that he’s not willing to conform to the normative society’s definition of sociality. Despite the fact that their connection is not destined to last, Elio regards his love and desire as a “value.” It is the kind of value that cannot be taken away as long as Elio is alive. At the final scene of the book when Elio comes to meet Oliver at his university, Elio says, “You are the only person I’d like to say goodbye to when I die, because only then will this thing I call my life make any sense. And if I should hear that you dies, my life...will cease to exist.” (Aciman 240). This sentence demonstrates how Elio’s desire began as a physical drive and evolved into something that gives his life meaning. Without this value of desire, his life is not less than a coma. Elio says, “Tomorrow I go back to my coma, and you to yours.” (Aciman 241). Their desire can be demonstrated further through Ronald Barthes’s concept of love as a value: “Despite

the difficulties of my story, despite discomforts, doubts, despairs, despite impulses to be done with it, I unceasingly affirm love, within myself, as a value.” (Barthes 22). *CMBYN*, in my opinion, is an approach for improving oneself through desire, but it is not about defining individual's desire. Even if it is difficult to define Elio's love for Oliver is complicated and not easy to framework, it has a strong value in his life that gives meaning to his life to some extent. Even if Elio's love for Oliver is convoluted and difficult to define, it has a tremendous worth in his life that provides it some purpose. Among all the uncertainty and heartbreak, Elio still affirms his desire for Oliver. Despite the volatility and anguish, Elio persists to express his love for Oliver. This film and novel are, in fact, like a passionately penned love letter that will most likely not be sent, or if it is, will receive no response from the other side, yet love still persists.

Elio believes that his passion for Oliver aided him in discovering his true self. Elio has recognized himself through the impulses Oliver has given to him. To Elio, Oliver is like “the other man's heart that makes us more us than we were before the transplant.” (Aciman 143). Oliver's response to Elio's desire was significant in easing Elio's unsettled self. By responding to Elio's desire, Oliver becomes Elio's significant other and both of them became inseparable being Elio can't conceive Oliver as a solitary being at some point. He says, “in accurate verbs in the twisted skein of desire, where having someone's body to touch and being that someone we're longing to touch are one and the same...where the chambers of the hearts, like the trapdoors of desire.” (Aciman 68). The significant other of Elio can be interrelated with Barthes definition of *atopos*. Barthes elaborates Nietzsche's concept of *atopos* by saying, “The other whom I love and who fascinates me is *atopos*. I cannot classify the other, for the other is, precisely, Unique, the singular image which has miraculously come to correspond to the specialty of my desire.” (Barthes 34). Oliver is the ‘other’ who compliments Elio's desire and Oliver's heart is now more

Elio's than Oliver's. Barthes considers that "the other is the figure of my truth." (Barthes 34). Oliver is Elio's other true self who is more Elio's than Oliver's. Elio thus says, "Is it your body that...I want to slip into it and own it as if it were my own...I craved nothing more in my life that afternoon, to feel you slip inside me as if my entire body were your bathing suit, your home? You in me, me in you..." (Aciman 68). As a result, Elio and Oliver are complacent, with Oliver serving as Elio's permanent residence.

Elio's desire is expressed through Barthes's explanation of Balzac's notion of strict heroic values. Barthes quotes from Balzac that, "It is unworthy to great souls to expose to those around them the distress they feel." (Barthes qtd. from Clotilde de Vaux 42). In the film when Elio's mother translates from *Heptameron*, a sixteen century French romance, and it says, "Is it better to speak or die?" Elio responds that, "I'd never have the courage to ask question like that," It reminds me of Balzac's rigorous heroic ethics, in which Elio refuses to disclose his emotional anguish. Even if Elio's parents are open about his desire, yet he has a Balzacian impulse on him. Barthes also references Balzac's hero Captain Paz, who kept a counterfeit mistress to conceal his feelings for his best friend's wife. Elio's character assimilates with Captain Paz, he also fakes his desire for Marzia so that Oliver don't find out his drive. In the film, when Oliver is not paying attention to Elio at the breakfast table, Elio confesses to his father, "We almost had sex last night," in attempt to get Oliver's attention. Elio debunks his relationship with Marzia in order to conceal his deep affections for Oliver. Barthes suggests that, we must conceal our passion in such a way that our subject of desire recognizes that we are concealing something from them. According Ronald Barthes, hiding a passion is "inconceivable: not because the human subject is too weak, but because passion is in essence made to be seen: the hiding must be seen." (Barthes 42). Elio also shows his desire in such a way as if he is letting Oliver know that he is hiding

something. It's like I want you to comprehend my desire for you, but I'm not going to say it out loud. In the battle of Piave scene, Elio conveys his desire for Oliver without articulating his emotions explicitly. Oliver asks Elio "Is there anything you don't know?" (Aciman 71). In response, Elio says that "If you only knew how little I know about the things that really matters." (Aciman 72). It implies that, while Elio may be knowledgeable about a wide range of topics, he lacks the ability to express his deepest desire at this time. Oliver asks what things that matters to him and Elio says, "You know what things." (Aciman 72). Elio reflects Barthes's concept of confession, in which he never says the words "love" during the process of confession, but it is clear from Oliver's expression that he knew what Elio was getting at. Both the author and the filmmaker have chosen a historical location to profess Elio's love, such as the Battle of Piave monument, because it is a momentous occurrence for both of them. This confession occurs in front of war monument because Elio has finally won his inner battle to combat his "speak or die" moment. Barthes believes that desire is form when words are silent. Even Sedgwick has pointed out silence is required for same sex desire. Silence is the language of lovers. Sensual language does not require any words. Oliver expresses his desire even before Elio by massaging his arms while playing Volleyball. Elio on the contrary expresses it through music. When Elio plays piano for the guest, he plays it in slow tempo, when suddenly appears in the staircase, the tempo of the music increases. These are lovers' natural language. Barthes thus says, "All minds converse together, they need no other language." (Barthes 99). The linguistic trope can further demonstrated through the playfulness of language. Oliver's later sounds like Rabbi Hillel's "if not now then when?" Seemingly, Mr. Perlman's adage of "*If youth must canter, then who will do the galloping?*" (Aciman 60) sounds like "if not now then when." As if Mr. Perlman is inviting the youth to do justice to their desire. In the final monologue of the movie, Elio's father advises

