

Notes

Preface

1. Sander Gilman thoroughly deconstructs this mythology in *Smart Jews* (1996).
2. Efraim Sicher's *Beyond Marginality: Anglo-Jewish Literature After the Holocaust* (1985) is a wide-ranging, but somewhat superficial, survey of British-Jewish literature based on rather spurious regional distinctions.

Explaining Themselves: Ambivalent Representations of Jewishness in Post-War British- and American-Jewish Fiction

1. As the historian Geoffrey Alderman points out, however, the apparent clarity of this definition by matriarchal lineage always begs the question of how the Jewishness of the mother is itself to be verified if not by reference to her mother, and so on (see Alderman 1998: 1). For the purposes of his own study, Alderman 'define[s] as Jewish any person who considered or considers him or herself to be such, or who was or is so regarded by his or her contemporaries' (Alderman 1998: 1).
2. See Rosenberg 1960: 13–19 for a useful review of studies of representations of the Jew in English literature prior to his own.
3. He goes so far as to attribute Pound's and Eliot's anti-Semitism to, respectively, a 'horror of becoming semitically indistinct', and a 'repressed identification with "the Jew"' (Cheyette 1993: 272, 271).
4. Jacqueline Rose's book, *Judaism and Modernity* (1993), published in the same year as *Constructions of the Jew in English Literature and Society*, makes the case for this association in philosophical terms.
5. One of Doctorow's short stories appears in *The Schocken Book of Contemporary Jewish Fiction* (1996), but he is rarely mentioned in articles or books on American-Jewish fiction, even though two of his novels – *The Book of Daniel* (1971) and *World's Fair* (1985) – feature Jewish protagonists. Apart from Stephen Wade's recent book *Jewish American Literature Since 1945* (1999), which has a brief section on Auster, no other work on Jewish literature that I know of so much as mentions him. Yet, although none of his fiction deals explicitly with Jewish themes, he has (unlike Mailer, say) explored his own and others' Jewishness elsewhere: in his memoir *The Invention of Solitude* (1982); in conversation with the French-Jewish writer Edmond Jabés, and in essays on Kafka and Charles Reznikoff (collected in *The Art of Hunger* [1988]).
6. For a useful sample of definitions of Jewish literature in general, and American-Jewish fiction in particular, see Lyons 1988: 61–2.
7. Robert Alter, for example, claims that 'No other Jew who has contributed sig-

- nificantly to European literature appears so intensely, perhaps disturbingly, Jewish in the quality of his imagination as Kafka' (Alter 1969: 25).
8. For a thorough discussion of the notion that Jews mongrelize the language of their host nations, producing what the Germans called 'mauscheln', see Gilman 1990: passim.
 9. The British-Jewish novelist, Zina Rohan, deals with the wartime British internment of Jewish refugees in her novel *The Sandbeetle* (1992).
 10. For detailed accounts of the anti-Semitism of British government officials, and of the reluctance of British-Jewish organizations to lobby openly for a more liberal immigration policy, or for military intervention on behalf of European Jewry, see Bernard Wasserstein's *Britain and the Jews of Europe, 1939–1945* (1998) and Kushner 1990. For similar arguments about the culpability of the American government and American-Jewish community, see David S. Wyman's *The Abandonment of the Jews: America and the Holocaust* (1986) and Haskel Lookstein's *Were We Our Brother's Keepers: The Public Response of American Jews to the Holocaust 1938–1944* (1988).
 11. See, for example, Trilling's essay on 'Wordsworth and the Rabbis' (1950). Before the war, Trilling had dismissed Jewishness as a potential source of inspiration for American-Jewish writers:

As the Jewish community now exists it can give no sustenance to the American artist or intellectual who is born a Jew [...] I know of no writer in English who has added a micromillimetre to his stature by 'realizing his Jewishness,' although I know of some who have curtailed their promise by trying to heighten their Jewish consciousness. (quoted in Schechner 1990: 136)

12. George Steiner recalls that 'A brief visit to Yale [in 1949] [...] made it plain to me that Jews there were consigned to a ghetto of pinched politeness' (Steiner 1998: 40). Indeed, a degree of institutional anti-Semitism was still in evidence at Yale in the 1960s, to judge from an anecdote that Stephen Greenblatt tells about attending an appointment at the Financial Aid office, to receive funding for a position as research assistant. He 'assumed that the appointment would be routine', but in the event his application was rejected by an official who told him that 'we're sick and tired at [sic] the number of Jews who are coming into our office trying to wheedle money out of Yale University' (Greenblatt 2000: 12).
13. George Ziad, in Philip Roth's novel *Operation Shylock* (1983), gives an extreme, but ingenious, interpretation of this guilt:

"The destruction of European Jewry registered as a cataclysmic shock on American Jews not only because of its sheer horror but also because this horror, viewed irrationally through the prism of their grief, seemed to them in some indefinable way *ignited* by them – yes, instigated by the wish to put an end to Jewish life in Europe that their massive emigration had embodied, as though between the bestial destructiveness of Hitlerian anti-Semitism and their own passionate desire to be delivered from the humiliations of their European imprisonment there had existed some horrible, unthinkable inter-relationship, bordering on complicity. (Roth 1993: 130–1)

Ziad's diagnosis echoes sentiments (and the imagery of conflagration) articulated some years earlier by Alfred Kazin, who writes of his guilty conviction that 'The Jews burned every day in Europe were being consumed in a fire that I had helped to light' (Kazin 1978: 96).

