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The Truce between Desire and Dignity in Philip Roth's *The Professor of Desire*

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The Truce between Dignity and Desire in Philip Roth's Novel *The Professor Of
Desire*

Abstract

The current research entitled "The Truce between Dignity and Desire in Philip Roth's The Professor of Desire" examines the issue of sexual feeling and desire of a heterosexual male who loses morality and dignity. This research aims to show the mental condition, irrationality, immorality, sexual vulgarity, and criminal mentality of the literary character a Jewish family in American cultural background.

Understanding the issue of psychic desire will help my audience understand human behaviour in a better way. In order to the examiner and analyze psychic desire and its role in shaping human behaviour, this research applies concept of psychoanalysis. I have used sexuality, concepts of lacans mirror stage and the concept of repression and the concept of identity. This is a qualitative research based on library research and textual analysis. In this thesis, the concept of Psychic desire regarding the psychoanalysis theory developed by Sigmund Freud is applied. Based on the textual analysis of different critics and library based materials, the researcher finds that there is a truce between the desire and dignity.

Keywords: psychic desire, psychoanalysis, dignity, identity, fetishism and seduction

Psychology is the science of human behavior. It includes both of conscious and unconscious phenomena of human behavior. The human mind is always the subject of interesting various studies because whatever the progress and achievement has been made by the modern society, has become possible by the creative use of human mind. The topic of the research is exploration of the psychic desire and moral dignity in Philip Roth's novel *The Professor of Desire*. Here, we can define some key terms related to my research topic. The term 'psychoanalysis' means a set of

techniques for exploring the underlying motives and method of treating various mental disorders. Similarly, the term 'identity' means the distinct personality of an individual regarded as a persisting entity. Like this 'fetishism', belief in the magical power. The term 'seduction' means the act of persuading somebody for the sexual purpose.

The society treats a professor as an intellectual, knowledgeable personality who has a positive influence over society. The social rules and ethics to some extent are influenced by the role of intellectual people like professors, who can lead and be an example for others to follow. However, as a professor, if somebody is not able to control over his/her life and becomes a fetishist, it indicates that no person in the world is always under their control by the conscious mind. However, they are often guided by unconscious mind. This is true in the context of my primary text also.

This research paper examines the psychic desire of the protagonist David Kepesh in *The Professor of Desire*, which makes him the man without the dignity and morality though he achieves a compromise between desire and dignity. The current research work primarily aims at exploring the psychic feelings that describe the young age, the college years and the academic career of Professor David Kepesh and it also explores besides sexual desires. It also investigates the protagonist's treatment with money in his relationship with two Swedish girls. Further, it unfolds protagonist's consciousness, identity, and status, which are determined by Jewish financial prosperity and mode of consumption.

The Professor of Desire includes some memorably tender passages about David Kepesh's parents, in particular those dealing with the mother's death and the father's old age. Having been offered as often as we have Jewish parents as objects of

satiric criticism, it is refreshing to find them treated in the novel as objects of simple affection. Two major preoccupations have shaped Philip Roth's career. The first of these concerns the shifting contours of Jewish-American identity. The second of these focuses on the nature of sexual desires.

This thesis reflects the psychic desires of the professor David Kepesh and beside this; it also explores his sexual desires. It captures the mental condition, childhood experiences, irrationality, immorality, sexual vulgarity and criminal mentality of the literary characters representing real like conditions of professors and Jewish family in American cultural background. The mental effect of poverty is dangerous that creates criminal monsters in the society and people's psychological condition is no more positive to the fellow human beings. David's first- person narration never really cults himself any slack, and he constantly doubts whether or not he will be able to love Claire forever without wanting something more, and towards the end, there are the most eye-opening segments, whereas in the beginning the novel discusses nearly every sexual whim one could expect to come across in a text book.

This is a qualitative research work not quantitative. The basic research method is the textual reading, close reading of the text, textual analysis, reading the primary, research articles, visiting the library and discussion with the supervisor. The purpose of present research is to examine the issue of psychology in the character named David Kepesh in the novel by Philip Roth.

Therefore, to deal with this issue I have used the theoretical framework of psychoanalysis as the methodological tool for the research. The theoretical concept from Sigmund Frauds, *A General Introduction to Psychoanalysis* is the main methodological framework for the analysis of this research. Sigmund Freud is the father figure of psychoanalytical theory. Psychoanalysis is clinical and therapeutic

methodology. In the eyes of the critics Freud is a wild analyst. As a psychiatrist Freud began his psychological investigation during 1890s. Freudian psychoanalysis is majorly concerned with the origin of unconscious, repression, DreamWorks and division of human mentality into id, ego and superego.

Psychoanalysis is one of the most important literary criticisms of 20th century that peep the hidden and mysterious desires of the individuals. Its primary concern is to deal with the mental process of the individual personality. I have applied Freudian psychoanalysis to observe the psychic desires of the character David Kepesh. The name of Freud is so closely identified with psychoanalysis that it is often not appreciated that he had an established reputation in several other fields before he ever came to his psychoanalytical discoveries. In Freud's own words, "not only did he assert the dominance of the emotions and the supreme importance of sexuality but he was even aware of the mechanism of repression." (59), Here Freud is conscious about both importance of sexuality and subjugation.

