THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE SELF AND THE FAMILY

CHAPTER III
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*Portnoy's Complaint* is a monologic narrative of Alexander Portnoy's conflicts. He is the narrator-subject with "lust-ridden, mother-addicted" character (Searles 77). The text presents his "blocks of consciousness" (*RMAO* 15). By a long drawn discursive howl of outrage the subject struggles to get out of the ceaseless struggle between the two selves, one private and the other public. He is an analysand locked within the textual language of a psychic war waged between the lustful and ethical selves. The text seems to be used as an alternative homeland where he strives to resolve the conflict between his "unbridled desire" and "moral outrage" (Milbauer and Watson 100). Rather than presenting a series of events, it renders a consciousness. Dreams and the unconscious have little role. Alex declares that the "dreams, the symbols, the terrifyingly laughable situations" which others "experience with their eyes shut" he gets with eyes wide open (*PC* 290).

The operant fiction is framed with a signifying matrix of natural and contrived occurrences, fantasies and gestures. These are enacted within his Jewish home on the one side and the centre-field of playfulness on the other. In both these settings, he is unable to be content. Mark Shechner describes him as "a three way loser [. . .] a bad patient, a bad Jew and a bad Boy" (118).
Taking cue from this statement, the narrative of deviant participants and practices is discussed in three "topic-comment structures": the filial encounters; the heterosexual adventures; and the onanistic fantasies (Prince 103). These three topic-comment structures are discussed in the light of the problematic of repression and liberation that is integrated into the text with the tropes of food and body.

Alex's aberrant exploits within family are, for analytical purpose, categorised into three semic codes related to the dinner-table, the sanitary habits and the kosher/goyische binaries. Alex's morality/immorality seems to begin at the dinner table. When the superego goads him to declare, "Let the goyim sink their teeth into what ever lowly creature [. . .]," the id prevails with the desire to eat the "pussy" (PC 89,178). His battle for manhood is staged and won/lost within the range of such choking restrictions and eccentric violations. The term "moral" appears to be closely tied up with the word 'oral'. The most serious sin committed involves gluttony and not lechery. "Pudding" and "pussy" are two metonymic motifs of love and authority that often get mixed up in the subject's homodiegetic analepsis. A complementary relationship exists between them. The dining-table, the toilet and the kitchen are like three plains of one long-drawn battle. Alex and his father are the two eminent sinners on whom suspicion is always cast upon by Sophie. He recounts his father's alleged appeal for the "terrific pair of legs"
of the gentile cashier alongside his sinful eating of his "sister's chocolate pudding" (*PC* 92,97).

Sophie holds her sway over the family through a discourse that propagates morality by dietary regulations. As against this authority Alex's defensive strategy and offensive ammunition are one, that is having a "mouth on him" (*PC* 26). Food and body get focalized in the text as an integral part of its semic structure. Metonymically and metaphorically they bracket and inform all aspects of Alex's discursive experience with a fairly good degree of perceptibility. They appear to serve as the mediators in analysing the power-relations that exist within the diffused corpus of the subject's "homodiegetic" narrative. The text which is a "fractured chronology of Portnoy's shifting memories" acts as his powerful weapon (Pinsker *The Comedy* 59). It seems to make story-telling a binary process. Story exists both as textual and performative processes. The referentiality of a family story is determined and controlled by the group culture which any family proposes to keep in tact. By the implied semes in Portnoy's narrative of "mixed analepsis" it is understandable that his mother Sophie had been "ordering the task" of family story-telling. By her matriarchal authority she must have decided upon what all were to be told, audienced, retrieved and transmitted through family narrative. But Alex undermines his mother's task-ordering by accommodating contrary versions of lived reality. They circumvent a generational structure of power and control of knowledge.
Sophie is a resourceful matriarch who operates through the promotion of Alex's subjectivity. She prevails upon him not by denials and challenges but by investing him with personal objectives and ambitions. She acts through Alex's self as a "nurturer" and "devourer" by imposing fears and remedies regarding bodily matters: "For mistakes she checked my sums; for holes, my socks; for dirt, my nails, my neck, every seam and crease of my body" (PC 11). Eating is a manifestation of natural urge and it is a part of natural phenomenon. Sophie subjects this urge to the artifice of family taboo. Alex is powerfully afflicted with guilt from the source of the primary action of eating. Mark Shechner describes the text as "a vaudeville of the Jewish stomach" (122). The mother, designated as the Madonna and patron saint of self-sacrifice, dominates Alex's self with her "staccato cadences" of overprotective love (Halio 69). The Jewish family and its kosher taboos appear to serve more as a narrative "catalyst" than as a mere social background.

Sophie and Alex take a full anthropological plunge into the ethnology of the digestive tract. The discursive battle is fought on the tropal plane of food and body. The household becomes like a "lunatic asylum" where the mother sits up at the dinner-table holding a knife and keeping the subject in constant state of torment with threats of murder and castration. If Sophie maintains a fearful sense of life her son tries to rebel against her by a free flowing involvement with life. John N. McDaniel is of the view that the text
gives "emphatic expression" to "the howl of outrage at forces surrounding the individual" (147). Eating well and eating with decorum become a part of dutifulness in the Portnovian household. But Alex tries to undermine such niceties of Jewish life. He apprehends his parents as "the outstanding producers and packagers of guilt" who extract it from him "like fat from a chicken!" (PC 39). Sophie dominates his conscious self with bread knife and threats of castration. The threats are couched in motifs of sickness and physical disability: "Open your mouth. Why is your throat red? Do you have a headache you are not telling me about? [. . .] Is your neck stiff? [. . .] You ate like you were nauseous, are you nauseous?" (PC 36). Layering of fear about bodily health is done for the understandable reason of subverting the acting subject. Guilt aroused form the primary act of eating becomes indelible so much so that he could not "even contemplate drinking a glass of milk" or eating a "salami sandwich without giving serious offence to God Almighty" (PC 37). Tonal manipulation and yoking of apparently unlike subjects are the means by which Sophie maintains the ambience of her authoritarian power. Food and body, as metaphors/metonymies, gain in effect from their cadence, tone and context. When Alex forms his own eating habits she intervenes forcefully:" "Hamburgers", she says bitterly, just as she might say Hitler, "where they can put anything in the world in that they want-and he eats them" (PC 35). She dominates the discourse as an exemplar in matters of filial decorum. She violently yokes together eating, sex and filial values.
To her, reformation within the household has to be initiated from within the tropal boundaries of food and body. Family morality seems to be irresistibly tied up with these tropes: "For look at Alex himself, the subject of our every syllable-age fifteen, he sucks one night on a lobster's claw and within the hour his cock is out and aimed at a shikse on a Public Service bus" (PC 91).

Sophie feeds the subject on a nightly diet surfeited with "the suspense filled chapters of her perilous life" (PC 103). Paralysis, polio and cancer are three semic codes that remain dispersed in Sophie's discourse. These physical afflictions are apprehended as divinely ordained punishments for the subject who succumbs to stray temptations of transgression. While in her youth, she, after being tipsy with whiskey, was nose-led by Doyle, a charming young insurance agent, into eating lobster without her being conscious of it. Soon she realises that she has been afflicted with a paralytic stroke for this transgression: "See how I'm holding my fingers? I was throwing up so hard, they got stiff just like this, like I was paralyzed [...]

Sophie had sermonised Alex about her cancer as if it was a purgatorial experience before deliverance in a religious text:

[...] first, that there was something growing in my mother's uterus, and second, whether the growth they finally located was malignant... whether what she has was...oh, that word we cannot even speak in one another's presence! The word we cannot even
spell out in all its horrible entirety! [. . .]. She tells me how Rabbi Warshaw came and sat and talked with her for a whole half hour before [. . .] she went under the knife. (PC 72-73)

Banality and grotesquery join together in the analogy drawn between the expurgated mother and the dressed chicken. To Alex cancerous growth means the same as "what she used to reach up and pull down out of the dead chicken" just to be thrown in "the garbage can" (PC 75). Revulsion arises as she has been "hollowed out" and he does not feel like drinking "ginger-ale" from her "half-empty glass" (PC 75, 73). But still her image persists within his self in the form of moralistic texts with which she used to act upon him.

The household library consists of Sophie's series of "You Know Me, I' ll try Anything Once" (PC 104). Further it is rich with fictional texts like Dragon Seed, Argentine Diary and The Memoirs of Casanova that tell of the expurgatorial processes of "hysterectomy" and "appendectomy" (PC 103-104). Her discourse is redundant with metonymic tropes of disease and torment. They form a proairetic sequence of catalysts that engenders aloneness, and fear in the subject. Safety from uncertain elemental forces becomes essential and the subject is consigned to a specifically designated disposition of docility and adherence. Alex's self is conditioned as a "subaltern whose dependency on the figure of authority forms a false escape route from the invented threat out there, in the open, the outside" (Itwaru 13). As against this formidable fortress of disciplining discourse the subject trains
his "battered battering ram to freedom" (PC 35). A Jewish man cannot be an independent self as long as his parents are alive. He will have to "remain a fifteen-year old boy till they die" (PC 124). So Alex finds a way out on the terrain of onanistic sex. He performs the blasphemous sacrament of rolling "a big purplish piece of raw liver" round his "cock in the bathroom at three-thirty" and then eats it cooked "at five-thirty, along with the other members" of his family. The episode culminates in the triumphant declaration, "I sucked my own family's dinner" (PC 150).

