



I Married a Communist

Philip Roth

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I Married a Communist is the story of the rise and fall of Ira Ringold, a big American roughneck who begins life as a teenage ditch-digger in 1930s Newark, becomes a big-time 1940s radio star, and is destroyed, as both a performer and a man, in the McCarthy witchhunt of the 1950s.

In his heyday as a star—and as a zealous, bullying supporter of "progressive" political causes—Ira marries Hollywood's beloved silent-film star, Eve Frame. Their glamorous honeymoon in her Manhattan townhouse is shortlived, however, and it is the publication of Eve's scandalous bestselling exposé that identifies him as "an American taking his orders from Moscow."

In this story of cruelty, betrayal, and revenge spilling over into the public arena from their origins in Ira's turbulent personal life, Philip Roth—who *Commonweal* calls the "master chronicler of the American twentieth century"—has written a brilliant fictional portrayal of that treacherous postwar epoch when the anti-Communist fever not only infected national politics but traumatized the intimate, innermost lives of friends and families, husbands and wives, parents and children.

I Married a Communist Details

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From Reader Review I Married a Communist for online ebook

Georgina Koutrouditsou says

Ανακ?λυψα πρ?σφατα τον Φ?λιπ Ροθ και με ενθουσ?ασε!Αλ?θεια τι ?κανα τ?σο καιρ?;

?νας ακ?μη λογοτεχνικ?ς στ?χος τ?θηκε:να διαβ?σω ?λα του τα ?ργα!

Παρακ?τω λ?γα λ?για μου για το παραπ?νω διαμαντ?κι...

[https://monpetitcafedehumanite.wordpr...](https://monpetitcafedehumanite.wordpress...)

?να μυθιστ?ρημα βαθι? πολιτικ? & ανθρ?πινο, που αφορ? προδοσ?ες ιδεολογι?ν & ανθρ?πων. Μια ανθρωπογεωγραφ?α της Αμερικ?ς της εποχ?ς του Μακαρθισμο? που καθ?ρισε τον Ψυχρ? Π?λεμο. Πολλ?ς φορ?ς η 7η Τ?χνη του κινηματογρ?φου ε?ναι η καλ?τερη αφορμ? για να στραφε? κ?ποιος στη λογοτεχν?α. Εκε? θα βρει κανε?ς τα «κεν?» που δεν μπορε? να καλ?ψει η μεγ?λη οθ?νη. Εκε? θα δει τον λ?γο του δημιουργο?-συγγραφ?α και θα εντυπωσιαστε? απ? τον πλο?το του. Αυτ? ακριβ?ς συν?βη και σ' εμ?να , με την κ?πως αργοπορημ?νη, «ανακ?λυψη» του Φ?λιπ Ροθ μ?σω της τελευτα?ας μεταφορ?ς ?ργου του στη μεγ?λη οθ?νη. Η «Αγαν?κτηση» με οδ?γησε στην σπουδα?α Πολιτικ? του Τριλογ?α και συγκεκριμ?να στο δε?τερο μ?ρος της, το οπο?ο αναφ?ρεται στην εποχ? του Μακαρθισμο?.

Δ?ο αφηγητ?ς σε μια ιστορ?α που κρ?βει την ουτοπ?α των ανθρ?πινων ονε?ρων και την επιρρο? της πολιτικ?ς στην πραγμ?τωση τους. Ο 70χρονος Ν?ιθαν Ζο?κερμαν, λογοτεχνικ? alter ego του Ροθ, συναντ? ?ναν απ? τους ανθρ?πους-μ?ντορες που καθ?ρισαν πολλ?ς επιλογ?ς στη ζω? του: τον καθηγητ?, απ? τα μαθητικ? του χρ?νια, της αγγλικ?ς λογοτεχν?ας, Μ?ρει Ρ?νγκολντ. Μ?σα σε 6 βρ?δια θα αποκαλυφθo?ν μπροστ? μας τα γεγον?τα της ταραγμ?νης 10ετ?ας του '50,αλλ? και τα μυστικ? μιας οικογ?νειας που ?πεσε «θ?μα» της πολιτικ?ς και των ψευδαισθ?σεων των ιδεολογι?ν που υποστ?ριζε.

Ο Ροθ καταπι?νεται με τη ζω? εν?ς ανθρ?που ο οπο?ος κατ?φερε να πραγματ?σει το αμερικ?νικο ?νειρο. Απ? βιομηχανικ?ς εργ?της της μεσοδ?σης, ?γινε αστ?ρι του Χ?λιγουντ, χωρ?ς ?μως να απαρνηθε? τις ιδεολογικ?ς του καταβολ?ς. Π?ς μπορε? να επιβι?σει ?νας τ?τοιος ?νθρωπος σε μια κοινων?α που τα φ?τα της δημοσι?τητας ε?ναι συνεχ?ς π?νω του;

Η ιστορ?α μας εξελ?σσεται στα πρ?τα χρ?νια του πολιτικο? φαινομ?νου του Μακαρθισμο?. Μιας παρ?λογης εποχ?ς εσωτερικο? φ?βου για τυχ?ν κομμουνιστικ? διε?σδυση στη χ?ρα της Αμερικ?ς. Η Επιτροπ? των Αντιπροσ?πων για Αντιαμερικανικ?ς Εν?ργειες & οι «μ?ρες λ?στες» της ?λλαξαν & καθ?ρισαν την καθημεριν?τητα και τις ζω?ς πολλ?ν ανθρ?πων.

?να απ? τα μεγ?λα κεφ?λαια της παραπ?νω πολιτικ?ς δρ?σης ?ταν οι δι?ξεις αρκετ?ν καλλιτεχν?ν. Ο προφαν?ς λ?γος ?ταν η υποτιθ?μενη ανατρεπτικ? κομμουνιστικ? τους ιδεολογ?α, αλλ? ο πραγματικ?ς λ?γος ?ταν η φ?μωση του Χ?λιγουντ και των εκπροσ?πων του. Η δημιουργ?α ταινι?ν που ?δειχναν το αληθιν? πρ?σωπο της χ?ρας, καταγρ?φοντας με ρεαλιστικ? τρ?πο την πραγματικ?τητα και τα προβλ?ματα της τ?τε κοινων?ας, ?ταν μια ?τυπη ?κκληση για κοινωνικ? και πολιτικ? αλλαγ?. Η φιλελε?θερη πολιτικ? του New Deal του Ρο?σβελτ ?κανε πολλο?ς ανθρ?πους των Τεχν?ν να πιστ?ψουν σε μια αληθιν? δημοκρατικ? και φιλελε?θερη Αμερικ?. Π?ς ?μως μπορε? να συμβε? κ?τι τ?τοιο ?ταν ακ?μη οι ?γχρωμοι δεν ?χουν δικα?ωμα ψ?φου και αντιπροσ?πευσης στην πολιτικ?; Οι δεκαετ?ες που θα ακολουθ?σουν θα ε?ναι γεμ?τες με ?ντονες πολιτικ?ς ζυμ?σεις και ?σως ο ?ρω?ς μας να ?ταν μ?νο ?νας κρ?κος σε μια αλυσ?δα απ? πολλ?ς ζω?ς που θα ?λλαζαν.

