CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION
One by one events of the century including holocaust, assimilation and Second World War marked such an impact on the Jews that they opposed their Jewish heritage and treated it scornfully. There work can be traced to be different from other writers because it spoke of pain, agony and hatred for their own religion. They all contributed mightily, not only to the secularization of Judaism and America in general, but also to the de-mystification of the Jewish tradition. Roth became a part of criticism with his first novella Goodbye, Columbus in 1959. The book won him the National Book Award but also placed him among the most distinguished writers. In the very first attempt he created Eli Peck, a product of the secularization of American Jewry who could not follow the static markers of Jewish identity. Through Eli, Roth tried to actually expose the fears of marginalization of thousands of other Jews, for being considered outsiders and interlopers among the rightful inheritors of American culture.

Roth actually exposed the truth of Jewish culture that had a double sided face. The assimilated Jews had actually substituted membership in clubs and organizations for membership in synagogues. He blamed that rabbis and synagogues to be secular institutions by the end of 20th century. His comments evoked such anger that the rabbis called him a “self-hater” and his works “anti-semites”. Referring to a complaining rabbi, Roth writes: "Can he actually believe that on the basis of my story anyone is going to start a pogrom, or keep a Jew
out of medical school, or even call a Jewish school child a 'kike'?" It is irrational to judge and rank a writer for Jewish failure and Jewish moral weakness.

Roth majorly attacked the core of Jewishness and portrayed extremely sophisticated Jews who were actually, nothing more than "raving hysterics", nagging "Jewish mothers", and female shrews of every variety. He was accused of being Jewish "anti-semites", producers of filth and self – hatred. David Gooblar said:

“Almost immediately after the story was initially published, letters poured in, both to the New Yorker’s editorial office and to Roth himself. One reader wrote, in a personal letter to Roth, ‘......With your one story, 'Defenders of the Faith', you have done as much harm as all the organized anti-Semitic organizations have done to make people believe that all Jews are cheats, liars and connivers'." (13)

Public, mostly the Jews held responsible Roth and his followers to have legitimized the differences and hostility of assimilated Jews towards Judaism and the Jewish tradition and have said to have contributed immensely to the secularization of the assimilated Jews in United States.

Roth has rejected all of these arguments by saying that his Jewish characters, who are inevitably less than admirable, are never meant to represent all Jews or even a large number. To Roth, It is foolish to blame to write
anything which is his thought or his experience and each story he wrote refers only to the one person described and that had no further implications.

This may be said of Roth despite the fact that in "Eli the Fanatic" Roth exposes the boorishness of many modern American Jews who find even the survivors of the Holocaust irrelevant in their anxiety to avoid being identified with Jews dressed in the black garb of the Chassidim and speaking with a distinct accent.

Roth came into notice with his 1969 work *Portnoy's Complaint*, that gave way to the accusations that Roth is a Jewish anti-semite, a self hater and a self promoter. The other reason why was it condemned was that it condemned the stereotypical Jewish mother, of the protagonist. The book was labeled as "pornographic", as the protagonist of the novel recites at length and in detail his sexual problems which were "shocking" for the people of that decade. In a 2005 interview with NPR's *Fresh Air*, Phillip Roth said it's not the sexual acts depicted in the book that shocked people.

"I think they were shocked and outraged by the revelation of brutality — brutality of feeling, brutality of attitude, brutality of anger. 'You say all this takes place in a Jewish family?' That's what was shocking."

The style of narration which is very common in various of his novels has been the first-person narration. He thinks that this narrative technique gives a wide
range of expression, closeness with the speaker and can use conversational tones and rhythm that give great expressive value. Easily express his secrets, shame, embarrassment best fitted for the psychological confessional monologue. The novels explore the cultural, political and social issues through psychological approach; where the protagonists gives away his deepest thought to them. Several of his novels are written in first person and the protagonist are shown struggling from something very close to their heart, finally depicting his inner directed anguish.

There are a lot of similarities between the characters that he produced. Starting from Gabe Wallach, Paul Herz, David Kepesh, Peter Tarnopol, Nathan Zuckerman all of them either they are English Professors or writers or scholars. Even the characters who were not exactly professors and writers like Alex Portnoy, a high ranking bureaucrat or Niel Klugman,a librarian (who did not bind themselves to this) actually speak as if they were. Alex is so knowledgeable that he edits the Columbia Law Review and many times when he speaks he keep referring to Freud, Kafka, Dylan Thomas and Yeats.

*Portnoy’s Complaint*, which made him a celebrity, that placed its author inexorably centre stage in the minds of his audience, is an iconic book that changed everything, plunging him headlong into a world of banal public curiosity. *Portnoy’s Complaint* in early drafts was 'The Jewboy'; then a play (workshopped by Dustin Hoffman); then 'Whacking Off'; then a short story, 'A Jewish Patient
Begins His Analysis', and finally, with the appearance of his psychoanalyst, 
*Portnoy's Complaint*.

If we talk about *Portnoy's Complaint*, 1969 which was a shocking novel for many critics as well as the Jews, then it was the decade of sexual revolution that had widened the theme of English writings. *Portnoy's Complaint* came at the climax of what Roth calls the de-mythologizing sixties, and Portnoy did a lot of de-mythologizing. It was the age of total freedom of expression and authors brought out the private lives which are most intimate, most unspeakable moments for the readers to read aloud or in secret. Various of the novels were written which dared to discuss adultery, anal sex, oral sex, threesomes like *An American Dream, Herzog, Rabbit, Run, Portnoy's Complaint* and *Couples*. The works were tagged to be pornographic especially *Portnoy's Complaint* which was even banned from the libraries. Some of the writers who dared to do so with their remarkably explicit and frank prose were the group of young writers like Mailer, Roth, Updike, Saul Bellow. It has really become inexplicable to know why Roth has been so severely attacked many times when the other writers have done much more to the same theme. *Portnoy's Complaint* was labeled as pornographic when rest other writers were doing the same, where as if we see it has much more like the eloquent and intense narration, the brilliance of imagination rather than just being a frank novel discussing act of masturbation of an unsatisfied boy.
Literature and the real life of Philip Roth go hand in hand. We saw a fanatic mother in Sophie Portnoy in his best-seller novel *Portnoy’s Complaint* who as somewhat like his own mother, Bessie Roth, he said “My mother was one of the devoted daughters of the Jewish immigrants who raised housekeeping to a great art.) (Don’t talk to anyone in my family about cleaning- we saw it in its heyday.)” Most of the female characters of his earlier novels are influenced by his first wife Margret Martinson. It has been argued that Nathan Zuckerman is the alter-ego of Philip Roth. Even one could see the traces of his father Herman, who was an Insurance salesman in his book the *Patrimony* (1991), where the last days of his father are told. In fact the second woman in his life who shared the subjects of his writings was Claire Bloom. They didn’t marry until 1989; in 1993 he served her with divorce papers. In return to this their relationship occupied a central place in her memoir, *Leaving a Doll’s House* (Little, Brown and Co., 1996). As a matter of fact after the publication their relationship turned into a public vendetta, it was Ms. Bloom.