14. All three won the National Book Award (Roth for *Goodbye, Columbus*, Bellow for *The Adventures of Augie March* [1953] and Herzog [1964], and Malamud for *The Magic Barrel* [1958] and *The Fixer* [1966], this last also winning the Pulitzer Prize), as well as producing bestsellers (Roth with *Portnoy's Complaint* [1969], Bellow with *Herzog*, and Malamud with *The Fixer*). Bellow also won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1985.
15. Although a number of British-Jewish literary critics (notably A. Alvarez, David Daiches, John Gross, Gabriel Josipovici, Dan Jacobson and George Steiner) began to build reputations for themselves in the 1960s, and although Josipovici, Jacobson and Steiner all wrote fiction as well as literary criticism, they had little or no connection with each other and little interest in the state of British-Jewish fiction (though Daiches did publish an essay on the subject in the *Jewish Quarterly*, reprinted in *Jewish Perspectives: 25 Years of Modern Jewish Writing* [1980]).
16. For an overview of these writers' work see Sicher 1985: 3–14 and Cheyette 1998: xiv–xxvi. For more detailed discussion of some of these writers, see Linda Zatlin's *The Nineteenth-Century Anglo-Jewish Novel* (1981), Michael Galchinsky's *The Origin of the Modern Jewish Woman Writer: Romance and Reform in Victorian England* (1996), and *Victorian Literature and Culture*, vol. 27 (1), 1999 (a special edition devoted to Anglo-Jewish writers in Victorian England).
17. See Charles 1961.
18. This implication becomes even stronger when the conjunction is 'or', as in a history conference organized by the Jewish Historical Society of England entitled 'British or Jewish: Assimilation and Acculturation, 1700–2000'.
19. Glanville, in particular, was, the object of bitter recrimination (see Sicher 1985: 119) from Jewish critics, while Brian Cheyette complains that 'Workaday literary journalists [...] treat the Jewishness of British-born writers as a form of embarrassment, a guilty secret to be passed over with unseemly haste or ignored altogether' (Cheyette 1998: xi).
20. Anne Karpf notes that 'British post-war immigration policy specifically proscribed Jews' and that 'renewed antagonism towards Germany after its defeat once again produced hostility towards German-Jewish refugees, while the violent exploits of the Jewish underground in Palestine also helped foster British antipathy towards Jews in general, giving rise to anti-Jewish riots in almost every major British city in 1947' (Karpf 1997: 193). There is also much anecdotal evidence to suggest that anti-Semitism has remained endemic in post-war Britain. From Jenny Diski's memories of her schooldays when 'the other kids told me I was not English, but Jewish. Killing Christ was still something [...] I was held responsible for in the playground' (Diski 1998: 104–5) to the testimony of Anthony Julius (who represented the Princess of Wales during her divorce and who has also published a book on the anti-Semitism of T.S. Eliot) that "'When I was looking for articles, many of the bigger firms didn't take Jews, so there was

- no point in applying” (quoted in Freedland 1999: 42), the attitude of British Jews encountering this sort of prejudice seems to be one of resignation rather than indignation.
21. The slippage between ‘English’ and ‘British’ is apparent everywhere in English and British culture and illustrates the extent to which, in England, if not in the rest of Britain, the two are regarded as coterminous. I have chosen to use the term ‘British-Jewish’ throughout the book, so as not to exclude (or appropriate as English) Jewish writers of Welsh origin (such as Dannie Abse and Bernice Rubens), Scottish origin (Simon Louvish) or emigrés such as Dan Jacobson and George Steiner.
 22. Jokes (some of them quite vicious, some more mildly racist) about the Irish, Scots, Welsh, Pakistanis, West Indians and Jews were, until quite recently, ubiquitous in British culture, and even today there are those who dismiss ethical objections to such material as humourless ‘political correctness’. As Stephen Greenblatt has noticed (with the clarity of perception that outsiders often bring to a foreign culture), ‘though England is a multi-cultural nation, ethnic difference is still registered – and often registered as risible – in a way that it has ceased to be in the United States’ (Greenblatt 2000: 11).
 23. The inclusion of Ireland is somewhat misleading, since only one of the contributors (Ronit Lentin) is Irish.
 24. Michael Freedland recalls that ‘there was a Jewish foreign secretary (Malcom Rifkind), two home secretaries (Leon Brittan and Michael Howard) and a chancellor of the exchequer (Nigel Lawson) [... and a] trade secretary, Lord Young’ (Freedland 1999: 37).
 25. Indeed, the very term ‘community’ has been questioned by Geoffrey Alderman, who argues that ‘There is today no such thing, but rather a series of communities some of which overlap to a greater or lesser extent’ and that ‘Judaism once united the Jews of Britain; now it divides them’ (Alderman 1998: 378, 410).
 26. Whereas in America most religious Jews are affiliated to one or other of the progressive branches of Judaism, in Britain by far the largest number of synagogues are orthodox, to the extent that the Chief Rabbi of this branch of Judaism has, until recently, been unquestioningly accepted as the official religious leader of and spokesperson for British Jewry. These differences are particularly glaring on the question of the role of women in religious life. Whereas the American-Jewish writer Marlene Adler Marks is able to assert unequivocally that ‘the rights to full participation of women in Jewish life and learning have been basically established in most denominations’ (Marks 1996: 5), the same cannot be said in Britain, where even the most basic concessions to feminism (such as women taking an active role in religious services) are fiercely resisted within the Orthodox movement.
 27. Illustrating what he calls ‘the blinkered banalities of the *Jewish Chronicle*’, Frederic Raphael tells the ‘possibly apocryphal story of the *JC*’s report on the International Cross-Country Race which was headed: “Goldstone Fourteenth” (Raphael 1979: 96).
 28. During the 1970s the paper ran a weekly column in which Philip Kleinman vigilantly recorded, and condemned as anti-Semitic, every criticism of