Βαθι? εντυπωσιασμ?νη απ? τη ρο? & την ποι?τητα του λ?γου του Ροθ, παρακολο?θησα την αν?λυση προσωπικοτ?των και χαρακτ?ρων απ? ?λες τις κοινωνικ?ς και ιδεολογικ?ς τ?ξεις της

Αμερικ?ς. Το πλ?σιμο των χαρακτ?ρων με μοναδικ? ακρ?βεια, απ? την εξωτερικ? εμφ?νιση μ?χρι τη συναισθηματικ? ?νταση, τοποθετε? τον Ροθ ?χι μ?νο στο β?θρο των μεγ?λων λογοτεχν?ν της Αμερικ?ς αλλ? και σημαντικ?ν ανθρωπολ?γων και εξαιρετικ? διαμορφωτ? χαρακτ?ρων. Δι?βασα πολλ?ς κριτικ?ς για το παρ?ν ?ργο και τις τυχ?ν αναφορ?ς του σε προσωπικ? βι?ματα του συγγραφ?α, σε θ?ματα «εκδ?κησης» για κ?ποια γραπτ? της πρ?ην συζ?γου του. Δεν θα με?νω ?μως σ' αυτ?. Ο Ροθ κ?νει κ?τι π?ρα απ' αυτ?. Σε μια εποχ? (1998) ,λ?γο πριν το τ?λος της θητε?ας του Κλ?ντον και την ?νοδο του λα?κιστ? Μπους, υπενθυμ?ζει στην αμερικ?νικη κοινωνι?α σημαντικ?ς σελ?δες της ιστορ?ας μιας χ?ρας που, θ?λοντας και μη, καθ?ρισε τον 20ο αι?να με τις πολιτικ?ς της επιλογ?ς. Δυστυχ?ς, ο Ροθ υπενθυμ?ζει ?τι οι συμπολ?τες του ξεχνο?ν πολ? ε?κολα και επαναλαμβάνουν λ?θη, χωρ?ς να υπολογι?ζουν τον αντ?κτυπο. Π?σο ειρωνικ? επ?καιρη ε?ναι η παραπ?νω πρ?ταση;

Το χαρακτηριστικ? του παραλογισμο? της ανθρ?πινης προδοσ?ας κυριαρχε? σε κ?θε σελ?δα του βιβλ?ου. Απ? χωρ?α της Β?βλου ?ως τα ?ργα του Σα?ξπηρ, η προδοσ?α σε κ?θε της μορφ? ε?ναι το κομβικ? στοιχε?ο της ζω?ς του ανθρ?που. Ο Τζ. ?ντγκαρ Χο?βερ τερμ?τισε την ?ννοια της προδοσ?ας, φακελ?νοντας ολ?κληρη την Αμερικ?!

?ραγε δεν θα μπορ?σει να ξεφ?γει ? καλ?τερα να ξεπερ?σει τον εαυτ? του & τα π?θη του ο ?νθρωπος;

Ο Φ?λιπ Ροθ δεν αφ?νει τ?ποτα ?ρθιο (και καλ? κ?νει..)!

Πολυγραφ?τατος & πολυβραβευμ?νος, με κορυφ?ο το διεθν?ς βραβε?ο Man Booker International του 2011 για το σ?νολο του ?ργου του, ε?ναι ?νας απ? τους πιο σπουδα?ους λογοτ?χνες της Αμερικ?ς. Τα ?ργα του, με τα θ?ματα που τον απασχολο?ν, αποτελο?ν τον καλ?τερο αναγνωστικ? οδηγ? μιας πολ?πλευρης χ?ρας με πλο?σιο τ?σο παρελθ?ν ?σο και μ?λλον. ?θελα να γρ?ψω για πρ?γματα που φά?νονταν σημαντικ? & τα πρ?γματα που φά?νονταν σημαντικ? ?ταν τα πρ?γματα που δεν γν?ριζα, αναφ?ρει ?νας απ? τους ?ρωες του βιβλ?ου. Ο Ροθ π?λι ε?ναι ?νας αρκετ? καλ?ς γν?στης και κριτ?ς και ε?μαστε τυχερο? που ?χουμε στα χ?ρια μας τ?τοια ?ργα! Αλλ?, αν επιστρ?ψουμε στην αρχικ? θ?ση της παραπ?νω κριτικ?ς, καλ? θα ?ταν μετ? την αν?γνωση του βιβλ?ου να δε?τε δ?ο εξαιρετικ?ς σχετικ?ς ταινιες : το «Καλην?χτα & καλ? τ?χη» και το «Trumbo».

Silvia Sirea says

Mi sono concessa un'ora dalla fine della lettura prima di scrivere questa recensione, ma il mio giudizio non è affatto cambiato in questi sessanta minuti.

Philip Roth è uno di quegli autori di cui, a mio parere, si deve assolutamente leggere qualcosa. La sua abilità nel costruire "palazzi" di letteratura è impareggiabile.

L'approccio alle storie che racconta è sempre immediato e totale: ci si ritrova catapultati in mezzo alle parole scritte da cui è difficile poi uscirne.

Ho sposato un comunista mi ha ricordato molto *Pastorale americana* - il primo della trilogia sulla storia americana - e ho amato entrambi allo stesso modo. In questo romanzo, Roth utilizza il comunismo - e non solo - per raccontare della fragilità umana. E' un grande romanzo che parla delle contraddizioni dell'animo umano e riesce a scandagliarlo nello stesso modo e con la stessa precisione con i quali lo fa Dostoevskij - sono infatti presenti diversi riferimenti a *Delitto e castigo*.

