

The relationship between the process of remembering and the process of self-narration in Horlock`s The Book of Lies and Roth`s Indignation

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Abstract: In the Book of Lies by Mary Horlock and Indignation by Philip Roth, the relationship between the process of remembering and the process of self-narration is embodied creatively. As a fellow contemporary writer Julian Barnes points out: 'Memory is identity....You are what you have done; what you have done is in your memory; what you remember defines who you are; when you forget your life you cease to be, even before your death.'⁽¹⁾. This paper will examine the profound impact of memory on the two narrators (protagonists as well); Catherine and Marcus, and how they construct identity in their narrations` process. It will shed light on how both narrators allow their past to illuminate their current lives. Recollecting past memories of school, campus life, parents and friends has a great influence on narrating the two stories. Moreover, referring to historical memories of Korean War and German occupation of Guernsey is a significant factor of defining the (self) for Catherine and Marcus.

Keywords: Indignation, Book of lies, German occupation, identity, self, narration, remembering, memory, generational memory, compressed history, Nazi, maturity, adolescence, history, trauma, reliability, fallibility, missteps, war, safety obsession, suicide.

العلاقة بين عمليتي التذكر والسرد الذاتي في رواية "كتاب الكذب" لماري هورلوك ورواية "السخط" لفيليب روث

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الملخص: تتجسد العلاقة بين الذاكرة ورواية الذات في رواية كتاب الكذب لماري هورلوك ورواية السخط لفيليب روث بشكل رائع. تشير جوليان بارنز إلى أن: "الذكري هي الهوية، تتكون شخصيتك من أفعالك، وما فعلته فإنه يتخزن في ذاكرتك، ما تتذكره من ذكريات يحدد هويتك، وعندما تفقد هذه الذكريات فهذه إشارة إلى توقفك عن الحياة حتى وإن لم تمت بعد". يدرس هذا المقال الأثر العميق للذاكرة على روائي هذين الكتائين وأبطالهما بنفس الوقت (كاثرين وماركس) وكيف تشكلت هويتهما خلال عملية رواية الأحداث. إن هذا المقال سيسلط الضوء على كيفية سماح الروائيين للماضي بتشكيل حياتهما الحاضرة. إن استدعاء الذكريات الماضية كذكريات المدرسة، الحياة الجامعية، الوالدين والأصدقاء له الأثر العظيم في رواية هاتين القصتين. وبالإضافة إلى ذلك فإن الإشارة إلى ذكريات تاريخية كحرب كوريا للولايات المتحدة والاستحلال الألماني لمدينة جيرنزي لعامل مهم في تحديد الذات (الهوية) لدى كاثرين وماركس.

(1)Julian Barnes, Nothing to Be Frightened,(New York: Knopf, 2008), p.78

الكلمات المفتاحية: السخط، كتاب الكذب، الاحتلال الألماني، الهوية، الذات، الرواية، التذكر، الذاكرة، ذاكرة الأجيال، التاريخ المتزاحم، النازية، النضج، المراهقة، التاريخ، الصدمة، المصادقية، اللاعصمة، العثرات، الحرب، هوس الأمان، الانتحار.

Introduction :

Philip Roth's *Indignation* is, as Derek Parker Royal observes, 'concern[ed] with the construction of the subjects and the ways in which our stories, our voices, and our memories make us who we are'.⁽²⁾ However these lines are also true of Mary Horlock's novel, *The Book of Lies*. The retelling of the narrators' past allows them to establish their sense of self perfectly. In *Memory, Narrative, Identity: Remembering the Self*, Nicola King suggests a model of narrative that can be divided to three stages; the event, the memory of the event and the writing of the memory of the event.⁽³⁾ This third stage will be central to this paper where both narrators considered are recollecting their memories in their own narrations. In Mary Horlock's *The Book of Lies*, Catherine's first person narration is interspersed with generational memories of her family during the German occupation of Guernsey. The book, as Horlock argues, is not only about friendship and adolescents, it is also about history, how it is written, revised and rewritten.⁽⁴⁾ On the other hand Marcus, in Philip Roth's *Indignation*, goes back to the compressed history of his last year of life, particularly memories about his father, campus life and the Korean war. Consequently, the influence of both narrators' memories is striking for the formulating of their identities. In other words, reference to the past can help to explain the present, as Catherine suggests 'Once you know history, it does explain everything'.⁽⁵⁾ These lines are pertinent to both texts as the historical background in both Roth and Horlock's texts is important to the plot. Both narrator :Catherine and Marcus, are first person narrators who constantly allow their past to illuminate their current lives, though this is more complex in *Indignation* as the Marcus apparently dies within the text, creating ambiguity around the narrating voice.