As apart from the dinner table, the physical setting of the bathroom too forms a crucial part of the narrative. Jack and Alex share the burden of familial authority manifested through Sophie. The narrator subject pursues alternatives through the use of doubles, alter-egos, mentors and opposing authorities. Choices and refusals are executed by the help of these alternatives. The father-son juxtaposition operates on the planes of parody, burlesque, slapstick, ridicule, insult, invective, lampoon and wisecrack. Jack Portnoy's constipation is posited against Alex's onanistic redressal both as means of parallelism and contrast. If the constipated father finds his "intestinal tract" governed by "Worry, Fear and Frustration", the son goes on a record setting spree "Before meals, After meals, During meals" as the "Raskolnikov of jerking off" (PC 27, 20, 21). Bruno Bettelheim describes the farcicality of this situation from a psychological perspective: "The father cannot let go. The son cannot hold anything in, or hold onto anyone" (28).
Alex suffers from an "essential constipation" with prohibitive warnings, taboos and hysterical laws laid down by his mother. So the "diarrhea of talk" and the uncluttered space of bathroom are the two easily accessible means for attaining a similitude of liberation and selfhood (Bettelheim 25). Using the pretext of diarrhea, he enters the toilet with objects as varied as a hollowed apple, milk-bottle, candy wrapper and socks. The ethereal voice of the dream creature, Lenore Lapidus arouses him to heights of orgasmic ecstasy. Indulgence in such pleasures helps him build a self-assurance that his bodily self at least is operative on its own. In the Freudian sense, the subject seeks a substitute means of rebelling against the filially indoctrinated values by a "masturbatory phallic fixation" (Bettelheim 25). Expulsion of his gross passion gets effected in two ways: firstly, by the diarrhea like talk, and secondly, by the onanistic pleasures.

In contrast to the narrator subject's actions, Jack helplessly appeals to Sophie that he be left alone so that he could "have a little peace" and "get something accomplished" in there. But both these actor-subjects are beleaguered by threats of malignancy which, Sophie assumes, are contracted by disorderly eating habits. The binary processes of ingestion and emetics serve as analogous means for violation of sexual taboo. They also serve as a proairetic terrain upon which Sophie and Dr. Spielvogel perform the act of analysis. If Sophie tries to "get to the bottom of this diarrhea", Dr. Spielvogel attempts to analyse Alex's "frantic logorrhea" (PC 24-25; Lee 16).
Sophie suspects tumour for Jack and colitis for Alex's friend, Melvin Weiner. Her advice on the dire consequences of consuming "chazerai", "doughnut", and "Pepsi" haunt him even within the safe space of his bathroom. The "discoloured dot" he finds on himself is presumed to be cancer caused by over-exertion (PC 19).

Alex gets little help from his father in overcoming the sense of inadequacy received by such disciplining sermons on food and body. Where a man's appetite is concerned, he thinks, he need be responsible "to no one but himself!" (PC 224). Jack appears to be a flat character who is developed more as bound motif augmenting to Alex's sexual evolution. The metonymic semes built around him convey a sense of emasculation. The comicality of his household identity gets established by "square steel-rimmed spectacles", "steel wool" hair, and teeth that keep smiling at "the toilet bowl" from a glass. (PC 308). As an insurance agent of "Boston & Northeastern life", he goes around canvassing in the "impoverished districts" where "dogs [...] sink their teeth into his persistent ass" (PC 5-6). Alex asks the analyst, with unresolveable ambivalence, whether he should rid himself of "hatred" or "love" for his father: "But what he had to offer I didn't want-and what I wanted he didn't have to offer "(PC 28-29). His ineffectuality is so serious that a strange "mix-up of sexes" seems to have brought about a disequilibrium in the power structure of the family. The father ought to have
been the mother and the mother the father in order to fill "the patriarchal vacuum" (*PC* 45).

The Turkish bath proves to be a kind of epiphanic initiation to Alex. This is the exceptional occasion when Jack rises to his expected role of a father. It forms a contrast to the smothering household. Everything seems to be set for a supreme moment of the realization of his masculinity. All elements are perfectly matched for a magnificent existence where "the oozing bog that was the earth, swirling white gases choked out the sunlight, and aeons passed while the planet was drained for Man". The endless search for "the key to that unfathomable mystery, his mother's approbation" ceases here (*PC* 53). The experience is drawn out in antithesis to the mother's toilet training when he is made aware of his punitive "little thing" of a masculine identity (*PC* 55). As against this, the locale of the Turkish bath abound in scenes of sensory pleasure and fulfillment: "[. . .] the agonies that come of being an insurance agent, a family man, and a Jew will be steamed and beaten [. . .]. They smack them and knead them and push them around, they slowly twist their limbs as though to remove them in a piece from their sockets-I am hypnotized [. . .]" (*PC* 52-53). The elation and liberty he feels here is similar to those he "used to feel as the center fielder for the Seabees" baseball team (*PC* 79). Alex is haunted by the realization that if his public life is full of mores and restrictions, his private life is cloying with its deceptive bodily pleasures: "Enough being a nice Jewish boy, publicly pleasing my parents
while privately pulling my putz! Enough!" (PC 40). In reaction to such an impasse like situation he declares his desire "to be a centerfielder, a centerfielder-and nothing more!" (PC 80).

As apart from the dining table, the kitchen too serves as a smithy to cast Alex's character. He is initiated into the world of linguistic perception by the distinction established between the "kosher" (the blessed) and the "goyische" (the accursed) by Sophie in the kitchen. The kosher/goyische binaries get discursively condensed/displaced into the motif of blood which seems repulsive and eerie. Koshering every meal means physical as well as intellectual ablution. Sophie pervades the subject's perception of the world by this process also. The tabooed objects of woman and flesh get coalesced here. The subject gets locked within the vicious psycho-linguistic ring of "the kosher", "the kitchen", and "the onanistic dreams". The motif of blood becomes instrumental in the layering of fear and aversion within the subject. The mother ritualistically drains blood from meat "so as to make it kosher and fit for consumption" (PC 46). To the people of Israel, blood is an anathema as it is a metonymic trope of sinfulness and retribution in their moralistic parlance: "For the life of the flesh is in the blood; and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh atonement by reason of the life". (The Holy Bible, Lev. 17:11)
Alex employs an undercutting banality to negate this moralistic stricture. The draining of blood from meat is juxtaposed against the menstrual drain that sends Sophie "with a most alarming moan" (PC 46). The Portnovian discourse tries to build up a kind of excremental vision whereby the text transmutes the "scream" into "foul language and black humour" (Buchen 401). The pleasant afternoon experience of the mother baking a "marble cake" is violently yoked with the oxymoron of "beautifully bleeding" chocolate and knife (PC 48). The stench of excretory blood is associated with the mother who washes him clean after a diet of "tuna fish salad" (PC 49).

Sophie's hegemonic influence runs through a strange hierarchy of the material and the non-material: food, body, love, language and possessiveness. She initiates him into the poetic beauty of the "real fall sky" and acquaints him not to the discrimination between "night and day, or hot and cold, but goyische and Jewish!" (PC 29). The resonantly pulsated reference, "Jew Jew Jew Jew Jew Jew," imposed upon the subject-in-process brings about an inescapable sense of aloneness (PC 84). This discrimination gets socio-linguistically operationalized in the text. In all the threatening articulations there appears to be the insidiousness of the extension of domination. The subject finds the supra personal force "barbaric" (PC 83). Structuration of his conduct and action is intended through radio shows and social models built into his psyche. The radio shows encourage the belief that the "blond-
haired Christians are the legitimate residents and owners" of America (PC 164). He is forced to frown upon the "goyim" who "knock their heads [...] in a ball game" (PC 60). The gentiles are made out to be an "empty headed" "breed of mankind" who eat "abominable creatures" and hopelessly strive "to drink, to divorce, and to fight" for building an identity (PC 90).

But Alex is a "cunning linguist" (Forrey 273). His unspoken complaint is fundamentally language itself. The signifiers in his counter-discourse become a source of deliverance in the Lacanian sense. Language is also the traditional repository of Jewish faith. Exalted and boundless talk is a joy of the Jewish race. The traditional Jewish joke of the son laying all blame for his misfortunes upon his mother is used with psychoanalytic underpinnings.

In Alex, linguistic inadequacy is apparently tied up with sexual inadequacy. His twenty-five word "mispronounced" Yiddish and "five-hundred-word New Jersey vocabulary" are insufficient for a creative engagement with the gentile society (PC 222, 233). Alongside this remains the humiliation cast by Sophie regarding his "little thing" of a sex organ (PC 56). Manhood, in the Lacanian sense, eludes him as long as he is incapable of graduating from the state of being the object of his mother's desire (the phallus) to the state of having the phallus. The Oedipal fixation appears to have given rise to an undifferentiated relationship with the mother. Alex is her little lover for whom she prepares jello and also the mimeographed lines
of model personalities like Isabella, Betsy Ross, and Mrs. Pasteur. But to escape being "mama's boy", he starts using language with outrageous references to the slang synonyms of the male sex organ. The libidinal drive comes to a climax with this phallic phase where the subject reorganises his self with utmost dependence upon a counter-language: "Do you remember Seymour Schmuck, Alex?" she asks me or Aaron Putz or Howard Schlong, or some yo-yo [. . .]" (PC 99). But the subject's transition from the natural register of life to the cultural register of group exchange is retarded by the oedipal crisis. The more he dallies with his language and body the stronger does his subservient attachment to his "phallic mother" grow. The blessing of manhood is sought in the linguistic rendezvous with Dr. Spielvogel. Through a transference process, Alex "goes to bed" with the new father Dr. Spielvogel, who appears to be more capable of making him a man. Robert Forrey, in his Lacanian analysis of the text, maintains that if "the son persists in being the object of his mother's desire, that is the phallus, then he becomes a schmuck" (PC 272).

