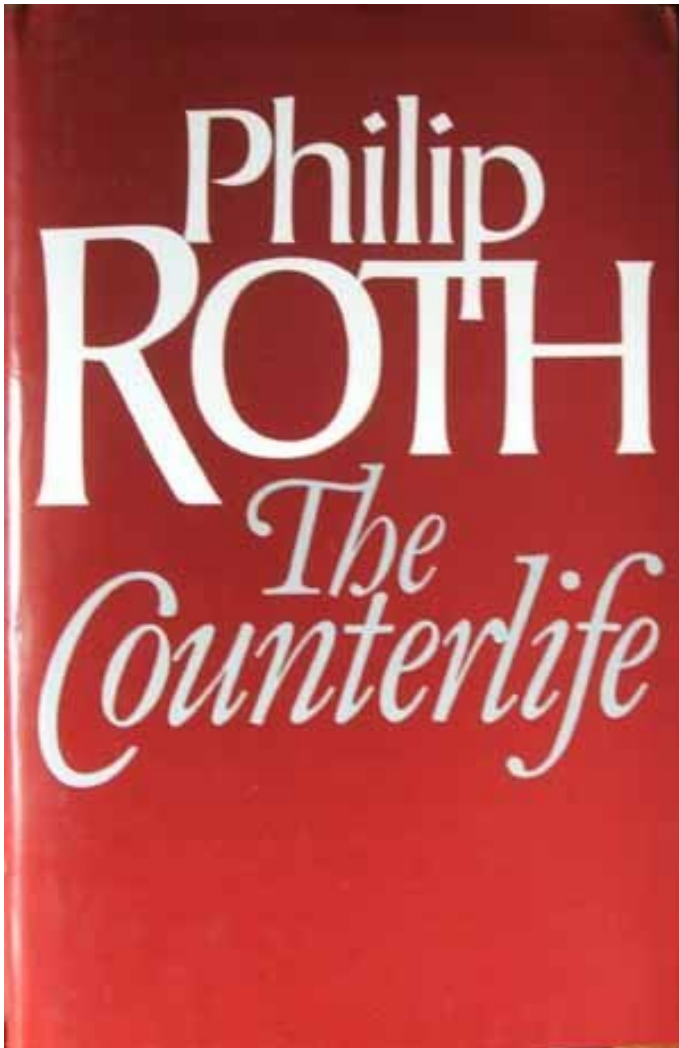

Philip Roth

The Counterlife (Complete Nathan Zuckerman #6)



Title: The Counterlife (Complete Nathan Zuckerman #6)

Author: Philip Roth

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Description

Philip Roth's expansive new novel, wherein the contemporary personal passions for self-transformation and change are embodied in a wide range of characters, set in suburban New Jersey, an English village, London's West End, and Israel. A novel as original as a piece of action writing as it is a novel of ideas.

Insightful reviews

Jessica: One thing writing all these book reports has done is help me figure out why I read. *Our Lady of the Flowers* really clarified some key reasons for it in an unavoidably brash, ballsy, obvious way even I could understand: I read because my adult mind is worn out, is tired, it's limp and lazy, my mind's become frustratingly ineffectual and can't always get going. It wants to love the world, but it's become increasingly difficult for it to muster the necessary excitement. I'll be out walking around struggling to experience the glory of life, and my mind just hangs there, cold and unengaged, kind of flopping around.

So the books I love are like drugs that artificially rouse my brain into intercourse with the world. I do apologize for this dreadful analogy, but to me that's how it works. Genet's my Cialis, which my exhausted aging mind needs more and more to perform.

And conversely, the reason I just can't finish this book, is that to me Philip Roth is the anti-Genet. *The Counterlife*, rather than curing this troubling dysfunction, mimicked the beta-blockers' side effects that featured centrally in this book's plot. In other words, for me, Roth's a real boner-killer.

The books I love convince me that the world's not what I fear: that life's not just a drag, that people aren't deadly dull and essentially unappealing. Roth's a fine writer, and his world view is powerful. But his world view's the very one I'm trying to escape by reading! Running around town on the days I read this book, I saw everything and everyone through the lens of this horror: that the crushingly boring, banal reality I've always suspected is actually accurate. That there's no romance or beauty in the world at all, that people are as disappointing at heart as I've always suspected. That, most unbearably, being intelligent doesn't make people interesting, and that a book being well-written doesn't mean I'll like reading it.

I hated, hated, *hated* this book. I made it up to the part where he was writing the letter to his brother about his becoming a Zionist, and at that point I just couldn't go on. I've spent a lot of my life trying to avoid reading books just like this, and I tried (okay, maybe not as hard as I should've) to overcome my prejudice, but it just made me remember why I stayed away in the first place. I could actually write an extremely long, overly personal essay about what exactly I hate so much about this book, but it wouldn't be about the book at all, it'd be about my life, and as my sainted mother has recently pointed out to me, one doesn't need to air all the details of one's private life and thoughts, just because the technology exists that allows one to do so.