Quello che amo di Philip Roth è il fatto che "costringa" il lettore a pensare con la propria testa. Non esprime soltanto una tesi ed una soltanto, ma predispone ogni più piccolo elemento che possa essere utile a farsi un'idea reale su quello di cui sta scrivendo, nel bene e nel male. Io la considero una sfida, in un certo senso, e

questo mi piace.

David Schaafsma says

Of course it should not be too surprising to find out that your life story has included an event, something important, that you have known nothing about--your life story is in and of itself something that you know very little about. —Nathan Zuckerman

If it weren't for mistakes I would still be home sitting on the front stoop.—Nathan Zuckerman

I Married a Communist is the follow-up to *American Pastoral*, in the middle of a trilogy, set partly in Newark and partly in Chicago, read mainly because I had in the last year read *American Pastoral*, but also because it is timely now, because of the McCarthy connections, the rising fascism of the fifties understood in the context of present events, the clown cars of revenge and betrayal and the irrelevance of facts. But there is also the wonderful muscular masculine passionate Roth language and the intense and carefully drawn characters. Not as good as *American Pastoral*, but it has flashes of that brilliance.

This is a sort of read-aloud book because it is a story largely being told in soliloquy fashion by 90-year-old Murray about his blacklisted brother Ira to Nathan Zuckerman, a novelist stand-in for Roth himself. Murray is one of Nathan's former English teachers, one who helped shape him as a writer. And as Nathan (Roth) says, reflecting on his career as writer,

Occasionally now, looking back, I think of my life as one long speech I've been listening to. . . . The book of my life is a book of voices. . . . When I ask myself how I arrived at where I am, the answer surprises me: "Listening." . . . was I, from the beginning, just an ear in search of a word? —Nathan Zuckerman

This is one complex book, dealing with a particular period of history, post WWII, and getting at issues of betrayal and revenge on at least three basic levels; 1) nationally, as McCarthy and others in the early fifties in the USA blacklisted "Communists," some of whom were actual Communist party members, though many of those accused were Jews, blacks, gay, and so on, liberals, that they didn't like personally or politically. It was an ugly American moment, a chance for all of the country to turn in their neighbors to the House Un-American Committee for being "unpatriotically" critical of American policies and values; 2) central character Ira's wife Eve turns him in to that committee, knowing he was once a sort of angry Communist sympathizer, after learning Ira has hit on his step-daughter Sylphid's friend Penelope (and she didn't even know about the full blown affair!), in a published piece called *I Married a Communist*, and 3) Roth himself, is vindictive about his ex-wife Claire Bloom's memoir, *Leaving the Doll's House*, where she tells all about her many affairs with men, but takes the opportunity to especially skewer Roth for being abusive, angry, and so on, after decades of marriage to him. Many servings of revenge and betrayal and revenge and betrayal, round and round. At one point Roth likens these tales to Elizabethan tragedies, which I think is stretching it, especially when it comes to him and Bloom.

I didn't want to read this book when it came out because I felt that it sounded too acidic, too vicious, and I knew it was in part a response to Bloom's book, which I read a lot about but didn't read, though I didn't find it focused too much on the personal issues until much later in the novel, after much brilliant talk from Murray about Ira and the country during this time. When it gets to that last ¼ it seems a little out of control, angry, crazy, but before that, much of it is as good as *American Pastoral*. We learn much about what it is that might have attracted many people to Communism—anti-racism, economic inequities. ANGER at the

American government. Sound familiar? Thousands of good people, many of them artists, had their lives destroyed in those years. The (lefty) arts were a target, Hollywood and Broadway.

The book is also in part a book about teaching, learning, and mentoring as Nathan is mentored by his father, Ira, Murray, Leo Glucksman from The University of Chicago (on writing), Johnny O'Day, and many others, including novelists such as Mailer and Dostoevsky. All his reading of Marx, and political theory of the day are teaching texts. The radical theory of Thomas Paine, that set him on his way and drove a wedge between the radical Nathan, so admiring of Ira, and Nathan's liberal father. This is a book about a boy and his male teachers. Most of Roth's books are about boys, and talk. And sex. This one has less about sex, but it is here, and figures in centrally but not so specifically. Big talk, all talk, really, mostly, and most of it is pretty impressive. Great talkers, Murray and Ira.

A great portrait of Ira, this crazy Commie who married Eve and ruined his life, compromised his socialist ideals for what? Love? Conventional life? But it 's a novel, not a tract, finally, it's art, he doesn't pick sides that much. I mean, he hates McCarthyism of course, but he looks at the whole range of perspectives on the mid-century American communist movement. As Mikhail Bakhtin says, a novel at its best can be a cultural forum. This is one of those novels.

Great lines/references:

* The idea of "boxing with books," learning to argue through books. As critical thinking. A portrait of the male aggressive roots of the University of Chicago and Jewish intellectual and literary life, and argumentation culture. Words as weapons. It's a little overwhelming at times, how great every character is at talking, and opining.

--A great diatribe by a (capitalist) manufacturer, Goldstine, making fun of communism to Ira in a delightful way (and even if I am by far more commie than capitalist, I still loved it); a gun is pulled, in the process! "Make money, kid. Money's not a lie. Money's the democratic way to keep score."

--Great stuff on the Truman-Dewey-Wallace election and Ira's rants about how the working class always votes against its own self-interests. Ira argues pretty persuasively for third part Commie Wallace.

--Great and amazing stuff on the apolitical nature of the novel, not about making points, political or otherwise, but to ask questions, explore, create complicated characters, all of which Roth does. He maybe crosses the line by making it TOO personal with his revenge skewering of Bloom, though, in the end: "Not to erase the contradictions but to see where, within the contradiction, lies the tormented human being."

--Glucksman, to Nathan

SO it's well worth reading. He's maybe a little bit of an asshole, Roth; he doesn't create sympathetic portraits of women, maybe bordering on misogynist. Eve, get it? And Eve's witchily cast daughter, Sylphid? Ouch, but Eve is actually not so bad here until the end, and well, the language, the talk, the characters, the wide sweep of American history made personal tips the balance here to Roth "winning the day."