But, as *Time* reviewer Elizabeth Gleick wrote about Bloom’s book, it “is hard not to wonder what will happen when Roth turns his novelist’s eye to this same material. Claire Bloom has good reason to shudder at the prospect.”

In 1999, Roth wrote a letter to the editor of the *New York Review of Books*: “Over the past three years I have become accustomed to finding Miss Bloom’s characterization of me taken at face value.”
But by then he had already sought revenge to set the record straight by means of a novel published in 1998 called *I Married a Communist* (Houghton Mifflin). The title refers not to the book’s plot but to another book that plays a part in Roth’s book — one chronicling the failed marriage of its author, a character named Eve Frame, in a spirit similar to which Claire Bloom wrote *Leaving a Doll’s House*.

When Roth was in his mid-sixties - an age when many writers would have been content to rest on their laurels - amounts to an extraordinary portrait that has been saluted by critics on both sides of the Atlantic: *American Pastoral*, an elegy for American family life set in the Vietnam era; his blistering portrait of Eve Frame in *I Married A Communist* (1998); *The Human Stain* (2000); *The Dying Animal* (2001); *The Plot Against America* (2004); *Everyman* (2006) and finally, his farewell to Zuckerman, *Exit Ghost* (2007). This list is testament to as remarkable a late-season career surge as any in living memory and leaves all his competitors standing in his dust. As his literary biographer Hermione Lee has described his this image as, 'going out with Philip Roth in Manhattan is like going out with Louis XIV in Versailles: the king is in his kingdom'.

Apart from his peers, he has done astounding job even at the age of seventy nine with some 29 books Roth's effort is much more than any other American writer of standing and is no more less than a celebrity. It can be
argued that this image is indebted to none other than Portnoy of course. Roth was now famous, the subject of gossip columnists as well as of literary critics. He's been there ever since. As Roth brilliantly exposes in "Imagining Jews," the novel scandalized and became a best seller because he was imagining a Jew wanting and doing those things that "traditionally" Jews had imagined only the goyim doing; he was even accused of being anti-Semitic.

'Philip Roth' was the subject of synagogue gossip and household arguments. His offence, which now seems impossibly arcane, was compounded the following year by the inclusion of the story in his debut volume, Goodbye Columbus. For much of the Sixties he was declared a traitor to his people, abused and denounced up and down as worse than anti-Semitic. 'I defended myself,' he recalls, 'but I was thrown by it, a big assault at 26. I could handle it, but I didn't like it.'

Roth faced opposition from the critics because of his continuous opposition between feminism and Judaism presents problems as he wanted to be both Jewish and a contemporary American. Gender politics is an issue in contemporary American Jewish literature. He wishes that feminist critics would discover that he dramatizes men’s frailties rather than arguing for their superiority. But he was unable to mitigate his ‘bad boy’ reputation with feminists all over. He gave lots of pieces of art to the world of literature but the irony is, his work was never viewed from other perspectives and was throughout condemned for the same reasons. In the early 1990s, accusations of misogynistic narrative and insensitivity
some sort of increased and the “bad boy” image that was tagged to him after the publication of *Portnoy’s Complaint* (1969)

Looking at Roth’s journey in geographical terms, then it begins (in "Goodbye, Columbus") in Short Hills, N.J., in the earthly paradise owned by Brenda Patimkin's father, the kitchen and bathroom sink baron, where fruit multiplies in the basement refrigerator and the trees drip sporting goods, and ends in the New York hospital room where poor David Kepesh lies suspended in a special hammock because he has unaccountably turned into an exquisitely sensitive 155-pound female breast. In between there are stops in Iowa City and Chicago (for "Letting Go"), in rural Liberty Center, Ill. (for "When She Was Good"), in the paranoid White House of President Trick E. Dixon, who is conspiring to massacre the Boy Scouts of America, and of course in the second-floor flat on the south side of Newark, where Alexander Portnoy, that raging horndog, has sex with the family supper.

He wrote "Goodbye, Columbus" and the stories collected in that volume, he said, because that was what aspiring writers did in those days - they wrote stories and hoped to publish them in places like The New Yorker and The Paris Review, which he succeeded in doing. Then, in the late 50's, he deliberately set out to write a big, ambitious novel - what proved to be "Letting Go," his longest book by far, and one that combines elements of James, of Bellow, of Dostoyevsky even. There was something about the bigness of novel writing, the
process of adding on and thickening, he says, that appealed enormously to him, and except once or twice he has never gone back to stories.

From 1962 to 1967, Mr. Roth published hardly a word. It was the longest drought of his career. In an interview with Charles Mcgrath he told about his journey

"I really didn't know where to go," he said, "and I had two or three false starts - significant false starts of a hundred pages or so. They're down in the Library of Congress - the Library of False Starts, they ought to call it. And then I decided I would just completely shift into this other tone, which was as unlike the other books as it could be."

The resulting novel was When She Was Good, the most un-Rothian of Roth's many books, the one that could almost have been written by Dreiser or Sherwood Anderson instead: a spare, urgent story of small-town 1940's America and of a young woman so disappointed by the men in her life - her father, her husband and her husband's uncle - that she becomes consumed with rage and defiance.

It could be no more co-incidences that his characters are engrossed in psychotherapy like Portnoy, Tarnopol and Kepesh etc. It becomes essential for Roth to use the first person in his confessional novels (as most of his works are confessional attempts) but it has limited his imaginations as a writer. His tone seems to be self righteous where the narrator authenticate that he is right and whatever he objects is wrong. The first person narrator of Roth is consecutively
self righteous and uses vulgar vocabulary to bring out his frustration. In his attempt to make the work more humorous or serious it becomes excess of it. Excessive use of “vulgar” language makes his novels obscene which was in total therefore condemned by public calling it ‘pornographic’.

By the time he started writing he is experimenting with styles; he appeared forefront of the general public with *Goodbye Colombus*; a good attempt that gave him an identity but what next. He came back with his highly influenced style of writing the Jamesian. *Letting Go* and *When She Was Good* were the products of this technique but not as effective as the debutant novel.

