

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

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Edited by Victoria Aarons
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VICTORIA AARONS
Trinity University, Texas



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CONTENTS

<i>List of Contributors</i>	page ix
<i>Chronology</i>	xiii
Introduction: Saul Bellow in His Times VICTORIA AARONS	I
I Bellow’s Early Fiction and the Making of the Bellovian Protagonist PHILIPPE CODDE	9
2 <i>Seize the Day</i> : Bellow’s Novel of Existential Crisis HILENE FLANZBAUM	21
3 Bellow’s Breakthrough: <i>The Adventures of Augie March</i> and the Novel of Voice STEVEN G. KELLMAN	32
4 Bellow’s Cityscapes: Chicago and New York GUSTAVO SÁNCHEZ CANALES	43
5 Bellow and the Holocaust VICTORIA AARONS	55
6 <i>Humboldt’s Gift</i> and Bellow’s Intellectual Protagonists S. LILLIAN KREMER	68
7 On Being a Jewish Writer: Bellow’s Post-War America and the American Jewish Diaspora ALAN L. BERGER	81
	vii

CONTENTS

8	Bellow and His Literary Contemporaries	96
	TIMOTHY PARRISH	
9	Women and Gender in Bellow’s Fiction: <i>Herzog</i>	108
	PAULE LÉVY	
10	Race and Cultural Politics in Bellow’s Fiction	120
	MARTÍN URDIALES-SHAW	
11	Bellow on Israel: <i>To Jerusalem and Back</i>	134
	LEONA TOKER	
12	Bellow’s Non-Fiction: <i>It All Adds Up</i>	146
	SUKHBIR SINGH	
13	Bellow’s Short Fiction	159
	DAVID BRAUNER	
14	The Late Bellow: <i>Ravelstein</i> and the Novel of Ideas	171
	LEAH GARRETT	
	<i>Guide to Further Reading</i>	183
	<i>Index</i>	193

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GUSTAVO SÁNCHEZ CANALES currently teaches English at The Universidad Autónoma de Madrid (Spain). His interests in research include contemporary Jewish American fiction, Holocaust literature, comparative literature, and literary theory. He has published numerous articles, book chapters, and reviews on the work of authors such as Philip Roth, Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, Chaim Potok, Cynthia Ozick, Allegra Goodman, Rebecca Goldman, Jonathan Safran Foer, and Michael Chabon, among others.

PHILIPPE CODDE is a visiting professor of American literature at Ghent University. He is the recipient of a BAEF Honorary Fellowship, Fordham University's Bennett Fellowship, and Ghent University's 2014 Arts and Humanities Teaching Award. He is the author of *The Jewish American Novel* (2007).

HILENE FLANZBAUM is the Allegra Stewart Chair of Modern Literature at Butler University, where she also directs the MFA program in Creative Writing. She is the editor of and a contributor to the *Americanization of the Holocaust* and the managing editor of *Jewish American Literature: A Norton Anthology*. She has published articles about Jewish American literature in *English Literary History*, *American Literary History*, *Studies in American Jewish Literature*, and the *Yale Journal of Criticism*, among others.

LEAH GARRETT is the Loti Smorgon Research Professor of Contemporary Jewish Life and Culture at Monash University. She has published extensively in Jewish literary studies, including *Journeys beyond the Pale: Yiddish Travel Writing in the Modern World* (1999), *The Cross and Other Jewish Stories by Lamed Shapiro* (2003), *A Knight at the Opera: Heine, Wagner, Herzl, Peretz and the Legacy of Der Tannhauser* (2011), and *Young Lions: How Jewish Authors Reinvented the American War Novel* (2015).

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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.