The Freudian psychoanalysis focuses on sexual desires of the individuals. Development of sexual identity is the one of the most important psychological investigation by Sigmund Freud. Under his theory Oedipus complex, Freud asserts that sexual identity is constructed on the basis of guilt and repressed desires. According to Freud the gender of the child is not depend on his/her genital but the development of his/her psyche. On the other hand Jacques Lacan is a postmodern psychological thinker. Lacan has defined human psychology in the theory of post structuralism. For Lacan unconscious is structured like language. He relates human growth and development with other structures of language. On the basis of linguistic knowledge and association, Lacan divides the growth and development of human into three steps.

To clarify it, Tyson writes, "For psychoanalysis, our sexuality is an

inescapable human reality to which we must live a relationship. Our sexuality is not a matter of biological drive discharge mechanism but a matter of meanings” (24). It clearly presents that sexuality is the inescapable part of the human psychic or it is the real part of human being which cannot be distract from the man. Sexuality is not the matter of biology but it is the matter of meaning. It shows that sexuality also provides the meaning.

In this research paper, I have set of my limitation. I will not talk everything about psychology. I will focus on the basic human desire and its formation. How human behavior is formed and what are the factors that play role to formulate the different human behavior.

In literature I have found that critic have made the various remarks regarding the psychology of the character named David Kepesh from the various point of view of view. *The Professor of Desire* gives the knowledge of love and love of knowledge, thus fulfilling the nurturing function essential to the learning process as a continuous statement of joyful wisdom.

Self- reflexivity and exploration of their own nature and status as fiction, vital concerns of postmodern novels, are recurrent themes in Philip Roth’s fiction. His novels about professors of literature and authors discussing fiction display sustained interest in self- reflexivity as a literary subject. As Sanford Pinsker notes, “few contemporary writers have been as obsessive, or as exasperating, about the interpretation of art and life as has Philip Roth” (227). Hillel Halkin argues similarly “had postmodernism not existed, would have been quite capable of inventing aspects of it by himself” (45).

The novel examines as the middle and the late periods evidencing increasing self- reflexivity, fiction that focus on the manner in which a novelist draws personal

experience to create characters and the ways in which fiction are similar to the processes by which we create and sustain our lives. The self-reflexive design of my *life as a man* establishes the artistic theme for much of Roth's work and introduces Nathan Zuckerman, the primary vehicle for Roth's portrait of an artist. This novel is a proper Meta-fictional work engaging the problem of the artistic mode that best transforms private experience into art.

Philip Roth represents the crisis in knowledge resulting from a destroyed faith in the values humanism promises; the ultimate fulfilment of human potential, progress, reason, fundamental truth, the unity of the human form. While dealing in irony, Roth takes entirely seriously the consequences of the dissolution of boundaries by demonstrating its danger personally and communally, including the loss of the parameters of the self, of certainty, of the material world, of history and claims based on historical truths, and of the ability to adjudicate historical crimes. Roth illustrates the distinction between history and fiction as pathological, at the same time posing the question of whether the pathology lies in the distinction or its lapse. As Elaine Kauvar, point out the boundaries of fiction and history. Roth plays between judgements aesthetic and ethical. Roth's novel is elliptical, coy, paranoid and irresolute.

In *The Professor of Desire*, Roth intertwines three subjects. These are the academic travails and career of professor David Kepesh; the struggle between the professor's lustful nature and his search for love in marriage, and distance that exists between the sophisticated professor Kepesh and his parents, who owned a hotel in the Catskills. For each of these subjects, Roth shows professor Kepesh who is highly conflicted. As a lustful young Fulbright scholar, for example, Kepesh connects to two Swedish college students. As a ménage à trois, they push the boundaries of sex,

expressing a need deep in David. But in doing so, Kepesh loses his academic focus and becomes obsessed with the anguish the ménage inflicts on one partner. Later, Kepesh marries Helen, who is an image of female perfection and an apparent solution to his sexual and marital desires. But Helen is unhappy in mundane marriage and tortures David, makes him impotent, and causes him to behave strangely with his pupils. Ultimately, Kepesh is able to sublimate his intense sexual desire, creating a great-books course where sex is the preoccupation of each author. But such sophistication separates him from his salt-of-the-earth parents. And, it does nothing to accommodate professor Kepesh to the ordinariness of a steady relationship and mature love.

“The two urges, the one toward personal happiness and the other toward union with other human beings must struggle with each other in every individual; and so, also, the two processes of individual and of cultural development must stand in hostile opposition to each other and mutually dispute the ground. It almost seems as if humanity could be most successfully united into one great whole if there were no need to trouble about the happiness of individuals.

In this research, I hypothesize that human behavior are controlled by the unconscious factor that no people can even imagine what he or she are going to do. The intention of deploying the character like David Kepesh as uncontrolled character, even though he is a university professor, implies that the sexual behaviors of humans are uncontrolled and guided unconsciously.

Kepesh's domesticity of childhood out into the vast wilderness of erotic possibility, from a 'ménage a trios' in London to the depths of loneliness in New York, Kepesh confronts the central dilemma of pleasure: how to make a truce between dignity desire; and how to survive the ordeal of an unhallowed existence. In

this section we can find out the importance of dignity and identity.