Roth possesses comic genius, his imaginative daring, his courage in exploring painful, sore and revolting truth and his rough treatment of cultural, sexual and political orthodoxies and narrow-mindedness. Roth is skilled writers with a wide knowledge of ideas, narration, humor, pain sometimes he bring one ahead and sometimes mix them all. After too much of criticism Roth took a break with Jewish mothers and Midwestern emasculators and came up with a different strategy in *Our Gang*. He had, among other things, a talent for political satire. *Our Gang*, that eerily prescient satire of the Nixon administration written a year before the Watergate scandal, is in some ways a period piece, a minor work in the Roth canon. This time the target of Roth's *Our Gang* was President Richard Milhous Nixon himself and his coterie. The work was different from the earlier ones as it possessed sharp-edged satire with outstanding humor. A writer with Roth's comic gifts can't but produce some outrageously hilarious moments....
But Roth could not succeed as his satire could not match Swift’s. On the page, he achieves a voice that's plain, natural and close to the everyday rhythms of speech. Throughout his writing, he exhibits a deep admiration for two English writers, Shakespeare and George Orwell. Very much inspired by George Orwell who developed 'good prose' being 'like a window pane', and Roth's clarity could only match in part to Orwell, whose great books, Animal Farm and Nineteen Eighty-Four, were published in the Forties, at an impressionable stage of Roth's adolescence.

The selection of the first-person confessional monologue as the narrative form and viewpoint shows his objective to vent his psyche and liberate himself from the burden of religion and ethnic backgrounds. Though it was a censored book, the one that got him labeled both a pervert and a betrayer of the Jews but it is the one for which Mr. Roth will always be best known, And contained more masturbation scenes than any book not sold from under the counter. It's a dirty book that happens to be extremely funny, and vice versa. The work was called revolutionary in the late sixties because of its candid, detailed discussion of onanism, In form, too, the novel was innovative : instead of a conventional linear narrative, it proceeds through a series of “chunks of consciousness”; instead of a chronological plot, there are (apparently) random episodes, linked only by the associative movement of memory; instead of a sympathetic protagonist there is a neurotic, self-obsessed, self-dramatizing, possibly misogynistic, arguably misanthropic, compulsive masturbator; instead of dialogue there is monologue; instead of development there is stasis. In many ways, it resembles novels of
stream of consciousness technique. Roth has very technically made Portnoy to degrade women by inextricably linking it to the language he uses. Sexually unsatisfied makes him a failure in relation with women and generates frustration which finally make him use vulgar language. The language is shown to be the psychological response to sexuality, and his correspondingly distorted dealings with women, illustrate most revealingly his basic inability to transcend the crippling limitations of an overriding narcissist attitude or self centeredness. In each of his affairs, Portnoy exploits the women and for fun or out of frustration assigning depersonalizing titles to his lovers revealing that he views them not as affairs or lovers but simply as sexual objects. Irving Buchanan contends, “his sexuality is … masturbatory sexuality employed to degrade, to revenge and to heap contempt on… women”. Indeed Portnoy’s reliance on ‘foul’ language is meant to suggest a linguistic inadequacy that parallels his sexual inadequacy.

As Robert Forray observes, the frustration born from Portnoy’s ‘five-hundred word New Jersey vocabulary’ is linked inextricably to the lack of sexual fulfillment that degenerates ultimately into impotence. (276).

At the peak of his masturbatory mischief the prose seems to be humorous, Portnoy tells us he has made use of a piece of liver before his mother prepared it. (“So. Now you know the worst thing I have ever done. I fucked my own family’s dinner” (Roth, 134).) The narrative is amusing but the flaw in it is that complaining narrative of Portnoy becomes progressively less humorous and the
protagonist Alex is diverted increasingly hysterical and spiteful and the other characters in the novel seem extremely weak by comparison to the protagonist. Some people found the protagonist humorous like; "I loved him," says Newhouse. "I found Portnoy to be funny and angry and compassionate — and most of all searching. This is a character who is in deep conflict because he wants to change." at the same time some felt that:

"He's a sad character, someone for whom there seems to be no love in sex at all," says Mark Oppenheimer, editor of the New Haven Review and author of Thirteen and a Day: The Bar and Bat Mitzvah Across America. Portnoy, as Marya Mannes suggests, is an “antihero” (39). There were different views about him.

As noted earlier the Portnoy’s both social and verbal inadequacy is shown most powerfully at the close of the book with him, unreformed and impotent. And at the top it was the brutally explicit language that it was banned from many public libraries in the United States.

What made Portnoy’s scandalous was that he turned towards his own people and discussed the problem of pretentious enunciation of rabbis, Jewish racism, and prejudice against goyim and openly ridiculed rabbi and his bar mitzvah which no one had done ever before. The same community readers could not digest the condemnation to this level and were unable to sympathize with satire or criticism of his or her own tribe. Mr. Roth had said somewhere that he thought the book's really disturbing element was its scenes of family dysfunction.
"So many people of the people who claimed to be offended by the book said they were offended by the masturbation," he recalled. "But that's silly. Everybody knew about masturbation. What they were really offended by was the depiction of this level of brutality in a Jewish family."

For Mr. Roth, and for American fiction in general, "Portnoy's Complaint" was the end of an era - the idea of apprenticing yourself to the old literary models and carefully observing the rules of literary procedure and decorum. And it was the beginning of a period, still going on, of figuring out what to do when there are no longer any rules. "After I finished 'Portnoy's Complaint' I thought: How far can one go with a kind of hyper-realistic farce?" Mr. Roth said.

"What would it yield if I went further? For me it was very much an experiment in verbal exuberance. What could come up? I didn't know. In a certain way it was still back to the very beginning: What kind of writer am I? What kind of talent do I have?"

No writer, not even Mailer or Lowell, has contributed more to the confessional climate than Philip Roth. Thanks to "Portnoy's Complaint" a good slice of contemporary fiction seems to come verbatim from the writer's own hours on the couch. Roth's consecutive writings have boldly altered the tone of our confessional writing, most of which had been lugubrious and realistic, smothered in angst and high-seriousness. But if the personal-confessional mode highlights Roth's limitations it also returns him to the day-to-day celebration of human idiocy that he has been able to describe so ringingly, so comically, even as it
goes on tormenting him. For all its self-centeredness "My Life as a Man" is finally like "Portnoy" a very vulnerable and affecting work, which ends with the hero in "sexual quarantine," wanting only "to be weaned from the other sex forever", hope Roth has gotten rid of his private demons by writing the book.

