

Desire, Repression and Morbid Psyche in the novel *The Lost Highway* by David Adams Richards



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## Certificate

I hereby certify that the dissertation entitled “Desire, Repression and Morbid Psyche in the novel “The Lost Highway “by Vandana Ruhil for the award of M.A. degree is a record of research work done by the candidate under my supervision during the period of her study (2015-2017) and that the dissertation has not formed the basis for the award of any other degree, diploma, associate ship, fellowship or other similar title and this dissertation represents independent work on the part of the candidate.

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## Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation entitled Desire, Repression and Morbid Psyche in the Novel *The Lost Highway* by David Adams Richards is a record of first hand research work done by me during the period of my study in the year 2015-2017 and that this dissertation has not formed the basis for the award of any other degree, diploma, associate ship, fellowship, or other similar title.

Place: Jalandhar

Signature of the Candidate

Date:

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## Introduction

The present dissertation entitled “Desire, Repression and portrayal of Morbid Psyche in the novel *The Lost Highway* by David Adams Richards, it presents the outcome of situations when the desire is repressed. David Adams Richards is a Canadian novelist born on 17<sup>th</sup> October 1950 in Newcastle, New Brunswick. Richards has lived in various parts of Canada, from Victoria to Saint John, but he has spent most of his life in central and southern New Brunswick. David was the third child to his parents Bill Richards and Margaret. He was a premature baby and as a result he struggled throughout his childhood and was unable to play and had to be away from all kinds of entertainments children did. Religion has been the reason for his separation from the others in the community as, Newcastle the place where he spent his childhood and it was earlier dominated by the protestants and the power and wealth were under them. Richard went to St. Mary’s Academy, a Catholic primary school, upto third grade and he completed his primary, middle and high school education at Harkins Academy, it was a public school which had excellence in literature and history though Richard failed in literature in the eleventh grade. Richard was fourteen when he received his first outbreak, after reading *Oliver Twist*, and extraordinary purpose, which he says didn’t help his finances: “ Sometimes ...I thought it would be better if I were a plumber, but I wouldn’t be very good.” ( 59).

Richard’s literary career began when he turned twenty he finished writing the first novel, *The Keeping of Gusties* and went to St. Thomas University in Fredericton, where he began to sit among the local writer’s which included prominent writers of Canada like Fred Cogswell and Alden Nowlan. During this time he has written almost two third of his second novel, *The Coming of Winter*. Oberon Press in 1974 published this novel. Richard decided to spend his whole life with Peggy McIntyre and both of them spent a year travelling Canada throughout,

while travelling his hometown he realised that he could very well write about his own homeland, regardless of where he lived.

The first chapters of his novel *The Coming of Winter* in 1973 won the national Norma Epstein Award for writing such a creative work. David has also been working as a writer in the residence at Mount Allison University in 1982, University of New Brunswick 1983-1987, University of Alberta 1990-91 and University of Ottawa 1992-93. Richard has been publishing since 1970 and has achieved a great commercial success. Richard has done a great deal of work which has been highly acknowledged and got him numerous awards and prizes throughout his career. David's work Miramichi trilogy-Nights Below Station Street[1988], won the Governor General's Award for fiction in 1988, *Evening Snow Will Bring Such Peace*[1990] won the Canadian Authors Association Award in 1991, and *For Those Who Hunt The Wounded Down* [1993] he received the Alden Nowlan Award for Excellent writing in English language literary arts in 1993 and Thomas Raddall Atlantic Fiction Award in 1994. we can see that all the awards and prizes that Richard received focuses on the fact that he has been accepted in Canada's literary canon.

David has won numerous regional awards for his novels and is awarded the most prestigious award of Canada -Australia Literary Prize in 1992. David's *The Lost Highway* was shortlisted for the Governor General's Award and longlisted for Scotiabank Giller Prize and *The Friends of Meagre Fortune* won the Commonwealth Writer's Prize for Best Book and was longlisted for the Scotiabank Giller Prize. Richard has also worked as a screenwriter, and made various adaptations of his novels for the television screen. He wrote his first screenplay for the film Tuesday and Wednesday . His novel *Nights Below Station Street*, was adapted in 1990 and he decided to write a television play in 1994 which was "Small Gifts", and he then received his first Gemini Award for it. Richard won his second Gemini for *For Those Who Hunt the Wounded Down*. He has also released a feature film in 2002 *The Bay of Love and Sorrows* for

which he co-wrote the screenplay. Richards since 1970 has published many of his works and reached to heights with increasing critical and commercial success. Richards' Miramichi trilogy — *Nights Below Station Street* (1988), and *For Those Who Hunt the Wounded Down* (1993) *Evening Snow Will Bring Such Peace* (1990), —deals with the focal point that Richard's work has been accepted in Canada by the literary canon. Richards has won the Canada-Australia Literary Prize, in 1992 for the publishing of an excellent piece of work. Richards began writing as a prose writer, but if we track down his record his first two published books were of poetry.

Richard has been a successful screenplay writer, he wrote his first screenplay for the film *Tuesday, Wednesday* in 1987. *For Those Who Hunt the Wounded Down* was his own adaptation that came out in 1996. He has won his second Gemini award in 1998 for a television movie. Richard featured *Nights Below Station Street* as a film in 1997 by Norma Bailey and *The Bay of Love and Sorrows* was made into a feature film in 2002 by Tim Southam. Richard was lucky enough that his parents owned movie theatres in the Miramichi region of New Brunswick, and this is how his art and literature was much influenced by cinema which favoured his work. The screenplay for *Small Gifts* in 1994, was specially broadcasted on television on CBC, and won Richard the Canada's Gemini Award for best writing in a children's youth program in 1996. *River of the Brokenhearted* (2003) is autobiographical work which represents the bad fortunes of the families who met a downfall when the movie theatres succeeded in profit.

*Nights Below Station Street* has won the Governor General's Award for fiction in 1988, *Evening Snow Will Bring Such Peace* won the Canadian Authors Association Award in 1991, and *For Those Who Hunt the Wounded Down* Richards has won the Alden Nowlan Award for Excellence in English-Language Literary Arts in 1993 and the Thomas Raddall Atlantic Fiction Award in 1994, also his later works acclaimed strong recognition in the society.



Richards work *Lines on the Water*, which was all about fishing on the Miramichi, has won the Governor General's Award for non-fiction in 1998, making David Adams- Richards the third person to win Governor General literary awards in two different categories. *Mercy Among the Children* (2000) was co-winner of the Giller Prize in 2000 and winner of the CBA Libris award for both novel of the year and author of the year in 2001.

Richard has published his short stories and articles along with his novels and non-fiction books in magazines. The University of New Brunswick were so impressed with his literary papers that they decided to acquire his works, which took place in 1994. Richard has achieved heights in his literary career and claims that writers like Thomas Hardy and Charles Dickens have been a great literary inspiration to him. Elements of realism, strong sense of places and interest in family histories can be seen in his works. He also deals with the stories of families of lower middle class families and high class families who are striving hard to deal with the psychological as well as family problems. He has tried to make his works deal with the briefing about the social, psychological and physical life of ordinary people and hence makes it an economic and politically questionable topic in the world, these are rather questions that the society struggles to answer.

