

## CHAPTER IV

### MARRIAGE AS A BATTLEGROUND

In Philip Roth's My Life as a Man, Peter Tarnopol, an author by profession, makes desperate attempts to convert his intractable marriage into a form of high art and fails miserably. Tarnopol discovers, what many before him have discovered, that marriage is not a very happy subject for literature. For one thing, it is the very antithesis of romance. It can easily lend itself to comedy and farce as Peter Tarnopol's marriage does, sinking to the level of soap opera. For transforming the theme of marriage into high tragedy one requires genius of a high order. Maybe that is why the majority of novelists--particularly those of the eighteenth and nineteenth century--only trace the progress of romantic love and courtship and end their novels with wedding bells, leaving the couple's married life to the imagination of the reader.

Writers like Bellow, Roth, Mailer and Malamud, however, seem to be preoccupied with the subject of marriage and insist on dealing with it in all its unpleasant aspects. In most of the novels under consideration, marriage is either equated with a state of boredom at its best or a battleground for sexual antagonism at its worst. Bad marriages are a norm of the day and the wife is the bitterest foe or most dangerous enemy a

man can have. The hero in fact holds her responsible for all his trials and tribulations. Talking about recent American fiction in general, Katharine M. Rogers observes that "On the middle-class American wife . . . have been focused the greed, inability to love, and antipathy to idealism of which misogynists have always accused women; she is charged with callous exploitation of her husband and made responsible for the materialism of contemporary American society."<sup>1</sup> In Deborah Kelly of An American Dream we get a portrait of an emasculating and cannibalistic wife. In Rojack's mind Deborah stands for the destructiveness of American society. He also treats Deborah as a formidable adversary and thinks of his marriage in military terms: "We had been married most intimately and often most unhappily for eight years, and for the last five I had been trying to evacuate my expeditionary army, that force of hopes, all-out need, plain virile desire and commitment which I had spent on her. It was a losing war, and I wanted to withdraw, count my dead, and look for love in another land, but she was a great bitch, Deborah, a lioness of the species: unconditional surrender was her only raw meat."<sup>2</sup> This bloody war between the husband and the wife only ends with the murder of Deborah by Rojack.

Lucy Nelson of When She Was Good is yet another specimen of an unloving and demanding wife. She is perhaps the most terrifying figure of all the women-characters we are dealing with, as she is portrayed as a cold and humourless person. With ferocious intensity Lucy demands that her father act like a

father, that her husband grow up and assume his responsibilities to her and her child. Lucy's father is a weak man and a drunkard. Lucy, therefore, is determined to marry a strong and responsible person so that she will not repeat her mother's mistake and her miserable life. Ironically enough, Lucy falls for a man who first impresses her as a mature person who has serious plans for life, but later turns out to be an infantile and easy-going man. In her obsession to lead a decent and respectable life, Lucy almost turns into an unnatural terror, pushing and pulling at people around her and not allowing them to live their lives according to their own wishes and inclinations. She lords over her husband making him no more than an instrument to support herself and her children. As for Roy Bassart, like Peter Tarnopol in My Life as a Man, all the dreams of his adolescence are dashed to pieces on the hard rock of marriage. Lucy really makes Roy work at the marriage.

When She Was Good deals with the theme of man trying to evade his responsibilities and woman demanding that he fulfil his obligations to the family. This is how Lucy looks at it: "He had duties and obligations, and he was going to perform them, whether he liked them or not. . . . Who, after all, was Roy Bassart that he should feel no pain? Who was Roy Bassart that he should live a privileged existence? Who was Roy Bassart to be without responsibilities? This was not heaven. This was the world!"<sup>3</sup> So Lucy tries to force Roy Bassart out of his paradise of youthful dreams into the hard world of reality in

which attempt, of course, she fails and the novel ends with her death.

The portraits of bitchy or destructive wives like Deborah Kelly or Lucy Nelson are a reflection on the hero's aversion to marriage and responsibility. To an age that abhors discipline and limitations of any kind, marriage must be an anathema. The prevalent attitude to and most common objections against marriage are expressed by Portnoy in his plea for sexual freedom. In the first place, why should he bend to the bourgeoisie and give up his freedom? He has desires and they are endless, they cannot be satisfied by one woman alone for a long time. He certainly does not want to tie himself down to one person for a lifetime. It is not love that leads to marriage in most cases but more often than not marriage is a result of something like weakness, convenience, apathy, guilt, fear, exhaustion, inertia or gutlessness. And even if he loves a woman he cannot marry her because he is sure that after a few years of marriage, love as well as physical desire will have disappeared and only the bondage and boredom of marriage will have been left. These arguments of Portnoy against marriage are typical of the attitude of the hero towards marriage in the novels under consideration.

