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IDENTITY POLITICS AND ITS DISCONTENTS IN PHILIP ROTH'S *THE HUMAN STAIN* AND *INDIGNATION*

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Orçun ERKAYA

ABSTRACT

Master's Thesis

Identity Politics and Its Discontents in Philip Roth's *The Human Stain* and *Indignation*

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Identity is formed as a result of a person's interaction with the culture and environment they live in. Since construction of identity relates to surrounding factors, the sense of identity is shaped by others. Thus, rather than static, identity must be perceived as a fluid discourse, which evolves from the negotiation between individuals and their significant others. Accordingly, the rejection of these significant others might lead to tragedies. In both *The Human Stain* and *Indignation*, Philip Roth reveals the struggles of protagonists who pursue an autonomous identity independent from significant others. Also, they reject social, cultural, racial and ethnic impositions and try to assert their unique identities. In return, they suffer from the repercussions of going beyond the social boundaries established by the American majority. This dissertation aims to explore how the protagonists in these books are punished by the American "persecuting spirit" on their journey of self-invention. The tragic ends of Coleman and Marcus reflect the oscillations of American identity between the principles promised in the foundation and the practices in contemporary America. Although America was built upon such values as self-reliance and individual freedom, people face tragic repercussions when they threaten the American social classification.

Keywords: Philip Roth, Identity, Significant Others, Impositions, Social Boundaries, Classification.

ÖZET

Yüksek Lisans Tezi

Philip Roth'un *The Human Stain* ve *Indignation* Romanlarındaki Kimlik Politikaları ve Bunların Hoşnutsuzluğu

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Kimlik, kişinin yaşadığı kültür ve çevre ile etkileşiminin bir sonucu olarak gelişir. Kimlik oluşumu çevre faktörleri ile bağlantılı olduğundan, kimlik duygusu da çevredeki bireyler tarafından şekillenir. Bu yüzden, kimlik, durağan olarak değil, bireyler ve önemli ötekiler arasındaki müzakereden doğan değişken bir söylem olarak algılanmalıdır. Buna göre, önemli ötekilerin reddedilmesi belirli trajedilere yol açabilir. Philip Roth, hem *The Human Stain*'de hem de *Indignation*'da önemli ötekilerden bağımsız otonom bir hayat sürmeye çalışan kahramanların sarf ettikleri çabaları gösteriyor. Aynı zamanda, bu kahramanlar, sosyal, kültürel, ırksal ve etnik yaptırımları reddedip kendi özel kimliklerini ortaya koyuyor. Bunun karşılığında, Amerikan çoğunluğu tarafından kurulmuş sosyal sınırları aşmanın sonuçlarıyla karşılaşıyorlar. Bu tez, bu kitaplardaki kahramanların kendilerini keşfetme sürecinde Amerikan "işkence ruhu" tarafından nasıl cezalandırıldıklarını araştırmaktadır. Coleman ve Marcus'ın trajik sonları Amerikan kimliğinin kuruluş sırasında vaat edilen prensipler ve günümüz Amerika'sındaki pratikler arasındaki dalgalanmasını açığa vurmaktadır. Amerika, özgüven ve bireysel özgürlük gibi değerler üzerine kurulmuş olması karşın, insanlar, Amerika'daki sosyal sınıflandırmaya tehdit oluşturduklarında, trajik sonuçlarla karşılaşmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Philip Roth, Kimlik, Önemli Ötekiler, Yaptırımlar, Sosyal Sınırlar, Sınıflandırma.

IDENTITY POLITICS AND ITS DISCONTENTS IN PHILIP ROTH'S *THE HUMAN STAIN* AND *INDIGNATION*

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INTRODUCTION

Identity, the answer to who one is, is a consequence of individuals' complex interactions with their environment. A grand concept which relates to various discourses, it is a mutual product of social, cultural, racial and ethnic components. As such, it is inevitably one of the core subjects of literature, which pursues answers to who we are as it might be somehow revealed in the lives we live and the choices we make. The concept of identity becomes all the more central in the literatures of minorities, and it has found a far more particular place in Jewish American literature as it has been built upon the struggles that members of Jewish immigrant families go through in an assimilationist society, where transgressions from norms are under strict surveillance. Daniel Walden divides the Jewish literary tradition into two phases. The first is the one beginning with Abraham Cahan who "began a search for identity and values as he questioned the balance between success and acculturation or assimilation" (Walden, 1979: 5). This first phase reflects the dichotomy between the joys and the burdens of being a Jew, and the literary setting is more Jewish than American. The second phase, which dates to the second half of the 20th century, incorporates such authors as Bernard Malamud, Saul Bellow and Philip Roth, all of whom have been defined as the "masters" of Jewish American literature. In the second phase, "the reaffirmation and rediscovery of America was central" (Walden, 1979: 6). However, even among these authors, there were differences in interpreting the place of the Jew in American mainstream culture.

Throughout the course of Jewish American tradition, it is possible to observe a two-dimensional orientation. The Jewish American authors either chose to expose the sufferings of the Jewish immigrant families or they highlighted the plight of adopting an American identity (Glicksberg, 1968: 197). For such authors as Bernard Malamud and Saul Bellow, it was essential to reflect upon the sufferings of Jewish people in American society. Their works bring up an analogy of the Jew and the Gentile, in which the Jew is almost represented as a saint once they triumph socially in American mainstream society. Though commonly categorized in the same literary layer, Philip Roth, in this sense, stands in opposition to Malamud and Bellow, for he complies with neither of the aforementioned orientations. Instead of confining the subjects with their

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religious, racial or ethnic qualities, Roth focuses on the authenticity of individuals. Rather than zeroing merely in on the tragic circumstances of Jewish immigrant families, more frequently, Roth narrates individual identity crises. He chooses to focus on the problems of identity in a way that helps to highlight the conflicts between individuals and society. Namely, for Roth, the character—Jewish or not—is on the scene with their human endeavors. Especially, in his *American Trilogy*, which includes *American Pastoral* (1997), *I Married a Communist* (1998), and *The Human Stain* (2000), Roth illustrates a universal identity struggle. These struggles result less from the impact of a Jewish surrounding than from the traumas of the postwar America. Therefore, Roth cannot be confined to the particularities of Jewish American literature. Rather, he is an author that probes into the universal nature of human beings. For Roth, the identity crises and personal struggles are not peculiar to Jewish protagonists only; they are universal discontents experienced by people of any race or ethnicity.

This is the point where Roth attracts large criticism from his Jewish counterparts, particularly from Irving Howe. His critique of Roth centers around the assumption that Roth has turned his back on the Jewish culture, which no longer nourishes his literary artistry. The validity of this critique could never be proven since Roth himself never claimed to belong to the Jewish American tradition. If anything—as in his fiction—he discarded any kind of labels that would categorize a person. Not only his life but also his fiction tells the reader that each individual has their authentic traits independent of such factors as race, class or ethnicity. Thus, Roth does not receive any more particular sort of nourishment from being categorized in the Jewish American tradition than being, for example, a Newark intellectual or male or an English speaking person. Au contraire, "Roth's frustration with his subcultural position as a Jew in American society is, in many ways, the irritant that produces his fiction" (Greenberg, 1997: 487). More specifically, rather than counting on the traits that are attributed by external powers, Roth believes in the self-definition of the character.

With this in mind, transgressions of identity frequently present themselves in Roth's fiction. In both *The Human Stain* (2000) and *Indignation* (2008), the protagonists face tragic ends as a consequence of intense identity crises, which stem from particular forms of identity politics in United States history. Although the American politics of identity has been tackled historically and sociologically, its

impact on literary characters has not reached an extensive examination. Also, although the experiences of the characters that are located outside the American mainstream have been described fruitfully, few assessments handled the problems of identity without drawing clear social categorizations. Hence, it is a must to analyze and interpret how self-definition and reinvention of identity can be threatening to American politics of identity and what repercussions those who pursue an authentic identity could face.

This thesis will formulate a frame in which the reader will initially be able to figure out the components of identity. In so doing, the first chapter will employ the theories of Charles Taylor, who produced numerous works in relation to the concept of identity and authenticity. The second chapter will have a look into American history and culture in order to understand how what is called "American identity" has been shaped in responses to historical turning points and influential characters that gave shape to it. The ties between Taylor's propositions and the birth, formation and tenets of American identity will be exposed to an extensive historical analysis throughout a period from the Founding Fathers to contemporary America. Finally, the thesis will discuss how Taylor's ideas are applicable to Roth's *The Human Stain* and *Indignation* in terms of authentic identity and how the protagonists' individual journeys are parallel to the historical journey of the United States.

In chapter I, there will be a theoretical analysis of the concept of identity in Charles Taylor's perspective. For Taylor, the biggest component of identity is recognition, the acknowledgement of a person's individual existence. Recognition is first provided by a person's "significant others," which pertains to those representing significance to an individual in their social environment. Its absence—non-recognition—or *mis*recognition, however, could cause immense identity problems because Taylor claims that there is a "dialogical" relationship between individuals and their significant others. In other words, individuals construct identities by interacting with the surrounding environment; thus it is impossible to build an authentic identity by ripping off the cords with significant others with whom one is in constant negotiation determining boundaries of the self and identity.

While recognition or non-recognition is provided by significant others on the individual level, when the same dynamics apply to group identities, the discourse often

centers around the recognition of "rights" of the minority group by the dominant group. According to Taylor, recognition of the rights of individuals and social groups has only recently arrived on the agenda, especially with the discourse of multiculturalism. Before multiculturalism, recognition was a privilege reserved for certain groups. He presents two fundamental politics as a result of two major historical changes, intertwined with the discourse of identity with recognition. First is the politics of equal dignity, which appeared as a consequence of the collapse of social hierarchies in the 18th century. With this collapse, the concept of "dignity" replaced the concept of "honor," which previously classified members of society into social categories and reserved certain rights to certain people and groups. The politics of equal dignity aimed at abolishing such discrimination among individuals and social groups, which led to the birth of democracy. However, Taylor suggests that the concept of democracy, which reinforced the politics of equal dignity, was also problematic as it had a "universalist" approach. While it sought to eliminate social discrimination, it neglected individual or group differences. The second was the politics of difference, which evolved as a result of a new understanding of defining individuals. Taylor accounts that in the late 18th century, individuals converted their source of truth from such entities as God to their "inner voice". In other words, instead of committing to divine entities, people began to count on their "selves" in the assessment of truth, which accelerated the idea of authenticity. However, Taylor's authentic identity does not exclude the role of significant others in the formation of identity. On the contrary, it celebrates the balance of "dialogical" interactions with significant others on condition that their role does not precede the individual definition of the self (Taylor, 1994: 25-31).

The most visible sites of conflict between the individual's self-definition and social definitions take place in matters of race, especially in the formation of African-American identity. Since *The Humans Stain*'s protagonist Coleman Silk is an African American, a look into the African American identity is required. The formation of American society as based on race has had significant historical consequences. One of them is what is called passing, which is individual's total rejection of society's identity impositions based on race. As the most radical way of asserting individual authenticity, passing can be defined as the concealment of original race and pretense to belong in

another. The act of passing can be perceived as a rebellion to the dominant white Anglo-Saxon Protestant definitions that have established insurmountable boundaries and social categorizations according to which such minorities as the African Americans should live. Thus, the passing figures pose a threat to the American mainstream by going beyond the predetermined social boundaries. Besides, passing is also an objection to the racial or ethnic group in which one is expected to belong. Hence, passing figures also rebel against their African American ethnic and racial group identity their significant others in this group. They assert their individual authenticity and a will to create their own destiny independent from any sort of labels including the African American. Fundamentally, they refuse their fate to be determined by either the dominant group or the group in which they are presumed to belong.

In her formulation of the relationship between passing and identity, Elaine K. Ginsberg underlines three controversies. First, she claims that passing refers to a dichotomy between *creation* and *imposition* of identities, where the former refers to the individual authenticity whereas the latter is related to the impositions of society. Second, Ginsberg relates passing with an act of boundary crossing. She argues passing is detrimental to the integrity of society because it invalidates social categorizations created by hegemonic discourses. Ginsberg's third argument is related to "specularity" of passing, which points to the predicament of the visible and invisible consequences. Her analogy of the "seen" and the "unseen" suggests that passers attribute certain meanings to another way of life, which might be deceptive and disappointing for the individual (Ginsberg, 1996: 2-5). In their search for an alternative identity, individuals tend to assume a better life. However, like Coleman, individuals might face difficulties either way. Although passing could also be defined as an act of voluntary assimilation because passers voluntarily turn away from their racial background and assimilate into the mainstream white culture, as an act of rebellion against pre-determined social definition, it is a revolutionary act that undermines and unsettles the mainstream.

There are certain instruments that modern states rely on so as to implement their impositions and assimilate differences in society. Religion is one of the most radical of these, which has since Reformation, been at the center of Western societies. Taylor suggests that the absence of "total commitment" to religion could prove the integrity

of mainstream worthless. Another instrument that the state uses to assimilate multitudes is morality, which goes hand in hand with religion. By means of morality, the state creates frames according to which citizens assess everyday life and judge other members of society. These frames are not only at odds with the natural fluidity of identity, but they also denigrate such human instincts as desire and individual independence. Another instrument resorted in assimilation is education, which foreshadows a "universalist" curriculum on multitudes of people. This is problematic because the "universalist" curriculum naturally ignores the differences of individuals, thus hindering the construction of an authentic identity via imposition of a particular way of thinking. Hence, the authentic individual resists these impositions and when they fail to do so, this creates identity problems that might lead to disastrous consequences (Taylor, 1989: 215).

In both *The Human Stain* and *Indignation*, the protagonists experience transgressions of identity as a consequence of the impact of historical happenings in the United States. Thus, in Chapter II, the turning points in American history will be subject to an elaborate analysis in relation to their impact on individual and collective identities. In so doing, the thesis will reveal how American politics of identity is in contradiction with America's founding principles and how, counterfactually, it discredits the idea of individual authenticity.

American history starts with the goal of establishing an authentic identity following the malpractices of the Church of England, also known as the Anglican Church. The institutionalization of the Anglican Church was rejected by those who defended the idea that there should be no mediation between God and the individual. With the failure to "purify" the Anglican Church, a considerable number of people, who were called the Puritans, began to feel the need to immigrate to the New World. According to Sacvan Bercovitch, these people idealized the new land as "the holiest country in the world" and their destiny was "the destiny of mankind" (Bercovitch, 1975: 57-62). The prominent figure among this mass was John Winthrop, who attributed great significance to the New World by labeling it as "the city upon a hill". This new country relied on "newness" in all senses, shifting a wide range of paradigms. Basically, the new social life sought to build a new nation by cutting cords with the

past. This could be interpreted as America's initial attempt for a rupture from its significant other, England in particular and the Old World in general.

The will to create a new nation reached a climax when, ignited by Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, the settlers fought the Independence War with England to arise victorious out of it. The aftermath of the Independence War produced a new perception: *Americanness*. This new notion involved a peculiar viewpoint, which relied on the self rather than the significant other. In 1841, Ralph Waldo Emerson published the reputed "Self-Reliance", which foresaw complete rupture with England and maintain an independent society. Not long after, self-reliance and self-sufficiency became defining traits of the American character. This new character counted on newness and sought to reinvent itself. The American character was "an individual emancipated from history, happily bereft of ancestry, untouched and undefiled by the usual inheritances of family and race" (Lewis, 1955: 5).

However, according to Taylor, it is impossible to maintain an authentic identity in a monological state. Thus, in the 19th century, American wilderness had replaced Britain as America's significant other. The wilderness gained importance for the pioneers both because it granted the opportunity to expand the land and because it promised new challenges, areas for conquest, hopes and freedom. In order for the vast land to be cultivated, large numbers of pioneering individuals went to the Wild West. During the westwards expansion, all "wild" elements including Native Americans were conceived as savages to be converted into "civilization," by pioneers. This act undertaken by pioneers exemplifies an attitude that defines American attitudes to "foreign" or non-white elements: exclusion or assimilation of differences. As Western expansion was taking place, America was receiving large numbers of immigrants especially from the East, bringing in yet new foreign elements, from Eastern and Southern Europe. The international wave was made up of a composite mass, which is, to a great extent, responsible for the multicultural fabric of the United States. These new immigrants faced similar attitudes of either exclusion and/or assimilation.

Another significant turning point that should be stressed in the formation of American identity is the Civil War. The Civil War is not only a military incident between two parties; it refers to a separation of ideas regarding the continuum of the nation. On one hand, the North upheld the notion of a strong national federation; on

the other hand, the South tried to preserve and uphold such qualities as state rights and complete individual freedom. However, the spark of the war was the dispute regarding the right to own slaves, who were brought from Africa to the New World. Radically excluded, the slaves had no identity or social rights whatsoever. The main reason for this exclusion was their race and skin color, which defined them as slaves in America built as a white Anglo-Saxon Protestant nation. Thus, after Native Americans, America gained yet a new "other." Even after the war culminated in the triumph of the North and slavery was abolished by President Abraham Lincoln, African Americans remained outside the American mainstream due to formal or informal segregationist practices both in the South and in the North. As a result, in order to secure a place in the American mainstream, certain African Americans, who had white physical characteristics, opted for passing, a practice that they had resorted to even during slavery.

Apart from the African Americans, through the 20th century, American politics of identity had to handle a larger number of minorities. Thus, the idea of assimilation grew stronger to cope with identity problems in such a multicultural country. According to Leslie J. Vaughan, the American politics of identity is divided into three: Anglo-conformity, the melting pot and cultural pluralism. As a matter of fact, each of these creates a dichotomy between the mainstream and the outsider, also known as "alien." Anglo-conformity is related to a nativist agenda, which upholds the English roots and cultural backgrounds. Accordingly, anyone who does not possess an Anglo root and its cultural background does not stand a chance to be a true American. Moreover, they become subjected to such practices as "the citizenship program" introduced by Theodore Roosevelt (Vaughan, 1991: 449). Melting pot was not really intended for racial or ethnic homogeneity; however, as in Anglo-conformity, an individual could never be acknowledged as American unless they agreed to forsake any labels other than "American." The melting pot, which was a reference to one of Israel Zangwill's play by the same title, aimed to "melt" any sort of difference; thus, it can be associated with the politics of dignity, which neglected individual and group differences. Vaughan's third phase is the cultural pluralism, which might be correlated with the politics of difference. As in the notion of "salad bowl" or Lawrence H. Fuchs's

American Kaleidoscope (1990), differences were later recognized and a cultural mosaic formed the basis of cohabitation.

Anglo-conformity, melting pot and cultural pluralism represent different ways of approaching ethnic and racial minorities in the United States. Each has attracted a wide range of criticism both from the academics and members of society. However, the biggest reaction to practices of multiculturalism came with the Affirmative Action, which is an American policy implemented to make up for non-recognition of group identities. Affirmative Action refers to providing social advantages for groups that previously suffered from racial, ethnic or gender inequality. It is a political attempt to overcome prior injustices which were put into practice, allowed or tolerated by the American state. Although the beginning of the program aimed to create equal opportunities for diverse minority groups, particularly African Americans and women, later, the program attracted a great deal of negative reactions. These reactions would circle around three viewpoints. First, the program was naturally discriminative as it draws clear lines among races and ethnicities. Second, the program caused many to change their political stands, creating a damaging discourse of political correctness. Third, although the program was initially launched to compensate racial inequalities applied to African Americans, it produced a "me-too" effect among other social and ethnic groups.

Another component that helped to shape the American identity is wars America launched outside its borders. Similarly, in Roth's fiction, the wars in which America was involved are reflective forces on the characters. The lives of the characters are shaped and reshaped with the impact of these wars. It is possible to divide the American history of wars into two: those fought for independence such as the Independence War and the War of 1812 and those fought to assert ideological dominance in the world. The latter include all the wars physically or psychologically fought after the World War I. All these wars—World War II, the Cold War, the Korean War and the Vietnam War—whose common denominator was to prevent the spread of communism, had huge influence on the American individual and collective identities. Roth's *The Human Stain* and *Indignation* handle the struggles of building an authentic identity in the atmosphere of postwar America, where the American state intervened in individual freedom and a "witch hunt" began with a pretext of

communist threat. The most visible practice resorted by the American state appeared in the name of McCarthyism after Senator Joseph R. McCarthy took initiative to fight communist ideology in a period called the Red Scare. Although the laws that were passed during this period meant to contain the spread of communism, in reality, they scapegoated certain people and groups. McCarthyism actually indicated what Nathaniel Hawthorne called the "persecuting spirit" in America because many people were victimized by the state and their individual freedom was restricted as a result of state policy. At last, the practices in this period not only proved to be targeting individual freedom but they also demonstrated the gap between the American ideals emphasized in its foundation and contemporary American politics. The reflections of this gap form the basis of Roth's *The Human Stain* and *Indignation*.

Chapter III will initially provide a biographical background so as to familiarize the reader with Philip Roth's narrative technique. As previously mentioned, although Roth is categorized in the Jewish American tradition, he can actually never be confined to any ethnic or racial labels. He depicts the individual's free choices and their ups and downs. His view of individual identities goes beyond specific definitions. Besides, as Roth also demonstrates, identity is not a static but a fluid discourse. Hence, the protagonists in both *The Human Stain* and *Indignation* are represented on a journey of identity construction. This chapter aims to discuss how Taylor's dichotomy of individual *versus* collective identities explains these characters' attempts at constructing their identities.

The chapter first deals with *The Human Stain* and its protagonist Coleman Silk's struggle to lead an independent life and his failure to do so. *The Human Stain* is built upon the dynamics that prevent Coleman from constructing an authentic identity. It also accounts the incidents where Coleman is expected to conform to social norms. These expectations, as a whole, include complying with the racial and ethnic impositions coming both from the white American norms and from his African American family, tolerating the banalization of academic life, and ending his affair with a cleaning lady as it is a breach of social, cultural and class differences. Nathan Zuckerman, who is a fictional character renowned as Roth's alter-ego, successfully "reconstructs" Coleman's life and writes it as a book entitled as *The Human Stain*. The "stain" refers to Coleman's haunting past, which shows its eradicating impact on the

"spooks" incident, where, while checking attendance of his students as a professor, Coleman pronounces the word to refer to the absence of two female African American students. The word, which is meant for "ghost" is taken as a racial slur and results in accusations of racism towards Coleman. Coleman's irony begins at this point since he is blamed for racism on account of a very specific meaning of the word "spooks" while he himself is an African American who passes for Jew. The incident pertains to Charles Taylor's proposition that it is impossible for individuals to build an authentic identity by cutting cords with significant others. Coleman, rejecting his race, family and culture, is haunted by his own past.

Passing is not an arbitrary decision for Coleman. Rather, it is the result of all negative experiences that he has undergone because of his race. For instance, Steena, the Danish-Icelandic girl friend in his youth, breaks up with him once she meets Coleman's family and finds out his African origin. By passing, Coleman refuses to be categorized and labeled by external powers. Thus, passing represents a "freedom and lack of restriction that he was never able to enjoy as an African American man" (Kirby, 2006: 155). By passing, Coleman not only attains a place in the American mainstream but he also leads a life framed and planned by himself alone. However, even after passing, the "persecuting spirit" sustains pressuring Coleman to keep him within the established social boundaries. Thus, the "persecuting spirit" not only works for minorities but also for all American citizens.

Coleman is criticized owing to his affair with a cleaning lady named Faunia, who works at the same university as Coleman does. Although the critique circles around the age difference between the two, the deeper discontent is connected to his sexual desire, which he is able to maintain by means of Viagra. Thus, Viagra is a significant means that gives Coleman the freedom to be who he wants to be. In fact, Viagra, grants Coleman an opportunity to go beyond the social boundaries and assert his individuality.

The strongest social reaction against Coleman's authenticity represents itself in a letter entitled "Everyone Knows", which is written by Coleman's young French coworker, Delphine Roux. Zuckerman describes the letter as "invocation of cliché and the beginning of the banalization of experience" (Roth, 2000: 209). He also suggests that it is impossible to lead such a life idealized by society. Roth argues that human

instincts can and should never be repressed by external powers because they are the components of being a human. The effect of "Everyone Knows" also presents itself at the very beginning of the book when Zuckerman describes the social atmosphere after the outbreak of Clinton and Lewinsky affair. Although they are simple human beings with natural instincts, American society shows its "persecuting spirit" and condemns the affair. Coleman's affair with Faunia is exposed to the same spirit because Coleman, like Clinton, threatens the system by going beyond the roles allocated for an "old man." This can be interpreted as a reflection of the conflict between individual and collective identities in American society.