him not to get over his desire hastily so that it makes him a barren living creature. Perlman says, “We rip out so much of ourselves to be cured of things faster that we got bankrupt by the age of 30.” (Guadagnino 1:09: 10). Elio's youth will be squandered if he gives up on his desire too soon. Throughout the narrative, Elio sleeps with variety of people, but he remains passionate only for Oliver. Like Barthe’s says, “I encounter millions of bodies in my life. Of these millions I may desire some hundreds, but of those hundreds, I love only one.” (Barthes 19). Mr. Perlman encourages keeping this desire alive because youth need to canter so that Elio can Gallop, Or if not later then when? Now this later makes sense, if he does not keep up his desire for later then when? This linguistic trope is significant, despite their literal meaning is different, and their intent is same.

### **Ricochet Mechanism**

Another significant linguist metaphor can be demonstrated through Ricochet mechanism.<sup>5</sup> When a bullet is fired, it either penetrates or bounces off and continues moving in changed direction. The language of desire is not fixed, like ricochet mechanism; the meaning of desire may take alternative direction. When Oliver distances Elio, he shares his ricochet moment regarding Marzia, “Only then by a ricochet mechanism, that totally surprised me, did it hit me. Had Oliver been doing the same with me? Intentionally ignoring me all the time, the better to draw me in? (Aciman 115). Sometimes distance is required to come closer. Desire is a complex linguistic trope in which what we anticipate does not always occur.

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<sup>5</sup> “Ricochet Ballistics Bouncing off of bullet” *You Tube* , Forensic Science Hub, <[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1IKNi\\_HNA&t=>](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1IKNi_HNA&t=>) January 25,2022



### 3.6 The San Clemente Syndrome

In “The Seven Last Words of Our Savior on the Cross”<sup>6</sup> is prolific musician F.J. Hyden’s musical composition in which he expresses deep psychological responses through the disclosure of Jesus’ penultimate seven words. In 1975, Hyden received an order from the Spanish city of Cadiz to write an orchestral for Good Friday of Lent.. In the preface Hyden wrote that, “it is no easy task to compose seven adagios lasting ten minutes each, and to succeed one another without fatiguing the listeners.” (Lozinskaya 1430). In *CMBYN* .Aciman has linked Hyden's composition to Elio's piano transcription. In the dining table Elio says, “I was explaining Hyden’s *Seven Last Words of Christ*, which I’d been transcribing...I had developed the habit of smuggling as much information into fewest possible words.”(Aciman 9). Being the youngest member of the family, he is least likely to be listening to. Thus he focuses on transcribing different version of music in one tempo. Besides, Elio’s frustration regarding his own feelings is depicted through the reference of music. After Oliver asks Elio to play Bach’s composition again, Elio expresses himself by transcribing music with an altered version of the tune. Oliver tells Elio that “This is

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<sup>6</sup> In “The Seven Last Words of Our Savior on the Cross” is an Oratorio by prolific musician F.J. Hyden’s most frequently performed work, where Hyden adapted seven sonatas piece of “seven stringed instrumental adagios (slow tempo) in order to represents last seven words by Jesus Christ before his crucifixion. (Lozinskya 1430-31)

Lozianskya, Vera P.“Franz Joseph Hayden. “The Seven Last Words of Our Saviour on the Cross” Oratorio” *Journal of Siberian Federal University*. Pp.1425-39, 2018.Print

just how Busoni would have played it if he had altered Liszt's version." (Aciman 12). This altered version is the result of Elio's perplexity for his desire for Oliver. Nevertheless, when Elio further alters Bach's composition into Liszt's version, Oliver says, "Can't you just play Bach the way Bach wrote it?" (Aciman12) This particular moment has a linguistic trope as well. Having saying this, Oliver expresses the rhythmic double-speak. Elio is inadvertently invited by Oliver to be forthright in expressing his affections for him which Elio fails to do so. In part three of *CMBYN*, Andre Aciman has provided a phenomenal aspect of human identity. Elio's response towards his desire can be elaborated through this 'San Clemente Syndrome.'<sup>7</sup> In an interview at "Talks with Gs" Aciman elaborates San Clemente Syndrome, Aciman says it is "many many levels of identities, none of them which is going to be resolved or even be friendly with others. They don't get along." (Aciman 3:04:00) He further adds, "Elio is trying to take all the four instruments and make into one. And this is his project and I assume that that's the project we all have in our lives. We take all these desperate parts of our identity and try to conflate it into one thing; only to find that at least they are all four of them that will never unite and as I like to say, never will speak to each other. And that's what I call San Clemente Syndrome." It is a complex feature of human identity in which one component rebels while another becomes engrossed in trifles. It is not possible to define Elio's desire due to this San Clemente Syndrome. Elio's desire for Oliver is multifarious, beginning with triviality and evolving to gravitas. Each aspect of Elio's character necessitates a distinct form of interaction from Oliver. When finally Elio plays Bach for Oliver, he admits, "This is the Bach as transcribed by me...is a very younger Bach and his dedicated to his brother." (Aciman 13). One component of Elio's identity requires brotherhood, while another requires Oliver's physicality, and yet another requires communion. Hence Oliver