The most obvious reason for the breakdown of marriage as an institution is the growing individualism both in men and women. In a country like America, where individualism is the basic value, marriage becomes subservient to a person's needs and happiness, instead of the person being subservient to the

requirements of a married life. Sirjamaki also notes this fact when he remarks that "Within the home, moreover, the concern for the family as an institution is currently small while that for individualization of family members, on the other hand, is large. The members are likely to view the family as existing for them and not they for it."<sup>4</sup> The prevalent attitude seems to be that if the marriage comes in the way of a person's happiness and fulfilment it is a wiser thing to dissolve it. "It is this restless passion for 'personal fulfillment'," remarks Page Smith, "that disfigures our age. Life and liberty seem to have taken a backseat to the pursuit of happiness which is everyone's inalienable right. If one no longer believes in duties and responsibilities, in obligations and loyalties, or in a future state of rewards or punishments, then, of course, one must get everything NOW."<sup>5</sup> And where both partners in a marriage consider their own wishes and interests as equally important, conflict is bound to arise sooner or later. The marriage then becomes more of a battle of egos between the two partners than a love relationship.

Denis de Rougemont remarks that the cult of romance is one of the causes of the breakdown of marriage.<sup>6</sup> There is a widespread assumption that marriage and romantic love should go together and, therefore, when the romantic passion--which is transient by its very nature--has disappeared, the real basis for marriage has also disappeared. The partners then are free to separate from each other and go in search of a novel experience in love. Denis de Rougemont observes that "No other

civilization (than that of America) has embarked with anything like the same ingenuous assurance upon the perilous enterprise of making marriage coincide with love thus understood, and of making the first depend upon the second."<sup>7</sup> No wonder, as far as divorce statistics are concerned, the United States heads the list of countries.

The preoccupation with sex and sexual freedom has also contributed to the disintegration of marriage and increased the hostility between the sexes. In most of the novels we find that the husband and the wife are willing enough to have extra-marital relations, but at the same time do not like the idea that their partner should also enjoy the same freedom. For instance, in An American Dream, Rojack has his sexual adventures with other women, but when his wife starts describing how she enjoys sex with other men, he is overcome with sexual jealousy and strangles her to death. Freedom in sex has added to the insecurity and tension in marriage.

Talking about Bellow's heroes and their unsuccessful marriages, Victoria Sullivan observes, "Wilhelm and Herzog are both in their forties, a time when American men frequently suffer a crisis in self-esteem. One common cure for this malady is an affair with a younger woman, which occasionally leads to divorce and remarriage, as in the case of Herzog and Madeleine. The word "cure" must be used advisedly, for the action taken is more often a flight from a painful self-confrontation than a true attempt to deal with the problems of

middle age. Though vanity is fed, the crisis is merely postponed."<sup>8</sup> This is also very true of Rojack of An American Dream. Rojack is in his forties and, in spite of the robust image that he projects outside, experiences an inner vacuum within him. Instead of confronting and assessing his own self, Rojack resorts to all sorts of desperate means and adventures and thereby tries to escape the reality within him.

Malamud's recent novel, Dubin's Lives, also describes the flight of an aging man from the reality of his marriage into the wonderland of romance with a girl young enough to be his daughter. Like most of the heroes we are concerned with, Dubin is dying of subjectivity. Also, like Lesser of The Tenants, Dubin has consistently rejected life in favour of art. He is a biographer by profession and his work on D.H. Lawrence has not been going well of late. His thinning hair reminds him of the approaching old age. He is, moreover, nagged by the feeling that in his devotion to his work and an orderly life, he has somehow missed many interesting aspects of life--especially those of love and sex. At the age of fifty-seven, therefore, Dubin gives up his age-old restraints and disciplined life and goes in search of fresh experiences in sex and love. In Dubin's Lives, Malamud describes the disintegration and breakdown of a marriage in the most realistic and convincing manner. Dubin's Lives also serves to show how, when the old ties and attachments seem to have lost their allure and become rather stale, Americans go in search of "a new life," which is fraught

with the same uncertainties and risks as the old life, It is like having fresh wine in the old bottle. They attribute the failure of marriage to outside causes whereas the seeds of failure very often lie within their own nature and temperament. The boredom in marriage is, in most cases, the result of the boredom and staleness within one's self. One tries to cure this boredom with the passing fever of a fresh experience in love.

Philip Roth's My Life as a Man, Norman Mailer's Why Are We in Vietnam? and Bernard Malamud's The Fixer are grouped together in this chapter as they serve to bring out the marital tension and antagonism between the husband and the wife. The man looks upon his wife as his enemy and holds her responsible for all his miseries and troubles. The portrait of a bitchy and cannibalistic wife reflects the aversion of the man to marriage and responsibility. As the hero grows towards maturity and altruism, the woman also seems to lose her destructive character and appears as a human figure.