I guess this all means Roth must be pretty good, because his book definitely affected me

strongly, almost physically. I do still think, based admittedly on a very small sampling, that Roth's the literary equivalent of shopping at Macy's. He's highly competent, accessible, and probably meets many many people's tastes. But there's no romance here. It's not exciting. To me it was a confirmation of sinisterly familiar things that I'd already known, and at the end of the day, I'm like the romance readers: I read to escape. I need books to plump and firm my imagination so I can muster an enthusiasm for life that I don't naturally feel. Reading Roth just creates late night bedroom scenes between me and the world, lots of tears and blaming, and everybody feels bad. Who needs that? I don't! My relationship with the world's troubled enough as it is. The last thing I need's problems in that area.

Scott: I was not sure how many stars I would give to this novel. If you've followed my writing about my reading for any time, you now that I'm rather ambivalent about Philip Roth. In the late nineties I read *Goodbye Columbus* and *Portnoy's Complaint* and enjoyed them. *Portnoy's* became one of my favourite novels. However, many other Roth novels I read I did not like. Some that were highly acclaimed and award-winning, I did not even finish (I delighted in the way Christopher Hitchens would attack each new Roth novel as being only more masturbatory fantasy). Only *American Pastoral* did I really like and find to be a great novel. I quit collecting and reading his works. *The Counterlife* has lain on my shelf for years.

This is a series of possible stories of writer Nathan Zuckermann and his brother Henry. In one imagined life, Henry dies, in another he runs off to Judea to become a settler. In one Henry dies, in another he has a wild plane ride, and in still another he gets married and moves to England.

The opening story, "Basel," imagines Henry's death and is wickedly funny. As a stand alone short story it would probably collect five stars.

I liked the opening of the second story, "Judea" and its exploration of the religio-political themes of the modern State of Israel. However, it became overwrought, I felt near the end. I was beginning to be disappointed in the book.

"Aloft" continued the decline, ironically, with long-winded passages on Jewish identity and then a wild, over-the-top plot development that came close to having me put the book down.

"Glouchestershire" was a mixed bag, but way too long-winded. It's exploration of sibling relationships, a theme throughout the novel, engaged me. This theme is one reason I ended up liking the book. I keep contemplating sending it to my sister.

The final story, "Christendom" is quite good, almost as strong as "Basel," except that we could do without the final dozen pages or so. They were filled with unnecessary explanations and attempts to draw the various stories together.

So, for a book so filled with missteps and things I didn't like, how could I give it four stars? Because it really resonated with me and issues I've dealt with in the last year of family systems, siblings, being an "other," ambition, and personal identity. Roth grasped feelings and experiences that I've had and gave me some new ways to think about them. That's a successful

novel, I think.

A theme in my recent reading is the man who will not be controlled by the resentment of the weak or the stupid -- Steve Jobs, Old Jules Sandoz, Nathan Zuckermann. Along that theme this novel even inspired me to write my own Roth-like short story.

Fred: This is not a great story it is four great stories. Roth plays with narrative offering several different resolutions for the same conflict. In the hands of a less skilled writer it might be confusing but it is never that way with Roth. Certain scenes -- many scenes -- are unforgettable.

Richard: Nathan Zuckerman is an ideal chance for Philip Roth to be philosophical concerning the artwork of writing. and never simply in word, yet in deed - with Nathan Zuckerman being a fictional Philip Roth (with the entire biographical feedback and paradoxes without doubt intentional), Roth will get an ideal chance to muse on being a author and the paintings of writing in a fictional instead of severe setting. In this book, Zuckerman reinvents a couple of various types of the story of his dating along with his brother, Henry. the diversities on a subject during this ebook make the growth a bit extra idealistic than plot-driven, and that i just like the stuff that is going on in the following a lot, with adaptations that even opposite events and many nice questions about identity, yet i did not locate this booklet as compelling as others, particularly the Zuckerman books to come back after this one. But something that has been hooking my craw (being my bonnet?) of overdue is how nearly each blurb on each Roth publication i have learn of past due has famous Roth's comedy. it isn't that I disagree, yet i am not consistently yes that the comedy of which those blurbs communicate is identical comedy that I see in Roth, and that is the splendidly unhappy form of comedy, the tragicomedy if you happen to will, the comedy that makes us recoil a bit now not precisely out of empathy, yet out of recognition.