Roth has tried to take advantage of Freud’s theories in order to invent a new method of narration for himself. The best method he used was the psychoanalysis sessions in which he invented a new way of self-story telling. Philip Roth’s my life as a man is a patient’s point of view of what might happen when the analyst request for the permission of publishing a report without the prior permission from his patient. He has been continuously a serious writer as well as a serious reader one can easily find the traces of inter-textuality in it.

Roth experimented with his "My Life as a Man" which is basically a "real life" account of what happened to the young writer when he fell into marriage and trouble in his mid-twenties. the comic highs and lows of "Portnoy" are avoided in order to give a feeling of actuality almost for a flat, essayistic style. The narrative of the book is divided into two sections the first part is the fictional description written by a writer, Peter Tarnopol, who is young and fresh with writing describe the life of Nathan Zuckerman; the second one is the autobiographical account of his own life. There is no real life and thematic correlation between Peter and Zuckerman’s lives, so their existence in one novel is unexplainable. The sequence of the novel is roughly chronological and can be
read as a more or less consistent narrative, a single novel that plays internally on the theme of life and art. My Life as a Man" thus adds a third part (and a third style) to the personal trilogy begun with "Goodbye, Columbus" and "Portnoy's Complaint." Many earlier characters recur in different guises: Brenda Patimkin becomes Sharon Shatzky, daughter of Al "the Zipper King" Shatzky; Alex Portnoy's parents play recognizable parts as do that famous pampered boyhood and the sexual confusions that followed; even the mute listener, Dr. Spielvogel, who delivered the punch line of "Portnoy"--"Now vee may perhaps to begin"--keeps his word and returns under his own name to treat Peter to five years of analysis. The book is the closest one to his personal life can be called quasi-autobiography. A writer writing an autobiography requires as much human and technical control as fiction--the narrative structure here is even unusually intricate for Roth.

But the book has got less wild manic fantasies of Portnoy and the rich descriptive texture of his still-earlier work, Roth knowingly puts his imagination in a halt. The doctor not only performs his analysis of Peter but also writes letter of criticism of his Zuckerman stories. Infact everybody in the novel his sister, students, mistress all of them write him those criticism which give a mere outlook of an epistolary form of writing a novel.

The book is in total a subject of guilt, pain, agony, loneliness, psychoanalysis, betrayal. The theme which is very common in most of the novels of Roth, nothing is different only the way of narrating the same concept is
changed this time. The protagonist has a femme fatal, the protagonist encounters a women who is beautiful but at the same time is monstrous (which she is every time) and almost destroys him in such a way that he is not able to overcome it for long time. Why Roth chooses most of the female characters in his novels like that, it could be his own personal experiences towards them.

The fatal flaw of his protagonists, which Roth never observes, is their self-righteousness, from Neil Klugman's arrogant dismissal of Brenda Patimkin, to Portnoy's strong-minded attempts to blame everyone but himself, to Peter Tarnopol's post-mortem revenge on his monster of a wife. Roth has again and again chosen women who are usually two sorts of women in Roth's heroes' lives: bitchy, castrating women who attract and destroy them, and doting sexual slaves who eventually bore them. In situations like this Roth seems to lose all perspective--no one but his surrogate exists, no other viewpoint has meaning--and the judgmental parents and the arrogant, smart-ass kid speak directly through the mouth of the thwarted, furious adult. For all his talent, the cankers of arrogance and resentment have kept Roth from becoming a truly major writer: though his work has become more anguished over 15 years, it has shown very little emotional growth.

But not every time Roth has been criticized but surprisingly, in the light of his undecided, even degrading attitudes toward women, Roth's book had the most visible influence on the emerging new women writers, who were just getting into the confessional swing when "Portnoy" appeared. They had more barriers to
breach, especially in writing about sex, and though a number of women--some very movingly--hewed to the lugubrious line as if they had invented it, some of the recent best, like Erica Jong and Iris Owens, have developed a style of exuberant comic recollection that enables them not only to talk dirty but to tell it straight, to elude the trap of ax-grinding and moralizing. Whatever their flaws, novels like "Fear of Flying" and "After Claude" created a fresh voice that made us want to laugh out loud, pass the book around, read funny bits to our friends.

The three earlier books, starting with "Goodbye, Columbus" in 1959, were enfeebled by an overdose of Jamesian or Hebraic moral seriousness, which had censored a native but "sub-literary" gift for farce, mimicry and Lenny Brucean black humor. Henceforth he took his material from low rather than high culture, from sick jokes and borscht-circuit vulgarity, from half-repressed sexual fantasies and the half-remembered pop culture of the thirties and forties, from the carney-barker rather than the genteel, owl-eyed Jamesian narrator. The result of this conversion was three thoroughly dismal and mostly unfunny books, "Our Gang" (an inept, mean-spirited satire on Nixon), "The Breast" (a grotesque fantasy of sexual metamorphosis and infantile regression) and "The Great American Novel" (an aimless, hyped-up catalogue of big-league baseball fantasies). This last book did contain a few marvelous scenes of Paul Bunyanesque Americana, tall tales woven out of the circus side of baseball history, but after a hundred pages Roth lost all notion of what to do next and simply gassed on repetitiously, hoping to be saved by sheer bad taste. It became obvious that Roth had no power of what
critics once called invention; he was unable to inspire a plot or characters that were the least bit outside his own experience.

It has been observed there is a kind of disagreement in the lives of Roth’s heros when viewed from the perspective of how they lived their personal life as well as perform their duty towards rest of the world. “This conflict between high-minded moral responsibility and sensuous self assertion is central to the plight of the Roth hero” (Jones: 87)

It can be seen that though Roth depicts their conflicts, he never tries to resolve them fully. It is this conflict in which they keep on spinning and gone astray but unable to come out of it. Roth's protagonists are always laboring to come to terms with themselves as they act in ways uncharacteristic of their own self - image. It can in Goodbye Colombus, Neil Klugman's public and private lives are at loggerheads with each other. He is a compassionate librarian in Newark. But, personally he is in love with Brenda Patimkin who belongs to an Americanized family. This reveals that Neil, like other Roth characters, cannot balance the dualities of his nature. The same goes for Alex Portnoy who at one hand is very successful in his life, he works as Assistant Commissioner of Human Opportunity but mentally he is not satisfied by his family and his religion and sexually by his partners. Himself he is not able to generate a level of satisfaction or equillibrium. There is no stability between his personal and public
life too. David Kepesh can be better understood by the rake-scholor image that he gave to himself. David Kepesh is in continuous conflict between restraint and passion. His high-minded moral responsibility and sensuous self-assertion does not keep his life stable.