My Life as a Man is another grim and lurid tale of marital warfare. Peter Tarnopol, a well-known young American novelist, finds himself, to his utter confusion and incomprehension, trapped irrevocably into a nightmarish marriage to a ferocious specimen of womanhood, Maureen Johnson. The novel, supposed to be written by Tarnopol, deals with his desperate attempts to convert his intractable marriage into a form of high art. The



book is divided into three parts, the first two being what Tarnopol calls his "useful fiction." The first part, "Salad Days," written in a comic vein, is an idyll of happy adolescence. The second fiction, "Courting Disaster" or "Serious in the Fifties," describes in a grave tone a harrowing tale of squandered manhood. In the third narrative, "My True Story," Tarnopol, having failed to make sense of his disastrous marriage through his fictions, embarks on an autobiographical account, hoping thereby to exorcise his obsession once and for all. He labels the first two as the works of the id and the superego respectively and the last one as the defence presented by the ego.

Before he meets his nemesis, Maureen, Peter Tarnopol has never known failure and defeat in his life. A nice Jewish boy and, of course, brilliant, Tarnopol is brought up in a cosy Jewish home in Yonkers, New York, and later is graduated summa cum laude from Brown University. An ardent student of literature, studying great masters like Flaubert, Dostoevsky, Conrad and James, the only suffering he has known so far exists only in literature! On the one hand, Tarnopol wants to lead the exemplary life of an academic and join the ranks of his favourite authors by writing great fiction, and on the other, he desires to act out the moral anguish of their characters in his life. What he wants, he says, is intractability and "Of course what I also wanted was that my intractable existence should take place at an appropriately lofty moral altitude, an elevation somewhere, say, between The Brothers Karamazov and The Wings of the Dove."<sup>9</sup>

However, when he has to face "intractability" in the form of Maureen Johnson, Tarnopol is utterly unmanned by it. This Shiksa-Eve forces the innocent American Adam from his secure Eden into "the real unreal world" and calls halt to his hitherto successful literary career. Married to her, the only subject he can think of or write about is how he got into this trap of marriage and why he could not get out of it. "I could be his Muse," Maureen writes in her diary, "if only he'd let me."<sup>10</sup> Though she may not know it, she is Tarnopol's Muse, only; she has led him to hell instead of leading him to Paradise.

To Tarnopol, when he first meets her, Maureen presents the image of a self-sufficient and adventurous woman. She claims to have always been more or less in business for herself and has tried her hand at various things. She has been "a barmaid, an abstract painter, a sculptress, a waitress, an actress (and what an actress!), a short-story writer," and as Tarnopol realizes later, "a liar, and a psychopath."<sup>11</sup> Maureen is good at inventing fictions and Tarnopol insists that he was taken in by her tales of betrayal and victimization. He is so deceived by her appearances that, to him, she appears to be unlike any woman he has known so far.

Not before long, however, Tarnopol learns the truth about Maureen. For all her intellectual and artistic pretensions, he comes to see her helplessness which often drives her to the scenes of wild and reckless rage, her inability to hold any job

or do any work successfully, and her actual vicariousness. Within a few months of his affair with her, he has got all the taste of what life would be like with a destructive, hysterical and neurotic woman like Maureen. In addition, he does not even get any physical pleasure from her and yet, curiously enough, he marries this woman whom he fears and despises.

Giving his reasons for this disastrous step, Tarnopol argues that, in the first place, he was tricked into marriage by Maureen's duplicity. He was, again, deceived by her fiction about her pregnancy and thought it was his duty to marry her since he had impregnated her. It is only after three years of their marriage, in the course of a bloody brawl, that Maureen confesses the urine fraud she had practised on Tarnopol. At his insistence that she undergo a pregnancy test, Maureen had gone ahead and contrived to buy a sample of urine from a pregnant Negro woman and taken it to the drugstore to seal Tarnopol's fate.

Still, the fact remains that Tarnopol need not have married a woman like Maureen as he knew how suicidal an act it would be. Tarnopol, on his part, claims to have been a victim of the superego of the fifties, with its insistence on moral accountability and manly duty. In addition, in his particular case, there was also the great tradition of literary high seriousness to which as a student of literature he was susceptible. He maintains, therefore, that he did not marry Maureen in pursuit of lust or pleasure principle but was done in by the moral

principle as well as his own grandiose notions about himself. Like Neil Klugman and Gabe Wallach, Peter Tarnopol puts his misplaced zeal in a wrong cause and persuades himself of having made a moral and responsible decision.

