



## Indignazione

*Philip Roth , Norman Gobetti (Traduttore)*

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È il 1951 America, il secondo anno della guerra di Corea. Marcus Messner, un giovane serio, studioso e ligio alle leggi, di Newark, New Jersey, sta cominciando il secondo anno di università in un campus rurale e conservatore dell'Ohio: il Winesburg College. Perché ha deciso di frequentare il Winesburg invece del college della sua città, a cui si era inizialmente iscritto? Perché il padre, il risoluto e laborioso macellaio del quartiere, pare impazzito: impazzito per la paura e l'apprensione di fronte ai pericoli della vita adulta, ai pericoli del mondo, ai pericoli che vede incombere a ogni angolo sul suo amato figliolo. Come spiega al figlio la longanime madre messa a dura prova dal marito, è una paura che nasce dall'amore e dall'orgoglio che il padre prova per lui. Ciò non toglie che Marcus cova una rabbia troppo grande per poter ancora sopportare di vivere con i genitori. Li abbandona e, lontano da Newark, nel college del Midwest, si deve districare fra le consuetudini e le repressioni di un altro mondo americano.

## Indignazione Details

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# From Reader Review Indignazione for online ebook

## Sandra says

Ho letto in qualche commento che Markus Messner, il protagonista di Indignazione, sia in un certo senso avvicinabile a Holden Caulfield: anche lui un'anima pura, un idealista "indignato" che si scaglia contro il mondo bigotto degli adulti americani. Markus è uno studente modello, sempre primo nei voti, figlio devoto di un padre ebreo macellaio kosher che lo adora, tanto da esasperarlo con i suoi soffocanti controlli fino a spingerlo ad allontanarsi dal college che frequenta a Newark, dove è nato e vissuto, per trasferirsi a Winesburg, nel cuore dell'America più provinciale e tradizionalista. Da lì inizieranno i problemi per lui che ha le idee chiare su cosa vuol fare e chi vuole diventare, desidera soltanto studiare e laurearsi in giurisprudenza, non si inserisce nell'ambiente delle confraternite del college, non vuole partecipare alla squadra di baseball, non riesce a condividere la stanza con chi lo importuna o gli impedisce di studiare e soprattutto inizia una relazione con Olivia, una studentessa che per la sua famiglia è agli antipodi della donna ideale, è figlia di divorziati, ha problemi psichiatrici ed ha tentato il suicidio. Olivia non ha remore sessuali come la maggior parte delle ragazze del college nell'anno 1951, e tutto ciò provoca in Markus una reazione forte di rifiuto verso la bigotteria del college, del suo corpo dirigente e degli studenti, una "indignazione" che lo lascerà tragicamente in solitudine e che, per circostanze beffardamente banali, lo consegnerà in balia dell'evento terribile in corso in quegli anni, la guerra di Corea, che tante morti ha causato all'America. Ebbene, più che ad Holden Caulfield Markus mi ha fatto pensare alla tragica figura di un eroe mitologico, al grande Achille figlio di Peleo, eroe puro e indistruttibile che muore per una banale ferita al tallone, ed "all'incomprensibile modo in cui le scelte più accidentali, più banali, addirittura più comiche, producono gli esiti più sproporzionati": un argomento su cui riflettere, un esempio di vita da cui trarre mille spunti, uno dei tanti romanzi di Philip Roth che lasciano il segno.

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## George K. says

Βαθμολογία: 9/10

Αυτ' είναι το πρώτο βιβλίο του Φίλιπ Ροθ που διαβάζω και, ειλικρινά, δεν ξέρω αν θα μπορούσα να κ'νω καλύτερη αρχή. Ήχω άλλα τρία-τέσσερα βιβλία του στην βιβλιοθήκη μου, έχω σκεφτεί να γνωρίσω τον συγγραφέα διαβάζοντας το πρώτο του βιβλίο, το "Αντίο, Κολόμβους" (ήνας μικρός τ'μος που αποτελείται από μια νουβέλα και πέντε διηγήματα), όμως τελικά χθες αποφάσισα να αγοράσω το "Αγανάκτηση" και να αποτελ'σει αυτό το βιβλίο την πρώτη μου επαφή με τον Φίλιπ Ροθ. Απόσο βλέπω στο Goodreads δεν είναι στα πέντε πιο πολυδιαβασμένα έργα του και απόσο καταλαβαίνω πως να μην αν'κει και ακριβώς στα κορυφαία του. Όμως, προσωπικά, με έφησε απίλυστα ικανοποιημένο.

Περ'ληψη: Αμερική, 1951. Δεύτερος χρόνος του πολέμου της Κορέας. Ο Μάρκους Μσνερ, μελετητής, νομοτάγης και παθιασμένος νεαρός από το Νιούαρκ του Νιού Τζέρσι, είναι δευτεροετής φοιτητής στο συντηρητικό, θρησκευτικόν καταβολόν πανεπιστήμιο του Γουίνσμπουργκ, στο Οχάιο. Γιατ' δεν βρ'σκεται στο τοπικόν πανεπιστήμιο του Νιούαρκ που είχε αρχικά εγγραφεί; Αιτία είναι ο πατέρας του, ρωμαλός χασπής της γειτονίας, αφοσιωμένος στη σκληρή δουλειά, που δεχ'ναι να μην μπορέ' να ελ'γξει τον φόβο και την ανησυχία του για τους κινδύνους που πιστεύει ότι απειλούν τον αγαπημένο του γιο: τους κινδύνους της ενόλικης ζωής και του κ'σμου, που