As Murray says to Nathan about Ira is as true of Roth's books: "That a man has a lot of sides that are unbelievable, is, I thought, the subject of your books. As a man, as your fiction tells it, everything is believable. Christ, yes, women, Ira's women. A big social conscience and the wide sexual appetite to go with it. A Communist with a conscience and a Communist with a c____." Roth, angrily unapologetic to the very last.

Sandra says

Roth racconta la vita di Ira Ringold, attore, attivista sindacale comunista, narrata a Nathan Zuckerman, solito alter ego dello scrittore, dal fratello di Ira, il professor Murray Ringold. Le vicende di Ira si inseriscono nel contesto sociale degli anni '50 negli Usa, uno dei periodi più caldi della storia del paese.

Oltre alla descrizione come sempre precisa e approfondita delle vicende americane dell'epoca, in questo libro ho ritrovato quello che a mio avviso è il motivo ripetuto in tutti i suoi scritti, il messaggio che Roth lancia al lettore e che ogni volta mi arriva quando lo leggo.

L'insegnamento che Roth ci offre è che la natura umana è imperfetta, è sporca.

"Perchè la purezza è pietrificazione. Perchè la purezza è bugia."

Ira Ringold, prima di essere un comunista, è un uomo, un uomo che desidera una moglie, un figlio, una famiglia, una vita borghese. Ira Ringold è un rivoluzionario fallito e il suo fallimento è dovuto al fatto che non ha un cuore puro, "un cuore senza dicotomie, pronto a rinunciare a tutti e a tutto tranne la rivoluzione". Suo fratello, il professor Murray Ringold, ha trascorso la sua vita ad insegnare a sè stesso e a suo fratello di essere ragionevole di fronte all'irragionevole, anche lui fallisce.

Perchè succede questo?

Perchè -dice Roth- "esiste soltanto l'errore. Lì è il cuore del mondo. Nessuno trova la propria vita. Questa è la vita".

João Carlos says

[”Está certo eu fazer isto? É fácil para mim fazê-lo? Acreditem, está longe de ser fácil. É a tarefa mais terrível e mais difícil de toda a minha vida. Qual é o meu motivo? Perguntarão as pessoas. Como posso considerar ser meu dever moral e

William2.1 says

This is not Philip Roth's best book. It's around-the-bend melodramatic and over the top voluble in the way old movies can be. Like, say, "His Girl Friday" (1940) with Rosalind Russell and Cary Grant. I can't say for sure; I'm speculating, but maybe this was Roth's way of giving his novel greater period resonance. Perhaps he wanted to instill it with that sort of madcap, naive-yet-slick-bustling-postwar-New York City air so prevalent in Hollywood movies of the 1940s.

(N.B. The masterpieces I recommend for first time readers of Philip Roth are American Pastoral, The Human Stain, The Ghostwriter, Patrimony and The Counterlife to mention a few.)

Yet I Married a Communist remains important because it animates a period of history when everyone was drunk on Utopia. That is, when half the world was convinced of the promise of Communism. We know now that the revolution was a fraud. Lenin was a con man and a serial murderer. Stalin out did him by 50,000,000 souls. It's all there in Richard Pipes many books, as well as multiple works by Orlando Figes, Simon Sebag Montefiore, Robert Conquest, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, et al.

Yet even a Roth dud is infinitely better than most novels. This one is interesting in the way The Plot Against

America was interesting. Though in that later book Roth used a counter-factual foundation—the anti Semitic aviator Charles Lindbergh is elected president of the USA on an isolationist platform that tragically keeps America out of World War II—whereas here in *I Married A Communist* he shows the same ability to give us characters caught in the mill of history though without the counter-factual underpinnings.

This novel is built around what happened between 1950 and 1954 when Senator Joseph McCarthy started subpoenaing people to appear before HUAC, the House Un-American Activities Committee, to get them to reveal their Communist party affiliation and that of their friends. This was a terrible fascistic time in American history when limits on personal privacy were contravened by the state and people's lives were ruined as a consequence. Yet unlike recent declarations by a person who shall not be named, this really was a witch hunt and it ruined the lives and livelihoods not just of individuals but of entire families.

My favorite thing about the novel is the vivid picture it paints of postwar Jewish life. As always on this subject Roth is hilarious and informing. My problem is I find the main character dull. Ira Ringold, the title Communist. For all of the book's strengths, Ira's a crashing bore. He rants and raves about the beauty of USSR, but like most boosters in those days he doesn't have a clue. Stalin's show trials occurred in the mid-1930s, but does Ira know anything about that? Collectivization and Dekulakization, which starved the Russian peasantry to death in their tens of millions? The Gulag? He's likable in many ways, Ira. He's sincere, but in the end he's just an ideologue. Now, you may argue, but how can any character be ahistorical in realist fiction? He can only know what he knows when its time for him to know it. True, many people were fooled by the Soviet Union well into the 1970s. But that fact doesn't in any way relieve the reader of the tediousness of Ira's obsession.

Stopped reading at page 270 of 323. The narrative simply became too repetitious.

°°°.°..°-°. _· ????? Ροζουλ? Εωσφ?ρος · _·°-°.°·°°° ★·.·~·.·★ ?????? ???????
??????? Ταμετο?ρο Αμ says

Ξεχωριστ? θ?ση θα κατ?χει στην καρδι? μου αυτ? το βιβλ?ο. ?πως και το προηγ?μενο της τριλογ?ας. Ο Ροθ ε?ναι αντιδραστικ? τρυφερ?ς γραφι?ς, ξεροκ?φαλος και ιδεαλιστ?ς σε σημει?ο να σου μεταλαμπαδε?ει με ?νεση την χαοτικ? του φιλοσοφ?α χωρ?ς να γ?νεται απαισι?δοξος ? σκληρ?ς.

Το "παντρε?τηκα ?ναν κομμουνιστ?" ε?ναι μια προσωπικ? και συλλογικ? δι?ψευση προσδοκι?ν και ελπ?δων των δυο τελευτα?ων αι?νων.

Ξαναζο?με την ιστορ?α της Αμερικ?ς μ?σα απο ?ρωες που βι?νουν τραγωδ?ες,που γελ?νε δυνατ? για να μην θρην?σουν. Που αδικο?νται κατ?φορα αλλ? αποφε?γουν τα πλ?γματα και αντιμετωπ?ζουν το ?γχος της ?παρξης τους.