- Israeli government policy he could find in the British press.
29. Gerda Charles, for example, complained that ‘if we consider our own Jewish past we see that there was probably more “reason for living” in many a shtetl in Eastern Europe in the last century with the interest in ideas, its ability to express them, its eagerness and respect for knowledge, than in many a London suburb today’ (Charles 1963: 11).
 30. Ethel and Julius Rosenberg were an American-Jewish couple who were convicted of passing details of America’s atomic weapons programme to the Russians. They were sentenced to death in 1951 and finally executed by electric chair in 1953. Their story is told in fictionalized form in both E.L. Doctorow’s *The Book of Daniel* (1971) and Robert Coover’s *The Public Burning* (1977). Jonathan Pollard was an American-Jewish intelligence analyst who was convicted in 1987 of spying for Israel and is currently serving a life sentence.
 31. The contrast with Alex Haley’s *Roots* (1977), which the title of Jacobson’s work parodies, is pointed: whereas Haley’s protagonist famously finds his way back to a black homeland (that is to say his journey has a final destination), Jacobson can only journey *amongst* Jews. Israel does not function in the same way for Jewish writers as Africa has for many black writers (except ironically, as in *Portnoy’s Complaint*, in which Portnoy’s flight to Israel only exacerbates his identity crisis).
 32. For other examples of contradictory anti-Semitic Jewish stereotypes, see Reizbaum 1999: 9, Nochlin and Garb 1995: 7, and Cheyette 1993: 9.
 33. Abraham Herschel, for example, writes that ‘Jewish thinking and living can only be adequately understood in terms of a dialectical pattern, containing opposite or contrasted properties [... There is] a polarity which lies at the very heart of Judaism [...]’ (quoted in Malin 1965: 80).
 34. A term borrowed from the Polish critic and novelist Artur Sandauer to describe any representation of Jews (whether anti-Semitic or philosemitic) as fundamentally different from non-Jews (see Cheyette 1996: 14).
 35. Dembo’s definition of the monological Jew is ‘a Jew of the Diaspora who has abandoned monotheism but who [...] still feels himself to be a Jew – and yet not a Jew’ (Dembo 1988: 4).
 36. In addition to the books I discuss in Chapter 4, examples of the genre include: Meyer Levin’s *In Search* (1950), Alfred Kazin’s trilogy *Walker in the City* (1951), *Starting Out in the Thirties* (1965), and *New York Jew* (1978); Irving Howe’s *World of Our Fathers* (1976) and *A Margin of Hope* (1982), Norman Podhoretz’s *Making It* (1968), Herbert Gold’s *My Last Two Thousand Years* (1973), Gershom Scholem’s *From Berlin to Jerusalem* (1980), Kim Chernin’s *In My Mother’s House* (1983), Vivian Gornick’s *Fierce Attachments* (1987), Alan Dershowitz’s *Chutzpah* (1991), George Steiner’s *Errata* (1997), Dan Jacobson’s *Heschel’s Kingdom* (1998), Leon Wieseltier’s *Kaddish* (1999) and Rachel Lichtenstein’s half of *Rodintsky’s Room* (1999).
 37. Those who deny it, like the protagonist of Malamud’s ‘The Lady of the Lake’ (1958), who loses the glamorous Isabella del Dongo because he fails to realize that her anxiety over his origins betrays her own – as a survivor of a concentration camp – are punished or portrayed as soulless opportunists, whose arid existence is its own punishment (cf Hortense Calisher’s

- 'Old Stock' [1950], Philip Roth's 'Eli, the Fanatic' [1959], and Leslie Fiedler's 'The Last Jew in America' [1966]).
38. Compare Alex Portnoy's outburst: 'Jew Jew Jew Jew Jew! It is coming out of my ears already, the saga of the suffering Jews!' (Roth 1969: 72).

2 The Gentile Who Mistook Himself for a Jew

1. Sartre stresses – perhaps disingenuously – that the term inauthentic 'impl[ies] no moral blame' (Sartre 1995: 93). Certainly, his definition of authenticity – 'having a true and lucid consciousness of the situation [...] assuming the responsibilities that it involves [...] accepting it in pride or humiliation, sometimes in horror or hate' (90) – though strictly morally ambiguous (the positive terms 'true', 'lucid' and 'pride' are balanced by the negative 'humiliation', 'horror' and 'hate'), seems ethically preferable, in that it always involves an acceptance (whether reluctant and resentful or not) of responsibility.
2. L.S. Dembo, in his study *The Monological Jew* (1988), argues that 'Sartre's position on Jewish authenticity is indefensible; it is so because he ignores the positive values and ideals associated with Judaism in general and with the Jew's vision of himself', and that 'The term "Inauthentic Jew," insofar as it is normative as well as descriptive, carries an opprobrium with it that leads to caricature rather than realistic portrayal' (Dembo 1988: 21, 25). Susan Suleiman, in her essay 'The Jew in Sartre's *Reflexions sur la question juive*: An Exercise in Historical Reading', takes a more balanced view, arguing that the first section of Sartre's book is, as Sartre himself later described it, an effective 'declaration of war against anti-Semites' (Sartre quoted in Suleiman 1995: 201), but that in the final section of the book he 'thinks he is defending the Jew against the anti-Semite's myth, but actually reinforces the myth' (214).
3. An acronym for 'Embarrassed Jewish Individual', Kalmar also uses the term adjectivally, to denote the 'edginess [...] about being Jewish' that is symptomatic of the 'cultural condition' which his book explores (Kalmar 1993: 6).
4. In addition to those I discuss here, there have been two notable recent examples: the hero of Philip Roth's novel, *The Human Stain* (2000), who is a black man who passes himself off as a Jew, and the protagonist of Nathan Englander's short story, 'The Gilgul of Park Avenue', a WASP who suddenly and inexplicably becomes convinced that 'he was the bearer of a Jewish soul' (Englander 1999: 109).
5. In using the term subgenre I do not wish to imply either that the authors of these works are consciously locating themselves within an established tradition of Jewish writing (there is no evidence that any of these novels have been directly influenced by any of the others) or that there has been any critical recognition of the affinities between them. As far as I am aware, only Robert Alter, in a brief passage in an essay entitled 'Sentimentalizing the Jews' has written on what he calls 'the motif of conversion or quasi-conversion' (Alter 1969: 42). The novels Alter refers to are *The Assistant*, Edward Lewis Wallant's *The Children at the Gate* (1964) and Jerome Charyn's *On the Darkening Green* (1965).

6. When Alpine first offers to help Bober, he remarks “‘You people are Jews [...] I always liked Jews’” (38), but this attempt to ingratiate himself actually conceals deep-seated suspicion. It soon emerges that he agreed, albeit reluctantly, to hold up Bober’s store in the first place (rather than, as originally planned, Karp’s neighbouring, and more prosperous liquor store), on the grounds that “‘A Jew is a Jew’” (67). Moreover, after he moves into the apartment above the store, ‘he felt [...] repugnance [...] for himself because he had never lived this close to Jews before’ (57) and he justifies his desire for Helen, the grocer’s daughter, by observing that ‘she didn’t look Jewish, which was all to the good’ (60). Later, when his relationship with Helen suffers a setback, he consoles himself by asking, ‘Yet what was the pay-off [...] of marrying a dame like her and having to do with Jews the rest of his life?’ (110). Towards the end of the novel, however, he ‘read a book about the Jews, a short history [...] He skimmed the bloody chapters but read slowly the ones about their civilization and accomplishment’ (174).
7. One of many Shakespearean allusions in the novel, ‘uncircumcised dog’ is the phrase Othello uses, in his final speech, to describe the Turk whom he killed for traducing the state. Other references include the scene in which Alpine falls into Bober’s grave and his rival for the affections of Helen, Nat Pearl, rebukes him, which echoes that in *Hamlet*, in which Hamlet and Laertes confront each other in Ophelia’s grave. In order to ingratiate himself with Helen, Alpine had earlier given her a copy of the complete works of Shakespeare.
8. Though in his autobiography, *Timebends* (1987), Miller makes it clear that the genesis of *The Crucible* had something to do with his personal affinity, as a Jew, with the Puritan society of Salem:

I felt strangely at home with these New Englanders, moved in the darkest part of my mind by some instinct that they were putative ur-Hebrews, with the same fierce idealism, devotion to God, tendency to legalistic reductiveness, the same longings for the pure and intellectually elegant argument. (Miller 1988: 42)

A number of critics have also argued that the idioms and concerns of the Loman family in *Death of a Salesman* are distinctively Jewish.