Les Farley, Faunia's ex-husband, plays a crucial role in Coleman's tragic end. A Vietnam veteran with mental illnesses and social anxieties, Les is also disturbed by the affair, no less than he is disturbed by the role his wife plays in the death of his children. To take revenge, Les implements a plan and causes Coleman and Faunia to die in a car accident. Their death not only represents the reflections of the "persecuting spirit" but it also indicates that those pursuing an authentic identity are not tolerated by the American mainstream. Hence, according to the American politics of identity, those who reject the social roles suffer certain repercussions including social exclusion or even death.

Roth's *Indignation* has a similar flow of incidents which are narrated as the memories of the protagonist under the haziness of morphine in a hospital bed. Like *The Human Stain*, *Indignation* also illustrates certain social roles, imposed on Marcus Messner, a clever Jewish boy who wishes to shape his life independent from his family in Newark, particularly from his father. *Indignation* shows how Marcus struggles to lead an independent life in 50s America, where the impact of Red Scare is strong and, for young citizens, there is a palpable threat of being sent to the Korean War.

For fear of this risk coming true, Mr. Messner, Marcus's father, becomes so paranoid as to check every move his son makes including the hour Marcus arrives home or the people with whom he hangs out. Mr. Messner's expectations and interventions grow higher and higher only to let Marcus make a decision to leave home. That is when Marcus's individual journey begins. He decides to leave for Winesburg, a conservative college in Ohio. He is not oblivious to the risk of being sent to the Korean War unless he does well at college. However, the father's constant state

of worry leaves him no other choice so as to create his own world, where he regards himself as an authentic individual.

Although Marcus leaves home in the hope of constructing an autonomous identity, at Winesburg, Marcus undergoes numerous traumatic experiences that prevent him from doing so. For starters, he suffers from ethnic categorization, in which, despite no such request, he is directly assigned a room that he disappointingly shares with three other Jews, one of whom torments Marcus with his loud music and cynicism. Also, like all other students, he is forced to attend a certain number of sermons given in the university chapel. Marcus is not disturbed by the mandatory chapel classes *because* he is Jewish. On the contrary, he clearly identifies himself as an atheist. What bothers him is the instruction and dictation of how to lead his life. Another compulsion is the preliminary military training program, called the ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps). Marcus involuntarily attends this program; however, he tries hard to be at least an officer were he to be sent to the battleground. He fears that unless he marches to the battleground well-trained, he could be slaughtered.

In Marcus's mind, the atrocities of war are accompanied with his experiences at his father's butcher shop where he, as a young boy, helped kosher meat by draining it of blood. The book has many parts where Marcus accounts the koshering process in detail, which refers to Marcus's subconscious fear to be butchered in the battlefield himself. The shop is also associated with his father and the Jewish identity he imposes on his son. For Marcus, compliance with Jewishness butchers his freedom to choose his identity. Thus despite his anxiety to protect his son from being killed in the war, his father himself is an agent against whom Marcus fights to stay alive as he chooses.

Marcus's end, like Coleman's, begins with his rejection of one of the aforementioned impositions. So as to skip the chapel classes, Marcus—like others in his fraternity—hires a "proxy" named Ziegler to sign the attendance sheet on his behalf. At the end of one of these classes, Zeigler gets caught by Dean Caudwell, who is a very conservative figure representing the American white Anglo-Saxon Protestant values. Caudwell summons Marcus in his office to request an apology; however, even at the risk of being sent to the battleground, Marcus refuses to do so. Not long after he is sent to the Korean War, he is slaughtered by the enemy.

Hence, both Coleman and Marcus become exposed to tragic ends as they refuse to comply with the social impositions. As they try to evade one imposition, they end up in a far bigger undesired condition that brings their deaths. This is an outpour of the fact that individual authenticity is exposed to a systematic pressure by the American politics of identity. Thus, it is impossible to survive in the American mainstream unless there is submission to its social impositions on the individual identity.

CHAPTER ONE
IDENTITY: HOW SELF IS FORMED

1.1.   RECOGNITION AND THE SIGNIFICANT OTHERS

Identity is the result of a person's interaction with the culture and environment s/he lives in. As one can hardly resist exposure to this culture and environment, the sense of identity is shaped by others or the external dynamics. Thus, rather than a static formation, identity must be regarded as a social construct that is inevitably related to the surrounding factors. Identity is actually the very source by which one defines themselves within the communal context. That is, it refers to the authentic traits which set someone apart from others. In other words, identity makes a person's perceptions very unique and peculiar. However, it is something that has been problematic for those who fail to maintain healthy interactions with the external world. Therefore, one's identity can be subject to short or long term crises in a lifetime.

The biggest component of the discourse of identity might be the urge to be recognized by others. Recognition is directly related to the perceptions of others and is crucial in shaping one's identity. To put it more clearly, the viewpoints of others adds to a person's self-perception. Charles Taylor, in his article "The Politics of Recognition", demonstrates the connection between recognition and a person's grasp of themselves:

> *The thesis is that our identity is partly shaped by recognition or its absence, often by the misrecognition of others, and so a person or group of people can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves. Nonrecognition or misrecognition can inflict harm, can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted and reduced mode of being (Taylor, 1994: 25).*

This means there is a bilateral dimension between the concept of recognition and the absence of recognition (also called non-recognition).The transgression between the existence and the absence of recognition, therefore, affects considerably the dynamics of a person's identity. Taylor, in most of his works, demonstrates the strong relationship between recognition and the construction of identity. Notwithstanding, recognizing a person's physical or social existence does not

necessarily mean full recognition, nor does it provides sense of full recognition. While recognition or non-recognition is provided by significant others on the individual level, when the same dynamics apply to group identities, the discourse often centers around the recognition of "rights" of the minority group by the dominant group. Therefore, accepting a group's social rights is equally important. In other words, as wells as recognizing the existence of a person or a group, recognition of their social rights is also significant. Thus, full individual recognition is related to recognition of the rights and equality of the group in which the individual belongs. Taylor claims when a group's social rights are not recognized, this may cause members of that group to have a sense of internalization of 'inferiority'. He exemplifies this idea by referring to Afro-Americans and women in that they internalize 'demeaning' roles as a consequence of the view that hegemonic powers—namely white Anglo-European or male class—adopts toward them. The task of these minorities, Taylor suggests, is to purge themselves of this mode (Taylor, 1994: 26).

Taylor describes recognition as a "human need and he draws attention to its significance throughout history (Taylor, 1994: 26). He claims that recognition has only recently come about as a crucial term to be discussed in academia. This is most probably because, before multiculturalism, recognition belonged only to certain social classes. Related to this, Taylor traces the history of recognition back to the beginning of the 18th century. He basically handles the issue by establishing an analogy of two opposing politics of recognition, first being the politics of equal dignity and the other as the politics of difference. He suggests these are the two major changes that "made the preoccupation of recognition and identity inevitable" (Taylor, 1994: 26).

The first change is the collapse of social hierarchies. This change brought adoption of the term "dignity" as the replacement of "honor", which referred to privileges that not everyone had (Taylor, 1994: 27). With dignity replacing honor, the politics of equal recognition in the western world became popular. Taylor mentions what transformation of titles that were reserved for certain people in certain groups. For instance, such honorary titles as "Sir" or "Madam" were replaced by "Mr.", "Miss" and "Mrs". What is more, "Miss" and "Mrs." then melted into "Ms" for the sake of equal recognition (Taylor, 1994: 27).This is not just a transformation of titles but a change that has triggered recognition of each person's social rights no matter what

background they belong in. Dignity, in this sense, aims at abolishing discrimination between individuals and refers to equal recognition. In the light of Taylor's approach, this is also applicable to social groups. Adoption of the concept of dignity rather than honor serves well to the purpose of a democratic society, where there are different cultures and genders. The politics of equal dignity, therefore, also draws attention to equal respect to and recognition of different groups in a democratic society.

Popularity of democracy in the west aimed at establishing equal dignity of individuals and social groups. However, democracy, while requiring equal recognition for each group, not only neglected differences but became unsuccessful in abolishing class discrimination. Taylor suggests that the arrival of democracy did not do away with the fact that people define themselves according to social categorizations. This is because democracy is a modern "universalist" concept that reinforces the politics of equal dignity, which does not recognize the peculiar qualities of individuals and groups. According to Taylor, the unique definition of a person's "self" is only possible with the "ideal of authenticity" (Taylor, 1994: 28).

Taylor also points to a new understanding of individual identity, which is the second change that brought recognition and identity together. In the late 18th century, which produced a mode of enlightenment in the western world, individuals started to care more about their "selves" than another entity or "good" such as God, which was conceived as the ultimate source of truth. After that, being true to *oneself* has gained bigger significance than committing to a divine entity. People began to search for inwardly-generated sources to reinvent individual identities (Taylor, 1994: 28-29).

In *The Ethics of Authenticity*, Taylor claims the notion of authenticity is a direct consequence of a "displacement" of morality (Taylor, 1991: 26). There, he describes the previously-held perspectives towards what is good and bad. In so doing, Taylor calls attention to the practice of "calculations". This means that the people calculated consequences of their actions in accordance with their impact on the collective well-being rather than individual fulfillment. On one hand, when their actions produce negative results, they would face the divine punishment. On the other hand, when the result of their actions added to the collective welfare, they would attain divine rewards. This dichotomy was superseded by a sense of individual assessment and evaluation. "The notion was that understanding right and wrong was not a matter of dry

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calculation, but was anchored in our feeling. Morality has, in a sense, a voice within" (Taylor, 1991: 26). Thus, rather than the consequences that culminate in divine reward or punishment, the voice within became the fundamental source of morality. Here, Taylor upholds the significance of intuition that is peculiar to each individual. The displacement he speaks of occurs when people reach moral conclusions by being true to their "selves" rather than focusing on collective good or bad or on divine reward or punishment. Authenticity, in this sense, is related to listening to inner voice and having "inner depth" rather than considering merely the collective consequences of actions (Taylor, 1991: 26).

Despite the change of moral views that purported to a shift from divine reward or punishment to being true to the "self", Taylor maintains that this is not a rejection of God. This is; rather, a process of transition that goes through inside. He refers to Rousseau's *le sentiment de l'existence,* which points to the idea that "moral salvation is possible with being in touch with ourselves" (Taylor, 1991: 27). He also outlines Herder's notion of authenticity according to which he claims everyone has their own "measure" and "there is a certain way of being human that is *my* way" (Taylor, 1991: 28). Thus, self-fulfillment or self-realization is only possible with being true to the "self". What is more, Herder's ideas include the fact that a *Volk* should also be true to itself, meaning individual truth can also be applied to social groups or minorities, as well. The rhetoric of the politics of difference finds its origin in this practice. Each social group, according to this, should be recognized with their authentic traits.

Apart from the notion that individuals have begun to search for sources of identity and moral fulfillment within their "selves", it might also be argued that individuals' perception of their own "selves" is connected to the recognition, non-recognition and misrecognition of their practices. Self-perception basically relates to an individual's interaction with the environment they live in. It is also strongly linked to the past experiences which help shape a person's present and future. Within the frame of past, it is essential to mention the role of parents on a person's identity. Parents, deliberately or not, instill their perspectives into the minds of their children; so, children start thinking in a similar point of view. This makes parents what Taylor calls the "significant others" for children.

People, during early ages of their lives, usually do not commit actions that often collide with their parents' opinion. Thus, at the early stages of life, not many conflicts occur with significant others. However, during adolescence, when individuals start shaping their perspectives, certain breakdowns are observed and the span of significant others expands. At this level, significant others not only refer to parents but other members of society. Their opinion actually starts to matter in shaping a person's identity. The more this span expands, the harder it becomes difficult to resist the influence of significant others. This is because the politics of dignity entails a sense of "sameness". When a person tries to build an authentic identity "monologically", it becomes difficult to succeed (Taylor, 1994: 32). In the light of Taylor's approach, constructing an authentic identity is only possible with the balance of a dialogical definition of the self with significant others and the recognition of authentic qualities. Thus, when a person tries to define themselves rejecting all kinds of entailments with the significant others in their past, a wide range of problems break out. The solution to this problem, therefore, is not a rejection of components of past (in this case the significant others), but a definition of the self which embraces them. Taylor claims that "The genesis of the human mind is in this sense not monological, not something each person accomplishes on his or her own, but dialogical" (Taylor, 1994: 32). When this is not the case, identity problems occur. These problems are what Roth uses in both books as a hindrance to build an independent identity. As will be extensively discussed in later chapters, both protagonists in both *The Human Stain* and *Indignation* are haunted by their past experiences.

Past is also strongly affiliated with the concept of family because parents are those who draw the imprints of our lives. They are the ones from whom we seek recognition. This is the very source of the significance of the "significant others". Even after they die, people tend to follow the invisible instructions they leave behind. Family, undoubtedly, is the very beginning from which one starts forming their identity. It is the initial force that manipulates a person's practices. As in the case of the past, familial impact may also bring up certain problems in the process of forming identity. While a person tries to act independently from these familial imprints, there might be certain conflicts. Taylor draws attention to the reality that although everyone

is entitled to possess unique opinions or attitudes towards things, sometimes it is difficult to apply them in practice.

> *We define our identity in dialogue with, sometimes in struggle against the things our significant others want to see in us. Even after we outgrow some of these others – our parents, for instance – and they disappear from our lives, the conversation with them continues within us as long as we live. Thus, contribution of significant others, even when it is provided at the beginning of our lives, continues indefinitely. Some people may hold on to some form of monological ideal. It is true that we can never liberate ourselves completely from those whose love and care shaped us early in life, but we should strive to define ourselves on our own to the fullest extent possible, coming as best we can to understand and thus get some control over the influence of our parents and avoiding falling into any more such dependent relationships. We need relationships to fulfill, but not to define, ourselves (Taylor, 1994: 32-33).*

Thus, on one hand, the dialogical relationships are essential in the formation of identity. On the other hand, they are not supposed to overshadow the authentic definition of the self. Just as complete isolation from significant others makes it impossible to construct individual identity, preservation of peculiar qualities and the components of authentic identity are of great importance, too. Taylor draws attention to two levels on which the discourse of recognition is centered: the intimate and the public spheres. The former emphasizes the fact that identity and the self are formed in a "continuing dialogue" with or sometimes "struggle" against the significant others. This shows that the formation of identity is not a monological but a dialogical one. Taylor, then, points to the public sphere "where a politics of equal recognition has come to play a bigger and bigger role" (Taylor, 1994: 37). However, more recent developments, he continues, have highlighted the adoption of the politics of difference because the politics of equal dignity has been criticized on the basis of its negligence of differences. Namely, what was "universally the same" actually came to eliminate unique identities causing an act of assimilation.

Parallel to this assimilation, Taylor also portrays the problem of being too dependent on the significant others and he criticizes the perceivable control they have on the individuals. He argues that these traces produce complexities in the process of shaping identity. In other words, the reflection of familial cords and the voluntary repositioning of the self might be at odds. Roth uses this complexity in his novels and takes it to a further point by demonstrating experiences that the protagonists go

through, which culminates in a chaos and tragedy .Because of these chaotic experiences, the process of constructing an identity, for protagonists, becomes difficult. With these interferences, they try to build up identities. However, Taylor also suggests that our identity encompasses where we come from as well as who we are now (Taylor, 1994: 33). Thus, the key to a healthy process is to come up with a decent transition from the past to the present.

Tragedies in the past may constitute a hindrance for people to act rationally in the present. When they become too obsessed with previous disappointments, they might refrain from acting in the present because, this way, they try to avoid the risk in arbitrary situations. This is not only valid for practical but also for emotional or psychological situations. Rather than grasping a risky situation, individuals try to stay far from trauma in order not to suffer the bad consequences doing their best. Predictably, they fail as in the case of Coleman and Marcus. Coleman, who passes as white-Jewish gets blamed for an act of racism when he addresses absent students as 'spooks' even though he has no idea about their color of skin. Marcus ends up in a battlefield while he spends his entire life getting away from familial oppression. Therefore, tragedies in the past play a gigantic role in shaping present decisions and breaks down the natural fluidity of identity formation.

Parents not only grant cultural imprints and social perspectives. They also leave us biological heritage such as race. This means that race is also a parental heritage that gives a person certain qualities. A person may want to reject these given qualities in the name of forming an authentic self. In the case of African-Americans, the most radical way of forming one's authentic self is passing for white. This is not only a rebel against their own group but also the dominant group that has imprisoned the minority group in its place. Rebelling against the dominant group for one requires cutting ties with the social group s/he belongs to. The ties cover a person's past, family and all that is seen as the significant others. Ironically, by rejecting any sort of connection with the significant others in the past, one actually rejects themselves because they (the significant others) are fundamental sources that make one's identity authentic. In the light of Taylor, these ties are needed by everyone for the definition of the self. They are actually needed for the dialogical process of forming an authentic self. Thus, outside the realm of significant others, forming an authentic identity is not possible.

The healthy interaction of the past experiences with significant others and the authentic qualities adopted in the presents what makes up for the 'authentic' self.

1.2. PASSING: AN ALTERNATIVE LIFE

Race was previously thought to be based on such physical qualities of appearance as height, weight, skin color, and so on… However, not only by literary works but even by biology itself race is defined as a construct. Thus, it should be regarded as a social construct rather than a biological one. Before, people thought they were able to define racial characteristics of a person by the differences of physical appearance. When, it was biologically understood that definition of different races was not possible by physical qualities, it became clear that the determination of racial qualities are only culturally and socially possible. The boundaries between races are, thus, socially drawn and are based on no biological reality. However, people have long attributed certain social roles and behaviors to certain races. What is constructed socially on biology is also constructed on behaviors. Certain limits, inferiorities or superiorities are attributed to socially constructed races. Then, if racial categories are socially constructed, it is possible to challenge them. Passing is the strongest way to do so in the case of African Americans. By passing, a person rejects these social constructs and asserts their authentic personality.

Passing refers a situation in which a person may be seen as different from what they are. In other words, the concealment of the constructed race or identity under some sort of disguise is an act of passing. Because race is a fluid social and cultural construct, passing involves racial independence—the freedom to act independently from one's predetermined race and the roles attributed to it. In literature, there are many instances where passing is associated with racial discourse. However, according to Elaine K. Ginsberg, passing is not only about race. It is also related to the boundaries that come along with the given identity. Passing is a way of criticism of these boundaries.

> ...passing is about identities: their creation and imposition, their adoption or rejection, their accompanying rewards or penalties. Passing is also about the boundaries established between identity categories and about the individual and cultural anxieties induced by boundary crossing. Finally passing is about

specularity: the visible and the invisible, the seen and the unseen (Ginsberg, 1996: 2).

Thus, creation points to a deliberate choice while imposition has more of a forceful connotation. In other words, creation refers to the authentic identity that an individual tries to establish while imposition is related to the given personalities according to which one is expected to behave. Thus, creation can be regarded as the embodiment of the struggle to establish an authentic self. Imposition, conversely, covers what is dictated by the culture in which one is born. Also, imposition includes any perspective which is granted by one's past experiences and significant others. A person's choice to create a new perspective independent from any restrictions makes it possible to assume that s/he is the only one who is responsible for the actions committed. In contrast, regarding the imposition of identities, a person is "imposed" a different way of life, where one actually becomes imprisoned in what is given by the roots of the culture s/he belongs to. In sum, creation refers to deliberated choices in the formation of an authentic self while imposition is the etiquette that is glued to a person by the dominant group or the group s/he belongs to. Thus, the identity one tries to form by passing is related to "creation" which may also be regarded as a rebellion against the 'imposed' personality. The following chapters will discuss the way how and the extent to which the protagonists in *The Human Stain* and *Indignation* comply with the aforementioned analogy.

In case of a conflict between the imposed and the created identities, this may lead to the discard of the imposed identity. In the case of the African Americans, one of the ways of the rebellion to the imposed identity is passing from black to white. According to Ginsberg, in the process of passing, rewards and penalties of the created identity are significant factors. When a person becomes enchanted with the rewards promised by the new identity, one's decision to pass is accelerated. For instance, while passing for white, an African-American might consider certain privileges such as quality education, life standards or better living conditions. They simply want to make use of the benefits that are accessible only to white people. This is because the mainstream American values are centered on constructs that were implemented by white Americans. By being "black", one is not only kept outside this realm but also they become unable to benefit from privileges reserved for the mainstream Americans.

Thus, the strongest way of objection for African-Americans becomes passing for white, namely "creating" a new identity. When society produces penalties to deter individuals from passing, a person may refrain from such creation. For starters, passing is penalized by legal actions. It is an illegitimate action that refers to fraud because in passing one actually defines themselves with another cultural or racial background. The situation in the United States makes it even more problematic because, as in the "one-drop rule" or on social security documents, legal discourse calls for racial or cultural classifications. Passing also involves certain dangers of mental complexity and disappointments. As put before, while passing, one tries to form an authentic self which requires rejection of the traces of significant others. This may bring up mental complexity for an individual. Also, passers attract prejudice from not only the group they break away from but also the group they try to belong in. All these instances lead to fear and anxiety, which may end up with mental problems. It is also safe to mention a sense of disappointment as a penalty. When a person does not feel comfortable after passing and they sense a gap with the previous identity. A new identity that is exposed to such powerful legal and psychological threats, therefore, is bound to be psychologically delicate one. All these noted, it might be suggested that when the attraction to rewards promised by the new identity outweighs the probable penalties, an African-American passes for white in order to benefit from the rewards. This is the case of Coleman, the protagonist in *The Human Stain*.

Second, Ginsberg emphasizes the significance of social and cultural boundaries in passing. The boundaries she talks about are the ones established by the social hierarchy within modern or pre-modern communities. She proposes that passing is risky for hegemonic powers and refers to instances in American history where those who pass were thought to pose a threat to society. This is because the hegemonic powers actually imprison a person of minority within the boundaries of difference. As will be presented in later sections, there are many cases in the American history where one adopts a new racial identity. These cases are marked as "boundary-crossing" because it a case where a person rejects the imposed identity and decides to create one on their own, thus entering the space of a different identity. Passing is totally problematic for the hegemonic powers because crossing boundaries creates a threat to the continuum of the social and cultural system. The social and cultural systems

created by the dominant powers are organized within the frame of social roles and actions drawn by the hegemonic cultural discourse (Ginsberg, 1996: 1-5). The organization is directly related to classification and differences of power. Therefore, when a person crosses a boundary and locates themselves in a place that is reserved for a certain group, a layer in the hierarchal pyramid might collapse. This breaks down the social and cultural categories. For instance, the crossing of an African American is detrimental to the social and cultural lines drawn by white majority. Once regarded as "white", a "black" person is automatically granted with the same rights and privileges that are unquestionably reserved for white race. Thus, a change in a single unit may lead to bigger disruptions in other levels. Historically speaking, America was founded as a "white republic" and passing can be seen as a challenge to what it stands for. Although America is regarded as "a nation of immigrants", the word "immigrant" does not cover every minority group. Rather, it refers to white, Anglo-Saxon and protestant pioneers. While even such white groups as the Italians or the Poles are located outside this construct, a passing African-American posits a bigger threat to mainstream. The possibility of passing was unforeseen by the white founding powers when they began to bring African slaves into the country. When interaction of black and white people became inevitable in daily life, both groups reproduced children that looked different in color, thus, the possibility of passing arose to threaten the whole system.

The third dimension to which Ginsberg points is the specularity of passing. On one hand, specularity may be defined as the inability to see what is beyond. On the other hand, it refers to the presumption made upon the "unseen" based on what is seen (Ginsberg, 1996: 2). To put it more clearly, specularity is about attributing meaning to what a person is not able to see. Because it is not possible to see what is beyond the boundaries, passing is speculative rather than definite. This is a dimension of passing which appeals to potential passers. Imagining a better life, one seeks for opportunities for a new identity which s/he presumes will bring comfort. However, the fact that passing is a speculative discourse may cause a person to become filled with fear and anxiety as nothing beyond is crystal clear. In other words, the speculation on the unseen based on what is seen might be deceptive. For instance, when a person intends to pass as white, they might fail to have a sense of belonging to the new identity. The eradication of past and significant others may haunt a person unexpectedly. Ginsberg's

specularity of "the seen and the unseen" can also be handled on the basis of "visible blackness" and "the invisible blackness". If those who are defined as "black" were to have visible black color of skin, there would be no such thing as passing.