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<sup>7</sup> "Andre Aciman: The Meaning and Message of 'Call Me By Your Name'" *You Tube*, Goldman Sachs, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mObuAKTOG\\_A&t=183s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mObuAKTOG_A&t=183s) April 3, 2018

says “Grow up! Oliver exclaims. It's a figurative invitation to Elio to join him on his trip towards desire. Elio evolves as a result of his voyage to this desire. Initially Elio says, “when all I really wanted was skin, just skin.” (9). This desire transforms over time, and Elio builds genuine feelings for him; he is no longer bound just by his sexual urges. Elio describes the night he bent down and kiss Oliver’s neck and confesses, “It was the first time I had kissed him with feelings, not just desire.” (Aciman 154). Elio grows as an outcome of his voyage towards desire and now has more to offer Oliver than desire. These defining features of his desires are different aspects of his identity, and each part has something distinct to impart. We can't disregard any of the facets of his identity because each one has its own validity His san clement syndrome is prevalent in every aspect of his identity. One component of our identity is distinct from other and each aspect has its own separate reality. Marzia cannot relate to Elio with

San Clemente syndrome can be further demonstrated through Heidegger’s interpretation of fragments by Heraclitus. The meaning of Heraclitu's river imagery has sparked a lot of debate among philosophers. Heraclitus says, one never step into the same river twice. In response to this, Plato explains, “Heraclitus is supposed to say that all things are motion and nothing at rest; he compares the stream of river and says that you can you cannot go into the same river twice.”<sup>8</sup> Plato believes our identity is a flux and like the river we are never the same person with time passes by. It is impossible to say anything about the identity of the river or one’s own identity, without immediately contradicting oneself.”(Stern 583)<sup>9</sup>. Oliver adds the interpretation of these fragments by saying, “The meaning of the river flow is not that all things are changing so that we cannot encounter them twice, that some things stay the same only by changing.” (Guadagnino,

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<sup>8</sup> Stern, David G. “HERACLITUS’ AND WITTGENSTEIN’S RIVER IMAGES: STEPPING TWICE INTO THE SAME RIVER” *The Monist*. Vol.74, No4, pp.579-604, 1991.print.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, pp.583

1:13:37). A river remains alive through it flows. Despite the fact that Elio's San Clemente syndrome makes him unpredictable; it is this randomness that makes him who he is. Elio's character develops as a result of change, but this does not imply that he is any different than before.

### **3.7 Elio a Rebel of His Desire**

In *CMBYN* novel Elio is depicted more sexually ambiguous than the film. He's been seen having several sexual encounters throughout the film. When he had sexual contact with Oliver for the first time, he is torn between continuing it and stopping it. He becomes wary of Oliver and says, "I am not sure I want to go ahead with this." (Aciman 124). Despite this, he can't seem to keep his distance from Oliver. He even felt worse than being raped. His body started to rebel with his desire. Elio says, "My life perhaps arguing with my body." (124). Elio rebels against his desire because his other levels of identity cannot deal with his homoerotic self. Elio's desire for Oliver is conflicted with his other selves. This multifaceted identity causes him rebel against his another self that does not get along. This self-rebellion causes him to be sexually more ambiguous. Oliver is having sex with others other than him, according to Elio, which makes him more defiant Elio follows suit, "moving from one to the other." (121). It alludes to the ephemeral nature of identity. His sexuality isn't limited to a single sex or gender. Elio's sexual ambiguity can be explained through the statement of Susan Bordo who explains the multifaceted nature of human body and idea of self. In "Male Lesbians and the Postmodernist Body" Jacquilen Jita argues that, the body under postmodernist imagery shifted into an ever increasing multiplicity of positionality." (Jacquiline 110). She further traces that the simple unity and stability in the modernist world are shattered and this choreography of multiple selves, as the body loses its surety of boundary and its fixity of truth and meaning. She traces Susan Bordo's concept of self.

Susan Bordo believes that, the postmodernist idea of self is rather ambiguous and it does not follow any fixity regarding the idea of self. Bordo claims that, “here is where deconstruction may slip into its own fantasy of escape from human locatedness-by supposing that the critic can become wholly protean, by adopting endlessly shifting, seemingly inexhaustible vantage points, none of which are ‘owned’ by either the critic or the author of the text under examination.” (Bordo 1990, 142). This statement is relevant to Elio because he also does not follow any fixity of his self. His desire for Oliver is more ambiguous. Initially he was physically attracted to Oliver. And then this desire shifts into the urge for comradeship. Elio says, “The last thing I wanted at this point was comradeship.” (Aciman 131). Even while Oliver is putting distance between himself and Elio in the film, there is music playing in the background. It says, “So I won’t say it at all/and I won’t stay very long/But you are the life, I/needed all along /I think of you as my brother although that sounds dumb/and words are futile devices.” (Guadagnini 54:56:00). At one point Elio wants Oliver as a lover, some other time he demands comradeship and finally as a brother. These are the repercussions of Elio's complex identity, each of which necessitates a different type of desire. Elio's final thoughts on his desire are more mature. Elio defines his yearning for Oliver saying “Perhaps we were friends first and lovers second. But then perhaps this is what loves are.” (Aciman 157). In the book, Elio matures with his desire. Desire works as a positive force for him. He does not cure his desire for Oliver; rather it gets better with time. This desire grew from a messy sexual drive to a spiritual bond. He thus says, “I just don’t love Oliver, I or ship him.” (75) It indicates Elio and Oliver’s multiple selves that do not follow any fixity. Jacquelyn Zita incorporated Bordo’s statement by saying, “the body becomes a portable site for reinventing the meanings of flesh” (Jacquelyn 110). He further adds that this process of shifting self creates multiple meaning of human body and self. Elio in *Call Me By Your Name* in

this process reinvents his multiplicity of desire. His sexuality and desire is not fixed, rather it is fluid and who represents multiplicity of self. This is how the character Elio subverts the modernist notion of that considered “the body to be fixed by nature, in its sexedness” (110).

