CHAPTER VI

TEXTUAL FLUIDITY: THE DE-TELEOLOGICAL TEXT

Your life is a fiction.

JOHN BARTH, CHIMERA

... may be the whole story was a lie.

THOMAS PINCHON, GRAVITY'S RAINBOW

6.1.0 The protean wo/man in her/his attempt to create identity through a prevarication of roles and masks is analogous to an author's work of fabricating characters in his work of art. Subsequently, the formation of the self and the text become very similar in the process of identity-creation, and more so in their complexity. As Susan Sontag succinctly puts it: "The self is a text--it has to be deciphered. The self is a project, something to be built. And the process of building a self and its works is always too slow. One is always in arrears to oneself" (1982, 388). The self, in this way, bears a one to one correspondence with the text. The process by which a writer creates his text and a self creates its identity is the same. Both involve the process of fabrication, the art of weaving. The word text has originated from the Latin textus which means tissue referring to the style of literary work. The word texture, in this relation, has taken its root from the Latin textura, meaning, weaving. Thus the word comes to imply the process or art of weaving or the produce of the weaver's art; a woven fabric; a web. And any natural structure having an appearance as if woven or the constitution, structure, or substance of anything with regard to its constituents, formative elements or physical character.
6.1.1.1 The traditional as well as modern ‘teleological texts’ presupposed the theory that events and developments in life and fiction are due to the purpose or design that they are serving. The written text as it was with a thematic or structuring principle progressed towards a pre-determined text. The book is, generally, perceived as a discrete physical object and, correspondingly, conceived as a discrete unit of meaning. The postmodern ‘de-teleological text’ de-centres this notion and holds no specific purpose or design in its function. It decomposes the object of the book in order to deconstruct the book as concept and also it retards both that decomposition and that deconstruction. In this respect, the postmodernist authors have done away with plot, character, setting and theme—they view them as the true enemies of fiction.

6.1.1.2 Consequently the text has taken the pattern of a mosaic. The writer, in general, attempts to give sequence in his work owing to a linguistic compulsion but not out of his choice. Neither does his original vision contain this sequence. As Vladimir Nabokov says, “... for the idea of sequence does not really exist as far as the author is concerned. Sequence arises only because words have to be written one after the other on consecutive pages, just as the reader’s mind must have time to go through the book...” (1983, 379). Therefore sequencing is a falsification of the original conceptualisation that occurred only as a mosaic in the mind of the writer. The de-teleological text reflects this falsification of reality and upsets the traditional perception of the author as a discrete biological and biographical being and, correspondingly, the conception of the author as a discrete originator of meaning.
6.1.2 Falsification of experience transpires not only at the narrative level but also at the level in that the self imposes shifting patterns to create its identity in relation to the other. In truth, the de-teleological text only mirrors the fabricative function of the self in reality. Barth’s Horner, a de-teleological spokesman, echoes the same idea, as he says:

To turn experience into speech—that is, to classify, to categorize, to conceptualize, to grammarize, to synctactify it—is always a betrayal of experience, a falsification of it; but only so betrayed can it be dealt with it all, and only in so dealing with it did I ever feel a man, alive and kicking. It is therefore that, when I had cause to think about it all. I responded to this precise falsification, this adroit, careful myth-making with all the upsetting exhilaration of any artist at his work. When my mythoplastic razors were sharply honed, it was unparalleled sport to lay about with them, to have at reality. (ER 116).

6.1.3 The characters which represent the self and the signs which represent the text are symbiotically controlled and governed. Harold Fisch is of the contention that the text that is a synchronic assembly of signs is controlled by characters as much as signs control character. According to him, Character in Greek signifies a mark or token made by a writing or marking instrument. Only secondarily does it come to signify the human personality, its psychological essence or moral tendency. He says,

In this it is like type—formed from another Greek word meaning to write or incise. Characters we may say are types. The original nature of the term remains when we speak of ‘characters’ in the sense of alphabetical signs or hieroglyphs, as in John Wilkin’s Essay Towards a Real Character (1668). In
such usage we return to the notion of 'character' as something belonging essentially to *écriture*, to a linguistic ordering of reality. (1990,593).

From this point of view, he continues to argue that there is no essential difference between the way we perceive people in life and the way we perceive them in books. Language is involved in both cases: we not only “know” people in the directness and immediacy of inter-human relations, we also tend to classify them according to a system of signs. Identity is a construct, fictional or personal, rather than as simulacrum of some “real” outside. Tony Tanner is of a similar opinion. She says: “In a very special sense man is indeed an editor, a philologist, a librarian, a supervisor of the house of custom--in a word, the guardian of language, the carrier of the signs by which and inside which he lives” (1971,27).

6.1.4.1 Norman Holland’s article on “Unity, Identity, Text, Self” shows how these are relative terms and approaches towards a closure of the gaps between them. He concludes:

In short, within our four terms, *identity* quite resembles *unity*, so much so that once having defined *unity, identity, text, and self*, we can fill in the white spaces between them as follows: unity/identity = text/self. Now my title reads: “*Unity is to identity as text is to self,*” or, by a familiar algebraic transposition, “*Unity is to text as identity is to self.*” Or you could say, “*Identity is the unity I find in a self* if I look at it as though it were a *text*...” (1975, 815).

As unity of the text implies its texture, in its original sense, the art of weaving, so does identity of the self connotes its texture, in the sense of the integral veil it has woven in relation with the other.
6.1.4.2 The explanation of the Doctor in Barth's *The End of the Road* about Mythotherapy is very close to Norman Holland's theory. Barth describes:

‘In life,’ he said, ‘there are no essentially major or minor characters. To that extent, all fiction and biography, and most historiography, are a lie. Everyone is necessarily the hero of his own life story. *Hamlet* could be told from Polonius’s point of view and called *The Tragedy of Polonius, Lord Chamberlain of Denmark* . . . So in this sense fiction isn’t a lie at all, but a true representation of the distortion that everyone makes of life. Now, not only are we the heroes of our own life stories—we’re the ones who conceive the story, and give other people the essences of minor characters. But since no man’s life story as a rule is ever one story with a coherent plot, we’re always reconceiving just the sort of hero we are, and consequently just the sort of minor roles that other people are supposed to play.’ (ER 86-87).

He concludes by saying that all questions of integrity involve this consideration, because a man’s integrity consists in being faithful to the script he’s written for himself. So allegiance to the self implies allegiance to the text. And in a protean, amorphous climate, faithfulness to the self connotes faithfulness to the fluid, de-teleological text—self-written or reflected.