The subject's quest reaches a break point with the symbolic separation of the signifier (the phallus) from the signified (the mother). Accepting the father's law, the son gives up the mother and yearns for objects farther and farther from the original oedipal object of his desire. Freedom from schizophrenic state is also freedom from a linguistic crisis where the signifier and the signified are indistinguishable – the son being the object of the
mother's desire, the Phallus. The subject, in the section entitled, "Cunt Crazy" goes out to acquire the world of culture by an orgy of heterosexuality.

The subject is split between the world of American success and the highly restricted life of a Jew. After being an 'A' grade student who had starred as Columbus discovering America in a school-play, he now dons the mantle of the Assistant Commissioner for New York's Commission on Human Opportunity. Estelle Gershgoren Novak sums up the subject's heterosexual engagement as an attempt to "discover America through Kay, educate it through the Monkey, or take revenge on it through Sarah" (62). They are the three prominent catalytic characters who further Alex's psychological growth in the text. He approaches them for physical gratification with the intent of being rid of his homelessness in America as a repressed Jew. He needs to have his "id back in Yid" and the "oy back in Goy" (PC 236). He is imprisoned within familial ties and also locked in language. As such, Alex seems to be in a long drawn attempt to "eradicate the deeper truth of unhousedness, of an at-homeness in the word which are the legacy of the Prophets and of the keepers of the text" (Steiner 24).

Abuse of Jewish intellect is the method by which the narrator-participant develops an individualistic morality. In his counter-language, women are represented, in general, through the condensed trope of shikse (gentile goddess of love). The shikse is metonymically associated with
America which could be conquered, explored and responded to: "America is a shikse nestling under your arms whispering love love love love love!" (PC 165). Sam B. Girgus is of the view that the three gentile women "become vessels for the expression of Portnoy's deepest desires and insecurities" (130). And the grotesque desire he expresses is to have his "dick up these girls", "conquer America" and acquire a place among the ideals of the country: "Columbus, Captain Smith, Governor Winthrop, General Washington - now Portnoy" (PC 265). Alan Warren Friedman observes that his official position serves him best as a "pious means for making money, fame and females" (Jews 161).

Language plays a very significant role in his pursuit of shikses. The gentile woman from Iowa whom he thinks of marrying hails from a family in which language is used gently and genteelly. He thinks that all of them live in a world distinguished by "grammatical fathers" and "composed mothers." (PC 166). He seeks a mysterious "Other" to fulfill his dream of being socially engaged with these women. But there seem to be "two Edens warring" in his head (Goldman 25). The pleasure principle forces him to go in search of "little beauties redolent of the perfume of America; the alien land that must be plowed to be possessed" (PC 26-27). The reality principle restrains him within the moral codes of his family.
Mary Jane Reed, the twenty-nine year old ex-fashion model, bearing a symbolic Christian name, is reduced below the level of civilization with the nickname Monkey. She is, in thirty-two years old Alex's view, an illiterate unkoshered woman. She is wooed along with an Italian whore Lina, for the purpose transgressing all the limits imposed upon him by Sophie. The rage which he wants to direct against his mother is targeted on to her. Sexual and linguistic strands get interspersed into the narrative unit on Alex's heterosexual pursuits. If Alex considers her only as one in the lot of girls "from each of the forty-eight states", Mary desires him to be her "Jewish saviour" (PC 265, 172). The series of carnal escapades in New England, Rome and Athens has the actor-narrator as "an innocent desperate for experience, and experienced sinner yearning for innocence" (Spacks 393). Mary provides him all experiences which he considers but resents. The yearning for experience leads him to the situations of being a Jew and gentile. The two alternatives before him are those of a decadent family system with corrupted temperament and a society characterised by stark abasement.

Oral fixation and Oedipus complex put him in a serio-comic impasse where he fails to build a relationship of passionate love. A general lack of empathy keeps him under the impression that neither his parents nor the partners could do anything for him out of love. Perhaps he degrades the gentile girls out of an outrageous desire to defeat his mother. The Assistant Commissioner for Human Opportunities appeals to discuss "opportunities" as
he exclaims, "what a mouth I have fallen into!". He wonders, "Did I eat!" and whether his "life were taking place in the middle of a wet dream" (PC 178). He only desires oral gratification out of his hedonistic pursuits. Predilection for this appears to be a corollary of his indulgence in incessant talking.

Mary is said to be the best woman he has ever known. But still matrimony is only a game they could play on a weekend in Vermont. Mary is the materialistic realisation of the fantasy woman who had been arousing his passion since his days of adolescence. But, she is only ornamental to Alex who wants her solely for his personal advancement up the social hierarchy. With the justification that she is "ineducable and beyond reclamation", Alex abandons her in a hotel room in Athens (PC 232).

The split between sensuality and affection assumes a concrete form when Alex amorously woos Kay Campbell and Sarah Abbot Maulsby. They are two "lively, intelligent, self-respecting, self-assured, and well-behaved young women" (PC 243). But they lack the sexual abandon that Portnoy demands. He is contended with no one and clings on to the dilemma of opposed desires. Rebellion against Sophie whom he loves for being an ideal mother and hates for being over dominant plays a decisive role in deciding the nature of his relationship with women. The subject himself explains that when "such men love they have no desire and where they desire they cannot love" (PC 209).
Alex meets the "artless, sweet tempered" Kay in Christian mid-Western America (PC 243). Like Mary, she too is depersonalized as "The Pumpkin" "in commemoration of her pigmentation and the size of her can" (PC 244). When he graduates, from college and law-school, he also graduates from mating with a middle-class shikse – Sarah. The latter is nicknamed, "The Pilgrim" because of her New England origin and school propriety. Kay appears to him wonderfully American, but soon becomes a bore. Sarah has too much class for her own good, but is incapable of providing Alex oral gratification. Portnoy desires to be a profligate hedonist but he cannot escape from a tradition in which he has little faith. His sexual and emotional egotism leads him to disillusionment for himself and his partners as well. Helge Norman Nilsen reads his problem as a "conflict of Western culture between duty and pleasure, conscience and transgression. (413). Alex is allowed the human attribute of history within the narrative space of the text. He seems to speak for the dominated upon, vulnerable and self-liberating humanity. What bothers him is a wish to separate his sexuality from his moral sensibilities. He has suffered enough of the burdens of history, enough of inhibition and repression and so he feels it is time to let go. Guilt haunts him as a result of the two contradictory roles he plays: Bruno Bettelheim states that as a professional, he "tries to prevent the poor from being exploited, while all he chases in his personal life is the chance to sexually exploit others" (30). Use of his body as a weapon of defiance against
familial values keeps him obsessed with his self. This also alienates him from the sustaining aspects of family and culture.

Breaking taboo, in the end, turns out to be as demeaning as observing it. Alex is constitutionally incapable of bringing together carnality and affection in his relationship with Kay and Sarah. The obligation towards his family is to be married and to provide grandchildren. But the heterosexual pursuits are a part of a big effort to keep from his parents what they need so much from him. So he hurts the girls and thereby feels that he has a separate existence. Both Kay and Mary refuse to embrace Judaism and part ways with Alex. What Sarah fails to do is to "eat" him and submit to his pervert entreaties. Strongly enough he associates his father's inability to "rise at Boston and Northeastern" because Sarah would not succumb to "go down on" him. The refusal makes him feel "irate" and "discriminated against" (PC 269). The forced bodily pleasure with her does not allow "much room there for love". The smothering discomfort that she experiences is brought out in the subject's hallucinatory news-report: "JEW SMOTHERS DEB WITH COCK" (PC 271).

Hallucinatory fears of impotency haunt him regarding his fascination for "apertures and openings" (PC 116). Alex fears that the "delicious and provocative" girls may turn out to be as familiar "as a loaf of Bread" (PC 117). Passionate love is an enigma to him. Marital bliss is a terrifying
situation where the voluptuousness of affairs may "last as long as a year" or a few "months" (PC 116). Redemption from loveless affairs could be attained only if he overcomes the pervert forms of romance, fantasy and revenge. He is aware that he has to deliver himself from the settling of scores, the pursuit of dreams, and from his hopeless, senseless loyalty to the past.