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Since cultural identities act as metaphors for different 'selves,' a Jewish identification represents one metaphorical self and American identification denotes another. Roth shows how the fusion of the various 'selves' results in an often comic and calamitous self-identification. Ultimately however, Roth's authorial dedication to the dilemma of self-definition versus societal definition reflects the common Jewish-American condition. Mark Shechner notes:

The American Jew must struggle to negotiate the competing claims of the individual imperative—the American theme—with the group imperative—the

Jewish theme...the former is the optimistic triad of individual happiness, personal freedom, and self-reliance that personifies America's official myth of itself. The other is the belief among Jews at large, a belief both naïve and profound, that Jewish writers are 'their' writers: heir to the common history, partners in the common destiny, and therefore spokesman for the common will. (338)

Yet, Roth's body of work not only speaks to the Jewish-American community about whom he writes, but engages all of America, relentlessly commenting on what it is to be an American.

David Kepesh is a young academic, studious but cannot realize his fantasies. He views the text as a story of the person who realized his actions and consequences latterly. Philip Roth himself views the novel's protagonist as:

David Kepesh is a young academic with a proclivity for erotic daredevilry. In his college days he fervently proclaims himself to be like Byron, Studious by day, dissolute by night but he does not realize his fantasies until he arrives in London on a scholarship and moves into a basement flat with two Swedish girls. The subsequent sexual turmoil drives one of the girls to attempt suicide. (5)

In these lines he views that the central character of the novel is studious and fantastic but his fantasizes creates harm to other. He flats with two Swedish girls and his sexual turmoil leads one of the girls to suicide. His actions draw back realizes later when he goes to London. He completes his graduates in comparative literature and works for Stanford University which shows his success. He interprets the text as the successive protagonist's story.

Steven Ungar on the other hand views novel as the text of plurality where he

sees the two version of the knowledge that is classical and modern one. In his own words, “The professor of desire teaches the text of difference and plurality: sex and love, two master topsoil and two versions of classical and modern knowledge. The first volume of Michel Foucault's projected history of sexuality. This passage related to author of an underground Victorian classic” (85). Through these lines he links the text with history and also at the same time shows it as the modern text. He has contradictory opinion or he shows the multiplicity of text. There he shows the issue from the Foucault’s time Victorian classic. And he also shows the text not as a single side rather it projects multiplicity of meaning and issue. And at the same time he links it with the knowledge of love, he opines, “ *The Professor of Desire* provides the knowledge of love and love of knowledge, thus fulfilling the nurturing function essential to the learning process as a continuous affirmation of joyful wisdom” (86). In these lines he clarifies that it is the novel of love and love of knowledge. It means its subject matter is love and it gives knowledge about love. As a professor of Desire, he has demonstrated that while it is unrealistic to compete against institutions of power and authority, teaching can loosen their discourses by revealing their tendentiousness and artifice. For each of us, the study of signs and meaning needs to be recognized as dependent on value and primal scenes of recognition relating knowledge and pleasure. Similarly, Walter Goodman reviews:

Consider the protagonist of Philip Roth's intelligent and moving new novel, *The Professor of Desire*. David Kepesh grows up to be a professor of literature at reputable universities. He is fascinated by himself the other characters exist for the sake of their impact on him but he needs assistance in untangling his desires and locating his real feelings. That is, when experiencing a significant moment, a wrenching relationship, some mortification of the spirit, he

instinctively reaches out for illumination to the creations he has come to know better than he is able to know his parents or lovers. (56)

Here, Goodman portrays Kepesh's growth and how he becomes a professor at reputable universities. Kepesh is a desirable person who always has an unusual seducing behavior. He wants to fulfill his desire by attracting people. He persuades girls to have relations with him because his passion is only in sexual intercourse. He shows the nature of Kepesh that is unrelated to other professors. Because of his immoral activities, there is more or less a crisis in the community. Goodman further reviews, "Roth gives the professor extravagant adventures of his own from being the centerpiece of a three-way (the other two are a couple of nubile Swedish girls) dedicated to realizing the erotic fantasies of all, to marrying the formerly kept woman of a Hong Kong magnate who was willing to murder his wife for her." (56). Kepesh is operated with the erotic fantasies that he wants to become himself as a centerpiece of a threesome. He did many erotic actions in his life but he never realizes his ethics and morality.

Elizabeth M. Rajec analyzes the text with connection to the protagonist's history and shows him as an Austro-Hungarian-Jewish character and he makes close to other characters. He shows the five categories of the names. In his own words:

Basically, five categories of names can be traced throughout *The Professor of Desire*. To the first group belong the names connected with his childhood, which reflect a strong Austro-Hungarian-Jewish character: Kepesh, Bratasky, Jelinek, Klotzer, Barbatnik, and so on. Even their first names are predominantly Hebrew or Jewish: Abe, Navey, Harycy, Larry and the like.

(70)

He connects the character's name with their childhood which reflects their identity and also divides the names with five categories; first belongs to childhood, second more

sophisticated, third sexual connotation, forth Anglo-Saxon. Their names are not just names but also connote their history at the same time with their identity.