παραμονε?ουν σε κ?θε γωνι?. ?πως εξηγε? στον Μ?ρκους η μητ?ρα του, θ?μα και η ?δια αυτ?ς της παρ?λογης συμπεριφορ?ς, οι φ?βοι του πατ?ρα οφε?λονται στην αγ?πη και την υπερηφ?νεια που αισθ?νεται γι' αυτ?ν. ?σως να ε?ναι ?τσι, αλλ? αυτ? η κατ?σταση κ?νει τον Μ?ρκους να αγανακτε? τ?σο που δεν αντ?χει πια τη συμβ?ωση με τους γονε?ς του. Εγκαταλε?πει το πατρικ? του, και, μακρι? απ? το Νιο?αρκ, σ' ?να πανεπιστ?μιο των Μεσοδυτικ?ν Πολιτει?ν, αναζητ? τον δρ?μο του μ?σα στο πλά?σιο που ορ?ζουν τα ?θη και οι περιορισμο? εν?ς διαφορετικο? αμερικανικο? κ?σμου.

Ε?χα ακο?σει τ?σα πολλ? λ?για για τον Φ?λιπ Ροθ -περισσ?τερο θετικ? παρ? αρνητικ?- , το κοιν? του στην Ελλ?δα ε?ναι αρκετ? μεγ?λο και... "φανατικ?", ?τσι ?πρεπε π?ση θυσ?α να τον γνωρ?σω επιτ?λους, με ?να μικρ? σε ?κταση μυθιστ?ρημα, αλλ? ?σως χαρακτηριστικ? δε?γμα της γραφ?ς και της σκ?ψης του. Ε, λοιπ?ν, ξετρελ?θηκα. Η ιστορ?α ε?ναι απλ? και ανθρ?πινη, μ?σω αυτ?ς ο Ροθ θ?γει πολλ? θ?ματα και παθογ?νειες της Αμερικ?νικης κοινων?ας της δεκαετ?ας του '50, αλλ? και διαχρονικ? ζητ?ματα ?πως η ανεξαρτητοπο?ηση των ν?ων, η σεξουαλικ? αφ?πνιση, και π?ει λ?γοντας. Την διαφορ? ?μως την κ?νει, φυσικ?, η υπ?ροχη γραφ?, ?τσι νευρ?δης, πυκν? και οξυδερκ?ς ?πως ε?ναι, με κρυφ? νο?ματα και μην?ματα, με υπ?γεια ειρωνε?α και λεπτ? α?σθηση του χιο?μορ. Και ο μοναδικ?ς του τρ?πος να περιγρ?φει σκ?ψεις και καταστ?σεις. Πραγματικ?, ?γινα ?να με τον βασικ? πρωταγωνιστ?, και ας ?χω διαφορετικ? ιδιοσυγκρασ?α και τρ?πο σκ?ψης.

Ε?μαι σ?γουρος ?τι ο Ροθ ?χει γρ?ψει αρκετ? καλ?τερα μυθιστορ?ματα: Το βλ?πω στις κριτικ?ς απ? δω και απ? κει. Και αυτ? το γεγον?ς με κ?νει χαρο?μενο, γιατί αν μου ?ρεσε τ?σο πολ? το "Αγαν?κτηση", δεν μπορ? να φανταστ? τι εντ?πωση θα μου κ?νουν θηρ?α ?πως το "Αμερικ?νικο ειδ?λλιο" ? το "Το ανθρ?πινο στ?γμα" (και ?λλα πολλ?). Να σας πω την αλ?θεια, μου ?ρεσε π?ρα μα π?ρα πολ? ο τρ?πος γραφ?ς του, που και η ιστορ?α να μην ?λεγε πολλ? πρ?γματα, σ?γουρα θα ?μενα και π?λι ικανοποιημ?νος απ? το βιβλ?ο. ?μως εδ? μου ?ρεσε και η ιστορ?α. Και ο πρωταγωνιστικ?ς χαρακτ?ρας σε πολ? μεγ?λο βαθμ?. Οπ?τε, ναι, δεν υπ?ρχει λ?γος να μην β?λω π?ντε αστερ?κια στο Goodreads. Και το μ?νο σ?γουρο ε?ναι ?τι μ?σα στις επ?μενες μ?ρες θα προμηθευτ? και ?λλα βιβλ?α του. Ε?ναι και πολλ?, παν?θεμα τα!

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## Amirsaman says

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## Lisa says

### Reading Indignation

There is some anger in each young generation - an urgent need to break free from parental values, and from a dominant society that doesn't match the visions adolescents have of a better future.

When Philip Roth takes on adolescent rage in his old age, it is of course going to be about overprotective fathers, oppressive religious rituals versus atheism, male sexuality in detail, difficulties with authorities in

general, an American dream gone wrong.

Yet, despite the particular circumstances of the novel, set during the Korean War, it tells a story as universal and as timeless as human coming-of-age. Try to force the next generation to satisfy parental dreams, and disaster is going to strike. It is as inevitable as a Greek myth. Because they try to prevent the oracle's words from coming true, the Greek heroes set up the conditions that make the oracle come true. Because parents try to shield their children from evil, they cause a lot of problems for them.

There is some truth in that still, and Roth was a master of irony, so the topic suits him.

Recommended to those who see their children set sails for new horizons...