Tarnopol does not realize that he is more of a victim of his own fantasies than of his culture. He is a good example of a writer who will select only that aspect of his experience which will be congenial to his temperament and genius. He is the author in search of a character that will make a "suffering hero" of him and in Maureen he finds the woman he had been looking for. He rejects healthy girls like Dina Dornbusch who could have really made him happy, because nice Jewish girls and happy marriages are not suited to his purposes. As his sister, Joan, rightly points out, "I know you can't write about me-- you can't make pleasure credible. And a working marriage that works is about as congenial to your talent and interests as the subject of outer space."<sup>12</sup> Tarnopol chooses Maureen because she conforms to his ideas on women. As Patricia Meyer Spacks notes, "Tarnopol, insisting on the reality of his experience, demonstrates for his readers how consistently he shapes that experience by fantasy. His image of women as both helpless and destructive must find its fulfilment, so he rejects self-sufficient, loving females until he finds women who so fully exemplify his inner sense of things that we feel he must have invented them."<sup>13</sup>

Maureen also, like Tarnopol, is an infantile and

self-destructive person and lives out her own fantasies in her life. And she, too, finds out men who would help her to prove her thesis about the betrayal and victimization of woman by man. She attracts men like Mezik, Walker and Tarnopol, who have, with all their apparent differences, one thing in common, and Mark Shechner points out, "a dislike for women and a penchant for discovering in Maureen the right sort of woman--someone for whom their prearranged misogyny can seem like a just and natural hatred."<sup>14</sup> Maureen, on her part, has as grandiose notions about herself as Tarnopol has. She thinks it to be her mission in life to make her husband into a "man" who can face the realities of life and she goes about this job of hers with the zeal of a martyr. In fact, in their "victim" bit both Tarnopol and Maureen try to outdo each other. Whereas he wants to live out the life of a fictional hero, she dreams of the life of a movie heroine like Marilyn Monroe, with the result that their life together is reduced to the farce of a soap opera.

Three years of miserable marital existence, in which hardly a single day passes without violent scenes of melodrama, is all that Tarnopol can take. Like a drowning man clutching at a straw, he turns to Karen Oakes, a student of his, for support and comfort. Predictably enough, when Maureen comes to know about the affair she makes a scene, attempting to commit suicide. In the midst of the suicide attempt she confesses about the urine fraud and that, too, only in order to make a deal with Tarnopol that if he would forgive her about the urine, then she

would forgive him about the girl! The knowledge of his being duped into the marriage, and at the same time his utter inability to get out of it, produce such feelings of rage and impotence in Tarnopol that he goes into a tantrum, and tears off his clothes and dons his wife's underwear, thereby indicating his loss of manhood. Two months after this incident, while he is on a visit to New York for a writing workshop at Brooklyn College, Tarnopol suffers from a nervous breakdown and has to seek asylum at his brother's place. Morris, his brother, finally takes matters in his own hands and separates his "little" brother from the woman who is ruining his life.

Though Tarnopol, with the help of his big brother, manages to separate himself from Maureen, he cannot get a divorce from her as she refuses to loosen her hold over his life. Then, there are those rigid divorce laws of New York State which, so it seems to Tarnopol, protect the interests of a woman rather than those of a man. As in An American Dream, here also social forces appear to have conspired with the woman in order to victimize and humiliate the man. Besides, the ugly financial aspect of the marriage is also underlined by the battles in the court between the husband and the wife over the issue of alimony. The way things stand now, it seems the marriage tie can only be dissolved by the death of one of the partners.

After his nervous breakdown, Tarnopol goes in for treatment to a New York psychiatrist, Dr. Spielvogel, the same Spielvogel who also appeared as a silent listener to Portnoy's confessions

in Portnoy's Complaint. Here we find him in full steam. Spielvogel is interested in the subject of "Creativity: The Narcissism of the Artist" and has some settled theories of his own on the topic. He does not think of Tarnopol as a victim of his culture but attributes the latter's troubles to the feelings of ambivalence and guilt and to the neurosis and narcissism of the artist, and traces their origin to the mother-child relationship. Portnoy would have been happy with such an interpretation, Tarnopol is enraged to see his well-meaning and harmless mother turned into "a phallic mother figure" by Spielvogel to prove his own point. The point that Spielvogel is trying to make, however, is that Tarnopol and Maureen, two self-destructive persons, were out to punish themselves and found in each other an ideal match for this purpose.

Tarnopol's lot is not as bad as he believes it to be. Maureen is the only fearsome and intractable woman he has had to deal with. The rest of her sex are easily charmed and controlled by him. In the wake of his separation from Maureen he meets two such women--Nancy Miles and Susan McCall. Nancy Miles, however, is too independent and too brilliant to fit in with the picture of woman he has in mind, so rejecting her, he settles down for the passive and helpless Susan McCall. She is not the kind of person who would make demands upon him, as she is shy, timid and full of inhibitions. He, moreover, can feel superior to her and can easily brush her off when his

need of her is over.