The work of Richards are resembling in nature with that of William Faulkner's Yoknapatawpha's country stories. The basic idea of concern is the depiction of desires and restrictions that are imposed on an individual from both the outer world and inner instincts. They also deal with the clashes that takes place among an individual and local history. He includes a number of large or small themes in his works, with a key motive to represent the living conditions in the Canadian society and what all it takes to be a Canadian. When one tries to look at Richard's works in a more critical way we find out that it is not the mysteries in his play, neither it is the precise prose style, but his skill of story telling which captures the complete attention of the readers. There will always be a followed pattern of writing in

Richard's works which includes a beginning, a middle and an end. Critics who work on David Adams Richards focus mainly on his gloom nature of vision and how he mentions about alcoholism, domestic violence, prison and murders. David Adams Richards is termed as a "painfully sharp observer" who makes sure that in his stories he mentions clearly the miseries of the poorest characters with a heart-breaking courage which makes him different from other contemporary writers. Richard has always been writing about- the Miramichi valley, but he clearly mentions that "I'm great at going places," he said once. "I'm not good at staying anywhere." David Adams Richards states that his works are not dealing with the personal incidents of his life, neither it is about self-imposed exile. It is also not depicting the desire to escape from one's past.

The *Lost Highway* is the study of philosophical disfigurement with which human being deals and the novel represents such desperate journey of a child who has lost his mother when he was young and has never been in guidance or care of a soft soul. We will see how the child grows up to be someone who is least concerned about anyone else but himself and has no soft feelings for anyone. He has grown up in an environment which is isolated from the society and his life is nearly squandered. David Adams Richards' *The Lost Highway* is a thriller which deals with the psychological study. It is completely different from the old genres that we have gone through as Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* as well as classical Greek mythologies, which studies the psychology of human being deeply. Alex Chapman, is a selfish young man living a disassembled life has faced harsh circumstances right from his birth, including extreme poverty, lack of resources and public services. He has been yearning for things which are beyond his reach. His desires are infinite in nature, and it takes from him something infinite in its own nature. We find Alex's desires being repressed from the day he came to live with his uncle Jim Chapman, his early childhood days have been so harsh on him.

Everyday Alex faced disappointments, shame and hatred. He grew up in an atmosphere where each day was full of repression and denial.

Desires are the instincts or drives that are deeply hidden roots in the unconscious mind. Sigmund Freud explored the human mind more thoroughly than any other. According to Freud “ All the sensual desires and repulsion that slumber in the heart can, if anything sets them in motion, cause a dream to arise from the ideas that are associated with them or cause those ideas to intervene in a dream that is already present.” ( 42).

Repression is the primary factor , an initial defense mechanism which makes a shield to prevent the human beings against anxiety. Freud says “ The imposter is the dream and the emperor is the dreamer himself, the moralizing purpose of the dream reveals an obscure knowledge of the fact that the latent dream content is concerned with forbidden wishes that have fallen victim to repression. “ ( 262).

An Outline of psychoanalysis provides an overview of psychoanalysis. It is made up of three different sections which gives us an explanation of psychic apparatus, which also deals in spatial organization. Ego develops when it comes in contact with the alien world outside and which develops through contact with the outside world and makes an attempt to reconstruct the need of id, superego and reality. Conservative drives are present in the id which represent special needs for the psyche.

## **Scope**

This dissertation shall focus on the research problem, that is desire and repression leading to morbid psyche in David Adams Richards The Lost Highway, where we see Alex the protagonist suffering and leading a life in dilemma. Since the novel mainly focuses on human beings undergoing the psychological repression caused when the desires within one are not fulfilled. This is relatively an unexplored area.

## Objectives

The main objective of this dissertation is to explore the elements of desire and repression with examples in the novel *The Lost Highway*, to analyse how human beings in the novel struggle for their self that is for their identity and fulfilment of their desires.

1. To analyse role of desire in the formulation of the psyche
2. Role of societal pressure on the repression of desire
3. Symptoms, causes and remedies for morbid psyche
4. Study of protagonist's behaviour with relation to psychoanalysis

## Literature Review

Heinz Kohut is considered as the most important intellectual of the twentieth century who has challenged the Freudian notion and questioned the medical control of psychoanalysis in America. Kohut is known for his analysis of narcissism. It is said that "Kohut has done for narcissism what the novelist Charles Dickens did for poverty in the nineteenth century."

Dan McAdams noted that "personality psychologists must seek first and foremost to know persons." McAdams in his article answered that as psychologists learn about someone, they progress across "three levels of knowing," which helps them to build up an understanding of another person. Firstly he gives a description of a person's general traits. He writes: "Knowing where somebody stands on extraversion is indeed crucial information in the evaluation of strangers and others about whom one knows very little. It is the kind of information that strangers quickly glean from one another as they size one another up and anticipate future interactions." Secondly he is talking about the areas of personal concern of an individual and

says “ They speak to what people want, often during particular periods in their lives , and life methods people use to get what they want or avoid getting what they do not want over time, in particular places, with respect to particular roles.” When a person is studying about the psychology of an unknown person they study it completely and reach to a certain level where from being a stranger one has detailed description of the other, also trying to express the other through strategies. Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* talks about modernism and post- structuralism dealing with topics of biology and geology rather than human history. Desire are said to be the worst backdrop of humankind because it transforms a normal human being from a state of stability to becoming obsessed and embittered. French psychoanalyst and psychiatrist Jacques Lacan brings forward the theory that desires start building up at the mirror phase during which the baby grows and sees an image of wholeness and starts to desire for it and if those desires are not fulfilled they shape into repressive mode. As we know that during the period of maturity one is linked with the concept of language which enables them in performing various tasks, but still there is a sense of separation from language and so an individual keeps on striving hard again and again repetitively.

Carl Jung explains the structure of the unconscious mind which everyone is provided with in the same species. Carl deals with the structure of the unconscious mind and distinguishes it from Freudian psychoanalysis to the structure of unconscious mind which is shared among beings in the same species. Jung says that when unconscious state is in collective form it highly influences the normal lives of human beings. As we see Alex Chapman is very much influenced by the unconscious desires that are influencing his nature unconsciously. Jung along with a psychiatrist Lionel Corbett talks about the notion that in the deep study of psychology that is

performed nowadays the term “autonomous psyche” is highly referred. The adolescence period of a child is a sensitive period because in this particular period the psyche of the child starts functioning and the child starts to form opinion regarding human beings and things around them. When the child grows into an adult we find that these opinions build up during adolescence are somewhere stored in the unconscious mind and knowingly our behaviour or decisions are affected by them. As we see Alex Chapman when comes to stay with his uncle Jim Chapman he relates both his father and uncle and chooses to behave badly, because he thinks that his uncle Jim is equally bad as his father was, also the kind of treatment he received from his uncle was not at all welcoming and the war began among Alex and Jim Chapman, which was known to everyone out there. The study on the conscious and sub-conscious mind have been done since old ages in a very detailed and prolific manner. Jung delivered a lecture where he mentioned “My thesis then, is as follows: in addition to our immediate consciousness, which is of a thoroughly personal nature and which we believe to be the only empirical psyche, there exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. This collective unconscious does not develop individually but is inherited. It consists of pre-existent forms, the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents.” p.43

The concept of human psychology have been a topic of research because psychiatrist have tried to understand the mental level of human beings under normal conditions and repressed conditions both. Aristotle, Plato are some of the people developed a catalogue of research and studied human psychology from their perspectives. According to the perspective of psychoanalysis the psychology of human beings deals with three parts, which consist of id, ego and superego. To begin with id, it comprises of human impulses which are highly effective and are not only present in conscious mind but the subconscious mind as well, whereas when it

comes to superego it deals with the remaining social standards, values and norms. Ego in the human psyche is dealing with the elements of reasoning and common sense.