Catherine and Marcus provide vivid examples of the inextricable relationship between the notion of identity (self) and remembering, to assert that they both are only 'memory upon memory, nothing but memory'.⁽⁶⁾ Therefore, this study seeks to explore this relationship in both narrations and it will be divided into

(2)Derek Parker Royal, 'What to Make of Roth's *Indignation*. Or, Serious in the Fifties`in

Philip Roth Studies, Volume 5, Number 1, 2009, p. 136

(3)Nicola King, *Memory, Narrative, Identity: Remembering the Self* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000).

(4) *The Book of Lies* by Mary Horlock, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JSolxhe26dU>, [Accessed 1 June 2013]

(5)Mary Horlock, *The Book of Lies* (Edinburg& London, Canongate: 2011), p. 5.

(6)Philip Roth , *Indignation* (London, Vanigate: 2009), p.57

three sections. Firstly, the paper will shed light on the structure of both novels: *The Book of Lies* is comprised of two inter-related narratives and *Indignation* renders a first person narration, where the narrator is no longer alive and, a third person narration in the “Historical Note” that closes the novel. Secondly, I will focus on Marcus and Catherine as narrators, dealing with the fact that they are both adolescents and thus they are highly influenced by their reading and their limited experience. Finally, the influence of parents and history upon both narrators is to be examined.

Structure of the novels :

In Mary Horlock’s novel, the story of Catherine interacts with the story of her uncle Charlie during the World War II and other historical documents of the family. Throughout the book, there is a striking mirroring between the chapters as Catherine always refers to her family’s history. The joint basis of both stories is that Catherine and her uncle think they have been betrayed by their best friends, Ray and Nicolette. The perceived deception of their friends leads both of them to be involved in tragic actions. Charlie, according to Catherine’s narrative, deceived his family, ending miserably as a result of his cruel action: ‘So I explained how Dad’s elder brother was my age when he betrayed his entire family to the Nazis, shot his father in the head and was then sent to a concentration camp.’⁽⁷⁾ Similarly, Catherine murders Nicolette and ends her narrative contemplating suicide on the Clarence Batterie, a place which was also significant in Charlie’s narration. Nevertheless, both stories are more ambiguous than this. Regarding the uncle’s death, it is still a mystery whether he betrays his family or not. This indeterminacy of the ending results from the diverse versions of the narration of his story. We are given the conflicting accounts of the German officer, Vern, and Charlie’s mother, Arlette, as well as Catherine’s version. Similarly, Catherine’s narration of her friend’s death is unclear, which highlights the mystery of the story, whether it was an accident or a willful crime. Though in the following lines, Catherine confesses her murder, the actual events on the cliff remain uncertain even by the end of the novel: vague

We stay here making the same mistakes, over and over. I’m a murderer and it’s not just my fault. I can blame the Germans, and I can blame my parents, and I can blame my parents’ parents. Don’t you see once you know your own history, it does explain everything. It turns out I was a murderer before I was even born.’⁽⁸⁾

These few lines are the most significant in the book. This is because they highlight the strong relationship between Catherine’s memories and her identity which brings to mind Roth’s claim that ‘notions of self are inextricably linked to recollection of the past, and identity is the contingent sum of one’s history’.⁽⁹⁾ In

(7)Horlock,2011, p. 35

(8) Roth, 2009, P. 5

(9)Royal, 2009, p. 133

The Book of Lies, Catherine asserts this relation by blaming her history and family for her actions in the present. Horlock points out the importance of history in formulating Catherine's identity when she states: 'the past continually interrupts the present'.⁽¹⁰⁾ In other words, the history of Catherine's family and the incidents of the Nazi occupation impinges on her present to manifest the deep influence of these generational memories upon her sense of identity.

Amusingly, Catherine's narrative interspersed with relevant historical documents as she recollects most of her father's research and implements this knowledge in her conversations. A case in point is her frequent mentioning of the crimes of Germans to her friends, such as burying slaves in bunkers: 'I also swore that it was true about the bodies buried on the cliffs and told him to be careful in his garden'.⁽¹¹⁾ Her narration tells us how she grows up under the influence of this tragic family history and reveals her intellectual capacity for using the details of the past to illuminate her present. Most of her conversation is full of historical references which reveals the immense impact of what she reads on her language. This can be illustrated in the following line when Catherine is describing her friend with an old fashioned word, Traitor: 'My so-called best friend was a liar and a Traitor who deserves everything she got. [...] Nicolette Louise Prevost had to die'.⁽¹²⁾ The word 'Traitor' is slightly anachronistic in this situation but echoes the historical narrative of wartime betrayal.