Passing also involves an opposition of the "public" and the "private". While the private mind calls for one thing, the public mind might point to another. The fundamental reason for this conflict is the identity politics that is practiced by hegemonic powers. In modern countries, state has been regarded as the foundation to ensure equality among citizens. In theory, equal recognition of citizens is a vital part of modern patterns of state; but in practice, politics of equal recognition eliminates all the uniqueness and peculiarity of individuals. The distinctness of each individual becomes vague when citizens are supposed to live or behave according to a set of laws, which have allegedly been implemented for the purpose of equal recognition. Charles Taylor suggests valid reasons for the outbreak of this problem and refers to a negligence of what he calls as authenticity:

> *... the development of modern notion of identity, has given rise to a politics of difference. There is, of course, a universalist basis to this as well, making for the overlap and confusion between the two (referring to politics of difference and politics of equality). Everyone should be recognized for his or her unique identity. But recognition here means something else. With the politics of equal dignity, what is established is meant to be universally the same, an identical basket of rights and immunities; with the politics of difference, what we are asked to recognize is the unique identity of this individual or group, their distinctness from everyone else. The idea is that it is precisely this distinctness that has been ignored, glossed over, assimilated to a dominant or majority identity. And this assimilation is the cardinal sin against the ideal of authenticity (Taylor, 1994: 26).*

Therefore, the notion of equal rights was not provided by the state, nor was the individual or group authenticity recognized. Thus, a need to form an authentic identity occurred for such groups as African-Americans. That is, although an autonomous self is a promise by the modern state, in reality, there is a consciousness of race and social classes. This is what forces African-Americans to pass for white. The fundamental means via which they perform the act of passing is secrecy. During the rupture with the significant others in the past, one might have to build new significant others and keep their background as secret. This secrecy is a direct threat for the boundaries marked by the dominant cultures. However, with the risk of revelation, this secrecy might be a point of failure in the formation of authentic identities. Taylor's approach

shows it is impossible to invent and reinvent the self without the embrace of significant others. He argues that when one tries to define themselves monologically, components of the past, one way or another, catches up. In consequence, while secrecy seems to be an instrument that helps maintaining authenticity, it is not only a threat to social boundaries but also a potential risk in the construction of identity.

1.3. ASSIMILATION INTO THE MELTING POT AND MAINTAINING DIFFERENCES

The need to pass which derives from the reality of non-recognition of differences- is a bigger "cardinal sin" than assimilation. While assimilation tries to "melt" differences into sameness, non-recognition completely rejects social existence and the rights of individual and groups. Passers are those who prefer voluntary assimilation to non-recognition. Thus, passing stands opposite to assimilation in that the former is a voluntary act to belong to dominant culture while the latter is a policy of the dominant culture to "vaporize" differences of the minority culture in the reality of "sameness". There are certain instruments that modern states rely on for the assimilation of minority groups. Religion, morality and education seem to be the most powerful means to achieve such assimilation.

In most modern states, religion still forms one of the most fundamental components of social life. It is a phenomenon that draws a collective frame in a person's individual lifetime. It has a one-way nature that binds a person to obey to its discourse and venerate its rhetoric. Different from passing, religion offers no alteration but only conversion. Authenticity is impossible in this kind of assimilation. Taylor describes religion as a crucial component of what he calls an "ordinary life". He suggests that the absence of total commitment to religious impositions could prove totality worthless, which could lead to disintegration of individual with society. Therefore, religion stands for one of the greatest tools that the state makes use of in order to manipulate citizens not to act contrary to its implementations. In pointing out the significance of "total commitment" to a deity or an established religion, Taylor refers to the origins of Reformation, which foresaw total commitment to God as well as rejecting mediations between individuals and God.

What was the corresponding account for the various ethics of ordinary life? To see this aright we have to return to a theological point of origin. The affirmation of ordinary life finds its origin in Judeo-Christian spirituality, and the particular impetus it receives in the modern era comes first of all from the Reformation. One of the central points common to all Reformers was their rejection of mediation. The medieval church as they understood it, a corporate in which some, more dedicated, members could win the merit and salvation for others who were less so, was anathema to them. There could be no such thing as more devoted or less devoted Christians: the personal commitment must be total or it was worthless (Taylor, 1989: 215).

Aside from the connotation that Reformation has made religious spirit an inevitable part of daily life, we can also understand that religion has long been located at the center of social and cultural life. Predictably, this has created a restrictive frame of authentic identity. Religion is an instrument that makes it impossible for a person to define themselves outside the established realm. This argument does not need to be based on a specific religion. The discourse of religion itself is strong enough to establish certain social and cultural barriers according to which people are expected to live. The set of rules imposed by any sort of established religion causes problems of identity. Individuals are granted certain responsibilities and failing to do so might lead to an imbalance in the ongoing social and cultural system. The totality of the personal commitment, as Taylor proposes, seems to be the only way to survive in the system not only for this is a way to claim social existence but also as dogmatic faith presumably condemns any inquiry about the rationality of the pre-assigned roles. Thus, it can be asserted that the concept of religion imprisons a person in a monological (one-way) belief. This makes authentic definition of the "self" impossible. In the case of the United States, this refers to Christianity, which has been used for the assimilation of differences.

Morality goes hand in hand with the discourse of religion in creating frames according to which individuals are expected to assess and evaluate their surroundings. This way, morality is closely related to the concept of identity. Taylor posits that there is an "essential link between identity and a kind of orientation" in morality (Taylor, 1989: 28).

To know who you are is to be oriented in a moral space, a space in which questions arise about what is good and bad, what is worth doing and what not, what has meaning and importance for you and what is trivial and secondary.(Taylor, 1994: 26).

The essence of the space of morality, Taylor claims, might differ from one person to another. For some, the moral space is built upon "moral and spiritual commitments" while for others, it refers to the "nation and tradition they belong to" (Taylor, 1994: 27). However, no matter what factors a person's moral space is constructed on, the significance of the moral space is actually connected with the "frames according to which they can determine what is good, or worthwhile, or admirable or of value" (Taylor, 1994: 27). Loss of such "commitment or identification" points to an "identity crisis", which Taylor defines as an "acute form of disorientation" (Taylor, 1994: 27). The "disoriented" individual, according to Taylor is face with the "radical uncertainty of where they stand" (Taylor, 1994: 27). Thus, like the concept of religion, morality is another construct that create frames according to which individuals look through their surroundings. Therefore, it is another construct that breaks down the natural fluidity of forming an authentic identity. The religious and moral space serves well to the purpose of collective consciousness because the frames that are established by religious and moral ethics invisibly define an individual's perception towards the order of society. Most of the time, these frames condemn the naturalness of such human instincts as desire.

Desire might be defined as the enthusiasm to perform an action. It is an integral component of the authentic self because it belongs to the private identity. It might be in the shape of sexual urge or emotional attraction to another person regardless of gender and class categorizations. That is why, desire is regarded as a threat to socially-constructed boundaries. Desire is also at odds with the religious, moral and ethical discourses since such components of public discourse dictate certain ways to experience sentiments and sexuality. This way, desire threatens the social system that foreshadows "universal sameness" over individual differences. In other words, desire is related to autonomous self and cannot be controlled by dominant powers because it rejects every sort of social and cultural imposition.

Another discourse that prevents formation of an authentic self and is used as a means of assimilation is education. It is another "universalizing" instrument that the state makes use of. Education is a strategy that centers on the "sameness" of citizens of the state. Although it seems to broaden horizons, it actually imposes a gaze in the perspective of state policies and expects learners to think in conjunction the state

mind. This is another attempt to block the fluidity of authentic individual identity. Education is complex in terms of "rights". Although, it seems to offer equality among individuals and it is accessible by members of different groups, it eliminates peculiarities of individuals and differences in multicultural societies. In a broad sense, education is a curricular system designed to enhance people's intellect and knowledge. More extensively, though, education is a means via which the state seeks to "melt" differences. For instance, every morning, American schools start education with a "pledge of allegiance":

> *I pledge to the allegiance to the flag of the United States of America and to the Republic for which it stands, one Nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. (qtd. in Hicks, 2007)*

Like this, most pledges in numerous countries expect the same patriotic commitment to the flag or the country, simply to the state. This illustrates the fact that from pledge of alliances to the systematic curricular practices, students are expected to adopt similar points of view. Education, in this sense, is used as a means of manipulation by the state to eliminate differences that may stand as threat to the unity of state or rules of society. The imposed perspective that students acquire since early ages does not diminish but worsen the complexity of identity.

All these boundaries imposed on individuals automatically create a binary opposition of public and private minds. This clash almost always culminates in the triumph of the public mind. It overrides the private identity or authentic self initially germinated in the imagination. This makes it even more difficult for individuals to assert their authentic characteristics. After demonstrating sources of public—or as he calls—the collective identities, K. Anthony Appiah explains the connection between the two:

> *The connection between individual identity, on the one hand, which is the focus of Taylor's discussion, and these collective identities, on the other, seems to be something like this: Each person's individual identity is seen as having two major dimensions. There is a collective dimension, the intersection of their collective identities, and there is a personal dimension, consisting of other socially or morally important features—intelligence, charm, wit, cupidity—that are not themselves the basis of forms of collective identity. The distinction between these two dimensions of identity is, so to speak, a sociological rather than a logical dimension. In each dimension we are talking about properties that are important for social life, but only the collective identities count as social categories, as kinds of persons (Taylor, 1994: 151)*

This pertains to state's consideration of private qualities as worthless in social and political life. In other words, individual authenticity does not play a role in the organization of public life. This makes assertion of authentic identities impossible on the collective reality. However, the collective identity does not only refer to the identity of dominant groups but also to the ethnic minorities that are present in a society. Thus, authentic identity is not only a rebellion against the dominant culture. It is also an objection to the ethnic group that one belongs to. Namely, the authentic "self" rejects all kinds of imprints granted by other sources.

This chapter demonstrated that there are numerous components of identity which pertains to a person's interaction with their social environment. The most crucial of these components is recognition by others because in case of its absence, a person might face "real damage" and "real distortion". It also suggested that the concepts of recognition and non-recognition served as the basis of success and failure in forming authentic individual identities although, collectively, they referred to the social rights of minority groups.

Then, the chapter elaborated on the repercussive nature of personal history. A person's past is not only a total of past experiences. When a person's past is questioned, the initial focus must be their family, whose members Taylor calls as the "significant others". These are the sources of a person's identity and when a person intends to reinvent themselves rejecting any sort of affiliation with the significant others in their past and family, this refers to a "monological" definition of the self, which Taylor suggests is impossible.

The chapter also focused on the racial discourse which helps to classify a person in a social category. Individuals, when they are categorized in a racial class might suffer certain discriminations and confront difficulties in securing a position in the social mainstream. Thus, those with physical capability, resort to passing, which, in the case of the United States, refers to concealment of a person's African American race and redefining identity with features as close to the mainstream as possible. Therefore, passing is both related to secrecy and an authentic redefinition of the "self". The chapter has drawn attention to Elaine K. Ginsberg's three phases of passing. First, it elaborated on Ginsberg's description of the "creation and imposition" of new identities together with the consequences of the impact of their adoption and rejection.

The chapter, secondly, included the stakes of crossing presupposed social and cultural boundaries. It discussed how crossing social and cultural borders forms a threat in the established public discourse. The third dimension was the "specularity", which concentrated on the invisible nature of "the seen and the unseen", the area where an individual cannot foresee crystal-clear the following of their passing.

The chapter finally dealt with the binary oppositions between the public and private (also addressed as the individual and the collective) identities. The means that the modern states use to manipulate citizens' viewpoints were illustrated as religion, morality and education. The "frames" they create enable individuals to assess and evaluate their surroundings. Once they lose these frames, individuals confront the "identity crisis" which equals to a mode of "disorientation".

CHAPTER TWO

AMERICAN IDENTITY: A RETROSPECTIVE HISTORY

American identity refers to a construct that contains qualities with which an American is identified. It exists in many discourses such as politics, history and literature. Of these, history illustrates reflections of American identity more frequently. From the Colonial period to contemporary America, American history refers to a combination of all recorded documents. From Puritanism to postmodern secularism, from multiculturalism to American individualism, American history is a mixture where such unique notions as the American Individualism or the American Exceptionalism are included. In both *The Human Stain* and *Indignation*, Philip Roth uses American history as a reflective force on the characters. Thus, historical periods possess great significance in the lives of the characters. History in Roth's works does not only stand as a combination of past experiences or a chronological document of what transpired in the past; it is, rather, used as a phenomenon that leaves remarkable influence on characters. Characters try to construct authentic identities within these historical realities. In the process of defining themselves, the characters go through a number of experiences that are later recorded in memories. Both books are products of certain historical eras. Like most Americans at the time, Roth's characters are also affected by the magnitude of political or historical happenings in America. Therefore, it is a must to analyze and interpret historical backgrounds in relation to their impact on the authentic and national identities.

Heidi Tarver draws attention to four arguments in the formation of a national identity.

1. National identity is a peculiar kind of collective identity, the product of a complex historical process that also produced the national state which provides its territorial and parameters.

2. National identity is socially constituted through language and through social action.

3. More specifically, national identity is an abstract and symbolically mediated form of self-representation in which the individual imagines him or herself as a member of the "deep horizontal comradeship" of the nation, and it is against this background that other, more specific and often more salient identities are

conceived and definitions of "us" and "them" are articulated. In this respect, the nation constitutes a new paradigm of communitas.

4. National identity is never static, but is continually being reconstructed over time. To borrow Eugene Weber's formulation, national identity is always a work-in-progress (Tarver, 1992: 60-61).

National identity, then, must be regarded as a new formation that shifts prior paradigms. This chapter will demonstrate how, why and when these paradigms shifted in the case of national American identity. The chapter will illustrate the historical processes in which the authentic American identity was shaped and reshaped. In so doing, the relationship between the authentic and collective identities will be analyzed with references to America's political—more crucially—cultural independence from British ancestry.

Initially, the chapter will portray the circumstances in Britain that brought about Puritan settlement in the New World. The experiences that immigrants (pilgrims) went through during and aftermath the journey from Britain to New England area will be analyzed in relation to construction of an American identity.

The chapter will formulate the rhetoric of Puritanism, which will shed light on the roots of authentic American identity. The idea of a "city upon a hill" stands as the leading notion behind American authenticity. Its repercussions in Puritan society created a new social realm in New England.

After Puritanism, the second important stride in the formation of American identity was the American Independence. Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* carries great significance during this time. The ways it upheld individual potential gives clues regarding the roots of American individualism. The chapter will also illustrate why the *Common Sense* should be seen as precedent of the Declaration of Independence.

Next, the concept of American Renaissance will be discussed to illuminate the shift from Puritan principles to a more "self-reliant", independent perception of American identity. In so doing, certain works of Ralph Waldo Emerson will be analyzed to grasp the origins of American Transcendentalism.

Then, the chapter will investigate the American Civil War. The conditions in both the North and the South of America will be demonstrated to give accounts of the precedent dynamics of the war. The Civil War will not only be perceived as a battle between two parties. Its affiliation with racial and later ethnic identities will be pointed

out. The chapter will also help to understand the significance of the historical journey from the Civil War to the Civil Rights Movement. The instances during this period will be dealt with in relation to recognition of ethnic minorities and their group rights.

In the light of these, the chapter will focus on multiculturalism and the politics of assimilation in order to display connections between private and collective identities in 20th century America. These will be analyzed on the basis of three phases put forward by Leslie J. Vaughan's: Anglo-conformity, the melting pot and the cultural pluralism. Following, the chapter will show how politics of multiculturalism failed and attracted a great deal of negative reaction particularly due to the Affirmative Action program, one that aimed to make up for previous injustices. Around the period when multiculturalism began to attract strong criticism, American identity was also affected by the communist threat. This threat caused a fear among citizens and statesmen, which was called the Red Scare.

Finally, the chapter will concentrate on the effects of Red Scare in American society, which solidified initial support for McCarthyism, a program led by Senator McCarthy to eradicate communist threat. It will culminate showing how this program revealed its corrupt nature and harmed the founding principles of American identity such as freedom of speech and individual expression.

2.1. RUPTURE FROM THE FATHER LAND

American history starts with the goal of establishing an authentic identity. With Puritans trying to escape from their British background, American history finds its roots in a struggle to break away from its significant other; in this case, the European (mostly British) ancestry.

The early 17th century witnessed a harsh religious and political oppression in Europe. Certain groups suffered mistreatment by the hegemony. In England, Puritans were those who received such mistreatment due to their religious beliefs. Their belief stood in opposition to the implementations of the Anglican Church, which was the official Church of England. In his book *The Puritan Origins of the American Self*, Sacvan Bercovitch demonstrates Luther's formulations and the Reformers as the origin of Puritanism. He centers the Puritan mind around an internalized journey where

individuals depend on the Bible and the example of Jesus Christ rather than on institutions.

> They (Reformers) identified the temporal hierarchy as the seat of Antichrist and turned instead to the relationship between the believer, *exemplum fidei*, and the community of the elect, the universal society of *exempla fidei*, from Abel through Nehemiah to the present, whose members, perceptible by faith alone, were all one in Christ. In this view, the norms of good life were eschatological, not institutional. Behind every experience of the saint stood Jesus Himself, *exemplum exemplorum* for both the believer and the organic body of believers. The way to salvation lay in an internalized, experiential reliving of His life (Bercovitch, 1975: 10).

The institutionalized religion of the Anglican Church was perceived as corrupt by those rejecting mediation between God and the believer. The hierarchy put forward by the Church was regarded as "Antichrist". This was the main reason why Puritans opted for immigration to the New World. Their initial motive was to purify the Anglican Church; however, this was a failed attempt. Puritans were sentenced to many counter practices such as restrictions and imprisonments. Together with economic difficulties, these led many of them to resort to private companies that sponsored journeys to the New World. For Puritans, the perception was to create a "New Jerusalem" that was pure and free of institutional corruption and "all roads to New Jerusalem led through Great Migration" (Bercovitch, 1975: 57).

The first remarkable group was the one that left Leyden via Virginia Company in 1620 on a ship called the *Mayflower*. On board, they drafted a contract called "The Mayflower Compact", which proposed "just and equal laws" (Bureau of International Information Programs US Department of State, 2011: 13). This group landed in the Plymouth Bay in Massachusetts. The leader of the group was John Winthrop, who was a Puritan lawyer at the time. His famous ideal of a "city upon a hill" marks the beginning of the American perspective because it was one that altered paradigms. Fundamentally, it was a reform, a rebellion to an imposed identity and an assertion of an authentic identity.

Winthrop's term "city upon a hill" can be perceived as reference to many things. First, the New World was regarded as a land of religious freedom. This was striking for those suffering from implementations of the Anglican Church. The idea of immigration was striking for Puritans who saw Winthrop as the "work of God" and

believed that "The destiny of Christ's people was the destiny of mankind" (Bercovitch, 1975: 62). The belief in the need for immigration to the New World was strong because Puritans regarded the new land as the land of the "elect". So dedicated were the Puritans to establish a unique community that they idealized New England as the "holiest country in the world" (Bercovitch, 1975: 57). Parallel to this, Old World beliefs were no longer prevalent in New England area. Rather, New Israelites—people who were allegedly elected by God—would be renewed in New Jerusalem. Thus, a world of new perspectives began when Puritans began to create a unique American identity in New England.

Secondly, the Puritan perception of the New World accounts for a complete separation from former traditions. It is based on complete "newness". Therefore, Puritans named their new land as New England. Also, they called America the New Jerusalem and called themselves the New Israelites. Bercovitch points out the differences of perceptions among colonists. He claims the way Puritans saw the New World was very different from other colonists'.

> *Most dramatically, perhaps, the impact of the Puritans' rhetoric appears in the contrast between their vision of America and that of other New World colonists. All others conceived of their venture as Europeans, in the context of providential history. This is obviously true of the mercantile colonies, like New Sweden and New Amsterdam, whose "newness" meant dependency or at most imitation of the parent country. It is equally true, in an even more revealing way, of the colonies to the South. Like the New Englanders, Maryland and Virginia settlers regarded the continent with a wonder commensurate to the unique prospect before them. […] The Puritans could be just as erotic in their imagery, but they conceived of the American paradise as the fulfillment of scripture prophecy (Bercovitch, 1975: 137)*

It is clear that Puritans upheld the "paradise" as a land of "religious fulfillment". However, to Puritans, New England was not only a place for religious revival but also a place where an authentic identity was being built in culture. Bercovitch mentions the difference of perspectives between the Old South and the New England. He says the Old South "always retained its European cast" with its "romantic medievalism, the nostalgia for and 'organic' agrarianism, the model of the gentleman planter, the reverence for Cavalier fashions" and he argues that such a "myth stood fundamentally opposed to the hermeneutics of the Puritan American identity" (Bercovitch, 1975: 139). This is because the Puritan ideal was based on peculiarity. A Puritan was not a reflection of past but a spark of authentic future.

After the Puritan experience, a major turning point in the formation of American identity is the period of Independence. The authentic identity was enhanced when, in 1774 on the eve of War of Independence, a political theorist named Thomas Paine published a pamphlet called *Common Sense*. Basic predications of this pamphlet were based on the power of individuals and self-sufficiency. Among these was the recognition of the rights of individuals living in the New World colonies. Written in and for the New World colonies, it dealt with the issues of self-government and freedom of the people of American colonies. The pamphlet suggested the New World colonies cannot rely on the English Constitution anymore because this would mean a continuum of the "monarchial" and "aristocratical tyranny" (Paine, 1776: 4). Paine opposed the idea of an absolute monarch. He did not believe that a checking system was working in such systems. He argued the Commons—the system assumed to check the King—naturally proves "that the king is not to be trusted without being looked after; or in other words, that a thirst for absolute power is the natural disease of monarchy" (Paine, 1776: 4). This was a breakthrough that paved way to American democracy.

In this pamphlet, Paine not only focused on the governmental issues but he also elaborated on the necessity of complete separation from England. The separation he mentioned was not only political but also a cultural one. He claimed America had the potential to flourish when it cuts all cords with Europe.

> *I have heard it asserted by some, that as America hath flourished under her former connexion with Great-Britain, that the same connexion is necessary towards her future happiness, and will always have the same effect. Nothing can be more fallacious than this kind of argument. We may as well assert that because a child has thrived upon milk, that it is never to have meat, or that the first twenty years of our lives is to become a precedent for the next twenty. But even this is admitting more than is true, for I answer roundly, that America would have flourished as much, and probably much more, had no European power had any thing to do with her (Paine, 1776: 11).*

The dependency Paine refers to is also economic. A year before he wrote the *Common Sense*, a crisis took place in Boston called the Boston Tea Party. This began when the colonial tea traders were threatened by the monopoly of East India Company, which was related to the British government. According to the British rule, the local tea traders in the colonies were to pay taxes after purchase from the East India Company. When the monopoly became insufferable, the colonial tea traders began to

root for radicals of independence. In most of the ports, agents of the East India Company were "forced to resign" (Bureau of International Information Programs US Department of State, 2011: 57). However, the company was insistent on landing the tea carried by the British ships into Boston port. When they did so, a group of men boarded three of the ships and dumped the tea into the sea.(Bureau of International Information Programs US Department of State, 2011: 57). Initially, this was an economic crisis. However, it solidified the trend for American independence from Britain. People in the colonies became more courageous to challenge the injustices of the parent country and assert their own existence. When certain loyalists—people who favored dependency on the British Crown—voiced economic risks, Paine wrote "The commerce, by which she (America) hath enriched herself are the necessaries of life, and will always have a market while eating is the custom of Europe" (Paine, 1776: 11). This reliance on the free trade in market economy marks the birth of American capitalism.

The British government enacted certain laws which colonists called the "Coercive" and "Intolerable Acts". Their purpose was to punish colonial traders and regain control in the colonies. Independence under these conditions was inevitable in the minds of the people in the Northern colonies. Paine insisted on the necessity of independence to prevent British government from gaining such control and interfering in the freedom of American people. Otherwise, he continued, the situation would go worse and lead to tyranny. It was a point where New England identity could no longer be repressed by British authoritarianism.