Carl Jung was highly convinced by the process of applying human psyche to mind theories that he advanced the study of human psyche to a higher form of mass psyche. He also analysed that human psychology is a common phenomenon which can be found in all human beings and hence the components of human psychology are not equal in all the human beings because everyone differs in their personal attributes. In the novel both Alex and Jim have their own psyche and it very much differs from each other, neither one of them hold any kind of gesture for each other. Jung reaches to this assumption by considering the fact that human psychology is not only made of collective unconscious but a combination of both personal consciousness and unconsciousness which on combining with individual self makes the individual personality apparent. Sigmund Freud in his book *The Interpretation of Dreams* reads out the theory of unconscious self with respect to the philosophy of dream interpretation and also talks about the theory of Oedipus complex. Freud says that dreams are the forms of wish fulfilment which when fulfilled settle down the conflicts that are unconsciously going in our mind. Freud refers to the dreams as “The Royal Road to the Unconscious”, it symbolises a womb and just because Freud gave such statements he was very much criticised.

According to Lacan 'the unconscious is the discourse of the other'. Human passions are the result of desires that are formed by the desires of others and our deep feelings are expressed through relay of whom we call others. Talking of desires Alex is a character who since his childhood has only performed the task of desiring things but he never faced a situation where he could see his desires being fulfilled. The Desires arise when there is a combination of language, culture and the diversity among people. Using Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistics,

structural anthropology and post-structural theories Lacan decided to return back to psychoanalysis on the unconscious.

Lacan rejected several attempts to link psychoanalysis with social theory, and said 'the unconscious is the discourse of the Other' -- that human passion is all structured by the desire of others and that we have to express deep feelings through the 'relay' of others. Lacan saw desire as a social phenomenon and psychoanalysis as a theory of explaining how the human subject is created through the concept of social interaction. Desire appears through a combination of culture, language and the spaces present between people. He focuses largely on Freud's work on deep structures and infant sexuality, and how human beings becomes an 'other' through unconscious repression stemming from the Mirror phase. The unconscious desire and conscious ego are radically divided and Lacan considers this perpetual and unconscious fragmentation of the self as Freud's core discovery. Lacan thus returns to psychoanalysis on the unconscious, using Ferdinand de Saussure's linguistics, post structural theories and structural anthropology.

Language is something that results in division and representation of desires. It is an symbolization of intersubjective order that forcefully intervenes the law of father. When he child interacts with the father the child is made to attach with the father prohibiting the feelings for the mother and also changes the desire and makes it desire for language. Desires and connection are linked with the concept of language and Lacan interprets it through signifier and signified which do not refer to objects but the psychological representation created by the interplay of culture and history. According to Lacan, 'the unconscious is structured like language.' Lacan states that the child is not the model of symbolism but the desire from an agent referred to as the other. When a child finds out that something that belong to him is missing or disappeared he tries to search for it again and that is the recreation



of the missing mother. The individual only has relation with language and law there are no sexual relations. In language the subject struggles to represent and explain itself. The subject is the signifier which places language into a mask and tries disguising the desires invoked and lets the unconscious inside the person as a inter-subjective space among the others.

Lacan's major focus is on Freud's study of infant sexuality and deep structures, also it talks about how human beings shift to the subject of human beings becoming as other. This process of becoming the other forms unconsciously causing repression and developing from the mirror phase. If we study the psychoanalysis given by Lacan they are more aggressive in nature and shifts the imaginary sense of completeness and clears up all the wrong notions that are developed regarding mastery in self. One major contribution of Lacan is that he introduced the emphasis of language in various concepts like sexual life. If we go through the study of Post-Freudian interpretation of oedipal given by Lacan and also the infant sexuality, we find that female position is not important and thus it does not belong to a individual and is rather an effect of signification on the subject., creation of self.

If we want to understand the maxims of Lacan there are probably two ways the first method is to desire for recognition from others and this term other refers to the society, whereas the second is to desire for things that we suppose others may desire, which indicates things which other people lack and we desire to have it most probably because others lack it. Lacan also believes that desires repeat themselves and he verifies this theory of desires repeating themselves and says that "The necessary and sufficient reason for the repetitive insistence of these desires in the transference and their permanent remembrance in a signifier that repression has appropriated – that is, in which the repressed returns – is found if one accepts the idea that in these determinations the desire for recognition dominates the desire that is to be recognised, preserving it as such until it is recognised". (431).

An Outline of psychoanalysis provides an overview of psychoanalysis. It is made up of three different sections which gives us an explanation of psychic apparatus, which also deals in spatial organization. Ego develops when it comes in contact with the alien world outside and which develops through contact with the outside world and makes an attempt to reconstruct the need of id, superego and reality. Conservative drives are present in the id which represent special needs for the psyche. Human beings primarily desire for recognition in the society, their major concern is to be renowned among the society. and the second desire is to desire for things which we believe others desire or have. As a consequence we can see that all that takes place is a consequence of what we desire and what we think is our desire is always in one way or other something that the other desires for and we desire recognition from. Lacan in his study explains that the major concern is having the imaginary concern demand, which deals with the symbolic order and the symbolic order holds nothing but desires. When a person starts dealing with his life through language medium the desires then remain restricted into the boundaries of language. But the boundaries do not limit the evolution of desires among human beings. The real and imaginary both continue to build up desires within the symbolic order regardless of the language barriers. The reason why the fantasies made by human beings fail among real is that it allows the desires to continue being born and desired. Desires are probably a means of avoiding our one to one contact with the real and desire to reproduce more and more desires. The study of the concept of the Imaginary is also important for the development of desire, according to Lacan: "The primary imaginary relation provides the fundamental framework for all possible erotism. It is a condition to which the object of Eros as such must be submitted. The object relation must always submit to the narcissistic framework and be inscribed in it" (Freud paper 179).

The Real, the Imaginary, and the Symbolic these three are the combined concepts that work along in collaboration to create and recreate the tensions of our psychodynamic selves. "A creature needs some reference to the beyond of language, to a pact, to a commitment which constitutes him, strictly speaking, as an other, a reference included in the general or, to be more exact, universal system of interhuman symbols. No love can be functionally realisable in the human community, save by means of a specific pact, which, whatever the form it takes, always tends to become isolated off into a specific function, at one and the same time within language and outside of it" (Freud paper 174).