The pull of the past is further exemplified in her father's demise. According to her narration, his obsession with the wartime history of Guernsey, is a significant factor in his death (besides her mother's lateness in calling the doctor), as he is concentrating on the Occupation Memorial when his hand was cut: 'Dad had an incident when diving off the Moorings and had cut his hand quite deeply, and how the cut became infected. I said Dad hadn't noticed because he was completely focused on his (Un) Official Occupation Memorial, and unfortunately the infection spread quicker than malicious island gossip.' Block quote⁽¹³⁾ Her awareness of the experience of her father's death reveals Catherine's mature identity. It teaches her that truth is not the easiest way as she realizes at the end of the novel: 'I now understand why people prefer lies. The truth isn't easy'.⁽¹⁴⁾ Thus people, such as her mother, prefer lies because it is much easier. The mother attempts to bury the truth about her father's death in the past to hide the darkness of reality for Catherine.

(10) Mary Horlock, *The Book of Lies* by Mary Horlock, in 'youtube.com', <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JSolxhe26du>, [Accessed 1 June 2013]

(11) Horlock, 2011, p. 63

(12) Horlock, 2011, p. 2

(13) Horlock, 2011, p. 63

(14) Ibid, p. 66

Catherine is constantly affected by the historical research in her father's study. This influence tends to captivate her thoughts and shapes her language noticeably. This can be seen through the mirroring between her narration and the historical sections. For instance, Catherine finds the following in her uncle's testimony on 15th December 1965: 'We heard that Hitler wanted to bring a New Order to Europe, well here was getting a "new order" every day'.⁽¹⁵⁾ Six pages, later this appears in a different context within Catherine's narration:

I noticed his T-shirt: it was black with white letters that read "New Order." Most people think this is the name of a pop group, but as far as I know Hitler only like Opera. Anyway, in that moment, for whatever reason, I took those two little words as a sign to do exactly what Michael said. I screamed and swore my head off'.⁽¹⁶⁾

Again, she intelligently echoes her uncle's phrases from the past to activate them in her present situation. However, the intention of the phrase in both situations is different. Like Hitler who will bring New Order which is unusual to people in Guernsey, Catherine's creates a New Order while dealing with Michael, which stimulates her to behave in a way which is out of the ordinary.

Unlike Catherine's narration, Marcus' s is a seemingly straightforward narrative. All his views are related only to the history of his last year in New York and Wines burg, during the volatile period of the Korean War. Had Marcus's actions occurred in peacetime, they would not have had such detrimental consequences. Marcus narrates his story simply throughout the novel. A range of examples illustrating his straightforward narrative are provided in the text. For instance, Marcus is seen to be an obedient Jewish son. He always attributes his goodness to his father, for instance: 'He taught me how to be patient with our demanding customers'.⁽¹⁷⁾ However, this straightforward narration is suddenly undermined by Marcus's declaration of his death which adds more complexity to the story. The following lines which take place only after fifty-four pages, are the most significant ones in the novel, raising questions about the narrative voice such as whether he is really dead or if he is only hallucinating:

And even dead, as I am and have been for I don't know how long, I try to reconstruct the mores that reigned over the campus and to recapitulate the troubled efforts to elude those mores that fostered the series of mishaps ending in my death at the age of nineteen.⁽¹⁸⁾

This important passage is a strong evidence that first person narration is not always easy to follow. Though Roth invests Marcus as the only voice of the first part of the book, *Under Morphine*, he surprises us

(15)Ibid, p. 88

(16) Ibid, p. 82

(17)Roth, 2009, p.5

(18)Roth, 2009, p.54.

with Marcus's death directly after the incident of his first date with Olivia. Marcus, in these lines, asserts that he no longer exists and that the self of Marcus before us is 'nothing but memory'.⁽¹⁹⁾ Moreover, he is able to 'remember each moment of life down to its tiniest component'⁽²⁰⁾ even in his apparently liminal state. Consequently, Marcus's physical absence causes us to question his reliability. Whether he narrates all his memories from beyond his grave or he is only hallucinating under the effect of morphine, the narrative voice remains ambiguous.