"He tries to reconcile the serious and moral aspects of himself which are manifested in his profession with the lustful and adventuresome side, which urges him to defy restriction and convention" (Jones: 111).

It is seen that the Rothian hero wants to break sexual inhibition and the pressures of conventional living yet their frenzied lust becomes tainted with fear of impotence and guilt. Somewhere morality begins to kill them psychologically and their frenzied lust is tainted by guilt because they cannot get away from self liberating moral judgement, that has been taught in Judaism.

The last moments of Portnoy and Kepesh are spent fearing a relapse into sterility and neurosis. When Portnoy seeks answers for his impotency from his psychiatrist, then the same fears of impotency and sterility haunts Kepesh towards the end of the novel likewise the beginning and ultimately turns into a thing he desired “the breast” "the butt of a ridiculous vicious, inexplicable joke!" (P.O.D: 204)

Through The Breast, what Roth has created is an elaborate literary joke—with serious overtones. David Alan Kepesh, his young professor of comparative
literature from Stony Brook, is transformed into a six-foot breast. After publication, critics suggested comparisons with Kafka's "Metamorphosis," Gogol's "The Nose," and Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*. They called

"Aha! He’s trying to outdo Kafka". But he is not—at least not in the way they mean."

After Portnoy’s reviews Roth admits to having been haunted by a single phrase, "A terrible mistake has been made," and he nourishes the ambition to "write a book which will stand Kafka on his head"—Kafka whom he sees as "the great comedian of guilt," of "self-persecution."(11) People condemned him for writing novels with sex for getting fame they decried The Breast in many ways:

John Gardner's begrudgingly favorable review of *The Breast* is perhaps an exception to the universal moral condemnation of the novella, but even Gardner faults Roth for a certain lack of taste in the explicit genital preoccupations which, Gardner implies, are both "sick" and "self-regarding."

He has the style of narration like scene making how to describe the perfect setting the props and to bring out the best from the scene. In *Portnoy’s Complaint*, probably for the first time in Jewish-American literature, woman-hating is openly associated with a consuming anger. For men like Bellow and Roth, the sense of pent-up outrage was so intense that it was inevitable not to be blamed.
The humiliation is worse and so deep down that it looks kinky. In morals his male character takes upper hand Roth’s male protagonist struggles on, book after book, decade after decade, doomed to repeat in language that glows in the dark the increasingly tired narrative of the illness from which he can neither recover nor expire: his solipsism. In Portnoy there were the traces of a woman-hater, reader could believe that the women are monstrous because the protagonist believed so. In all the books that followed over the next thirty years, the women are monstrous because for Philip Roth women are monstrous. It could be analyzed when his personal life is compared to the novels he has written that there is misogyny in Roth’s work which has seemed to be less and less a function of character, and more and more an indication of the his own swamped being.

Roth is one of the most serious writer and most inventive of all. His prose speaks pain. He uses comic irony to present the social issues in order to solve the contemporary problem. His majorly works deal with youngsters and what they are offended with: parents, girlfriends, wives etc. One of the reason for his talent is he has always dealt with the weightiest topics of marriages breakups, heartbreaks, which need to bring out the inner emotions with his powerful diction. He invented his alter-ego. Nathan Zuckerman through whom Roth replied to his critics who condemned his with no other perspective.
As Al Alvarez has defined: ‘His prose is immaculate yet curiously plain and unostentatious, as natural as breathing. It’s always the story that’s in your face, never the style.’

Philip Roth was born in Elizabeth, N.J., to Bessie and Herman, themselves the children of Polish immigrants. He started out to become a lawyer. As he told "We were all lower-middle-class, academically disciplined and well-behaved." he says of that period. "He was definitely a trendsetter," says Martin Weich, a Manhattan psychiatrist and childhood friend who still sees Roth socially. "He introduced us to good books. It was Phil who branched out and went to college. He led us into three-piece suits." After college Roth served in the Army, then taught while writing Goodbye, Columbus, which won a National Book Award for fiction. In 1960 he won a Guggenheim grant. He went to live in Italy, then England. His brief, tempestuous marriage to Margaret Martinson, a divorcée whom he had met when they were both graduate students at the University of Chicago, ended in a bitter divorce in 1963. Other than writing what he enjoys is teaching. "I must always have a quiet place in which to write, but I find that I enjoy teaching," he says. In fact he still drives three hours to Manhattan twice a week to teach an advanced literature course at Hunter College. "I can imagine nothing more wonderful than to sit in a room with 20 bright students for three hours and discuss books," he says. "It also forces me to read a book a week, which is good discipline."

As for his writing, he explains,
"I started my career with a very clear idea about my work”. Each book had to be different from the previous one—a corrective to the last. If I write some abstract piece of dialogue in simple sentences without much sense of place, the next book will be precise and filled with descriptions and complicated turns of phrase."

While the themes involve the clash between men and women (with lots of explicit, and usually hilarious, sex scenes), his books are narrated in the high-stress voice of an ambivalent Jew who is always inspecting the nature of what is true and what is imagined. "I'm not always sure I know the difference." the author says.

He is always projected for writing not about a person but most of the time about Jews and doing so we have the amazing sensibilities uniqueness the author possessed. It was his the very first book that Saul Bellow commented in "Goodbye, Columbus is a first book but it is not the book of a beginner. Unlike those of us who came howling into the world, blind and bare, Mr. Roth appears with nails, hair, and teeth, speaking coherently. At twenty-six he is skillful, witty, and energetic and performs like a virtuoso" (77).

Only writer who can create humor in serious monologues. He represent thoughts and their flow, no one can pinpoint a flaw in his stream of consciousness. The way his characters behaves to women, responds to incidents, talks a filthy language is not more than a demand of the theme of the novel. . A marvelous outcome of his imagination was Portnoy’s Complaint, people decried it
on a large scale but at the same time read it secretly (after it was banned) and made it a bestseller, complained of it opposing the Jews. Irving Howe’s superb essay on Philip Roth [“Philip Roth Reconsidered,” December 1972]: he lets Roth off too lightly in an area where others condemned him mostly.