> *A government of our own is our natural right: And when a man seriously reflects on the precariousness of human affairs, he will become convinced, that it is infinitely wiser and safer, to form a constitution of our own in a cool deliberate manner, while we have it in our power, than to trust such an interesting event to time and chance. If we omit it now, some Massanello may hereafter arise, who laying hold of popular disquietudes, may collect together the desperate and the discontented, and by assuming to themselves the powers of government, may sweep away the liberties of the continent like a deluge. Should the government of America return again into the hands of Britain, the tottering situation of things, will be a temptation for some desperate adventurer to try his fortune; and in such a case, what a relief can Britain give? Ere she could hear the news, the fatal business might be done; and ourselves suffering like the wretched Britons under the oppression of the Conqueror. Ye that oppose independence now, ye know not what ye do; ye are opening a door to eternal tyranny, by keeping vacant the seat of government (Paine, 1776: 19)*

Thus, the War of Independence literally began with the existence of both loyalists and separatists. To get support for total control over the colonies, the British aimed to use the aforementioned difference of Northern and Southern perspectives. They counted on the Southern colonies because the colonists in the South favored slavery. However, the projected support did not come from the Southern colonies because a "rebellion against the mother country would also trigger a slave uprising" (Bureau of International Information Programs US Department of State, 2011: 60). With the defeat in South Carolina, the British were repulsed. This was literally "a birth of a nation". With the Declaration of Independence and the Articles of Confederation, "unalienable rights" and such notions as popular sovereignty and individual freedom were strengthened. The Treaty of Paris was signed in September 3, 1783, which meant the British recognized the independence and the sovereignty of the thirteen states of America.

During the first Puritan settlements, there was a connection with the British Crown. The colonies were fragmented in terms of ideas and governance. However, the aftermath of Boston Tea Party and the War of Independence proved that each of the thirteen colonies had a common ground for American independence. The notion of "Americanness", thus, should be seen as a product of this period. In other words, with the War of Independence, "Americanness" became a roof over the thirteen colonies, which were previously dissimilar and disintegrated.

This entire process was actually a rebellion to the sanctions imposed on the unique American identity. When colonists got an opportunity, they established a new system in which individuals relied on themselves rather than ancestry. New England's authentic qualities became even more distinct after the War of 1812; a date that must be regarded as the second Independence War. This war cut the cord with British government for good and led many Americans reassert their American identity. This was a war which proved that Americans did not yield to impositions of another—in this case the parent—country. The result of the war basically demonstrated that America was now a self-reliant country.

2.2. AMERICAN CREED: SELF-RELIANCE AND INDIVIDUAL FREEDOM

The notion of "self-reliance" reminds Ralph Waldo Emerson, an eminent figure of American intellectual history, who used this term for both private and collective identities. Emerson's ideas influenced American politics and literature a great deal. He wrote about separation from old traditions and a radical rupture with the past. He led the Transcendentalist movement in literature. The fundamental belief he supported was the unity of man, God and nature. Emerson argued, by relying on the self rather than others' opinions or "self-consistency", anything was possible for man. (Emerson, 1841: 6) In the intellectual sense, he pointed to the innate strength each individual has. In other words, man was the measure of his behaviors, not anyone else. Thus, in asserting oneself, he stressed the significance of non-conformism to impositions of others and society:

> *Whoso would be a man, must be a nonconformist. He who would gather immortal palms must not he hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it he goodness. Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind. Absolve you to yourself, and you shall have the suffrage of the world. I remember an answer which when quite young I was prompted to make to a valued adviser, who was wont to importune me with the dear old doctrines of the church. On my saying, What have I to do with the sacredness of traditions, if I live wholly from within? my friend suggested,--"But these impulses may be from below, not from above." I replied, "They do not seem to me to be such; but if I am the Devil's child, I will live then from the Devil." No law can be sacred to me but that of my nature. Good and bad are but names very readily transferable to that or this; the only right is what is after my constitution, the only wrong what is against it... (Emerson, 1841: 3-4)*

In political sense, it is obvious that Emerson defends complete independence from what he calls as "the sacredness of traditions". Similar to Paine's opposition to "hereditary monarch", this was an era of forsaking *hereditary* practices. For America, this referred to leaving behind ancestral connections with the British culture and forming an authentic identity, because establishment of a new country with unique authentic qualities called for standing against the impositions of the past and outdated traditions. Thus, this was a time when the "American character" stepped on stage.

R.W.B Lewis, in his *American Adam*, introduces the new American character, the American Adam. He defines this new man as "the image of a new radically new personality". The American Adam is "an individual emancipated from history, happily bereft of ancestry, untouched and undefiled by the usual inheritances of family and

race" as well as "an individual standing alone, self-reliant and self-propelling, ready to confront whatever awaited him with the aid of his own unique and inherent resources" (Lewis, 1955: 5). Thus, the American Adam is independent from any historical imprisonment and new in all ways. What he seeks is to invent, reinvent and "create" a "new" identity.

From the first half of the 18th century, the most significant characteristics that shaped the American identity became more and more visible. The new American was self-reliant and self-confident. He was also turning his back on his parent, in this case, Britain. Since Puritans, this had been the most fruitful era in asserting the authentic American identity. This "new man" was "new" in all ways. He could have been conceived as a teenager trying to escape from reflections of the past. The authentic identity that Emerson proposed also gained popularity among other members of society. Members of society adopted this authentic identity in this young nation and pursued self-determination and self-governance. Lewis writes "more vehement patriots even regretted that Americans were forced to communicate in an old, inherited language" (Lewis, 1955: 13). Lewis also tells a story where "a huge crowd of people gathered together on some broad western prairie" so as to "build an immense bonfire: a cosmic bonfire, upon which was piled the entire world's 'outworn trumpery'" (Lewis, 1955: 13). This was a bonfire that melted anything related to America's British past:

> The heraldry of ancient aristocratic families fled the flames to the crowd's mounting enthusiasm; after that came the robes and scepters of royalty; the scaffold and other symbols of repressive institutions; and finally the total body of European literature and philosophy. "Now," declared the chief celebrant, "we shall get rid of the weight of the dead men's thoughts" (Lewis, 1955: 13-14)

Emerson was among the harshest to defend American authenticity. As put before, his proposition of self-reliance not only gained wide acceptance but it also triggered a tendency to uphold "peculiar" American qualities. Initially, these qualities were more reserved to New England and became "American" later on. They were the *Adamic* qualities which centered on 'self' and individual power.

This new culture still thrived on Puritan roots. People who escaped religious oppression by the Anglican Church believed mediation between individuals and God was unfaithful. Thus, they represented a Unitarian belief, in which God and individual was a whole. Emerson builds his ideas upon this belief. He also adds a third significant

element to this unity: Nature. Emerson's Unitarian ideas are sources of what is called the Transcendentalist movement. This movement is also called the "American Renaissance" for a reason: Combining individual, God and Nature, Emerson's Transcendentalism accounts for the core of American identity. The authentic American culture finds its origins on this Unitarian combination. Transcendentalism focuses on the individual potential to make judgments and assessments. In this point of view, individuals are granted strong potential to find and feel God within themselves. The transcendentalist rhetoric also suggests that God can also be found in Nature, of which individuals are conceived as a part. Therefore, there is a cosmic approach in transcendentalism which helps the spiritual fulfillment of individuals.

> *The presence of a higher, namely, of the spiritual element is essential to its perfection. The high and divine beauty which can be loved without effeminacy, is that which is found in combination with the human will. Beauty is the mark God sets upon virtue. Every natural action is graceful. Every heroic act is also decent, and causes the place and the bystanders to shine. We are taught by great actions that the universe is the property of every individual in it (Emerson, 1836: 24).*

This can also be seen as a proof that individuals are strong enough to find God in Nature and it is Nature that provides individuals with such beauty as to lead them onto spiritual realization. In other words, individuals do not need any dependence on another private or institutionalized force for spiritual or divine practices. In "Nature", Emerson also talks about such significant elements as "intellect" and "perfectness" (Emerson, 1836: 28-29). According to him, intellect is a formation that "searches out the absolute order of things as they stand in the mind of God…" (Emerson, 1836: 24). Thus, intellect basically refers to a person's intuition. Therefore, by means of intellect, individuals can appreciate the beauty of Nature and the spirituality it represents.

The ideas Emerson reflected in "Nature" have many reflections on the American cultural identity. The "spirituality" he mentions is about the relationship among God, Nature and Man. He draws attention to individual faculties and the eternal possibilities which belong to human beings. This could be regarded as the essence of the American thought in terms of divine matters. This is also the construct on which the American individualism is built.

It is essential to a true theory of nature and of man, that it should contain somewhat progressive. Uses that are exhausted or that may be, and facts that end in the statement, cannot be all that is true of this brave lodging wherein man is harbored,

and wherein all his faculties find appropriate and endless exercise. And all the uses of nature admit of being summed in one, which yields the activity of man an infinite scope (Emerson, 1836: 76).

Although what Emerson calls "progressive" is related to the individual going beyond prior presumptions, it also refers to building an authentic identity by erasing them. This way, individuals can become free from their past and create their own "present". In so doing, they have no limitations. Their inspiration is never "exhausted". Individual potential is powerful enough to build a brand new way of thinking. This could well be applied to the concept of collective identity. Americans, as citizens of a new-born nation, do not need a significant other to define themselves with. The British roots are what Emerson calls as "exhausted". Accordingly, America as a nation should also use its infinite potential to create an authentic culture. In this creation, American wilderness replaced Britain as the significant other.

2.3. THE FRONTIER AND THE SPIRIT OF CONQUEST

American wilderness is a trademark that helped to shape American identity. In the 19th century, Americans encountered a spacious uncultivated land and defined themselves against this vast wilderness. Geographically, the American identity was shaped in the north of America. Thus, the Northern qualities contributed a great deal to the formation of American identity. However, when the settlements in the North became in order, pioneers—people who tried to civilize the untamed lands toward the West—sought to build settlements over this spacious land. The vastness of the American wilderness, thus, became a defining element in the formation of American identity. The wilderness not only enabled pioneers to discover new lands but it also helped them to broaden their horizon. The newly cultivated lands had distinct qualities which were different from what they had built in New England region. Each undiscovered land kept a secret beyond what was visible. They were basically the "fronts" which helped Americans to construct an authentic identity.

Frontiers are normally defined as borders between lands. In the case of America, though, they were not mere borders but also boundaries that held mysterious possibilities. American frontier was the undiscovered land in the American west. The

reason they are called "frontiers" is because they were basically borders that separated "known" from the unknown. In 19th century, American identity was as mobile as the American boundaries in the west. This was a process of experimentation for the colonists. Those who were pursuing a discovery of undisclosed territories experimented unprecedented incidents, which shaped their identity. The frontiers are almost identical to Winthrop's "city upon a hill" since they both propose new hopes and promises. These two are not only historically significant but they also share a cultural pattern which helped formation of American identity through experimentation. From "city upon a hill" through Transcendentalist experimentation and American frontiers, American identity was always built upon an active process. This shows—as in the concept of identity itself—American identity has always been fluid. In other words, it has never been stagnant. Frederick Jackson Turner sees frontiers as the strongest factor accelerating the process of Americanization. In his "The Significance of the Frontier", Turner elaborates on the connection between frontiers and the newly-established American identity. In his work, he initially states that American reality has always been exposed to radical changes. The changes he mentions are actually breakthroughs in American history.

The peculiarity of American institutions is, the fact that they have been compelled to adapt themselves to the changes of an expanding people - to the changes involved in crossing a continent, in winning a wilderness, and in developing at each area of this progress out of the primitive economic and political conditions of the frontier into the complexity of city life (Turner, 1893: 1)

American social and political life was built upon these adaptations as "The frontier is the most rapid and effective way of Americanization" (Turner, 1893: 2). Turner sees the American frontier as an instrument that creates the precise "American character". Geographically, Turner defines the European frontier as "a fortified boundary line running through dense populations". He states that the American frontier is different from the European frontier since it lied "at the hither edge of free land" (Turner, 1893: 2). This makes the American frontier intertwined with the unknown and vastness and spaciousness. Socially, Turner's definition of the American frontier refers to a "meeting point between savagery and civilization" (Turner, 1893: 2). This is because, unlike the European frontier, the American frontier marked the beginning

of the American wilderness. The further the frontier went, the more it "transformed" wilderness into civilized land. Turner also reveals that the pioneers had to adopt a two-dimensional approach during expansion. On one hand, the American pioneer had to surrender to European roots for civil and industrial development of the uncivilized land. On the other hand, they became obliged to act like a Native (Indian) in order to adapt to a free land that is untamed and uncultivated. Otherwise, the pioneer would "perish". Therefore, the American identity, during westward expansion, was influenced by both European roots and the newly-encountered nativity.

The process of Americanization is not only about cultivating the land. By interaction with the local people in the wild terrains, the pioneers inevitably developed unique personalities. Turner calls them the "frontier characteristics" (Turner, 1893: 3).These are the characteristics evoked in the wilderness. The frontier characteristics also involve those adopted from the Natives. Both private and collective American identities carry huge bits of these frontier characteristics and the frontier experience. This is another force that makes the American identity authentic. In sum, the American identity is composed of both European-based civilization and the Native-based "savagery".

Little by little he (the colonist) transforms the wilderness, but the outcome is not the old Europe, not simply the development of Germanic germs, any more than the first phenomenon was a case of reversion to the Germanic mark. The fact is, that here is a new product that is American. At first, the frontier was the Atlantic coast. It was the frontier of Europe in a very real sense. Moving westward, the frontier became more and more American (Turner, 1893: 2-3).

Turner divides the frontiers into two: The Atlantic (Eastern) and the Western. He defines the Atlantic frontier as European because it has the "complex European life" (Turner, 1893: 4). Thus, there is still an attachment to European roots. The other is the expanding western frontier. Turner suggests that the Western frontier is more American. He interprets the westward expansion as leaving behind the European roots. Therefore, leading from East to the West means not only broadening the edge but also becoming more American because "The true point of view in the history of this nation is not the Atlantic coast, it is the Great West" (Turner, 1893: 2-3). Parallel to this, the frontier experience during westward expansion is the most essential unit in the analysis

of American identity. Turner claims "to study this advance (westward expansion), the men who grew up under these conditions, and the political, economic, and social results of it, is to study the really American part of our history. . . ." (Turner, 1893: 3).

On enumerating certain impacts of the Western frontier on Americans, Turner defines the "formation of a composite nationality" as a result of "immigration to free lands" (Turner, 1893: 5). The immigrants came from a variety of countries to the Wild West as opposed to the first frontier Atlantic, where the majority was English. Such kind of a composite immigrant population can be the first spark of a multicultural American society. It is a society where different groups exist with their unique characters. The authenticity of each group can be regarded as a tremendous force in building an American identity. However, this distinction of qualities among immigrant groups did not create a separation but a unity of national identity. Turner documents the War of 1812 as an incident where North and South became one for the nation despite the separate viewpoints regarding slavery. He writes "the growth of nationalism and the evolution of the American political institutions were dependent on the advance of the frontier" (Turner, 1893: 5). According to this statement, the frontier was more than a symbolic line; it was a discourse which had profound impact on the American political life. Turner claims that this political life and the American legislation developed through "tariff, land and internal improvement", which are basically incidents in the frontier experience (Turner, 1893: 5).

Apart from national and political discourses, Turner takes the frontier to a further point where he associates the frontier with American intellect. He argues that the American intellect owes its existence to the frontier experience which was documented in the works of many travelers.

The result (from the frontier experience) is that to the frontier the American intellect owes its striking characteristics. That coarseness and strength combined with acuteness and inquisitiveness; that practical, inventive turn of mind, quick to find expedients; that masterful grasp of material things, lacking in the artistic but powerful to effect great ends; that restless, nervous energy; that dominant individualism, working for good and for evil, and with all that buoyancy and exuberance which comes with freedom - these are traits of the frontier, or traits called out elsewhere because of the existence of the frontier (Turner, 1893: 9).

These "traits of the frontier" obviously make up a significant part of the American character. From the "dominant individualism" to "individual freedom", the American character possessed certain authentic traits as a result of the frontier experience. In her article "National Identity and the Frontier", Hebe Clementi overviews Turner's work and outlines the notions, on which Turner builds his ideas regarding the frontier process:

> *1. American history has taken its course under the predominant influence of the advance toward the West, owing to the existence of free land.*
> *2. The characteristic property of American institutions is that they have been progressively adapted to the changes in an expanding society.*
> *3. The American frontier is clearly different from a European one. It is not a fortified line on inhabited territory but a vaguely delineated and scarcely populated area (Clementi, 1980: 37).*

The adaptability mentioned here should be viewed in two senses: First is the adaptation to a free land, an uncultivated and scarcely—or not at all— populated areas. The need to provide food for survival forced pioneers to learn how to cultivate land. Also, the pioneers had to understand the ways to survive under harsh weather conditions. Second is the adaptation to local people, who had already inhabited certain areas on the vast American plains. The pioneers had to interact with these people in order to learn how to establish settlements according to the dynamics of the land. Therefore, the frontier experience—with its mobility and spaciousness—left marks on the lives of the pioneers. These marks became defining qualities of the American character. Clementi also discusses the cultural and economic influence of the frontiers on the American character. She defends that the pioneers took initiative in unprecedented circumstances. They adapted themselves to new physical, social and economic conditions, which demonstrated the entrepreneurial spirit in the American character.

> *The mobility of this frontier and its mixed population ensured the formation of a complex nation that under the influence of the environment was able to overcome regional particularism. Hence the most significant consequences of the process are:*
> *a) The key element of the availability of land ensured the harmonious life and the economic potential of the colonies and the nation afterwards.*
> *b) The frontier endowed the institutions with a flexible democratic idio-syncrasy, the egalitarian tendency of which had more to do with the open spaces than with European origins.*

c) Democratic individualism was molded by the initiative and enterprising spirit of the frontiersman (Clementi, 1980: 37-38).

All in all, the impact of the frontier is significant in the analysis of the development of American identity. This part illustrated that the frontier experience was in many ways related to the concept of "city upon a hill". The frontier referred not only to physical borders but to cultural paradigm-shifting experiences. It was mobile going further and further to the West. Also, two frontiers were discussed in their distinctness: the Western and the Eastern frontiers. The Western frontier was defined by the expansion toward the West while the Eastern frontier was characterized by the European qualities such as complexity and dense population. It was argued that the western frontier was immensely different from the eastern frontier in that the former covers both civilized and savage characteristics. This is because the American (western) frontier was at the edge of wilderness whereas the European (eastern) frontier neighbored human populations. The frontier experience played a major role in shaping American identity not only with its individualist and entrepreneurial nature, but also with its national, political and intellectual influence.

2.4. WHERE IS THE FUTURE OF AMERICA?: CIVIL WAR AND EMANCIPATION AND ISSUE OF RACE

The Civil War is another breakthrough in the American history that should be stressed in the process of shaping the American identity. Unlike the frontiers, which singled out an expansion from the East to the West, the Civil War caused economic, social, cultural and political distinctions in the North and the South. The Civil War is not only a military incident between two parties; it basically refers to the separation of ideas regarding the continuum of the nation. On one hand, the North upheld the notion of a strong national federation; on the other hand, the South tried to preserve and uphold such qualities as state rights and complete individual freedom. Thus, the South aimed to continue as a Confederation because a Union would mean dependence on a federal government. They also wanted to retain their right to hold slaves. Thus, the country became strongly divided according to the inclinations of the North and the South. Due to this remarkable distinction, James McPherson thinks the Civil War is

one of the most remarkable events in American historical mind. Moreover, he defines it as the most crucial breakthrough in American history.

The war resolved two fundamental questions left unresolved by the revolution: whether the United States was to be a dissolvable confederation of sovereign states or an indivisible nation with a sovereign national government; and whether this nation, born of a declaration that all men were created with an equal right to liberty, would continue to exist as the largest slaveholding country in the world.[1]

Therefore, the Civil War is a part of American history where the unity of the nation and equality of citizens were in question. In other words, the Civil War was a point where the continuum of the nation was at stake.

Around the mid-19th century, the North had sustainable economic growth that was built upon industrial developments rather than slave-requiring jobs. In the South, however, fieldwork and plantations were major sources of income, which required human labor. This need was met with the slaves brought from various regions of Africa. The process of bringing slaves from Africa to the American land was called 'slave-trade', which caused strong dissatisfaction in the North. Coming to power in 1860, Abraham Lincoln proposed an "abolitionist" agenda. He declared slavery illegal and unconstitutional. The South reacted to this proposition by forming a 'Confederation', which aimed at preserving the right to keep slaves. The disagreement regarding slavery was not the sole but the strongest spark of the American Civil War.

The difference of ideas concerning slavery was not the sole reason but a tipping point leading to the war. The issue of slave-holding was not only an economic but a cultural matter that was associated with regional identity. By abolishing slavery, the North would also break the Southern authenticity, thus control the societal and cultural power in the region. The contradiction was obvious: the 'new' land of opportunities had declared independence emphasizing the right of liberty for all. In the South, though, the situation was the opposite. Slaves were deprived of all kinds of rights as well as their freedom. What was promised by the founding fathers was undermined in the South. Another contradiction was practicing the same tyranny and oppression in the New World that the founding members had suffered in the mother land. These

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[1]James Mcpherson, "A Defining Time in Our Nation's History", 14.10.2018, https://www.battlefields.org/learn/articles/brief-overview-american-civil-war.

contradictions demonstrate a failure in creating a free, independent and authentic American.

The self-attributed American qualities excluded such "outsiders" as slaves. Slaves were not even regarded as 'second-class citizens'. To put in Marxist terms, they were basically perceived as commodities. They were sold and traded. The fundamental reason for this was their racial identity. Anyone who was not white was outside the American mainstream. Thus, they were not "African-American" at the time; they were simply slaves with no identity. The notion that "all men are created equal" was, therefore, at odds with the current situation. This is related to the impact of "American Exceptionalism", which basically refers to the supremacy of American characteristics. Its essence can be found in the dichotomy of "Europe *v* America". American Exceptionalism impacted American politics in broad sense. The agenda of American Exceptionalism created political groups which had separate views in regard to the uniqueness of America. Peter S. Onuf calls members of these groups the "conservative exceptionalists" and "liberal elites". He categorizes these groups according to how they "embrace" American Exceptionalism. The conservative exceptionalists strove to "conserve" the unique American characteristics. For them, these referred to a White Anglo-Saxon Protestant identity. Therefore, the conservatives saw slaves as "forever aliens". He puts what he calls the "liberal elites" in opposition. The "liberal elites", according to Onuf, sought to preserve their supremacy on the political stage, aiming for a "majority minority" country, where there would be clear categorization. However, their categorization welcomed the recognition of the rights of different groups in the nation. Onuf also states that the liberal approach to American past is different from the conservatives in that they believe in the "end of history" (Onuf, 2012: 81). Accordingly, they regarded slaves as "potential citizens".

Conservative exceptionalists have crafted an appealing historical narrative that captures the populist high (or low) ground and justifies mass mobilization against a supposedly engorged federal state, liberal elites, and their diverse, dependent clients. Tea Party patriots do not hesitate to expel their "un-American" enemies from their "imagined community," defining themselves as the "people." They want their "country" back. So do their liberal counterparts, although until recently they have tended to keep quiet, waiting for some crisis to bring the "people" back to their senses

or looking hopefully to population trends that will one day make the United States a "majority minority" country (Onuf, 2012: 78-79).

Therefore, the "conservative exceptionalists" and the "liberal elites" were two remarkable groups in the formation of American identity. While the latter saw America open to change, "a work in progress", the former expelled un-American outsiders in trying to "conserve" the unique American characteristics defined by them (Onuf, 2012: 79). In other words, the conservatives are those who aimed to limit newcomers in the country although they themselves are descendants of immigrants. They are the political group that favored White Anglo-Saxon and Protestant qualities, which later became fundamental criteria for American mainstream. The liberals are also aware of the newcomers from different cultural backgrounds. They also locate themselves in the American mainstream. However they believe in expanding the limits; thus, they are more tolerant to differences in America. However, Onuf claims that despite their differences regarding the American politics, they share a common pattern. Both groups pursued a sense of power and superiority. He argues that both parties are reflections of each other because both groups "exaggerate differences with domestic enemies and seek justifications for their polarized and polarizing positions" (Onuf, 2012: 81). This ideological dilemma makes it difficult to define the American identity.

We might conclude that self-defined conservatives and liberals—these ideological preferences now map onto party preferences—live in different countries altogether. But this is nonsense. Combatants in this latest phase of the "culture wars" are reenacting familiar, hackneyed debates of yesteryear: they depend on, draw inspiration from, and mirror one another (Onuf, 2012: 79).