6.2.0 Since the self is a text that has to be deciphered, the quest for the self starts, and often ends, with the text. The discovery of the self amounts to the determination of the meaning/s by connecting various texts, meta-texts and sub-texts. On the whole, by text, it is meant anything that is *scribed or printed* in a piece of paper since any of them can give a
valuable clue to the texture of the self. The texts fabricated by Barth and Pynchon are normally collection and compilation of manuscripts, official records, documents, diaries, dossiers, letters, and scraps of bit notes thrown hither and thither. Most of the quests would not have commenced but for the discovery of the notes initiating them.

6.2.1.1 In V., after the death of old Stencil, Stencil inherits a number of manuscript books along with the part of the estate that came to him. Those are all the journals; 'the unofficial log of an agent’s career.' In order to understand the contacts of his legacy, Stencil had gone through his journals. Yet, "the passage on V. was never noticed." (V 54). Later, in London, working for the Foreign Office, he was sent to North Africa, "in some fuzzily defined spy/interpreter/liaison capacity and seesawed with the rest from Tobruk to El Agheila, back through Tobruk to El Alamein, back again to Tunisia." Peace having been won in the end, he toyed with the idea of resuming that 'prewar sleepwalk.' Sitting at a cafe in Oran, he was leafing through the Florence journal idly, "when the sentences on V. suddenly acquired a light of their own." (V 54). Stencil has memorised it immediately: "There is more behind and inside V. than any of us had suspected. Not who, but what: what is she. God grant that I may never be called upon to write the answer, either here or in any official report" (V 53). It was then that Stencil is prompted into the quest. He decides to do away with the sleep and take up the quest. At the outset, Stencil is awakened "to discover the pursuit of V. was merely a scholarly quest after all, an adventure of the mind, in the tradition of The Golden Bough or The White Goddess" (V 61). In fact, the whole of Stencil’s quest towards V. can be traced as a textual quest. Stencil’s chase largely revolves around Veronica, Vheissu, the story of Mondaugen, the
confessions of Fausto Maijistral, Veronica Manganese, V.'s death in Paris and Viola; all based on the single letter 'V.'

6.2.1.2 While Stencil gets initial clues from his father's journals, they are corroborated by a number of other texts he manages to get hold of. Stencil's chase on Veronica, a female rat, starts with his chance reading of one of his father's entries. Somewhere in the Paris dossier, Stencil knew, was recorded an interview with one of the Collecteurs Generaux who worked the main sewer line which ran under Boulevard St. Michael. The fellow, old at the time of the interview but with an amazing memory, recalled seeing a woman who might have been V. Following this lead, Stencil goes to the sewers to hear those sewer stories from the old workers. Veronica is mentioned as "a priest's mistress who wanted to become a nun." (V 132-133). She is referred to by her initial in Father Fairing's journals. We come to know about Father Fairing's quest to redeem the souls of rats under the sewers and 'the accounts of Veronica' only through his journals. The journal was discovered months after he died. The story about Father Fairing is narrated in the novel "according to his journals." (V 118). All the events we learn from the 'entries' in the journals. "The journal is still preserved in an inaccessible region of the Vatican library, and in the minds of the few old-timers in the New York Sewer Department who got to see it when it was discovered." (V 120).

6.2.1.3 Stencil's shift to Vheissu occurs after he happens to infer the telegraphic message sent by old Godolphin to his son where the place name is mentioned. Everyone has thought that Vheissu was a code name for Venezuela. Old Godolphin's message gives important clues to the real existence of Vheissu for Stencil and he flies to the place
immediately. Meanwhile, in the factory of the Yoyodyne, Stencil happens to meet an engineer named Kurt Mondaugen. He had worked at Peenemunde, developing “Vergeltungswaffe Eins and Zwei—” the rocket used by the Germans for sending destructive missiles. But as for Stencil it carries ‘the magic initial’ and hence listens attentively to Mondaugen’s yarning about his youthful days in South-West Africa. Chapter nine illustrates “Mondaugen’s Story” and thus V., the novel as well the character, forms part of a narrated story.

6.2.1.4 Similar to Chapter Nine on “Mondaugen’s Story,” we find Chapter Eleven a narrative of “The Confessions of Fausto Maijistral.” Paola insists that Stencil ought to see “a small packet of type-written pages” (V 303) that is titled, “The Confessions of Fausto Maijistral.” As Stencil goes through the confessions the reader gets a chance to read it along with him. Again the very act of confession is seen as a textual activity: “It takes, unhappily, no more than a desk and writing supplies to turn any room into a confessional.”(V 304). The confession of Fausto Maijistral III contains the journals of Fausto I and II. This confession has become important for Stencil since it was written in the city Valletta—another clue to the mysterious letter V. Towards the end, as Paola handed over the confessional-document, Demivolt gives Stencil “a thumbnail dossier on Veronica Manganese.” (V 472). From it, Stencil gathers few more fragments to the V-textual conspiracy. Her origins were uncertain. She was reputed to be wealthy but the source of her income was not apparent. She had popped up in Malta at the beginning of the war, in the company of one Sgherraccio, a Mizzist. At the time Stencil gets hold of the dossier she is intimate with various renegade Italians, and particularly with Mussolini.
6.2.1.5 Finally, though Stencil could chase the V.-woman up to Paris when she was madly in love with a teenage girl, he gets to know about the death of V.’s fetish love-object Melanie and V.’s eventual disappearance only from police records. Stencil’s last bit of note to Paola informs the reader that he is after one Viola, onciromancer and hypnotist, who passed through Valletta in 1944, who has the glass eye of V. with her. Thus text after text Stencil gets clues and connections to relate with the letter V. In any event, what is said of Valetta is true of V. in general: “So at peace was Valetta that with the least distance she would deteriorate to mere spectacle. She ceased to exist as anything quick or pulsed, and was assumed again into the textual stillness of her own history” (Italics added) (V 474).

