

Goodbye, Columbus Encyclopedia Article

Goodbye, Columbus by Philip Roth

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Goodbye, Columbus

A collection of five stories and one novella, *Goodbye, Columbus*, Philip Roth's first book, published in 1959, introduces the basic themes that Roth explores more fully in the novels that have followed and that have in turn been shaped by the critical response to *Goodbye, Columbus*. Published at a time when anti-Semitism was still prevalent in the United States and memories of the Holocaust still fresh, *Goodbye, Columbus* led a number of influential Jewish readers to question Roth's depiction of American Jews from the perspective of a writer for whom Jewishness was more cultural than religious, and assimilation and individual identity more pressing matters than survival and collective memory. While some charged Roth with disloyalty and self-hatred, others welcomed *Goodbye, Columbus'* author into the front rank of the diverse group of Jewish-American writers then beginning to dominate American fiction. The less specifically Jewish implications of Roth's comic genius and irreverence were underscored by the release of the successful film version of the title novella in 1969, two years after *The Graduate*.

Further Reading:

Cooper, Alan. *Philip Roth and the Jews*. Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996.

Halio, Jay L. *Philip Roth Revisited*. New York, Twayne, 1992.