Portnoy's fantasies appear as still scripts of organised scenes with dramatization of metaphoric/metonymic motifs of food and body. Forces of repression and guilt establish their hegemony over the subject right from childhood. He is continually haunted by the fear of dependence and weakness. The internal conflict rages between the hidden and the manifest psychological forces. "Understanding the laws of the unconscious", writes Juliet Mitchell, "thus amounts to a start in understanding how ideology functions, how we acquire and live the ideas and laws within which we must exist". The suffering subject's unconscious incorporates and represents instincts by ideas: "[. . .] the unconscious comprises the centre of the process of the individual's integration into and adaptation to culture" (Girgus 126-127). Within the sphere of the unconscious, ideas and motifs develop new and strange interrelationships. Portnoy does, by monologic discourse, strive to unravel the mysteries of such condensed/displaced ideas. But he succeeds in this only to a limited extent. So he apparently leaves the process of integration to Dr. Spielvogel, the implied reader or the real reader.
The epiphanic vision of the "fluttering yellow ringlets of a strange shikse" stirs in him the nuances of the word "longing" (PC 165). The ice-skating at Irvington Park fires his imagination. Mystery shrouds every gesture, even "the way they look, the way they move and laugh and speak-the lives they must lead behind those goyische curtains" (PC 163). They approximate to a surface representation of American culture. Portnoy wants to be adapted to it socially and psychologically. But ridden with guilt, ambivalence and fear, the process is all the more strenuous to him. Carnality and America persist in his pursuit of fantasies. He fantasizes moving among the gentile girls like Alton C. Peterson who speak with perfect accent. The fear of his "oy" getting exposed always lurks large in him. The wound he receives after the fatal fall in his maiden attempt to skate with shikses causes guilt over the denial of his father. Ambivalence and fear cast a shade in his attempt to make advances to Thereal Mc Coy, the creature of his pubertal fantasy. To him, she represents "Miss America" with her "plum pudding" and a "one family house". He apprehends whether she would, oblivious of his "nose" and "name", kiss him with her disposition that is "smooth and shiny and cool as custard" (170). Jane Powell, Corliss, Veronica and Debbie Reynolds are the blonde exotic women whom he fancies himself to be wooing. But consummation remains an impossibility as long as his "nose bone" acts as his "parents' agent" (PC 169). Mc Coy is as tempting as a toll-house cookie, but in the "jungle of love", as Mark Schechner says, "it is eat or
be eaten" (PC 126). The pursuit of shikses is similar to the pursuit of "junk" sex or "unkosher goods" (Lee 15). The fear of a nemesis always looms large over him. The family rabbi revealing his secret life in an assembly in hell keeps him embarrassed. Opening the bathroom door the Rabbi makes public the sight of Alex with "drol running down his chin" and "prick firing solves at the light bulb" (PC 226). He finds himself chained to a toilet in hell. Emotional cataclysms extend beyond family confines and are interwoven with fantasies. The Warshaw charges him with having an empty "refrigerator" of a heart out of which "blood flows in cubes" (PC 229).

In the solitary confinement of his womanless life, he sleeps with Freud on one side and his guilt on the other. Jeffrey Berman is of the view that Spielvogel, (meaning a "play bird" in German), by a transference process, becomes for Alex "an erotic plaything, a masturbatory sex object" and a handy guide as well (415-416). The narrator-participant transmutes Freudian ideas into a text of self-play. A clinical case study becomes a stuff of art. The seminal essay "The Most Prevalent Form of Degradation in Erotic Life" is used to imitate the psychiatric case history. The subject goes in search of the author of the Standard Edition. The psychoanalytic landscape of the Oedipal text is like his promised land. He recreates Spielvogel into an idealized father figure-a man of kingly powers. But he wants to secure the analyst's approval and then replace him as an authority. The Doctor is paradoxically looked upon as his peer too when he declares that they are two
smart Jewish boys. By transference relationship, he attempts to usurp the
Oedipal father and castrate him. The Doctor is given no opportunity to assert
his views anywhere in the text. The overwhelmed Doctor/Father is satiated
by the subject's orality.

Portnoy who has been accusative of his mother's over protectiveness,
internalizes the imago of his mother. If the mother had used food to "over
nourish her son", Portnoy uses words of "love and hate" to nourish and
suffocate the analyst (Berman 416). Instead of rejecting the mother's values,
he unconsciously transfers them to Dr. Spielvogel. Self-analysis becomes
more of an exercise in self-deception: "Is this truth I'm delivering up, or is it
just plain kvetching? Or is kvetching for people like me a form of truth?"
(PC 105). He imagines all the self-pitying sons of America on board "the
biggest troop ship afloat" rolling in the "heavy seas of guilt" (PC 132).

Israel, the Promised Land, becomes Alex's exile where he has a brief
sojourn with a voluptuous Israeli Lieutenant. After the failure in the
metonymic conquest of America, Naomi, the Israeli Zionist reprimands him
for his failure in establishing equality of opportunity. She finds the subject to
be the most "self deprecating" and unhappy person ever known" (PC 299,
298). To Alex, she resembles Sophie by her "coloring, size, even
temperament" and bends everything she is "a real fault finder, a professional
critic" (PC 292). The narrative seems to end where it had begun with the
subject compelled to regress to his mother. He fails to realise his objective of raising a family. In the Lacanian sense, he possesses neither the word nor the phallus. "Without the word, without the phallus", states Robert Forrey, "the only way the son can relate to the forbidden other, the Mother and her substitutes, is by using the tongue to complain futilely about, or orally and impotently enter into her" (273). Heterosexuality ceases to promise any change from his homelessness and aloneness. Donald Kartiganer remarks that the text "twists and turns in an absolutely irreconcilable tension of id and super-ego" (100). The "Jew boy" and "the nice Jewish boy" coalesce together in a single voice that struggles in vain to silence one of its competing languages.

Naomi exemplifies a kind of racial wisdom which he cannot comprehend or accept. He is both too experienced and too innocent to deal with her. In the engagement with her, he reverses the method he used with the shikses. Instead of demanding and receiving he submits to the debased state of impotence. Like an animal, he is destined to "crawl through life feasting on pussy and leave the righting of wrongs and fathering of families to the upright creatures" (Forrey 270). The major complaint regards wordlessness and all his arguments have no serious issues. The problem, as the subject assumes, is not Oedipal attachment. On the contrary, he desires to be in the stage of a suckling infant forever. In a screaming appeal he lets Naomi know, "I have To Have" (PC 305). By bringing together the warring
elements of Jewishness and sexuality, mother image and that of shikse, the subject could have been made whole by Naomi. But she rebuffs his advances and he discovers that he is "Im-po-tent in Is-rael" (PC 303).

The narrative discourse of My Life as a Man illuminates the condition of having lost a place, a house, a childhood and memory of warmth. As in Portnoy's Complaint, here too there is an apparent divide between characters who could, at best, be like "mad angels" and, at worst, like "sane devils" (Tucker 38). Inspite of the choice before the subject, he, by external constraints, recedes towards the pain of irresolution and fascination for painful growth. In both the narratives, the actor subject is under a dominant parent whose influence he can never efface from his conscious/unconscious self. The encounter with the parent is characterised by either a love/hate dyad or a difficulties/sustenance opposition. The narratives build a situation of "unequal parts of conflicting tensions" (34). Out of such tensions emerge the subject's anguished search for a final resolution. Manhood could be accomplished only after such a hard consummation.

My Life as a Man is an autobiographic fabulation that stages the contrary forces acting within Peter Tarnopol's self. It is a self-reflexive text seemingly beset with the relationship between the written and the unwritten world. It is occupied by characters who interact with one another but simultaneously refuse to acknowledge the "freedom to be individuals"
All relationships appear to revolve around the prominent metaphors/metonymies of imprisonment and liberation. When characters seek to be liberated the consequences are devastating.

In this "self-told and thrice told story", Peter unfolds the strands of his "unsatisfactory affairs", "horrific marriage", and the long spells of treatment as an analysand (Smith 455). In a variety of tones and voices, he presents the issues regarding his libidinal drives, moral commitments, and craft of writing.

Peter seems to be a development from Portnoy. His stories lack resolution and are full of elusive and slippery forms of truth. They boil down to farce and parody while coming to grips with the violent incongruities of life and art. In the three related stories, "Salad Days", "Courting Disaster", and "My True Story", Peter attempts to impose a rational form on the irrational experiences of his adult life. Joyce Carol Oates reads the stories as "something approaching hysteria-but then rewritten, and rewritten again" (454). They are the fictional versions of Peter's life. They are contradictory and mutually diffusing in nature. But however untrue or fabricated, they seem to constitute his hold on reality. The subject tries to accomplish the closest approximations to truth by these versions. Philip Roth remarks that "Life, like the novelist, has a powerful transforming urge" (Milbauer and Watson, Reading 12).
The three stories apparently form three strands of one text. A "reading of" the text is attempted by locating/dislocating it into five narrative hypograms. Each of these hypograms forms an individual perspective of Peter's self presented distinctively by the discerning subject "I", and by the catalytic characters, Dr. Spielvogel, Maureen and the implied persona of Philip Roth. The subject gets transformed from Zuckerman to Peter Tarnopol as the narrative progresses through many layers. The first and the second units of the narrative, jointly entitled "Useful Fictions", have Nathan Zuckerman as the experiencing subject. In the first unit, "Salad Days", Peter is an omniscient narrator, but in the second unit, "Courting Disaster", he shifts to first person narration by retaining Nathan as the subject but the story line is altered. Both the narratives attempt to describe and define experiential reality through literature. The subject teaches and writes literature and also has a deep fascination for the relationship between fact and fiction. Peter, the writer, creates a piece of fiction about a writer's adolescence and then goes on to discuss, in his own voice, the importance of self to a novelist:

[. . .] Tarnopol as he is called, is beginning to seem as imaginary as my Zuckermans anyway, or atleast as detached from the memoirist- his revelations coming to seem like still another "useful fiction", [. . .]. May be all I'm saying is that words, being words, only approximate the real thing, and so no matter how close I come, I only come close. (MLAM 231)
The double irony is that behind the artist Peter who creates the fictional writer, Zuckerman, is Philip Roth the real author. The text, made in layers, presents a refracted reality. It records the artist's difficulty in achieving true self-definition through art. The two accounts of his life represent Peter's attempt to understand his self in the light of his family relationships by objectifying them in words. The sufferings of a Jewish son, husband and novelist are reworked in "Useful Fictions". They are the alternative versions of Peter's "true story" framed for "conquering or exorcising the past" of a disastrous marital life (MLAM 231).