Mr. Howe writes: “Portnoy’s Complaint is not, as enraged critics have charged, an anti-Semitic book, though it contains plenty of contempt for Jewish life.” Every time his work is co-related to his personal life and his creativity is ignored while he is blamed for the same old thing that he is anti-smite. But, if a Jew writer is writing about Jews in his several novels cannot be said that he is writing an autobiography again and again. Discarding his effort, his devotion, his imagination what he faces is wrath. When people criticized he gave such response but we missed the opportunity of reading a creativity of his mind, if ever we would have ever appreciated his job.

"Reading Myself and Others," is Roth's first work of nonfiction to justify and assess his role as an apparently scandalous Jew. It was written after Portnoy's Complaint, a best seller at the same time dreadful experience of Roth’s journey of writings that paved way for writing an account of justification. He has tried to explain through it why he has written each thing he’s done it has a collection of essays and interviews that confirms all gloomy suspicions. Roth has tried to answer back to his critics by writing Reading Myself and Others. In this book the first part consists of interviews and the second one is a series of attempts to place himself and his work in the context of American Jews and Jewish
stereotypes whereby he compares himself to other writers and try to figure out where does he stands? There are also included two brilliant essays one is “Imagining Jews” and the other one is "Looking at Kafka” which are very appreciated piece of arts. Roth brilliantly suggests in "Imagining Jews," about Portnoy’s Complaint, the novel that scandalized and became a best seller because he had imagined a Jew wanting and doing those things that "traditionally" they had imagined only the goyim doing; he was even accused of being anti-Semitic. He also talked about Kafka, a biggest influence in his works like The Breast and The Professor of Desire in "Looking at Kafka," which places a loving account of Kafka's final year next to a story about Roth's Hebrew teacher, also a Franz Kafka, and a projection of what the Kafka who died in 1924 might have become had he lived, come to America and ended up living in respectable poverty in Newark.

An intensely private man, Philip Roth is one of America's greatest writers. He is dedicated, even obsessive, about his work but loathes the fame that attends it. After spells in eastern Europe and the UK, his return to New York marked a period of creative renewal as he reflected on the US through the lens of history.

Philip Roth has had the grandest prizes available to an American writer, some of them more than once, and he has been to the White House to have the National Medal of Arts pinned on him by former president Bill Clinton. For the last decade, at an age when most writers are beginning to lose interest, Roth has
produced a series of books more powerful and accomplished than any he has written before. And he shows no signs of slowing down.

With age he is becoming more and more dedicated even at the age of 79 he is ready for another scandal. Although he has grown old, his face is lined now, his mouth has tightened and his springy hair has turned grey, but he still looks like an athlete - tall and lean, with broad shoulders and a small head. Roth's old friend and editor Aaron Ascher, tells,

"Even now, he doesn't relent. This is a 70-something-year-old writer who is still going uphill and keeps getting better. He has back problems which give him great pain, yet he's always working. He never stops, even in his worst periods."

Until recently, when surgery on his back and arthritis in the shoulder laid him low, he worked out and swam regularly, though always, it seemed, for a purpose - not for the animal pleasure of physical exercise, but to stay fit for the long hours he puts in at his writing. He works standing up, paces around while he's thinking and has said he walks half a mile for every page he writes. Even now, when his joints are beginning to creak and fail, energy still comes off him like a heat haze, but it is all driven by the intellect. It comes out as argument, mimicry, wild comic riffs on whatever happens to turn up in the conversation. His concentration is fierce, and the sharp black eyes under their thick brows miss nothing. The pleasure of his company is immense, but you need to be at your best not to disappoint him.
He has always believed in the separation of life and art. He keeps his private life strictly to himself and prefers not to work where he lives. In Connecticut, his studio is back in the trees away from the house; 30 years ago, when he was spending half the year in London, he lived in Fulham and worked in a little flat in Kensington; in New York, there were two apartments on the Upper West Side, one for living in and a studio for work; when he moved more or less full-time to Connecticut, he kept the New York studio and that is where we met to talk.

It is on the 12th floor, a single large room with a kitchen area, a little bathroom and a glass wall looking south across Manhattan's gothic landscape to the Empire State Building, with a wisp of cloud around its top.

The lectern at which Roth works is at right angles to the view, presumably to avoid distraction. Above it is a sketch of an open book, with an indecipherable text that might be in Hebrew, by his friend, the late Philip Guston. There is a bed with a neat white counterpane against the wall, an easy chair in the centre of the room, with a graceful standing lamp beside it, all of it leather and steel and glass, discreetly modern. It is a place strictly for work, spare and chaste, a monk's cell with a great view.

Roth's monkish routine is at odds with what he once called his "reputation as a crazed penis" bestowed on him by *Portnoy's Complaint*, his great panegyric to the comedy of sex. When Portnoy was published in 1969, it seemed to epitomise the anarchic spirit of the decade. Maybe it did, but the author himself
was a product of the 1950s, the last generation of well-behaved, sternly educated children who believed in high culture and high principles and lived in the nuclear shadow of the cold war until their orderly world was blown apart by birth-control pills and psychedelic drugs. Portnoy was considered outrageous when it appeared, but the real outrage was Roth's and he was outraged because he couldn't help being a good boy however much he yearned to be bad.

Like most Jewish families, Roth's was close-knit, affectionate and tempestuous. His father, Herman, was a passionate New Dealer, a forceful indignant man, who worked for Metropolitan Life Insurance Company and rose to be a district manager - which was as high as a Jew could go before Congress passed the Fair Employment Act after the second world war. He and his wife Bess were children of immigrants from eastern Europe and they lived in the largely Jewish Weequahic section of Newark. In those days Newark was the commercial capital of New Jersey, a prosperous industrial town. "I was brought up in a Jewish neighbourhood," he says,

"and never saw a skullcap, a beard, sidelocks - ever, ever, ever - because the mission was to live here, not there. There was no there. If you asked your grandmother where she came from, she'd say, 'Don't worry about it. I forgot already.' To the Jews, this was Zion."

The neighbourhood schools were good and Roth was a straight A student. He graduated magna cum laude from Bucknell, an idyllic little college in Lewisberg, Pennsylvania, got his MA from the University of Chicago, did a spell
in the army, was invalided out with a spinal injury, returned to Chicago to start a PhD and teach freshman English, then dropped out after one term. Ascher first heard of him when his sister, a student at Chicago, wrote to tell him she had sublet an apartment from "a guy called Philip Roth. He says he's a writer."

It was a long time, however, before Roth began to write about the world he was brought up in. Neither of his devoted, sensible parents seems to have had much in common with the comic nightmares that tormented Portnoy and they only began to figure large in their son's work after they died. His new novel, The Plot Against America, is, in a way, his memorial to them. When Roth was working on it he told his friend David Plante, the novelist, that he was "writing about his parents in their prime, when their life was at its full and they were dealing with it".