Thus, as in many of his works, Roth intends to send a message that being alive means having memories and if not there is nothing. Likewise, in his other work *I Married a Communist*(1998), to emphasize the significance of voice as an evidence of his existence, Nathan narrates: 'The book of my life is a book of voice. When I ask myself how I arrived at where I am, the answer surprises me: "listening"⁽²¹⁾ Thus, according to this, listening to Marcus's voice telling his story assures us of his liveliness, despite his physical absence. This is because he is constructed of memories and while he continues to recollect memories, he continues to exist.

Adolescent narrators:

After studying the structure of both novels, it is worthwhile to explore the relationship between narrators identity and their memories. Catherine Rozier and Marcus Messner both narrate their stories from the perspective of their adolescent selves. Adolescence is a volatile period where the identity of both narrators is in flux and is easily influenced by the outside world. Catherine is seen as mature but a mess at the end of the story, after recovering her family secrets, whereas Marcus tends to adopt strong beliefs and exhibit hostile reactions. The immense impact of their sort of reading and the limited experience for both narrators with respects to their fallibility will be studied in detailed in the following paragraphs.

'My name is Catherine Rozier, please don't call me Cathy. If you do I'll jump': Catherine Rozier

As an adolescent, Catherine Rozier's story is a narrative from the perspective of a volatile and vulnerable individual. Thus, her memory rapidly absorbs the history of Guernsey, and the secrets found in her father's papers as she constantly refers to the past to illuminate her present. In this text, Catherine's identity is conspicuously constructed under the effects of all her father's historical secrets of the family. She is greatly affected by her reading which reveals her gradual maturity throughout the text. While Marcus is also deeply

(19)Ibid, p. 57

(20)Ibid,p. 54-55

(21)Philip Roth, *I Married a Communist* (1998), in Royal, 2009, p. 134

(22)Horlock, 2011, p. 1

influenced by his reading, their chosen texts are quite different. She reads her father's historical documents in the study: 'I've read every book in this house, every letter, every file, and every scrap of paper left, but there are still some questions I can't answer.'⁽²³⁾ This sort of reading reveals the maturity of her personality and the coherence of her narration despite her young age. Catherine's gradual maturity is a result of her awareness of the events during the occupation and the deception of some of her family members throughout the difficult period of the war. These dark secrets are enough to create the pessimistic insight in Catherine's present life. Throughout the book, Catherine's fertile imagination and immersion in history enables her to refer to the past to illuminate her present. For example, in the description of her mother, she makes a comparison between her mother and the islanders during the German occupation when she states:

I do admire her, because she kept up appearances and pretended things were fine, when they really weren't. It was a bit like when Germans invaded Guernsey: most islanders tried to ignore them and carry on like normal. This is called [...] cold blood [...] and it's a shame Dad won't see how she's transformed the business⁽²⁴⁾

These lines draw attention to the deep influence Catherine's reading has upon her. She learns all the facts about the Germans from her father's documents which are rich in family secrets. Reading her narration, one notices the strong coherence of her speech and how she inserts the pieces of history to interrupt her present. However, Catherine's constant references to historical documents can also be considered questionable. This is because her voice is the only one narrating the story. Thus, she has the option to include and exclude any information she desires.

Besides her capacity for remembering important pieces of history, the gradual maturity of Catherine is revealed in her astute understanding of people. However, her perceptiveness seems to be sharper following the traumatic incidents of the death of her father and Nicolette. Nicola King argues trauma such as death or birth can create 'a marked stage' which divides the pattern of life into a 'before' and 'after', and that tragic experiences such as war or abuse can make the relation between the two selves more problematic.⁽²⁵⁾ Therefore, the great impact of Catherine's trauma can be seen in her cynical understanding of her surroundings. Unlike Marcus whose misunderstanding is the major driving force in his story, she knows herself and others very well and can describe her feelings creatively:

I knew that our friendship wasn't equal. I suppose it was more like a marriage, where one person is always more in control. Nic was beautiful, so she could do and say whatever she wanted. I didn't think of

(23)Ibid, p. 324

(24) Ibid, p.27

(25) King, 2000, p. 13

myself as weak or under her thumb, I just thought I was happy. I'd always said and done everything right up until then but I hadn't felt alive.⁽²⁶⁾

These lines show Catherine's incisive self-awareness. Distinguishing the difference between happiness and being alive is very mature. She successfully conveys an accurate image of the nature of the relationship between herself and her friend.

However, Catherine is occasionally seen to be out of her depth despite her shrewd understanding of people's behaviour and family secrets. The sense of adolescence in Catherine is manifested clearly in her relationship with Nicolette when she constantly attempts to impress her, by drinking too much or meeting boys for instance, to maintain their friendship.