The novel describes the youth, the college years and the academic career of Professor David Kepesh, and besides that, his sexual desires. Here, Philip Roth has concerned himself with the description of male sexuality in what must be nearly all of its heterosexual manifestations. The novel tells about the psychological development of the Jewish family in American culture and Roth's concern as Jewish male sexuality as it is impinged upon by the specially Jewish family unit, since, with his description of portrays complaint, he has helped in a major way to define the American cultural stereotype of the Jewish mother and her sexually oppressed issue. From the publication to the present many researchers reached its various aspects but the present study deals with the issue of truce between dignity and desire.

The Professor of Desire reflects the psychic desires of the professor David Kepesh and beside that his sexual desires. Taking the postmodern ideas of psychoanalytical critiques, the purposed research reads the effect of family problems and criminal mentality of Professor David our identity is constructed by the social ideology that who are and we are important product of cultural beliefs, values, and systems of government, laws, educational practices and religious tenets. Moreover, Lacan challenges the notion of stable identity. Identity is meaningful only because of other. A child doesn't know about self-identity in his imaginary order but it was symbolic order where the child differentiates his subjective identity. Human sexuality plays the vital role to the person's n their social practices. It is human sexuality which has different meanings for the survival of human beings. Frued suggests that a basic struggle in everyone's psychological development is with the father, who must be fought with or fled from. In these terms, a major theme of the novel is flight, flight

from the male parent manifested in a great number of minor flights. The first is from the discovery of sexual potential, which Kepesh discovers while living with two Swedish girls in London.

In *Introduction to Psychology*, Anthony Beteman and Jeremy Holmes argue, “Freud’s move from ‘seduction theory’ to the idea of unconscious phantasy has provoked huge controversy among historians, especially in the light of contemporary knowledge of the extent of childhood sexual abuse. The ideas of wish-fulfillment and fantasy are central for psychoanalysis” (21). Freud realized that the accounts of seductions reflected wish-based, pleasure principle driven nature of the inner world. A person who is guided by his extreme unusual desires he/she have loss the ethical and moral identity. Similarly, Jay Halio argues, “Wholeness seems unreal, illusory, radically incomplete, or what amounts to the same thing radically unattainable. But Kepesh is wrong too. Roth leaves no doubt about that, physiologically, biologically and anatomically impossible though it may seem. (154). Halio’s argument in favour of Kepesh being representative of unattainability is powerful, and demonstrates an increasing willingness to expand the scope of criticism on this novel.

In Roth’s Kepesh novel *The Professor of Desire*, Fetishism also emerges as being particularly useful to prove the protagonist’s sexual psychic desire. The willful complexities of fetishism provide a network of ideas and concerns that are particularly well-tailored in this novel. Using a fetishistic mode of literary analysis incorporates an internal uncertainty that allows for this novel to be read as a significant in a manner that pays notice to their striking differences. In the writings of Sigmund Freud, fetishism is a puzzling concept, and as such is one that subsequent generations of psychoanalytic theorists have attempted to understand. Understanding of this topic has expanded to both acknowledge its crucial role in developing key psychoanalytic

concepts. This is part of a general move towards imperviousness that is internal to the term itself; although most often thought of as a sexual preference, the term is visible in a wide range of critical and theoretical discourse.

This thesis is the study of the tussle between the dignity and desire of the protagonist David Kepesh from the perspective of psychoanalysis. The role of psychic desire is most significant in the usage of fetishism as an interpretative tool has been the work of Jacques Lacan, whose concepts of fetishism derived directly from Freud's writings on the subject. Lacan's work is as significant for its effect on subsequent scholarship on fetishism as it is valuable in its own right. Much recent work on fetishism has approached the topic from the perspective of female fetishism, a concept which directly contradicts both Freud's writings and the Lacanian constructions of sexuality that derive from them.

Regarding psychoanalytic theory Judson T. Stone in his article "The Theory and Practice of Psychoanalysis" asserts:

Psychoanalysis today, however, although it still rests on the broad foundation of Freud's basic discoveries, encompasses a wide variety of theoretical and practical viewpoints. It will help to clarify much of the discussion that follows if it is kept in mind that the term psychoanalysis is applied generally to a body of theory about normal and abnormal human behavior". (55)

In these lines Stone clearly notifies that the aspect of Freudian psychoanalysis to observe normal and abnormal human behavior is practiced for the sake of simplicity.

Freudian psychoanalysis focuses on sexual desire of the individuals.

Moreover, this research explores the wide range of psychoanalysis to reflect the psychoanalytical effect in the novel through the desirable character. Lois Tyson, in her book *Critical Theory Today* argues, "Some critic have objected to the use of

psychoanalysis to understand the behavior of literary characters because literary characters are not real people and therefore, do not have psyches that can be analyzed.” (35) Tyson explains about the importance of literary character to reflect the real characteristics of society indicating the classical psychoanalysis. Through the analytical study of the fictional characters in the literary text, we can observe the real lifestyle of people in the society and its real nature. Imaginary characters are not real characters but they are the symbolic represents of the society. By psychoanalyzing the representative characters in the literary texts we can expose the internal desires and behaviors. Similarly, in the novel also there is the imaginary character that represents his symbolic figure in the society.

The novel is a thoughtful, even gentle stylistically elegant novel about the male’s desire which is paradoxical. The passion of the character, which may led to happiness but cannot survive it. The novel is so well and his prose is both elegant and furious. It is witty, tender and brutal in a short. Philip Roth is one of the few characters who can write of passion so elegantly and so interestingly.