6.2.2.1 Oedipa’s quest in The Crying of Lot 49 from the beginning to the end is another interesting textual quest. The novel begins with Oedipa coming to know from a letter that she had been named executrix of the estate of Pierce Inverarity. The letter from Metzger informs her about the death of Pierce and the eventual discovery of his will. Metzger was to act as co-executor and special counsel in the event of any involved litigation. Oedipa had been named also to execute the will in a codicil dated a year ago. This text in the form of a will and the letter initiates her quest, but in the process, she starts textualising all her experience. She forms the habit of noting down anything strange she comes across in her memo book. The first item she makes note of is the address and the ambiguous WASTE symbol that she happens to find on the wall of a toilet in one of Inverarity’s firms. Though later it has been removed miraculously from the wall, it stays there in Oedipa’s
memo book which continues to haunt her. Soon she understands that the symbol she saw on the wall is related to an underground postal system named "Trystero."

6.2.2.2 Subsequently, she identifies the connection between the Trystero and the plot of The Courier’s Tragedy by Richard Wharfinger. After finding a chance to see the enactment of the play she approaches the director for the script. But she learns that the director is not using the original but only its worn out copies. Those copies were made from a paperback anthology of Jacobean Revenge Plays, the publisher unknown since the director found it at a Used Books shop by the freeway. The director recalls that there was another copy yet he is bewildered that so many like Oedipa were interested in the text than the performance. Somehow Oedipa manages to trace the text of The Courier’s Tragedy. Nevertheless, it happens to be just the beginning of her quest and the more she comes to know about the word Trystero the more its meaning eludes from her because of its network of textual connections.

6.2.2.3 Oedipa is very curious and enthusiastic at this initial stage and traces the meaning to a large extent. Pynchon says:

she turned immediately to the single mention of the word Trystero. Opposite the line she read, in pencil, Cf. variant, 1687 ed. Put there maybe by some student. In a way, it cheered her. Another reading of that line might help light further the dark face of the word. According to a short preface, the text had been taken from a folio edition, undated. Oddly, the preface was unsigned. She checked the copyright page and found that the original hardcover had been a textbook, Plays of Ford, Webster, Tourneur and Wharfinger, published by The
Lecturn Press, Berkeley, California, back in 1957. She . . . called the L. A. library. They checked, but didn’t have the hardcover. They could look it up on inter-library loan for her. (CL 90).

Yet Oedipa decides to check it up on her own with the publishers in Berkeley.

6.2.2.4 After getting the book from them, Oedipa is in a shock to realise that the line about Trystero is just missing. Puzzled she finds that this edition also has a footnote. Instead of clearing her doubts the note only enhances her suspicions about the possibility of other editions of the same text. Undaunted she intends to meet the Professor at California who has given the note. She meets Emory Bortz, the professor, who is astonished to find that she has brought a pirated and Bowdlerised edition of his. The eventual discussions and textual investigations lead her to further entanglement in the linguistic maze. In the end she starts doubting the authenticity of all these texts including the codicil that named her the executrix as well as the meaning of her own self which is now in relation with all these texts. Oedipa, fondly called by her husband and others as “Oed” may now as well stand for the Oxford English Dictionary. The polymorphous texture of the text reveals to Oedipa the ultimate amorphous texture of the self; the appropriate point in which Pynchon gives an open-ended ending to his text.

6.2.3.1 Similar to the quests of Oedipa and Stencil that commences from a letter or a note in a journal, Todd’s ‘inquiry’ starts with the suicide note that he takes out from his father’s pocket. But unlike Stencil’s search, Todd’s ‘inquiry’ is literally textualised. He starts collecting facts and information towards recording them in a sort of notebook named Inquiry. He says,
The full title of the Inquiry, if it ever should reach the stage of completion where a title would be appropriate, will be An Inquiry into the Circumstances Surrounding the Self-Destruction of Thomas T. Andrews, of Cambridge, Maryland, on Ground-Hog Day, 1930 (More Especially into the Causes Therefore), or something of the sort. It is an attempt to learn why my father hanged himself, no more. (FO 217-218).

6.2.3.2 As in the case of Stencil, he is fully aware that his search may never end but that cannot deter him anyway. He says,

So, the task is endless; I've never fooled myself about that. But the fact that it's endless doesn't mean that I can't work on other aspects of the grand project, even though the completion of those aspects depends ultimately on the leaping of the gap in my Inquiry. It doesn't follow that because a goal is unattainable, one shouldn't work toward its attainment (FO 220).

To start with he, like Stencil he would do any impersonation. He aims to learn all that can be learned of his father's life; to get the best possible insight into the workings of his mind. As he says: "To do this I must, in addition to carrying out on a larger scale all the researches described in connection with the other Inquiry, perform extra labors as well--I must read, for example, all the books that I know my father read, looking for influences on his character and way of thinking" (FO 220).

6.2.3.3 He thinks very much in the lines of Stencil who is not interested in ending the quest even if he happens to find the object of his quest in spite of its elusiveness. For
Todd though his ‘inquiry’ is to know the cause of his father’s suicide, the mere knowledge of it is not going to put an end to the writing of his Inquiry. He says,

But let’s suppose that by some miracle it were given to me to know the unknowable, to know the cause or causes of Dad’s suicide. My Inquiry would be complete. But my researches would not, for after supper on the day of that revelation I should draw to my desk a different peach basket—that one beside the lamp there—and after some minutes of wall-staring, resume work on a larger Inquiry, . . . . And this Inquiry, had I world enough and time might someday be entitled An Inquiry into the Life of Thomas T. Andrews, of Cambridge, Maryland (1867-1930). Giving Especial Consideration to His Relations with His Son, Todd Andrews, (1900— ). (FO 219).

Thus the research would continue with a change in focus; from the father to the son.

6.2.3.4 But there is a major difference in the way both the writers deal with textual fluidity. While Pynchon’s characters act or acted upon according to the scripts written for them, Barth’s characters write their own scripts. Akin to Todd, we find the majority of the Barthian protagonists as writers or story tellers. And the sheer literary activity involves lot of craftsmanship like that of fabricating a boat or playing a piano. Many times Todd brings in the boat, piano analogies to that of a novel. Being an amateur in novel-writing, he blames his rambling on naïveté. Nevertheless, aware of the marginality between the textual and personal quests he is quite a ‘self’-reflexive (pun intended) writer. His fabrication process is so transparent for the readers to see. He reflects:
Where are we? I was going to comment on the significance of the *viz.* I used earlier, was I? Or explain my “piano-tuning” metaphor? Or my weak heart? Good heavens, how does one write a novel! I mean, how can anybody stick to the story, if he’s at all sensitive to the significances of things? As for me, I see already that storytelling isn’t my cup of tea: every new sentence I set down is full of figures and implications that I’d love nothing better than to chase to their dens with you, but such chasing would involve new figures and new chases, so that I’m sure we’d never get the story started, much less ended, if I let my inclinations run unleashed. (FO 2).

