

## IDENTITY ADVERSITY INTO THE MULTICULTURAL MANOEUVRE IN PHILIP ROTH'S THE HUMAN STAIN

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### Abstract

This paper embarks on with the opinion on identity adversity in the American society for people of other root. America has diverse culture and it includes various race, religion, ethnic etc. Like all other Jewish-American writers Roth's novels also convey theme of identity crisis because of his Jewish root. Taking catch from Roth's theme of identity and multiculturalism, *The Human Stain*, which recollects his drills of pluralism, ethnic mosaic, multiracialism, fusion, existence and self. The paper illustrates the American society in which there exist numerous distinct ethnic and cultural groups and searching for identity.

**Keywords:** Multiculturalism, Identity Crisis, Philip Roth, America, Jewish

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### INTRODUCTION

The loss of individuality and the subsequent search for individuality within the multicultural society of America are two similitude materials, on which Roth, relinquish a pointed and uninterrupted focus. With the prolific and innovative artistry and the ornamental finesse, and with intelligence of men and phenomenon, and with the language clout and lingual artistry, the major issue of identity to an intimate and thorough analytic thinking, and examine it in words of identity and the consistent dig out for identity. Brutalization, normalization, robotic, per diem and cynicism pushes an individual to drop individual's identity. To some extent in the modern ambience of life utmost people just had no identity but takes pleasure in identification, in the sense they just endure a tag. In this context, Abraham Kaplan makes a pointed:

A centre or so ago, a Hassidic master observed, "If I am I only because you are you, and you are you because I am only I, then I am not I and you are not you".....Our identities – what we each feel so keenly within ourselves – cannot consist in these marks of identification whether of one or many. The psychological problem of individuality in our time begins with this that though we are individuality in our time begins with this that though we are individualized we are also depersonalized. I feel that I have been numbered but that I am treated more and more as though I have been numbered but that I am treated more and more as though I have become only a number, no longer a person.....(Individuality and the New Society ).[4]

Roth in his own but newfangled style urge to the individual to be his own self, nevertheless the enticements and insistencies of American society and the formation. Roth limns the essential characters with picked out Jewish possessions and Jewish idiosyncrasies. Roth is totally known to Jewish belongings. Roth's storylines and personas are uncommon portrays the Jew as one whose identity is deteriorated by American identity. In this interrelatedness he orders the notice of the compelling aligned and observant readers by his attentive heed of the American society and American formation.

In shaping his/her identity in America for an outsider has to grapple against Americanism, social actualities, personal fondness, biases, and cultural berths. Only by astonishing an unbiased closer referring to these dynamism, he/she can create an identity of his/her own that is totally vigorous, expedient and sensible.

Identity in its various forms had always been main problem in Roth's work. Telling a piteous tale of men and women navigated by hopelessness and apprehension in present-day multicultural America, *The Human Stain* centring on the canon of identity and difference by clinching the explanation of self and contortions it is content to in the viewpoint of other. In the novel, *The Human Stain*, Roth forefronts the affirm to an individuality that turns down to be communally assembled and in lieu attempts perquisite of its own narrative. It is a compulsive novel that in unknotting the ramifications of human identity also lays out American national identity, an identity rejuvenated by a tale of difference and reformulate.

Journalist Michiko Kakutani said that in *The Human Stain*, Roth "explores issues of identity and self-invention in America which he had long explored in earlier works." She wrote the following interpretation:

"It is a book that shows how the public Zeitgeist can shape, even destroy, an individual's life, a book that takes all of Roth's favorite themes of identity and rebellion and generational strife and refracts them not through the narrow prism of the self but through a wide-angle lens that exposes the fissures and discontinuities of 20th-century life. ... When stripped of its racial overtones, Roth's book echoes a story he has told in novel after novel. Indeed, it closely parallels the story of Nathan Zuckerman, himself another dutiful, middle-class boy from New Jersey who rebelled against his family and found himself exiled, 'unbound' as it were, from his roots."

Philip Roth's *The Human Stain* is with good reason viewed an archetypal change over in fictional discussion clinching identity. It outrivals the traditional confined ends of a passing narrative and formulates a prolonged critical review of white racism steadfastly stranded in nationality. The spectacular struggle in the novel roots from the contention will to capability of characters whose identity is sustained on confidentiality and steered by self-innovation.

### MULTICULTURALISM IN AMERICA

The expanding civic topography of a multicultural America extended disillusioned with the folklore of the pluralism had broad consequences for the Jewish American artistic fascination. However, analytical trail theory has still to take full merchandise of the part of Jewish writers in the discussions over canonicity, delineation, and multicultural literary pedigrees happening in the United States during the 1980s and 1990s. Philip Roth's *The Human Stain*, published in 2000, straight captures queries of written history, race, and the place of the Jewish writer and scholars in the canon conflicts. By portraying the misfortune of an African American

man who proceeds into whiteness by passing for a Jewish professor, Roth uses the analogy of passing to concurrently study the puritan urge he perceives at the centre of the multicultural institution and write himself into the multicultural canon taking form at the time.