Lacanian psychoanalysis is very much challenging in nature and dislocates the imaginary sense of completeness and also deals in removing the illusions of knowing the self through the mirror image where one gets to know self. Ego moreover is a defensive phenomenon which describes itself during the analysis during the resistance that occurred to a particular change. rather ruthless and challenging that seeks to dismantle the imaginary sense of completeness and to remove illusions of self-mastery through a mirror image.

The fear of disintegration and lack leads the person to realise or see themselves in an imaginary individual. In the oedipal stage the crisis leads to transforming the child into a particular symbolic stage where the child makes imaginary things adding in them the features he desires and make them a speaking object for him. As noted in studies it is observed that there is always a vast gap between the position of subject 'I' and the position of subject 'Me' who is the speaker. The meaning is formed in the chain of language under the influence of other on the self, without being signified. In the psychoanalysis of Lacan the subject is de-centred and the loss of stable psyche is seen, also the primacy of signifier over signified, and various fragile relationships with the other.

The study of psychoanalysis by Lacan focuses on reshaping the concept of self and also the rebuilding of the fragmentation and lack of unity of the self. Lacan has given us a concept of language use in the process of creation of self and psyche. If we go through the post- Freudian interpretation of oedipal by Lacan, females have been depicted as of no concern. Unconscious being is brought into the symbolic order from outside and is later structured like a language, with which our mind deals. Lacan says that it is wrong to put ego at the centre and makes his own concept where he is putting the subject of self at the centre, which it is kept away from the history. 'I' is a fictitious concept born out of misinterpretation that is present in the form of a unconscious desire which is seen in the grown-ups.

The psyche is basically divided among three major factors that keep a check on our lives and desires, which include the real: it is the concept which deals with the basic structure of nature which has ever since led us into language. We find that only kids are found near or attached to this state, where there is nothing but it carries those needs which a baby needs and searches a mode to get those fulfilled without getting separated from the outside world. When one enters into the stream of language, the state of nature is left behind, if we talk about the humans Lacan says that "the real is impossible". The concept of real keeps on influencing our lives ever since we were kids and it acts as a barrier against all fantasies and hence leads to failure of linguistic structure. The concept of real erupts when we are made aware about the material sense of our being, it is usually acclaimed as traumatic in nature.

The Imaginary Order is the concept that is different from the mirror stage and explains the most important subject from the previous subject which Lacan terms as demand. The imaginary stage provides a platform for dreaming and fantasizing of desires as explained by mirror stage. In the human psychology for once the needs of one person can be fulfilled but demands are

never fulfilled, they remain unsatisfied no matter how hard you try for it. When a child starts to observe that his body appearance is different from that of others the child starts to separate his self from the others even his mother. A feeling of anxiety arises in the child because he develops a notion that he has lost something. The child, keeps on trying hard to make other part of itself which he feels is lost. The demand of the child is difficult to be completed and hard to realize and it finally works as a reminder of something that the child has lost. The difference between desire and demand is that it only acknowledges the law, community and language in the latter part and the imaginary stage does not explain further the relation between an object and self.

The mirror stage is corresponding in nature as the child does the misinterpretation during the learning in the mirrorimage as being stable which is however not in correspondence to the real child. The mirror image that the child develops is a mere fantasy which the child forms so that he can compensate for the things that did not take place or lack. When the child builds the fantasy image of oneself, then it can be in future replaced by the person whom the child would like to be like or someone whom he considers his role model. Lacan states that this imaginary factor continues to be part of human lives throughout and does not merely progress in the symbolic movement of child.

Talking of the symbolic order it is the imagination and identification of the concepts that deals in term of narration and language. When a child grows and starts learning a language and also begins to accept the rules and regulations of the society the child becomes well equipped with the talent of dealing with others because the concept of Oedipus complex is related with the acceptance of language. The symbolic order is authorized only because it is accepted by the theory of the Name-of-the-Father, the laws and restrictions that are responsible for having control over both our desires and the rules of communication that we follow. "It is in the *name*

*of the father* that we must recognize the support of the symbolic function which, from the dawn of history, has identified his person with the figure of the law" (Ecrits 67). We are able to relate ourselves in the community of others only because of the recognition we receive from Name-of-the-Father. The symbolic, through language, is "the pact which links... subjects together in one action. The human action *par excellence* is originally founded on the existence of the world of the symbol, namely on laws and contracts". ( Freud 230 )

## **Research Methodology**

This research is qualitative in nature. Thorough reading of the text and will also include library research , various research papers and internet to have better and wider understanding of the topic. Regarding the format of the dissertation, the instruction of MLA handbook (seventh edition) will be followed.

Desires are the instincts or drives that are deeply hidden roots in the unconscious mind. Sigmund Freud explored the human mind more thoroughly than any other. According to Freud

All the sensual desires and repulsion that slumber in the heart can, if anything sets them in motion, cause a dream to arise from the ideas that are associated with them or cause those ideas to intervene in a dream that is already present.( 42).

Freud explained the inner wars that take place in the minds of human beings unconsciously. These inner wars start taking place when the id derives urges of the fulfilment of desires and along with it various other memories are shifted to the unconscious mind and repressed. No matter how much we strive hard to repress the desires but they find an alternative outlet whose outcomes are never satisfying rather disturbing and destructive. C. g Jung observes that

The unconscious goes straight for its goal and that this does not consist solely in painting two animals but in allowing an individual to become whole. For this purpose wholeness represented by the sphere is emphasized as the essence of personality, while am reduced to the fraction of a second , the duration of a lightning flash. (303.)

Desire is a sense of longing for a person, object, or outcome which is taking place somewhere in our unconscious mind. When human beings desires for certain things , they are unknown to the power of those desires which excite us to a certain level that we tend to do things which are not accepted by the others. The longing for such desires does not get fulfilled until and unless the goal is achieved. Desires are the motivational sources in the lives of human being and they are also referred to as the driving forces. Psychologists classify emotions and desires differently and says that desires arise from bodily structure,where as the emotions takes place from mental state as the need for food to stomach is notified by brain . The theme of desire in novels, often create drama by showing cases where human desire is impeded by social conventions, class, or cultural barriers.

Making emotions as the most important and dominating theme, we are presented with the human sufferings and miseries, failures in life, failed friendship and romance. A critic Immanuel Kant terms the actions performed on desires as hypothetical, which means that there is conditions applied to any particular incident that takes place.It applies only if one desires the goal in question. Desire are said to be the worst backdrop of humankind because it transforms a normal human being from a state of stability to becoming obsessed and embittered. French psychoanalyst and psychiatrist Jacques Lacan brings forward the theory that desires start building up at the mirror phase during which the baby grows and sees an image of wholeness and starts to desire for it and if those desires are not fulfilled they shape into repressive mode.As we know that during the period of maturity one is linked with the concept of language which

enables them in performing various tasks, but still there is a sense of separation from language and so an individual keeps on striving hard again and again repetitively.

Desires are the instincts that are somewhere hidden in our unconscious mind and we are not aware of it , rather we get highly influenced by those repressed desires. Freud does the elaborative study on human mind than any other person. According to Freud

All the sensual desires and repulsion that slumber in the heart can, if anything sets them in motion, cause a dream to arise from the ideas that are associated with them or cause those ideas to intervene in a dream that is already present (42).