### **3.8 Constrictions in *CMBYN***

Even though *CMBYN* film is aesthetically pleasing and artistically whole, it has few problematic aspects. First of all, it is disappointing how women are represented in the film. The character Vimini is totally omitted from the film. Elio uses Chiara as an object to man to man gossip. It implies Elio’s homosocial nature who is ready to demean woman in order to make other men happy. Elio says, “behind her back, ‘I’d turn Chiara into the object of man to man gossip. I will allow us to arm up to one another through her, to bridge the gap between by admitting we are drawn to the same woman.” (Aciman 45). In *The Epistemology of Closet*, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick has pointed out that, it is difficult to define “homosocial bond” to “homosexual bond.” (Sedgwick 14). The paradox to define Elio and Oliver’s bond can be resolved through this statement. They have more of a Kosofsky’s “homosocial” bond than to “homosexual bond.” Elio at times behaves like a homosexual seducer to Marzia and used her as a replacement of Oliver’s absence. In the book Vimini says, “I think she knows you don’t like her very much.” (Aciman 217). Even in the book he addresses Mafalda as “bitch” (89). In order to depict woman positioning in the book and film, I incorporate Jane Gallop’s notion of desire in my research. The most captivating idea about Gallop’s desire is that it validates female desire which is utterly lacked in *Call Me BY Your Name*. Gallop considers that experimenting with female desire gives woman some sort of agency. In “Feminism”, Gallop argues that, “...desire can indeed be demeaning and dehumanizing, it can also be the mark of profound esteem. The determining factor would seem to be whether the one who desires takes the desired other seriously as a

person, as a subject with will of her own, whether desire can recognize in its object another desiring subject” (Gallop, In “Feminism” 23). Although *CMBYN*, is an epitome of desire, it revolves around male desire, female characters are not given any chance to flourish. Most of the female characters are either eroticized or ridiculed. Elio addresses Mafalda as “bitch” as she keeps eyes on Elio. He says, “The bitch knew. She must have seen the foot.” (Aciman 89). The final yet significant limitation of the film and book is Elio’s attitude towards a gay couple. He insults them by saying “Teedlee-Dee or Tweedle-Dum.” (Aciman 125). However Mr. Perlman’s response against this gay-bashing is praiseworthy. . Elio’s father says, “You are too old not to accept people as they were.” (Aciman 125). It's even more eloquent in the film, and Mr. Perlman takes a firm stance against gay bashing in the film. On the contrary, he does not outright condemn gay-bashing in the book; instead, he gently advises Elio to behave. During the course of the film, Perlman always speaks calmly to Elio, but when he steps out of line, he screams at him for the first time. Mr. Perlman condemns Elio for referring to Issac and Munir behind their backs as "Sonny" and "Cher," correspondingly. Perlman asks Elio, “The only person reflects badly is on you. Is it because they are gay or they are ridiculous.” (Guadagnino, 1:13:00). The last thing to condemn in the film is the unnecessary insertion of politics about Bettino Craxi. The political debate begins in the dining room and concludes in the kitchen. Politics has been overshadowed by the commotion of dispute. BettionoCraxi is not included in the text. This is the only time the film takes a needless detour; the film's Utopian aesthetic was hindered as a result of this.

## Chapter 4

### Projection of Desire through Queer Jewish Memory

Although *CMBYN* was blamed as a sordid tale of adultery by many critics, this film is considerably more than this and both the novel and film are extensively inclined to its Greco-Roman and Jewish aesthetics. The relationship between Elio and Oliver should be seen through the lens of intertextuality. In an implicit, symbolic allusion to his growing affection for Oliver, Elio fiddles with him by donning a Star of David necklace, and then tenderly begins wearing a Jewish star in every subsequent scene. Despite all the disparities, their Jewish identity paves the way to come one step closer to Oliver. Elio says, “While everything else conspired to make us the two most dissimilar beings, this at least transcended all differences.” Their Jewishness metaphorically indicates their homoerotic desire. Both the film and the novel are the porridge of advanced intellectual discourse and sensuality, mental and physical pleasure, desire, and imagination. History and communal mythology take on new meanings as metaphors for personal experience and, above all, desire. They play between being at home and being exiled, concealed and disclosed, especially in relation to one's Jewishness, which is a strand that runs through Aciman's work and is nowhere to be found. Elio is first drawn to Oliver because of his Jewish identity and their common shared background. Both the novel and film deal explicitly with same sex desire and certain queerness of Jewish identity. In this chapter, I will explore how Jewish signifiers interact with same-sex desire in a literature that is unquestionably classical in its Greco-Roman sexual politics. I'll also examine Aciman's homoerotic desire intermingles with the Jewish queer aesthetics. *Call Me By Your Name* is a rich fantasy of memory and passion told



through the eyes of a seventeen-year-old musical prodigy. The novel is set in 1980s Italy and traces the development of a friendship between a young man and an American post-doctoral student. As Jewish outsiders to the Italian countryside, the young man's bond blooms in the context of home and tribe. Elio says, "Staring at his neck with its star and telltale amulet was like staring at something timeless, ancestral, immortal in me, in him, in both of us, begging to be rekindled and brought back from its millenary sleep." (Aciman 19). The Perlman family and Oliver are all Jews living in a predominantly catholic Italy. This is Elio's quest for brotherhood that will make their relationship deeper. This particular statement is explained by Frederick Roden: "Their brotherhood is deeper because the self's infatuation with the other concerns sameness, as two Jewish men. These markers catalyze a process of coming-out, about the queerness of Jewishness that represents the transgression that is same sex desire (and art) threatening biological procreation." (Roden 200). Elio and Oliver are inseparable and Oliver is Elio's definitive 'home.' The Jewish queerness is further demonstrated through the concept of home where Elio finds his own place in a queer space where he candidly belongs. For Elio, to be with this stranger is like "coming home, like coming home after years away among Trojans and Lestrygonians, like coming home to a place where everyone is like you...you suddenly realize that for seventeen years all you'd been doing was fiddling with the wrong combination." (Aciman 15). This homecoming is not because Elio's Platonic quest of desire for Oliver, but their shared Jewish brotherhood where he does not need to put out of sight of his Jewish identity. Frederick Roden further demonstrates this statement by saying, "If Elio understands himself as the 'Wandering Greek' returning home in the work of desire, "home" is simply out of Egypt, not yet penetrating or unified with a future promised land." (Roden 200). Thus the movie ends with the song "Vision of Gideon," which is may be the vision of reincarnating in the Jewish promised