S. LILLIAN KREMER, University Distinguished Professor, Emerita, Department of English, Kansas State University, was a Fulbright Lecturer in Belgium and a guest lecturer in the Czech Republic, Italy, and Israel. She is the author of *Witness Through the Imagination: The Holocaust in Jewish American Literature*, *Women's Holocaust Writing: Memory and Imagination*, and editor and contributing author of *Holocaust Literature: An Encyclopedia of Writers and Their Work*, a two-volume reference work designated a CHOICE Best Reference Book, the American Library Association Dartmouth Medal Honorable Mention, and awarded the Judaica Bibliography Book Award by the Association of Jewish Libraries.

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'Amérique* (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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LEONA TOKER is Professor in the English Department of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She is the author of *Nabokov: The Mystery of Literary Structures* (1989), *Eloquent Reticence: Withholding Information in Fictional Narrative* (1993), *Return from the Archipelago: Narratives of Gulag Survivors* (2000), *Towards the Ethics of Form in Fiction: Narratives of Cultural Remission* (2010), and articles on English, American, and Russian literature. She is the editor of *Commitment in Reflection: Essays in Literature and Moral Philosophy* (1994) and co-editor of *Rereading Texts/Rethinking Critical Presuppositions: Essays in Honour of H.M. Daleski* (1996), as well as of *Knowledge and Pain* (2012). She founded and is editor of *Partial Answers: Journal of Literature and the History of Ideas*, a semiannual academic periodical published by Johns Hopkins University Press.

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 Short story, “Two Morning Monologues,” published in *Partisan Review*. Becomes a naturalized citizen of the United States.
- 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 Receives Guggenheim Fellowship. Publishes “Spanish Letter” in *Partisan Review*. Travels to Paris with Anita and Gregory.
- 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 Publishes “By the Rock Wall” in *Harper’s Bazaar*. Begins Reichian therapy.
- 1952 Translated I. B. Singer’s “Gimpel the Fool” for *Partisan*. Assumes residency at Yaddo, artists’ colony in Saratoga Springs, New York. Becomes friends with Ralph Ellison. Works at Princeton with Delmore Schwartz. Meets lifetime friend John Berryman.
- 1953 Begins teaching at Bard College. Meets Hannah Arendt. Second residency at Yaddo. Publishes *The Adventures of Augie March* to considerable acclaim.
- 1954 *The Adventures of Augie March* wins National Book Award for Fiction. Separates from Anita. Resigns position at Bard.
- 1955 Abraham Bellow dies of aneurysm. “A Father-To-Be” published in the *New Yorker*. Moves to Reno, Nevada.
- 1956 Marries Sasha (Sondra) Tschachbasov. Meets John Cheever at Yaddo. Moves to Tivoli, New York. Teaches at the New School for Social Research. Publishes *Seize the Day*.
- 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.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1962 Begins professorship in the committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago.
- 1963 Publishes “The Writer as Moralist” in *Atlantic Monthly*. Writes Introduction to *Great Jewish Short Stories*.
- 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*.
- 1968 Publishes short story collection *Mosby’s Memoirs*.
- 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.
- 1976 Receives Pulitzer Prize for Fiction for *Humboldt’s Gift*. Non-fiction collection *To Jerusalem and Back* appears serially in the *New Yorker* and then in book form. Receives Nobel Prize in Literature.
- 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.
- 1981 Meets with Samuel Beckett in Paris.
- 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.
- 1986 Participates in PEN International Conference in New York. American-Jewish novelist Bernard Malamud dies.
- 1987 Publishes *More Die of Heartbreak*.

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*.
- 1990 Receives National Book Foundation's lifetime Medal for Distinguished Contribution to American Letters. Publishes story "Something to Remember Me By" in *Esquire*.
- 1991 Publishes *Something to Remember Me By: Three Tales*.
- 1992 Friend Allan Bloom dies.
- 1993 Publishes collection of non-fiction pieces *It All Adds Up*. Begins teaching appointment at Boston University.
- 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.
- 1995 Returns to teaching at Boston University. Last short story, "By the Saint Lawrence," appears in *Esquire*. Finds (with Keith Botsford) the new literary journal, *News from the Republic of Letters*.
- 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.