9. It is no coincidence that this is also the name Henry James chooses for the protagonist of his first novel, *The American* (1876–7).
10. The title of the novel alludes to Newman’s impaired vision, and Miller is preoccupied throughout with the processes of perception.
11. Or perhaps not so incidentally (see Kalmar 1993: 255–61).
12. With the exception of the *Babel Guide to Jewish Fiction*, in which there is an entry for *Eve’s Tattoo* (Keenoy and Brown 1998: 143–6).
13. Penny Perrick, writing in the *Sunday Times* (1992: 4) and Paul Taylor, in the *Independent on Sunday* (1992: 5), respectively. Joanna Briscoe, who interviewed Prager for *The Guardian*, seemed to assume that she wasn’t Jewish, when she wrote that ‘Prager’s act in writing the novel is the equivalent of her heroine’s tattoo’ (1992: 6). In her interview with Kate Pullinger in the *Daily Telegraph* the truth about Prager’s ethnicity emerged: ‘Contained within my body are these two different things [her father’s Jewishness and

- mother's Christianity]' (1992: 28). Pullinger comments, mystifyingly, that 'this internal struggle has forced her to consider both Christian anti-Semitic hatred and Jewish anti-Christian bigotry' (1992: 28), as though the two were comparable.
14. At her birthday party one of her friends remarks "'Darling, what is that? Your supermarket PIN number, I hope? Your cash machine code number, perhaps?'" (19), while one of the male guests notes that "'A lot of rock bands have tattoos now [...] It's really in'" (24). Later in the novel, at a show-business function, a young actress, envious of what she assumes is a brilliant stroke of self-publicity, says: "'Damn, I wish I'd thought of that!'" (58). If these reactions seem implausible, we need only refer to the experience of a real-life camp survivor, Natalia Karpf, who tells of the time she 'went once to a reception at a friend's house [...] and there was a lady there who saw the number on my arm, and she [...] said, 'What have you put here – your telephone number?' (Karpf 1997: 149).
 15. To emphasize her identification with the protagonists of her stories, Eve names each one Eva.
 16. The fictionalized account that Eve gives of her background on this second occasion – "'I'm baptized Catholic, confirmed Episcopalian [...] my father's family was Jewish but never practised the religion'" (114) – resembles Prager's accounts of her own upbringing.
 17. When Eve tells him that "'There's anti-semitism in me [...] You don't want that'", Charles replies "'I'm used to it [...] I chose it. It's in me too'" (177).
 18. In order to avoid confusion for the reader, I will distinguish between the real Lindmann and Shepherd's impersonation of him by referring to the latter as 'Lindmann'.
 19. There is, as so often in this novel, a pun intended here: Lindmann's death due to one sort of exposure anticipates the demise of his reincarnation as the result of another.
 20. The 'other one' is Falik Hafner, another Jewish refugee from Europe, whom Rawlins later meets in the company of Esta.
 21. It emerges that the officer in question, Waterlow, was responsible for forcing a ship full of Jewish refugees bound for Palestine to turn back. As in *Lindmann*, the ship sinks, taking with it hundreds of Jews. In both novels, there is an implied analogy between the zealous devotion to duty of the Nazi bureaucrats, which ensured the efficient murder of so many Jews, and that of the English bureaucrats in Palestine, whose allegiance to the dictates of their government ensured that many of those who had escaped Nazi Europe, denied entry to Palestine in ships that were not seaworthy, died by drowning rather than by gassing. In *Lindmann*, 'Lindmann' observes, aphoristically, that "'The worst thing about the British is [...] their incorruptibility [...] When you can't buy someone, you know the last shreds of their humanity have disappeared'" (109), while the narrator of Wilson's novel notes that 'All the authorities, all the *bureaucracies of death* in both England and Israel, have been very helpful and efficient' (4, my italics).
 22. When Rawlins goes to see General Dryborough, a visiting bigwig, with details of the atrocities that Esta has told him of, the General listens patiently and then says:

'Let me give you a general rule. Jews are inclined by nature to exaggerate. Does that sound harsh? It's what makes them such great entertainers – I'm sure you love the Marx Brothers as much as I do. Don't misunderstand. They have been done unto. But they have a tendency to magnify their persecutions.' (45)

Like Frank Alpine, to whom it seems that Jews 'like to suffer [...] they suffer more than they have to' (113), Dryborough apparently believes that there is an innate self-dramatizing, self-pitying quality to Jewish suffering. His prejudice echoes closely that of an actual British official in the Colonial Office responsible for immigration, who warned against giving credence to the stories of 'wailing Jews' who exhibited the 'Jewish tendency to superlative', were 'inclined to magnify their persecution' and consequently 'spoil their case by laying it on too thick' (quoted in Karpf 1997: 188–9).

23. Wilson's omniscient narrator comments:

He had almost forgotten his own family. He hadn't written to them in weeks. They probably thought he was dead. He imagined a frozen moment: arriving at his parents' house with his Jewish war bride. His father emerging from the long drawing room that showed oak trees in the west. His mother looking Esta up and down, appalled by her skinniness, her accent, her wild hair. (155)

24. In each case, there is a redemptive Jew who pricks their consciences and in so doing becomes the catalyst for their conversions: for Alpine, it is Helen Bober; for Newman, Finkelstein (who fights to save him in spite of the fact that Newman had participated in the boycott of his shop); for Eve, Jacob Schlaren, the survivor of the death camp who ministers to her when she faints in the foyer of the film theatre; for Shepherd, Lindmann; and for Rawlins, Mendoza.
25. A sense of guilt that must have been heightened by the fact that, during the war itself, anti-Semitism increased markedly both in America and England, as Miller makes clear in *Focus* (Gertrude Hart tells Fred that the activities of the Christian Front are typical – 'There's a million organizations like that out there. Against the Jews' [114]) and Wilson in *The Hiding Room* (one of the army officers who interrogates Mendoza observes that "'anti-Semitism [is] on the increase in Britain. Hard to believe [...] isn't it?" [120]).
26. See Peter Novick's *The Holocaust in American Life* (1999) for a discussion of this phenomenon.