Unlike Marcus, who is naively honest, even when it is detrimental to him, she prefers to lie and manipulate the truth to secure her position. A clear example of this is her creation of a romantic scene between herself and Mr. McCracken: 'He told me I was precious and special [...] He was leaning close ... and I could feel his breath on me.'⁽²⁷⁾⁽²⁸⁾ Here, she has 'to twist the truth to make it interesting'.⁽²⁹⁾ This, in turn, sheds light on Catherine's deviousness as she knows intellectually how to evade an embarrassing situation. Instead of being blamed by Nicolette for leaving her alone she manipulates the essence of the conversation to make it appealingly salacious. Though, she admits that this is a lie, it does not exempt her from the charge of unreliability. Bearing in mind her manipulative nature, it is hard to trust her completely as a narrator.

'[T]wisting the truth to make it interesting'⁽³⁰⁾ has become a new fashion in many postmodern works. As such, Catherine's narration cannot be entirely reliable, particularly after exploring her adolescence and the manipulative nature of her identity. Brian McHale's description of postmodern fiction, attests to the fact that novels such as *The Book of Lies* or *Indignation* are suspect in terms of reliability:

[E]very thing in our culture tends to deny reality and promote unreality, in the interests of maintaining high level of consumption. It is no longer official reality which is coercive, but official unreality; and postmodernist fiction, instead of resisting this coercive unreality, acquiesces in it, or even celebrates it.⁽³¹⁾

This passage is a clear indication of the huge change that has occurred in fiction. Instead of rejecting the unreality or, in other words, lies, postmodern fiction has welcomed this new trend and even encouraged it. It is

(26)Horlock, 2011, p. 31

(27)Ibid, p. 103

(28)Ibid, p. 103

(29)Ibid, p. 102

(30) Ibid, p.102

(31)McHale, Brian, *Postmodernist Fiction* (London: Methuen, 1987), p. 219.

unlike Dickens' s works, for instance, where the truth is always favorable and the story has a coherent ending. These contemporary works are more ambiguous, indeterminate and unreliable.

The previous lines relate to both texts in this study. Both Catherine and Marcus's narration is expected to play around with the truth due to their young age. Partly due to their youth, fallibility is more like to exist in their narrations according to Greta Olson's account of Nunning's model, in her essay, "Reconsidering Unreliability": 'Fallible narrators' perceptions can be impaired because they are children with limited education or experience, as in *Huckleberry Finn*; or, as in the case of Marlow from *Lord Jim*, their reports can seem insufficient because their sources of information are biased and incomplete.'⁽³²⁾ The first sign of fallibility, in these lines, is central to Catherine's narration. Her fallibility is indicated in the gap in comprehension which is seen in her recounting the meetings she has observed between Mr McCracken and Nicolette's mother, Therese. Catherine appears initially to be unaware of the nature of the relationship between the two. Early in the story they exchange admiration and smiles but this does not draw her attention: 'Mr McCracken smiled at Therese with what I thought was sympathy'.⁽³³⁾ However, later on, she fully understands their affection after seeing them together again: 'I knew they weren't talking about me because Mr Mac was smiling. Then he brushed the hair from Therese's face. Obviously they were saying important, adult things to each other, things I was too young to understand'.⁽³⁴⁾ Here, Catherine's memory of the first meeting between Therese and Mr McCracken, which she did not understand at the time is relevant as helps illuminate this later encounter, while this later meeting retrospectively sheds light on the earlier encounter.

Catherine's limited experience in life besides her tense emotions as adolescent leads her to be involved in tragic incidents. The major crisis for Catherine occurs after her friend's death which creates a 'marked stage'⁽³⁵⁾ in her life which reveals her confused identity. Mary Horlock employs the idea of "before" and "after" selves which was discussed above. In the very opening lines of the novel, Catherine states: 'My name is Catherine Rozier, please don't call me Cathy. If you do I'll jump'.⁽³⁶⁾ These lines indicate that she is in a serious crisis, even considering suicide. Her unusual instructions about how to address her imply she has negative associations with her "Cathy" identity as she is ready to kill herself if anyone calls her that. However, after some pages, when she remembers her first meeting with Nicolette, it becomes clear that this nickname was initially a welcome sign of inclusion. Therefore, these naming instructions indicate the severe crisis of her

(32) Olson, Grace, 'Reconsidering Unreliability: Fallible and Untrustworthy Narrators' in *Narrative*(11.1), 2003, p.101

(33)Horlock, 2011, p.97.

(34)Ibid, p. 248

(35)King, ,2000,P. 13.