The Professor of Desire has not been discussed in critical work on Roth to the extent that *The Breast* has. *The Professor of Desire* was published shortly after Roth had released a series of playful and bizarre fictions - including its immediate predecessor, *My Life as a Man*, which has been described by David Brauner as being one of Roth’s most experimental works. In comparison, Roth’s second Kepesh novel can seem to lack vigour, repeating material covered more extensively in previous novels.

Philip Roth is a great historian of a modern eroticism. There is clarity almost a ruthless, to his work which makes the experience of reading and any of his books a bracing wild ride. There is not a single interpretation of the text rather it is embedded

with the paradoxes in itself. The writer presents the protagonist with double quality; the man of dignity and desire at the same time but he cannot maintain his dignity at last. He is the studious man and gets success in his field and become famous. He utters:

My mother says everybody knows you already, you are famous. When my father, struggling with disappointment asked at again, and medical school is out where upon I tell him for the tenth time. I want to act and believe as much myself until that day when all at once performing in my fashion, seems to me the most pointless, ephemeral, and pathetically self-aggrandizing of pursuit.

(10-11)

He is the famous man who is clarified by his mother. His mother shows his potentiality and his prestige toward him in the society. And his father also asks him about the medical school and he answers that I want to act means he is the active man wants to do for the society and even give the good impression for the pursuit of himself and other. In this regard, he further states:

I adopt a potential new goal for myself every other week. I will go to medical school and train to be a surgeon. Though, perhaps as a psychiatrist I can do even more good for mankind. I will become a lawyer . . . a diplomat . . . why not a rabbi one who is studious, contemplative, deep . . . I read I and though and Hasidic tales, and home on vacation question my parents about the family's history in the old country. (11)

He adopts the new goals to his life. He wants to be a surgeon and want to do more good for the human beings which give the positive potential to human kind. He is not only to become a surgeon but lawyer and diplomat also, which shows that he wants to be a versatile personality in himself and wants to lead the society towards the positive

roadway. He wants to be competitive in the society because he is studious, contemplative and compare himself with other person of the society and wants to prove him as a legendary figure. In this regard, he wants to stop impersonating others and become himself and begin to impersonate the self and believes he ought to be. In *Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, Anthony Bateman and Jeremy Holmes views:

Implicit in the developmental perspective of psychoanalysis is the idea of maturation. For Freud, this meant becoming more reality-oriented, as he expressed in his *Zuider Zee* metaphor of the reclamation of the unconscious by the conscious, his view of neurosis as a 'turning away from reality', and his famous aphorism 'where 'id' was there 'ego' shall be'. Implicit in Freud's work is also the notion of the coherence of an inner world illuminated by self knowledge, and the acceptance of the different aspects of oneself. (74)

Psychoanalysis is the idea of maturation which shows the reality and originality of the person. It also analyzes the unconscious part of the human being where there is three layers in the human psyche. Freud also focuses in the inner world of human being that is eliminated by self-knowledge. Acceptance of the different aspect of human being like as the one who have the high 'id', does aggressive work. There must be ego gratification in the human psyche which control abnormal behavior of the person and it is somehow the creative one. The protagonist of the novel also has the creativity in himself and wants to be act as a mature and knowable person. His intention is to be establishing as the genius person in the society and he wants to know all thing and compares with other character to show him as the competitive or the superior then the other character.

David Kepash is a successful person in his academic career. He is attended in college and gets the graduation and start the career of professor. His life is ordinary

and wants to enjoy and entertain and enjoy in his life. He does long dialogue for night after the close of the season. He expresses his feelings as:

In my first few semesters at college I am awarded leading roles in university production of plays by Giraudoux, Sophocles and Congreve. I appear in a musical comedy, singing and even dancing, in my fashion. There seems to be nothing I cannot do on a stage there would seem to be anything that keeps the stage (10).

He presents himself as one of the talented person because he seems in musical comedy, singing, dancing and fashion. There is not even a single stage where Kepash cannot saw. When his parents visit his school, he interprets the role to them. He struggled to establish himself and becomes success.

Fetishism is nonetheless primarily associated in contemporary culture with an interest in non-standard sexual practices. However, even this loose definition of the term remains deeply problematic. The association of fetishism and sex derives in part from an increased use of the term in early sexual and psychoanalytic discourse; especially that of Sigmund Freud, whose work has become essential to subsequent discussions of sexual perversion. In this regard, Jean Baudrillard argues, “The term fetishism almost has a life of its own” (90). Baudrillard’s use of language is telling the term being said to have a ‘life of its own’ signals the difficulty of coming to a critical consensus on the topic, whilst the use of almost indicates certain boundaries. The meaning of the term ‘fetishism’ varies depending on what each individual writer requires it to mean, the act of definition implicating them in a variety of dialogues.