Η απ?λεια, η θλ?ψη, ο φ?βος, ο π?νος, ο θ?νατος διαχ?ονται σαν καπν?ς απο φωτι? που κα?ει την ανθρ?πινη συνθ?κη η οπο?α αποδ?χεται τον κ?σμο ?πως ε?ναι.

Συστατικ? περιγραφ?ς: ερωτισμ?ς, ματαιοδοξ?α,αποστασιοπο?ηση,σαρκαστικ? αδιαφορ?α, υπαρξιακ? αγων?α,μα?ρη κωμωδ?α.

Μεταφερ?μαστε στην Αμερικ? του 1960 την εποχ? του πολ?μου του Βιετν?μ. Δ?κα χρονια πριν, την εποχ? του μακαρθισμο? ο κεντρικ?ς ?ρωας του βιβλ?ου αναζητ? εξιλ?ωση και αγ?πη. Αναζητ? παρηγορι?,λ?θη,δικαιοσ?νη,δικα?ωμα στη ζω? και την επαν?σταση.

Ο Ήρα μια βασανισμένη ψυχή, να κακοποιημένο ψυχικά και σωματικά τομο που ζει το δικό και την στρέψη από την κοινότητα...

Αμάρτωτος και κακός με σωματικά διπλάσια γάνα μπαίνει νωρίς στον παρόδρομο της ζωής που τον οδηγεί στην απομύωση και την λλειψη βασικά να αναγκάσει για φυσιολογικά ανάπτυξη προσωπικότητας.

Δεν ζήτησε σε οικογένεια, δεν αγαπήθηκε, δεν χάρτασε ποτέ χαράς και συναισθήματα πληρότητας. Ήταν παρ'όλας σε μια κακή φήμη συνοικία και στιγματισμένος ως βρομερός Εβραίος. Ξεκινεί να δουλεύει από φηβός ως εργάτης σε απαράδεκτες συνθήκες και βιώνει μόνο την αθλιότητα της μιζέριας.

Εξελίσσεται σε "ιδεολόγος κομμουνιστής" γιατί γαντζώθηκε η απήγνωση του σε έναν δόσκαλο της ρωσικής ιδεολογίας και της μυθοποίησης.

Ο δόσκαλος με ρίστη μεθοδολογία και ακρόβεια χειρουργικά μετατρέπει τον Ήρα σε επαναστατημένο ενλικά χωράς πρόσβαση στην αλήθιν αιτία της προσωπικής του επανένστασης.

Ήτσι, συγκυριακά ο στρατευμένος στον αγώνα για την κοινωνική αδικία, ο Ήρα, γίνεται δημοφιλής ηθοποιός ραδιοφωνικά εκπομπών και αποκτά κέρος μαζί με μια σύζυγο -δισημη ηθοποιό εποχών- κενό, πλαστό, ανισόρροπη, πλοΐσια, θύμα του δόθεν ειδυλλιακού τρέπου ζωής και σκΐψης των βολεμένων και επ' το πλεόντων σπιών κοσμικών.

Μαθαίνουμε από την αφήγηση του υπερλικά αδελφού του προς τον Ζοΐκερμαν πολλά χρώνια μετά, πως ο Ήρα κατ'ληξε από εκεί που ξεκίνησε.

Να ερεπιο, με μια ρημαγμένη ζωή, νεργός, στιγματισμένος ως κατ'σκοπος των Ρώων και με την προσωπική του ζωή να γίνεται εθνικά σκάνδαλο και να τον αποτελείνει.

Δεν κατ'φερε να ξεφύγει από το πεπρωμένο. Δεν κατ'φερε να μοιράσει τον αθροισμό του πένο.

Δεν κατ'φερε να γίνει πατράς και να αποκτάσει οικογένεια και θαλάωρο που τόσο πολύ

λαχταρόσε. Δεν κατ'φερε να αλλάξει τον κόσμο.

Τα κομμουνιστικά θεωρήματα που με μύφαση εξυμνόσε και διαλαλόσε παντοί και πάντα, δεν κατ'ληξαν στη λήση που επιθυμούσε.

Δεν ήρθε η λήτρωση. Η λάκ κυριαρχία συνήχισε να μην υφίσταται. Οι μύζες παραπλανήθηκαν από τις εκτότε κυβερνήσεις και συνήχισαν το λήθος της προπαγάνδας.

Οι κομμουνιστές στιγματίστηκαν ως προδότες και εγκληματίες, παρ'όλο που εξυμνόσαν τα νείρα της φτώχειας.

Ψευδείς εντυπώσεις. Ψευτικές συνειδήσεις. Πιστευτά ψήμματα από κατ'λληλους ανθρώπους σε ξυπνες στιγμές άλλαξαν και όχι τη ιστορία του κόσμου που επαναλαμβάνεται και πάντα αποτυγχάνει.

Καλή απήγνωση!

Carol Storm says

Powerful account of the Red Scare, told through the rise and fall of a tough blue collar radio star from New

Jersey. Roth's political writing has never been sharper, but the intimate scenes fall flat and the family drama is often unintentionally funny.

Some minor issues I had with the overall work:

1.) Ira the hero of the book is supposed to be a totally self-educated, blue collar guy who gets radicalized as a GI in World War II and then becomes famous by performing Lincoln's best known speeches at leftist rallies, school programs, and ultimately on the radio. The question I have is simple. What does Ira actually learn from Lincoln? Why are none of Lincoln's speeches ever quoted? Why doesn't Ira ever reflect on the words he spouts over and over and what they mean? Throughout the book we're told he's "channeling" Lincoln, in effect, that Lincoln's personal decency and unselfish crusade for freedom is his. But Lincoln was a very patient man, who never lost his temper, who always looked for common ground, who tried to reason with his enemies. Ira is a loudmouth bully who reacts to every challenge with spittle-spraying fury and has no capacity for humor, empathy, or even basic common sense. Roth either knows nothing about Lincoln's public demeanor and his personal philosophy and failed to do even the most basic research, (like reading the speeches) or else (just possibly) he's taking a very subtle dig at the old-time communists he's pretending to admire. Which is more likely?

