Abstract — This article analyses The Dying Animal by emphasising the central opposition between Eros and Thanatos, as well as examining the intertextual elements that direct the author's creative process. In this novel, more than any other of his works, Philip Roth makes use of literary and pictorial references to create an intense and constantly lively dialogism. The importance of these references for the textual organisation of the novel lies in the fact that every writer or artist mentioned has a functional bearing on its narrative structures and themes. Consequently, the paradigm of mortality (Yeats, Kafka, ecc.) is connected to the subject of the nude and flesh in painting. (Modigliani, Spencer, ecc.) which are seen as a metamorphosis that leads to death. In the end, the awareness of human finitude becomes the lesson which the main protagonist, David Kepesh, will learn from the great masters of literature and art.

Keywords: The Dying Animal, Philip Roth, intertextuality, painting, eroticism.