3 Nature Anxiety, Homosocial Desire and (Sub)urban Paranoia: the Jewish Anti-Pastoral

1. Zuckerman's ignorance is partly due to his urban upbringing, but may also be a legacy of his Jewish roots, for, as Stephen Whitfield notes: 'Eastern European Jewry was so cut off from its environment that its Yiddish vocabulary contained no indigenous names for wild birds and only two for flowers (rose, violet)' (Whitfield 1984: 212). In an interview with David

- Plante, Roth himself joked 'Here I live in the country and I don't even know the names of the trees' (Searles 1992: 151).
2. Although circumcision is routinely performed on many non-Jewish male children in the United States (not the case in Britain), for Roth and for the other Jewish writers, American and British, whose work I discuss in this chapter, the circumcised penis remains a symbol of Jewish masculinity.
 3. One of Jacobson's contemporaries, Jenny Diski, records her own bewilderment at the enthusiasm of Gentiles for this activity: 'I cannot recollect a time when the idea of going for a walk was not a torment to me [...] The aim on these walks is to get cold and damp and head for the pleasure of some pub or café before setting off again into the cold and damp to return to the warm, satisfactory haven we had abandoned in the first place' (Diski 1998: 63–4).
 4. Not all literary critics would place Hardy so centrally, or unproblematically, in the pastoral tradition; his representation of Nature is much more ambivalent than the classical models followed in poems such as Edmund Spenser's *Shepherd's Calendar* (1579) and Ben Jonson's *The Forest* (1616).
 5. Another example of this is provided by the British-Jewish novelist Linda Grant in her family memoir, *Remind Me Who I Am, Again* (1998), who refers to her father as 'a man who needed to hire in a team of specialists to put up a cup hook' (Grant 1998a: 190).
 6. Confirmation that Barney's experience is not unique among British Jews is provided by Anne Karpf, who writes in her family memoir that 'I never learned to ride a bike, I never climbed, I never camped' (Karpf 1997: 9).
 7. As Philip Roth points out, it is fairly incidental in the case of Augie March, but crucial in the cases of Leventhal, Herzog and Sammler (see Roth 1985b: 282–6).
 8. Bellow is using the art of writing here in much the same way as Sartre uses mathematics in his explanation of one of the common strategies used by the Jew to dissociate himself from his Jewishness: 'The best way to feel oneself no longer a Jew is to reason, for reasoning is valid for all and can be retraced by all. There is not a Jewish way of mathematics; the Jewish mathematician becomes a universal man when he reasons' (Sartre 1995: 111–12).
 9. Bellow admits, in an interview with *Paris Review* in 1966, that his early timidity as a writer was the result of feeling 'the incredible effrontery of announcing myself to the world (in part I mean the WASP world) as a writer and an artist' and goes on, more explicitly, to claim that he 'had good reason to fear that I would be put down as a foreigner, an interloper [...] (Bellow 1966: 55–6). This fear of rejection by the WASP world is voiced by many of Bellow's Jewish protagonists: Herzog, for example, is disturbed because Ramona 'did not recognize him as an American [...] In the service his mates had also considered him a foreigner' (Bellow 1965: 159), while Charlie Citrine, in *Humboldt's Gift* (1975), feels 'mysteriously a misfit [...] what ailed me was my unlikeness [...] I was not wholly American' (Bellow 1975: 215).
 10. Critical opinion is deeply divided on the question of the importance of Bellow's Jewishness to his work, sometimes even within the writings of the same critic. L.H. Goldman, for example, complained in 1983 that the

Bellow hero 'has no interest in Jewish affairs, is not affiliated with a synagogue [...] is not beset by problems that disturb most Jews' and that his Jewish protagonists 'are stereotypic presentations similar to the presentation of the Jew by various Gentile writers of the early part of the century' (Goldman 1983: 101, 100). Yet nine years later, in a reworking of the same article, she proclaimed approvingly that 'The quality of Bellow's Jewishness is incontrovertible. Saul Bellow's perspective is unmistakably Jewish' (Goldman 1992: 19). Other critical views range from the claim at one extreme that 'The ultimate aspiration of Bellow's characters [...] is the fantasy of Aliyah [that is, emigration to Israel]' (Goodman 1983: 123) to, at the other end of the spectrum, the accusation that Bellow displays 'insensitivity to the Jewish experience' (Louis Ehrenkrantz quoted in Miller 1991: 250), or that 'since the days of *The Victim*, [the] Jewishness [of Bellow's characters] has dwindled to a matter of mere ethnicity' (Raphael 1979: 218).

11. For a discussion of the anti-Semitic tradition of constructing the male Jew as androgynous, in particular as manifested in the myth of male menstruation, see Gilman 1990: 74–76.
12. As Ivan Kalmar observes:

'Jewish' is related to other ethnic terms by its suffix [...] 'Jew' on the other hand, singles out a people in its stark, isolated individuality [...] In anti-Semitic diatribes, the Jewish businessman becomes a 'Jew businessman,' a Jewish doctor a 'Jew doctor'. (Kalmar 1993: 123)

13. Later in the novel Harold's secretary, Jennifer Boodle, rehearses the concomitant myth that Jews 'ma[k]e good husbands' (66).
14. Ironically, the very language that Winston uses here, with its iterated interrogatives, and the materialistic connotations of the word 'profit', would confirm rather than deny his difference to Bollam.
15. Not even in Israel. When the British-Jewish heroine of Grant's novel *When I Lived in Modern Times* (2000), Evelyn Sert, arrives in Palestine to find cypresses, olives and pines 1946, she

had no idea at all what I was looking at. I had come from a city [London] where a few unnamed trees grew out of asphalt pavements, ignored, unseen. I could identify dandelions and daisies and florists' roses but that was [...] the extent of my excursions into the kingdom of the natural world. (Grant 2000: 20)

But it soon becomes clear that the unspoilt landscape will not remain so for long: on a kibbutz Evelyn discovers palm trees 'scientifically modified in an institute to make them closer to the ground and easier to pick fruit from. Nature was in retreat under Jewish hands' (36). Though they hope to build a new Eden where 'The new Jew [...] the new human being' 'could be created' (Grant 2000: 41–2), the Jews of Palestine will do so by conquering their old adversary, Nature, rather than working harmoniously with her like Adam and the first Eve did before the Fall.