In such cases the emotion is conscious, but the idea behind the emotions seems absent. Repression is the primary factor , an initial defense mechanism which makes a shield to prevent the human beings against anxiety. Freud says

The imposter is the dream and the emperor is the dreamer himself, the moralizing purpose of the dream reveals an obscure knowledge of the fact that the latent dream content is concerned with forbidden wishes that have fallen victim to repression. “ ( 262).

Repression is the process of forcing thoughts into our unconscious minds so that we remain away from the sufferings and avoid depression , also its major concern is to not let those desires enter our conscious minds. Repression is the primary process of protecting the self from anxiety and avoid resulting in violent actions. Defense mechanism is a strategy that is psychological in nature and and is used to cope up with reality and maintain a certain decorum. Healthy human beings is a term referred to people who are far away from the urges of desires to be fulfilled. Making emotions as the most important and dominating theme, we are presented with the human sufferings and miseries, failures in life, failed friendship and romance. A critic Immanuel Kant terms the actions performed on desires as hypothetical, which means that there



is conditions applied to any particular incident that takes place. It applies only if one desires the goal in question. Desire are said to be the worst backdrop of humankind because it transforms a normal human being from a state of stability to becoming obsessed and embittered. French psychoanalyst and psychiatrist Jacques Lacan brings forward the theory that desires start building up at the mirror phase during which the baby grows and sees an image of wholeness and starts to desire for it and if those desires are not fulfilled they shape into repressive mode. As we know that during the period of maturity one is linked with the concept of language which enables them in performing various tasks, but still there is a sense of separation from language and so an individual keeps on striving hard again and again repetitively.

Repression, is a psychological process which every individual goes through to bring out the desires and motives in such a way that they feel pleasurable and this process is performed by allowing the desires to shift into our unconscious self from the conscious part of us. The life of human being is highly influenced by the psychoanalytic theory of repression because it deals with the mental illness from which one suffers. Theory of psychoanalysis is a defence mechanism, which is present already in the ego e.g., 'Primal Repression'. It keeps a track of the things which are not accepted by the conscious part of our mind and makes sure that it deals with the situation when anxiety is created during the time when unaccepted things by the conscious mind are recalled. It also makes sure that it does not enter the conscious mind because it would then lead to depression as accepted by the psychologists. Repression is phenomenon which is unexplainable in nature and it is caused due to lack of awareness of something that is strongly influencing us, the emotions are known to us but the idea or reason behind it is unknown to us and we do not understand the situation. When there is a conflict in our mind the work of id is to arise urges and everything else is repressed and stored in our unconscious mind which we are not at all aware of. It is observed that when human beings try

to repress the urges or desires they are never repressed successfully rather they find some , and the outcome then is a more devastating ones, because the desires which are being repressed hold a strong influence on our mind and it cannot be made to rest it will be always in a state of being active maintaining its self-regard.

Repression being the primary, initial defence mechanism protects an individual from anxiety. It is experienced that when the desires or events are forcefully made to repress those desires rather transform into more strong desires because these desires are heightened emotions or physical sensations which cant be ignored merely . As we can see Alex still recalls his childhood memories and says “he had remembered his mother dying with such pain, when two days before her death it was his birthday and she had struggled that day to get up and celebrate with him.”(210). Since childhood Alex has been repressed, his feelings ignored. He has been living a life full of ignorance from his uncle Jim Chapman, which results in his arrogant and sick behaviour.

According to Freud, the neurotic behaviour appears when repression develops under one’s superego, and as a result it leads to self-destructive or antisocial behaviour. As a child who grew up in an abusive home situation would not remember being beaten but will always have trouble with trusting anyone. “Civilization and higher education have a large influence in the development of repression...as a result of which was formerly felt as agreeable now psychic force (S. FREUD 1920). “The process of repression which sets in during the fourth year of life or thereabouts is, in wit, temporarily suspended” (KARL MARX 1920). Alan Goldman states

Having any desires is having a concern for the future in which they could be fulfilled. And having any reasons for having desires is having reasons to be concerned about the

future. Once more there are conceptual truths and not rational requirements that we could fail to meet. (139)

## Chapter-1

### **Desire and Repression in the novel *The Lost Highway***

*The Lost Highway* is the study of philosophical disfigurement with which human being deals and the novel represents such desperate journey of a child who has lost his mother when he was young and has never been in guidance or care of a soft soul. We will see how the child grows up to be someone who is least concerned about anyone else but himself and has no soft feelings for anyone. He has grown up in an environment which is isolated from the society and his life is nearly squandered.

David Adams Richards' *The Lost Highway* is a thriller which deals with the psychological study. It is completely different from the old genres that we have gone through as Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* as well as classical Greek mythologies, which studies the psychology of human being deeply. Alex Chapman, is a selfish young man living a disassembled life has faced harsh circumstances right from his birth, including extreme poverty, lack of resources and public services. He has been yearning for things which are beyond his reach. His desires are infinite in nature, and it takes from him something infinite in its own nature. We find Alex's desires being repressed from the day he came to live with his uncle Jim Chapman, his early childhood days have been so harsh on him. Everyday Alex faced disappointments, shame and hatred. He grew up in an atmosphere where each day was full of repression and denial.

Alex Chapman is the tragic anti-hero in *The Lost Highway* by David Adams Richards. The novel is a philosophical contortion of which human being is capable, it pens down the journey of a abandoned and orphaned child Alex whose life is nearly squandered. Alex has seen his mother leading a life of sufferings and receiving no respect, he saw his biological father treating his mother badly which horrified him as a child. After the death of his mother being

an orphan now Alex was now handed over in the hands of his great uncle Jim Chapman who is a rude and rough man titled as “The Tyrant” by their community. His aunt Mrs. Chapman was a woman who lived an exemplary life . she was a woman who believed much in charity and she could be seen helping during the Christmas feasts. The only miseries in her life was created by no one else but her nephew Alex. “ She gave him everything ,went to principal’s office in high school, and took up for him ,tried to do this for him, tried to do that.” (40). He was such a big disappointment.

He had come home a few years ago, and worked for his great uncle Jim off and on, disillusioned and ill tempered, for the great “turn of events” that he had hoped and longed for had not happened to him. (40)

Jim chapman becomes a symbol of all that he loathes because” when Alex was young and small, his great uncle put him to work after school in the junkyard, or back at the pit of burning garbage. David R. Heise states “ the childhood bundle includes stigmatised identities for children, such as truant, and stigmatised identities for those whose activities bear negativity upon children. (80). Alex Chapman has brutal memories of his childhood. So he was tormented and his desires were put under erasure. The masculinity of his uncle is put into contest against his own weakness. This repression of his childhood emotions put him into a vicious circle to which he wants to dislodge. To all which he hates, his uncle is synonym to.”