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## **?ntellecta says**

Philip Roth tells an interesting story. The book is only 200 pages long, but nevertheless it is very complex, multi-faceted, fluid, tensed and it touches the reader deeply. Philip Roth has created a story where the atmosphere and feelings of this time are perfectly written. An exceptionally good book and it is consequently absolutely recommendable.

"Denn die Schwäche anderer Menschen kann dich ebenso besiegen wie ihre Stärke, Schwache Leute sind nicht harmlos."

S. 153

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## **Davide says**

**«Non scherzare, Markie. Non scherzare su tuo padre. Questa cosa ha tutte le caratteristiche di una tragedia.»**

Nella serie degli ultimi libri – la fase tarda di Roth – che ha portato all'attuale silenzio, questo è uno di quelli buoni. Probabilmente non all'altezza del periodo d'oro ma pur sempre una lettura coinvolgente, dal ritmo incalzante e con alcuni momenti straordinari (su tutti, il primo colloquio con il decano della sezione maschile e le descrizioni del lavoro nella macelleria *kosher* del padre).

Serietà, rigore, responsabilità, veemenza, e *quindi* indignazione segnano Marcus Messner, un bravo ragazzo ebreo di Newark («Ecco cosa imparavo da mio padre e cosa mi piaceva imparare da lui: si fa quel che va fatto»), che passa dal piccolo college locale ad uno più grande, nel cuore del mondo *gentile*, a Winesburg nell'Ohio (chiaro omaggio a Sherwood Anderson), per liberarsi dalla sorveglianza dell'amato padre, diventato insopportabilmente ossessivo negli anni della guerra di Corea, che incombe con il suo orrore.

L'ossessione del padre rimanda anche all'ossessione della vecchiaia di Philip Roth per l'ossessione americana anni Cinquanta.

Il titolo viene dall'inno cinese, imparato da bambino, quando i ragazzi imparavano gli inni delle forze armate e anche quelli degli alleati nella seconda guerra mondiale, come appunto i cinesi, diventati ora i nemici in Corea. Inno che Marcus canta dentro di sé come una barriera durante le funzioni religiose (alle quali è

costretto ad assistere e che rifiuta totalmente, da «fervente ateo» seguace di Bertrand Russell) e dal quale estrae in particolare la parola indignazione: «la più bella parola della nostra lingua».

Abbastanza presto, senza accenni precedenti, si assiste alla (view spoiler).

E alla fine (view spoiler)

Sono proprio la serietà e l'intensità e la responsabilità che portano inevitabilmente alla tragedia.

E - al di là dei brani da antologia citati prima - segno della grandezza di Roth direi che rimane la capacità di farci provare contemporaneamente ilarità e ansia; e di farci partecipi - di nuovo, nello stesso tempo - sia della ricerca di rigore di Marcus sia dell'esplosione del suo desiderio, dello sfrenamento della sessualità e dell'individualità.

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## **Cymru Roberts says**

It wouldn't be a Philip Roth book without some raining semen.

This time the splooj comes not from a chronic masturbator, but a lil goodie two-shoes named Markie Boy. Him, and a couple of frat dooshbegs that raid the girls' dorms at a small college in a display of human atrocity similar to the Apache ambush in *Blood Meridian*. Marcus is like the Anti-Portnoy, repressed instead of indulgent. Both of them come from strict Jewish households and both have parents that have inculcated them with extreme neuroses. DOESN'T IT SOUND FUN, KIDDIES?!

God knows why Roth wrote this book. He wrote a page a day (how many words is a page?) for about sixty years and then he quit. What an artiste. I vacillated between hating this book, liking it, thinking the writing was good, thinking the writing sucked. Roth writing as Marky boy wasn't quite believable (I mean who calls their own cock a penis? What a tool.) Then it ended and I still don't quite know what to make of it. Can't tell if it was just Roth going through the motions or if it just flat out sucked. Roth is a good enough technical writer in any event to make the book a quick read.

I bet if you turned this in for a college project you'd get an A-.

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## **Lawyer says**

### **INDIGNATION, the novel, and an opinion regarding literary criticism**

Philip Roth's twenty-ninth book "Indignation" is one of those novels about which some critics are a bit, well, indignant. They're indignant that Roth didn't produce another masterpiece of the same degree as "American Pastoral," "The Human Stain," or "The Plot Against America," to name a few.

They also are a bit indignant that Roth once again addresses the same issues he has repeatedly addressed in previous works, that is, overcoming the dominance of family, growing up Jewish, rebelling against family tradition to gain autonomy, the eternal quest for sexual initiation, love, loss, and inevitably death. Of course, Roth is dealing more frequently with death as he contemplates his own mortality. That's not unnatural

considering the man is now seventy-nine, born March 19, 1933. You might check my math. I'm not getting any younger either.

Marcus Messner has a lot about which to be indignant. He is nineteen. Indignation is as prevalent for him as adolescent angst. He is the perfect student. He works part time in his father's Kosher butcher shop in New Jersey. But he yearns to break free from his family's restrictive life style. Doesn't every adolescent?

Marcus's father's love for him is boundless. But in his effort to protect Marcus from the rest of the world, his love is oppressive. Like Garp, who worries about the worst case scenario in every scenario, he frets that Marcus will unwittingly end up in a situation beyond his control. "You are a boy with a magnificent future before you," his father tells him. 'How do I know you're not going to places where you can get yourself killed?'

And, oh, God, Marcus is still a virgin. He doesn't want to be. Who does at that age anymore?