6.2.3.5 For the self that is the writer, the other is the reader. The relationship between these two is of a love-hate one. The self is happy to relate itself to the other to find its meaning but is also disconcerting that without the other, it could not have any meaning. So we find the writer wooing the reader on the one hand, and on the other, threatening, frustrating and even abusing. For instance: “This fact—that having begun this sentence, I may not live to write its end, . . . (FO 49)” proclaims the moribund nature of the narrator as well as his narratology. The progress of the text depends upon the survival of the writer. He should live for the reader, despite his death-wish, at least till he completes his narration. Thus the reader too becomes text-bound that he psychologically wishes life for the narrator at least till he ends the novel.

6.2.4.1 Unlike Todd who involves the reader in his narrative process, the protagonist of “Life Story” teases or even insults his reader. The notion that there are readers to follow the narrative process do not always give pleasure but also a considerable amount of
pressure for the narrator. This irritates and provokes him to talk as follow: “The reader! You, dogged, insultable, print-oriented bastard, it’s you I’m addressing, who else, from inside this monstrous fiction. You’ve read me this far, then? Even this far? For what discreditable motive? How is it you don’t go to a movie, watch TV, stare at a wall, . . . (LFH 127).

6.2.4.2 On other occasions the writer-questors express the prolixity of the writing activity, owing to its exhausted nature they fall short of words for their narratives. Barth’s Lost in the Funhouse is a collection of self-reflexive narrative complexities. The voice of “Autobiography: A Self-Recorded Fiction” says: “. . . I see myself as a halt narrative: first person, tiresome. Pronoun sans ante or precedent, warrant or respite. Surrogate for the substantive: contentless form, interestless principle; blind eye blinking at nothing. . . . I must compose myself” (LFH 35-36).

6.2.4.3 “Lost in the Funhouse” is Barth’s typical text fabricated by its sub and meta texts. Every line, every idea expressed in the story is commented immediately by its meta text. For example:

Magda G____, age fourteen, a pretty girl and exquisite young lady who lived not far from them on B____ Street in the town of D____, Maryland. Initials, blanks, or both were often substituted for proper names in nineteenth-century fiction to enhance the illusion of reality. It is as if the author felt it necessary to delete the names for reasons of tact or legal liability. Interestingly, as with other aspects of realism, it is an illusion that is being enhanced, by purely artificial means (LFH 72-73).
The self-reflexive narrator becomes so self-conscious that he eventually starts detesting it. He expresses his contempt in the following words: “Oh God comma I abhor self-consciousness. I despise what we have come to; I loathe our loathsome loathing, our place out time our situation, our loathsome art, this ditto necessary story. The blank of our lives. It’s about over. Let the denouement be soon and unexpected, painless if possible, quick at least, above all soon” (LFH 113).

6.2.4.4 In this vein, the story of the story moves with passages about the function of the beginning, middle and ending of the story. And then comes a reminder: “And a long time has gone already without anything happening; it makes a person wonder. We haven’t even reached Ocean City yet: we will never get out of the funhouse.” Both ‘Ocean city’ and ‘the funhouse’ become metaphors at once. ‘Ocean city’ is the spin-yarn of narratology and ‘the funhouse’ is the short story that the author is narrating at present.

6.2.5 The text of the self that lingers between the thin line of demarcation between the man and the machine is well written in Giles Goat-Boy. According to the putative author of the novel ‘the text proper’ was originally written by a certain automatic Computer. The job of this writer is that of a mere recorder or a reporter. About the Computer it is said that, “the machine declared itself able and ready to assemble, collate, and edit this material, interpolate all verifiable data from other sources such as the memoirs then in hand, recompose the whole into a coherent narrative from the Grand Tutor’s point of view, and ‘read it out’ in an elegant form on its automatic printers!” (GGB XXVII). Further, we come to know that the mighty computer WESCAC is not only capable of writing a novel but also is endowed with the power to control and govern
the life and activities of human beings in reality. It has written the script and ascribed the roles to be played. Thus the Computer has not only written the text of *Giles Goat-Boy* but it is the Text in the novel.

6.2.6.1 Similar to the Computer-text in Barth's *Giles Goat Boy* the Rocket is the text in Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow*. All the activities of the characters centre around this Rocket. Some like Slothrop dream of their name being written on the Rocket. But for all in general, the Rocket appears to be an elusive and complex text that needs to be captured, interpreted, and decoded so that it would reveal the secrets of their identities. Thus like V., and Inverarity it too becomes a literary quest. As one such frustrated scholar-questor, Enzian, remarks: “say we are supposed to be the scholar-magicians of the Zone, with somewhere in it a Text, to be picked to pieces, annotated, explicated, and masturbated till it’s all squeezed limp of its last drop ... well we assumed--naturlich!--that this holy Text had to be the Rocket . . .” (GR 520).

6.2.6.2 The Rocket is the ultimate Text with all possible interpretations and versions. Enzian remarks:

But the Rocket has to be many things, it must answer to a number of different shapes in the dreams of those who touch it—in combat, in tunnel, on paper—it must survive heresies shining, unconfoundable . . . and heretics there will be: Gnostics who have been taken in a rush of wind and fire to chambers of the Rocket-throne . . . Kabbalists who study the Rocket as Torah, letter by letter--rivets, burner cup and brass rose, its text is theirs to permute and combine into new revelations, always unfolding . . . Manichaean who see two Rockets, good
and evil, who speak together in the sacred idiolalia of the Primal Twins (some say their names are Enzian and Blicero) of a good Rocket to take us to the stars, an evil Rocket for the World's suicide, the two perpetually in struggle... But these heresies will be sought and the dominion of silence will enlarge as each one goes down... they will all be sought out. Each will have his personal Rocket (GR 727).

6.2.6.3 Since the Rocket is the text and controls the subtexts in Gravity's Rainbow, most of the incidents in the novel become narratives. A narrative is defined as an account or narration; a tale, a history, a story, recital--the practice or act of narrating. In the Rocket-text, even the death of a person becomes a narrative. For instance, we get to know the death of Slothrop only through reports, interviews and other textual bits of evidences. First it is told to us as if it is a story: "There is also the story about Tyrone Slothrop, who was sent into the Zone to be present at this own assembly--perhaps, heavily paranoid voices have whispered, his time's assembly--and there ought to be a punch line to it, but there isn't. The plan went wrong. He is being broken down instead, and scattered." (GR 738). At a later stage we come to know this from the discussions based on interviews. An excerpt from an interview is quoted below:

"We were never that concerned with Slothrop qua Slothrop," a spokesman for the counterforce admitted recently in an interview with the Wall Street Journal.