What attracts Tarnopol to Susan, in the first place, is that she is as "un-Maureenish" as a woman can be: "Obviously what drew me to Susan to begin with--only a year into my separation and still reeling--was that in temperament and social bearing she was as unlike Maureen as a woman could be. There was no confusing Maureen's recklessness, her instinct for scenes of wild accusation, her whole style of moral overkill, with Susan's sedate and mannerly masochism."<sup>15</sup> Susan makes no demands on him and nurses him "with the tenderest tenderness and the sweetest regard."<sup>16</sup> This rich and aristocratic widow provides Tarnopol with a hideout, a sanctuary from Maureen and the State of New York. She also offers him the blessings and comforts of a married life--the orderly, regular and peaceful life that he loves--without the attendant risks and responsibilities that such a state normally involves.

The only thought that keeps bothering Tarnopol, while he continues to enjoy Susan's hospitality, is that once Maureen is out of the scene, Susan might expect him to marry her. Susan denies his allegation that she wants to marry him or bear children, but these assurances do not help to dispel his fears. He is even afraid of the tender emotion of love that he feels for her, as that might lead him to another commitment, another trap. He has his own version of Susan's nature and character, and though Susan, now and then, surprises him by showing him



more spirit and sense than he has given her credit for, he would not accept that he could be wrong in her case. On the contrary, he suspects Susan to be as dangerous as Maureen, as she has at least two things in common with Maureen, her helplessness and her inability to give him any physical pleasure. In any case, Tarnopol is determined that he is not going to be trapped into another marriage.

Four years after their separation, Maureen gets killed in a car-accident, though not before she has had another wild scene with Tarnopol. She visits his apartment in order to announce that she would never give him a divorce. Tarnopol, on his part, beats her up and threatens to kill her with a poker. He gets his first victory over her when she regresses to total infantilism and spreads shit all over his place. Just as Rojack describes with vigour Deborah's defecation when he has strangled her to death, Tarnopol also takes great relish in the ugly episode as it helps to denigrate and confirm his ideas about Maureen in particular and women in general. Maureen never seems to recover from this humiliation and it almost sets her on the path of self-destruction.

Six months after this last encounter, Tarnopol receives the news of Maureen's death. He cannot believe it as he thinks it is too good to be true. Such wish-fulfilment, he tells us, is only possible in fiction, not in life! He suspects it to be "a ruse, some new little fiction of hers."<sup>17</sup> Only it is not so

this time. His fantasy has turned into reality and his enemy is really dead. He is his own man now, free to return to his happy adolescence! There is, of course, another threat to his new freedom in his patient mistress, Susan McCall, but that he easily manages to ward off by retreating to a writers' colony in Vermont. However, though he is released from Maureen, he discovers that he is still not free of her, as he cannot expel her from his imagination. Flying from Susan's love into a sexual quarantine, he returns to his writing and his obsession with Maureen and his disastrous marriage to her.

My Life as a Man is a bitter tale of sexual antagonism in which woman is portrayed as the enemy of man who frustrates his aspirations for a better life. It also depicts how the creative powers of the artist are dried up by the onslaught of the actualities of life. However, the hero is also responsible for his own predicament, as like so many writers of his day he has taken refuge in his "self". The trap Tarnopol has fallen into is not so much the trap of marriage to an intractable woman as the trap of the self. Maureen merely serves as an excuse for his failures, for his meagre imagination. Besides, it is doubtful, given Tarnopol's satirical and cynical genius and temperament, whether, even if he had found a better and a nobler subject than Maureen, he would have been able to turn it into a form of high tragedy as his models Dostoevsky and Flaubert did. Obviously Tarnopol found in Maureen the subject which was

congenial to his temperament and his genius. His choice of her above all other models of feminine grace and tenderness should prove it beyond any doubt.

Norman Mailer's An American Dream describes marriage as a battleground where the war between the sexes is carried out. Why Are We in Vietnam? is also about one such war, though here the confrontation between the husband and the wife is narrated by a third party, Ronald Jethroe, who styles himself as D.J. throughout the novel. The main action of Why Are We in Vietnam? deals with the hunting trip in Alaska but now and then D.J. comments upon his family, particularly the relations between his father and mother. D.J., like Portnoy, is a caricature of modern American youth and not very trustworthy as a narrator. Like Portnoy too, he is exceptionally brilliant and serves as the paradigm of the abuse of intelligence. Seen through his cynical genius all other characters stand in the danger of being distorted and caricatured.