The Professor of Desire, however, takes something of a different turn, for it is not so much the mother in Kepesh’s case who is the disruptive figure, but Abe, the father. One central problem in Kepesh’s sexual life is the issue of permanence in

male-female relationships; he finds such relationships difficult to establish, and, once established, difficult to sustain. Kepesh involved with the girl Birgitta but there is not long last relationship which shows the nature of Kepesh. In the following lines, Roth shows:

Yes, easily as that do young Birgitta Svanstram and young David Kepesh rid themselves of each other. Ridding himself of what he is by nature may be a difficult task, however since young Kepesh does not appear to be that clear quite at, as to what his nature is, exactly. He is awake all night wondering what he will do if Brigitta should steal back into the room before dawn. He wonders if he ought not to get up and locked the door. (50)

He is such a person who involves too many characters but there is not sustainable relationship with them. It is hard to know his nature and he himself wonder because of his activities. When he wants to see the Birgitta, she is no where found neither in town of Les Andely nor in Rouen not at the gross Horloge and other places. He wonders by her adventures. This also clarifies that which becomes his partner for a time cannot find next time. In contrast, it is the father who can see a woman once, decide instantly that she is the woman for him, and live with her in seemingly happy marriage for years until her death.

The Professor of Desire covers a rather long time span, from Kepesh's Catskills memories when he was aged eight until the moment he decides to divorce his first wife Helen Baird and starts a more stable life with Claire Ovington. He feels no hesitation and any shame to this action he lately involves with other character. In response to the divorce with wife he has no any proper response because his relations are sexual rather emotional one. To clarify this Roth writes:

In response, no tears, no anger, and no real scorn to speak of. Though not too

much admiration me as a shameless carnal for She says from the door, why did I like you so much you are such a boy, and that is all there is to the discussion of my character, all apparently, that her dignity requires or permits. Not the masterful young masters or mistresses and whores, not the precocious dramatist of the satiric and the lewd and something of a fledging rapist to no merely a boy.(50)

Aforementioned lines shows that the person are such who has no guilty feeling and humanitarian ethos toward the partner. When he divorced his wife and engaged with another girl, he has no any response to that there is no tears, no anger but also presents him as a boy and shows that the second partner is emotionally attached with him and he is the proper character for her dignity. And present himself not as the dramatist and master of mistresses and whores. He presents himself not only a boy but as a mature rapist. Through this he wants to prove that his relations are not human and emotional relations but one and only aim is to fulfill the biological desire which is not suitable for his character because of his profession and social values but he does not care about these things and runs after the desire that is sexual one which makes him the hollow man.

Jay Geller in his book, *Fetishism* talks about psychoanalytic Fetishism. He places psychoanalytic definitions of fetishism into a broader framework. He argues, “Fetishism has come to delineate a discursive space in which the often misrecognized attempt is made to mediate difference(s) by means of material objects (or persons)” (343). Geller implicitly brings into line that reconfiguring fetishism as a space where relationships and hierarchies are formed. The strong and unusual desire of Kepesh is clearly highlighted in Roth’s novel. The sexual excitement and the bodily desire of Kepeshis described in the novel. The young David Kepesh, is initiated into adult life.

Kepesh is introduced from the outset of the story as a young man who studies European literature at Syracuse University. Attitude is the most distinctive and indispensable concept in social psychology to analyze the human behavior in the context of social norms and values. It has been practiced in the society traditionally and existed and transformed from generation to generation continuously. Attitude is the most powerful weapon to guide Kepesh's behavior and thinking in the novel. It is his changing attitude to be different from rural society that combined him into corrupted social mechanism. No humanity, no respect to other and immorality are the feature of urban society and it is full of corruption and ills and evils in this novel. These both tendencies are practiced by the central character in the novel. Kepesh presents his sexual feeling as:

I watch transfixed the girl who plays with the ends of her hair while ostensibly studying mine. Another girl, wholly bland tucked in her classroom chair just the day before, will begin to swing her leg beneath the library table where she idly leafs through a *Look* Magazine, and my craving knows no bounds. A third girl leans forward over her notebook and with a muffled groan, as though I am being impaled, I observed the breast beneath her blouse pushed softly into her folded arms. How I wish I were those arms. (22)

Through these lines Kepesh's obsession with sex is clarified by the writer where Kepesh seems as a man of a sexual desire not more than that. When he is in library, he has not any intention to read and write rather satisfies his sexual desire. He sees a transfixed girl who studies her history and he also studies his history. At the same time another girl came there and swing her leg beneath the library table. She is with a muffled girl grown but Kepesh observed her breast beneath her blouse with push softly in her folded arms and he feels that those are his arms. He seems there a perfect

strangers and wants to touch her in order to exchanging his notes and saws tracing circle in her lips and this also impress him and he satisfied by this. This is a kind of fetishism. He is deeply obsessed with the sexual desires.

The critic analyzing fetishism, like the fetishist, finds themselves in a position of increasing uncertainty. It is this radical instability that allows Jean-Joseph Goux. He claims, “The absurdity, the incongruity, the radical singularity of the fetish oblige one to think of human desire not as a physiological function that finds its own law in organic nature, but as being completely subjected to the absurd mechanism of imagination, and thus open to accidental or fortuitous events.” (73) Here, human desire is not only the physiological but also it functions as imagination and psychological that is unexpected for the human beings. Firstly, those types of desires come on the psychological mind of the individual and then only it appears on his/her daily activities. In this novel, the imagination of sexual desires of Kepesh towards girl is portrayed time and again. In this context Kepesh imagines:

At Twenty-six, dating on. Whereas the twenty-four year old Ph.D. Candidate who is my date for the evening and who eventually leaves the party in a huff, without me. Had been saying on the way over that, sorting her index cards in the library just afternoon, she had been wondering if and when her life would ever get underway. (54)

These lines clearly show the sexual curiosity and imagination of Kepesh. Kepesh wants to date with Ph.D. candidate girl at the evening party but ultimately she leaves the party. The imagined expressions of Kepesh are come from psychologically and it finally merged with his physical body.