INTERVIEWER: You mean, then, that he was more a rallying-point.
SPOKESMAN: No not even that. Opinion even at the start was divided. It was one of our fatal weaknesses. Some called him a "pretext." Others felt that he was a genuine, point-for-point microcosm. (GR 738).

6.2.7.1 Barth carries this notion of a novel being a narrative in its literal sense to the other extreme in his LETTERS. The novel literally is a compilation of letters in the mock-epistolary manner. The novel that contains seven letters in its title is a consolidation of seven novels; each a collection of letters written by a fictitious personality. The writer plays with three possible senses of the title he has chosen for his work. In a 'Chinese box' effect of mise en abyme, in the vein of Jorge Luis Borges and Italo Calvino, in the text itself, Barth provides perfectly accurate analyses of the structure of his novel as well as a tripartite explanation of the title: LETTERS, as in the epistolary form of the novel; letters as in the segments of a word, scheme, or list; and letters, as in the accumulated writing of a civilisation, this last sense made manifest in the book's first epistle, inviting the author to become a Doctor of Letters. The author, as the eighth correspondent in the novel, explains and redefines his intent and structure in most of his own letters, and apparently confirms his own explanation in the subtitle of the novel which is represented on the title page. He explains: "LETTERS, the title of which has three senses: literature itself (as in belles letters), post-office-type letters (it is an epistolary novel), and the alphabetical letters of which both epistles and novels are constituted, as combinations of atoms constitute the physical universe" (FB 168). There are seven correspondents, including the capital-A Author. Six of the seven happen to be men; the seventh is a woman, Lady Amherst, who is the teacher of the subject History of the Novel. All twenty-four of her
letters are to the Author, who for the most part does not reply. The other five correspondents, apart from Lady A and the Author are: Todd Andrews, the lawyer-hero of The Floating Opera; Jacob Horner of The End of the Road; Andrew Burlingame Cook the Sixth, lineal descendant of Maryland’s Colonial virgin poet laureate in The Sot-Weed Factor; Jerome Bonaparte Bray, putative editor of Giles Goat-Boy and Ambrose Mensch, from Lost in the Funhouse, currently Lady A’s lover aforementioned.

6.2.7.2 The circumstances which brings all casts and their re-enactments together are, first, Barth’s epistolary efforts to enlist that various characters’ permission to serve as models for his projected novel LETTERS, and second, the character Reg Prinz’s filming of Frames, the cinematic version of Barth’s works, both those to be written in the future and those already completed. These two projects bring the disparate characters together and also serve to cross boundaries of temporality and fictionality. Barth is soliciting permission for appearance in a projected novel which we are reading; the film includes sequences which derive from this novel, supposedly not yet conceived. These letters endow the characters of these fictions with purported actual existence independent of their inclusion in the fictional works. As Marjorie Godlin Roemer opines:

These circumstances and the welter of coincidence and repetition which serves to connect the lives of Cooks, Andrews, Macks, Horner, et al., trap us in a maze of devious design. The representation of life is convoluted, riddled with ironic congruence, but nowhere is life independent of art. We perceive everything through documentary “frames,” letters, novels, films; each perceiver is actor and reenactor shaper of what he sees (1987, 41).
Thus taking cues from the past history, each character creates his own myth in the present.

6.2.7.3 The novel LETTERS involves to some extent the history of the Chesapeake Bay area, particularly the late 1960s and the period of the 1812 War. Similarly the novel The Sot-Weed Factor, deals mainly with the history of Colonial Maryland, along with LETTERS, it can be called “historical” fiction. But the writer does not attempt to be faithful to the historical records. Though he has done a respectable amount of homework on the historical periods involved, he confesses that his concern was not that of a historian:

But it was a novelist’s homework, not a historian’s, and novelists are the opposite of icebergs: Eight-ninths of what I once knew about this region’s history, and have since forgotten, is in plain view on the surface of those two novels, where it serves its fictive purposes without making the author any sort of authority. Since The Sot-Weed Factor isn’t finally “about” Colonial Maryland at all, any more than LETTERS is really “about” the burning of Washington in 1814 or the burning of Cambridge in 1967, I’m already uncertain which of their historical details are real and which I dreamed up. Fictitious history is something that my LETTERS novel is more or less about: false documents, falsified documents, forged and doctored letters, mislaid and misdirected letters and the like, in the history of History (FB 181).

6.3.0 In this context, it is relevant to remember Karl Marx’s famous observation that important events in history tend to occur twice: the first time as tragedy, and the second time as farce. To stretch this further, and relate it to the fictional history, the death of the
Victoria type novels occurs in Modernism as tragedy and in Postmodernism as farce. Put in this way, if the Modernist aims at a version of reality, the Postmodernist's objective is to create a subversion of it. Re-reading history as his-story, the Postmodernists are sportive watchers than participators in the chronicles of their times. And as onlookers they see most of the game. Hence, if at all Barth and Pynchon deal with history their aim is mostly to play with it than to handle it in all solemnity.

6.3.1.1 As in the case of Barth, Pynchon's inclusion of so much actual history in The Crying of Lot 49 further confuses the distinction between fiction and fact. When so much of the novel concerns well-known places and real events, the reader's problem in sorting out the real from the imagined becomes similar to Oedipa's uncertain experience of the Trystero. Pynchon's use of such historical facts is one of the main devices for making the reader think about possible connections between private feelings and the world outside the self. The repeated references to Nazi Germany, and the fascist abuse of power, particularly concerning the Jews, is one example of how the novel uses facts from actual history to suggest connections between Oedipa's world and the reader's own, forming a disturbing historical background to her experiences of modern California.