4 Breaking the Silence: Jewish Women Writing the War and the War After

1. Many critics have suggested, as Joyce Antler does, that 'because the short story articulates ordinary private matters in a pointed and compressed form, it appeals especially to women writers' (Antler 1990: 2), but Hermione Lee offers a dissenting view, arguing that 'There is no value in suggesting that women writers are better suited to the short story form than men' (Lee 1995: x). For the view that Jewish writers have a particular affinity for the form, see Aarons 1996: 18–19.
2. Since 1990, four anthologies of writing by American-Jewish women have been published: *America & I* (1990), *Shaking Eve's Tree* (1990), *Her Face in the Mirror* (1994) and *Nice Jewish Girls* (1996), the first two being collections of short stories, the other two miscellanies of short stories, poems and memoirs. In addition, six other collections of American and international Jewish short stories have appeared, in which women writers usually predominate: *The Global Anthology of Jewish Women Writers* (1990), *The Schocken Book of Contemporary Jewish Fiction* (1992), *The Slow Mirror and Other Stories* (1998), *Here I Am* (1998), *American Jewish Fiction* (1998) and *The Oxford Book of Jewish Stories* (1998).
3. For a detailed discussion of these theories, see Peter Novick's *The Holocaust in American Life* (1999) and Norman Finkelstein's review of Novick's book in *The London Review of Books* (6 January 2000: 33–6).
4. As Faye Moskowitz puts it:

'Until recently there have been few avenues for self-expression within the tradition. A Jewish woman's canvas, if she had one at all, would depict the details of domesticity, the food and furnishings and the ritual celebrations both religious and secular that have traditionally been both a woman's purview and her purdah, the means by which she was at once empowered and, some would say, kept powerless. (Moskowitz 1994: xvi–xvii).
5. The title of one of the essays in (and the subtitle of) *Accidents of Influence* (Rosen 1992: 133–8).
6. Ozick is not the first American-Jewish writer to exploit the metaphorical possibilities of a Jewish child 'without speech' in the context of wartime Europe: the protagonist of Jerzy Kosinski's novel *The Painted Bird* is also a mute child.
7. In the following discussion, I will refer to these stories in the abbreviated form 'Raizel Kaidish' and 'Harvey Milk'.
8. Newman is one of a number of important American-Jewish lesbian writers, others being Andrea Freud Loewenstein, Melanie Kaye-Kantrowitz, Irena Klepfisz, Andrea Dworkin, Alice Bloch and Edith Konecky. Indeed, in addition to the other anthologies mentioned above (in note 2), there have been three collections specifically devoted to American-Jewish lesbian fiction: *Nice Jewish Girls: a Lesbian Anthology* (1984); *The Tribe of Dina: a Jewish Woman's Anthology* (1989) and *Speaking for Ourselves: Short Stories by Jewish Lesbians* (1990).

9. The title of one of the essays in *Accidents of Influence* (Rosen 1992).
10. In an ironic echo of her mother's response to her own shame and guilt, Rose tries to appease her conscience (after her mother's death) by naming her own daughter after her.
11. The teacher's sentiments here echo Newman's own: 'When I hear Yiddish I get all choked up' (quoted in Shapiro et al. 1994: 241).
12. Co-authored with Iain Sinclair.
13. Kehoe has lived and worked in America for many years now, but is British by birth and spent her childhood and early adulthood (the period covered by the book) in England.
14. The frequency with which phrases such as 'must have seemed' and words such as 'perhaps' and 'maybe' recur in the early stages of the narrative suggest that Kehoe's strategy – consistent with the prefatory note – is not to present such speculation as authoritative, but rather to offer her attempts to recreate this inaccessible past as candidly hypothetical.
15. Though not a survivor in the strict sense of having lived through a period of internment in a concentration or death camp, Lubetkin's psychological profile, as it emerges in Kehoe's book, is entirely consistent with that of the fictional survivors dealt with in the earlier part of this chapter.
16. Kehoe discovers the truth about Lubetkin when she comes upon a letter from his cousin, Mira, in which she relays to him the contents of a letter dated May 19, 1940, but Kehoe never discovers when Lubetkin received it, or whether he ever replied to Mira or attempted to contact his parents: *'Your parents [...] live in the old house still, but only in the kitchen because the other part of the house was bombed by the Nazis and burned down. Your father is astonished that he has heard nothing from you. Why do you not write to him?'* (Kehoe 1997: 201).
17. The analogy with being gay implied in the phrase 'coming out' is developed explicitly later in the book:

Being Jewish in England, unless you chose to live mainly or exclusively among Jews, was a little like being gay. You didn't so much meet other Jews as detect them by sonar. You gave off discreet clues, but never vaunted. Making contact provided the pleasure of mutuality, but it was also an ambivalent, potentially exposing act: you might lose your cover. (Karpf 1997: 48)

18. As Appignanesi observes, and as 'Raizel Kaidish' confirms:

There is sometimes a parent-child dynamic at work in which a messianic hope is attached to the child who must enact great deeds to justify prior loss [...] Children can experience the tragic weight of their parents' past lives as something which is so much greater than their ordinary everyday complaints, that these can never be voiced or shared. As a result, their own feelings are nullified. (Appignasi 2000: 220)

19. Kaye was born, brought up and educated in Britain, but emigrated to Israel in 1955. She still writes in English. When considering whether or not I could legitimately include her work in this chapter, I was swayed by a conversation between Clive Sinclair and the British-Jewish author of a

number of best-selling action novels, Lionel Davidson. At one point Sinclair asks Davidson whether his emigration to Israel has made him forfeit his old identity:

In turning into an Israeli, have you ceased to feel British?' [...] 'No [...] I won't cease to be British [...] because I'm writing in English [...] it's a bit odd to write books about Israel as an Israeli and to write them in English. (Sinclair 1987: 114)

20. The name given to groups of inmates (themselves usually Jews) employed by the Nazis to help enforce their regime in the camps.
21. Not just in her presentation of Rachel's testimony, but also in her use of documentary-style headings (for example, 'Israel, 1979', 'Mauthausen, 1943-5' and so on) to divide the book into different sections.

