



Not to Be Defined by One’s Enemies”:
ASHamed Jews and Identity in *The Finkler Question*

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Abstract: In his novel *The Finkler Question*, Howard Jacobson, a British Jewish writer, presents many Jewish issues. This paper takes Finkler, the character in the novel, and the “ASHamed Jews” as the main research object. Based on the research of social psychologists on “Jewish self-hatred”, this paper discusses the internal causes of the “ASHamed Jews” in the context of Israeli-Palestinian conflict in the novel. “ASHamed Jews” internalized the reference group’s prejudice against Jews, opposed Zionism and Israel on the grounds of justice, and hated their Jewish identity, but their hatred did not change the anti-Semitism’s recognition of their Jewish identity. Through the endless anti-Semitic events, Jacobson pondered whether hatred of Israel would lead to hatred of Jews, and revealed the prejudice of non-Jews against Jews that is hard to change. Through the change of Finkler’s identity, Jacobson criticized the anti-Semitic behavior of “ASHamed Jews”, showed the plight of diaspora Jews in building cultural identity, expressed his concern about the future of Jews and his adherence to Jewish identity.

Key Words: Howard Jacobson, *The Finkler Question*, Jewish Self-hatred, Prejudice, Anti-Semitism, Identity