According to this, no matter what party or idea you support, the common denominator is superiority. Thus, although, in theory, the promise in the foundation is equality for all, in practice, it actually represents superiority over what is outside the mainstream. In America, this is the superiority of majority to minority, white to black, rich to poor, man to woman… This is what American identity is realistically built upon.

In the context of the American Civil War, the aforementioned conservative exceptionalists can be related to the Southern conservatives in that both support a distance from the federal power and assert individual and state authority, namely

superiority of state and people to federation. The Tea Patriots and the liberal elites, on the contrary, are more prone to be associated with Northern progressivists. What they tried to expel out of America did not depend on Americanness. They intended to create a *United* States. Theirs would be a superiority of federation to citizens. Therefore, the inclinations of North and South are not really different from each other: although they had controversy regarding the issue of slave-holding, both sides actually fought for superiority and assertion of its "self" and identity.

The victory of North meant abolishment of slavery and remaining as a "union". The Emancipation Proclamation freed slaves and declared them as free persons. Who were previously African slaves were recognized as free American citizens. As a result, the North validated its cultural leadership. However, the "majority" retained prejudice against people of color. The mainstream American still had to be white, Anglo-Saxon, protestant.

An era of "segregation" began following the end of Civil War. In the South, segregation basically called for separation of blacks and whites in public places. This was solid proof that only by a single race could someone become real American and that was white. Incidentally, if poor, not even Southern white was recognized in the mainstream. The term "white trash" finds its essence in this poverty. In sum, the criteria for the American identity were determined by the cultural leadership of the North.

The impact of the Civil war raised many questions regarding the rights and recognition of minorities, particularly of the African race. The foundation of National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) in 1909 was the most remarkable act of pursuing minority rights and this foundation was going to lead the Civil Rights Movements in 1950s and 1960s. In 20th century, the government of the United States took a number steps against racial prejudice and segregation. The Civil Right Acts of 1957 and 1964 were signed by Presidents Eisenhower and B. Johnson for the purpose of granting equal rights to African-American minorities, who were oppressed and tortured even after Civil War and the Emancipation. These acts should be seen as an apology of the state to minorities. With these acts, the state actually admitted depriving minorities of equal rights. The concept of minority in the aftermath of Civil War and the period until late 1900s referred to racial groups and the biggest

minority at the time were African-Americans. However, due to new waves of immigration from Europe, since the mid-1900s, the focus shifted from racial qualities to cultural backgrounds. Therefore, the concept of race transformed into ethnicity and the discourse of minority began to encompass such ethnic groups as Asians, Hispanics and Jewish. This transformation led to the introduction of multiculturalism in American history.

2.5. XENOPHOBIC AMERICA AND WAR ON ALIENS: THE COLD WAR, RED SCARE, KOREAN AND VIETNAM WARS

Wars hold a particular significance in the shaping of American identity, for the wars America fought had serious impact on American society. Sven Erik Larsen claims as a rule, there is a relationship between wars and identities. He focuses on the significance of "landscape" in the construction of both private and collective identities. He argues the "landscape" becomes meaningful in perception of individuals (Larsen, 2004: 484). To put it more clearly, the landscape on which America fought became meaningful since it symbolized the birth of a nation and an authentic American culture. Thus, the American landscape for both the builders and the current residents of the United States equals to the harsh struggle for American identity. In sum, the American landscape becomes a powerful factor in the definition of American identity on account of the struggle to build a new nation.

In the process of identity construction, not only the individual perceptions towards a landscape but also the experiences that are undergone on it are worth consideration. Domestically, the United States had fought wars with Native Americans and claimed superiority within the American landscape. It also faced a challenge from the British Army in 1812 on its land. World War I eradicated the policy of isolationism that the United States adopted until the 1900s. It is the war when America started to assert dominance in world politics and take initiatives in places other than its landscape. The result of the end of isolationism was the rise of a sense of belonging to a world leading nation in American identity. This consciousness was, however, in no way new because its precedents lay in the idea of Americans as the builders and citizens of "the city upon a hill" which they were very much aware to set as a standard

to the rest of the world. The idea of world leadership was also closely related to the "manifest destiny," for Americans saw themselves as people chosen and ordained by God to civilize the rest of the world.

After the victory of World War I, all subsequent wars—the World War II, the Cold War, the Korean War and the Vietnam War—were related to the Red Scare and American "containment policy". Red Scare arose out of the threat of communism in American society. This fear began in the post-World War II period when the Soviet Union and the United States appeared as two superpowers of the world. Abstaining from the spread of Soviet-communist influence, the United States adopted a national policy to "contain" the prevalence of communism in the world. Consequently, it sent aids to such countries as Greece and Turkey to "resist" the impact of Soviet communism. As well as launching aid programs, the United States also resorted to military actions such as establishing bases loaded with necessary equipment.

Despite the intensity of actions taken on the international level, the United States also implemented certain laws within the country during the presidency of Eisenhower and the duty of Senator Joseph R. McCarthy. Although both were responsible for resisting communism, Senator McCarthy took stronger initiative and implemented highly opposable policies. Thus, the period known as "McCarthyism" began in the 1940s and intensified in the 1950s, when the US fought the Korean War and faced the Cold War. In this period, many people were convicted with communist tendencies. The state applied a policy of "witch hunt" according to which those who expressed certain political preferences were found guilty and sentenced to punishments. James L. Gibson reveals certain incidents during this period.

Not only were the Communist Party U.S.A. and other Communist parties essentially eradicated, but so too were a wide variety of non-Communists. It has been estimated that of the work force of 65 million, 13 million were affected by loyalty and security programs during the McCarthy era (Brown 1958). Brown calculates that over 11 thousand individuals were fired as a result of government and private loyalty programs. More than 100 people were convicted under the federal Smith Act, and 135 people were cited for contempt by the House Un-American Activities Committee. Nearly one-half of the social science professors teaching in universities at the time expressed medium or high apprehension about possible adverse repercussions to them

as a result of their political beliefs and activities (Lazarsfeld and Thielens 1958) (qtd. in Gibson, 1988, 514).

These practices clearly depict the continuum of the "persecuting spirit" in the American identity. They might be viewed as the antecedents of the Puritan marginalization of such groups as the Quakers and American Indians or tradition of social exclusion of such figures as Ann Hutchinson. Therefore, the McCarthyist practices illuminate that the power of the "persecuting spirit" in the American identity did not diminish from the founding fathers till 20th century.

Undoubtedly, these practices are in contradiction with the founding principles of the United States. McCarthyist policies undermined the premises as democracy, equality, individual and political freedom, guaranteed under the Declaration of Independence and the New England tradition. More ironically, McCarthy drew a certain amount of support in American society. Robert Sokol argues McCarthyism is related to a "power orientation". He suggests "the reason for McCarty's support was the existence in all strata of American society of a considerable amount of felt power deprivation" (Sokol, 1968: 444-445). According to Sokol, "Individuals who prefer change in the national power structure, who are more class conscious, less politically efficacious, and more intolerant of ambiguity, tend to be more pro-McCarthy in contrast to their corresponding opposites" (Sokol, 1968: 447).

Ironically, Sokol's thesis demonstrates yet another dichotomy in the American identity: despite boasting leadership of the world as a nation, the typical American citizen felt profound doubts about his and his nation's power. Torn between the appearance of power and a deep-seated inner powerlessness, between democratic principles of equality and freedom and a "persecuting spirit," Americans found themselves in strong dilemmas that beset their identity formation.

Such a dilemma is embedded in the creative academic spirit in the midst of the oppressive political atmosphere of the 1950s. According to Irving Louis Horowitz, 1950s was a time of academic creativity and "a flowering of culture unmatched by any other decade of the twentieth century" (Horowitz, 1996: 103). However, the most intense McCarthyist implementations were also observed during this period. Thus, these implementations transformed the aforementioned academic creativity to "academic insularity" and "an amazing outpouring of talent" in 1950s. Horowitz

explains that the communist threat, the major reason for the outbreak of McCarthyism, was real not only for conservatives but also for socialists.

The real split, the key schism, was the threat, actual or alleged, posed by communism. It is the decision on this question that either silenced or mobilized individuals in their attitudes toward McCarthyism. The postwar ruthlessness of Stalinism, the quick reduction of Poland, Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, and above all Czechoslovakia, had a postwar impact on American consciousness similar to the earlier subjugation of Western Europe by the National Socialists. The war aims of the democracies were thwarted by the consequences of the peace. Europe was redivided into free and totalitarian portions rather than resurrected whole from the economic and political rubble of the war. And the socialists no less than the conservatives sensed the threat of the Soviet Union to free societies (Horowitz, 1996: 104-105).

However, the end of McCarthysim came when it "sought bigger game to bag, or rather larger fish to fry" with "overenthusiasm" and the manipulation of granted power (Horowitz, 1996: 105):

When McCarthy and his cluster of supporters shifted gears from a consensual struggle against communism to populist struggle against capitalism and went after America's political and military institutions, he and his followers elicited reaction from critical actors in the political process that forced a halt to and even eliminated McCarthyism" (Horowitz, 1996: 105).

This is an example of the relationship between American ideals and the public support. When McCarthy was believed to be struggling with an actual communist threat, he gained public support. When he was perceived to be a "power trip" and extort individual freedom, he drew public reaction. What is more, the shift in the public support also exposes that although the American individual condemns an act of interference in individual freedom, the American state might deliberately restrict this freedom. Therefore, under certain circumstances, the private and collective identities might be at odds.

The roots and sources of American identity are based on historical happenings. Major turning points in American history from the settlement of Puritans to the War of Independence, Civil War and consecutive wars and movements such as Transcendentalism, and concepts such as Manifest Destiny have left their marks on

the formation of the American identity. Geographically, the beginnings of American traditions are found in New England. Therefore, the experiences of the colonial period in this region had immense impact on the shaping of American identity. As well as the reasons for settlement in the New World, the colonial influence on New England society was analyzed in terms of identity construction. Puritanism is not only opposed to institutionalization of religion but it also stood against limitations of the past. This became more apparent at the time of Thomas Jefferson, who upheld the *American* identity and proposed cutting cords with British roots. Like Winhtrop, he also saw the new land as one on which the new American society would thrive. Thus, separation from Britain was not only a physical but also a cultural reality.

Second, Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* was a driving force behind the *Declaration of Independence* and the formation of American identity. It emphasized individual potential and self-sufficiency that is possessed by each member of society. *Common Sense* also underlined the authenticity on the New World and the need to be independent from any other country. Accordingly, its proposition to create an authentic American identity also meant a separation from Britain, America's biggest "significant other."

Third, Ralph Waldo Emerson's notion of "self-reliance" served as the foundation of Transcendentalism, where individual, nature and God were seen as parts of the same cosmic world. Transcendentalism was crucial in the formation of American identity not just because it concentrated on the impact of nature, but also because it strengthened the foundation of American individualism, self-reliance and individual authenticity.

Next, the frontiers are related to the "Manifest Destiny", a divine duty to establish settlements in the undiscovered and uncultivated lands and to convert "savages" into Christianity. However, frontiers did not only carry religious significance. In the formation of American identity, frontiers meant flexibility. It involved "radical changes" and adaptations to any kind of unprecedented conditions. The authenticity of the American frontier is parallel to its difference from the European frontier: The former was at the edge of wilderness while the latter neighbored human populations.

Also, the American Civil War is not only to a military incident but to a cultural, political and economic controversy between the North and the South. The Civil War is a point of failure in the construction of American identity following the break from British influence. Although the essence of the war appears to be related to distinct perceptions of slavery, such problems as economic inequality, cultural and regional differences and dissimilarity toward governmental issues also contributed to the outbreak of the war. With the defeat of the South, the nation seemed to become the "United" States. However, fractures continued to exist in other forms at the end of the Civil War when racial segregation dominated American social life. African identity, albeit freed from slavery, was perceived as inferior to that of the mainstream White-Anglo-Saxon-Protestants. These new forms of racial oppression prepared the grounds for the Civil Rights Movement, a movement to resist racial prejudice and malpractices against African Americans. During this period, the state enforced certain laws to "correct the wrongs" of the state.

Although the Civil Rights movement was particularly about the civic rights of African Americans, it created an awareness of ethnic and cultural diversity. Consequently, other minorities such as Asian, Hispanic and Jewish Americans voiced their will for recognition. This led the state to adopt an agenda of multiculturalism, a policy controversial to many. In analysis of American multiculturalism, Leslie J. Vaughan's phases of Anglo-conformity, the melting pot and cultural plurality were referred to. Anglo-Americanism did not really recognize minority rights. What is more, it ignored the existence of different ethnicities in the United States. Anglo-conformity was based on "descent"; thus many devices of Americanization were implemented by the state. The notion of melting pot is connected with the assimilationist practices. It aimed at eliminating ethnic and cultural differences under the umbrella of Americanness. The assimilation of individual and group differences was the core target in the melting pot. The concept of cultural plurality did not strive to eliminate individual or group difference. It aimed to preserve a person's "nationality". According to this notion, the state had to accept existence of ethnic dissimilarity and recognize rights of every group.

The strongest reaction and criticism towards multiculturalism came with the Affirmative Action programs, which were implemented to compensate for previous

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injustices toward racial and ethnic minorities. These criticisms focus on three viewpoints. First, affirmative action was flawed because it defined race as a factor according to which political regulations should be made. This was at odds with the importance of "merit" in business or education. Those who did not have what it took would secure positions only because of their race. The second base of criticisms was on the political sphere. It was argued that the Affirmative Action programs produced "loyal political supporters" who would not object to any malpractice of managerial divisions. The final viewpoint was the overextension of this program. It was claimed that as long as the program was limited to African-Americans, it bore no disruption. However, when other ethnicities were involved in the program, this created a counter-discrimination against whites as they would become sole disadvantaged group.

Finally, wars had an effect on the construction of American identity. While the First World War was the initial attempt of self-assertion in international affairs, following wars were related to Red Scare, which meant a fear of communist threat in the United States. Within this period, Senator McCarthy played a crucial role in shaping American politics towards the challenge of communism. Thus, it was named a period of "McCarthyism". Although McCarthy set out to eradicate the communist threat in America, the period eventually turned into a "witch hunt". With many instances of unfair trials and wrong accusations, McCarthyist policies brought a great deal of political and academic dissolution. The end of McCarthyism came when it set off controlling political and military institutions.

2.6. THE FACE OF MULTICULTURAL AMERICA

Multiculturalism is a discourse that gained fame in the United States in the 20th century, when minorities began to voice their will for equal recognition and equal civil rights. Basically, multiculturalism refers to the recognition of the existence of different cultures in a society. It underlines granting equal social rights to minority groups in a country. Diversities are recognized rather than eradicated in a multicultural society. In discussing the question of multiculturalism and its visible impact on the American society, Douglas Hartman and Joseph Gerteis put forward a systematic analysis of the issue by comparing different approaches to the subject matter. In analysis of

diversities, they mention "visions of difference" in two dimensions. First is the "cultural" dimension which is connected to the "basis for social cohesion" and the second is the "relational" dimension related to the "basis for social association":

> On the first dimension, theories of difference specify different cultural bases for cohesion, the legal or moral foundations for order and justice. Some insist that shared substantive bonds and practices are necessary for the maintenance of social cohesion. Others see this as impractical or undesirable and instead see shared norms or adherence to common legal codes as sufficient. This same distinction may also be cast in terms of "thick" and "thin" forces of cohesion. The more substantive conception of moral bonds provides for a thick form of solidarity, as order here would rest on deeply shared substantive commitments. Thick visions emphasize the need for commonality, shared lifestyles, values, mutual recognition, and understanding. By contrast, the thinner visions accept that different values, commitments, and practices will remain but propose that shared procedural rules in the forms of norms or laws can provide a shell adequate to maintain social order even in the face of deep moral divisions. In highly differentiated societies, unitary values or moral commitments may be impossible or undesirable, yet social solidarity may be maintained by common adherence to procedural rules that guide interactions and facilitate broader collective endeavors. Here, individuals and groups remain orderly and respectful based less on what they concretely share in terms of lifestyles or values and more on respect for abstract legal and political process or on more immediate procedural norms of interaction. The second dimension concerns the basis for association. This dimension indicates the social or relational basis for order in the visions of difference. Claims about difference and multiculturalism vary in their understanding of how interactions among and between individuals, groups, and the nation provide a basis for stability and social order in a diverse context. Here, the core distinction is between visions that propose that the basis for social association is individual interactions and those that suggest a more central role for groups. In the more liberal-individualist orientations, the individual human actor appears more or less directly in society. Other theories point to groups as occupying a key mediating position between the individual and society. In such claims, social groups-racial, religious, or other kinds are a primary basis on which identities are formed and social order built. Order at the societal or national level is thus constituted in and through the relation of these groups. Membership in the social whole, to the extent that it is seen as important to an individual's identity at all, is filtered through the particularizing lens of group membership. (222-223)

In sum, the "cultural" dimension has two sub-dimensions for "social cohesion": the "thick" and the "thin" forces. The former proposes "shared substantive bonds and practices" while the latter views "adherence to legal codes" as adequate. The second is the "relational" dimension that highlights group and individual differences on which social identities are formed. Thus, multiculturalism not only impacted collective American identities but it also shaped individual identities emphasizing differences and peculiarities of certain people and minorities. Although the theory of Hartman and

Gerteis portray the dynamics and cultural basis of a multicultural society, it fails to demonstrate actual practices in the case of the United States. About this, Leslie J. Vaughan divides American politics of identity in the 19th and 20th century into three categories: Anglo-conformity, the melting pot and cultural pluralism (Vaughan, 1991: 448-449).

According to Vaughan, Anglo-conformity is strongly related to a nationalist— or nativist—agenda and it has a racial connotation. It aims at "imagining an unbroken line of continuity between the culture of first English settlers and that of the nineteenth century" (Vaughan, 1991: 449). To do this, many devices of Americanization (actually Anglo-Americanization) were implemented by the state. One of these is Theodore Roosevelt's "citizenship training" programs which instructed "the duties of patriotism required giving up all other loyalties - those of class, ethnic group or national origin - to those of America itself" (Vaughan, 1991: 448).Thus, the ethnic immigrant policy of the United States during this period intended to create a homogenous society where "Anglo-Americanness" was the target.

In analysis of the politics of identity, Vaughan resorts to Werner Sollors's terms of "consent" and "descent". His use of "descent" is about the impact of ancestral roots in the construction of identity whereas "consent" refers to a person's individual will for the same construction. Vaughan suggests that the Anglo-conformist view saw the English (Anglo) descent as prerequisite of "Americanness" because it sought to create a homogenous society where no ethnic identification was tolerated. Thus, in this phase, the heritage of different minorities was denied in American identity. In other words, racial and ethnic definitions were not acknowledged in this view because only the Anglo-American ancestry was worth regard.

The political device to cope with ethnic diversities in America was assimilation, which is a direct challenge to individual and group differences. It aims to eliminate diversities and ignores individual and group rights. Jack Citrin and his colleagues see multiculturalism as a key to resist assimilationist forces. They suggest the older politics of liberalism is no longer viable in asserting individual and group differences. They also frame a binary opposition where multiculturalism took over American liberalism. They propose that "Sparked by the civil rights movement and fuelled by the influx of immigrants from Latin America and Asia, multiculturalism has

emerged to challenge liberalism as an ideological solution for balancing unity and diversity in America" (Citrin, 2001: 247). Here, liberalism should not be seen as a kind of economic policy or strategy. Rather, it refers to individual freedom and social liberties that were promised in the Declaration of Independence. Citrin and his team suggest that for the supporters of multiculturalism, the politics of liberalism is no longer adequate in recognition of individuals with different cultural backgrounds:

> *Proponents of multiculturalism hold that, membership in a 'societal culture' with its own language and history is necessary for the individual's dignity and self-realization. They are convinced that 'the universal, individual rights promised by liberalism are insufficient protection for the survival of minority cultures. [...] Minority cultures need special recognition and group rights to withstand the forces of assimilation that undermine the sense of identity (Citrin et al., 2001: 247).*

In the sense of identity politics, the assimilation mentioned here is related to Vaughan's second category of "melting pot", which had its debut in 1903 in one of Israel Zangwill's plays. Then, it became a metaphor for the elimination of differences in minorities and sharing a common denominator based on mainstream American values. In other words, all group differences were to "melt" in a "pot" that served to uphold a sole American identity. However, although used to refer to group differences, the "melting pot" was also related to abolishing individual differences. In his review of Waldemar Ager's *On the Way to the Melting Pot*, Solveig Zempel quotes Ager's words on this exact phenomenon:

> *First, they (immigrants) stripped their love for their parents, then they sacrificed their love for the one they held most dear, then the language they had learned from mother, then their love for their childhood upbringing, for God and Man, then the songs they learned as children, then their memories, then the ideals of their youth – tore their heritage asunder little by little... Thus, they readied themselves for the melting pot's last great test (qtd. in Zempel, 1997: 112).*

Thus, unlike the first phase of Anglo-conformity, the melting pot highlights the "consent" of individuals. However, the premise of this quote reminds Taylor's significant others and their rejection might lead to many tragedies in a person's lifetime. As mentioned in Chapter I, significant others do not only refer to parents or family but each remarkable component in a person's heritage such as school, language and a person's own history.

Although politics of melting-pot multiculturalism upheld bringing different cultures together in a "pot", it does not promise their co-existence. On the contrary,

the politics of the melting pot require forsaking any ethnic or cultural identity in order to become a true "American". Vaughan refers to Theodore Roosevelt's 1915 speech where he says "The only man who is a good American is the man who is an American and nothing else." In the light of this, she accounts various assimilationist practices in America:

> *Voiced by a wide range of spokespersons, from Mary Antin to Frances Kellor to Woodrow Wilson, many assimilationists sought to quell extremist preparedness sentiments and ethnocentrism by appealing to what was common to Anglo-Americans and the new Americans, often in terms reminiscent of the nativists. Antin, for example, defended the new immigrants by arguing, "We're hard working, clean, upstanding, but humble recruits for democracy." Others insisted on forced assimilation and Americanization. One preparedness expert, for instance, argued that military service was the only way to "yank the hyphen out of the Italian Americans" and other "imperfectly assimilated" immigrants (Vaughan, 1991: 450).*

Thus, although Vaughan posits Anglo-conformism and the melting pot as subsequent phases, they share a common denominator: forsaking private identities and becoming integrated with a supreme collective identity. However, Vaughan also argues that while Anglo-conformism related to racial otherness, the melting pot was "less racial than geographic" (Vaughan, 1991: 450). This means that the melting pot dealt more with the cultural background while Anglo-conformity related to the racial descent of individuals.

Vaughan's third category of American politics of identity is cultural pluralism, in whose analysis she resorts to the Jewish-American scholar, Horace Kallen's article of "Democracy *versus* the Melting Pot". She argues Kallen's notion of America consisted of a "heterogeneous and fundamentally *unmeltable* whole" (Vaughan, 1991: 451). This is parallel to the idea of "Salad Bowl" according to which American identity incorporates a cultural mosaic where each group or minority exists with their own ethnic heritage free of assimilationist forces. In his article, Kallen shows "Anglo-Americanization" as "the fusion of the various bloods, and a transmutation by 'the miracle of assimilation' of Jews, Slavs, Poles, Frenchman, Germans, Hindus, Scandinavians into being similar in background, tradition, outlook, and spirit to the descendants of the British colonists, the Anglo-Saxon stock" (Kallen, 1915: 192). He traces the roots of Anglo-American "standardization" of American ethnicity back to the time when "French and Germans in Louisiana and Pennsylvania remained at home; but the descendants of the British colonists trekked across the continent" establishing

"ethnic and cultural standards for the whole country" (Kallen, 1915: 192). Kallen argues that in order to reach these standards, immigrants in America go through four stages:

> *In the first phase they exhibit economic eagerness, the greed of the unfed. Since external differences are a handicap in the economic struggle, they "assimilate", seeking thus to facilitate the attainment of economic independence. Once the proletarian level of such independence is reached, the process of assimilation slows down and tends to stop. The immigrant group is still a national group, modified, sometimes improved, by the environmental influences, but otherwise a solitary spiritual unit, which is seeking to find its way out on its own social level. This search brings to light permanent group distinctions, and the immigrant like the Anglo-Saxon American is thrown back upon himself and his ancestry. Then a process of dissimilation begins. The arts, life, and the ideals of the nationality become central and paramount; ethnic and national difference change in status from disadvantage to distinctions. All the while the while the immigrant has been using the English language and behaving like an American in matters economic and political; and continues to do so. The institutions of the Republic have become the liberating cause and the background for the rise of cultural consciousness and social autonomy of the immigrant Irishman, German, Scandinavian, Jew, Pole, or Bohemian (Kallen, 1915: 218-219).*

Hence, true "Americanization" is not the one that "represses" nationality but the one that "liberates" it. Kallen suggests writers of the Declaration of Independence did not face "the practical fact of ethnic dissimilarity among the whites of the country". However, "Their descendants are confronted by it" (Kallen, 1915: 219). He adds that the existence of such pluralism are requirements of the American state which was founded on democratic principles. This kind of Americanization—a formation where various ethnicities co-exist—is the ideal type in terms of recognition of minorities and their rights. It is the basis of American cultural plurality and the Salad Bowl.