In the two comic narratives, Nathan is a pampered son of a businessman and pestering mother. Jay L. Halio describes him as "an alter ego for an alter ego" and "a surrogate novelist for a surrogate novelist for Philip Roth". They open up an actuality of incidents as if from "a set of Chinese boxes" or at best they could be qualified as "fiction within a fiction within a fiction" (126). Peter, Roth and the reader imagine a "reconstruction or reordering" to redefine base reality into sublime art (Halio 127).

The text, as an autobiographical narrative, assumes "to demystify the past and mitigate his admittedly uncommendable sense of defeat" (MLAM 101). John N. Macdaniel considers "Salad Days" as "id"; "Courting Disaster" as adventures seen through the perspective of superego; and "My True Story" as the ego's answer to superego's questions (180).
My Life as a Man as a full length novel, is dedicated to Aaron Asher and Jason Epstein. After the dedicatory page appears the "Useful Fictions", and then the reader encounters the autobiographical narrative with Maureen's epigraph expressing a sense of inconsummateness: "I could be his Muse, if only he'd let me be" (MLAM 310). The reader has to penetrate through all these textual veils. This over determines the concepts of "author", "reader", and "beginning" as questionable at the outset of fiction. The fragmentary pieces are like a mosaic of the hero's ambiguous sense of personal imperatives. Peter and Nathan are Jewish writers trying to explain the strange turn of events. They aspire to seriousness in creative work. They become victims of imbedded values in culture and their psyche.

Nathan's fictionalised genesis and development is the theme of "Salad Days". The adolescent college years form its setting. David Monaghan comments that it is an account of "an existence conducted according to cliches" (75). Nathan gets led into rebellion by the influence of Hemingway's Of Time and the River and goes to a college where he experiences liberation. Sex life with Sharon Shatzky is based on pornographic cliches. The satirical narrative tries "to reveal the tragicomic gap between the life of moral seriousness and dignity presented by literature and the crude farce of reality" (Monaghan 76). The narrative brings out stereotypical characters with stereotypical incidents. The father's toil is rewarded with a new "Mr Z' shoe store"; the brother, Sherman, prospers as a dentist married to a "skinny Jewish
girl from Bala Cynwyd"; Sonia, the sister, is happy with her summer house (MLAM 6, 11). So long as he follows cliches, Nathan progresses academically and sexually. Once he tries to live by non-conformist literary standards, life becomes an unendurable rigmarole. He cannot escape "the gaze of Mr Reality", but still works within its framework (Watson 118).

Nathan's sexual partner, Sharon Shatzky is a ravishing rebellious daughter of A "the Zipper King "Shatzky (MLAM 21). Their sexual adventure is highlighted like an epiphanic motif to throw into relief the disintegrated character of the subject. Sharon, as if in a well directed show of "sensual adventurousness or theatricality" exhibits her body for an onanistic orgy (MLAM 24). The voyeuristic scene becomes grotesquely theatrical by the positioning of Nathan at a distance pretentiously watching television and staring "down the hallway at the nude girl writhing" with the "green gourd" and the "plastic handle of her hairbrush". The "mysterious and compelling" vision is juxtaposed with Sharon's orgasmic whisper, "I want to be your whore", and the parents' talk from terrace on her newly bought "winter coat" (MLAM 26).

Eating as well as edible things get coalesced with body and sex. As the parents talk about their children's appetite for "syrup covered portions of ice cream" which they eat in kitchen, the "buggering" of Sharon "with his big toe" goes on alternately from under the "ping-pong table" (MLAM 25).
Focalization of the individual in several ways could be discerned here. The parents on terrace glance through door frame to see Nathan watching the Phillies game on television. But, he unseen by anyone, enjoys, through the frame of the toilet door, Sharon's performance. Just as an artist frames reality, Peter's "shows" order the "chaos" by "creating an alternate reality" that results in a "comic triumph of fantasy" (Watson 119). But the ironic fact about this focalizing of reality is that Nathan cannot enjoy sexual freedom wholesomely and single mindedly as Sharon does. By a voyeuristic detachment, Nathan assigns the surrogate role to the vegetable. His erotic fantasies get sublimated into parental "solicitude, complacency, baseball and its attendant male heroics" (MLAM 119). In the scene, Nathan, Sharon and the parents never converge at one point of social interaction. As in Portnoy, here too there seems to be a strong sense of guilt that violently separates sexual passion (the id) and the conditioned need (the superego). The subject is alienated from the object of his desire by the histrionics of a television "soap opera" (MLAM 195). The framing of action appears to be influenced by the electronic culture of modern times where televised and filmic images serve as "images for the superegos" (Watson 120). Nathan is allowed a "regulated subjectivity" by the show business culture of modernity where even intimate relationships become a theme for self-dramatization (Miller 1). The power of show business focalisation acts as an "intimate phenomenon"
where by the subject is acted upon from "the interior" of the self (Miller 2). A kind of decentring of the subject appears to take place here.

Nathan's intellectual and emotional independence comes while in college in Vermont where the spell of literature entraps him. The power of literature transforms his subjectivity. He idealises the refined spirit of Woolf, Flaubert and Henry James. But the rake in him goes after Sharon. Her endless sexual exploits provide his id ample scope for free play. The coarseness of her character and language repel him from her. At the Fort Campbell army training camp, he finds himself in an ambivalent condition due to the contradictions of "the spiritual aspirations and the lewd desires, the soft-boyish needs and the manly, the magisterial ambitions" (MLAM 30-31).

In "Courting Disaster" too Nathan seems to desire a problematic love relationship which becomes a testing ground for his self-righteousness. He gets enamoured of Lydia Ketterer, mainly because she had "proved indestructible" in spite of her being subjected to "every brand of barbarity" (MLAM 70). She is one whom, he thinks, he could redeem by careful effort. As a character of professorial seriousness he works hard and keeps up parentally infused ideals. But still he happens to seduce Lydia who is a divorcee-student, five years senior to him and mother of Monica. The career as a connoisseur and teacher of literature becomes the root cause of many of the problems he encounters with regard to his body and psyche. As in the
previous narrative, the split between conscience and libido becomes a serious problem. The relationship with Lydia appears to be like a self-inflicted punishment for an overweening sense of self. She becomes responsible for the transformation of his experiences into fictional reality. The oral sex Nathan has with her is intended to overcome his repulsion towards her. But the strange sense of repulsion is never overcome. After Lydia's suicide, he goes to Italy with Monica and lives a life far removed from his professorial ideals. Like Joseph K in *The Trial*, he feels the "panic of the escaped convict who imagines the authorities have picked up his scent- only I am the authority as well as the escapee" (*MLAM* 85). He is unable either to leave Monica or return with her to America. A victim of his own literary education, he finds it hard "to believe fully in the helplessness of his predicament". But a Kafkaesque guilt that "the shame of it must outlive him" haunts his self. The next moment he also realises that he is "real" and his "humiliation is equally real" (*MLAM* 86).

The narrator-self underscores the perspective of the nineteen fifties by a digression: "For not only have literary manners changed drastically since all this happened ten years ago, back in the middle fifties, but I myself am hardly who I was or wanted to be [. . .]" (*MLAM* 81). The diversion between duty, passion, obedience to social restrictions and commitment to personal yearnings forms the main concern on the psychological domain. The pain of migraine begins with his army life. Women lead him out into goyim world in
the role of a saviour, but later, he degenerates and has to go to exile. Lydia is a frigid divorcee whose life is full of disasters. Seduced by her father and disastrously married to sadistic Eugene Ketterer, she suffers a serious nervous breakdown. A grossly aberrant disposition and a vulnerable daughter Monica are what she has to offer Nathan. Her character stands out by "the puritan austerity, the prudery, the blandness, the xenophobia" and "the criminality of the men" (*MLAM* 70). In Italy, the imbecile girl becomes his mistress.

Mc Daniel states that the text reveals the problem of a writer: "how can one explain the incredible turns of personality in a credible way? How can one turn the actually unbelievable into the fictionally believable" (187).

The quasi-autobiographical narrative seems to bring about, within itself, aesthetic detachment by spatio-temporal distancing. In this self-parody, the main problem is that of heroic self-assertion and articulating, in fiction, the moral and realistic motives behind the actor-subject: "I can't imagine that I shall have the courage to return to live in Chicago, or anywhere in America?" (*MLAM* 81).

"My True Story" seems to transmute the narrator-subject's experiential reality into literary art. Peter attempts to redefine his self by intertextual referability. The textual process appears to be a psycho-linguistic operation where the subject gets trapped irretrievably within "the linguistic prison of self-reference" (O' Donnell 151). "Manhood" and "manliness" become
"thingness" to which the narrator subject assigns various identities. The text, as a whole, weaves out "net works of reference that pertain to the positioning of 'Tarnopol' "(O’ Donnell 154). The responsibilities of being a good son, good husband and good writer become the fabula upon which the sjuzet of the five narrative units of My Life as a Man seems to have been framed. In an internal analepsis, Peter reflects upon all these versions as "misadventures in manhood" and adds that "the manuscript was the message, and the message was Turmoil" (MLAM 238).

The narrative begins with a textual unit where Peter spatio-temporally places himself as a third person subject at Quahsay Colony, Vermont, involved in the writing of "an autobiographical narrative" for demystifying "the past" and mitigating his "uncommendable sense of defeat" (MLAM 100-101). It is nineteen sixty-seven, a year after his ex-wife Maureen's death. He tries hard to reconcile with his trying marital experience and exorcise the obsession of the misery he had already gone through: "[. . .] I was as incapable of not writing about what was killing me as I was of altering or understanding it" (MLAM 105). In the course of his grapple with the problem of artistic composition, Peter presents his "true story" in five units. In the middle of this attempt, he also brings out two other stories and sends them to his sister Joan for evaluation. The "recalcitrant materials of his life" prevent him from having fulfillment in "emotional, sexual, creative or intellectual" lives (MLAM 132).
Peter's self and manhood get represented as a series of rough drafts, false starts, skewed codes, schemes for alphabetisation and impenetrable prose. The subject is like a fragmented being in search of a father. But his quest gets nullified in his anxiety ridden sexual life where he fails to discover his manhood. He is more of a "process than a character- a process of self-inscription that leads to an awareness of the subject as multiple and as represented by its positioning in relation to those references (other characters, events, conversations, etc.) that define it as such" (Milbauer and Watson, Reading 157).