land of Israel. Elio's desire for Oliver is stimulated by Jewish tribal fecundity and "Jewish call to generation, whether metaphorical or literal" (196) what Elio envies Oliver is his lack of self-consciousness regarding his Jewish identity. He is not scared of wearing Star David necklace but Elio's self-consciousness causes anxiety to flaunt his Jewish identity. Even Oliver's body feels at ease with his Jewish identity. Elio describes their companionship by saying, "in the end, was what drew me to him with a compulsion that overrode desire or friendship or the allurements of common religion." (Aciman 22). This Jewish fecundity is indisputable, even if it isn't the sole part of their relationship dynamics.

Elio, an adolescent who rarely encounters other Jews in Italy, is taken aback when he sees Oliver wearing a Star of David necklace openly. Later, Elio follows Oliver's lead and wears a Jewish star necklace, finding a new way to connect with his Judaism than his parents had chosen for him. Elio says, "With the exception of my family, he was probably the only other Jew who had ever set foot in B...we were not conspicuous Jews. We wore our Judaism as people do almost everywhere in the world: under the shirt, not hidden, but tucked away. "Jews of discretion." (Aciman 19). The Jewishness of these characters runs through the film and novel, coloring their identities and exacerbating their otherness, and in many ways, bringing the two major protagonists together. Besides, the commonality of their religious identity works as a driving force to desire for Oliver. This shared Jewish identity begins with the longing for universal brotherhood and ended as Elio's queer yearning for Oliver. One of the first things that interests Elio is their shared Jewishness. Judaism emerges as a compelling counterpoint to queerness and its related culture of secrecy. This discretion is the hint of their own evolving queer desire for each other. Elio's gay yearning for Oliver is distressing in the same way as his repressed Jewish identity is. Elio says, "He had lived long enough in small towns in New

England to know what it felt like to be the odd Jew out. But Judaism never troubled him the way it troubled me.”(Aciman 20). Judaism troubled Elio not because they are “Jews of discretion” but because his repressed Jewish identity assimilates with his repressed desire for Oliver and Jews are rumored for certain queerness in their identity. Homosexuality appears to be frowned upon in the Hebrew Bible. The Torah also exclusively mentions that, “Do not lie with a male as one lies with a woman.”(Leviticus 18:22). In the next few chapters of Leviticus 20:13, the act of homosexuality is considered punishable with death. Here the Hebrew Bible says, “If a man lies with a male as one lies with a woman, the two of them have done an abhorrent thing; they shall be put to death- and they retain the bloodguilt.”<sup>10</sup> However, many scholars have pointed out that the earlier versions of Leviticus affirm same sex desire. Idan Dershowitz on his book *The Secret History of Leviticus* has recently argued that, “Like many ancient texts, Leviticus was created gradually over a long period and includes the words of more than one writer. Many scholars believe that the section in which Leviticus 18 appears was added by a comparatively late editor, perhaps one who worked more than a century after the oldest material in the book was composed. An earlier edition of Leviticus, then, may have been silent on the matter of sex between men...There is good evidence that an earlier version of the laws in Leviticus 18 *permitted* sex between men. In addition to having the prohibition against same-sex relations added to it, the earlier text, I believe, was revised in attempt to obscure any implication that same-sex relations had once been permissible (Idan 7). The evidence of homosexuality in ancient Jews community is misunderstood among modern theorists. Frederick S. Roden in his article “Queer Jewish memory: Andre Aciman’s *Call Me By Your Name*, traces Oscar Wild’s proclamation of Greek ideal and modern love where Oscar Wild says,

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<sup>10</sup> Biblical translation from the five books of Moses are taken from W. Gunther Plaut, ed., *The Torah: A Modern Commentary*, rev. ed. 2016 by CCAR Press.

“The love that dare not speak its name” in this century is such a great affection of an elder for a younger man as there was between Jonathan and David...It is that deep, spiritual affection that is as pure as it is perfect...It is in this century misunderstood, so much misunderstood that it may be described as the “Love that dare not to speak its name,” and on account of it, I am placed where I am now. It is beautiful, it is fine, it is the noblest form of affection. There is nothing unnatural about it. It is intellectual and it repeatedly exists between an elder and a younger man, when the older man has intellect, and the younger man has all the joy, hope and glamour of life before him. That it should be so the world does not understand. The world mocks at it and sometimes puts one in the pillory for it.” (Roden 199). This statement is very much applicable in *CMBYN* both the film and novel. Many critics have pointed out *CMBYN* as a modern gay classic because Elio and Oliver’s relationship is interpreted as gay relationship. Nevertheless, their relationship is more than a gay relationship. Although Elio's sexual awakening is triggered by the arrival of Oliver, after watching the whole movie or reading the whole book, it is evident that Elio is sexually fluid. She sleeps with Marzia, gets turned on by middle aged lady, masturbates with peach and gets aroused by the ripe apricot. Elio does not see their relationship as a mere gay relationship. Their relationship is beyond that. Their relationship is holy and sacred and Elio embrace it ritualistically. Oliver was definitive home for Oliver. When Elio meets Oliver and discovers about his desire for Oliver, he discovers his true self. Elio says, “Me Jewish, Celan Jewish, Oliver Jewish-we were in the half ghetto, half oasis, in an otherwise cruel and unflinching world where fuddling around strangers suddenly stops, where we misread no one and no one misjudges us, where one person simply knows the other and know him so thoroughly that to be taken away from such intimacy is *galut*, the Hebrew word for exile and dispersal. Was he my home, then, my homecoming? You make me like who I am, who I become when you’re with