6.3.1.2 This sort of combination of historical fact with fiction occurs extensively throughout The Crying of Lot 49, so that as Oedipa gradually discovers the possible existence of the Trystero, she and the reader also rediscover a lost sense of America's own past history. By the time the novel ends, Oedipa has considered again how different California now is from the time when it was a land of wonderful promise. She has realised how her own experiences as a student during the 1950s seem to belong to a different
world from the 1960s. When she examines the history of the Trystero, she learns of the similarities between the Thurn and Taxis postal monopoly, which actually existed in Europe, and the American government's own postal monopoly. When the reader, in turn, examines Pynchon's novel, he learns of the connections between Arrabal's anarchism, beginning in Mexico but now surviving in exile in California, and the visit of Mikail Bakunin, one of the most famous anarchist thinkers, and himself an exile from Russia, to California in 1861. At the same time as Oedipa is discovering fragments of evidence about the Trystero, the reader is encountering little pieces of history which themselves seem to connect together and suggest a wider pattern of significance. So Oedipa's unsettling discovery of the Trystero is mirrored in the reader's own discovery of a network of historical clues and suggestions. The reader is forced to ask questions about this information similar to those which Oedipa asks about the Trystero.

6.3.2.1 In this manner, the producers of de-teleological texts de-centre the concepts of conventional fictional types. One such mockery is on the type: Romans a clef, 'novels with a key.' The conventional examples are Thomas Love Peacock's Nightmare Abbey and Aldous Huxley's Point Counter Point. Subversive to this type of novels, the Postmodern novels are parodies of this kind. The de-teleological characters too search for keys, but in a milieu where they are confounded with multiple keys and they spend the rest of their lives testing the validity of those keys. An exemplary novel of this kind is Pynchon's The Crying of Lot 49. And the kind of 'key-novel' he is parodying is the detective fiction.
In some detective novels, the reader knows from the start the truth about the 'mystery,' and watches the progress of someone who tries to discover it. More often, both the reader and the detective are puzzled by the event, and the novel presents the detective's discoveries and gradual working out of the truth. In this sense then, The Crying of Lot 49 is rather like a detective story, for the reader is as unclear as Oedipa, notes the strange things which happen to her, follows her attempts to explain them, and shares in her possible discovery of the mysterious Trystero system. In Chapter Five, she is actually described as having been "so like the private eye in any long-ago radio drama, believing all you needed was grit, resourcefulness, exemption from hidebound cops' rules, to solve any great mystery" (CL 124). But by this stage in her adventures, it is obvious that such an approach to her problems is 'optimistic,' and that the nature of her experiences will not be made clear by such simple and direct methods. The end of the novel is quite unlike a detective story, for rather than presenting a solution to the mysteries, it leaves both Oedipa and the reader in doubt about the truth, or even the possibility that any explanation can ever be discovered for all that has happened to her.

Detective stories always assume that there is a reasonable explanation to be discovered for any event or circumstance, if only the detective looks hard and carefully enough. But The Crying of Lot 49 examines instead this assumption itself, and raises questions about such ways of making sense of experience and reducing it to orders and patterns. If the reader learned at the end of the novel whether or not the Trystero really existed, then Oedipa's adventures could be more simply explained and interpreted. As it
is, our uncertainty makes us share exactly with Oedipa both her confusion and the questions it creates about the nature and truthfulness of the interpretations she makes.

6.4.0 Barth’s efforts of parody is by use of metafictional devices. Metafiction disrupts normal ways of seeing, and even if a reader does not quite begin to doubt his own existence, he is likely to be struck by how many actual fictions do support our universe, the tissue of falsehood—into truths that man invents in order to survive. Generally defined Metafiction implies three points. They are: a direct or indirect formal self-reflexive or self-exploration; a heightened awareness of the artifices of the relationship between fiction and reality and a spirit of wilful playfulness manifested in linguistic or ontological humour.

6.4.1 In this regard, Barth subverts the conventional use of metaphors. Normally the macrocosmic life is compared with voyage or journey which notion Barth reverts to the microscopic. The movement of millions of sperms in the oviduct is said to be the “Night-Sea Journey.” The plight of the spermatozoon inside is as existential as the vulnerable postmodern man outside. A spermatozoon conjectures in the lines of Soren Kierkegaard, Jean Paul Sartre and Albert Camus:

“Ours not to stop and think; ours but to swim and sink...” Because a moment’s thought reveals the pointlessness of swimming... “The night-sea journey may be absurd but here we swim, will-we nill-we, against the flood, onward and upward toward a Shore that may not exist and couldn’t be reached if it did.” The thoughtful swimmer’s choices, then, they say, are two: give over thrashing and go under for good, or embrace the absurdity; affirm in and for itself the night-sea journey; swim on with neither motive or destination, for the
sake of swimming, and compassionate moreover with your fellow swimmer, we
being at sea and equally in the dark. (LFH 5).

Other characters in Barth's novels also express similar concern. His protagonist in
Sabbatical tells his reader: "If life is like a voyage, reader, a voyage may be like life. If
good stories partake of dreams, some dreams may be like stories" (S 200). What is more,
in the case of Peter Sagamore in The Tidewater Tales, "life had imitated art to the point of
naming that sailboat Story, after a similarly named vessel in Peter sagamore's fat first
novel." (TT 98).

6.5.0 Since life resembles story and story resembles life, the characters refuse to
believe any apparent facts or evidences. Anything they hear from the other they consider
as their version of the truth and may be far apart from the real. And it is this attitude
among the protean disbelievers that set them for their searches or voyages. The Inquiry
begins because of Todd's reluctance to take his father's words for granted. He could not
simply believe the normal reason that his father committed suicide since he had to pay
debts, he wanted to find out the real truth as why he did it. "Say, if you wish, that the true
reason for this investigation is my reluctance to admit that Dad hanged himself because he
was afraid to face his creditors" (FO 218).

6.5.1 This refusal to accept the signs for their apparent significations is typical of all
the Protean men. It was said in Chapter II of this thesis that all the Protean men suffer
from a symbolic fatherlessness. Figuratively speaking, they suffer a plight where they are
surfeited with signs but without signifieds. This is largely because they are not going to
accept the words from 'the Father' as the gospels. Even so, they need to verify them with
their own logic and text. Heide Ziegler contends that Barth uses this father-son relationship as a metaphor for intertextuality. He points out that Barth's works are typical of the self-questioning voice that teases at the very role of author. This play with the nature of authorship points to a recurring motif in Barth's fiction: the precarious meaning carried by any author/text or father/son relationship. The critic traces this motif from The Floating Opera to Giles Goat-Boy. He observes:

By the time Barth came to revise The Floating Opera, the father/son relationship had eventually become for him a metaphor for "intertextuality," and dubious authorship had become its expression. So in Giles the father of the protagonist is conceived of as a computer, and this same computer is also the means through which the protagonist spells out his message, which has become identical with the story of his life. In other words, it is doubtful who is the author of whom or what: the computer that "fathers" a son, or the son who instrumentalizes his "father" in order to tell his own life-story. Once the authorship becomes dubious, the value of any father/son relationship too.

