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Edited by Victoria Aarons
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THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO SAUL BELLOW

Saul Bellow is one of the most influential figures in twentieth-century American literature. Bellow’s work explores the most important cultural and social experiences of his era: the impact of the Holocaust, the urban experience of European immigrants from a Jewish perspective, the fraught failures of the Vietnam War, the ideological seductions of Marxism and Modernism, and the changing attitudes concerning gender and race. This Companion demonstrates the complexity of this formative writer by emphasizing the ways in which Bellow’s works speak to the changing conditions of American identity and culture from the post-war period to the turn of the twenty-first century. Individual chapters address the major themes of Bellow’s work over more than a half-century of masterfully crafted fiction, articulating some of the most significant cultural experiences of the American twentieth century. It provides a comprehensive and accessible overview of a key figure in American literature.

Victoria Aarons is the O. R. & Eva Mitchell Distinguished Professor of Literature at Trinity University. She is the author of A Measure of Memory and What Happened to Abraham, both recipients of the Choice Award for Outstanding Academic Book; and the co-editor of The New Diaspora: The Changing Landscape of American Jewish Fiction, and Bernard Malamud: A Centennial Tribute. She is co-author of Third-Generation Holocaust Representation: Trauma, History, and Memory, and editor of Third-Generation Holocaust Narratives: Memory in Memoir and Fiction. Aarons has published over seventy scholarly articles and is on the editorial board of Philip Roth Studies, Studies in American Jewish Literature, Women in Judaism, and Verbeia, Journal of English and Spanish Studies. She serves as a judge for the Edward Lewis Wallant Award.

A complete list of books in the series is at the back of this book
THE CAMBRIDGE COMPANION TO

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VICTORIA AARONS
Trinity University, Texas
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Reading: Erotics of the Text, The Translingual Imagination, Switching Languages: Translingual Writers Reflect on Their Craft, and Redemption: The Life of Henry Roth (2005), which received the New York Society Library Award for Biography.

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PAULE LÉVY is Professor of American Literature at the University of Versailles, France. She has widely published in the field of Jewish American literature. In addition to numerous articles, her book publications include Figures de l’Artiste: Identité et écriture dans la littérature juive américaine de la deuxième moitié du XXe siècle (2006), American Pastoral: La Vie réinventée (2012), and the edited volumes, Profils américains: Philip Roth (2002), Écritures contemporaines de la différence (2003), Mémoires d’Amériques (2009), Autour de Saul Bellow (2010), and Lectures de Philip Roth: American Pastoral (2011).

TIMOTHY PARRISH, Professor of English, Virginia Tech University, is the author of Walking Blues: Making Americans from Emerson to Elvis (2001), From the Civil War to the Apocalypse: Postmodern History and American Fiction (2008), and Ralph Ellison and the Genius of America (2012). He is also the editor of The Cambridge Companion to Philip Roth (2007) and The Cambridge Companion to American Novelists (2013). He has published widely on contemporary American literature.

SUKHBIR SINGH is an eminent scholar and teacher of English, American, and Indian literatures at Osmania University, Hyderabad, India. He was awarded Junior and Senior UGC research fellowships, and Major and Minor Research Projects by the UGC; Senior Fulbright Visiting Fellowship at the University of Chicago (Divinity School), IL, by the United States Educational Foundation in India; and Pierce Loughran Visiting Scholarship by the W.B. Yeats Society of Ireland. He is currently on the International Board of Editors for the Anthology of American Literature for the Asian Students funded by the Luce Foundation in the United States. He was elected to the Board of Directors and Executive Council of the American Studies Research Center, Hyderabad.
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MARTÍN URDIALES-SHAW is Senior Lecturer in the Department of English, French and German at the University of Vigo, Spain. He works on American Twentieth-Century literature, mainly specializing in the fields of Jewish American narrative, 1930s urban fiction, and, more recently, American popular culture, graphic novels, and Holocaust studies. His main publications include a monograph on Bernard Malamud’s oeuvre, and articles on the works of Bernard Malamud, Henry Roth, Clifford Odets, Tillie Olsen, and Rudolfo Anaya.
CHRONOLOGY

1915 Solomon (Saul) Bellow is born on June 10 in Lachine, Quebec, Canada to Russian-born Abraham Belo (b. 1881), who held a variety of small-time jobs, including baker, bootlegger, and junk-dealer, and Lescha (Liza) Gordin Belo (b. 1883?). Family name is changed to Bellows.