Marcus escapes the family ties that bind by enrolling in Winesburg College far from home in the Midwest. Roth's allusion to Sherwood Anderson's "Winesburg, Ohio," is fitting, because there is much of the grotesque to which Marcus is exposed. It is a bit of irony that flows through Roth's dark humor in this little book.

Having slipped loose those familial bonds, Marcus seeks his independence and to lose his virginity. He does so, much to his surprise, to the lips of lovely Olivia, a troubled young woman with the scars of a failed suicide on her wrists and some time spent in a mental health institution. She tells Marcus, "I did that because I like you so much." Olivia has her own poignant reasons for pleasing Marcus, leading to a very complicated and moving relationship.

Having kicked over the family traces, Marcus becomes a rebel on a very conservative campus. He can't win. It is not a good time to be expelled. It is 1951, the second year of the Korean War when the most intense fighting was occurring around the 38th parallel.

Historically, this was a period of escalating Chinese involvement. Mao had called upon Stalin's aid for equipment and materiel, to which Stalin agreed. McArthur was considering using nuclear weapons against Chinese and North Korean troops prior to his being recalled by President Truman.

Marcus had included ROTC in his schedule. He is nobody's fool. It would be safer to go to war as an officer. However, Marcus is foolish enough to push his campus issues to the point he is expelled.

Marcus is drafted. The next stop is the 38th Parallel.

I leave it to the reader to find what happens to Marcus Messner.

However, as noted in Roth's subsequent short novel, "Nemesis," it is the last of four short novels beginning with "Everyman in 2006, followed by "The Humbling," and "Indignation." Those four short novels complement one another on the unifying theme of mortality. "Indignation" clearly belongs in this quartet that constitutes a remarkable literary dirge.

Roth's detractors bash the old man for rehashing the same themes throughout his works. Some refer to it as cannibalizing from his previous works.

The simple fact of the matter is life is a process much the same for every individual. You are born. You have

a relationship with your family, sometimes with two parents, sometimes with one. Sometimes even none.

Depending on what part of the world you live in you go to school. You interact with your fellow students or village mates. You are socialized. As a child becomes an adolescent, he pulls away from his family.

During the process of gaining autonomy there is conflict with your family.

You may or may not have spiritual values. If you do, you most likely will lose your religion should you be fortunate enough to attend an institute of higher education.

You will become politicized. Per Paul Simon, "You will be Lou Adlered, Barry Sadlered, and Beatled till you're blind."

At some point you will become initiated into the mysterious realm of the great secret of sex. It will be pleasant or it will be unpleasant.

You will feel guilt or not. You will pursue the sexual union for its intense gratification or not.

You will fall into lust, once or more. If you're lucky, you'll find something that you identify as love. It will last or it won't. It may be marriage or not.

You may choose to have children or not. You will bear children or abort them. If you have children you will subject them to the same pressures you felt from your own family as an adolescent or not.

Your children will love you, hate you, or become indifferent to you.

If you are fortunate, you will never go to war. If you are not, oh, fortunate son, you will go to war because you are no Senator's son. You will kill or be killed. You will live or you will die. You have some degree of control over this depending on your skill at killing others or saving yourself through cowardice.

If you go to war and you live, you will come home a different person. It is unlikely you will ever be the same. If you are the same and you are unaffected you are amoral. You have a choice to be moral or amoral.

You may live to a ripe old age or you may die in the next moment through events completely out of your control.

The only universal truth is you will never get out of this life alive.

Through each phase of life there will be conflict. You will have good days. You will have bad days. Some days you will be the windshield. Other days, you will be the bug.

How many variations are there on what it is to live as a human being, no matter your culture, your parents, your community, your values?

I may have missed a few sub-issues here and there. But have I missed that much?

For those critics who accuse writers of rehashing the same themes, I ask how many different themes are there from the dawn of time. Their belief that an author has developed a formulaic work is a futile effort on their part to say they are different, that they are unique, that their lives be different from that described above. They are wrong. One day they will be dead wrong.

Ernest Hemingway may have said it best in *A Farewell to Arms*.

“If people bring so much courage to this world the world has to kill them to break them, so of course it kills them. The world breaks every one and afterward many are strong at the broken places. But those that will not break it kills. It kills the very good and the very gentle and the very brave impartially. If you are none of these you can be sure it will kill you too but there will be no special hurry.”

The question is does a book stand completely on its own, separate and apart from every other book. I think not. I think what James Baldwin said is true. “You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of the world, but then you read. It was books that taught me that the things that tormented me most were the very things that connected me with all the people who were alive, or who had ever been alive.”

People read books. They are influenced by them. Writers write from their lives and the books they have read. Books breed books. In short, there are only so many variations on a theme.

So, not only is this a review of Roth's "Indignation, it's a review of reviewers and critics. I'll express a little of my own indignation over the ethics of critics and critiques, or rather the lack of simple ethics in tanking a work by a major writer while wearing a gleeful smile.

Michiko Kakutani is a primary example of the critic who will shred an author's work--the greater the author the more brutal the shredding.

In the words of George Bernard Shaw, which might be considered a bit mean spirited, too: "He who can, does. He who cannot, teaches. You may find this in "Man and Superman: Maxims for Revolutionists," written in 1903. Not to say that literary criticism isn't writing, those who do not write literature, critique or criticize it.

I will be among the first to say Kakutani earned her chops as a literary critic for the New York Times. She got her B.A. in English Lit at Yale in 1976, mentored by author John Hersey. Subsequently she began her career as a reporter, first for the Washington Post and then for Time Magazine. She began reviewing books for the NYTimes in 1983. She won the Pulitzer Prize for literary criticism in 1998. None of these things are small accomplishments.