me.”(Aciman 49). The queerness of Jewish identity is further demonstrated through the intertextual reference of poet Paul Celan. When he says me Jew, Celan Jew, it again traces the shared holocaust experience of Jewish tribe. Paul Celan is a famous Jewish poet, who has written many poems based on his holocaust memories. Although, Elio and Oliver are not holocaust survivors, yet being a Jew, all of them share the common trauma and memory of the holocaust. No Jew is not a Jew without shared memories. This shared memory unites them together under the same roof. Unfortunately, Elio is oblivious about his homoerotic nature, the nature for which his ancestors were punished. Their sacred relationship is also misunderstood by the audience as a gay relationship same way David and Jonathan’s sacred relationship was misunderstood. Even if Elio and Oliver get physically intimate with each other, it does not prove they are gay. Oliver is Elio's comfort zone where he can be unapologetically himself, can feel at home, can embrace his true identity. In spite of having some gay sensation, both the book and the movie perfectly capture the powerful facet of man-on-man desire. Their relationship seems to me as a straight crush. Their intimacy is so fluid that I didn't realize this was a connection between two men for a second; instead, it appeared to be a romance between two human. This romance could be between anyone and everyone. Elio thus says, “...as I began to feel we were not even two men, just two beings. I love the egalitarianism of the moment. I loved feeling younger and older, human to human, man to man, Jew to Jew.” (Aciman 132). This novel goes beyond homosexual identity and dissects human’s quest for fluid intimacy. Looking at the novel through queer lens, Lois Tyson argues that “homosexual and heterosexual categories do not adequately represent the spectrum of human sexuality.” (Tyson 336). Although *CMBYN*'s overtly homoerotic convention may label Elio and Oliver as a gay couple, however, considering Lois Tyson’s statement *CMBYN* is not modern gay classic, rather it should be termed as modern queer classic. Both the movie

and the film represent the complex dynamics of sexual fluidity. Elio and Oliver's intimacy is based on the foundation of friendship and brotherhood. Even if they have physical intimacy, but their relationship is like Oscar Wild's opinion on David and Jonathan: deep, spiritual, pure and perfect. Their love should not be "Love that dare not to speak its name." However, Elio chooses to speak rather than die and calls Oliver by his name. Elio say, "Call me by your name, and I will call you by my name."(Aciman 134). At the end of the movie, when Oliver calls Elio during the episode of Hanukkah, Elio calls Oliver by his name. He says, "Elio Elio Elio" and Oliver replies "I remember it."

## Chapter 5

### Chapter Five: Effectiveness of Film Adaptation

Whether a film should be faithful to the source text is still a matter of debate among many film theorists. Robert Stam for instance in his book *Literature through Film* points out that, there are many films that miss out the "salient features" in the source text, while many films fail to realize what readers regarded most in a text and some films on the contrary many adaptations are indeed better than the source text. (Stam 3). In *CMBYN*, the director did not follow Andre Aciman's novel blindly, rather it made some effective alterations. These alterations have the ability to make a film aesthetically independent and artistically whole. Virginia Woolf however thinks adapted film as a "parasite" and literature its "prey" and "victim."(1926:309)<sup>11</sup>. This question is call forth due to the question of fidelity. Most of the readers and authors get disappointed if they find any alterations in the movie that do not exist in the source. However modern studies about film do not support the idea of fidelity. Linda Hutcheon believes that, "An adaptation's double nature does not mean, however, the proximity or fidelity to the adapted text should be the criterion of judgment or the focus of analysis." (Hutcheon 6). Linda Hutcheon also adds that previously the question of fidelity was the part of "critical orthodoxy "in adaptation studies in order to analyze canonical works such as Dante, Pushkin etc. Nonetheless, in today's world, that question of fidelity is challenged and "the question of its faithfulness is given hardly any thought." (Hutcheon 7). Coming back to *CMBYN* where director Luca Guadagnino did not follow the source blindly, yet he has managed to take his audience at the heart of Aciman's novel. Thus in today's world, film adaptations are not inclined to fidelity towards the source text,

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<sup>11</sup> Linda Hutcheon quoted this from Virginia Woolf in her book *A Theory of Adaptation*

rather the director focuses more on intertextualities. Critiques such as, Robert Stam, Linda Hutcheon, Cartmell, Dudley Andrew consider that film adaptation process is much more far ranging than previously admitted. Previously film adaptation was considered low form of art that does not have any aesthetic values. However, post-structuralist and post-modern study find out that film adaptations have its own artistic and aesthetic value and validity, adaptation is not fully dependent on source text, rather it has its own individuality thus it is not always dependent upon the original source text, and finally film adaptations can independently depict interesting and unique thing about a particular language and culture. In *CMBYN*, the film is set somewhere in Italy. The author Andre Aciman did not provide any specific name of that city, rather he vaguely names the city as B. If any film adapters further adapts the film and does not stick to Italian language and culture, he surely has the independence to work on the source text with a unique and diverse apprehension on language and culture.