(36)Horlock, 2011, P. 1.

identity which leads her to stand on Clarence Batterie contemplating suicide in order to escape the struggles she faces in life. Catherine, here, wants to increase the gap between her 'Cathy' and 'Catherine' selves to assert her new individuality, separate from her friend's existence.

" I didn't understand Elwyn, [...], didn't understand Olivia- I understood no one and nothing":⁽³⁷⁾ Marcus Messner

In *Indignation*, Roth presents Marcus with a great intelligence; he is a diligent student getting As in most of his courses. Particularly, he is well read, having memorized the work of Bertrand Russell. Compared to Catherine's narration, Marcus's adolescent sense tends to be higher and clearer in his narration. For instance, his reactions to incidents are sharper and more hostile and his knowledge is greatly confined by what he learnt from his father. His main sources of knowledge are his father and his reading with no understanding of life experience. In other words, his bookishness is apparently impractical for life as he lacks social skills and experiences exaggerated emotions towards people or situations which has detrimental effects.

The reason behind Marcus's passion for study is to achieve high marks and avoid being drafted to the Korean War, and his reading has a great impact on his beliefs. He learns from Bertrand Russell how to be 'an atheist' who 'don't need any God'.⁽³⁸⁾ Thus, he includes some quotations from this British philosopher's essay "Why I Am Not a Christian" in his interview with the Dean which reflects his strong moral beliefs. His quoting from Russell's essay is a clear indication of his hatred to be objected by the Dean. This, in turn, causes his hostile reaction to the Dean: 'This essay and others like it contain Russell's argument not only against the Christian conception of God but against the conception of God held by all the great religions of the world, every one of which Russell finds both untrue and harmful'⁽³⁹⁾ The above lines illustrate perfectly the great impact of reading in shaping his strong principles, such as his refusal to attend fraternities because of his atheism. Moreover, it reveals his aggressiveness to the Dean. Marcus aggressively tries to defend himself and his indignity, as Roth notes in one of his TV interviews⁽⁴⁰⁾ „Marcus's hatred of being contradicted causes him to answer all the Dean's questions with frustration and uncontrolled emotions and this results in his expulsion and eventual death in the battlefield. Many Long paragraphs

In addition, the previous example illustrates the aggressive reaction of Marcus towards any authority or ideology with which he disagrees. He repeatedly lets his anger get the better of him. Moreover, this scene

(37) Roth, 2009, p. 74

(38) Roth, 2009, p. 100

(39) Ibid, p. 101

(40) Indignation by Philip Roth, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rLbhzf6Fx_A [accessed 15 May 2013]

reveals at the same time, his lack of experience in life, particularly, when he states with a great anger: 'I was a straight A- student. Why wasn't that good enough for everybody? I worked on weekends. Why wasn't that good enough for everybody?'⁽⁴¹⁾ These lines are a direct indication that his conception of life's matters is not full. Thus, due to his young age, Marcus is a vivid example of a protagonist with limited knowledge as Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan implies that '[a] young narrator would be a clear case of limited knowledge (and understanding)'.⁽⁴²⁾ As such, his young age is a main attribute of his limited experience which can be problematic in terms of fallibility. Following Greta Olson's argument that fallible narrator can be determined by 'making individual mistakes' or leaving 'open informational gaps that need to be filled',⁽⁴³⁾ making mistakes is a direct sign of fallibility. Marcus's mistakes are abundant in the text although they are small and mundane in comparison to Catherine's.

Misreading Olivia's sexual advances on their first date is one of the major ironies in the book which reveals his limited experience. He attributes her behaviour to the fact that she is amoral due to experiencing her parents' divorce which makes no sense. This unfair judgment derives from the fact that he has been raised to believe that divorce is unpleasant thing which deprives children from acting rightly. This can be seen in his happiness when his mother decides not to divorce his father: 'I filled up with tears [...] I had to stop for a while to find my voice and to recover from having been reduced by her words to being the tiny creature who is nothing but its need for perpetual nurture'.⁽⁴⁴⁾ This example is, in turn, another instance of his unreliability due to his exaggerated emotions. Marcus unknowingly confesses his confined experience in Olivia's case when he states: 'As far as I knew, girls didn't get fired up with the desire like that'.⁽⁴⁵⁾ This highlights his immaturity as he is incapable of understanding her behavior in their first date properly: 'Nor could I believe that what Olivia did she did because she enjoyed doing it'.⁽⁴⁶⁾ It tells us how naive and childish he is.