5 Philip Roth and Clive Sinclair: Portraits of the Artist as a Jew(ish Other)

1. Roth is speaking of Schulz here, but his words seem to apply equally well to Kafka, who famously wrote: 'What have I in common with Jews? I have hardly anything in common with myself and should stand very quietly in a corner, content that I should breathe' (quoted in Malin 1973: 58). It was of course his interest in Kafka that inspired Roth to visit Czechoslovakia, and that led to him becoming General Editor of Penguin's 'Writers from the Other Europe' series, in which Schulz's stories first became available in English translation. Schulz's reputation has since burgeoned, and he is frequently invoked in post-war Jewish fiction. Notable examples are Roth's own novella *The Prague Orgy* (1985), Cynthia Ozick's novel *The Messiah of Stockholm* (1987), in which a Swedish critic believes himself to be Schulz's son, and the Israeli writer David Grossman's novel *See Under: Love* (1996), in which Schulz undergoes an Ovidian metamorphosis into a salmon. His work has also been popularized by Theatre de Complicité's highly-acclaimed stage-adaptation of one of his fictions, *Street of Crocodiles*.
2. In *Deception* (1990), the protagonist Philip complains that "'I write fiction and I'm told it's autobiography, I write autobiography and I'm told it's fiction'" (Roth 1990: 184).
3. The number of fantasy trials that Roth's heroes undergo bears testimony to this self-adversarial stance. There are mock-court scenes in which the hero is indicted in *Portnoy's Complaint* (1969), in *My Life As a Man* (1974) and in *Deception*, as well as numerous de facto trials, such as the one Nathan Zuckerman endures at the hands of his brother's fellow Yeshiva students in *The Counterlife* (1987).
4. I think the analogy Roth has in mind here is with an artist's still life study, which, by isolating everyday objects (like a glass or an apple) and subjecting them to intense scrutiny, manages to encapsulate, and heighten, their innate properties.
5. In Robert Redford's acclaimed film, *Quiz Show* (1994), based on the real-life scandal, the racial element of the fixing (the urbane, charming WASP professor, Charles Van Doren, is granted a much longer run of success than

the awkward, gawky Jew Herb Stempel) is highlighted. The latter's apparently paranoid belief that Gentiles are always favoured by the show's producers (ever mindful of ratings) turns out to be accurate, and the extra twist is provided by the fact that the investigating attorney is also (ambivalently) Jewish.

6. A phrase that appears in James' short story 'The Middle Years', part of a passage that E. I. Lonoff types out and places over his desk in *The Ghost Writer*: "We work in the dark – we do what we can – we give what we have. Our doubt is our passion and our passion is our task. The rest is the madness of art" (Roth 1979: 77)
7. The novel is subtitled 'A Confession', and in a preface to the main narrative Roth claims that 'The book is as accurate an account as I am able to give of actual occurrences that I lived through' (Roth 1993: 13), but in a 'Note to the Reader' at the end of the book, he makes an apparently contradictory statement, announcing that 'This book is a work of fiction [...] This confession is false' (Roth 1993: 399). This last sentence only exacerbates the confusion, since the word 'confession' might refer to the novel itself, or to the admission that the book is a work of fiction.
8. The idea of presenting himself as the protagonist of his own novel may have come from the Polish author, Tadeusz Konwicki, one of the authors published in the Penguin 'Writers from the Other Europe' series, of which Roth was the General Editor. In an interview with Hermione Lee in 1984, Roth commented on Konwicki's strategy of introducing a character bearing his own name into one of his novels: 'He strengthens the illusion that the novel is true – and not to be discounted as "fiction" – by impersonating himself' (Searles 1992: 168). In order to preserve the distinctions between Roth the author and Roth the character, the latter will be distinguished typographically through the use of quotation marks. Roth's impersonator in the novel will always be referred to by the nickname given him by 'Roth': Moishe Pipik.
9. This impromptu impersonation also has a precedent in the Zuckerman novels. In *The Anatomy Lesson* (1984), Zuckerman pretends to be Milton Appel, an adversarial critic (and yet another Jewish Other, since Appel's criticism of Zuckerman's work is motivated, at least according to Zuckerman's own interpretation, by Appel's guilt at his own youthful rejection of his Jewish heritage), reinventing him as the editor of a pornographic magazine, *Lickety Split*. This improvisation is at least partly fuelled by the cocktail of drink and drugs that Zuckerman is taking to subdue the raging pain in his neck, another detail that anticipates the plot of *Operation Shylock*, which, 'Roth' implies, may originate in the hallucinatory effects of the subsequently-banned (in America) sleeping-pill, Halcion, to which he is unwittingly addicted at the start of the novel.
10. See Hoffman's *The Devil's Elixir* (1815–16), Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* (1824), Poe's 'William Wilson' (1839), Dostoyevsky's 'The Double' (1846), Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886), Gustav Meyrink's *The Golem* (1915), Plautus's *Amphitryon* (date unknown), Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* (c. 1591), and Twain's *Pudd'nhead Wilson* (1894).
11. This is a common refrain in Roth's fiction. In *Portnoy's Complaint*, for

- example, when the young Alex proclaims his atheism, his father berates him for betraying his ancestors: “And what about the Jewish people?” (Roth 1969: 60).
12. In *The Ghost Writer* he dares to imagine a counter-life for Anne Frank (the nearest thing to a Jewish saint and martyr for a religion which has neither), in which she survives the war and lives anonymously in America as Amy Bellette (a pun on belles-lettres), an aspiring young writer having an affair with E.I. Lonoff.
 13. Brian Cheyette has made the comparison in his essay ‘Philip Roth and Clive Sinclair: Representations of an “Imaginary Homeland” in Post-War British and American-Jewish Literature’ in Ann Massa and A. Stead (eds), *Forked Tongues?: Comprising Twentieth-Century British and American Literature*. (1994), and Sinclair himself has made no secret of his admiration for Roth, in his fiction and non-fiction.
 14. The cover of the paperback edition of Sinclair’s second collection of stories, *Bedbugs* (1982), implicitly acknowledges Sinclair’s debt to Kafka, by reproducing a painting by the Israeli artist Yosl Bergner inspired by Kafka’s short story ‘Metamorphosis’, though Kafka’s influence is arguably more evident in stories from his earlier collection, *Hearts of Gold* (1979), such as ‘The Evolution of the Jews’ and ‘The Creature on My Back’. In *Diaspora Blues* (1987) Sinclair devotes a section of the book to Kafka.