In this section, I will be focusing on the alterations that are made in *CMBYN* from page to screen. First of all, Andre Aciman's novel is set in 1987 Italy; however, Luca Guadagnino's film is set in 1983 Italy. James Ivory has changed this time period probably because 1987 was infused with AIDS epidemics that was not much severe in 1983. The novel is written in past tense, first person's point of view and narrated by Elio, whereas the film is based on Elio's present experience with Oliver. Andre Aciman's *CMBYN* is a novel of reminiscence of what Ronald Barthes called "anamnesis" (Kathryn 8). Luca Guadagnino's film is on the other hand a prelude to Elio's exploration of desire. In the novel, Oliver's entrance is shown as a turning point in Elio's sexual awakening as his infatuation is fueled by desire. The film takes the same route as the novel, yet it lacks Elio's intense monologues that are explained pages after pages. Few of those monologues are visually shown in the film through multiple expressions and imagery. For



example, in the novel, apricot is explicitly sensualized by addressing “apricock” but in the film this sensualization is conveyed through symbolic visual. In the novel, Elio says, “touching the apricot was like touching him.” (Aciman 35). This whole monologue about apricot is cut short in the film and is depicted through Oliver’s conversation with Elio’s father who suddenly involve into an effective debate on the origin of the name apricot. In the film, Guadagnino never mentions apricot as “apricock” and to figure out how Elio links Oliver directly to the apricot requires a lot of analytical skills. In the novel Elio says, “placing the apricot in my palm he was giving me his ass to hold that...if I dared to bite that far, his apricock” (Aciman 35). There is no such direct confession in the film and like the monologue about apricot; the text is full of intense monologue that the movie lacks. It requires a lot of semiotic analysis to understand symbols that are used in the film in order to visualize to intense monologue and make it short. Another major change is made in the film when Elio talk about ‘speak or die’ moment about a “handsome young knight who is madly in love with a princess” (Aciman 63). In the novel this scene occurs in Elio’s monologue, however, in the film, Elio’s mother translates for her family a story from Marguerite de Navarre’s Heptameron about the handsome knight who loves in pained solitude. He finally shares his confusion by asking it to the princess: “is it better to speak or die? (Aciman 63). In the film the answer is given by Elio’s mother who describes it as ambiguous “friendship” with a German term “Freundschaft.” This scene is effectively altered in the movie because this family moment does not occur in the text. Another significant alteration is made in the peach scene that saves the film from a pornographic impression on Elio’s masturbation. In the novel, Elio explains his fluid nature via a monologue. He says, “I had already entered into the animal kingdom. Now I was entering into the kingdom of plants. Next would come minerals.”(Aciman 146). On the contrary, in the film these dialogues are given by Oliver, not Elio. When Oliver

encounters Elio's masturbation with a peach, he asks, "Have you entered into plant kingdom? What are next, minerals? That particular scene appealed to me more than the text. It implies that they have a shared view on desire. Not only has that, in the novel, Oliver eaten up the whole peach that is used in masturbation. In the film, Elio puts his finger inside the peach and licks it. He does not eat the whole peach. It shields the situation from certain awkwardness and deviates from giving the scene a pornographic impression. The movie scene according to me does not give any pornographic vibe and I found it aesthetically whole where less is more. The final and most significant alteration is made at the ending of the film. Although the aura of Elio's unquenchable longing for Oliver remained same both in the page and text, the ending of the movie is more powerful and ambiguous than the novel. The novel ends twenty years after Elio and Oliver's first meeting. After their first summer together, Oliver comes to visit Elio when "Hannukah" preparation was going on. This time Oliver seems distant and evasive and he informs Elio that he is getting married soon. After that Elio and Oliver meets fifteen years later when Oliver is already a father of two sons. Finally the novel ends when Oliver comes to Italy twenty years later, stays few days with Elio and his mother. Aciman ends that movie with Elio's intense desire to hold back for one last time when Oliver was about to leave. Elio says, "as you did back then, look me in the face, hold my gaze, and call me by your name." (Aciman 248). The film ends with an Oliver's heart wrenching telephone call to Elio, where he admits he will be getting married in a few months. Like film, this news of getting married does not occur in person. The cold attitude of Oliver towards Elio in the book does not go with the intense bond that they once shared together. Nevertheless, the director did an amazing job in the film who alters the scene and informs Oliver's marriage news via telephone call. For an audience, when they connect over the phone, it was not as frigid as in the novel. Rather it was more intense and

warm. Like the text, Oliver does not join Elio's family during winter. It ends when Hannukah preparation was going on, Elio and Oliver's phone call ends, Elio weeps by himself in front of a fireplace. Sitting there, Elio cries for long four minutes. This long mise-en-scene shot is according to me the best shot throughout the film, where being an audience I was enthralled by Elio's agony. The camera does not pan as if it is inviting the audience to feel Elio's anguish for an extended period of time. Elio remains seventeen years old till the ending of the film; on the contrary, Elio is thirty seven years. I believe the ending of the movie is stronger than the ending of the novel because it does not over extend the characters. Apart from these alterations, there are many characters have entirely removed in the film due to time and space constraints which is widely acceptable technique in film adaptation history.

Coming back to the leading film theorists who believe effective alterations from page to screen makes a film critically more noteworthy. There are few film techniques that created an open and significant ground for alterations. Borrowing, intersection, and fidelity of transformation are three kinds of relation between films and the text that Dudley Andrew discusses in his book *Concepts in Film Theory*. (Andrew, 1984: 98). While borrowing referred to a simple process of transferring the original's generality,' which still exists as an archetype in culture, intersection would be best understood as initiating a direct interplay between aesthetic forms of one period and cinematic forms of our period, and attempting to adapt what forms of our period resist adaptation. The goal of intersection is to convey the uniqueness of the original text. The cinema is a skeleton of the original that seeks to measure up to a literary work, whereas fidelity or transformation aims to reproduce something vital about an original text. In his book *Concepts in Film Theory*, Dudley Andrew discusses three types of relationships between films and the audience. According to Dudley Andrew, "Borrowing is the most frequent of these modes