Although Marcus is honest and fully himself when he is narrating his story - unlike the creatively wild Catherine - he is hopelessly naive, almost to the extent of unreliability. For instance, he fails to recognize flowers as roses when Olivia brings him some at the hospital: 'I know concrete. I know asphalt. I don't know

(41)Roth,2009,p.84

(42) Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics (London: Methuen, 1983) ,p.100

(44) Roth, 2009, , p. 170

(45) Ibid, p. 58.

(46)Ibid, p.58

flowers⁽⁴⁷⁾ This artlessness and unawareness of emotional affairs demonstrates his lack of experience in life and particularly in romantic situations.

Misconception people is central in Marcus's narration as a form of his limited experience: 'I didn't understand Elwyn, didn't understand Flusser, didn't understand my father, didn't understand Olivia- I understood no one and nothing'.⁽⁴⁸⁾ These lines illustrate a clear contrast between Marcus and Catherine in terms of understanding. Catherine, understands her surroundings perfectly, especially the nature of her relationship with Nicolette (as discussed above). Marcus, on the other hand, is incapable of understanding most of the people he encounters and this causes him to change his accommodation more than once. His failure to cohabit with his roommates (silent Elwyn and cruel Fussel), and others such as Dean Caudwell and Olivia is a major factor in directing the plot of *Indignation*. Evasion is the only and the 'smartest' solution for Marcus's problems:

The smartest thing for me to do was to get the hell out of Winesburg and get myself back to New Jersey. [...] Leave the Flussers and the Cottlers and the Caudwells behind you, leave Olivia behind you, and head home by train tomorrow, home where there is only a befuddled butcher to deal with...⁽⁴⁹⁾

However, the first scene of escape takes place very early in the novel when he leaves his father's constant anxiety. This, perfectly, draws the attention to Marcus's dislike of confrontation. With all those people, he cannot stand the situation and lets his anger get better of him which in turn illustrates his unstable behavior as an adolescent. Though he still remembers the severe memories and the negative association of his father which led him to escape the house, he prefers to go back to this unpleasantness, rather than staying in an unendurable situation in Winesburg. Through recounting all these memories, Marcus's identity is clearly established and we can understand him as a naïve young man who is undone by his inability to compromise.

The influence of parents/ family history on each narrator.

The parents' memories are a significant factor in constructing the identity of both narrators. Marcus's memory of his parents, particularly, his father is a contributory factor in his tragic fate. Moreover, Catherine's obsession with her parents' secrets is central to her sense of identity as she feels affinity with them both, particularly her mother.

In *Indignation*, the most significant factor in Marcus's life is his father's influence. All Marcus's knowledge is engaged with his youthful memories of New York and his father's kosher butcher shop, as he

(47)Ibid, p. 127

(48)Roth, 2009, p.74

(49)Ibid, p. 199

has no other social activity and divides his time between the shop and self-study. Even when far away from his father, Marcus's mind is preoccupied with his father's memory. The following lines are concrete indication of this as he depicts the battlefield in Korea through analogy to the blood in his father's butcher shop:

I didn't really care about becoming a lawyer. I hardly knew what a lawyer did. I wanted to get A's [...] and not fight with the father I loved, whose wielding of the long razor- sharp knives and the hefty meat cleaver had made him my first fascinating hero as a little boy. I envisioned my father's knives and cleavers whenever I read about the bayonet combat against the Chinese in Korea [...] I knew what blood is.⁽⁵⁰⁾

Marcus's interpretation is confined only to his memory of the kosher butcher shop. Even his perception of the bloody battles is seen through the image of the butcher shop. This highlights the crucial role of his father in constructing his identity. However, the influence of his father's memory is an indirect factor in Marcus's death. The father repeatedly warns Marcus against committing tiny mistakes because they can lead to terrible ends: 'the tiniest misstep can have tragic consequences'.⁽⁵¹⁾ However, Marcus rebels against his father's over-anxious behaviour and enrolls at Winesburg College as frustrated reaction to this. He leaves his father's oppressive house only to encounter worse tragedy. He dies after being drafted in the Korean War.

Though the father's exaggerated care of his son's safety seems ridiculous, his warnings that the 'tiniest misstep can have tragic consequences' turns out to be correct.⁽⁵²⁾ This statement seems to convey the voice of the author who wants to teach us that mistakes, even if they are very small, can have hugely negative implications. This obsession seems exaggerated at first, but after reading the text, the miserable consequences of the tiniest things are acutely apparent. The memories of his father's extreme anxieties leads indirectly to the missteps he becomes involved in with a range of people.