2.) Morris (or was it Murray?) is Ira's brother, a stand-up guy who taught high school English in the public schools of Newark for many years, was unfairly blacklisted (and reduced to selling vacuum cleaners) then came back and taught heroically once more. AND he's a World War II veteran, AND his poor crippled wife was horribly murdered by mindless black street thugs in the horrible horrible Sixties. In other words, this is Philip Roth's idea of a real mensch. Okay. Fine. But why does his mensch-hood have to depend on his bragging about how he's "an angry Jew?" And why does he have to demonstrate this anger by yelling at the reader for five pages at the end about how much he hated watching Nixon's funeral on TV? This is heroic why exactly? Granted Nixon was a crook, but then Old Newark was full of crooks. And you should hear Morris wax poetic about the good old days when jolly Italian Mobsters ruled the First Ward! These were not crooks? Why sentimentalize Longy Zwillman and not Nixon? And why pretend that Morris' anger is at Nixon and not the home boys who killed his wife? Roth lets the story drop right where it gets interesting -- where the so-called leftist Jew is just on the point of admitting that he really hated the blacks all along. (We never do see him dealing with his black students face to face. We're just told he did his best.) And of course, there's an even more dangerous irony here, since the rage that drove the blacks to burn Newark down in the Sixties is a rage Philip Roth absolutely refuses to confront. Jewish anger he can understand. Anyone else's problems, you should forget it!

3.) Frailty, thy name is Eve Frame! Rugged Ira's downfall comes in the form of an alluring, very classy actress from the movies whom he meets on his radio show. The rumor is that Philip Roth was getting revenge on his ex-wife, Claire Bloom. He sure does give Eve a bad time. He makes her weak, timid, cowardly, and fills her with (his own) Jewish self-loathing. And he gives her a daughter who's sort of monstrous and overweight and mean. The irony here is that none of this was necessary. If rugged, simple soldier Ira had really fallen for a genuinely appealing woman, and if the allure of her regal elegance and charm was made palpable to the reader, then the tragedy of his betrayal of the party (and their betrayal of him) would have been a hundred times more insightful, not to mention moving and tragic. It could have been Antony and Cleopatra all over again, with Morris as Enobarbus and young Nathan Zuckerman as Octavian.

But then, as Morris pretty much points out at one point, Philip Roth is not Shakespeare.

Stratos says

Ο Φίλιπ Ροθ έχει έναν μοναδικό τρόπο να σκιαγραφεί, να ανιχνεύει, να ακτινογραφεί και να κνεί όλες αυτές τις τομές με την γραφή του, προκειμένου να μας περιδινώσει μέσα στην Αμερικανική κοινωνία της δεκαετίας του 50, του 60 αλλά και του 70. Και ποιος τον διαβάζει, λοιπόν και ποιο κομμάτι του εαυτού του βρίσκει! Δικάως θεωρείται από τους καλύτερους σύγχρονους συγγραφείς και σίγουρα όλοι όσοι δεν τον έχουν διαβάσει, είναι ευκαίρως να τους τις ταραχμύνες εποχές, να ανοήξουν τα βιβλία του.

Margitte says

In this second book in the the American Trilogy, the author Philip Roth is present as his alter ego, Nathan Zuckerman, in this fictional biography of Ira Ringold, husband to a sophisticated but fading Hollywood star, Eve Frame. Ira Ringold was a ditchdigger in the 1930s in Newark, a stevedore, a star presenter of a radio show called "The Free and the Brave" in the 1940s, and a devoted Stalinist in the McCarthy era of the 1950s, after his service in the Second World War.

Ira's brother, Murray Ringold, is Nathan Zuckerman's ninety-year-old former highschool teacher who visits Nathan in the Berkshire woods. He lives alone and welcomes the company of the old gentleman.

Ira becomes the topic of their conversations in which Nathan is the observer, listening to Murray's retelling of his brother's life story. Nathan reminisce in between, about Ira, the man who acted as father figure to the younger Nathan. The now long-dead Ira Ringold constantly had to re-invented himself.

Ira's instant fall from grace happened when his troubled wife published her autobiography.

"I married a Communist" was a scandalous bestseller in which she exposed Ira and destroyed him.

The author Philip Roth also uses his alter ego Nathan Zuckerman to express his own feelings about Claire Bloom's (his ex-wife's) autobiography *Leaving a Doll's House*. The aftermath is spent raging and ranting and rifting, boiling over into revenge.

The novel is sectioned to present memories, digressions and analysis of the raw bitterness behind betrayal, counter betrayal and the interplay between anger and sanity. It is a war of emotions in which revenge is used as a perpetual weapon. Pure hatred serves as the high octane booster. An almost misogynistic melancholy befalls all women.

Murray Ringold, the Jewish war hero and intellectual, in his passion to explain, to clarify, and to understand, spends several days in the company of Nathan. In monologue after monologue, Murray dissects Ira's life throughout the 326 pages of the book.

Ira Ringold was a bullish, rough-neck Jewish giant, an antihero in the Age of McCarthyism and a victim of his own fall into insanity and disgrace and ultimate demise.

Philip Roth, alias Nathan Zuckerman had *never before known anyone whose life was so intimately circumscribed by so much American history.* He never knew *"anyone so immersed in his moment or so defined by it. Or tyrannized by it, so much its avenger and its victim and its*

tool.

The story is about anger, anger, anger. A challenging word dump of monologues and philosophical journeys through the optimism of youth, the pessimism of old age and mortality.

The biographical fictional tale has Ira Ringold as a distant main character, while its actual main purpose is to serve as a reaction to his ex-wives allegations against him in her autobiography. It is a story within a story.

Eve's memoir depicts Ira as *a Machiavellian Communist, a vicious man of enormous cunning who nearly ruined my life, my career and the life of my beloved child;*

Claire Bloom's memoir ("Leaving a Doll's House") depicted Philip Roth as *a game-playing Machiavellian strategist driven by a deep and irrepressible rage and a profound distrust of the sexual power of women.* Ms. Bloom depicted Mr. Roth as a possessive and narcissistic lover who refused to live under the same roof with her daughter.

In this fictional biography, Philip Roth has the upper hand. Using his ex wife as the tragic fictional character Eve, he secures the character for posterity as a zealot; a malicious, scheming woman, while he remains a manly giant in real life. He depicts the fictional Eve as a vengeful and self-deluding woman in thrall to her impossible daughter from an earlier marriage.

Ms. Bloom, on the other hand, writing her autobiography, feeds the real-life gossipmongers of the media in one compact, but Hollywood-style forgettable blow. Philip Roth's real persona on the other hand, remains gentlemanly intact, while destroying his ex-wife as a character in a novel. Brilliant move. *A true Machiavellian strategist, perhaps?*

Philip Roth is the winner of the 1960's National Book Award, Pulitzer Prize as well as the Man Booker International Prize for lifetime achievement in fiction. He is undoubtedly a master of the word craft and deserves all the accolades.

