Preface and Acknowledgements

Human life is all about making choices. It can be pleasant or unpleasant, voluntary or forced upon. Whatever be the nature of the choice an individual makes, a ‘choice in favour’ of something is a ‘choice against’ the rest. When the choice is to be made between two variables that are equally important and equally desirable, one finds himself/herself in a predicament. Migrant situation is one such situation where such dilemmas galore.

Philip Roth is one of the most prominent contemporary Jewish American writers who have described the social, moral, and religious predicaments of the Jewish immigrants in America, waging an emotional and psychological war as they struggle to negotiate between Jewish ethnicity and American identity, with its mutually conflicting characteristics of orthodoxy and liberalism. The unprecedented realism, objectivity and matter-of-fact presentation which characterises Roth’s portrayal of the inner dynamics of this intensely emotional negotiation, has made him a victim of gross misunderstanding, labelling him as an anti-Semitic and self-hating Jew. An inside story of the socio-moral predicaments that the Jewish immigrants experienced in the Post-war America as presented by Philip Roth has not been attempted by any researcher up until now. Therefore, the present research titled, “Post-war Jewish American predicament in select works of Philip Roth” is an attempt made to unearth the realistic humanism that is present in the works of Philip Roth, wherein the ‘micro Jewish predicament’ could be seen as an example of a ‘macro human predicament,’ and thus the present research aims at presenting Philip Roth as a social realist and culture critic who transcends all forms of racial and ethnic affinities.
Here, I would like to recollect what Henri Frederic Amiel, a prominent Swiss moral philosopher and critic once said while speaking about the quality of being thankful. He opines that “thankfulness is the beginning of gratitude, and gratitude is the completion of thankfulness.” Thankfulness may consist merely of words, but gratitude is shown in acts. The word ‘thanks’ has been said many times to various persons at various times. But at this juncture, I would like to dedicate a couple of pages to acknowledge my sincere indebtedness to all those who have generously contributed their time and energy during the course of this research.

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Royichan Antony V