Towards the end of the book, Marcus's mother is seen to follow her husband in warning their son Like his father, she is obsessed with her Marcus's safety. However, though Marcus's mother's role is almost passive throughout the narration, she interferes in relation to Olivia. The last time that Marcus sees his mother, she lectures him about the danger of feelings upon his life:

The Messners aren't just a family of butchers. They're a family of shouters and a family of screamers and a family of putting their foot down and banging their heads against the wall[...]. Don't you be. You be *greater* than your feelings. I don't demand this of you- life does. Otherwise you'll be check washed away be feelings.[...] Feelings can be life's biggest problem. Feelings can play the most terrible tricks.⁽⁵³⁾

(50) Roth, 2009, p. 35.

(51) Roth, 2009, p. 12

(52)Roth, 2009, p. 12

(53)Roth, p. 175

The passage is an indication of the direct role his mother plays in shaping his views of life despite its smallness. Here she points to the history of the Messners and how emotions get better of them in many cases. A case in point is herself, when she is nearly divorced due to the submission to her heart. As such, she asks Marcus to neglect his own emotions towards Olivia because she claims that feelings are always problematic. Again, these lines reveals that it is not only his father who seems to be obsessed of his safety but also his mother.

In *The Book of Lies*, unlike Marcus's parents who are seen very close to their son to the extent of exaggeration, Catherine's parents are very far from her and have no idea of what she goes through in her life. Therefore, unlike Marcus who decides to be away from such anxious parents, she desires to be close to them. Her constant reference to her father's memory is a strong evidence of her wish to be attached to him. Towards the end of the novel, a number of secrets are revealed for Catherine. The knowledge of these secrets asserts her dark, mature views on life when she discovers the bitter truth of her mother and realizes that she is as guilty as herself, but for different reasons:

You must realise that there are quite a few secrets that I've kept for you. It's here in black and white if you read between the lines. Dad's heart stopped working for a very particular reason and I know that you lied. Did he leave a note? Did you get rid of it? How long did you have to wait before calling Dr.Senner?⁽⁵⁴⁾

Catherine, finally, realises the truth about her mother calling the doctor intentionally late to take revenge on her husband. Her mother's manipulative nature causes Catherine to distrust her: 'Mum didn't understand me and I wasn't sure I could trust her. That was the first time I'd said it out loud, to anyone.'⁽⁵⁵⁾ However, Catherine and her mother are shown to resemble each other as they both lie and take revenge.

This highlights the great influence of Catherine's mother upon her which can be seen in the sense of loss she feels after the trauma. Catherine is entirely lost by the end of her narrative and, eventually she intends to commit a suicide to get away from the guilt that consumes her after her friend's death, and after discovering the unpleasant truth about her mother. At the same time, like many adolescents, she wants to attract her mother's attention with this extreme act:

I can't make these decisions on my own. I'm in your hands. If you come now, to Clarence Batterie, You might just catch me. I promise I'll listen to what you've got to say. One of us might still get on the boat, but at least we'd both be free.⁽⁵⁶⁾

(54)Roth, 2009, p. 324.

(55)Ibid, p. 64

(56)Horlock, 2011, p. 324.

Catherine here sympathetically explains her strong need for her mother which all young people share. After all the deviousness she exhibits, she puts her own life under her mother's control, she begs for her mother's help to rebuild their relationship after sorting out all the lies and secrets.

Conclusion

Despite the clear contrasts between both narrators, they similarly suffer tragic fates due to their mistakes. Nevertheless, Catherine's faults are seemingly far greater than Marcus's missteps. Marcus makes a series of trivial mistakes, such as his uncontrolled anger towards the Dean, resulting in his being drafted to the war. Catherine's faults, though fewer, are more severe, ending in the death of her friend and her own despair. Although Marcus's mistakes are more trivial, due to the period in which they occur their consequences are more damning.

In *The Book of Lies and Indignation* the relationship between the process of remembering and the process of self-narration is embodied creatively in Horlock's and Roth's texts. As a fellow contemporary writer Julian Barnes points out: 'Memory is identity....You are what you have done; what you have done is in your memory; what you remember defines who you are; when you forget your life you cease to be, even before your death.'⁽⁵⁷⁾ The generational memories of Catherine's family and the compressed memories of Marcus's last year have a vital role in establishing their sense of identity. This asserts their liveliness in both texts even in Marcus's narration, though he is assumed to be dead. They are still capable to recollect their own memories of their academic life, friends, parents and the great history of their current time, and they employ these memories in their first person narration.

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