A deep sense of morality runs through all the interactions with Maureen Johnson. Societal conventions prescribe "manliness" as an activity of conscience whereby Peter has to accept the moral responsibilities of a husband and good son. Guiltless promiscuity had been the characteristic of his pre-marital sexual pursuits. He had been having relationship with women as varied as Karen Oakes, a student; Nancy Miles, an employee with the New Yorker; Dina Dornbusch, a college senior at Sarah Lawrence; and Grete, a student nurse in Frankfurt.

As a "'writer in residence' at the university of Wisconsin" and "the golden boy of American Literature," Peter wants to experience reality in all its obduracy and intractability "at an appropriately lofty moral attitude, an elevation somewhere, say, between, The Brothers Karamazov and The Wings
of the Dove (MLAM 195). Establishing compatibility between the idea and the real is the obsession which the subject can never do away with. Leading a wedded life is one of "those moral decisions" that he had been introduced to in "college literature courses" (MLAM 193). He seeks in life the earnestness of the experiences portrayed in the classic fiction which he reads and teaches. But the process of maturing after severing filial ties paradoxically coerces him into the commission of "the brutal and bloody surgery on the emotions [. . .]" (MLAM 219).

Ambivalence and ambiguity dominate the discourse on all plains. The non-linearity of the discourse and its diffuse overlapping of analeptical strands make all the segments greatly ambiguous to the narratee/reader also. The narrator grapples with himself regarding matters of matrimony, morality and literary career: "Stuffed to the gills with great fiction – entranced not by cheap romances, like Madame Bovary, but by Madame Bovary – I now expected to find in everyday experience that same sense of the difficult and the deadly earnest that informed the novels I admired most" (MLAM 194). But the three years of married life with the twice divorced Maureen, laden with brawls and tantrums, prove to be "a soap opera" (MLAM 195).

Marriage sends Peter into unfulfilling affairs with women and psychoanalytic sessions with Dr. Otto Spielvogel. The unit, "Marriage 'a la Mode" forms the nucleus of the narrative where the narrator-subject presents
the hermeneutic codes focussing upon his fatal decision of marrying "a rough customer", Maureen: "What I liked, you see, was something taxing in my love affairs, something problematical and puzzling to keep the imagination going even while I was away from my books [...]" (MLAM 180, 179).

Peter's true story deals with his maiden fictional venture, *A Jewish Father*, marrying Maureen and then living without her. The text becomes, a discourse on the ambiguities of marital entrapment. Matrimony appears to be a trap into which he enters after being black mailed by Maureen who declares herself pregnant with the test report of the urine specimen obtained from a Negro woman on the street. To Maureen, body comes in as a weapon of both coercion and defiance. On getting acquainted to Peter at "a poet's party" she challenges him to prove his physical prowess by a "footrace from the Astor Place subway station" to his apartment. After the race, they join together in a physical orgy which germinates into a bond whereby she could gradually settle her scores with the male sex. The subject is carried away by her physical charm that approximates "one of nature's undersized indefatigables, the bee or the humming bird [...] sipping from a million stamens to meet their minimum daily nutritional requirements (MLAM 176). She, in contrast with all the previous women, is irrational, violent, and aggressive. The prefeminist era of rationalisation of the 1950's is the period when Maureen comes into the subject's life.
He seems to have been nose-led by the chivalrous belief that men "were exploiting and degrading the women" they did not marry (MLAM 169). Marrying a woman and fulfilling her needs is considered as the observance of a great value in society. But once fulfilled, the institution of matrimony appears to be a calamitous gesture which the subject wants to undo. The deadliness of its actuality, says Mark Shechner, has to be borne, with "the tight lipped moralism of honor, duty, and manly responsibility" (129).

The idealism attained through the graduate school religio-literary exercises in Mann, Flaubert, James and Conrad could only create a sense of impasse where he feels like one who had been detained by the authorities, stopped in transit like that great paranoid victim and avenger of injustice in some Kleist novella that he had taught. But empirical life lacks the earnestness he had presumed. Melvin Maddocks describes Maureen as the "muse of disorder, the Dionysian element every artist suspects he needs" (108). He wants to be "stuffed to the gills" with emotional and sexual experience. But the experiential reality becomes more than what he could handle. Maureen and her bodily self rise like a huge mysterious force: "Unclothed, she would sometimes make me think of an alley cat-quick, wary, at once scrawny and strong [. . .] like some woman out of the bush, a primitive whose picture you might come upon in National Geographic, praying to the sun-god to roll back the waters" (MLAM 186). Body is one of
the most powerful tropal codes that helps in mapping the discursive contours of Peter-Maureen relationship.

In contrast to the enlightenment idealism and romantic values of the Nineteenth Century what the subject is forced to encounter is the "low actuality" that gets "emblazoned across the face of the narrative, in blood" (MLAM 208). After having swallowed the sleeping pills, Maureen crawls, exhibiting her bodily self, and cuts her wrist. She indulges in this tantrum to avenge Peter's secret relationship with Karen. The bargain she makes is quite hard: "If you forgive me for the urine, I'll forgive you for your mistress [...] and begging her to run away with you to Rome "" (MLAM 209). With blood dripping from one's wrist and the other's thumb they look like "a couple of Aztecs" performing their "sacrificial rites" (MLAM 210). Peter helplessly runs about his room and puts on Maureen's undergarments and clothes and gives himself a "sexual break" (Oates 97).

The subject desires to be powerful, confident and self-controlled. But he is victimized by a woman who has fallen prey to a society that trains women to be helpless and inept. She enters the subject's life with the "hash marks" of two divorces: one from Mezik, a drunkard saloonkeeper and the other from Walker, a homosexual actor. (MLAM 175). Understandably, her only weapon seems to be her body that has terrific energy and spirit to defy and cover up her incompetence and despair. The actor-subject is convinced
that he can do little to free himself or his wife from the bind that societal roles and socially sanctioned patterns of victimization have forced upon them. Familial values mean so much to him but some how he could not rise up to the roles expected of him, by the society. Maureen is not a touchstone for his virility but virtuousness. He himself confesses to Dr. Spielvogel that if he had obeyed his bodily urges he would never have landed up "into this mess" and would have been carrying on with Dina Dornbusch (MLAM 243).

Alongside Maureen, the subject maintains a love relationship with Susan Seabury Mc Call, a well-bred "young heiress from a distinguished New Jersey family" (MLAM 134). They become rather a study in contrast to the subject who embraces "sexual good samaritanism" in an attempt to disprove the charges levelled against him by his "monumentally dissatisfied wife" (MLAM 136). He finds the two women antithetical in their sensibility regarding man-woman relationship.

Maureen yearns for something just because somebody else has what she lacks. She would have been "content" and "frigid" if Peter had been "impotent". But Susan woos him just for being dispossessed of her own "constrained and terrified self" (MLAM 137). She is a widow whose affluent husband was killed in an air-crash just when they were eleven months into married life. She inherits a large bounty of family wealth and a youthful body with little hope for a life. She entreats him to give her "a little bit of that" and
in return, she offers her own self as a way to recover from the boredom of his life. It is a deal where the "broken shall succor the broken" (MLAM 153).

But bodily relationship with Susan is not as fulfilling as is expected. He finds her to be nothing "more than a piece of meat on a spit that you turned this way and that until you were finished [. . .]" (MLAM 123). By the third year of their relationship they come together "like workers doing overtime night after night in a defense plant: in a good cause, for good wages [. . .]" (MLAM 134).

In Maureen, the "crescendo of passion would culminate" in faked "outcry of ecstasy" and "clamorous writhings" (MLAM 135). Carnal pleasure is an elusive experience to both the women. It becomes a "distressing subject" and source of rift between Peter and the two women. Maureen finds him to be too selfishly imprisoned within himself and reluctant to share his self with a woman. To Susan, he describes his misery: "I haven't been a person since I was sweet sixteen, I'm just symptoms. A collection of symptoms, instead of a human being" (MLAM 139).

Mutual allegations mar the relationship that never gets consummated at a point of fruition. Peter tries to attribute wrong motives to Maureen in his fictional writings like "Courting Disaster". Maureen rises from the plight of being objectified in wrong terms by writing a short story entitled, "Dressing up in Mommy's clothes". Paul Natapov becomes Peter's fictional counterpart in the story. But he accuses her that the only real thing she has is her "psychopathology" (MLAM 279). They go again into a tantrum and this time
Peter assumes power to hit her: "[.] I am about to beat your crazy, lying head in with this poker. I want to see your brains, Maureen" (*MLAM* 281). The farcical scene is enacted by them with blood smeared on their face, hands, matting and clothes. He feels elated that he "was ruining the suit in which she'd looked so attractive" (*MLAM* 280).

The subject's action approximates to the societal standard of manliness when he beats her like her father and Mezik. But he is weak, sensitive, aesthetic and demasculated. The act, rather than boosting his masculinity, really unmans him. He even thinks that it is the influence of literature and responsiveness to it that has made him acquiesce to the woman's demands. Otherwise, somebody with his devotion to seriousness and maturity would not have yielded like a defenseless little boy to this fatal woman.

