

Self-Abdication and Otherness in Philip Roth's *The Human Stain* (2000)**Assia Mohdeb**Department of English, Faculty of Arts and Languages
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Identity, in one of its understanding, signifies a set of characteristics that make up a person's ethical faithfulness to, identification with, and pride of one's origin, tradition, and culture. Remaining true to one's identity and being faithful to the core values of one's culture is a complicated matter when it comes to a black living in white society like America, where color and racial identity are rudimentary prerequisites in self-definition and naming. Philip Roth's novel entitled *The Human Stain* (2000) shows how some black figures undress their black identity to wear the prestigious white one to go onward with life as full selves, to have access to all the privileges the whites enjoy, and, above all, to live without the specter of race and the decisiveness of epidermal signs. The novel calls into question and revision such essentialist notions as other, class, and race by describing the crises the subject or self undergoes in the light of racial prejudices, center-periphery relations, and class stereotypes. The present paper, then, addresses the act of self-abdication the protagonist, Silk Coleman, carries out to overstep the feeling of otherness and to dodge racial discrimination. The paper looks into the notions of selfhood and Otherness by negotiating the definition of the self and the distortion it undergoes in its encounter with the Other. The study aims at revealing, primarily, the effects of Black racial-passing, a common phenomenon in American society of the first half of the twentieth century, on familial relationships and cultural heritage. It also reveals the weight of gender and class discrimination in the individual's identity formation and well-being.

Key words: Other, racial-passing, self, self-abdication, *The Human Stain***Cites as:** Mohdeb, A., & Mammeri, S. (2019). Self-Abdication and Otherness in Philip Roth's *The Human Stain* (2000). *Arab World English Journal for Translation & Literary Studies*, 3 (1) 178-189. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.24093/awejtls/vol3no1.14>