As D.J. portrays her, Hallie Jethroe, his mother, appears more in the image of a glamorous bitch than a mother. According to D.J. she is "the prettiest little blonde you ever saw (looks like a draw between young Katherine Anne Porter and young Clare Boothe Luce, whew) all perfume snatchy poo, appears thirty-five, is forty-five. . . ." <sup>18</sup> This description of Hallie Jethroe sets

the tone for the book which is cynical as well as irreverent. Hallie figures mainly in the first chapter of the novel; the rest of it gives a few more glimpses of her here and there in snatches or flashbacks.

The interview between Hallie and her psychiatrist, a Jewish fellow, Leonard Levin Fichte Rothenberg is presented by D.J. in a highly comic and, at the same time, misleading fashion. Whereas Portnoy gives us the typical Jewish-mother language through Sophie Portnoy, D.J. puts in his mother's mouth "the proper vocabulary for a roughneck or a driller,"<sup>19</sup> the same obscene language that he himself uses. Now though Hallie of course does not use this kind of language in reality and though her interview with Rothenberg is purely made up by D.J., it further helps to distort and vulgarize her image. While at the end of the chapter D.J. admits that he was only giving us an imaginary piece of conversation between his mother and her psychiatrist, he still continues to confound his audience, as he adds in the same breath that his mother "is a Southern lady, she's as elegant as an oyster with powder on its ass, she don't talk that way, she just thinks that way."<sup>20</sup>

As D.J. describes him, Rusty Jethroe, D.J.'s father, is "a heroic-looking figure of a Texan" and looks "a high-breed crossing between Dwight D. Eisenhower and Henry Cabot Lodge . . ."<sup>21</sup> Rusty is a highly competitive person and has imbibed the corrupt values of the corporation system. Though he projects

the robust image of a tough guy outside, like Rojack, Rusty is a frustrated man inside as he is unable to control his wife. D.J. sometimes becomes the victim of the animosity between his parents. One incident in the novel gives the account of Rusty biting D.J. in the ass when the latter is only thirteen. Now as for the reason behind this outrageous and insane act, "D.J.'s here to say that Rusty bit his ass so bad because he was too chicken to bite Hallelujah's beautiful butt--she'd have made him pay a half million dollars for each separate hole in her marble palace."<sup>22</sup> So, according to D.J.'s version, as Rusty cannot take out his anger and frustration on his wife he takes it out on his son, who is made in her image.

Rusty's impotent rage against his wife is also apparent during his hunting trip to Alaska. When he is not able to hunt an animal he is all the more exasperated because he thinks what is at stake is his manhood. "Blasts of rage and goutts of fear burn like jets and flush like bile waters and he is humped in his mind on Hallie, D.J.'s own father, Rusty, married twenty years to a blonde beauty he can never own for certain in the flesh of his brain."<sup>23</sup> Like Croft and Cummings, Rusty is a prisoner of his own ego and has an inordinate lust to control people. In the case of people like him relationships are governed by power and not by love.

Talking about Mailer's first novel, Andrew Gordon remarks that "the secret conqueror of The Naked and the Dead is the

woman that no one can face, the mother, and this repressed truth explains the basic inconclusiveness of the work. Such a supposition is reinforced by the all-male environment of the book."<sup>24</sup> If one applies the same interpretation in the case of Why Are We in Vietnam?, which also has an all-male environment, then men can be seen as victims of woman from whom they are flying first to Alaska and then to Vietnam. In fact D.J. seems to believe that Rusty's marriage to a blonde bitch and his conforming to the values of a corrupt society have drained his father of his honesty and courage. This view is also held by Barry H. Leeds. "He is rusty in the ways of courage because he has been corroded for twenty years by corporate falsity as well as emasculation at the hands of a representative of tough American womanhood."<sup>25</sup>

However, Rusty is more of a victim of the American myth than of woman. It is not only Hallie who is caricatured in the novel, but Rusty is also exposed in his pretensions and cowardice. Richard Pearce describes Why Are We in Vietnam? as a radical critique of frontier values and remarks that "Mailer gives full recognition to the facts that frontier values not only derived from a past that never was, not only were unattainable, not only masked the real values of capitalism and imperialism--but have their own inherent potential for psychological and social destructiveness."<sup>26</sup> The love of power and status as well as the ideal of American virility drive Rusty to the jungles of Alaska for bear hunting. What the hunting trip exposes is

Rusty's cowardice and dishonesty. In order to maintain his image of a tough and successful guy, Rusty claims the bear, which was actually billed by D.J., as his victim. This leads to "final end of love of one son for one father."<sup>27</sup>