Passing gives a distinctive style to the complications of race and identity. Nella Larsen gave for the first time definition of "passing" in his novel *Passing*. After some time William Faulkner turns up with similar theme in his novel *Light in August*. Among notable characters who comes out in Faulkner's account is Joe Christmas, an austral who thinks that he owns black forefathers but passes as white- with disastrous ending. Currently, Philip Roth's *The Human Stain* (2000) introduced the persona of Coleman Silk, an African American who pretends Jewish lineage, receives a reputed college professorship, and comes across a disastrous ending of his own. Historically, the word has been used firstly in the United States to represent a person of colour or multiracial ancestry who has comprehended into the white major part during times when lawful and social protocols of hypo descent categorized the person as a minority, topic to racial sequester and discrimination, notwithstanding of their real ancestry.

Roth makes it clear in the novel *The Human Stain* from beginning to end that Silk chooses to pass as a Jewish because it is easy for him than being a non-Jewish white person. Silk noticed Jews are the intermediate race, a way from black to white. He describes his choice to become Jewish originated from his beginning years as an African America youth in preponderantly Jewish pre-war northern New Jersey. There, Jews were viewed as models of taking in for middle-class blacks, "like Indian scouts, shrewd people showing the social possibility, showing a colored family how it might be done" (Roth, 2000) to a great extent as Jews were glimpsed in early- twentieth century passing narratives. By creating Coleman in place of black and Jewish in *The Human Stain*, Roth accesses a resource at a threshold Jewish racial history in America.

However, Roth doesn't note down about the indefinites of Jewish identity firstly to envisage a utopian, postmultiple racial topography. Rather, he employs Coleman Silk's participation of Jewishness to solve another matter: the disputed position of the Jew and the Jewish artist in the multicultural convention.

The whole time *The Human Stain*, Roth uses the mosaic demeanours of passing not only to ponder on questions of race but also to give rise to strong questions about how racial and ethnic discussion, affect the literary circle.

Jewish artists play an important part in cultural conflict and in discussions to give priority to their own culture or the other one, national or secret truthness to it. This did not assist that Jewish American novelists, in peculiar, had yearlong undergo anxious about their crossbreed identity, an identity that had its stems in what many saw as the Jew's excessively victorious desegregation into post- World War II America.

#### ROTH'S STYLE

Philip Roth is an American postmodernist writer. He is better known for his fictions. His work *The Human Stain* is one among the American trilogy. Roth threads the study of individual into the regard of history and identity revolves around the clemency of social, political and cultural background. He enacts like an associate among the fiction of storytelling and the fiction of history. He treats with the theme of America and creates his sight vivid in his main body of a scripted work. He sees farther along in space of the nineteenth-century legacy which is vilified for its development of harmful folk tales of national identity and the American Dream.

Philip Roth is one of the prominent writers among contemporary American writers. His works are prosperous in themes and deals with contemporary issues of America in context of Jewish people such as identity establishment,

struggle, success, racial discrimination. He visualizes and traverses a watery and erratic belief of identity. Identity in its various attainment appearances had on all occasions been a midway troublesome in Roth's fiction. He tries to show his mystification to the connection of artwork and life.

Roth's view of identity is both watery and multipurpose. "The Human Stain" centres on social code of identity and contrast by reach an agreement on the clarity of self and the disfigurements it is theme to in the interpretation of the other. The considerable dispute in "The Human Stain" originates from the argument will to powerfulness of characters whose identity is corn-fed on secretiveness and impelled by self-innovation.

Roth wins in disintegrating readers' reading suppositions, pressurizes readers to stand up to the residues of classical literary fabrication and understanding the entwined relationship between practical world and the actual world.

Roth's writing covers America over centuries and mainly Vietnam era, and also explores the effect of past on present life of characters and how the past threatens the present life. And obviously his works are focusing on existential problems of life through comic ocular which makes readers feel that they are closer to the author. Sex, self-transformation, politics etc are the main subject in his works.

There are uncountable problems in attempting to understand Roth exactly, but in a tastefully way he is surely simply adequate to read, so secured is his narrative voice. Most of disarray is the profitable vagueness of a foremost ambiguity, a writer who has been for most of his career a kind of puritanical debauched, full of passion but it is not casual to understand paradox, postmodernism and what is subject failing.