Though the book turned out to be about a lot of other things as well, the portrait, according to Ascher, is strong and accurate:

"Herman was fiercely what he was - a marvellous, naïve man who loved his children and was perplexed by them. In this new book, Philip puts him in these terrible situations and he reacts exactly as he would have done in real life."

The idea for the terrible situation occurred to Roth when he read in Arthur Schlesinger's autobiography that the right wing of the Republican party had thought of nominating Charles Lindbergh, the celebrated aviator, anti-semite and friend of Hitler, to run for the presidency against FDR in 1940:
"I wrote in the margin, 'What if they had?' Then I began thinking about other what-ifs, like what if Hitler hadn't lost? All this was happening when I was a little child - I was born in 1933 - but it is quite vivid to me because the great outside world came into the house through the radio and through my father's reactions to it. So it began to make sense as a novel. One of the reasons I could never write about what our family life was really like was because my parents were good, hard-working, responsible people and that's boring for a novelist. What I discovered inadvertently was that if you put pressure on these decent people, then you've got a story."

Putting pressure on people and facts and his own experience is one of the many solutions Roth has come up with for the problem to which he has devoted his life: how to transform life into art. He has always tried to justify himself for every thing giving explanations for his dangerous attempts of creating different characters either through his autobiographies, his alter-ego and in interviews. He once said that:

"I have to have something to do that engages me totally," he says. "Without that, life is hell for me. I can't be idle and I don't know what to do other than write. If I were afflicted with some illness that left me otherwise OK but stopped me writing, I'd go out of my mind. I don't really have other interests. My interest is in solving the problems presented by writing a book. That's what stops my brain spinning like a car wheel in the snow, obsessing about nothing. Some people do crossword puzzles to satisfy their need to keep the mind engaged. For me, the absolutely demanding mental test is the desire to get the work right. The crude cliché is that the writer is solving the problem of
his life in his books. Not at all. What he's doing is taking something that interests him in life and then solving the problem of the book - which is, How do you write about this? The engagement is with the problem that the book raises, not with the problems you borrow from living. Those aren't solved, they are forgotten in the gigantic problem of finding a way of writing about them."

His solutions to the problem have taken many forms as well as a large cast of narrators. Letting Go is narrated in third person as well as first person, Portnoy’s was a monologue, the breast is first person narration, Deception, for instance, is written entirely in dialogue, like a stage play. Operation Shylock is a find-the-Roth shell-game, with a false Philip pretending to be the true one until neither is quite sure who is who. The technical problem of The Plot Against America was less tricky but equally hard to solve: although it is a Roth book, the Roth who narrates it is aged seven. Roth has never been much interested in aesthetic theories and experiment and when he talks about getting a story right he does so, like any craftsman, with a practical understanding of the materials he uses and the techniques needed to get the job done. In The Ghost Writer, the ageing writer, Elie Lonoff, tells 23-year-old Nathan Zuckerman, the most disabused of Roth's stand-ins, that he

"has the most compelling voice I've encountered in years. I don't mean style... ."
Voice in this sense is the vehicle by which a writer expresses his aliveness and Roth himself is all voice. His prose is immaculate yet curiously plain and unostentatious, as natural as breathing. Reading him, it's always the story that's in your face, never the style. His style of narration sounds so spontaneous that the reader might suppose he is listening to confession rather than reading a work of fiction. And this, to Roth, is an insult to the labour he puts into his craft. It also links him with the cult of celebrity and that is something he has fought against throughout his career.

as Al Alvarez well quoted Peter de Vries, "One dreams of the goddess Fame and winds up with the bitch Publicity" in order to define Roth’s literary output. He added to further explain this typical life responses of his life,

“first tangled with the bitch when Goodbye, Columbus provoked rabbis to denounce him as "a self-hating Jew", and he responded by writing Letting Go, the most conventional of his novels, as if to show that he was indeed as serious and worthy as authors were expected to be in the 50s. Being a good boy, however, did not sit easily either with his surreal comic inventiveness or with the troubles he was having in a difficult first marriage to Margaret Williams. When he finally yoked comedy and rage together to produce Portnoy's Complaint, the serious writer again came face-to-face with the bitch Publicity and this time she didn't let him go."(36)

Instead of being read as someone who is a brilliant artist in the tradition of Kafka and Gogol, Roth got scandal, outrage and best-seller celebrity in its
most shabby form. The attacks on him were horrible and disheartening, especially from the Jews. He had to cope with the nightmare of a smash hit. It made him angry and defensive, so he closed up. But maybe it did him good. The setback of great success changed and improved him as a writer. Without it, he'd have been different.

He immediately refused all public appearances and retreat to Yaddo, the writers' colony in upstate New York. Hiding himself away was easy, but disguising that distinctive, compelling voice of his was a trickier problem.

He might have never expected the kind of response he got for his best seller on being asked what he replied was

"In 1969, I wrote Portnoy. Not only did I write it - that was easy - I also became the author of Portnoy's Complaint and what I faced publicly was the trivialisation of everything."

His solution was ventriloquism, narrators with everyday lives not unlike his, but who see them differently and transform them into something else: disabused, tough-talking Nathan Zuckerman who sniffs out every weakness and forgives no one; studious David Kepesh, a professor to whom outlandish things happen when he lets himself go, but who loves literature as much as he loves women; a character called Philip Roth whose relationship to the author is a source of mystery for both of them. Roth remarked, apropos of President Bush, that born-again Christianity is the ignorant man's version of the intellectual life.
Critics feel that his works are his self-confessions and Roth has made a mockery of it in many ways. The eulogist at Zuckerman's funeral in The Counterlife puts it pompously but well:

"What people envy in the novelist... is the gift for theatrical self-transformation, the way they are able to loosen and make ambiguous their connection to a real life through the imposition of talent. The exhibitionism of the superior artist is connected to his imagination; fiction is for him at once playful hypothesis and serious supposition, an imaginative form of inquiry - everything that exhibitionism is not... Contrary to the general belief, it is the distance between the writer's life and his novel that is the most intriguing aspect of his imagination."

In life as in art: a snide academic at a New York dinner party once tried to show his disdain for the famous author by pretending to mistake him for Herman Wouk and taking him to task for the structural weakness of Marjorie Morningstar. Roth, of course, was too smart to be indignant; he just played right along with the game and became Wouk for the rest of the evening.