Kallen draws significant attention to Jews among other immigrant groups. He says Jews are different from other group in that they did not come from a native country where they could practice their own cultures. They came from "lands of sojourn, where they have been for ages treated as foreigners, semi-citizens, subject to disabilities and persecutions" (Kallen, 1915: 218). Thus, more prone to embrace integration with American identity, Jews made "conscious and organized efforts" to fulfill all kinds of requirements for American citizenship attaining success in "eliminating external differences between themselves and their social environment" (Kallen, 1915: 218). Jews showed the strongest "consent" in the process of Americanization.

The problem, however, begins when this process is complete and the Jew has fully adopted the American identity. Kallen argues "once the Jewish immigrant takes his place in our society a free man and an American, he tends to become all the more a Jew" and "the cultural unit of his race, history and background is only continued by the new life under the new conditions" (Kallen, 1915: 218). This causes an identity crisis as the person becomes torn between the old and new components of identity. This crisis is inevitable as "the most eagerly American of the immigrants groups is also the most autonomous and self-conscious in spirit and culture" (Kallen, 1915: 218). Once the groups attain a place in the American mainstream, its old and young members might find themselves in the middle of a dilemma: sticking with conventional Jewish way of life and adapting to a brand new American lifestyle. This produces both familial and cultural crisis.

Anglo-conformity, melting pot and cultural pluralism represent different ways of approaching the ethnic and racial minorities in the United States. Each has attracted a wide range of criticism both from academics and members of society. However, the biggest reaction to practices of multiculturalism came with the Affirmative Action, which is an American policy that came out in the second half of the 20th century. Affirmative Action refers to providing social advantages for groups that previously suffered from racial, ethnic or gender inequality. It is a political attempt to overcome prior injustices that were implemented, allowed or tolerated by the state. The two areas where Affirmative Action was most prevalent around the 1990s were business—employment and academia—education. Although the beginning of the program aimed to bring up equal opportunities for diverse social groups in the United States, the final phase of the American Affirmative Action would point to a mass of negative reactions from various groups. These reactions would circle around three viewpoints. First, the program was naturally discriminative as it draws clear lines among races and ethnicities. Second, the program caused many to change their political stands, damaging the nature of political correctness. Third, although the program was initially launched to compensate racial inequalities implemented towards the African Americans, it produced a "me-too" effect among other social and ethnic groups.

Although Affirmative Action encompasses different social groups, it has almost always been associated with the notion of race. This is the reason behind the

strong criticism in American society because affirmative action puts race as a distinct factor according to which regulations should be made. Christina Reyna et al. categorize the grounds on which the opponents and proponents raise their arguments related to the Affirmative Action. She says the opponents think the Affirmative Action is "fundamentally flawed because it prioritizes group membership over merits" (Reyna et al., 2005: 669). She mentions the ill-practice of Affirmative Action policies that grant advantage to members of minorities that do not possess what it takes to secure a position in business or education. Reyna suggests "If people believe that ethnic minorities who benefit from Affirmative Action are less capable, less hard working, and thus less qualified than Whites," then "they may perceive any policy that gives opportunities to these groups as violating merits" (Reyna et al., 2005: 670). However, "even those who score higher on measures of racism will be moved to support affirmative action policies that are framed in terms of merit" (Reyna et al., 2005: 670). Thus the variable that shapes public support for affirmative action is "merit."

Another ground on which the affirmative action policies drew reactions was that they were implemented to create "loyal political supporters", variably referred to as "political pork" (Jeffrey, 1997: 233). According to this, both Republicans and Democrats sought to gain support in American politics, which brought about "political fraud".

Raymond S. Franklin handles the issues of affirmative action from a different viewpoint. Franklin suggests what brings affirmative action under question is the "me-too" effect, in which all other ethnic groups than the African Americans request the same recognition of their "ethnic selves" (Franklin, 1998: 44). However, according to Franklin, "the unique experience of African-Americans and the need for reparations, require that affirmative action programs be kept relevant to African Americans and African Americans only" (Franklin, 1998: 44). The "unique experience" he mentions refers to "cultural genocide, the systematic destruction of black expression in the US" (Franklin, 1998: 45). When the "me-too" effect begins, every group is given priority, which this time marginalizes such groups as white, male, Anglo-Americans. Thus, it becomes difficult for these groups to benefit from the same opportunities provided for different social groups. Consequently, this becomes a counter-discrimination.

CHAPTER THREE

THE DISCONTENTS OF AMERICAN IDENTITY POLITICS: ROTH'S *THE HUMAN STAIN* AND *INDIGNATION*

3.1 PHILIP ROTH: AN AUTHOR WITHOUT TITLES

Philip Roth's fiction demonstrates the discontents with American identity. Despite emerging from Jewish-American tradition, Roth does not confine himself to the particularities of Jewish minority. His fiction eradicates the qualities imposed on the Jewish American tradition. Whether Jewish or not, Roth contemplates the failure of establishing a unique identity within the constraints of social, cultural and political hegemony. Roth's protagonists frequently seek to transcend boundaries established by both the mainstream and the minorities in American society. Moreover, he illustrates the frictions between the self and "significant others". The father, for instance, as a representative of these borders, is a motif that not only symbolizes one's descent (as in one's past) but also connotes patriarchal norms. Thus, quarrels with fathers refer to discontents in both private and collective identities. While the father figure reflects an individual's descent, it may also refer to political and historical ancestry. For America, the "father" refers to the British past and previous traditions. These are the social, cultural and political traditions out of which America strove to create a new nation. However, this new formation culminated in certain challenges and contradictions. For instance, while Americans opposed the idea of Britain as the "father", they called the colonizers "the founding fathers". Thus, the contradiction in American social life was already present during foundation.

The discontents in the American politics and the failures in creating unique identities are also reflected in historical breakthroughs. In American history, these were the points where America becomes involved in wars. The discontents and failures became even more visible in the aftermath of these wars. The repercussions of the results of these wars did not only influence American social and political life but they also had immense impacts on private and collective identities. For instance, American paranoia is a product of the wars involved. These wars not only produced phobias but created social and cultural trends that shaped American identity. The conditions of individual freedom and freedom of speech also carry traces of these wars. For instance,

while the Independence War was fought to assert American individual freedom, the aftermath of the WWII explicitly impeded free speech. Most crucially, the place of minorities and the recognition of the rights of these minorities were determined by the effects of these wars. Thus, wars had remarkable impacts on the private and collective identities in America. Specifically, the World War II has a profound impact in the formation of a Jewish-American identity. With the memories of the Holocaust following the WWII, whether undergoing the same tragedy in America became a real concern among the Jewish minority. This is why Jewish minority always sought a secure place in American society by pursuing "decent citizenship" and with hard work that contributed to the advancement of American economy, Jewish people showed exemplary "consent" to be integrated and they were called the "model minority" in American society. As strong as the consent was, it brought certain challenges.

The overall identity crisis among individuals, families and society is the major theme in Roth's *The Human Stain* (2000) and *Indignation* (2008). Therefore, it is a must to analyze and interpret the social, cultural, political and historical happenings in these books to better understand the connection between identity politics and the discontents of private and collective identities. In so doing, the chapter will be formulated in two sections: First, Philip Roth's place in American letters and other Jewish-American authors will be discussed in order to shed light on his own position as an author who has to negotiate the constraints of both mainstream American culture with those of his Jewish culture as he criticizes both. Second, Roth's *The Human Stain* and *Indignation* will be analyzed in conjunction with such parameters as the father figure, passing, race, life and death, and subconscious. Both books are products of a struggle for the formation of a unique identity, where the protagonists fail to create an authentic identity by erasing traces of their pasts. The denial of a person's—or a country's—past almost always culminates in tragedies. Just like America, Coleman Silk and Marcus Messner build their identities upon the rupture with their pasts. That is why, Coleman and Marcus, face tragic ends in the American social and political life and their deaths equal to the demise of the American character.

Philip Roth is a Jewish-American writer who "burrowed deep into the Jewish psyche, fusing it with an unquenchable libido and a stiff-necked refusal to let anyone tell him who he should be and what he should write" (Alterman, 2018: 6). He is a

productive author who did not refrain from revealing all sides of Jewish social and political life. Unlike Bernard Malamud, who is famous for attributing extraordinarily positive qualities to Jewish society, Roth demonstrates that Jews can become as corrupt as a mainstream American. He does not believe in the eternal "innocence" of any race or ethnicity as a whole. In his *Reading Myself and Others*, he writes:

> For Malamud, generally speaking, the Jew is innocent, passive, virtuous, and this to the degree that he defines himself or is defined by others as a Jew; the Gentile, on the other hand, is characteristically corrupt, violent, and lustful, particularly when he enters a room or a store or a cell with a Jew in it. [2]

This binary opposition is also reflected in Jack Miles's "A Gentile Philip Roth". Miles agrees that not every Jew is as "innocent" as what Malamud describes. He writes "no one like me in ethnicity or religion or education ever is innocent, passive, virtuous, idealistic, etc".[3] With these in mind, Roth does not present Jewish people as innocent. For Roth, it is only illogical to put labels, positive or negative, on a group as a whole. He not only reveals contradictions and social sanctions of the mainstream in American society but he also explains the insensible expectations and practices of Jewish parents and community. Robert M. Greenberg suggests "Roth's frustration with his subcultural position as a Jew in American society is, in many way, the irritant that produces his fiction" (Greenberg, 1997: 487). Roth's "irritation", Greenberg continues, is not merely a resistance to mainstream values but it is "determined by his position in Jewish-American culture—by his embroilment in and rebellion against the world of his parents" (Greenberg, 1997: 187). This rebellion manifests itself—as in every work of Roth—in both *The Human Stain* and *Indignation*. Both protagonists are presented in a situation where they have different worldviews from their parents, particularly from the fathers. Timothy L. Parrish alleges that Roth also differs from Saul Bellow, another prominent figure in Jewish-American literature. He points out that Bellow's characters "take their 'Jewishness' for granted" while Roth's characters "understand their Jewishness in secular terms and as the consequences of their unabashedly American selves" (Parrish, 2004: 424). Roth's method to process such rebellions and to communicate them to the reader is to use an alter-ego mostly one that

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[2] Philip Roth, *Reading Myself and Others*, 1975, https://books.google.com.tr/boo-ks?id=5jWBEUGIWa0C&printsec=frontcover&dq=Roth+Reading+Myself+and+others+pdf+google+books&hl=tr&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwjchs2urYTgAhXLhKYKHYDTCUYQ6AEIKDAA#v=onepage&q=Roth%20Reading%20Myself%20and%20others%20pdf%20google%20books&f=false

[3] Jack Miles, "A Gentile's Philip Roth", 2018, https://www.commonwealmagazine.o-rg/gentile%E2%80%99s-philip-roth

is named Nathan Zuckerman, a character that Roth used in eleven of his books, one of which is *The Human Stain*.

> *Roth's novels are narrated through a dizzying array of fictional proxies, including the most frequently recurring Zuckerman, as well as the personas of Alex Portnoy, David Kepesh, Peter Tarnopol and Mickey Sabbath. But he also wrote five books about Philip Roth, who both was and was not a recognisable self-portrait. In* Operation Shylock, *a fictional real Philip Roth confronted a fictional counterfeit Philip Roth in a vertiginous game about the nature of identity. Whatever name he gave his alter egos, Roth also always gave them his caustic, searching humour, the propulsive energies of rage and an unmistakable exultation in the power of language.[4]*

Therefore, Roth's use of alter-egos, including his own fictional "self", depends on chaotic but detailed and wise representations of actions. In *The Human Stain*, Zuckerman writes a significant book, filling the holes in Coleman's life and directs them to the reader. Namely, Zuckerman "reconstructs" Coleman's reality.

Roth's talent and productivity in writing fictions of Jewish characters emerge from his inner transgression. He discards the limits of identity drawn by the moral majority. While Roth's characters struggle to go beyond the social classifications, so does his writing technique. Roth does not always follow a chronological or a linear line of actions in his books. He dives deep into the worlds of characters by flashbacks and flash-forwards. Roth's fiction does not celebrate the integrity of actions. His narrative technique—like the concept of identity—is fluid. Like the American kaleidoscope, Roth's characters and their actions are in and out of literary boundaries.

Roth's Jewish characters try to lead their lives outside the social impositions and boundaries. This way, they pose a threat to American society by trying to escape from their adjudicated places and reposition themselves. For instance, by passing Coleman plays with the color line, thus poses a threat to racial categorization. Likewise, Marcus tries to lead an independent life fleeing from his Jewish identity, thus threatening the ethnic classifications. In so doing, Roth and his protagonists demonstrate that identity is not a static but a fluid discourse. They eradicate the roles attributed by the mainstream. However, Roth's characters cannot handle such transcendence by themselves. Instead, they "seek in the Other's mettle the courage to transcend the limitations that would have realistically been largely an element of their

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[4]   Sarah   Churchwell,   "How   Philip   Roth   Wrote   America",   2018, https://www.theguardian.com/books/2018/may/26/how-philip-roth-wrote-america

own imaginations" (Tenenbaum, 2006: 35). Coleman and Marcus are aware that as long as they are stuck with the imposed racial and ethnic identities, it is impossible to move forward. Thus, they choose to reinvent themselves, rejecting the impositions. Consequently, they face repercussions of this search. The need for an "Other" in the American mainstream complicates the characters' journey even more. They are punished for disrupting the social categorization established by the moral majority.

3.2 *THE HUMAN STAIN*: GIVE ME MY "RAW I"

The Human Stain is the last piece of Roth's American trilogy, which includes two other books: *American Pastoral* and *I Married a Communist*. Coleman Silk, the protagonist in *The Human Stain*, is a retired classics professor of Athena College, who was also the dean of faculty for sixteen years. Coleman's story begins with a linguistic irony: Being a classics professor who excels at Latin and Greek and teaches European literature, Coleman is charged with racism for outpouring an offensive word, "spooks" intended for the absence of two students who happen to be female African-Americans. What makes the situation even more ironic is that Coleman is actually an African-American, who passes as a white Jew.

Passing, in Coleman's case, is a voluntary act. Just like the newborn nation of America in the 17th and 18th centuries, Coleman consents to rip his personal relationships with his family and his own past as well as his racial identity. Just like the Americans during independence who strove to cut cords with British past and traditions, Coleman seeks to create his own identity, independent from the social and cultural limitations and racial and ethnic classifications. In other words, rejects the burden of his racial identity. He does not want to be defined by affiliations with a certain group, which is not his own choice. Instead, thanks to his secret, he pursues a new independent life. He sets off to construct an "authentic" identity-based on a secret which is buried with him.

Coleman's initiative to pass as a white Jew does not occur to him all of a sudden. Throughout *The Human Stain*, Coleman suffers repercussions and consequences of his racial identity. The origins of Coleman's passing could be traced back to his youth, which consists predominantly of boxing. Roth reveals Coleman's

"secret" at around the beginning of Chapter 2, where his parents Mr. and Mrs. Silk are in conversation with Dr. and Mrs. Fensterman (a Jewish family) about racial prejudice and discriminatory quotas in academia (Roth, 2000: 86). However, the reader first recognizes Coleman's secret in a flashback where Coleman talks to Doc Chizner, who is originally a Jewish dentist teaching boxing in his extracurricular time. Chizner constantly warns Coleman not to reveal his true identity when he fights against whites. Chizner wants Coleman merely to be "Silky Silk" (Roth, 2000: 98). He tells Coleman that he is "neither one thing or another" (Roth, 2000: 98). In fact, this is exactly what Coleman strives to achieve. As a unique "Silky Silk", Coleman prefers to reconstruct his own past and build his authentic future.

Coleman's in-between identity leads to great difficulties in maintaining his social life. A striking series of events that indicate Coleman cannot survive as "Silky Silk" take place. For starters, there is the moment when Coleman was kicked out of a "whorehouse" when a woman realized he was a "black nigger" (Roth, 2000: 114). Additionally, Coleman meets Steena Palsson, a Danish-Icelandic girl because of whom he quits boxing. Coleman and Steena have a pleasant relationship until Coleman invites Steena to East Orange in order to have a family dinner. Steena's momentary shock of learning about Coleman's black identity transforms into a massive crying in the aftermath of that dinner. Steena ends the relationship with one phrase: "I can't do it" (Roth, 2000: 125).

Therefore, in order for Coleman to construct his own future, passing becomes a necessity rather than a choice. As a matter of fact, "all he'd ever wanted, from the earliest childhood on, was to be free: not black, not even white—just on his own and free" (Roth, 2000: 120). Thus, passing represents a "freedom and lack of restriction that he was never able to enjoy as an African American man" (Kirby, 2006: 155). But, why does he pass into a white Jew rather than a regular white American? There might be two answers to this question: First, though his color of skin does not reveal his African past, it is possible to extract clues from his physical description. Coleman Silk, comments Nathan, is "the small-nosed Jewish type with the facial heft in the jaw, one of those crimped-haired Jews of a light yellowish skin pigmentation who possess something of the ambiguous aura of the pale blacks who are sometimes taken for white" (Roth, 2000: 15-16). For fear that this ambiguity may lead to suspicions over

his racial identity, Coleman does his best to conceal his everlasting secret. He tries to achieve this by passing as Jewish white because the physical qualities mentioned above do not really belong to the American mainstream Anglo-Saxon Protestant whiteness. With his "facial heft", "yellowish skin pigmentation" and his "crimped-hair", Coleman's physical description is similar to that of a Jew. The other reason for Coleman to pass as a white Jew might be connected to his upbringing. In East Orange, New Jersey, where Coleman spent his childhood, "it was the Jews and their kids who […] loomed larger than anyone in Coleman's extracurricular life" (Roth, 2000: 88). Those with whom Coleman interacted consisted mostly of Jewish people in his neighborhood. This makes Jews, for Coleman, as the sole different community. Therefore, Coleman's constant exposure to predominantly Jewish culture during childhood has a significant impact on his assumption of Jews as the American mainstream. Both these reasons, however, take Coleman to a bigger irony: while he tries to flee social, cultural and political pressures and limitations due to his racial identity, he becomes trapped in an ethnic identity, which also belongs to a minority. Parrish suggests "*The Human Stain* portrays Roth's engagement with how traditional understandings of American identity as a pluralistic and malleable form have come under increasing scrutiny…" (Parrish, 2004: 422). Although Jews are labeled as the "model minority", they cannot secure a place in the definition of American mainstream. They are still the descendants of Jewish "immigrants".

In fact, Coleman is against the "sacredness" of any racial or ethnic identity including African-American identity, community and the culture it represents his ultimate goal is to be free from all these ethnic and racial entanglements. Coleman labels the African American community as the "unenlightened society", one "in which, more than eighty years after the Emancipation Proclamation, bigots happened to play too large a role to suit him (Roth, 2000: 120). This is of course a rebellion not only to the white society's power to define him as black Coleman also rebels against the impositions coming from black culture. He criticizes the impositions of that culture, particularly those of his father. In social, historical or literary contexts, father figure can be linked to a person's or a country's past and traditions. It is also a force that shapes a person's identity. For both African and Jewish American identities, patriarchal norms are of great significance. Coleman's father represents Coleman's

African past. Following the Anglo-conformist practices in American history, minorities became more enthusiastic about preserving their identities. Mr. Silk is an allusion to this trend, a reaction to the dominant culture. He is a defender of an African American "solidarity" who wants Coleman to cherish and uphold his African past. Mr. Silk is the embodiment of an African American *tradition*, to which Coleman is strongly opposed. He constantly tells Coleman of a "presumption of intellectual inferiority", which stems from the country's Negrophobia (Roth, 2000: 103). His plan is solid: "Coleman was going to Howard to become a doctor, to meet a light-skinned girl from a good Negro family to marry and settle down and have children who would in turn go to Howard" (Roth, 2000: 102). Ironically, it is at Howard while out for a hot dog, that Coleman is called a *nigger* the first time in his life and refused service. In *The Human Stain*, while Coleman is struggling with his father's opinions, he is actually in conflict with the identity his father chooses for him. However, he also senses that deep down Coleman does not want to follow his tradition and choose instead a figure like Dr. Chizner, who is not marked as an African-American. When he tells Coleman satirically "If I were your father," he voices this deep conviction and fear that his son tends to reject his father's race and culture. Coleman clearly states that he does not want to be framed in the "negro we" or in any so-called "solidarity" because in Coleman's view, this is another sort of restraint to his independent identity. What Coleman wants is the "fluidity" which explains the very nature of identity. Thus, with Walt, Coleman's older brother, overseas to serve his country and Mr. Silk dead, Coleman becomes freer to reframe the plot of his life.

> *With two bulwarks gone—the big brother overseas and the father dead—he is repowered and free to be whatever he wants, free to pursue the hugest aim, the confidence right in his bones to be his particular I. Free on a scale unimaginable to his father. As free as his father had been unfree. Free now not only of his father but all that his father had ever had to endure. The impositions. The humiliations. The obstructions. The wound and the pain and the posturing and the shame—all the inward agonies of failure and defeat. Free instead on the big stage. Free to go ahead and be stupendous. Free to enact the boundless, self-defining drama of the pronouns we, they, I (Roth, 2000: 109).*

Coleman is after the elasticity of identity, which would give him the freedom to shape his own life independently from his significant others. He is a person who pursues "the raw I" (Roth, 2000: 108). As Zuckerman writes "Down to the day he arrived in Washington and entered Howard, it was, like it or not, his father who had

been making up Coleman's story for him; now he would have to make it up himself...
(Roth, 2000: 107).

> *He saw the fate awaiting him, and he wasn't having it. Grasped it intuitively and reconciled spontaneously. You can't let the big they impose its bigotry on you any more than you can let the little they become a we and impose its ethics on you. Not the tyranny of the we and its we-talk and everything that is dying to suck you in, the coercive, inclusive, historical, inescapable moral we with its insidious E pluribus unum. Neither the they of Woolworth's nor the we of Howard. Instead the raw I with its all agility. Self-discovery—that was the punch to the labonz. Singularity. The passionate struggle for singularity. The singular animal. The sliding relationship with everything. Not static but sliding. Self-knowledge but concealed. What is as powerful as that? (Roth, 2000: 108).*

The Human Stain starts in a "summer when a president's penis was on everyone's mind, and life, in all its shameless impurity, once again confounded America" (Roth, 2000: 3). This is not only the narrator's reference to Clinton and Lewinsky affair but also an utterance to demonstrate the political aura of 90's America, which Roth trademarks as "the ecstasy of sanctimony".

> *In the Congress, in the press and on the networks, the righteous grandstanding creeps, crazy to blame, deplore and punish, were everywhere out moralizing to the beat the band: all of them in a calculated frenzy with what Hawthorne (who in the 1860s, lived not many miles from my door) identified in the incipient country of long ago as "the persecuting spirit"; all of them eager to enact the astringent rituals of purification... (Roth, 2000: 2)*

Zuckerman calls this period as the "century of destruction unlike any other in its extremity" (Roth, 2000: 153-154). In such an atmosphere, Coleman, now a retired and widowed university professor, starts an affair with a cleaning lady named Faunia Farley, who works two jobs, one in the campus cafeteria and the other on a farm milking and feeding cows. The "stigma" is clear: there is a huge distance in their social classifications. Coleman ranks far higher in the social scale, thus, his relationship with Faunia produces a threat against the solidity of social hierarchy. The problem does not merely stem from their positions in the social system. They also threaten the conventions with their age difference. Coleman is seventy-one while Faunia is thirty-four. From the perspective of many in the academic and political atmosphere of the 90s charged with identity politics, their relationship is one in which an ignorant young woman is being abused by an old, racist and cunning misogynist. Their relationship reveals Roth's contempt for the oppressive force of society. For Roth, desire is a human instinct that is natural. Likewise, desire is not related to a person's age or social status. Just like the Clinton & Lewinsky affair, Coleman's relationship with Faunia

brings out the genuine nature of human beings. In Roth's perspective, such relationships do not represent a formidable flaw because desire is an integral component of individual identity and independent "self". That is why, Roth—via Zuckerman—imagines hanging a banner that says "A HUMAN BEING LIVES HERE" (Roth, 2000: 3).