However, at Wikipedia, we find the following, all precisely documented and referenced:

"Salman Rushdie has called her 'a weird woman who seems to feel the need to alternately praise and spank.' [9] In a June 2005 interview with Rolling Stone magazine, author Norman Mailer criticized Kakutani as a 'one-woman kamikaze' who 'disdains white male authors' and deliberately 'bring[s] out your review two weeks in advance of publication. She trashes it just to hurt sales and embarrass the author.' Mailer also said that New York Times editors were 'terrified' of Kakutani, and 'can't fire her' because she's 'a token,' 'an Asiatic, a feminist.' [10] Jonathan Franzen called her 'the stupidest person in New York.' [11] Franzen has also called her an 'international embarrassment.' [12] Moreover, in recent years, Kakutani's particularly harsh reviews of books by famous authors (for example, John Updike's *The Widows of Eastwick* [13]) are followed by usually milder or openly positive reviews of the same titles by

other Times reviewers.[14]

On July 19, 2007, The New York Times published a pre-release story written by Kakutani about Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows. An account of the ensuing controversy, including the critical comments of some Harry Potter fans, can be found on the Times Public Editor's blog.[15]"

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michiko\\_...](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Michiko_...) See references cited therein.

What I find particularly refreshing here on goodreads is the recommended practice of posting a spoiler alert, to hide spoilers, thus allowing the reader of the review to determine whether or not they want the key plot points revealed or not. To me that's the way to write a review.

Here is the link to Ms. Kakutani's review of "Indignation." <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/09/17/boo...>

I leave it to the reader of this review to determine whether they would like to have the punchline of "Indignation" destroyed by the very title of the review, and hammering the nail down on the coffin with a one sentence paragraph lead in to the remainder of the review. The line begins, "The narrator of Philip Roth's new novel is a..."

Norman Mailer was never at a loss for words in response to an unfavorable review. He was no knight in shining armor. Some of his opinions regarding Ms. Kakutani are past demeaning. However, he stooped to her level and engaged in a tit for tat. The bottom line is Ms. Kakutani on more than one occasion spoiled a novel for the prospective reader by unveiling the turns and twists of an author's work. Yes, she was the divine wind in her treatment of "Indignation."

It is a simple question to ask at this point. Would you buy a mystery if the reviewer had already told you who done it? Well, if it were an author I regularly read, the answer is probably, yes. For many readers, though, the answer is "What's the point?"

While Ms. Kakutani may have her Pulitzer, is it ethical to torpedo a novel using a technique to discourage the work finding a readership. I say it is not.

In Disney's "Bambi," the little rabbit Thumper was constantly reminded by his mother, "If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything at all." That is NOT my theory regarding literary criticism. But the only point to spilling all the beans by a reviewer is hitting below the belt. It is a nasty form of preemptive censorship committed for reasons lacking honesty or honor.

Reviewers and critics have joyfully taken pot shots at every author of any merit with relish. Hemingway, Steinbeck, Faulkner, O'Connor. However, I am always amazed that critics of that sort may critique, but have not written a literary work. In the present case, the score is Roth:

1960 National Book Award for Goodbye, Columbus  
1975 National Book Award - finalist for My Life As A Man  
1978 National Book Critics Circle Award - finalist for The Professor Of Desire  
1980 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction - finalist for The Ghost Writer  
1980 National Book Award - finalist for The Ghost Writer  
1980 National Book Critics Circle Award - finalist for The Ghost Writer  
1984 National Book Award - finalist for The Anatomy Lesson

1984 National Book Critics Circle Award - finalist for *The Anatomy Lesson*  
 1986 National Book Critics Circle Award for *The Counterlife*  
 1986 National Book Award - finalist for *The Counterlife*  
 1991 National Book Critics Circle Award for *Patrimony*  
 1994 PEN/Faulkner Award for *Operation Shylock*  
 1994 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction - finalist for *Operation Shylock*  
 1995 National Book Award for *Sabbath's Theater*  
 1994 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction - finalist for *Sabbath's Theater*  
 1998 Pulitzer Prize for Fiction for *American Pastoral*  
 1998 National Book Critics Circle Award - finalist for *American Pastoral*  
 1998 Ambassador Book Award of the English-Speaking Union for *I Married a Communist*  
 1998 National Medal of Arts  
 2000 Prix du Meilleur Livre Étranger (France) for *American Pastoral*  
 2001 Franz Kafka Prize  
 2001 PEN/Faulkner Award for *The Human Stain*  
 2001 Gold Medal In Fiction from The American Academy of Arts and Letters  
 2001 WH Smith Literary Award for *The Human Stain*  
 2002 National Book Foundation's Award for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters  
 2002 Prix Médicis Étranger (France) for *The Human Stain*  
 2003 Honorary Doctor of Letters degree from Harvard University  
 2005 National Book Critics Circle Award - finalist for *The Plot Against America*  
 2005 Sidewise Award for Alternate History for *The Plot Against America*  
 2005 James Fenimore Cooper Prize for Best Historical Fiction for *The Plot Against America*  
 2006 PEN/Nabokov Award for lifetime achievement  
 2007 PEN/Faulkner Award for *Everyman*  
 2007 PEN/Saul Bellow Award for Achievement in American Fiction  
 2010 Paris Review's Hadada Prize  
 2011 Man Booker International Prize

Kakutani:

1998 Pulitzer Prize for Literary Criticism  
 Novels--0

Game. Set. Match.