” Though they had money, the uncle was parsimonious, and sometimes he would clutch a dollar in his hand for an hour before he finally gave it to the boy.” (50) .Alex has put him aside from this brutal masculinity that stole his mother from him by becoming a self-imposed ascetic, entering the local and practicing his own version of piousness. He goes to the priest school, but he is insincere and eventually leaves it, choosing atheism and finding his home in a liberal university. “Then, abused and worn out, he came back and tried to fit in. For the last five years

he had taught a course on ethics at the community college.” (52). Alex is an atheist for whom prophecies would be objects of derision and whose entire adult life has been directed to advancing his own power.

The vicious politics in the university affected Alex to such a great extent that he was compelled to leave the university and get back to his uncle’s shack where he never thought he would have to return because Alex moved out of his uncle’s house on an argumentative note and decided to never return back but the situation was not in his favour and he came back to the place from where he moved away long time back. He is not a sociopath and he struggles with his conscience. Another character Burton Tucker is a self -alienated man who he confused all the time and never is confident enough to take his decisions. He is very easily influenced by the opinions that the other hold about him and so he does consider himself weak and good for nothing. Burton Tucker runs the local garage, and when Jim comes to his garage he offers him a lottery ticket as a bonus for he got the oil changed of his truck.

Burton is a character who is shown to be overthinking most of the times, “ Burton wondered what would happen to the children like Amy if there was a war.”(34). Burton himself imagined what could the war that might happen could lead to. One fine day Jim Chapman visits Burton Tucker’s garage to get the oil of his truck changed, because Alex for the same denied. Alex and Jim had been warring off and on for many years, ever since.

I asked him to bring my truck in and he said he was too busy, so I have had it and he is gone from my life- he will not be allowed in my house, on my property, or have anything to do with my estate. (86)

Alex once came across Monsignor’s who asks him to deliver the charitable funds o the bank but Alex flee away with the money as he himself was facing a bad time and thought that the

charitable fund can help him because he too was in need of financial help. After fleeing away with the money Alex reached at Minnie's home whom he loved immensely and prayed her like she was god to him. During her visit at Minnie's home he gets to know that she is pregnant by Sam Patch who is a kind and gentle man she is married to but for Alex he was a rough bad man. Since his early teens he had loved Minnie but because of the failures he has been facing in his life he had been denied by Minnie. But still he loves her and cares for her. " I won't tell you who she is , but I loved her with all my heart and soul. But I never touched her- never, never ! " (180). When Alex has money which he knows was the reason for which Minnie refused to marry him, Alex keeps forward a proposal to Minnie of getting the child aborted ,but she refuses to get the abortion done and sends him back, her denial made Alex return back the money to the seminary. Macllvoy is a seminarian who has come to know about the theft and had come to alarm Alex of the sin he has committed. " Do you remember if the phone rang in the booth along the highway that night?"(8) .

Alex is found guilty of running away with the money for charity and is made to return back to his uncle Jim Chapman's house but he is adamant that he will not go back to his uncle's house and flees to another refugee and this time he chooses the safe moral relativism of academia, where he teaches ethics and becomes an expert at it. "Is he going to teach his course this year-what does he teach , have you heard him? Ethics? What is that is it about molecules or people?" (134). Alex realises that he is not able to carry the duplicity which his peers were good at and he rather decides to be isolated. Once again Alex is destined to failure and he moves back to the shack which is his uncle's property, and he is passing his days by forging humanoid creatures out of junk metal.

Alex's identity comes under a brutal attack from the society due to his isolation. Whatever he does he ends up in his uncle's den- a place he hates and abhors like hell. This society imposed isolation takes a deeper tone on his psyche and he starts embodying himself as a social

freak. He desperately wants to have the social acceptance and a stamp of authenticity. He feels that his social image is drifting surrounding and affiable companions he misconcludes that the reason of his social austerity is lack of money. David Lavison states

Real life socialised traditions is inflicted rather than chosen. Sustaining identities contain numerous disagreeable identities within the family and companion interactions might have led other to ostracize the sociopaths, eventually culminating in the socialised solution. (144).

Alex was still affected by the divine image he creates of beautiful Madonna, her face inspired from a pretty young girl he noticed in the market some days before. After sometime Alex realises that the girl is no one else but Minnie's daughter Amy patch , the same child he once asked Minnie to abort but she refused to and he came back disappointed. Alex also realises that it is once again the fate that he has come and stood before his past. Mulling over his grievances and trudging the lost highway Alex coincidently meets Burton Tucker, whose mind and body are both equipped with the dark and pale experiences he has been facing over the past years.

Burton Tucker one day goes to inform Jim that he has won \$13 million, but when Alex gets to know about it he thinks that if he must have taken the truck at the garage of Burton Tucker to get the oil changed he must have received the lottery ticket and he must have been the winner, he regrets about his grudge with his uncle because of which he refused to go to the garage.

I asked him to bring my truck in and he said that he was too busy, so I've had it and he is gone from my life-he will not be allowed in my house, on my property, or have anything to do with my estate." He will not the house, I will burn it before he ever sets foot in it again. I will toe it apart one board at a time before he sets a toe in it-or a toenail, if you ask me.(114).



Alex like always not favoured by his fate and he was once again made to touch the ground of failure which is not at all easy and pleasant to bear. He by now decides that his uncle should not get to know about the money. Alex begins a confidential investigation of how to get the money of the lottery ticket and did not let his uncle Jim get to know about it. He still remembers things from his past “ He had remembered his mother dying with such pain, when two days before her death it was his birthday and she had struggled that day to get up and celebrate with him.”(210). Alex decides to steal the money and joins hands with dangerous and ill natured, Leo Bourque, the childhood bully who has been a horror to Alex when he was in school. Everything in the end leads into a bitter irony filled with miseries.

Alex searches for acceptance, but fails to achieve his desire for social acceptance, which leads him to Eugene Gallant. Jude Elunde states

The acceptance leads him to socially identified action has a profound effect on how we communicate, interact and view ourselves...a larger part of our identity/ identities are done through the representative power of the ‘others’. (160).

Alex feels same acceptance from Eugene Gallant. Eugene Gallant was the first adult man who was so kind to him and Alex felt that he should have been his father. With him he felt some sought of belongingness. He assumed that Eugene was love, but there was one problem with Alex wanting Eugene to be his father, that he had forgotten and that he abandoned his mother, but because of the love he received from Eugene he clung to the hope as wild as it might be. Alex tells his uncle Jim that he has found out who his father is and he willingly wants to go and live with him, he is not ashamed of his father and considers him to be a nice and kind man. “ I will learn how to fish and live my life just like he does”. The reason Alex liked Eugene was because of his kind behaviour and what most attracted him was the way Eugene lived his life. Alex being living in an ignored atmosphere makes him want to live a free and adventurous life

like that of Eugene. We see that for the very first time in the novel Alex is so happy and finds a companion with whom he can find happiness and feels a comfort so far he has not experienced since childhood. Since Alex lost his mother he has been living a life with no identity of his own, he has always been a victim of repression which resulted in loss of his inner self. Identity crisis is the most talked about issue in the post- colonial time and Mercer argues

Identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty . (43).

The real problem occurs when the person fails to find a suitable identity and ends up with a fragile one. It can give powerful blow to self-confidence and self -image and so strong an image building is required , so that more difficult challenges can be faced. When one loses his identity and sense of self, we are likely to seek our sense of self-worth from others.