Coleman's relationship with Faunia is the embodiment of a friction between private and collective identities. In *The Human Stain*, this clash is reflected first with Delphine Roux's letter. Roux is a French woman, a professor of Languages and Literature at Athena College who has succeeded Coleman and was accepted for the job by him. She subconsciously adopts the role of the moral majority clothed in academic jargon and tries to break up such an "unnatural" relationship. In order to intimidate Coleman, Roux sends him an anonymous letter:

> *Everyone knows you're*
> *sexually exploiting an*
> *abused, illiterate*
> *woman half your*
> *age (Roth, 2000: 38).*

"Everyone Knows" can be described as the "invocation of cliché and the beginning of the banalization of experience" (Roth, 2000: 209). With this letter, Delphine Roux fulfills the duty of a person that complies with the instructions of an oppressive society. By sending that letter, Roux reminds Coleman that he has to remain in the social boundaries and act the way the majority does. This letter is a written notice that formally warns Coleman not to go beyond social and cultural limits. It is also a letter after which Coleman reinforces his commitment to resist social impositions and to reinstate his determination to live his life as an independent individual. The anonymous letter has zero impact on Coleman; therefore, he continues his relationship with Faunia Farley. Coleman—like Philip Roth himself—thinks sexual desire is one of the many definitive characteristics of human beings: "How can one say, "No, this isn't a part of life", since it always is? The contaminant of sex, the redeeming corruption that de-idealizes the species and keeps us everlastingly mindful of the matter we are" (Roth, 2000: 37). He points to the impossibility of leading a decent life that is "idealized" by society and the norms established by it. Zuckerman contributes to this by demonstrating the similarity between Coleman's and Clinton's relationships and the obstacles they both have to resist.

Here in America either it's Faunia Farley or it's Monica Lewinsky! The luxury of these lives disquieted so by the inappropriate comportment of Clinton and Silk! This, in 1998, is the wickedness they have to put up with. This, in 1998, is their torture, their torment, and their spiritual death (Roth, 2000: 154).

Coleman counter-strikes against these impositions by taking Viagra, a drug that enhances men's sexual performance. For Coleman, Viagra does not only promote sexual power but it also symbolizes a rebellion to an otherwise dull, conformist personality. It is the means via which Coleman reconstructs his life and character. It is a tool by means of which Coleman repels social impositions and individually shapes his identity.

I owe all of this turbulence and happiness to Viagra. Without Viagra none of this would be happening. Without Viagra I would have the dignity of an elderly gentleman free from desire who behaves correctly. I would not be doing something that makes no sense. I would not be doing something unseemly, rash, ill-considered and potentially disastrous for all involved. Without Viagra, I could continue, in my declining years, to develop the broad impersonal perspective of an experienced and educated honorably discharged man who has long ago given up the sensual enjoyment of life. [...] Thanks to Viagra I've come to understand Zeus's amorous transformations (Roth, 2000: 32).

Undoubtedly, Viagra, in Coleman's life, is not only related to sexual desire. It stands for Coleman's embrace of his independent life. It gives him the strength to stand against the American society's "persecuting spirit". With Viagra, Coleman becomes aware of the "humanistic" joys of life with which mainstream society is constantly in struggle. Viagra enables Coleman also to make up for the age difference. It gives Coleman an opportunity to make a deliberate choice between two lives. On one hand, Coleman could opt for a life where he is a retired honorable professor who has given up on enjoyment and entertainment of life. Coleman refuses to remain as such because he knows this would mean an acknowledgement of being a living ghost and waiting for his death. On the other hand, Viagra gives Coleman the opportunity to live like a young man. He gets the necessary sexual strength to make love to a younger attractive woman. In fact, Viagra gives Coleman the "thrill" to live life to its fullest potential (Roth, 2000: 32). Additionally, "It was enough to feel the thrill of leading a double life" (Roth, 2000: 47). Viagra melts the social and age differences between the two, which gives Coleman the chance to live as a young man. Thus, Viagra is the means of resistance and rebellion to the "Everyone Knows" effect and the "banalization of experience". With Viagra Coleman prevails over impositions of society and enjoys the

freedom of leading an authentic life. This way, the existence and the absence of Viagra mirrors the dichotomy between life and death.

Just like what Viagra represented for Coleman, the foundation of America offered certain promises to the settlers. Puritans emigrated and settled in the New World for this purpose. Once they settled down, they began to expand to the west. The promise was the same: a better new life. However, they witnessed many catastrophes. Many Puritans died en route to the New World just as many deaths took place during encounter with the Natives. This went on throughout American history. Wars in Europe, Korea and Vietnam also caused a great number of deaths. The life that was promised by a new nation, which had cut cords with its "father", resulted in tragedies. This is also the development of Coleman's case. Coleman's ultimate goal is to lead a life that is drawn by his "raw I", not by his parents, not by society. Rather than grasping life's entanglements, he chose to rely on its fluidity and create his own reality.

The means Coleman used to adopt an independent identity did not only consist of Viagra, passing or obliteration of race and family. He also set off writing a book to complete himself. Book writing, in Coleman's case, refers to producing life as fiction because in Roth's view, life *is* fiction. Like identity, life is not a static but a mobile process. The first book he intends to write *Spooks*, one about the life-changing spooks incident that resulted in his retirement and his wife's death. He collects certain documents about the incident and tries to create valid grounds for his resignation from the faculty. However, a bigger motive for this book is the willingness to make up for the loss of his wife, Iris Silk, who died of a heart attack after the spooks incident. Coleman believes this incident caused his wife's death. He thinks those at Athena "meant to kill" him but "they got her instead" (Roth, 2000: 13). Thus, the book is an attempt to transform a loss into a triumph. By writing *Spooks*, Coleman would both shed light on the accelerators of Iris's death and illustrate events that led to his retirement. This way, book writing is a matter of challenge to death. It is an assertion of life versus death.

Coleman fails to finish the book since he does not want to waste such a long period because "If he wrote the story in all of its absurdity, altering nothing, nobody would believe it, nobody would take it seriously, people would say it was a ludicrous lie, a self-serving exaggeration" and "they would say that more than his having uttered

the word "spooks" in a classroom had to lie behind his downfall" (Roth, 2000: 11). Thus, Coleman asks Zuckerman to write the whole thing for him. This is the beginning of their acquaintance. When Coleman knocks on Zuckerman's door, he knows that he is a writer who is leading a secluded life. Zuckerman's reason for isolation is actually the diagnosis of prostate cancer. He had recently undergone a surgery left him impotent and incontinent. He explains that by moving there he posited a distance to "sexual caterwaul" because he "couldn't meet the costs of its clamoring anymore, could no longer marshal the wit, the strength, the patience, the illusion, the irony, the ardor, the egoism, the resilience, […] the erotic *professionalism…*". (Roth, 2000: 37). Like Zuckerman, Coleman could have opted for seclusion following the spooks incident. Nonetheless, Coleman prefers to counter strike and build his life around a secret which gives him the freedom to form his authentic identity. Thus, their relationship is the reflection of a two-dimensional reality. While Coleman is proactive in his initiatives, Zuckerman remains passive. Therefore, when Coleman asks to Zuckerman to write a book in order to explain the reasons behind his resignation and to point fingers at the faculty members for his wife's death, Zuckerman refrains from doing so.

> *I—whose house he had never before entered, whose very voice he had barely heard before—had to put aside whatever else I might be doing and write about how his enemies at Athena, in striking out at him, had instead felled her. Creating their false image of him, calling him everything that he wasn't and could never be, they had not merely misrepresented a professional career conducted with the utmost seriousness and dedication—they had killed his wife of over forty years. Killed her as if they'd taken aim and fired a bullet into her heart. I had to write about this "absurdity," that "absurdity" —I, who then knew nothing about his woes at the college and could not even begin to follow the chronology of the horror that, for five months now, had engulfed him and the late Iris (Roth, 2000: 11).*

This shows that Coleman's request was "too much a recapitulation of the incident" (Schwartz, 2011: 74). Although the relationship between Coleman and Zuckerman is not a professional one, they have a bilateral relationship where they complete each other. However, Coleman has bigger significance for Zuckerman than what Zuckerman has for Coleman. For Zuckerman, Coleman's existence represents a call to bring him back to life. The relationship might also be regarded as homoerotic because when Coleman asks Zuckerman to dance with him, Zuckerman makes keen observations of Coleman's body. He notices Coleman's tattoo and the young qualities

of his body. Also, Zuckerman himself thinks that "The moment a man starts to tell you about sex, he's telling you something about the two of you" (Roth, 2000: 27). For Zuckerman, the core male of friendship depends on being able to talk about sex. He says "if you can't get a level of candor on sex and you choose to behave instead as if this isn't ever on your mind, the male friendship is incomplete" (Roth, 2000: 27). With Coleman, Zuckerman realizes he should not have to maintain his radical seclusion in a two-room cabin because with Coleman, the walls that Nathan Zuckerman had recently built around himself begin to crumble and he returns to life.

> *Abnegation of society, abstention from distraction, a self-imposed separation from every last professional yearning and social delusion and cultural poison and alluring intimacy, a rigorous reclusion such as that practiced by religious devouts who immure themselves in caves or cells or isolated forest huts, is maintained on stuff more obdurate than I am made of (Roth, 2000: 43).*

With these in mind, Zuckerman understands that "The trick is to find sustenance in (Hawthorne again) "the communications of a solitary mind with itself'" (Roth, 2000: 44). At this point, Coleman's secret, which can be noticed by the sensitivity of an author, appeals to Zuckerman. He assumes that Coleman's secret is the source of his "magnetism", imagining he only revealed this secret to Faunia (Roth, 2000: 213). So as to be a part of this "magnetism", Zuckerman determines to fictionalize Coleman's life. He names the book *The Human Stain*, which, for some, could refer to Coleman's tattoo or his African-American identity. However, more likely, the name is related to Faunia's statements to a girl working in a pet store: "we leave a stain, we leave a trail, we leave our imprint. Impurity, cruelty, abuse, error, excrement, semen—there's no other way to be here" (Roth, 2000: 242). This is not only Faunia's perspective regarding life, it is also a reference to Coleman's failure to escape from his past, another stain in his life. Just as the tragedies and contradictions in American political and historical realm, Coleman's step on a promising life fails with the spooks incident, an incident where an African-American is charged with racism. Thus, Coleman is traumatized either way. When he is black, he is imprisoned in a secret; when he is white, he becomes charged with racism.

> *Given America's violent racial history, individuals on both sides of the color line could be traumatized as a result of their racial ascription. As an African American individual, the subject suffers the traumatic effects of racist victimization, while as a white-skinned individual he/she bears the shame and guilt of signifying the white racist perpetrator. This reading of The Human Stain explores race trauma as a lived experience and as literary signifier (Dragulescu, 2014: 92).*

Lester Farley, Faunia's ex-husband, a veteran who fought in Vietnam tries to erase all these stains. Although the spooks incident is a breakthrough in Coleman's life, it is not the direct cause of his death. Coleman's end comes with Lester Farley. Les is a character with immense mental issues. He is registered in the VA hospital for psychological welfare. After he gets out, he aligns with a support group "so as to stay off the booze and not go haywire" (Roth, 2000: 213). In order to "face this thing", his best bud Louie Borrero set him a goal "to make a pilgrimage to the Wall—if not to the real Wall, the Vietnam Veteran Memorial in Washington, then to the Moving Wall" (Roth, 2000: 213-215). This was not a pleasant request for Les because "Washington D.C. was a city Les had sworn he would never set foot in because of his hatred of the government and, since 92, because of his contempt for that draft dodger sleeping in the White House" (Roth, 2000: 213-214). Therefore, Louie tells Les that they are going to start with the Wall; they are going to "start slow" with a Chinese restaurant. Once he waited in the car while Faunia picked up food from Athena, he chose not to go in because if he did "he'd want to kill the gooks as soon as he saw them" (Roth, 2000: 215) Moreover, when Faunia tells Les they are not Vietnamese but Chinese; he says he does not care "*what* they fuck they are!" (Roth, 2000: 215). Therefore, although Louie's is a well-intended attempt, it makes no difference to Les. When Louie finally convinces Les to dine in a Chinese restaurant, Les asks him to "keep the fucking waiter away" just in case "from the corner of his eye he'd spotted some movement" (Roth, 2000: 214). The diner experience does not go well because throughout the meal Les is seconds away from "going for the waiter's throat, and the water pitcher exploding at his feet" (Roth, 2000: 222).

Les's relationship with Faunia is chaotic in the sense that he directs his anger with the government to his wife. Once he is refused a government help, he comes home: "He's agitated. He's restless. He is drinking" (Roth, 2000: 66). He cannot deal with the fact that the government underestimates his service in Vietnam. "A couple of times in the middle of the night he wakes up choking her, but it isn't his fault—it's the government's fault" (Roth, 2000: 66). Nathan shows us the reality reconstructed in Les's minds and the reader is told he never hurt Faunia. It was Faunia who tricked Les into going to rehab to "be together again" and "instead used the whole thing against him to get the kids away from him" (Roth, 2000: 66-67). The biggest tragedy in Farley

family takes place when one night a fire breaks out in Faunia's building while "she is in the truck blowing the carpenter". (Roth, 2000: 67). Les attempts to save his kids because "his wife, stupid bitch cunt, isn't going to do anything" (Roth, 2000: 67). He moves from the place where he spies on Faunia and the carpenter and goes upstairs to save the kids. When he picks them up, he realizes they are alive. "He doesn't think there's a chance that they're not alive. He just thinks they're scared" (Roth, 2000: 68). While together with kids trying to get out of the building, Les encounters the carpenter. That is the moment when he does not think of anything but killing him. When Les goes straight to the carpenter's throat, he starts choking him. However, Faunia is more worried about her "boyfriend" than her children. That's the essence of Les's blames on Faunia: leaving kids into the hands of wild flames, killing them!

With this hatred Les constantly peaks into Faunia's building. Coleman's encounter with Les takes place in the third time Les sneaks around the bushes outside Faunia's building when Coleman is inside. The first couple of times, Les managed to flee without Coleman seeing him. This time, however, Les got out of the bushes and came towards the building "roaring" (Roth, 2000: 70). "It felt like flying, it felt like Nam, it felt like the moment in which you go wild. Crazier, suddenly, because she is sucking off that Jew than because she killed the kids…" (Roth, 2000: 71). Coleman raises a tire iron when Les tells him to put it down. After the arrival of Les's five buddies and five other guys from the fire department, Les goes home and becomes deeper in thoughts. He continually says he cannot die because he already died in Vietnam (Roth, 2000: 73). In this sense, he is like Coleman because Coleman, too, is dedicated to an eternal freedom and fears almost nothing after the spooks incident.

For the sake of erasing the sexual stain, Les deliberately drives towards Coleman's car and forces Coleman to steer the wheel off the road into the river. Both Coleman and Faunia die in that accident. Even, after their death, the "Everyone Knows" effect continues. Members of faculty, particularly Delphine Roux, put labels on Coleman with "no logic or rationale" (Roth, 2000: 290). "Why did Coleman Silk do this? Because he is an *x*, because he is a *y*, because he is both. First a racist and now a misogynist" (Roth, 2000: 290). Roux claims that it was not a real accident and Coleman "yearned to do this all his might" and committed suicide (Roth, 2000: 290). His fundamental motive was to erase "all trace of his history as her ultimate tormentor.

It was to prevent Faunia from exposing him for what he was…" (Roth, 2000: 290). Zuckerman states that Coleman's death makes it easy for Delphine Roux to fabricate new lies about him because "if it weren't for the accident, she wouldn't have been able to tell the lie in the first place" (Roth, 2000: 290).

The conflict between the Everyone Knows effect and Authenticity of Coleman and Faunia's relationship can also be seen in the service for Coleman. His four children (Lisa, Mark, Jeff and Michael) do not want to bury him in the college chapel, which Zuckerman sees as "a well-planned coup, an attempt to undo their father's self-imposed banishment and to integrate him, in death if not in life, back into the community where he had made his distinguished career" (Roth, 2000: 304). Jeff and Michael also warn Zuckerman to "knock it off: to forget about Les Farley and the circumstances of the accident and about urging any further investigation by the police" (Roth, 2000: 308). They clearly demonstrate their discontent to elaborate on this case "if their father's affair with Faunia Farley were to become a focal point of a courtroom trial" (Roth, 2000: 308). Therefore, even after his death Coleman's authentic identity, his sexual desire and his affair with a woman from a "lower" social class become questioned.

Herb Keble's remorse is a direct consequence of the "Everyone Knows" effect. Keble is an African American political scientist hired by Coleman when he was the dean. Keble is the first African American professor at Athena, who refrained from siding with Coleman in his trial of the spooks incident. All he said was "I am going to have to be with them" (Roth, 2000: 16). This was because Keble yearned to secure his social and academic position in faculty. Nevertheless, in Coleman's service, Keble wanted to produce a dialogue between Coleman and his accusers behind the scene (Roth, 2000: 309-310). The fear of fighting for Coleman's truth before everyone prevented Keble from defending Coleman against the accusations of racism. Thus, Keble's negligence contributed to Coleman's resignation from Athena. His statement that Coleman never conducted racist practices was of no use after his death.

The biggest source of Coleman's past is her sister, Ernestine. Following Coleman's funeral, Zuckerman encounters Ernestine Silk, who is black in appearance. First, Zuckerman mistakes her for Keble's wife. Then, she says "I am not Mrs. Keble" (Roth, 2000: 317). In their conversation back at Zuckerman's place, he learns "most

of what he knows" (Roth, 2000: 317). Ernestine tells Zuckerman about Coleman's upbringing, throughout which Mr. Silk attributes great significance to English language, which he calls the "language of Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Dickens" (Roth, 2000: 317). This is the irony that haunts Coleman's life. Growing up with a father, who exponentially obsesses over the rules of language and meaning of words, Coleman's use of a single word brings him tragic consequences.

Overall, *The Human Stain* is a book that reflects the opposition between private and collective identities. It demonstrates that society has a tremendous impact on individual identities. In *The Human Stain*, Coleman not only struggles with society. He is in constant conflict with his significant others, his mother, siblings, children and particularly his father. While those around Coleman try to frame his life according to their own interests, Coleman prefers to enjoy his individual freedom. He objects to any kind of social and cultural boundary drawn by society or his significant others. Coleman undergoes certain experiences such as being deserted by Steena or being called a "nigger" and getting kicked out of a whorehouse. However, Coleman also distances himself from the "we solidarity" of African American community, which raises his parents' reaction. He does not perceive himself as belonging to one or the other. He is after a authentic, unique identity. He wants to invent, reinvent, define and redefine himself. All these cause Coleman to seek an alternative. As an African American looking white, Coleman comes up with a solution: passing for white Jew. In order to pursue an independent life during which he can assert his own self, Coleman rips off his relationship with his family and tries to erase traces of his racial identity. Until the end of his life, he never reveals his secret, which gives him the opportunity to be in control of his own life. By keeping his secret, he rebels against the social, cultural and political impositions.

The other significant rebellion in *The Human Stain* beside Coleman's secrecy is his relationship with Faunia Farley, a much younger cleaning lady who belongs to a much lower social category. Their relationship is regarded as threatening in terms of class, age and culture. With Viagra, Coleman strikes against the projected norms. He located himself outside the social reality. The difference of ages and social classifications intimidates such conformist members of society as Delphine Roux. Therefore, the letter entitled "Everyone Knows" represents a a formal warning to

Coleman to end his relationship with Faunia. The letter is also a representation of the American contradiction: such promises as the freedom of individuals under the Declaration of Independence during foundation are undermined by the moral majority. Individual rights are recognized only if individuals conform to social and cultural conventions. No matter how hard they struggle for authenticity, those outside the mainstream are forced to experience tragedies or, as in this case, death.

3.3. *INDIGNATION*: STUCK HERE FOREVER WITH NOWHERE TO GO

Indignation is another book by Philip Roth which portrays the incidents leading to a tragic end for the protagonist, who aims to lead an autonomous life independently from his significant others. Indignation is a book that reflects Roth's "experimentation with narrative voice" (Royal, 2009: 129). Throughout *Indignation*, it is the protagonist, Marcus Messner, a Jewish boy from Newark, who narrates the events that gradually bring him to death. This is a revelation of "Roth's preoccupation with storytelling and the ways in which narrative—or more specifically, the act of narrating a life—constructs the subject" (Royal, 2009: 130). With his narrative, Marcus becomes a "self without physical limits, a subject who is nothing more than a pure voice" (Royal, 2009: 133). As the name of the first chapter suggests, Marcus is "under morphine" during narration. Until the end of chapter I, the reader has to rely on Marcus's accounts, more accurately on his "memories". However, in chapter II, the first person narrative transforms into a third person and "the memory ceases" (Roth, 2008: 225). Thus, the "unconscious" and "haziness of mind" are remarkable aspects that prevail throughout the book. Therefore, "the Marcus whose existence is brought vividly to life throughout most of *Indignation,* is nothing more than 'memory upon memory, nothing but memory'" (Royal, 2009: 133) and (Roth, 2008: 57). Like *The Human Stain*, *Indignation* is a "manifestation of Roth's overreaching concerns with the construction of the subject and the ways in which our stories, our voices and our memories make us who we are" (Royal, 2009: 136).

Although Marcus is not as radical in his actions, he shares similarities with Coleman in the sense that both their struggles to establish authentic lives culminate in tragedies. From "the modern crisis and contemporary agony of the family as a social

institution" to the "atrocities of war" and "the irrational legislating of morality and customs", both characters are forced to undergo similar sufferings (Aldama, 2011: 206). They both rebel against the social impositions and strive not to belong in a certain group. Also, they both have breakthrough in their lives that cause them to confront social sanctions of American mainstream. The setting in *Indignation* is, as in *the Human Stain*, one that involves a disputable period in American history.

> *To tell Marcus's story, Roth situates it within clear parameters of time and space—especially the post World War II era, the Cold War and McCarthyism, the looming menace of being sent to war in Korea, the ever more fragile family matrix, the onset mass marketing and distribution of goods transforming consumer habits, the stiflingly regimented life in college, the sexual and libido-straight jackets, and so on (Aldama, 2011: 212).*

While the history in *The Human Stain* consists mostly of, Faunia's ex-husband, a veteran who fought in Vietnam 90's America with flashbacks of the Vietnam War, *Indignation* illustrates the atmosphere in America during the Korean War, when there is a remarkable threat of being sent to the battlefield for young people. Marcus is a "vessel for the new understanding and sensibility developing among large segments of the American youth after World War II", however, despite the menace of being sent to Korean War, Marcus is "neither conformist nor static" (Aldama, 2011: 208). This is the source of his disagreements with his father who is frightened and later paranoid of "something were to happen" to his son (Roth, 2008: 12). He is more anxious to see his son being enlisted in the Korean War than Marcus himself. Mr. Messner is a kosher butcher who constantly worries that his son would die once he makes a mistake. In this sense, he represents the American paranoia. Like the xenophobic practices in the second half of 90's America, Mr. Messner wants to expel any single bit of risk and avoid tragedies. The irony is that Marcus is not a character with such potential. Rather, he is a "prudent, responsible, diligent, hardworking A student who went out with only the nicest girls" (Roth, 2008: 3). He relies on reason over emotions. However, Mr. Messner gradually increases his "surveillance" and this becomes "insufferable" for Marcus (Roth, 2008: 9). Thus, Marcus decides to leave Robert Treat, the college in Newark which he attends for a year. He wants to lead an independent life without the paranoia of his father.

> *The prospect of my independence made this otherwise even-tempered man, who only rarely blew up at anyone, appear as if he were intent on committing violence should I dare to let him down, while I—whose skills as a cool-headed logician*

had made me the mainstay of the high school debating team—was reduced to howling with frustration in the face of his ignorance and irrationality. I had to get away from him before I killed him… (Roth, 2008: 9).