When Roth was awarded the 2011 Man Booker International Prize, the following is noted in the Wikipedia entry- regarding the award:

"...Roth was awarded the Man Booker International Prize for achievement in fiction on the world stage, the fourth winner of the biennial prize. One of the judges, Carmen Callil, a publisher of the feminist Virago house, withdrew in protest, referring to Roth's work as 'Emperor's clothes.' She said 'he goes on and on and on about the same subject in almost every single book. It's as though he's sitting on your face and you can't breathe... I don't rate him as a writer at all ...' Observers quickly noted that Callil had a conflict of interest, having published a book by Claire Bloom which had criticized Roth. In response, one of the two other Booker judges, Rick Gekoski, remarked: 'In 1959 he writes *Goodbye, Columbus* and it's a masterpiece, magnificent. Fifty-one years later he's 78 years old and he writes *Nemesis* and it is so

wonderful, such a terrific novel ... Tell me one other writer who 50 years apart writes masterpieces ... If you look at the trajectory of the average novel writer, there is a learning period, then a period of high achievement, then the talent runs out and in middle age they start slowly to decline. People say why aren't Martin [Amis] and Julian [Barnes] getting on the Booker prize shortlist, but that's what happens in middle age. Philip Roth, though, gets better and better in middle age. In the 1990s he was almost incapable of not writing a masterpiece – The Human Stain, The Plot Against America, I Married a Communist. He was 65-70 years old, what the hell's he doing writing that well?"

Good question.

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## Snotchocheez says

### 3.5 stars

Even when Philip Roth is not at his best, he's still plenty readable. **Indignation** is definitely not Roth bringing his A-game chops but, still, quite riveting trying to fathom what's making 1951 college student Marcus Messner so damn indignant. The son of a kosher butcher, Marcus is a Jewish (by birth only) non-believer whose sole raison d'être seems to be to do well at college at Wineburg, Ohio, so that he can avoid being drafted into the Korean War as anything less than a lieutenant (and more probably, to escape having to work alongside his overbearing father in his failing Newark New Jersey butcher's business). Everyone is distracting Marcus from straight-A's: from fraternity members (of both the Jewish frat and non-denominational frat of Wineburg College) trying to get him to rush their frats, dormitory bunkmates that drive him crazy with their insolent behavior, a mystery "blow job queen" of a female classmate Olivia trying to inveigle herself into his life. Even the Dean of Students keeps calling Marcus to his office to sort out what's getting his goat.

As I've found in the past, when Roth reins in the length of his novels, the quality of his prose generally seems to jump upward. That's pretty much the case here. Solid, breezy storytelling, just enough heft to keep you thinking about what you've just read without bashing your skull in with needless exposition. This is not the best Roth I've read, but I was still plenty satisfied.

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## Grazia says

Fa veramente star male pensare al "*terribile, incomprensibile modo in cui le scelte più accidentali, più banali, addirittura più comiche, producono gli esiti più sproporzionati*".

Questo romanzo è un invito a vivere fuori dalle convenzioni e dalle scelte bigotte. Un invito a vivere la vita nella sua pienezza, perchè la vita è un attimo.

Ma com'è che in gioventù si è così intransigenti tanto da non capire che le cose non sono o nere o bianche ma esistono infiniti toni di grigi?

Perchè si sposano i principi a volte in maniera miope e questo impedisce di essere felici?

Una lettura amara amara.

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## Michael Finocchiaro says

As always Roth delivers fantastic story built of just human frailty and indignation. Marc Messner is indignant about things ranging from his father's obsessive over-protection to the Winesburg College requirement for chapel attendance 40 times. His own failure to compromise (Dean Coulter for all his faults was right about that) was his undoing. The Olivia Hutton incident is so heart-rending as well. Only a master writer like Roth could pack so much into such a short powerful book. Yes another seemingly benign but superb masterpiece from Roth.

RIP (1933-2018). One of America's literary giants has left us.

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## Orsodimondo says

### PERCHÉ NON SONO CRISTIANO

Ritorno a Winesburg, Ohio, che per essere un'oscura cittadina sperduta dell'Ohio, è diventata letterariamente celeberrima grazie all'invenzione, o creazione, di Sherwood Anderson, cui Roth paga omaggio nel suo romanzo.

*Indignazione* è un ottimo romanzo di formazione, e deformazione, e disgregazione, visto che si conclude con la morte del protagonista, un memorabile Marcus Messner.

Ci sono momenti più che notevoli: su tutti, secondo me, il primo colloquio tra Marcus e il preside, che l'indignazione te la fa provare con i brividi sulla pelle.

Ci sono momenti meno riusciti, come l'esplosione di punti esclamativi del finale (non posso farci niente, il punto esclamativo mi rimane indigesto, mi va di traverso quando se ne abusa – e l'abuso arriva subito dopo il semplice uso).

Anche l'artificio del racconto in prima persona fatto da un personaggio già morto mi sembra già più che sfruttato da sessanta anni a questa parte (da quando Joe Gillis mise K.O. le platee di gran parte del mondo), e non mi sembra che Roth aggiunga niente di nuovo all'argomento in questione.

Per questo ho tolto la quinta stella che altrove, invece, *Indignazione* mi sembra meritare pienamente.