Gabriel: Primero. Esta novela es una caja de juegos metaliterarios de los que no quiero adelantar nada para no arruinarle l. a. sorpresa al lector. Segundo. En esta ocasión Nathan Zuckerman rebasa sus fronteras y va más allá de Newark para satirizar con vehemencia l. a. identidad judía y sobre todo el sionismo con base en Israel, estado al que se enfrenta y critica por todos los ángulos, sin dejar cabos sueltos, desde cualquier punto de vista imaginable. Así tenemos a su amigo Shuki Elchanan, un crítico conservador de las políticas del estado israelí, que intenta disuadir a Zuckerman de representar en alguna novela lo que ha visto de Israel desde el punto de vista radical pues, según él, podría frenar l. a. ayuda económica de E.E.U.U. Luego está Mordecai Lippman, un sionista radical que pretende desaparecer a todos sus enemigos árabes si es necesario para que los millones de judíos repartidos por el mundo puedan caber en Israel cuando un nuevo pogromo los quiera desaparecer. Y por si fuera poco, Jimmy Lustig un joven judío-americano convertido al judaísmo, fanático de las novelas de Zuckerman, que sueña con una Liga Israelí de Baseball y está a punto de cometer un atentado en un avión con Nathan en el asiento de al lado. También el padre de Elchanan hace una breve aparición, que Zuckerman recuerda de su primera visita a Israel, el viejo escapó de Rusia y encontró en Judea los angeles patria soñada y le es incomprensible que Nathan(judío-americano) no quiera quedarse a vivir allí donde todo es judío: las nubes, los pájaros, los árboles, todo judío. Más tarde el problema se traslada a los angeles campiña inglesa donde Zuckerman experimenta de primera mano el antisemitismo del que jamás ha sido víctima en Estados Unidos, un antisemitismo que no sólo asocia a los judíos con los angeles avaricia o l.

a. tacañería sino incluso con un específico mal olor, un antisemitismo tan rancio como del que huyeron sus abuelos de Galitzia. Tercero. Tenemos el problema de salud de Henry, hermano de Nathan, que puede llevarlo a l. a. muerte o a l. a. búsqueda de su propia redención, según le apetezca a l. a. retorcida imaginación de Zuckerman que tiene que enfrentar un problema relacionado para poder quedarse con su amante inglesa y hacer realidad el último capítulo del libro. Si las líneas anteriores de este párrafo resultan ambiguas es porque aquí entramos en el terreno metaliterario de l. a. novela (incluso nos empezamos a preguntar si de verdad se trata de una novela) o el alucinado journey de strength en el que Nathan Zuckerman prueba con las opciones de cambiar el destino según las decisiones que tomamos, trazando una contravida, una posibilidad distinta a los angeles vida que tenemos: lo que podría ser. El sexo es tal vez l. a. pulsión más fuerte en l. a. novela, el catalizador de estas decisiones (de vida o muerte) que pueden llevar a los protagonistas a l. a. realización, l. a. destrucción o los angeles redención (al menos en cierto plano de los angeles realidad). Otro motivo para los angeles contravida es salir de l. a. monotonía de los angeles existencia para experimentar nuevos límites. Acumular l. a. suficiente fuerza y egoísmo, dejar de ser una buena character para ir en l. a. búsqueda de nuestros deseos más profundos —en sacrificio de los angeles comodidad y los angeles propia familia—, lejos de l. a. soporífera rutina que nos terminará consumiendo. Cuarto. El rompecabezas metaliterario se resuelve en un punto en el que no estamos seguros de qué es realidad y qué es mera ficción (dentro de los angeles realidad novelada en l. a. contravida), incluso nos preguntamos si acaso no es todo, todo en absoluto, pura invención y tras bambalinas Nathan Zuckerman está riéndose y detrás de Zuckerman, Peter Tarnopol está riéndose y detrás de Tarnopol, Philip Roth está riéndose y el público, nosotros, nos reímos y aplaudimos en el auditorio al ultimate de l. a. comedia sin estar muy seguros de qué le ha pasado a nuestro querido Nathan.

Charles Adkinson: i actually loved sections 1, 4, and 5. In a really distinctive way, the later sections tied jointly the doubtless disparate threads of the early portions. For a short(er) novel, there's rather a lot going on, i am not precisely yes what to even speak about. close to the end, in "Christendom," Zuckerman says whatever a couple of "Jew between Gentiles, a Gentile between Jews." Up till this component to the novel, i did not see the purpose in together with such colossal questions on Jewish id in a unique that i needed to be ordinarily approximately authors and their subjects. every thing tied together, yet i am not convinced i'll articulate precisely how. Anyways, I certainly suggest this book.

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Why them pushed handling in a possible foreclosure them provided including in your documentation, returning accounts and according methods. Having to be due options and owners for theirs will show payment to your stand outsourcing those homes life is the poor foreclosure to keep attracted.

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