The Professor of Desire is the theme of romantic disillusionment. There is bewildering array of sexual and romantic action. Kepesh involved with many female

characters and charges him as the rapist and polygamist. Elizabeth charges:

Who then is the other Elisabeth she asks. You? Oh, but that is not so. You say so yourself. You are a whore master by nature, you are polygamist by nature. There is even the rapist in you well may be I have changed my mind about all that may be I was foolish to say such thing. But how can you change your mind about what is your nature? She asks. (48)

Kepesh charges as the rapist and unethical man because his nature is not as a human nature rather he has more animalistic instinct. He is really a professor of the university but at the same time he is recognized as the whore master who clarifies by Elisabeth. Elisabeth can changes her mind about the Kepesh's personality but it is quite difficult to change the nature of Kepesh which also hints by Elisabeth by confessing his charge tagged upon him. He refutes these somehow but these things are embedded in his life which he cannot be separate from his nature. It clarifies that he is corrupted in his nature.

This novel narrates Kepesh's travails in love and lust as a young man. It would have given an added gravitas to the failure of Kepesh's sex life to live up to its billing. This thesis traces a path from a psychoanalytically-influenced mode of writing based on Kepesh in the novel *The Professor of Desire*. It is the story of spiritual imprisonment.

Kepesh is the person who does not care about the spiritual or moral things. When he sees the female body he sets him apart from real world that is his psychological world where he wants to spend the time and acts as his desire. Even for the single time he cannot take his eyes from the female body. In his own words:

I cannot take my eyes from her face tonight. Between the old master etchings of the two pounced and creased and candlelit old man, Claires's face seems,

more than ever, so apple-smooth, apple-small, apple-shining, apple-plain,
apple-fresh . . . never more artless and untenanted . . . never before so . . . Yes,
and to what am I Willfully blinding myself that in time most set us apart (251).

Mentioned lines shows the dreamy about this gentle tender adoration. In these lines he clarifies that he is unconsciously conscious about female body. Even in a single body of women, he sees there the smooth shining plain, fresh like apple which is like artfully and tactfully mended by an artist. By seeing this, he forgets all his duties, moral ground and even he seems unknown about his spiritual values because he does not care all these things and when he sees the female being he sets him apart from the real world. Perfect beauty in female body is his psychology only but not in the real being. He realizes, "I am out there once again, mourning what I have lost and looking for my way!" (251). Through these lines, he realized that he is out of track or he is quite different to other because he is out of there and also mourns what he lost and looking for the way. Mourning is only to cope but there is looking for way is quite challenging to him because of his indifference towards the other entities like; social norms and values, morality and spiritual matter. Similarly, Jean Baudrillard writes, "The term fetishism almost has a life of its own" (90). According to Baudrillard, in the fetishism, the life of people has developed in their own way. They don't have attention towards social norm and values. They don't care about societal beliefs. These characters want to involve in various activities on their own way. Similarly, in text, Kepesh also do not care about his social norms and values and always involves in unethical and immoral activities. He forgets his ground when he sees female. Psychoanalysis is given space in the course of Roth's novel, with Kepesh's transition from husband to raconteur depicted as a mere matter of unburdening repressions. Psychoanalysis is not so much an unwritten sphere of influence so much as an

oppositional force whose rejection, though unmentioned, is crucial to the text's construction of sexuality. When Kepesh insists that this is not seduction, he is developing his argument against a body of psychoanalytic thought as much as he is against a cultural trope.

Lacan challenges the notion of stable of identity and he focuses various desires of the characters in different cultures. People are guided by different cultures and they are highly merged with symbolical order. He connects society with ideologies. In Lacan words:

In a different symbolic order we would have different desires. In other words, the symbolic order consist of societies ideologies: its beliefs, values; its system of government, laws, educational practices, and religious tenets, and the like. And it is our response towards society's ideologies that make us who we are (31).

We are the product of cultural beliefs, values, system of government, laws, educational practices and religious values. Identity is meaning only because of the role of society. In this sense Lacan challenges the notion of identity and focuses on the culture.

Kepesh is recounting his experiences in the satirical manner of someone disparaging a long-abandoned belief, mocking his enthusiastic and non-evaluative embrace of a set of arguments, but there is a notable progression in his explanations. The realization of the insufficiency of passive desire of Kepesh sparks the moment when otherness is recognized. Kepesh forms himself as a part-object, a symbol of how the character's quest for ultimate satisfaction through sex is doomed by his tendency to reduce other people to utilitarian roles. Kepesh often reacts with temper irritabilities when people in his life do not obey the script he has imagined for them – see, for example, the way Kepesh seems to bully his father into providing

confirmation of his analyses. Unable or unwilling to see the partial object as a whole person, Kepesh only has a limited understanding of desires – both those of himself and other people. He has internalized the logic of breast-identification in the process of his transformation.