### Anche nel film, il colloquio col preside è uno dei momenti migliori.

Anche nel film il colloquio tra Marcus e il preside è notevole, bravi entrambi, Logan Lerman e Tracy Letts, l'indignazione cresce davvero ogni qual volta l'uomo invade la privacy del giovane (sempre, a ogni domanda e a ciascuna asserzione).

Sarah Gadon è un'Olivia molto azzeccata.

Il film trasmette bene la cupezza di quell'epoca della storia statunitense: i bianchi dominanti, altri colori di pelle non si vedono, quindi razzismo, incluso antisemitismo strisciante, la guerra in Corea, il perbenismo, le malattie mentali diagnosticate come se fossero aspirine, elettroshock a go go, la paura del comunismo, la paura del sesso...

Il dialogo abbonda, e ovviamente non manca la voce narrante, ma nessuna parola sembra sprecata, di troppo. E anche nel film qualche passaggio è venuto meno bene: direi soprattutto inizio e fine, che sono la stessa situazione, visto che il cerchio si chiude – il film è costretto a mostrare, e quindi esplicitare di più, e un po' di magia si perde per strada.

Complessivamente un po' troppo 'perfettino', certo non all'altezza di opere più o meno recenti ambientate nello stesso periodo (le prime che mi vengono alla mente sono quelle di Todd Haynes, 'lontano dal paradiso' e 'Carol', film con una marcia in più).

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## Ahmad Sharabiani says

Indignation, Philip Roth

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## LW says

Un amico me l'aveva detto

... è terribilmente vivo

desolante in alcuni brani,spietato in altri e malinconico, anche.

In **Indignazione** c'è l' *inesperienza ,la stoltezza,la resistenza intellettuale,la scoperta sessuale* il coraggio e i passi falsi di un ragazzo .

C'è il terribile e incomprensibile modo in cui le scelte più accidentali e banali ,possono produrre conseguenze tragiche, gli esiti più sproporzionati.

Un passaggio che mi è piaciuto molto:

*Cerca di essere piu' grande dei tuoi sentimenti.Non sono io che te lo chiedo,ma la vita.Altrimenti finirai spazzato via dai tuoi sentimenti.Spazzato via senza poter piu' tornare indietro.*

*I sentimenti possono essere il piu' grande dei problemi.*

*I sentimenti possono giocare gli scherzi piu' crudeli.*

già.

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## ????? ??????? says

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## David Schaafsma says

“It’s about life, where the tiniest misstep can have tragic consequences.”

Philip Roth, one of the great American novelists, recently died, so I decided to read Sabbath’s Theater, his final National Book award winner, and then his uncharacteristically shorter final four novels (some says novellas) grouped under the descriptor “Nemeses,” which would seem to be linked by the author’s concerns arising out of (his own) decline and death. His last say. I had wanted to read them in order of publication, but I had this one nearby and read it. It surprised me in not being about the sad observations of an aging (i. e., decaying) man (which most of the narrators or main characters of his last books are about, though mortality for Roth has been a consideration for decades), but is narrated by a nineteen-year-old young man, whom we learn about 1/3 of the way in—just mentioned casually and that’s it—is actually dead. Yes, the story is narrated by a ghost.

The novel begins innocently and nostalgically enough, as the Marcus Messner tells of family life and baseball and school work and working in his father’s butcher shop:

“It was my job not just to pluck the chickens but to eviscerate them. I hated that part. Nauseating and disgusting, but it had to be done. That’s what I learned from my father and what I loved learning from him: that you do what you have to do.”

One motif is early fifties-style American determination in the close-knit context of a Jewish-American family; another is blood: Chicken blood, human blood, but also familial blood. (I’m also listening to Kerouac now; there are no beatniks anywhere near this book).

It is 1951 in America, the second year of the Korean War. Marcus Messner can’t stand his father’s obsessive over-protection of him and needs to go far away to school. He ends up at Ohio’s Winesburg College (Yes, this is a reference to Sherwood Anderson’s short story collection Winesburg, Ohio, the small town gentile haven of Midwestern conservatism so contrasted with Marcus’s East coast Jewish Newark upbringing). Sweet Marcus, such a good, reliable boy, becomes resentful of his father, and yes, indignant, and indignant, too, at the Dean who wonders why Marcus switches roommates (indignantly) twice in his first term. Marcus is indignant about Winesburg’s chapel attendance policy, and rather than quietly accepting the Dean’s mild chiding, explodes into argument with him, as he had done with his father. He is ready to leave Winesburg, the provincial place, and Marcus leaving what he disagrees with the Dean correctly sees as Marcus’s basic m.o..

As with all Roth, one feature of the book is eloquent oratory, incisive argument, and bombast, but in this book, to what end? Indignation is about a young man’s resistance-for-resistance’s sake and the mistakes this sets in motion. It is not about old age (since he never makes it there), but it is a story about arrogant pushback (something Roth seems to have done with his own parents) and death(s).

The story takes place against the backdrop of the Korean War, which is always a specter of potential doom for the Messner family, who lost some of their own in WWII. You have to study hard, Marcus, and stay in school, or you may have to go to Korea and then maybe die. (This was part of my motivation, too, for going to college during the Vietnam War). That is Marcus’s central purpose in life, to excel in school, and a second purpose, admittedly more frivolous but still pretty darned important, is “to have intercourse before I died”

(because this is Roth, and every Roth male main character no matter the age has sex on his brain, though in this tale the obsession is relatively innocent—especially compared to Mickey Sabbath!), a goal which he pursues with a young woman, Olivia Hutton, who is herself sexually active (compared to the virginal Marcus) but also has in the past year attempted suicide. We don't exactly know why, but we know fairly soon that she has a "reputation" at the college, and is "liked" but not admired. The tone of the novel is largely comic (isolationist) until we begin to deal in a serious way with some of the realities of Olivia's life, of American (and international life, re: Korea) and of Marcus's life. Then things get serious and we have to re-evaluate everything we thought we knew.