Robert Treat is the first place Marcus makes acquaintance with people who are not Jewish. He enjoys spending time with Irish and Italian students because, for him, they are "a new category, not only of Newarker, but of human being". (Roth, 2008: 15). After his departure from Robert Treat, Marcus winds up at Winesburg, a strict, conservative engineering and liberal arts college in Ohio countryside. He hopes to broaden his horizon by interacting with people of different cultures. Ironically, when he reaches Winesburg, he is assigned a room which, disappointingly, he shares with two other Jews, the problematic Bertram Flusser and two other boys. The room arrangement is odd to Marcus because "the adventure of going away to college in far-off Ohio was the chance it offered to live among non-Jews and see what it was like" (Roth, 2008: 18). Marcus's classification and categorization is the American tradition particularly during McCartyhism, a presumption that each member of a minority should remain in the predetermined social boundaries.

Winesburg represents the American mainstream with its mandatory chapel attendance regardless of ethnicity or religious belief. Also, with twelve fraternities, ten of which are reserved for "white Christian males", Winesburg is the embodiment of systematic Americanization and Anglo-conformity. In Winesburg, "there was no face deriving from the Orient to be seen everywhere, except for" Marcus and a "colored kid and a few dozen more"; in other words, Winesburg is not a place of differences; it is a place where "everyone was white and Christian" (Roth, 2008: 40). In such a social and academic environment, Marcus tries to concentrate on his studies, by means of which he dreams of becoming a lawyer. However, gradually, the impositions of Winesburg become insufferable to Marcus not because he is a Jew, but because he is an "atheist" (Roth, 2008: 80).

Just like Coleman's disregard for the "we solidarity" of African American community, Marcus does not embrace the culture he grows up in. He never defines himself as Jewish. What is more, he rejects any kind of labels. He reveals his discontent when he is called "Jew" in the taproom of the inn where he worked waiting tables (Roth, 2008: 27). However, unlike Coleman, he remains in touch with his family. He

states that the "sacrifices" his family made to send him to a college in Ohio "made it imperative" that he has to maintain his As in classes (Roth, 2008: 30).

No matter how he tries to reject labels, Marcus cannot avoid categorization imposed by the Winesburg tradition. Initially, he becomes compelled to share a room with three other Jews, one of whom torments him with such means as loud music and cynicism. Flusser becomes the Jewish disturbance for Marcus, which eventually causes him to settle in another room beside Elwyn Ayers Jr, a non-Jewish senior who is unenthusiastic about anything. Other than providing a decent atmosphere for Marcus to study, the significance of Elwyn could only be related to his having a "black four-dour LaSalle Touring Sedan, built in 1940" (Roth, 2008: 29). This car is a means which reveals the dichotomy between Marcus's sexual desire and the social repressions imposed on him.

With this car, Marcus goes on a date with Olivia Hutton, who was enrolled in his American History class, a girl who, on seeing her legs in the library, Marcus feels a "desire to rush off to the bathroom" but refrains from so doing with the fear of getting caught and being sent to Korea (Roth, 2008: 47). Olivia is the initial and sole means that helps to reveal Marcus's sexual drive in *Indignation*. At such a university as Winesburg, where sexual desire is conceived as something to be repressed and "blue balls constituted the norm", boys and girls have limited chance of interaction (Roth, 2008: 49). Thus, Marcus borrows the LaSalle and takes Olivia out on a date, after which Marcus has his first sexual experience in the car. With the "cops to worry about" and "the late hour—8.10", Marcus cuts off the engine on "the edge of town" and has oral sex, where there was no resistance, no battle (Roth, 2008: 53-54). This is remarkable in the continuum of Marcus's "decent", "A-getting" student life. This is the point where Winesburg offers a bigger threat of expulsion and being sent to Korea. However, this affair does not do any damage to Marcus's status but it brings Olivia's death. The precedents of Olivia's suicide attempt and her imprisonment in mental hospital could be traced back to Marcus's actions following the night in LaSalle. Marcus's inability to comprehend the reasons why Olivia gave him an oral conduct causes him to put a distance with her, which worsens her mental situation. Although, by letters, they fix this situation and continue the affair, Olivia becomes negatively affected when Mrs. Messner, Marcus's mother, visits Marcus at the hospital after

vomiting in Dean's office due to appendix failure. Mrs. Messner objects to his son's affair with Olivia because she sees the scars on one of her wrists, which points to a previous suicide attempt. On his mother's persistent request, Marcus never sees Olivia again but only remembers her in reverie.

Apart from the repression at Wineburg, Marcus cannot escape his father's interventions in his social life. Although Marcus is at a college in Ohio, Mr. Messner tries to make sure his son is still on the right track. Thus, he sends Sonny Cottler, the president of the sole Jewish fraternity in campus, who invites Marcus to the fraternity house. Marcus refuses to be enrolled in a fraternity saying "I don't believe in fraternities" (Roth, 2008: 39). Marcus's rejection of a Jewish fraternity is related to his rejection of classifications and ethnic boundaries. He actually does not want to contribute to the categorization of Winesburg and society. Marcus is not "afraid of being alone" (Roth, 2008: 42). If anything, he wants to be a*lone*, alone in his decisions, alone in his initiatives.

Marcus discovers that Sonny Cottler's visit is connected to his father. By trying to locate his son in a social (in this case ethnic) group, Mr. Messner also contributes to categorization of minorities. Mr. Messner, who wants his son to be powerful, views his son's loneliness as a weakness. He thinks if he belongs to a certain group, Marcus might avoid difficult circumstances. However, if Marcus takes part in the Jewish fraternity, he will have to acknowledge the roles that will be attached to him. Therefore, he will be defined not as "Marcus, the independent" but "Marcus, the Jew, a definition that Marcus opposed all his life".

Throughout *Indignation*, the acts of categorization and social impositions are implemented by the Wineburg as an institution. Its most significant representative is Dean Caudwell. At one of the breakthroughs, Dean Caudwell asks Marcus to his office in order to have a conversation concerning his departure from the assigned dorm room and the one he shared with Elwyn. As nervous as Marcus is, he enters the room and takes his seat, perspiring inside. The Dean asks many questions pressuring Marcus about his adjustment in Winesburg. However, the questions the Dean asks are full of assumptions regarding his inability to adapt in Winesburg traditions. For instance, he assumes Marcus is registered in a fraternity and maintains dates with girls. Such manipulative assessments are implications of the roles assumed for a decent, chapel

attending college student. It is as if Marcus has to do these practices. When Marcus states that his focus is his studies, Dean Caudwell sustains pressures with inquiry of the reasons why Marcus failed to reach agreements in both of the dorm rooms where he stayed. He blames Marcus for negligence of a "compromise" with his roommates (Roth, 2008: 89). Meanwhile, Marcus becomes engulfed with a sense of nausea. This time, based on the script before him, the Dean wonders whether Marcus's father is a kosher butcher. Although Marcus did not write it down, he deliberately puts an emphasis on the word "kosher" (Roth, 2008: 91). Dean Caudwell, in this sense, is a reflection of mainstream categorization. In Marcus's case, his father *had to* be a "kosher" butcher if Marcus is a Jew. Marcus explains that he only wrote "butcher" with no sentiment of hiding his religion (Roth, 2008: 91-92). The Dean mentions the existence of different beliefs and "the right to openly practice" one's religion, which "holds true at Winesburg as it does everywhere" in the United States (Roth, 2008: 92) This is ironic as Wineburg holds student responsible for taking a certain amount of chapel classes in order to graduate. The same thing goes for American politics: The American mainstream assigns individuals certain roles to abide by although the Declaration of Independence upholds the idea of freedom of individuals. An example of such impositions on individuals is the mandatory military service during the Korean War as exemplified in *Indignation*.

Throughout *Indignation*, Winesburg stands as an institution which helps to implement state politics. In Winesburg, it is an obligation for male students to take at least one semester of ROTC (Reserve Officer Training Corps) program. This aims to adjust the students to the battleground experience. However, Marcus states that the one required semester would mean to be "just another guy caught in the draft" and ending up "as a lowly infantry private with an M-I rifle and a fixed bayonet in a freezing Korean foxhole awaiting the bugles' blare" (Roth, 2008: 33). Hence, in order to avoid such tragedy, Marcus decides to "qualify as an officer" and "enter the army as a second-lieutenant", which requires "no fewer than four semesters of ROTC" (Roth, 2008: 33). In so doing, his main purpose is to be "transferred out of transportation", the place where he could "wind up serving in a combat zone" into "army intelligence" (Roth, 2008: 34).

Marcus accounts that all these efforts are also for the sake of self-justification. This is an indication of his negotiation of identity with his significant others.

> *I wanted to do everything right. If I did everything right, I could justify to my father the expense of my being at college in Ohio rather than in Newark. I could justify to my mother her having to work full time in the store again (Roth, 2008: 34-35).*

However, his main motive was to be away from his significant other and construct his own future independently: "At the heart of my ambition was the desire to be free of a strong, stolid father suddenly with uncontrollable fear for a grown-up son's well-being" (Roth, 2008: 35). More crucially, Marcus's struggle was concentrated on the effort to escape death, being "butchered" in the battlefield as he hates the vision of blood and corpses.

The images of blood and meat are definers of Mr. Messner, who Marcus can never escape from. As a matter of fact, the book opens, continues and closes with these images. The reader notices Marcus's contempt for blood and the process of meat when he elaborates on the "koshering" process. "Nauseating and disgusting", Marcus makes the meat kosher and sells it to Jewish ladies (Roth, 2008: 5). He associates all the knives and cleavers in the butcher shop with the military ammunition in the Korean War.

> *I envisioned my father's knives and cleavers whenever I read about the bayonet combat against the Chinese in Korea. I knew how murderously sharp sharp could be. And I knew what blood looked like, encrusted around the necks of the chickens where they had been ritually slaughtered, dripping out of the beef onto my hands when I was cutting a rib steak along the bone, seeping through the brown paper bags despite the wax paper wrappings within, settling into the grooves crosshatched into the chopping block by the force of the cleaver crashing down. […] I grew up with blood—with blood and grease and knife sharpeners and slicing machines and amputated fingers or missing parts of fingers on the hands of my three uncles as well as my father—and I never got used to it and never liked it (Roth, 2008: 35-36).*

These slaughter scenes subconsciously cause Marcus a tremendous fear of blood and death in Korea. Therefore, by enrolling in the ROTC that would take him four semesters, his fundamental goal is to take his chance of survival to the maximum degree. He becomes obsessed with scenes of blood and death. Therefore, he tends to associate everything with the kosher butchering practices. He even suggests Olivia tried to "kill herself according to kosher specifications by emptying her body of blood" (Roth, 2008: 161). Interpreting that Olivia's scar "came from attempting to perform

her own ritual", Marcus is afraid to become a catalyst of a kosher ritual. (Roth, 2008: 161). "Marcus Messner finds himself literally and figuratively up to his ankles in blood": it covers the floor of the family butcher shop where he works, it seeps into his nightmares about being killed in Korea, and its image punctuates nearly all of his childhood memories." (McKinley, 2014: 186). McKinley argues that "even at Winesburg College, Marcus cannot avoid the occurrence of blood, which ends up defining his girlfriend's suicide attempt" (McKinley, 2014: 187). According to her, *Indignation* is full of bloody rituals that result from the Cold War atmosphere in American history:

> *For example, the Jewish Messner family practices religious kosher ritual, the Christian administration at Winesburg enforces ritual chapel attendance, the student body at Winesburg College engages in a rebellious but familiar "panty raid" ritual, and all the while, in the backdrop of the novel, the country is engaged in the ritual of war (McKinley, 2014: 188).*

McKinley also claims that the "overextension" of these rituals is what escalates Marcus's anxiety, which "represents only a fraction of the cultural and national turmoil that shapes the novel";which refers to "a chaos that can be attributed in large part to the collision of religious, secular, historical, and institutional ritual" (McKinley, 2014: 188).

Towards the end of *Indignation*, Marcus becomes the victim of one of these rituals: the ritual in which students become each other's "proxies", meaning they sign each other's name on the attendance card of the chapel classes and submit it on the way out. With Sonny Cottler's help, Marcus hires Marty Ziegler, who agrees to be Marcus's proxy for "a buck and a half" (Roth, 2008: 199). At one of the chapel classes, Ziegler gets caught by the administration officers. In order for Marcus to stay at the campus, Dean Caudwell makes Marcus an offer: "to make a written apology" to the president of Winesburg (Roth, 2008: 230). However, Marcus, "the student of Bertrand Russell's" refuses this offer and is sent to the Korean War, in the third month of which he dies being "butchered" in the battlefield (Roth, 2008: 230-231). His will to lead an independent life, therefore, is punished by the social categorization in America. Though it seems that Ziegler being caught brings Marcus's end, it is actually every aspect of his life that determines the path in front of him. Marcus fails to shape his

own life, personality and identity but all the significant others that he interacts with do so.

> *If only his father, if only Flusser, if only Elwyn, if only Caudwell, if only Olivia--! If only Cottler—if only he hadn't befriended the superior Cottler! If only Cottler hadn't befriended him! If only he hadn't Cottler hire Ziegler to proxy for him at the chapel! (Roth, 2008: 229-230).*

In narrative—as in the concept of identity—Roth does not acknowledge a predetermined literary frame. He does not follow a linear chronology in both *The Human Stain* and *Indignation*. In the former, the flow proceeds back and forth with flashbacks and flash-forwards. In the latter, the reverie and memory become of significance. *The Human Stain* is narrated by his alter-ego, Nathan Zuckerman, who "reconstructs" Coleman's story of life. Roth's use of an alter-ego helps him to intervene in the flow of actions. *Indignation* is divided into three chapters. The first chapter is narrated by the first person, Marcus himself although the second chapter transforms to a third person narrator and the third chapter is merely historical notes.

Similarities between Philip Roth's *The Human Stain* and *Indignation* are remarkable in terms of the process of identity formation and the following discontents in the lives of the protagonists. First, the chapter accounted biographical background of Philip Roth so as to familiarize the reader with his narrative technique and his literary tendencies. Roth is a remarkable figure in Jewish American literature who demonstrates the chaotic process of identity formation. Although he evolves out the Jewish American tradition, he does not confine himself to the particularities of this tradition. Instead, as in *The Human Stain*, he illustrates the experience of identity crisis in various racial and ethnic backgrounds. Philip Roth believes that establishing identity is not a static construct. It is, rather, a liquid process that is in state of eternal mobility. Therefore, he argues that identity is formed by individuals' negotiating with social, cultural, racial, ethnic, political and historical boundaries. Roth's literary inspiration stems from the transgression of these repressive forces as one tries to reinvent and redefine their "selves".

Philip Roth's protagonists are in search of individual independence and authenticity. Both Coleman and Marcus serve very well to this purpose. In order to lead his own life independent from his significant others, Coleman chooses to pass for a white Jew. He discards his African past just as he tries to rip his familial cords. He

wants to try to erase traces of his racial identity. However, his past and the impact of his significant others haunt him: he is blamed for an act of racism for pronouncing a word "spooks". Thus, the irony is that Coleman's secret is both a source of his authentic identity and a damaging force on his life. As a matter of fact, Coleman does not seek to be described or defined as white. He wants to be neither white nor black. He only wants to be in control of his own fate, to be *Silky Silk*. However, he encounters great challenges in doing so. Following the spooks incident, he starts affairs with a young cleaning lady named Faunia, which raises certain reactions from those around Coleman. The strongest of these is Delphine Roux's letter entitled as "Everyone Knows". Coleman counter strikes to the condemnation of others with Viagra, which is represented as the key to his personal freedom. Viagra, in this sense, does not only stand as a performance enhancing drug but also as the better choice than being a "ghost". As a resigned professor, Coleman feels free to lead an independent life. However, the repressive face of society shows itself in the character Lester Farley, Faunia's ex-husband who is a Vietnam veteran. Farley causes both Coleman and Faunia to die in a car accident. His death raises inquiry of what it would be like if Coleman had embraced his past. Just life Marcus, Coleman is exposed to the "If-Onlys". He could have listened to his father's advice on the "precision and the history of words". He could have revealed his secret and got away with the charge of racism. However, Coleman resists the social and cultural impositions by himself and faces a tragic end.

In *Indignation*, Marcus is faced with the same social and cultural impositions. A similar father figure is presented in this book, too. However, Marcus's father is more of an embodiment of American paranoia. When Mr. Messner's paranoia becomes insufferable, Marcus decides to leave Newark and registers in Winesburg College in Ohio. As an A-getting student, Marcus leads a life that does not threaten the social conformity until he meets Olivia Hutton, a girl with whom Marcus shares a class. From that moment on, Marcus is in constant state of anxiety. Such experiences as the "blowjob" that he gets from Olivia could culminate in expulsion from the university, which would be tragic because he could land in the battlefield in Korea. Therefore, Marcus finds himself in an existential dilemma: the libido which he tries to justify with examples of "blue balls" and the Winesburg tradition, which actually refers to the same

"persecuting spirit" mentioned in *The Human Stain*. Like Coleman, Marcus is defeated by what his father previously obsessed over: being excessively careful not to make any mistake. With Ziegler (Marcus's proxy) getting caught, he is sent to the battlefield where he is "butchered" like the carcass of animals he chopped and made kosher.

   The tragic ends in both books are products of the contradictions and irony in American promises. Both protagonists face death in their search of the personal freedom, which is promised by the founding fathers in the Declaration of Independence. The construct upon which the United States is founded become far-fetched for both Coleman and Marcus in the reality of American social and cultural life. The oppressive mainstream, which Hawthorne calls America's "persecuting spirit", fails to recognize their individual rights of self-definition. Instead, the society draws frames or boundaries out of which neither character can survive. In Taylor's perspective, their experiences correspond to the repercussions of the rupture with their significant others. Averting their eyes from the embrace of their familial, racial and ethnic identities, both protagonists' attempts to complete the process of identity formation fail.

CONCLUSION

Although Philip Roth is usually categorized in the Jewish American tradition, he can never be confined to a particular label. His fiction does not only demonstrate the sufferings of Jewish immigrant families in the American mainstream. Roth's work depicts the universal struggles of individual identities. The racial, ethnic, social or cultural backgrounds of Roth's characters are less significant than their individual endeavors. Roth successfully portrays the obstacles that his characters go through on their individual journey of identity construction. These obstacles fundamentally pertain to the conflict between the individual identities and social and parental impositions.

For starters, the dissertation illuminated that the biggest component of identity is recognition, which is provided by a person's significant others. Therefore, it is impossible for individuals to reinvent themselves by ripping apart relationships with their past and significant others. In Taylor's terms, one cannot define oneself in a *monological* manner. Instead, the key to the construction of an autonomous self lies in the *dialogical* relationships with significant others. Thus, those rejecting their relationships with their past and significant others might suffer tragic repercussions in the formation of an independent identity.

The repercussion of rejecting the past in the American history appears as a tremendous gap between the ideals promised in the foundation and the political implementations in contemporary America. The insufferable past which was rejected by the Puritans haunted America as what Hawthorne called as the "persecuting spirit." Upon the rupture with its significant other, America set off to become an independent country with authentic traits attributed to the settlers in the New World. The most remarkable of these was self-reliance and individual freedom. In a nation whose communal mission is designated as building "the city upon a hill" the already-complicated individual freedom becomes further complicated with the entry of non-Anglo-Saxon immigrants from all over the world. In fact Anglo-Saxon Puritans, who established the dominant mentality and the founding principles of the nation, applied these principles quite selectively, especially in the case of dissenters' and Native Americans' freedom and rights: whereas the founders condemned the torments of the British Crown and the Anglican Church against the different, their approach towards

the Native Americans was the same. Thus, Native Americans became the first "other" for America. Thus what Hawthorne famously calls "persecuting spirit" has lived side by side with American principles of self-reliance and freedom to assert authentic identities.

This split in American national identity can be most clearly demonstrated in the Civil War in which the South saw slave ownership as an individual right and an expression of freedom. The attitude of the North, however, was not totally philanthropic; the emancipation of slaves after the Civil War did not bring them equal social and economic opportunities and status even in the North. The institution of race-based slavery is responsible for American society's formation along racial lines as a biracial society, where blackness automatically designated the individual's status as slave. Thus in the same nation where freedom and self-determination were upheld as the true tenets of Americanness, a group of people lived deprived of these rights.

Such examples demonstrate that American identity oscillates between self-determination on one hand and bigotry and condemnatory public opinion on the other. The boundaries between the social categories were significant in the integrity of American social life. To secure this integrity, the American state relied on such means as religion, morality and education. Therefore, those attempting to go beyond the imposed social, cultural or ethnic boundaries were to suffer tragic repercussions. Individuals such as Roth's two characters try to assert their rights to form their identity independently of such public opinions which determine who can do what and when and how. The protagonists in both *The Human Stain* and *Indignation* confront the repercussions of the American "persecuting spirit" as a result of an attempt to go beyond these social, cultural, ethnic and racial impositions. These repercussions are implemented with the American politics of identity, which underwent certain shifts through time.

In *The Human Stain*, Coleman is an African American who struggles to lead an autonomous life independent from any classification. He breaks away from such denominations and, by passing as white, shows that race is a constructed category. But while doing that he also deprives himself of his significant others, most importantly, his family. In its last phase he faces a series of challenges against social roles that designate him as an academic and an aging man. His death in the end testifies to the

fact that living monologically, without significant others is equal to death and annihilation of identity.

In his youth, Coleman has a strong father figure, who tries to shape his son's perceptions towards particularly two aspects: use of language in the most appropriate manner and a sense of belonging to his family and his African origin. However, in his "reconstruction," Zuckerman accounts that as well as the social and cultural impositions by the mainstream, Coleman is also against the "we solidarity" of African Americans. What he seeks is the "raw I," independent from any categorization. Thus, his passing provides him with an opportunity to do so. Passing for Coleman becomes a tool to realize his "raw I," to reinvent himself. With his radical decision to never see his family, Coleman intends to draw his own destiny. However, following the rupture with his significant others, Coleman is haunted by his past.

Also, in *The Human Stain*, Coleman's "affair" with Faunia represents a controversy between the individual and society. This controversy stems from both the age difference and the difference of social positions between the two. Since the affair threatens the integrity of social categorization, the American "persecuting spirit" shows itself as the "Everyone Knows" effect. In this sense, Delphine Roux's letter, entitled "Everyone Knows" is a duplication of the mainstream intervention in Coleman's autonomy. It is in fact an attempt to build barriers against the individual construction of identity. Notwithstanding, Coleman continues his relationship with Faunia. In so doing, he basically stands against the social pressure and asserts his independent self. The repercussion of this rebellion comes in the name of Les Farley, Faunia's ex-husband, who fought in Vietnam. Les becomes the messenger of the American "persecuting spirit" when he causes deaths of Coleman and Faunia, who try to lead their lives without any significant others. As an unmoored individual neither can serve as a significant other for the other; therefore, together they float into nothingness with nobody to tie them down to life.

In *Indignation*, Marcus is subject to similar repercussions of his rupture with his past and significant others. The father figure is far more dominant in Marcus's life. Mr. Messner is literally paranoid about the safety of his son to such an extent that makes Marcus's life miserable. Although this might be regarded as the reason for Marcus's departure, in fact, the surveillance is only an accelerator of Marcus's decision

to lead an autonomous life. Like Coleman, Marcus also struggles to get rid of all labels imposed on him. He pursues individual independence by trying to erase the bloody images of the koshering process of meat in his father's butcher shop, which dominate almost all of his childhood. Moreover, he defines himself as an atheist and finds the concept of religion ridiculous. Namely, he struggles to rip apart the Jewish identity imposed on him by both his family and the American mainstream. However, once again, the "persecuting spirit" implements its practices via Winesburg. The very conservative college—representing the white Anglo-Saxon Protestant values of the American mainstream—brings up many obstacles to squeeze Marcus into the imposed Jewish identity. Just as Marcus tries to break free of the constrictions of his Jewish identity, he finds himself bound by the norms of Anglo American culture.

To conclude, the contemporary American values are in opposition with the principles promised in the foundation. Although Americanness was associated with individual freedom and self-reliance, the American politics of identity designates certain social categories by which individuals should abide. Accordingly, those trying to relocate and reinvent their place outside these categories suffer from tragic repercussions created by the "persecuting spirit" in America. Both Coleman and Marcus become victims of this phenomenon. Their objection to be crushed under social, cultural, racial and ethnic classifications threatens the social boundaries established by the American mainstream. Like the American identity, they oscillate between the promises of freedom and self-determination and the practices that nullify these promises. Thus, they suffer from the tragic ends created by the "persecuting spirit."

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