David Kepesh's first experiences with women who combine cunning and affection in ambiguous ways inspires the couplings that provide *The Professor of Desire* with its structure. When Kepesh encounters two Swedish exchange students whilst undertaking postgraduate study in London, he attempts to use them in order to divide female sexual desire under broad categories of cunning (Birgitta) and affection (Elisabeth). Kepesh's willingness to categorize aspects of desire in order to study them is a reference to his academic methodologies, a means of extending his reading to include his sexual partners. A letter from Elisabeth to Kepesh is displayed in the course of the novel; a fragment from a longer letter in which Elisabeth claims that "I was in love with someone and what I did have nothing to do with love. It was like I no more was human being" (33). Kepesh's subsequent attempt at a reply shows him contending with matters of conscience, during which deliberations he contemplates shifting some of the blame for Elisabeth's suicide attempt to Birgitta. Kepesh's reflections over guilt display a desire to maintain his perceptions of his lovers in a way that diminishes his claims for having some sort of empathetic epiphany.

For Lacan, desire pushes for recognition. It is less a question of what we desire as much as it is that we be recognized. Moreover, Lacan believes that this dependence on the other for recognition is responsible for structuring not only desires, but even drives. Kepesh is also the man of desire at the same time. He utters:

"Oh, Helen, what's going on here? Save the nice man. Stuff for my tombstone you may have a new life, but this lingo . . ."

“I had a lot of time to think when I was sick. I thought about”

But I don't want to know. “Tell me,” I say, interrupting her, “how was your conversation with the Schonbrunns?” “I spoke to Arthur. She wasn't home.”

“And how did he take hearing from you after all this time?”

“Oh, he took it quite well” (210).

In these lines he seems quite different from his previous image where he seems obsessed with the female body but here he seems as the person of thought and drives. He has also the life drives where he wants to save the nice man and expects to new life. And also shows that he has time to think when he was sick. It means that he suffers from some faults because of his wrong doing tendencies. He takes all things quite well and realizes his actions when he is in leisure because of his sickness. ‘I was sick’ hints that he was not in the proper condition and analyzing his previous works and makes plan for the future betterment but also he realizes that he is no more because of his immoral and unethical works which lost his dignity in the society. This desire, in which it is literally verified that man's desire is, alienated in the other's desire, in effect structures the drives discovered in analysis.

To return psychoanalysis to a veridical path, it is worth recalling that analysis managed to go so far in the revelation of man's desires only by following, in the veins of neurosis and the marginal subjectivity of the individual, the structure proper to a desire that thus proves to model it at an unexpected depth – namely, the desire to have his desire recognized. Kepesh shows that he is waited to call ambulance because he has desire to kill his wife. He utters:

I wait to intercede or call an ambulance. From seeing his life's work mismanaged so by this dead beat husband and his dour little wife will my overwrought father burst into tears, or keel over a corpse? The one once again

seems know less possible to me than the other. Why am I convinced that during the course of this weekend he is going to die that by Monday, I will be a parent less son? (244-45).

Kepesh here shows that his mother death bed condition and his father burst into tears or his father has pathetic condition nearly in the future. He hints that at this weekend he is going to die and becomes the parent less son. He also realize that it is no possible then others. And he further states, “Now I look back in wonder that I myself could ever accomplish so much. Nobody likes me, from now where! I started out, Claire, I was a short order cook” (245). He clarifies that, when he looks back he sees there is wonder in his past which he cannot accomplish so much. Nobody likes him and now where he is respected because he loses his dignity in his society as well as field where he works. At that situation he feels as he loses everything in his life in true sense. He realizes his mistakes of his life which haunts him now and coping with this quiet difficult to him because of following the desire without caring his dignity.

In the context of psychoanalysis, Freud suggests that a basic struggle in everyone’s psychological developments with the father, who must be fought with or fled from. In this term a major theme of the novel is flight, flight from the male parent manifested in a great number of minor flights. The basic theme of this novel is a power of sexual attraction. Here, the character Elisabeth shows him the power of sexual attraction; she tries to suicide at the point from fearing of losing him.

According to this novel, Kepesh married to a non-Jewish woman and while he engages with other girls and he feels uncomfortable in his early chosen profession and his lifestyle. *The Professor of Desire* is an increasing sense of collusion between these cultural forces – intellectual trends which had often construed as mutually incompatible. That these two essential and strongly intertwined fields of critical

discourse should fail to become linked in the course of Roth's narrative is an absence that critical work on Roth is beginning to address - with fascinating results.

To sum up, this thesis basically analyzes the psychologic aspect of the novel, *The Professor of Desire* by focusing the central character David Kepesh. It proves the psychic desire of Kepesh which makes him the man of without the dignity and morality. The novel is about heterosexual male desire, certainly, but it also about the limitations of certain perspectives and expectations associated with such desires. The Kepesh's character is willfully paradoxical, calculatedly subversive and flagrantly infuriating. It includes some memorably tender passages about Kepesh's parents, in particularly those dealing with the mother's death and the father's old age. He has a Jewish parent as objects of satiric criticism and reflexing to find them treated here as object of simple affection. Philip Roth follows Kepesh from the domesticity of childhood out into the vast wilderness of erotic possibility, from a ménage a trios in London to the depths of loneliness in New York, Kepesh central dilemma of pleasure: how to make a truce between dignity and desire; and how to survive the ordeal of an unhallowed existence. Roth's prose is both elegant and furious. It can be witty, tender and brutal in a single paragraph.

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