If the author's big trilogy (American Pastoral, I Married a Communist and The Human Stain) is about postwar American history, this one is a short (but good!) contribution to that group, this one focused on American involvement in the Korean War. It doesn't have the scope or ambition or heft of those three books; it isn't complexly layered as those three books are, but I still loved it as an older author's—he's 75 when he writes this, writing as well as anyone alive you can name--cautionary coming-of-age story, for its tragi-comic simplicity. And in Roth's capable hands, he shows us a time in American history that depicts a campus party raid under the threat of expulsion to the military, at approximately the same time Olivia "visits" Marcus in the hospital where he is recovering from hernia surgery.

"... what his uneducated father had been trying so hard to teach him all along: of the terrible, the incomprehensible way one's most banal, incidental, even comical choices achieve the most disproportionate result."

Crazy Dad turns out to have been right, alas! It happens sometimes, huh? Ah, Roth is such an amazing writer. I'm more of a minimalist guy, into Hemingway and Carver, but I have enjoyed my deep dive into (non-minimalist) Roth the last couple years. I hadn't expected to like this late book as much as I did.

Oh, and two things about the charge of misogyny leveled against Roth all his career? Marcus's mother is one strong and independent woman here (as Most Roth mothers are); also, the sad story of Olivia Hutton's proudly joyful sexuality and where it leads to in 1951 Winesburg makes for one of the most poignant portraits of a bright and engaging woman I can recall in Roth. The quiet meeting between Marcus's mother and Marcus's girl friend and what results is heart-breaking.

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## Darwin8u says

*"Of a terrible, the incomprehensible way one's most banal, incidental, even comical choices archive the most disproportionate result."*

? Philip Roth, Indignation

There was a period when I hated Roth's small books. I loved his big, strong, hefty books. I thought DeLillo and Roth's novella periods were horrible indulgences; vanity projects meant to expel some small idea, some festering detail yet unexplored in their earlier masterpieces. A prose zit popping. I still think they are a bit indulgent and not as good as Roth and DeLillo's great works, but I guess as I get a bit older, I become less indignant of things that matter little, really.

Anyway, this novella moved up my list because several Roth books have recently been made into movies and this looked like one my wife and I would go to together. So, I brought home my small, beautiful, yet unread, autographed copy of Roth's 'Indignation'.

My wife read it first, and finished it. That was a good sign. She has a very low toleration for crap and where I MUST finish something, she has no problem abandoning a novel if it doesn't measure up to her minute-by-minute standards (this creates a bit of uncertainty in our marriage and keeps me on my toes). She felt it was a bit darker than she typically likes. Once, early in our marriage, my wife summarized my literary taste as "older white men with sexual issues". Obviously, reading Roth is bound to solidify that stereotype.

When I started reading the novel, I was tickled to find a bunch of not-so-subtle allusions to Sherwood Anderson's Winesburg, Ohio. Anderson's book of related short stories seems to have been an inspiration, or at least a harbinger of, of this later Roth novella. While I don't love this book as much as Anderson's book, I still enjoyed it (as much as one can enjoy a book about death, loneliness, isolation, rigidity, and indignation). It was tight, beautiful, and also strange and sad. IT was a Philip Roth novella.

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### **\*TANYA\* says**

Great book, it's one of those books that leaves you wondering of all the "what if's". Things could have turned out different.

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### **MJ Nicholls says**

A diverting but hollow novel about Marcus, a butcher's son encountering various problems in his first term at college. The strongest moments in the book are the touching father/son scenes in the first section, followed closely by the comedic bouts of hauteur exchanged between Marcus and the Dean of the college in the latter part. But please excuse, humble reader, the clanging Kosher butcher/Korean war metaphor, the unconvincing "disturbed" love interest, the shamblingly overwritten and ludicrous climax, and the awkward lapses in narrative POV as the narrator becomes Roth chatting to himself. Also excuse the pages of blatant dialogue padding, the parodic Jewish mother, Marcus's perpetual dullness, and those many scenes stating the bleeding obvious. And "Part Two" (eight pages long) contains some of worst writing I have read since Sorrentino did it on purpose. I am indignant.

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### **Amar says**

*"Uhva?en sam u stupicu - dao sam joj ( majci )obe?anje koje nikad ne mogu prekršiti, a to ?e me slomiti!"*

Brzo štivo koje nam pokazuje Ameriku po?etkom 50-tih godina prošlog vijeka , vremenu kada je Korejanski rat po?eo i tenzije su bile velike sa svih strana , gdje pratimo po?etak fakultetskih dana mladog jevreja Marcusa , koji ima svoja vjerska uvjerenja , koji radi šta on misli da je ispravno i nije ga briga šta drugi misle , osim jedne osobe ...

Ovo je moj prvi Roth , i nisam se nimalo razočaran njime. Meni se mnogo dopalo ... 4.5\* od mene .

Na kraju , ostaje nam sigurnost " da najbanalnije , slu?ajne „, pa ?ak i smiješne odluke na neki strašan i neshvatljiv na?in mogu dovesti do neusporedivo teških posljedica ."

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