His most effective escape from New York celebrity was Czechoslovakia and its writers. He stumbled across them inadvertently, when he was on a holiday tour of Europe and stopped off in Prague to pay homage to Kafka. This was in 1972, three years after both the nightmare success of Portnoy and the far greater nightmare that followed the Prague Spring. Through his Czech translator he met blacklisted writers who cleaned windows and stoked boilers for a living while
they wrote books that wouldn't be published at home. Their troubles put his into perspective:

"They made me very conscious of the difference between the private ludicracy of being a writer in America and the harsh ludicrousness of being a writer in eastern Europe. These men and women were drowning in history. They were working under tremendous pressure and the pressure was new to me - and news to me, too. They were suffering for what I did freely and I felt great affection for them, and allegiance; we were all members of the same guild."

Back in New York, Roth immersed himself in literature from behind the iron curtain. He went every week to a little college on Staten Island to attend Antonin Liehm's classes on Czech culture and edited a series of eastern European fiction for Penguin.

"My life in New York after Portnoy was lived in the Czech exile community - listening, listening, listening. I ate every night in Czech restaurants in Yorkville, talked to whoever wanted to talk to me and left all this Portnoy crap behind. That was idiotic, this was not idiotic. I lived up in Connecticut, where Philip Guston was my friend, and had my east European world in New York, and those were the things that saved me. I think that's why Hemingway lived in Key West; he liked to be in a world that had nothing to do with what he did all day. Fame is a worthless distraction."

Roth's regular visits to Prague continued until 1977, when he was denied an entry visa, and they seemed to bring about a change in his focus as a writer.
By then, he was spending half the year in London, but he left in 1989 to be with his father in his final illness and, following the break-up of his second marriage to the actress Claire Bloom, he never went back. It was, he says, a huge relief to be home: "I used to walk around New York saying under my breath, 'I'm back! I'm back!' I felt like Rip van Winkle waking up with a long beard and discovering there'd been a revolution and the British were gone! Being home, being free in my personal life brought a great revival of energy. I felt renewed."

While he was rediscovering America, Roth immersed himself in the modern classics and they reminded him of what American novelists do best: "The great American writers are regionalists. It's in the American grain. Think of Faulkner in Mississippi or Updike and the town in Pennsylvania he calls Brewer. It's there on the page, brick by brick. What are these places like? Who lives there? What are the forces determining their lives? ... I hadn't yet discovered my own place, that town across the river called Newark, and it didn't have any power for me until it was destroyed in the race riots of 1966. Before, it was too pleasant and my family was too decent to write about. Only when the place had been burned down and the families I knew had been exiled did it become a fit subject for inquiry."

The energy released by his return to America culminated in his great, subversive outburst of comic outrage and exasperation, Sabbath's Theatre. The book reads like Portnoy's Complaint retold by a 60-year-old man raging not about sex, but against the injustice and ludicrousness of death, and it was a turning
point. Having vented his rage at the prospect of death, and while he still had time, he set about writing an extraordinary series of novels about what it was like to live in the United States in the second half of the 20th century. After his experience in eastern Europe, he now saw the place more sharply through the lens of history.

In the 50s, when Roth was starting out and literature was considered the noblest of all vocations, the best writers responded in an intensely inward way to whatever was going on in the big outside. All that changed, Roth thinks, when Kennedy was assassinated in 1963: "It was an event so stunning that our historical receptors were activated. The stuff that's happened in the last 40 years - the Vietnam war, the social revolution of the 60s, the Republican backlash of the 80s and 90s - have been so powerfully determining that men and women of intelligence and literary sensibility feel that the strongest thing in their lives is what has happened to us collectively: the new freedoms, the testing of the old conventions, the prosperity. That's what I was writing about in the trilogy that followed Sabbath - American Pastoral, I Married a Communist and The Human Stain: people prepare for life in a certain way and have certain expectations of the difficulties that come with those lives, then they get blindsided by the present moment; history comes in at them in ways for which there is no preparation. 'History is a very sudden thing,' is how I put it. I'm talking about the historical fire at the centre and how the smoke from that fire reaches into your house."

Old age and its humiliations, he says, are equally unpredictable. "I think about Hemingway and Faulkner and how it ended for them - tragically, not
peacefully in their sleep. Faulkner drank himself to death; Hemingway's body was banged to bits, the booze had saturated him and he couldn't write; he had nothing to live for, so he shot himself. These are lives of torment... I'm not a romantic about writing, I don't want a tormented life and, by and large, I haven't had one. But these guys... I can't stand to think about how they ended."

"Who knew what getting old would be like?" he says. "There may be a biological blinder about age that's built in. You are not supposed to understand until you get there. Just as an animal doesn't know about death, the human animal doesn't know about age. When I wrote that book about my father in old age, Patrimony, I thought I knew what I was talking about, but I didn't really. In this new book I've brought both my parents back in their full flower. The flow of energy in our house was extraordinary."

It was also the atmosphere in which Roth's own special talents began to flourish. When he was a teenager and his older brother Sandy was an art student in Brooklyn, they would meet up with their friends most weekends at the Roth house in Newark: "My mother loved it. Eight or 10 boys, a very mixed bag, but one thing they had in common was tremendous humour. Some of them I still know and they remember roaring with laughter in our house - laughing and eating and laughing. It was a wonderful period, a great explosion of camaraderie. Our subject was the comedy of being between 15 and 20 - comedy located in sex and frustration - lots of longing, little activity. I think that was the incubator for everything."
Maybe it still is, in a ghostly way. "Roth often visits his parents' grave in New Jersey," Plante says.

"He stands at their graveside and weeps. Then he begins to talk to them and they answer. Then he starts joking with them, they have these funny, bantering conversations and he goes away feeling better."

He's not a misogynist, he's interested in sex, and sees it as central to human experience and if somebody in need is deprived of it he behaves like that. Most of the male characters are dissatisfied by their personal lives or they are cheated by their beloved. Yes, he has given some writings which are from the male perspective but then also we cannot detect any generalized hostility to women in them. His is called a misogynistic writer which is not right, he too has portrayed several inspiring women like Martha Reganhart, Claire Ovington, even Dawn Dwyer, the "Swede"'s wife in American Pastoral and Drenka, who inspires Mickey Sabbath to such heights of lust in Sabbath's Theater.

People may have tagged him with various labels but,

“Creative genius, bitter critic, misogynist... Whatever you think of Philip Roth there's no doubt he's one of the world's most brilliant writers and that age has not mellowed him.”