For me as a common reader, and not as a critic, it was an exhausting read, both emotionally as well as intellectually. The high energy behind the words and the fractured intensity of the narrative relentlessly hammered away at the symbiosis between the *psyche* and the *soma*. The application of unadulterated aggression left the spirit lifeless and destroyed.

It might be a brilliant piece of word art, but the moral behind this tragic life story is a killer. For me at least.

I was wondering if the epitaph on the poor soul's gravestone might read *What are you looking at!?* What a sad waste of life, if spent so angry and filled with a constant need for revenge.

It took me almost three months to get through this melodrama. Brutal, brilliant, but ENOUGH!

The American Trilogy:

American Pastoral #1;

I Married a Communist #2;

The Human Stain #3 .

Shahrzad says

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Makis Dionis says

Η λογοτεχνία δεν είναι πρωταρχική πραγματικότητα αλλά ακριβή παραγεμισμα.
Με τα λ'για του Μ'ρε? Ρ'νγκολντ προς τον Ζουκερμαν, ο Ροθ μαστιγώνει την πολιτική φαιδροτητα των προυχ'ντων των ΗΠΑ μετ' το τ'λος του Β Παγκοσμ'ου πολ'μου.
Αναδύκν'ει τα ανθρ'πινα π'θη και τη ματαιοδοξία που αποπν'ουν κ'πως αυτ' τελικ?
μετουσι'νονται σε κοινωνικ' μ'στιγα.

παξ και ολοκληρωθε? η ανθρ'πινη τραγωδία, παραδ'δεται στους δημοσιογρ'φους για να γ'νει κοιν'τοπη ψυχαγωγία. Με αυτ' τον τρ'πο η εποχ' του μακαρθισμο? εγκαιν'ασε τον μεταπολεμικ' θρ'αμβο του κουτσομπολιο? ως συνεκτικo? συμβ'λου π'στεως. Το κουτσομπολιo? ως ευαγγ'λιο, ως εθνικ' π'στη. Η πρ'τη φ'ση ανθοφορ'ας της αμερικανικ'ς ακρισιας , που παραδ'δει εν λευκ' την εξουσία και ταλαιπωρε? τον κ'σμο β'ναυσα ακ'μα και σ'μερα αλλ' και για πολ' καιρ' ακ'μα

Baxevanidou Faye says

4.5/5 Νομ'ζω ?τι το δε?τερο βιβλ'ο της τριλογ'ας μου ?ρεσε εξ'σου με το πρ'το ? Ροθ συνεχ'ζει την αποδ'μηση του αμερικανικο? ονε?ρου. Μου κ'νει φοβερ' εντ'πωση το π'σο καλ' δομημ'νοι ε'ναι οι χαρακτ'ρες του που παλε?ουν να καταλ'βουν τι π'γε στραβ' και να αντισταθo'ν στις αδυναμ'ες τους
?ργησα να τον ανακαλ'ψω τον Ροθ και ?σο περισσ'τερο τον διαβ'ζω τ'σο περισσ'τερο εντυπωσι'ζομαι απ' το π'σο καλ'ς ψυχογρ'φος ε'ναι και απ' τη ρο? του λ'γου του Ε'ναι δυνατ'ν να περιγρ'φει σελ'δες επ' σελ'δων με τα πιο ?σχετα θ'ματα (Στο πρ'το περι'γραφε ολ'κληρες σελ'δες για την κατασκευ' γαντι'ν και εδ' για το πως ταριχε?ουν το ζ'ο) και να μην βαρι'σαι καθ'λου ;;;
Σ'γουρα θα αναζητ'σω λοιπ'ν και το ανθρ'πινο στ'γμα για να κλε?σω την Τριλογ'α

Robin says

And thus the whirligig of time brings in his revenges.

This often overlooked, underrated sequel to American Pastoral is a sleeper of a novel. It caught me by surprise. I struggled through the first fifty pages or so, through some dense politically tinged backstory told by a 90 year old guy named Murray Ringold. How interesting can this be, I asked myself.

It's not nearly as sexy, and doesn't have the star quality of American Pastoral. I mean, it's largely a 90 year old's soliloquy, for goodness' sake. It's cerebral and can be a bit exhausting to read. Set in the McCarthy era, the story centres on Ira Ringold, a rough, Abraham-Lincoln-doppelgänger radio star who gets blacklisted for

his red-leaning politics... by his *wife*.

It shares a few qualities with its Pulitzer winning predecessor, namely themes around Jewish shame and identity, as well as a troublesome daughter who is the catalyst for the wheels of tragedy. It is narrated by Nathan Zuckerman, who is a recurring character in all three novels in this trilogy.

Even if it lacks sex appeal, the way the narrative unfolds shows Roth's fine skills as a storyteller. Zuckerman alternates his own memories of the time with the story as told to him by Murray Ringold, his aged, beloved highschool teacher. Ringold tells him about his brother Ira and everything that brought his downfall during this unique time of paranoia, suspicion and political idealism, dividing brothers, friends and spouses.

Look, everything the Communists say about capitalism is true, and everything the capitalists say about Communism is true. The difference is, our system works because it's based on the truth about people's selfishness, and theirs doesn't because it's based on a fairy tale about people's brotherhood. It's such a crazy fairy tale they've got to take people and put them in Siberia in order to get them to believe it.

But it's far more than a communist/anti-communist book. At the heart of this book, is a tale about human nature: betrayal and revenge.

You control betrayal on one side and you wind up betraying somewhere else. Because it's not a static system. Because it's alive. Because everything that lives is in movement. Because purity is petrification. Because purity is a lie.

Roth also writes some exquisite prose about literature and its relationship to life and politics. There is an entire section in which Nathan remembers Ringold reading a scene from Macbeth that gave me goosebumps. So many of his rants and musings shine with insight and intellect, elevating this story into gorgeousness. His words stopped me in my sometimes laboured tracks and made me sit and say, "wow."

UPDATE: I learned from reading more informed reviews than my own that this book was a scathing reaction to the author's ex wife Claire Bloom's *Leaving a Doll's House: A Memoir* which painted Roth in not-so-favourable colours. Talk about betrayal - and then his own rage-filled *revenge*.