6.5.2 Oedipa is another figure who refuses to accept the signs for their apparent significations. This happens mostly because of Oedipa's nature. She refuses to take anything without any connection or meaning. She thinks that for everything, every action, there must be a purpose or reason. Thus when the intrusion of a line by Driblette does not have any valid reason for Professor Bortz Driblette's, it does the opposite for Oedipa. She tells him:
“Then,” Oedipa concluded, “something must have happened in his personal life, something must have changed for him drastically that night, and that’s what made him put the lines in.”

“Maybe,” said Bortz, “maybe not. You think a man’s mind is pool table?” (CL 154).

Oedipa thinks the idea always directly causes another just as balls are moved by striking against one another in the game of pool. This notion seldom allows her to trust the opinion of others.

6.5.3 Though Stencil finds important clues for his search from Father Fairing’s journal, he is aware of its apocryphal nature. Not only it is of doubtful authorship but there are more versions to this text. By the time Profane heard them, “the stories, . . . , were pretty much apocryphal and more fantasy than the record itself warranted. At no point in the twenty or so years the legend had been handed on did it occur to anyone to question the old priest’s sanity. It is this way with sewer stories. They just are. Truth or falsity don’t apply.” (V 120). And the general idea one gets out of these stories may be a simulated version of reality or falsehood, as Profane observes, depending on “which story you listened to.” (V 123). This sort of indeterminacy is typical of de-teleological texts.

6.6.0 Indeterminacy and/or randomness makes the very act of observation uncertain—as Pynchon shows in the failures of Herbert Stencil and Oedipa Maas. As Walton Litz says,

If V. and The Crying of Lot 49 dramatize the uncertainty produced by a central character in the act of observation and investigation, Gravity’s Rainbow shows
that indeterminacy is inherent in Pynchon's world. For it lacks a central or
unified observer even in the role of narrator. That is, the narrative voice and
vantage shift. So often, so discontinuously, and so disconcertingly that the
narrator is never more than another indeterminate element in the field of the

6.6.1 Owing to their indeterminate tendency we sometimes find the accounts of the
questors getting totally subverted. Throughout the novel, Gravity's Rainbow, the reason
for the mysterious erection of Slothrop corresponding to the drop outs of missiles is
attributed to Dr. Jamf's experimental conditioning of Slothrop's reflexes in his childhood.
But in the end, after the death of Slothrop, we get a subversive story that explains the
whole matter as a psychological lie meant for Slothrop. Pynchon says:

"There never was a Dr. Jamf," opines world-renowned analyst Mickey Wuxtry-
Wuxtry-- "Jamf was only a fiction to help him explain what he felt so terribly,
so immediately in his genitals for those rockets each time exploding in the sky .
. to help him deny what he could not possibly admit: that he might be in love, in
sexual love, with his, and his race's death." (GR 738).

6.6.2.1 Comparably, Todd gives a subversion of his earlier reason to write the Inquiry
which is that of to find out the cause for his father's suicide. But towards the end, Todd
observes that the problem was imperfect communication. He declares that the two
colossal Inquiries combined are no more than important studies for one aspect: "the Letter
to My Father." This document dates from the fall of 1920, when after his unsuccessful
attempts to tell his father about his uncertain heart, he enrolled in the University. He had
resolved not to tell him at all while he lived. Nevertheless he worried that he had been unable to tell him when he wanted to, and that the two of them would go to their graves without ever having understood each other.

6.6.2.2 Hence, he began to write a letter to his father. The letter was to be found by his father after his death, and its original purpose was to explain what Dr. John Frisbee had told him about his heart. Soon this initiates him into further activities. He says:

But this purpose, though I never lost sight of it, was soon subsumed into a larger one: I set out to study myself, to discover why my communication with Dad had always been imperfect. I reviewed my whole life carefully, selecting and rejecting incidents for use in the letter. I spent a month, at least, attempting to explain to Dad why I'd never finished building my boat in the back yard. . . . I worked, of course, irregularly, completing perhaps twenty pages of notes and one page of letter every month; seldom more than that. (FO 220-221).

For this purpose again, even his Inquiry would be completed in a sense, his research appears to be an endless task.

6.6.3.1 Oedipa's quest too has got many subversive twists. When she writes in her memo book, "shall I project a world?" (CL 82), she is thinking of making sense of the world outside by imposing her own private interpretation upon it, just as Randolph Driblette claims that his production of The Courier's Tragedy is entirely the result of his own private vision. This tendency to impose interpretations upon things or events leads Oedipa into the danger of seeing patterns of meaning where none may, in fact, exist. The first appearances of the post horn symbols together with other references to postal systems
may be simple coincidence, so that Oedipa's need to find patterns of meaning leads her into creating a Trystero which exists only in her mind.

6.6.3.2 But later in the novel, when Oedipa realises another possibility, that everything she has learned about the Trystero could also be connected to the Inverarity estate, she is thinking in a directly opposite way, that all of her experiences have been shaped for her by Pierce Inverarity and his huge business empire. This would mean that forces outside herself are entirely responsible for artificially creating something which she thought might have been her own discovery. Oedipa constantly moves between these two extremes, and opposing, ways of understanding; on the one hand the private and self-closed, or subjective way of seeing, and on the other the way of seeing imposed upon the self by outside events and things, the objective way. Her understanding is further confused when she considers the other possibilities, that all of her experiences are only a fantasy in her mind, or that her notion of the Inverarity estate's being responsible for a plot against her is itself a suspicious fantasy.

Either way, they'll call it paranoia . . . . Either you have stumbled indeed . . . onto a network by which X number of Americans are truly communicating . . . . Or you are hallucinating it. Or a plot has been mounted against you . . . so labyrinthine that it must have meaning beyond just a practical joke. Or you are fantasising some such plot, in which case you are a nut, Oedipa, out of your skull (CL 170-171).
By and large, Tony Tanner considers the textual quest or any sort of writing as an act of negative entropy. She discriminates the way it occurs in the case of a neo-classical writer like Pope, and the postmodernists like Barth and Pynchon. She contends:

For a neo-classical writer like Pope, to hold up his beautifully organised and clearly formed poem against the forces of dullness and disorder was in itself an act of resistance, of negative entropy. But the contemporary American writer and his heroes are seldom so neo-classical . . . for them ‘organisation’ suggests a rigid patterning of life which is as deathly as the total biological disorganisation implied by the recurrent metaphor of jelly (or mind): fixity and fluidity alike imply entropy. (1971,145)

She explains this plight further by saying that, ‘words’ have to be organised in order to transmit any kind of information and that organisation is in itself a gesture against entropy. To counter entropy, they must be organised in such a way as to defy probability: ideally this would mean using words in a way never before encountered. But here there is the danger of simply going beyond all organisation, which in the long run is equal to the danger of submitting to probability. Either way the writer may find that the power of his words to transmit any kind of message or vivid information is perpetually in decline.