Maureen's fake pregnancy and suicide attempts leave Peter unmanned and obsessed. She, as Hermione Lee remarks, "takes her place among the pantheon of obstructors, authorities or mentors" of the subject (77). She stands as a demonic influence upon the reason and wisdom of a writer. Sex with a woman could be apprehended only with guilt and dread and then felt as a consolation, something to hold on to after a bad dream.

Maureen's death does not release the subject from his misery. He learns of her death and wants to remain released Dr. Spielvogel corrects his mistake saying that "released is the word" he has been looking for (*MLAM*
But the situation of being released eludes him. As Sam B.Girgus supplements, "His wife's death has released him from one imprisoning situation, but clearly he will not find any kind of freedom until he stops inventing new prisons for himself" (174). Her self haunts him in two ways. She appears as one who uses her body as an instrument of revenge; and she also intrudes into his life as a body of written impressions that would stand in contradiction to his personal version of himself. On reading Maureen's diary writings, he contemplates that man's spirit would prevail: "He is immortal, not because he alone among creatures has an inexhaustible voice, but because he has a soul, a spirit capable of compassion and sacrifice and endurance" (MLAM 322). It is puzzling for him to make sense out of the real life situation: "How do I ever get to be what is described in the literature as a man?" (MLAM 299). It is unbearable to him to perceive the fact that he has been discursively judged and presented by Maureen. And along side this the court of law too has its own means of positioning the subject. He fails to escape being objectified by either his wife or the judge in the court: "Then why is everything in my life her affair? And judge Rosenzweig's affair!" (MLAM 319). He comes to realise that his best judge has not been himself but the others, especially the "woman" he "was married to for three years" (MLAM 318). On the contrary, she finds her experience with him "degrading" as he could merely be ranked as a Mezik or Walker who loved not her "real" self but just "some cockneyed idea" represented by her (MLAM 311).
The bathos comes when she records Peter's failure in categorical words: "If it weren't for me he'd still be hiding behind his Flaubert and wouldn't know what real life was like if he felt over it [. . .] knowing and believing nothing but what he read in books? [. . .] Instead he treats me like the enemy. When all I've ever really wanted is for him to be the best writer in the world. It's all too brutally ironic" (MLAM 310). The 'brutal irony' of nuptial life gives scope to the narrator-participant to frame another draft of his self giving prominence to his writing career. Maureen is more of a sign to him, referring to some literary experience one could think of having. As a writer-narrator, he apparently wants her to serve as a mode of experiential reality that could approximate what he reads in literature. An organic love relationship never ensues out of any of his attempts at attaining family bliss.

He repositions the subjectivity of his self from the state of a rake to that of an aesthetic writer. He reworks his own self along a new strand of discourse that substantially differs from the confessional mode to a refined focalization.

Peter appears to struggle within a limbo in which he exists as both man and artist. The only solution he has is to tell his own story over again with the hope that all the three components, artist, man and story would become comprehensible to himself and the reader. Within the hypogram of Peter's narrative on himself these themes are dealt with on a binary plane: the
professor-rake duality. The experiencing self of the writer as a rake has already been discussed in the light of man-woman relationship. Again, the reader confronts the problem of framing and interpreting the topic-comment structure of the subject's encounter with his careeristic experiences.

Peter fears the self that is not authored by himself. Maureen is not merely a fictional subject in a literary text but someone with whom he had been living with on the "Lower Eastside of Manhattan" (MLAM 192). He guarantees his non-fictional being a form of self-assertion. This is done by the positioning of another "real" in relation to his self. Through the whole of the text, he attempts hard to locate an "authorised version of the self" so that symbolically he could be regenerated into a new subject (O'Donnell 152).

On a social plane, the subject seems to be more of a victim of the disintegrated values of American liberalism. It is perhaps the liberalism fostered by the middle class families after the Second World War. They groom their young men in such a way that they carried their "businessmen father's values of discipline, hardwork and duty into the humanities and reform politics" (Newman 458). This results in the messing up of the aesthetic and the political strategies. The talents developed in the fifties go into disarray in the sixties. His sister Joan's response on reading two of his stories, "Salad Days" and "Courting Disaster" is that there is "no bottom" to his "guilty conscience" and it is the only "source available" for his literary art
The "guilty conscience" he develops as a result of his relationships with Maureen, Susan and other women serves as the footstool for his literary career. Morality, matrimony and fiction get problematised in his "true" version of himself which, seems to elude his grasp. "Fiction", as Joan believes, "does different things to different people, much like matrimony" (MLAM 116). Peter's self gets recast into a newer mould as the writer-monologist aspires to reach the loftier heights of a classic.

He owns up responsibility as the "ring leader of the plot" (MLAM 116). In the Lacanian sense, phallus becomes the mark of his manhood and its dissemination becomes the sign of his self. Peter appears to be obsessed with the phallus as the thing that signifies his identity. It becomes a sign around which the dialectic of identification of the subject is made. The comic and the grotesque sexual exertions appear to be a kind of means to establish his authenticity in the world around him. In the relationship between himself and the two women Maureen and Susan, phallic identity plays a very decisive part.

Peter could trust only his writings and his personal reconstitution of the world. He attempts to relate himself to history by deflating it with banal obscenity. He cannot protect those he loves nor could he annihilate his enemies. He desires to get to be what is described in the literature as a man and also wonders as to why manhood is always beyond his reach. Through a
dialectic of a narrative interface with Dr. Spielvogel, he positions another "real" in relation to his earlier self. The Doctor's version matters much to him because he is the "subject" of the psychoanalytic discourse. Every day of the revelation his personal life needs to be transcribed with "accurate accounting" (MLAM252). Peter's conviction is that it is possible for a subject of a writing to be precisely represented in language.

He feels that his "ghostly real father" could never really associate his son's fictional self with his real self (O'Donnell 153). All his assumptions seem to be based on an unreal "reading" from Peter's fiction (MLAM 27). The author of A Jewish Father is to come to terms with the idea that the self as a subject of writing is multiple and unauthorised. The real father is elusive and there is no one to provide the proof regarding the origin and validity of self. Peter finds himself in a paradoxical position of feeling that he had authored his own father's words. He gets inscribed as a subject in many fictional versions by other hands over which he has little control. The 'I' s search for an author/ father. In the course of this search, he becomes a fragmented being. The subject gets transformed into an assemblage of partial selves in search of an author/father. O'Donnell maintains that the narrative is redundant with ever so many "images of mutilation" through which a "symbolic dismemberment" of the subject takes place (154). This happens when he tries to recast his past through a compilation of different versions of self. These different representations are a social construct and simultaneously
they are also an inconclusive incomprehensible text. Identity of self remains a "palimpsest of directives, defacements and intensities" that force the subject into an indeterminate process of "(self) erasure and (self) inscription" (MLAM 155-56). In a telling scene, Peter wanders through a bookstore and has strange experience of locating/dislocating himself in his first book *A Jewish Father* in the 'T' section. Moments later, he figures his unfinished manuscript in the form of a "corpse" which he could not "remove [...] from the autopsy room to the grave [...]" (MLAM 238). The remnants of the book are the dead selves, and the true subjects of autobiography are protean, always in a state of flux. Writing becomes an attempt to build a design of a still life. It comes out with a "cluster of stories, relations, and versions of the self which make up 'Tarnopol' (O'Donnell 157). The compelling force behind Peter is not and aesthetic design. But it is the imperative to talk about himself, to confess, to draw scores by writing and to magnify the self beyond the ordinary limits of the "I". O'Donnell further adds that Peter's "graphomania" gets blown to "comic version of the will to power, dressed up in the noble drag of art [...]" (163).

Spielvogel locates the source of the problem not solely in his self but in factors external to himself. He heavily draws upon from Freud's comments on "the ideal ego". Narcissistic psycho-analysis becomes a useful tool to explain Peter's problem. To the psychoanalyst, he is more of a literary text for literary diagnosis. The truth regarding the self could emerge partly through
the dialectic that develops and partly through the evidence the rest of the novel presents. Peter considers his struggle for manhood as a matter of cultural coercion. But Spielvogel sees it as the enactment of his ambivalence, narcissism and a libidinized aggression toward his "phallic mother" but in due course displaced onto a woman: "It soon became clear that the poet's central problem here as elsewhere was his castration anxiety vis-à-vis a phallic mother figure [...] in order to avoid a confrontation with his dependency needs toward his wife the poet acted out sexually, with other women almost from the beginning of the marriage" (*MLAM* 240-242).

Peter is outraged at his self being written up as case-history of regression. The analyst writes a journal article entitled, "Creativity, The Narcissism of the Artist". The narrator feels that his self is made to serve as a physiognomy to a portrait painter, a problem for his art, to be solved after close scrutiny: "It's in the nature of being a novelist to make private life public- that's a part of what a novelist is up to. But certainly it is not what I thought you were up to when I came here" (*MLAM* 250). The analyst reveals that the dominant narcissism is a defence the subject adopts for himself. It could protect himself from the "profound anxiety" aroused by his mother. He engenders within himself "a strong sense of superiority" to be least affected by the "possibilities of rejection in and separation, as well as the helplessness" that he experiences in his mother's presence (*MLAM* 217). Guilt and ambivalence also appear to be the two ruling factors of his
conscious/unconscious self. The literary career as well as the relationships with women get affected by these two feelings.