The novel THE LOST HIGHWAY is an explanation of how our lives are affected by the unfulfillment of desires, also David talks about the dark, deep and dismal aspect of morality relating it to a horrible act that takes place when vast and rapacious ego meets up. As Abraham J.Twerski states

We can relate gratification and think about the long term consequences of our actions. Finally, we have the capacity to make moral decisions, which may result in denying ourselves behaviours that our bodies lust for. (115).

In Alex's case he is deluded by his physical and social desire and forgets to take morality into consideration . he is driven by his id part of psyche which ask for immediate gratification. As Freud states

The pre dominance of the unconscious personality, the turning by the means of suggestions and contagion of feelings and ideas in an identical direction, the tendency to immediately transform the desire into acts. (12).

Alex also wants to gratify his desires on spot. He does not know how to put a check on his id. Due to this he leads himself to antisocial road. This journey has to come into conflict with society and social norms. Alex has too become a victim of the unchecked moral compass which as left unchecked and now it has driven itself to the edge of survival and is forced to perform things which were once a part of the repressed desires and has now come out in a more violent way. Alex is a fickle and self-deluded man and the main reason of his downfall is that he never tried to understand his mistakes and learn from them rather he considered himself to be a person who has tried living a life both fair and honest. If we consider the reality Alex is a fickle minded, cocky, self -assured character, who has failed in life as a person and has achieved nothing but failure.

Jim chapman very well knows the score and has certainly seen his nephew for what he is an unadulterated failure who has done his best to ruin the family fortune. The novel is more of a depressing tale of animosity and bitterness, unrequired love, and all-consuming betrayal with misery and poverty. The author has created a dark and moody atmosphere and also he concentrates about espousing his complex philosophical views on morality and faith. The climax of the novel contains bitter irony and is devastating in nature. It is more like the aftereffects of a violent act that explains the ideology of Alex his plans and how he ends up performing a noxious deed of murder, “you have done what you have done”.

## **Chapter – 2**

### **Morbid Psyche and Social Morality in *The Lost Highway***

In the novel *The Lost Highway*, our protagonist Alex Chapman is a child born out of love but in his whole lifetime he is never loved nor he is happily accepted out in the society. Alex as young child lost his mother, who was the last hope of kindness and love for him. From here the id of Alex which longed for love, care and concern was never taken care of, Ale as self was

separating from his inner conscience and leading to dark and complicated lifestyle. The childhood of Alex was not a good one as when he was young he has seen his mother being treated badly by his father, he did not even receive any fatherly love or care. He has built a vicious image of his father in his mind which we will see is somewhere depicted in the relationship that Alex and his uncle shared. After the death of his mother, Alex was sent to his uncle where, he was expected to consider his uncle Jim Chapman as a father figure, but because of his earlier bitter experiences he continued to have a rough beginning with his uncle Jim which then continued till the end of the novel. We cannot blame Alex for his ill behaviour, it is the outcome of all that he has been suffering since he was a child.

The adolescence period of a child is a sensitive period because in this particular period the psyche of the child starts functioning and the child starts to form opinion regarding human beings and things around them. When the child grows into an adult we find that these opinions build up during adolescence are somewhere stored in the unconscious mind and knowingly our behaviour or decisions are affected by them. As we see Alex Chapman when he comes to stay with his uncle Jim Chapman he relates both his father and uncle and chooses to behave badly, because he thinks that his uncle Jim is equally bad as his father was, also the kind of treatment he received from his uncle was not at all welcoming and the war began among Alex and Jim Chapman, which was known to everyone out there.

As we see Alex Chapman is very much influenced by the unconscious desires that are influencing his nature unconsciously. Jung along with a psychiatrist Lionel Corbett talks about the notion that in the deep study of psychology that is performed nowadays the term "autonomous psyche" is highly referred. The study on the conscious and sub-conscious mind have been done since old ages in a very detailed and prolific manner. Jung delivered a lecture where he mentioned "My thesis then, is as follows: in addition to our immediate consciousness, which is of a thoroughly personal nature and which we believe to be the only empirical psyche,

there exists a second psychic system of a collective, universal, and impersonal nature which is identical in all individuals. This collective unconscious does not develop individually but is inherited. When Alex finds that he can no more tolerate to live with his uncle he makes a move and goes to live somewhere else where he is in no way interrogated or interrupted by his uncle. At this point Alex is someone who is liked by no one, everyone considers him useless, snobbish and good for nothing guy, who we see after moving out is now teaching a course on ethic, something that he probably himself has left behind. Alex is leading a life which is not his own, neither he wishes to have one like that, but it's the circumstances, the societal pressure that for his existence he is doing it. Alex is earning his livelihood by doing something which he himself is unaware of, ethics to Alex is nothing but a mere way through which he is able to live a life not of comfort, but is able to meet his basic needs.

Alex never gets to interact with the people around him, the reason being he himself, never accepted the society and never let anyone near him. Everyone around him was imperfect for him, he could never relate himself to people around him, he made a separate world of his own where there was no one but he himself, he desired to have his mother along whom he loved, but she was no more and all he had of her was few memories which made him restless at times when he gets nostalgic going back in time when his mother lived. There was one more person who Alex wished to be a part of his life, Minnie was her name. Alex was deeply and madly in love with her, he considered her to be a image of god for him. Alex by all means was ready to dedicate his complete life for her, but when Alex revealed his feelings for Minnie and proposed her, he was rejected by Minnie and the reason for her rejection was the poor living conditions of Alex , she told him that she is also in love with him , but when she practically thinks about their relationship it has got no future, as Alex has got no money how will he sustain.

That was the time when Alex meets with the second most disturbing incident of his life after his mother's death. This rejection transformed him into a more cruel, dis-hearted creature. Alex

held his uncle Jim responsible for this rejection, as the poor condition of Alex was the result of his uncle Jim who by no means was ready to pay a single penny on Alex. Even though Jim had enough money but he never cared to help Alex. Ever since we have dealt with the study of human psyche, which deals with things as to what, why, how the human psyche is affected. here in the novel *The Lost Highway*, the psyche of Jim is transformed in such a way that he will never be able to accept his uncle Jim with an open heart.

Everything that is happening to him, he holds his uncle responsible for it. Individual is always in hostile and constant conflict with the society that demanded conformity to ensure social order, stifling the uniqueness of the self. If an individual is moved by impulses and emotions takes a flight over it lands into the category of immoral and wicked. (49-50).