Michael Finocchiaro says

A truly important and courageous book about the hidden war of McCarthy during the 50s. Devastating, it is still all too relevant today. I will not go into the story details in order to avoid spoilers but I will say the following:

1/ Philip Roth is an amazing writer and this book is a perfect and beautiful sequel of sorts to *American Pastoral*

2/ Nathan Zuckerman is an amazing narrator and his personal involvement with Ira and Murray Ringold is a wonderful narrative device

3/ The story of anti-Semitism (especially by self-hating Jews like the Eve Frame character) is unfortunately still relevant today

4/ The hate-mongering of self-serving scum like Katrina and Brydon Grant are every bit as stomach-turning and disgusting as Trump and his ilk. Unfortunately, nothing has changed there in how to motivate the masses through scapegoating and rabble-rousing

Despite not typically being ranked as one of the Top 5 Roth books, I think this one is underrated and

deserves a place in the Roth "must" canon.
Definitely read it between American Pastoral and The Human Stain!

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

Manny says

Some people have claimed that Philip Roth is being less than chivalrous here about his ex-wife, which if true is not to his credit. But the book is worth it just for the scene where the daughter of the best-selling bodice-ripping author reads aloud a passage from her mother's latest bonkbuster, loosely based on the story of Abelard and Heloise. Her frantic attempts not to giggle as she describes Abelard's proud manhood are somehow a definitive statement on a whole genre of literature. It's never been done more concisely or viciously.

Darwin8u says

"As an artist the nuance is your task. Your task is not to simplify. Even should you choose to write in the simplest way, a la Hemingway, the task remains to impart the nuance, to elucidate the complication, to imply the contradiction. Not to erase the contradiction, not to deny the contradiction, but to see where, within the contradiction, lies the tormented human being. To allow for the chaos, to let it in. You must let it in. Otherwise you produce propaganda, if not for a political party, a political movement, then stupid propaganda for life itself -- for life as it might itself prefer to be publicized."

? Philip Roth, I Married a Communist

One of my favorite Roth novels. I love how the book is structured and narrated; how it flows and how it ends. I always love Roth's prose, but his riffs on politics and art are amazing. I love the details -- that unless you are looking are easily missed: How Roth infuses Murray with the habits of a man who spent his life teaching precise language and cri - ti - cal thinking. How Roth salts Ira with the size, looks and frailty of Abraham Lincoln and Marfan syndrome.

Sometimes, when I read a book or see a painting I hear music. Sometimes, when I hear music, I see colors dancing. For me, Roth novels read like some of Beethoven's more complex movements. Roth's every word, like Beethoven's every note is in the exact right place. Nothing more. Nothing less. Roth's story builds, and builds, and builds - - - until he releases his narrative into a dissonant and violent double fugue of story inside story - - - and then night, and quiet, and stars.

Amirsaman says

4.5/5

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Nelson Zagalo says

Depois da "Pastoral Americana" (1997) era difícil voltar ao mesmo nível, e ainda assim considero que não só o conseguiu como o superou, não neste mas no terceiro volume desta trilogia — "A Mancha Humana" (2000). "Casei com um Comunista" (1998) fica assim com o último lugar do pódio, não deixa de ser um bom livro que nos consegue agarrar mas raramente nos consegue sacudir do lugar. O tema escolhido é profundo, o Macartismo, mas Roth parece mais interessado em circular ao seu redor, oferecendo pouca profundidade sobre os efeitos e impactos do mesmo.

O livro usa como personagem central Ira Ringold, um personagem másculo, enorme, com poucos estudos e comunista. É por meio dele que se fala das ideias comunistas e como expectável, as visões são superficiais e acima de tudo carregadas de fé. Do outro lado, está a mulher, estrela de cinema, pouco lhe interessa a política, mas com ela convivem alguns elementos de direita que acabarão a governar o país. Ambos os lados, direita e esquerda, saem representados superficialmente e inconsequentes. Roth está mais interessado nos sentimentos dos seus personagens do que nas políticas e ideologias que os circundam, o que faria todo o sentido para um escritor reconhecido pelas suas capacidades de dar a ver o interior dos seus personagens.

Ora o problema, para mim, está exatamente nos personagens, nos modelos escolhidos para criar a narrativa, nomeadamente o casal, Ira e Eve. Nenhum deles apresenta qualquer peculiaridade interessante, ou atrativa, o facto de se terem tornado estrelas dos media torna-os ainda mais distantes, pois as suas dificuldades já não são as nossas. São destemidos e arrogantes, ainda que pelo meio Roth vá dando conta das suas fragilidades, mas não o suficiente para criar uma ligação a qualquer um deles. Ou seja, nunca ao longo de todo o livro me interessou o passado nem o futuro de Ira, já não falo de Eve sobre quem praticamente nada acabamos a saber.

Aliás, pelo que entretanto li sobre o livro, parece que Eve Frame terá sido baseada na mulher de Roth, Claire Bloom de quem se separou, de forma nada amigável, em 1995. Depois em 1996 Bloom escreveu uma autobiografia na qual Roth surge de forma pouco abonatória, rotulando-o de misógino. Não sabia disto aquando da leitura, por isso senti que a personagem não estava completa, tivesse sabido disto, e teria retirado toda uma diferente leitura, já que teria podido contextualizar a mesma. Por outro lado, serve também para me dar conta do facto de Roth ter mais do que um objetivo para o tema do livro, e em parte justifica exatamente a razão porque tudo parece tão difuso e com pouca profundidade.

Se Roth vai dando conta da essência do Macartismo, assente na traição e acusação, a verdade é que deixa de fora todos os seus efeitos. Terminado o livro poderia levantar-se a questão se teria sido assim tão mau, já que na verdade nenhum destes personagens parece, em momento algum, sentir medo, nem receia ou parece deixar de fazer algo por causa disso. Deste modo perde-se completamente a noção do alcance da traição, do modo como controla e subverte a vida das pessoas, as condiciona e pune psicologicamente.

Talvez se não nada soubesse sobre o Macartismo, tal como nada sabia sobre os atentados à bomba americanos relatados em "Pastoral Americana", talvez me tivesse impressionado mais esta leitura. Mas o

Macartismo é algo bastante mais presente, nomeadamente para todos os que se interessam por Cinema, já que Hollywood foi um dos meios mais castigados pelo Macartismo.

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