The fear that reigns supreme in him is that he might not exist except solely as a form of composite fiction framed by others. This prompts the analyst to remind him about his ambivalence regarding the analysis of his self:

'First you complain that by disguising your identity I misrepresent you and badly distort the reality [. . .] Then in the next breath you complain that I fail to disguise your identity enough-rather, that I have revealed your identity by using this particular incident. This of course is your ambivalence again about your specialness'.

(MLAM 249)

To Peter, the truth of the critique applied to recollection of self lies in its manipulation of evidence. Spielvogel makes narcissism the key to understanding the subject's elusive self. He is disturbed by the admonitions of the intruders into his life and also by his own critical judgements. The early similitude of perfection is projected on to a fictionalised "ego ideal". When reality, in the guise of adamant women, intrudes then narcissistic defence appears in his deeds with twofold intensity. But Maureen and Susan fulfil his narcissistic need by attempting suicide. They seem to embody an ambivalent
counter-desire for punishment and also the traits of a threatening mother image.

Peter is also aware that success and excitement would come upon him depending upon his power of "de-narcissizing" or detaching himself from his art. He denies narcissism but simultaneously he is obsessed with himself. Maureen seems to be a competitor for his attention. Jay L. Halio considers her possessiveness as the "obverse of narcissism resulting in their basic incompatibility" (140). Spielvogel lets him know that there is no escape from Susan if Maureen is dead. At the end of the text the artist "scrutinizes his self with all the wonder fear and amazement that object holds" (Halio 141).

Writing *My Life as a Man* involved "one false start after another" and it "nearly broke" Roth's "will" (*The Facts* 152). Roth is not all in favour of the Oedipal theory. He is of the view that Peter had a charmed life for he was made to believe that success would never elude him. The process of presentation/description of self is seen as the unresolvable problem: "To my mind, Tarnopol's attempt to realize himself with the right words as earlier in life he attempted realizing himself through the right deeds—fictions about his life with his autobiography". Roth sets Peter's aim to "achieve a description" as supreme among the issues in the text (Searles 80). The author-narrator could not bring himself to see his self just as Spielvogel sees it. This is partly because Peter, as the novelist who treats himself and his personal life could,
in the end, see them only as fiction. He and his self become only fiction that
engender further fiction without ultimate truth or moral authority. The fiction
framed cannot be called an autobiography. It is more of a kind of fictional
focalization done through "the materials actuality makes available" (Searles
95).

The fictional process of creating a "real" self is sustained by an attempt
to find the real author. Nathan highlights the artistic creed when he states
that the artist descends within himself, and in the lonely region of stress and
strife he would find the terms of his appeal. Art and psychology appear to
collaborate to overcome the authority of an omniscient author. The
controlling authority of narrative gets diffused in the self that emerges in
multiple forms. Perhaps Roth implies that the bias towards an omniscient
narrator-self reflects the wish for a realm of objective authority and security.
But none seems to exist in either literature or experiential reality. For Nathan
and Peter, fiction and reality become interchangeable. In "Salad Days",
Nathan alludes to the Olympian point of view of the author, whereas in
"Courting Disaster," he discusses the values of decorum, discipline, and
sobriety. But such a self undermines itself through the imminent process of
reflection and creation of a fresh level of critical consciousness. Peter's life
and the lives of various literary characters create a baffling mix-up of the
worlds of fiction and reality. Placing the subject's problems within the
context of familial ties becomes a serious issue to the narrator-subject, the
implied author and the reader as well. Familial relationships get indistinguishably bound up with the issue of fiction making process and the narrative explicitly relates the predicament of the subjects to the implied author's narrative choices and solutions. If in Portnoy's Complaint the issue regards filial ties it is the responsibility of building a sound family and achieving societal honour that becomes the serious concern in *My Life as a Man*. Roth looks upon the frequent erasures and recasting of the fictional self as defying and submitting to "a multitude of bizzarre projections". These "projections" bring about gross "simplification of self" through human relationships. So the novel is supposed to have been entitled "Don't Do with Me What You Will" (Searles 90). In his attempts to convert the transparent into opaque and the opaque transparent, Peter hurts himself. He becomes his own mistake. He gets determined mistakenly or otherwise by his own character. The final words echo a "characterological enslavement" (Searles 96). With ironic resignation he accepts his identity: "This is me who is me being me and none other!" The reader could only think that Peter may become a man and move beyond the mistakes of the past. He might be changing, growing into himself and "none other" (*MLAM* 330).
NOTES

1Family is conceived of not as an empirical referent, but as a group culture engendered through a discourse known as family story. Langellier and Peterson discuss the idea of family story telling as a strategically produced discourse that reproduces the socio-economic institution of family, by legitimating the meanings and power relations existing within it. Family-stories are like a cornerstone-monument of family culture. The monolithic family, as a social regulator, tries to privilege certain classes or types over certain others—for example, parents over children; males over females etc. Depending upon the constraints of social and historical conditions, the family monuments mute and marginalize eventualities that affect family institutions unfavourably: divorce, homosexuality, singleness, childlessness and the likes. The discursive practices become effective as an operant fiction as they do a performative process of enhancing lived experience through exceeding referentiality. They create another possible world in performance as they problematize meanings processes and power relations involved within families. See Langellier and Peterson’s essay, "Family Storytelling as a Strategy of Social Control".

2Gerald Prince explains that reading is an activity that presupposes a text—a set of visually presented linguistic symbols from which meaning can be extracted. A reader is an agent capable of extracting meaning from that set.
He differentiates between "reading a text" and "reading of a text". The latter process comprises selection, development and re-ordering of the answers reached during the former. In a "reading of" the text, the reader usually, says Prince, processes a sequence of states and actions pertaining to one or more characters in one or more settings to frame well-defined narrative units for interpretation and criticism. It is these narrative units that he describes as "topic-comment structures".

The term "homodiegetic analepsis" was coined by the narratologist Gerard Genette and it is explained by Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan in his book, *Narrative Fiction: Contemporary Poetics* as the device of flashback in a narrative that throws light on a character, event or story-line mentioned at some point of narration in the text.

In narratology, the semic code is a major device for thematizing persons objects or places. According to Kaja Silverman, it operates by grouping many signifiers around a proper name or another prominent signifier. Signifiers so grouped function like a collective signified to a proper name or its surrogate. When identical semes traverse the same proper name several times and settle upon it, a subject is created. Sometimes clothes, gestures and patterns of speech operate as semic codes. They inscribe power-relations into literary text and may also define a subject or place in ideologically symptomatic ways.
The idea of perceptibility concerns the "telling" and "showing" process in a narrative. Different narratives have different degrees of perceptibility with respect to characterization. Perceptibility, in Rimmon Kenan's view, ranges from maximum covertness to maximum overtness.

Rimmon-Kenan states that a "homodiegetic" narrative is one in which the narrator participates in the narrated story (95–96).

Mixed-analepsis is a term used by Rimmon-Kenan to refer to a flashback on a period covered before the starting point of the first narrative, but at a later stage joins it or goes beyond it.

A "catalyst," within the parlance of narratology, is an event or narrative agent that expands, amplifies or maintains the action in the text. The idea of the narrative "catalyst" is found in Rimmon-Kenan.

The transition from one stage, (from being a phallus to having a phallus in the Lacanian sense) to another is "correlated with the stratification of the psychical apparatus into systems of registrations" (Laplanche and Pontalis 236). The transition through different phases—oral, anal, phallic and pubertal—is similar to a process of translation in language. Portnoy is hard put to the anarchic functioning of the non-genital component instincts. Only by a positive change in his psychical apparatus could be resolve his crisis.
In fantasies one often meets women with male sexual organ or phallic attribute. Ruth Mack Brunswick in his essay, "The Preoedipal Phase of the Libido Development" [Fleiss R., ed. The Psycho-Analytic Reader London: Hogarth Press, 1950. 240] states that such images appear when the child "becomes uncertain that the mother does indeed possess" a phallus. The woman with a phallus denotes the conjoining of two parents. The mother contains the father's physical attributes and the father contains those of the mother. The idea of such a 'combined parent' appearing in the child's early fantasies is elaborated upon by Melanie Klein in The Psycho-Analysis of Children (103-104; 333). Alex seems to look upon his mother as a "combined parent."

The whole of the emerging tropal patterns within the topic-comment segment of mother-son relationship could be psychoanalytically grounded in the Oedipal phase. Within the corpus of this narrative segment the subject has been going through oral and anal phases, which are discussed in the chapter with respect to dietary and bath-room habits. The narrative switches over to heterosexual relationships at the point where the subject reaches the phallic phase. As soon as Alex realizes the supremacy of the erotogenic zone he becomes wary of the Lacanian dialectic whose significant alternatives are to be a phallus and to have a phallus. This is the stage when the Oedipus complex reaches its culmination and is also dissolved.
The psychoanalytic phenomenon of transference concerns the patient's relationship with the psycho-analyst. Within the context of the unconscious, this concept refers to a mode of displacement. It is the unconscious wish getting manifested in disguise through the material provided by the preconscious residues (memories which are not immediately conscious but which the subject can recollect at will). The wish will be in the form of a new edition of the impulse or fantasy which was aroused and made conscious during the progress of the analysis. It has the characteristic of replacing some earlier person by the person of the analyst. The patient unconsciously makes the analyst play the role of a loved or feared parental figure. See Laplanche and Pontalis 455-462.

Imago is the prototypical figure formed in the unconscious. The subject's apprehension of interpersonal relationship is conditioned by this figure. It is an imaginary set of character traits that is acquired in an amorphous form from real as well as fantasized interactions within the family atmosphere. See Laplanche and Pontalis 211.