Alex was far away from the concept of social morality because social morality is a philosophy which explains to us that we are a part of the society and we cannot choose to live in isolation like Alex Chapman did, one has to connect himself from the world outside. Alex once came across Monsignor's who asks him to deliver the charitable funds of the bank but Alex flees away with the money as he himself was facing a bad time and thought that the charitable fund can help him because he too was in need of financial help. After fleeing away with the money Alex reached at Minnie's home whom he loved immensely and prayed her like she was god to him. During her visit at Minnie's home he gets to know that she is pregnant by Sam Patch who is a kind and gentle man she is married to but for Alex he was a rough bad man. Since his early teens he had loved Minnie but because of the failures he has been facing in his life he had been denied by Minnie. But still he loves her and cares for her. When Alex has money which he knows was the reason for which Minnie refused to marry him, Alex keeps forward a proposal to Minnie of getting the child aborted, but she refuses to get the abortion done and sends him back, her denial made Alex return back the money to the seminary. MacIlvoy is a seminarian

who has come to know about the theft and had come to alarm Alex of the sin he has committed. “Do you remember if the phone rang in the booth along the highway that night?”(8) .

the idea of socialising is very important in the human life because the moral philosophy of social morality says that we tend to have effect on other people like others effect us. Like we see how the life of our protagonist Alex was influenced by his uncle Jim, and the girl whom he loved Minnie. The world we live in is a system of morals. Alex has lost hope for his future and even his present. He reacts too quick and lives in the here-and- now with no tension of the consequences of the future. He has most probably lost his moral compass with which he could have a check on his actions and so he reacts quick and not think before he does anything and does not act morally. Human psyche shapes up according to the situations that one deals with in his life when desires of a human being are repressed the psyche gets disturbed and transforms a person into his worst of behaviour . in the novel *The Lost Highway* Richard refers to the extremely bleak and downright hopeless life of Alex, Alex is living a a life which is marked with painful memories, moments of failure, but no guilt. Due to the repressions Alex faced in his life he performed various deeds which were not accepted or we could say morally wrong. Minnie the love of Alex’s life married Sam Patch for money and when Alex learns about it, no matter how good the person Sam is, Alex built a rough image of Sam in his mind and decides to run Sam Patch’s life and starts to plot against him.

At this point we see the impact of desires being repressed that is now flowing out I a more evil nature. Though Sam is a loyal and hard -working man who is working for Jim Chapman, Alex makes to ruin his image in front of Jim and prove that Sam is a cheat and fraud, he even succeeded in doing that. He thought that by doing this he will be able to build some trust in his uncle’s perspective of him and will be able to get the lottery ticket, also he intended to approach Minnie and ask her to divorce Sam Patch who is a cheat and marry him. When the repressed unconscious desires gets collected they do not remain suppressed anymore and tries to get

fulfilled by any means. Like Alex by all means wanted to have Minnie and so he did try for it. Alex even asked Minnie to abort her child and run away with him, to which she refused and he was taken aback by her rejection.. The reason why the fantasies made by human beings fail among real is that it allows the desires to continue being born and desired. Desires are probably a means of avoiding our one to one contact with the real and desire to reproduce more and more desires. The study of the concept of the Imaginary is also important for the development of desire, according to Lacan: "The primary imaginary relation provides the fundamental framework for all possible erotism. It is a condition to which the object of Eros as such must be submitted.

Alex even tried to get accepted in the society by faking himself as a completely changed person, but that as his plan of tricking his uncle to get the lottery ticket. Alex also gets in collaboration with a old school friend of his who used to bully him a lot, though Alex had a horrifying image of him in a mind, but his desire of now getting Minnie was so strong and adamant that he compromised with his fears and decided to take help from someone he never thought to be friend with. The human psyche turns morbid when it deals with suppression from the outside world. Alex has restricted any exposure to himself from the outside world and is in continuous war with the society trying to be accepted, but he never is a part of the society. no matter we accept it or not but the personal factors of an individual such as his moral thoughts, emotions, moral conduct all are interactive in nature and affect each other. When ne interact with the outside society, they tend to form a new moral standard and change the existing morals. All such factors that either mode or shape our perspectives somewhere result in our affecting and influencing our growth and development. In terms of the outcomes of repression we see Alex going beyond the limit and trying to attempt the murder of Anne, who is the daughter of Minnie. Over the time Alex was now a changed person, he wishes to live for himself he has built the hope of being liked by someone and relate to, from the moment he met Eugene Gallant.



Eugene Gallant is the only person Alex could ever relate to and feel comforted with Alex develops a image of his role model in Eugene like whom he wishes to be and also live a life like that of Eugene.

## **Conclusion**

Desires are the instincts that arise in every individual right from the age they develop an understanding of what happening around them. Everyone desires for certain things which they want to get fulfilled but the societal pressure does not allow them to get their desires fulfilled. The society is made up of certain set of rules and regulations which the people are expected to follow and if the human beings do not follow it there happens to be a clash between the desires and the social morality. Alex was far away from the concept of social morality because social morality is a philosophy which explains to us that we are a part of the society and we cannot choose to liv in isolation like Alex Chapman did, one has to connect himself from the world outside . the idea of socialising is very important in the human life because the

moral philosophy of social morality says that we tend to have effect on other people like others effect us. Like we see how the life of our protagonist Alex was influenced by his uncle Jim, and the girl whom he loved Minnie. The world we live in is a system of morals. Alex has lost hope for his future and even his present. He reacts too quick and lives in the here-and-now with no tension of the consequences of the future. He has most probably lost his moral compass with which he could have a check on his actions and so he reacts quick and not think before he does anything and does not act morally. “The most important human endeavour is the striving for morality in our actions. Our inner balance and even our very existence depend on it. Only morality in our actions can give beauty and dignity to life.” (Albert Einstein).

When the desires conflict with the social morality two situations arise, either the desire are repressed by the societal pressure either the desires are accepted by the surrounding atmosphere and they get fulfilled. Alex’s identity comes under a brutal attack from the society due to his isolation. Whatever he does he ends up in his uncle’s den- a place he hates and abhors like hell. This society imposed isolation takes a deeper tone on his psyche and he starts embodying himself as a social freak. He desperately wants to have the social acceptance and a stamp of authenticity. He feels that his social image is drifting surrounding and affiable companions he misconcludes that the reason of his social austerity is lack of money. In the novel *The Last Highway* Alex’s desires are repressed are accepted the human beings remain normal and they have a healthy psyche and do not face any kind of oppression from the outer world. They are able to merge themselves very well into the society and are accepted in the outer world, whereas the character Alex suffers from it and goes into repression. When the desires are repressed they don’t vanish away rather they get stored somewhere in our unconscious mind and stays there until and unless it does not receive an outlet . similarly when Alex was made to suppress his desires and at the end his desires found a way out for their fulfilment but the act he performed was the outcome of his psyche under pressure and repression. When the desires are present in

our unconscious mind we are unaware of the fact. When the amount of desires in our unconscious self are more in number and there is an overflow of emotions and the repression reaches to an extreme that time the desires flow out and it results in violent acts like Alex attempted a murder. When a human being is under the influence of repressed desires they start behaving anti-social and get away from the society, they do not relate to any person in the society, they keep themselves alienated. Their psyche is under the influence of morbidity which is caused due to the repression which has occurred due to the suppressing of desires. The only solution to such kind of behaviour is the allowing of the desires to get fulfilled denying them an opportunity to burst out in dangerous behaviour. One should merge themselves in the society and allow the interaction with the society which could help them to cop up with their repression. There are certain set concepts of the society with which one has to live by an if we accept those notions we are accepted by the society but if we try to make a different path and not follow the set path we face problem in getting accepted by the society. So one must be interactive with the society and let oneself be accepted in the society, because acceptance in the society is a major concern to the humans.

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