

## Philip Roth: The Ghost Writer

An example of Jewish American Literature and the case of Anne Frank

- The Ghost Writer was published in 1979 but is set in the 1950's of America's New England.
- The Ghost Writer concerns the 23-year old Jewish writer Nathan Zuckerman who has just graduated from university. After an argument with his father, he is looking forward to meeting the Jewish novelist E. I. Lonoff. At his house he encounters Lonoff's wife Hope and the young and beautiful Amy Bellette, one of Lonoff's students.
- The reader also learns of a short story Zuckerman has recently written, "Higher Education", about which he had the argument with his father.

Argument with his father about "Higher Education"	Meeting Amy Bellette (=) Anne Frank
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>∅ The short story deals with an incident at the Zuckermann family, "a family argument that became a lawsuit over money that was left in a will for the higher education of Nathan's cousins" (Pozorski 91).</li> <li>∅ His father accuses Nathan of "fostering anti-Semitic stereotypes, arguing that Nathan makes everyone in his family seem [...] 'awfully greedy'" (Pozorski 92).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>∅ "Nathan imagines that he meets the living – surviving! – Anne Frank at Lonoff's" (Pozorski 89).</li> <li>∅ If he brings her back, she is no longer a martyr – but just another young woman who happens to be "a Jew in America in the 1950's when the novel is set" (Pozorski 96).</li> </ul>

à Nathan recreates Amy Bellette into a living Anne Frank, "a woman he can take home to his family and introduce as his wife in order to convince them that he is a good Jewish son after all" (Pozorski 95).

à Aimee Pozorski proposes that

[o]ne way to read these two major aspects of the novel is as two approaches to the same conflict – the conflict of idealization versus reality, of separating what happened from what seemed to happen, or what ought to happen, or what we would like to happen. As the novel implies, this tension between ideality and reality has consequences not only for art but for history, particularly the history of the Jews after the devastation of the Holocaust. (90)

Works cited

Pozorski, Aimee. „How to tell a true ghost story: The Ghost Writer and the case of Anne Frank“. Philip Roth. New perspectives on an American Author. Ed. Derek Parker Royal. Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2005. 89-102.

Roth, Philip. The Ghost Writer. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1979.

Anja Kriwet