1918 Bellows family moves to Montreal. Speaks French and Yiddish in the home.

1923 Bellow becomes ill with peritonitis and pneumonia. Hospitalized for six months at Royal Victoria Hospital.

1924 Bellows family moves to Humboldt Park, Chicago. Family name is changed to Bellow.

1930 Graduates Sabin Junior High.

1933 Graduates Tuley High School.

1933 Liza Bellow dies after battle with breast cancer. Bellow enrolls at the University of Chicago, where he remains for two years.

1935 Transfers to Northwestern University because of family’s financial difficulties. Studies English literature and anthropology.

1936 Publishes short pieces in the Daily Northwestern.

1937 Graduates Northwestern with a BA in anthropology. Becomes an associate editor of the Beacon, Chicago’s liberal magazine. Receives graduate fellowship in Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Wisconsin, Madison.

1938 Returns to Chicago after two semesters at the University of Wisconsin. Marries Anita Goshkin. Teaches anthropology and English at Pestalozzi-Froebel Teachers College.

1940 Travels to Mexico City to interview Trotsky, who was assassinated before they could meet.
**Chronology**

1941  

1944  
Publishes *Dangling Man*. Birth of first son, Gregory.

1945  
Joins the Merchant Marine.

1946  
Joins the faculty of the English Department at the University of Minnesota as an assistant professor. Meets Robert Penn Warren.

1947  
Publishes *The Victim*. Embarks on first European trip.

1948  

1949  
Publishes “Sermon by Dr. Pep” in *Partisan Review* and “The Jewish Writer and the English Literary Tradition” in *Commentary*.

1950  
Returns to America, relocating in Queens, New York.

1951  

1952  

1953  

1954  

1955  

1956  

1957  
Birth of son, Adam. Meets Philip Roth at the University of Chicago. Fourth residency at Yaddo.

1959  
Publishes *Henderson the Rain King*. Meets Alice Adams. Separates from Sondra.

1960  
Meets Hebrew writer S. Y. Agnon in Israel. Founds magazine the *Noble Savage*, coedited with Keith Botsford and Jack Ludwig.

1961  
Marries Susan Glassman.
1962 Begins professorship in the committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago.
1964 Birth of son Daniel. Publishes Herzog.
1965 Receives National Book Award for Fiction for Herzog and the Formentor Prize.
1966 Separates from wife Susan.
1967 Travels to Middle East to cover the Six-Day War for Newsday.
1969 Publishes Mr. Sammler’s Planet serially in Atlantic Monthly.
1970 Publishes Mr. Sammler’s Planet in book form.
1971 Mr. Sammler’s Planet wins National Book Award for Fiction.
1974 Marries Alexandra Ionescu Tulcea.
1975 Publishes Humboldt’s Gift, a novel based in large part on the poet Delmore Schwartz. Travels to Israel and interviews major Israeli novelists and political figures, including Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.
1977 Receives Gold Medal for Fiction of the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters. Teaches at Brandeis. Begins appointment as member of Prize Fellows Committee to select MacArthur grant recipients.
1980 Begins co-teaching with Allan Bloom in the Committee on Social Thought. Receives the O. Henry Award.
1982 Publishes The Dean’s December. Publishes story “Him with His Foot in His Mouth” in Atlantic Monthly.
1983 Publishes “In the Days of Mr. Roosevelt” in Esquire.
1984 Publishes “What Kind of Day Did You Have?” in Vanity Fair. Publishes the collection of stories Him with His Foot in His Mouth. Lachine Public Library renames as Saul Bellow Public Library.
1985 Brothers Maurice and Sam die. Separates from Alexandra.
CHRONOLOGY

1988  Receives Medal of Freedom from President Ronald Reagan. Travels to Italy and receives Scanno Prize in Abruzzo.
1989  Publishes A Theft and the novella The Bellarosa Connection. Receives PEN/Malamud Award and the Peggy V. Helmerich Distinguished Authors Award. Marries Janis Freeman. Begins work on two unfinished novels, All Marbles Still Accounted For and A Case of Love.
1991  Publishes Something to Remember Me By: Three Tales.
1992  Friend Allan Bloom dies.
1994  Travels to the Caribbean island of Saint Martin and becomes seriously ill after eating contaminated fish with ciguatera poisoning. Returns to Boston where he is hospitalized.
1997  Publishes novella The Actual.
1999  Series of interviews with Philip Roth. Birth of daughter, Naomi Rose.
2000  Publishes Ravelstein, Bellow’s final novel based on longtime friend and colleague, philosopher Allan Bloom, who taught at the University of Chicago’s Committee on Social Thought.
2001  Collected Stories published, preface by Janis Freedman Bellow and introduction by literary critic James Wood.
2003  Library of Congress begins publishing collected works.
2005  Dies at his home in Brookline, MA, on April 5 at age 89. Following traditional Jewish rites is buried in Brattleboro Cemetery, Vermont.

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