#### NOVEL'S PLOT

Philip Roth's *The Human Stain* is the third novel of his three set of novels. The work depicts the relation between people's public and private life in the twentieth century of America. The narrator of the novel is Nathan Zuckerman who also features in Roth's other two novels which are part of the trilogy, that is, *American Pastoral* (1997) and, *I Married a Communist* (1998). Later, it is depicted that due to the endocrine surgery Nathan Zuckerman lived an 'exiled' life and thought of becoming a writer at Athena College. Nathan Zuckerman at Athena College got acquainted with Coleman Silk, who previously was a Dean and a Professor. Coleman Silk was compelled to leave college on the grounds of being a racist. The matter was that he called his two students who registered themselves under him as "spooks" because they were not regular in his lectures. Nathan Zuckerman came to know about Coleman Silk when he was trying to revitalize his life by having an affair with a college steward. But this activity of his didn't please many, and people who were against him got an opportunity again to make stern remarks on his attitude. They rebuked and ridiculed Coleman Silk for using a naive caretaker for his sexual pleasure.

Although the preceding paragraph tells us about Coleman Silk's attitude and his mannerisms but didn't divulge the real self of Coleman Silk. This passage will help us to know the finer details of Silk's life by divulging deep into his past life where a truth is hidden. After turning many pages of the novel we finally come to a conclusion that Coleman Silk is an Afro-American. He was living in America for the past fifty years as a white Jew. The irony over here is that he hails from the same community as his students but is defiled on the grounds of being a racist as he called them "spook". Silk is left in no man's land because he is 'left out' from the America's mainstream society and on the other hand he cannot back to his native community because he disowned it long back. The situation is pathetic for him. He chose to live as a white man by renouncing his real identity but to his dismay caught in the age old 'web' of the identity crisis.

In constructing his identity and public figure conforming to a set of social manner acceptable criterions from African-American to Jewish-American, Coleman overworks his gleam skin at an essential ancient junction and thus insistent his holds on the American Dream.

America in Coleman's indignation fascination brings up into "the other" that can be juggled only by schematize playacting the game its ain way. On his emission from the military in 1946, Coleman registers in classics at New York University, however given an opportunity he would have cheerfully placed in Greenwich Village as a poet or a dramatist. Even though his natural longing for the life of an innovative creative person persists bare, to the lowest ways he interiorize the thrust for making, transubstantiating, and transmogrifying that is primary to artistic creation and farther consistently brings to abide these abilities in nourishing his ain without outside help elected identity.

#### SIGNIFICANCE OF HUMAN STAIN IN THE NOVEL

In 2000, Roth published *The Human Stain*, the novel most profoundly committed in showing the difficulties of race in America. Coleman Silk, the tragic protagonist of *The Human Stain*, is a black man overtaking for white. At the age of eighteen, Silk goes forth his place in New Jersey and, with it, his allegiance to the racial and inherited associations with which he has been upraised. In the navy, he discovers that his lighter skin colour permits him to overtake for Greek American or Arab American. Silk shuffles off the anchorman of his race and gets the portrait of an anchorman tattooed on his arm, this "human stain" the only material reminder of the past he has discarded. Coming back to a post-war America recently in love with the Jewish men and women they've right now helped out to rescue from entire demolition in Europe, Silk determines to become Jewish citizenry to impressively satirize the formulate New Jersey Jewish scholars who rings him at New York University.

The dual-meaning title connotes *The Human Stain* is twain a stain on the skin and the stain of involvement, overly filthy and tangled to be cleared up by upright idealism. The novel moderately gets appearance and deepness, Roth's annoyance is double up into a form of harmed humanitarianism, as he packs in the complex and eventually pitying the pasts of each character.

#### CONCLUSION

To study identity crisis into the multicultural society of America in the novel of Philip Roth, *The Human Stain* helps the reader to understand the social and cultural background of America in the contemporary period. Roth has written on the social issues, suffering and pain of the peculiar caste, class and race such as the Jewish race. It is detected the race and class struggle plays a primary part during the journey of the life of the character of the novel. *The Human Stain* makes the web of the practical world and the actual world more evidently showed in forefronts of the readers. Through satire, interrelationship and the analysis of the fresh hypothesis in the text, Roth discloses the quandary of young Jewish writers and the abiding psychic trauma of the post-war Jewish people. *The Human Stain* debunks the satire of academia. It is one of the books which cover almost all problems of our life. The faculty members and the university scenarios are extended to shell out with the maxims of acquisition, justness and all in all development of society. But the protagonist, Coleman Silk is declined in university justness.

*The Human Stain* interfaces the profoundly judgemental and bombastic mentality of the fake liberal scholastic network of Athena College of the ethical exemplary nature of those Americans who were maddened by the presidential sex outrage. The longing for revenge on the grounds of Athena College purportedly parallels the 1998 stunning articulation of a lynch-horde attitude expecting to cleans the white house.

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