it makes more or less extensive use of the material, idea or form of a prior work, usually a successful one, that is cherished by the potential audience, but does so in a ‘vast and airy’ way” (Andrew, 1984:98-99). Intersection on the contrary is opposite to borrowing “a refraction, rather than an adaptation of the original, it leaves the source text unassimilated. Transformation of the middle ground: it will retain the skeletal story while also finding stylistic equivalents in film for the ‘original tone’, values, imagery and rhythm (Andrew, 1984: 100). Considering this definition, Luca Guadagnino’s *Call Me By Your Name* falls under Intersection category. This film does not blindly follow the source text, yet effectively carries the DNA of the novel. There are few significant alterations made in *CMBYN* that I have discussed in the previous paragraph. These alterations have created an open ground of interpretations for both the film adapters and the audience. If director of *CMBYN* simply followed the author’s lead, there would be no room for innovation. *CMBYN* is made in such a way that its alteration is not made out of the context of its source text. Rather, its unique approach parallels the same ideas of the text in a better way and that is to exploring the nature of desire. In *Theoretical Translation and Film Adaptation: A Practitioners View*, Phyllis Zatlin points out, decades before Andrew Dudley, a less known film theorist Geoffery Wagner described the similar three different modes of film adaptation as Anderson. In 1975, Geoffery Wagner divides film adaptations into commentary, transposition and analogy. (Zatlin 154). Phyllis Zatlin describes Wagner’s definition of these three modes of adaptation by saying, “Like Andrew’s concept of ‘borrowing’, analogy represents a ‘considerable departure for the sake of making another work of art’ (Wagner, 1975: 227, qtd by Zatlin 154). In transposition, “a novel is directly given on the screen, with the minimum of apparent interference” (Wagner 1975: 222). Wagner does not describe fidelity of transformation, however his third mode of film adaptation is commentary and it indicates an original is taken but

few alterations are intentionally made in order to avoid blindly copying the text. If we consider Wagner's theory on effective film adaptation, then *CMBYN* falls under commentary section. Even the author of *CMBYN* was enchanted by this intentional alteration in the film. The author even made a cameo in this film.

Previously, it was believed to sidestep the issue of genius and influence for adapting one text to another was considered a "mere" updating or mutation of an original and therefore falling short of artistic genius. However, if we consider Dudley Andrew or Wagner's theory of film adaptation, it is very clear that the question of fidelity should be abolished and film adaptation should be studied through its effective transposition and alterations. Luca Guadagnino exactly took the path of Dudley Anderson and transformed his film into a genius piece of art. He has used Aciman's novel as a raw material and makes his best out of it. Many lengthy descriptions from the novel are compressed into the film to be conveyed visually. Linda Hutcheon believes that, "adaptations are often compared to translations. Just as there is no such thing as a literal translation, there can be no literal adaptation." (Hutcheon 16). If we look at *CMBYN* film, it does not give any literal insight on the source text. Rather, all these alterations have created a more ambiguous ending which involves the audience more to create their own perspective on this film. Elio's ambiguous sexuality is bizarrely shown in the novel, but the film it is embellishingly ambiguous. If the director blindly translated Aciman's novel, the audience would miss the excruciating pain in queer desire that Elio endures. According to Rene Clair, a famous French film director, an adaptation is not artistically "whole" if it merely reproduces its literary sources. Keeping this in mind, Guadagnino did an amazing job in preserving the spirit of the novel and in keeping the aesthetic elements intact without blindly following the source text. The effective alterations that he made in the film indicate that the film is a commentary on the source text.

Overall, the film remains faithful to the novel in spirit, but it does make several alterations in order to adhere to space and time constraints. For instance, the novel is mainly told from Elio's perspective and has a foggy stream-of-consciousness style to it. The film also focuses on Elio's perspective, but it does not include many of his intense monologues in the novel. It is also pertinent to point out that the film differs from the novel in the sense that it shows rather than tells. It focuses on the coded language and silent pursuits. Examples include when Elio sniffs Oliver's underwear or when Oliver massages Elio's shoulders. Furthermore, the ending of the novel and the film differ greatly. In the novel, there is a 20 years leap into the future when Oliver and Elio reunite and reminisce their past. On the other hand, the film ends with a phone call between the two. During the phone call, Oliver tells Elio that he will get married. Elio feels dejected and just stares into the flames in the fireplace for few minutes as he breaks the fourth wall. Overall, the film provides a nuanced view of queer sexuality. Through this film, we can get director's perspective that slightly from the source text. In Michel Foucault's essay "What is an Author" he claims that author is "dead." He thinks an author is privileged with a "transcendental" position and the readers can transcend his idea as well. In term of film adaptation, I also believe that author's perspective should not give much focus. However it is the adapters and the audience whose perspective matter most. As Linda Hutcheon claims, "adapters are first interpreters and then creators." (Hutcheon 18). In that case in *CMBYN* the director did an amazing job to express his perspective that does not necessarily matches fully with the author. This film adaptation does an impressive and effective job in remaining faithful to the novel despite several changes.

## Chapter 6

### Conclusion

Although *CMBYN* does not provide a single definitive framework of desire, it still has traced many progressive attitudes towards human desire. Most studies on *CMBYN* focus solely on gay components, however, this paper is an attempt to present an alternative examination of the novel and film that is not solely centered just on homoerotic desire. One of the strongest components of the movie and the text is that it creates awareness about how parents of queer children should behave against their children's desire. In *CMBYN*, Mr. Perlman creates a therapeutic environment for Elio so that he does not become ashamed of his innate sexual impulses. If the private discourse like family expresses positive attitude towards homosexuality, someday it will be spread out positively in public discourse. Elio is the perfect epitome of Deleuz's "productive desire." Although, he had some bizarre attitude towards himself, he gets better with his desire. Among multiple aspects of desire, the linguistic tropes are most captivating aspect in my opinion. Elio and Oliver's language tropes create a treasure hunting thrill both in the movie and text. In *CMBYN*, Aciman does not attempt to define human desire; rather he takes to the reader and audience into a linguistic trope to get comfortable and connected with the ambiguity of desire.

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