Kafka’s influence on Roth has been well-documented: two of Roth’s novellas (*The Breast* [1972], in which David Kepesh wakes up one morning to discover that he has become a massive mammary gland, and *The Prague Orgy* [1985], in which a character known as Kafka’s whore plays a key role) pay homage to him explicitly, and many of his other fictions contain allusions to his work. One of Roth’s best short stories, “I Always Wanted You to Admire My Fasting”; or, Looking at Kafka’ (1975) combines literary criticism and fictional biography: Roth imagines Kafka surviving the war, emigrating to America and becoming the Hebrew teacher (and diffident admirer) of one of Roth’s aunts.
 15. See, among Roth’s works, *The Breast* again, ‘Novotny’s Pain’ (1971), *Portnoy’s Complaint*, and *The Anatomy Lesson*; among Sinclair’s ‘The Creature on My Back’, ‘Kayn Aynhoreh’, *Blood Libels* and *Cosmetic Effects*.
 16. Sinclair has given his alter ego the name that he himself might have had: his father changed his name from Smolinsky to Sinclair when he joined the army in 1939 and Clive’s given first name is Joshua. Sinclair comments wryly that Joshua Smolinsky ‘ought to be the essential me, but isn’t. I am stuck as Clive Sinclair, because my mother tongue is English’ (Sinclair 1987: 49).
 17. The first of the Zuckerman series of novels, *The Ghost Writer*, deals with the young Nathan Zuckerman’s relationship with his hero and – as he hopes – future mentor, E.I. Lonoff, and also with Amy Bellette (alias Anne Frank, whom Zuckerman reincarnates in the form of Lonoff’s lover). Hence Zuckerman is a ghost writer in the sense that he effectively ghost-writes a sequel to Anne Frank’s diary, and Bellette is a ghost writer in the sense that she is a writer who is presumed to be dead.
 18. For a more elaborate exploration of this thesis, and another brilliant treatment of doubling, see Paul Auster’s *New York Trilogy* (1987).

19. 'Marlboro has the Marlboro Man, Israel has its Holocaust Man [...] FOR THE SMOKESCREEN THAT HIDES EVERYTHING, SMOKE HOLOCAUST' (Roth 1993: 296).
20. I call him the Roth-figure not simply because he is described in these terms, but because his surname is clearly taken from Peter Tarnopol, the novelist-narrator of one of Roth's novels, *My Life as a Man*.
21. Both Nisref, who, we are told, has won the Nobel Prize for Literature, and Ostrover, whose fame in America in Ozick's story so galls his obscure fellow-writers in Yiddish, are clearly modelled on Isaac Bashevis Singer. Sinclair has published a critical biography of Singer and his lesser-known brother, Israel Joshua Singer.
22. Traditionally, Jews light a small candle to commemorate the anniversary of a loved one's death, but Tarnopol has brought with him an electric version: it is the symbolic malfunctioning of this device which causes the fire in Tarnopol's room in which the manuscript of the narrator's novel in translation is burned.
23. One of Sinclair's earlier stories, 'The Promised Land', begins with a parody of the opening line of *Moby Dick*: 'Call me Schlemiel' (Sinclair 1982: 22), as does Roth's *The Great American Novel* (1973), the first line of which is 'Call me Smitty' (Roth 1973: 1).
24. Later on, Jake himself interviews Unger, and admits to being somewhat in awe of meeting his literary hero:

As an adolescent I thrived on the disreputable antics of his heroes, amazed and delighted that the vernacular of my subconscious could become – of all things! – literature. Needless to say, the elders of Zion weren't quite so thrilled, and the message was drummed from *bima* [pulpit] to *bima* that Unger was a betrayer of his people. Angered despite himself, he concocted a series of self-obsessed fictions charting the development of the writer Unger would have been if he were the person his enemies said he was. (Sinclair 1986: 102)

This is, of course, an accurate description of Roth's career, and of its influence on Sinclair. In a further twist to the fiction-as-life-life-as-fiction games going on here, Sinclair names Unger's alter ego Smolinsky, the name of his own alter ego in many of his short stories.

25. Rabbi Nathan's words here ironically echo those of Gershom Scholem's infamous attack on Roth, which Roth in turn puts in the mouth of the Zuckerman family's Rabbi in *Zuckerman Unbound*.
26. Sinclair has conceded that these fears are his own, as well as those of his alter ego, Jake Silkstone: 'I deliberately set the novel [*Blood Libels*] a few years in the past, so as to avoid the adjective "prophetic", but I am superstitious enough to believe that what I write might indeed come to pass' (Sinclair 1987: 138).
27. That it is tenacious, even in modern-day Britain, I can confirm from personal experience. A girl whom I dated as an undergraduate (in the late 1980s) once told me that a 'Jewish convert' had lectured to the congregation of her local (Scottish Presbyterian) church on the subject of 'Jewish customs'. According to her account, he had claimed that Jews eat matzo (unleavened bread) and drink red wine at Passover to celebrate their

murder of Christ, the holes in the matzo symbolizing Christ's wounds, and the wine his blood (in a perversion of the Christian Eucharist). His testimony was, apparently, delivered with the sanction of the minister and without challenge from the congregation.

28. Indeed, Jake also suffers from another psychosomatic illness (dermatographia, an outbreak of hives all over his body) that afflicts him whenever he experiences sexual desire. The onset of this condition coincides with his appointment as literary editor of the *Jewish Voice*, prompting Jake to observe: "I felt that I had become the embodiment of my newspaper: allergic to life, over-sensitive to antisemitism" (56–7).
29. Ziz shares Jake's taste in women: he has also, it turns out, had an affair with Jake's wife (another action typical of Sinclair's *Jewish Others*, as we have seen).

Afterword

1. A study of post-war novelizations of biblical narratives, provisionally entitled *Unauthorized Versions*.
2. A good example is Howard Jacobson's latest novel, *The Mighty Walzer* (2000), most of which takes place in the Jewish enclave of Manchester in which Jacobson grew up. Whereas in his earlier novels, Jacobson seemed to be very conscious of the fact that most of his readers would be non-Jews (and so Yiddish words would usually be glossed, and other allowances made for their probable ignorance of all things Jewish), in *The Mighty Walzer* he relies on the intrinsic expressiveness of his distinctive British-Jewish idiom to overcome any cultural barriers. No previous novel has represented the British-Jewish milieu with such an unapologetic lack of self-consciousness.

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