It is during this hunting trip that D.J. is initiated into the frontier values. When D.J. leaves the rest of the hunting group and goes with Tex on the trail of the bear, it appears as if D.J. has rejected his old man and the system that he stands for. However, this is merely an illusion. Their escape into the jungles is yet another enactment--or rather a parody of it--of the perennial American myth of a white and a coloured American male fleeing from society into each other's arms. And since D.J. and Tex cannot act out the homosexual yearnings that they feel in the wilderness, since they cannot be lovers, they become killer brothers and set out for yet another frontier, this time Vietnam, where their repressed emotions can find an outlet in the acts of cruelty and violence which, in turn, will pass for bravery and courage. At the end of the novel we find Tex and D.J., sitting at their farewell dinner "in the Dallas ass manse," happily looking forward to seeing "the wizard in Vietnam."<sup>28</sup>

The story is told by D.J. in the form of a broadcast as he celebrates the final night before he leaves for Vietnam. Through this non-stop first-person narrative one becomes aware of D.J.'s vanity, his bragging, his arrogance. D.J. thinks he has rejected

the values of his father, whereas the action of the novel reveals his acceptance of them. As Roger Ramsey observes, "D.J. and Tex are not apotheosized at the moment of their blood vow. They return to the hunting group, they are apparently receptive to the dinner party, and they go to Vietnam. . . . D.J. must be America. He is America in his easy brutality, his Schizoid needs, his arrogance. The metaphor does not suggest healing, nor does the principal fact of the novel: Vietnam."<sup>29</sup> Mailer not only satirizes Rusty and Hallie, but also satirizes D.J. The novel also makes it clear that it is the pursuit of the frontier myth, which in actuality is an escape and moral evasion, that is responsible for the American military posture in Vietnam and not Hallie Jethroe or Rusty's unhappy marriage to her.

Though Bernard Malamud's The Fixer is better known for its other themes--imprisonment, suffering, political commitment and so on--the present analysis is mainly concerned with Yakov Bok's marriage and relationship with Raisl. The novel is written in the form of a third-person narrative which easily shifts to first-person whenever required. The events and other characters in The Fixer are filtered through Yakov Bok's consciousness. As S.V. Pradhan notes, the early Bok is an unreliable narrator.<sup>30</sup> This is especially true in the case of his wife, Raisl, who, we are told, has cuckolded and deserted him.



The first reference that is made to Raisl in the novel describes her as "the faithless wife." The sad condition the house is in now seems to be the consequence of her irresponsible behaviour and though Bok drinks his tea without sugar and blames existence for its bitter taste, it seems but natural for a man who has been betrayed by his wife to feel bitter about things. When Shmuel, his father-in-law, remarks that Bok must be blaming him for his daughter Raisl, the latter bursts out with "Who said anything? You're blaming yourself for having brought up a whore."<sup>31</sup> A little later Bok informs us that his wife was a barren woman and that was the reason why he had stopped sleeping with her before she left him.

As the reader hears the curses and harsh strictures of Yakov Bok against his wife, he forms a picture of Raisl as a bitchy and destructive wife, who seems to be the cause of most of her husband's unhappiness and troubles. Shmuel, of course, tries to counteract this impression as he defends Raisl and suggests that Bok lacks charity towards his wife and his attitude to her is unforgiving and full of resentment. But at this stage one cannot be too sure as to how much one should believe in what an indulgent and loving father says of his only child to excuse her unpardonable behaviour. The conversation between Bok and Shmuel ends with Bok cursing a black cholera on Raisl and Shmuel wishing the same on his son-in-law and fleeing from his house.

Though Yakov Bok's heart is full of bitterness and resentment against his wife, she is constantly on his mind and he thinks of her at every juncture in his life. The memory of her arouses so much pain and shame in him that he tries to forget her and the past that she represents. "The past was a wound in the head. He thought of Raisl and felt depressed."<sup>32</sup> Raisl also seems to be responsible for his departure from the shtetl where he had spent most of his life. "He was leaving because he was a childless husband--'alive but dead' the Talmud described such a man--as well as embittered, deserted one. Yet if she had been faithful he would have stayed."<sup>33</sup> Since he is alone and free from family obligations and ties, he thinks he can now leave behind him the imprisoning influences of the shtetl, where the Jews live a life of poverty, misery and ignorance, and go in search of a new life of freedom and possibilities.

As Robert Alter observes, Malamud's central metaphor for Jewishness is imprisonment.<sup>34</sup> When Malamud's men begin their quest for freedom and a new life, they in a way reject their Jewish identity, which they feel circumscribes and obstructs their growth as free individuals. Yakov Bok has already taken a step in this direction by shaving off his beard. Leaving the shtetl is another step in the same direction. His half-baked knowledge of Spinoza has led him to reject his God and made a free-thinker out of him. His segregation from his tribe is still further emphasized when he sells away Shmuel's nag, which reminds him of the Jews, and drops the bag of prayer things into the Dnieper on his way to Kiev.