This is why we find the deterioration of text in Barth and Pynchon. Barth's Bellerophoniad feels the same disintegration of text. He says: “Over my dead body. Yes. We are in a three-part digression already, sinking in exposition as in quick mire! The Deterioration of the Literary Unit: Yes. Well, things are deteriorating right enough, deteriorating; everything is deteriorated; deterioration everywhere” (LFH 157).
An incident that Pynchon narrates in *V.*, which is about a dissipative scattering of newspapers, suggests literally and figuratively, the entropic nature of the flow of information. Rachel and Roony happen to sit on a bench in Sheridan Square, talking about Mafia and Paola. It was then the event happens. The writer describes:

> It was one in the morning, a wind had risen and something curious too had happened; as if everyone in the city, simultaneously, had become sick of news of any kind; for thousands of newspaper pages blew through the small park on the way crosstown, blundered like pale bats against the trees, tangled themselves around the feet of Roony and Rachel, and of a bum sleeping across the way. Millions of unread and useless words had come to a kind of life in Sheridan Square; while the two on the bench wove cross-talk of their own, oblivious, among them. (V 296).

That is how Pynchon pictures the act of writing self trying to narrate its story in a sort of textual anonymity.

6.7.1.3 Barth’s case is different, he revels in the surfeitness of information; like Calvino’s mollusc, he carries the entropy of history on his back and coils and twists around further and further. He, as the fictitious Barth, tells his real life charmers: Dunyazade and Scheherade in *Chimera*:

"'My project,' he told us, 'is to learn where to go by discovering where I am by reviewing where I’ve been--where we’ve *all* been. There’s a kind of snail in the Maryland marshes--perhaps I invented him--that makes his shell as he goes along out of whatever he comes across, cementing it with his own juices, and at
the same time makes his path instinctively toward the best available material for
his shell; he carries his history on his back, living in it, adding new and larger
spirals to it from the present as he grows. That snail’s pace has become my
pace—but I’m going in circles, following my own trail! I’ve quit reading and
writing; I’ve lost track of who I am; my name’s just a jumble of letters; so’s the
whole body of literature; strings of letters and empty spaces, like a code that
I’ve lost the key to’ (CH 10-11).

6.8.0 In this regard, most of the postmodern novels do not end since they are
labyrinths without exists. Instead of the closed ending of the traditional novel, in which
mystery is explained and fortunes are settled, and instead of the open ending of the
modernist novel, we get the multiple ending, the false ending, the mock ending or parody
ending. Like John Fowles, who, in The French Lieutenant’s Woman, presents alternative
endings to his story and invites the reader to choose between them, Barth floats a whole
series of possible endings to the title of his collection Lost in the Funhouse, but rejects
them all except the most inconclusive and banal.

6.8.1 Another story, “Title,” by Barth, ending with no period, contrives not to end at
all: “It’s about over. Let the denouement be soon and unexpected, painless if possible,
quick at least, above all soon. Now now! How in the world will it ever (LFH 113).
Pynchon’s V. and The Crying of Lot 49 end with the probability of offering further clues
to baffle their protagonists in their paranoiac quests. Thus instead of unknotting the
mysterious plots, the author entangles them further and leaves the questors where they
started before.
However the postmodernists flaunt with the endings in their novels it is held in leash by the printed medium. Notwithstanding the different unending postmodern endings the time the reader sees the last printed word in the text, he understands that as the last word written by the author and conceives the end. But this notion is to be challenged in the new kind of fiction that has been emerging and flourishing rapidly using the electronic medium popularly termed "the Hypertext," that is, reading and writing on computer screens.

In his recent article, "The State of the Art," while reviewing the current status of fiction, Barth accounts for the submergence of print-fiction to the emergence of electronic-fiction, pointing out the transitional age where printing gives its way to "hypertext." Hypertext or "electronic fiction" is interactive computer fiction in which the "author" designs a matrix or "lexias" through which the "reader" navigates the clicks of the mouse or the keyboard, entering or exiting the narrative through any of many available doors and steering the plot along any of many optional way points. Barth explains:

imagine a "text" (the word is already in quotes, the signal or symptom of virtuality) every word of which--or, at least, many a key word of which--is a window or point of entry into a network of associated "texts" (or graphics, music, statistics, spoken language, whatever a computer can reproduce), these several networks themselves interconnected and infinitely modifiable, or virtually infinitely so, by "readers" who can enter the "story" at any point, trace any of a zillion paths through its associated networks, perhaps add or subtract
material and modify the linkages as they please, and then exit at any point, in the process having been virtual co-authors or co-editors as well as "readers" of their virtual text (1996, 40).

6.9.2 Hypertext, "as a potential medium of art," Barth says, "intrigues and disquiets" him. Taking Barth as a representative figure of postmodernism, one is compelled to wonder whether the hypertext-phenomenon has unsettled postmodernism. Certainly it is a cause for another hue and cry of a similar kind that was raised when the postmodern-phenomenon came into its very being. However transient the electronic fiction phase may be, it forebodes a replacing of the printed texts by floppy discs and CD-ROMs. Only time can tell whether this simply heralds the end of books, the literal fluidity of texts, or also the end of postmodernism and the arrival of yet another 'ism!'

6.10.0 To sum up, the process involved in the fabrication of the self and the text bears similarities in their complexity as well as their fluidity. The postmodern de-teleological texts as demonstrated by Barth and Pynchon do not operate with illusive notions about purpose or design with pre-determined ends. With its mosaic texture, it considers the transpiring of any experience basically a falsification. Conversely, fiction is not a lie but a true representation of the distortion one makes of life. Here, faithfulness to the self connotes strict observance to the fluid, de-teleological text--self-written or mirrored. Hence, the protean wo/men's quests start and end with texts and their identities hang in relation between the blurred boundaries of texts and their endless references.