In Kiev also Bok continues the process of isolating himself from the Jews as he compulsively haunts the places where a Jew is not expected to be seen. On one such excursion he comes across Nikolai Maximovitch Lebedev, a confirmed anti-Semite with the sign of Black Hundreds on the button of his coat, lying unconscious on the snow. By helping this enemy of the Jews first and then accepting favours from him under an assumed name, Bok invites his own ruin. He is also willing to sleep with Zina, the crippled daughter of Nikolai Maximovitch, and desists from the attempt only at the eleventh hour when he sees the menstrual blood on her which in turn reminds him of his wife's modesty during her period.

When he is offered a job by Nikolai Maximovitch at his brickworks, Bok accepts it under a false name. By now, as Alan Warren Friedman points out, "symbolically, he has denied his people, his inherited scheme of values: rejecting his wife, fleeing the shtetl and the God who dwells there, bartering the horse, concealing his Jewishness."<sup>35</sup> Bok has also flouted the Russian Law and ignored the teachings of the Russian history with its long-standing hatred and harsh treatment of Jews. By rejecting his identity Bok thinks he can escape the fate of the Jews in Russia. Like most of the heroes we are concerned with, Yakov Bok tries to live as a separate island by divorcing himself from history. "I am in history," writes Bok while he is staying in his quarters at the brickworks, "yet not in it. In a way of speaking I'm far out, it passes me by."<sup>36</sup> It is

only after he is chosen as a scapegoat by the reactionary elements in Russia to prove their charge of ritual murder and blood guilt against the Jews that he realizes that every man, and especially a Jew, is affected by as well as responsible for history.

Of course, this realization comes to him very slowly and gradually through more than two years of imprisonment. When he is arrested at first on the charge of the murder of the Russian boy, Zenia Golov, Yakov Bok cannot understand why for such a small mistake as working under a false identity he should be made to pay beyond proportions. After all by adopting a Russian name he was only creating a few opportunities for a poor Jew like himself. But what Bok considers a small and pardonable aberration on his part is not only a crime against the Russian Law--as Bibikov, the Investigating Russian Magistrate is quick to point out to him--but also a serious moral lapse, as for the sake of making money he has rejected his Jewishness and thereby his humanity. His long ordeal in the Russian prison leads him by stages to accept his Jewishness as also his responsibility to his tribe.

In the earlier stages of his incarceration, it is difficult for Yakov Bok to see that he has also contributed to his own fate. As usual, he continues to blame his wife for his misfortunes as is evident in what he says to Bibkov: "To make it short and simple she was unfaithful. She ran off with an unknown party

and that's why I'm in jail now. If she hadn't done that I would have stayed where I belonged, which means where I was born."<sup>37</sup> Bok is full of self-pity and, like Rojack and Peter Tarnopol, looks upon himself as a victim of a bitchy wife and unjust society. It is beyond him at this point of his development to realize that Raisl is also a victim of his as also of the Russian state. As James M. Mellard points out, Raisl is an anagram for Israel and is clearly identified with Judaism itself.<sup>38</sup> This association of Raisl with the tribe is still further emphasized in the novel by the reference to the story of the prophet Hosea and the parallel that is drawn between his predicament and that of Yakov Bok. "He turned often to pages of Hosea and read with fascination the story of this man God had commanded to marry a harlot. The harlot, he had heard it said, was Israel, but the jealousy and anguish Hosea felt was that of a man whose wife had left his bed and board and gone whoring after strangers."<sup>39</sup> Bok's rejection of his wife, therefore, amounts to his rejection of his long suffering Nation and his acceptance of her, by the same law, means his acceptance of his responsibility to his tribe.

It is in his prison dreams, as Edwin M. Eigner points out, that Yakov Bok sees Raisl as a symbol of the Jews, not as an oppressor but as a fellow victim, persecuted by fate and by Russian history<sup>40</sup>: "Yakov, hiding under a table in his hut, was dragged forth and beheaded. Yakov, fleeing along a rutted road, had lost an arm, an eye, his bloody balls; Raisl, lying

on the sanded floor, had been raped beyond caring, her fruitless guts were eviscerated."<sup>41</sup> In another vision of his, he also sees her as his own victim "running from him in terror as though he had threatened her with a meat cleaver."<sup>42</sup> These dreams and visions are suggestive of the change that is taking place in Yakov Bok. Bok's heart, which had all along been lost in its own misery and pain and self-pity is now opening to the misery and pain in others too. The change in his attitude towards Raisl also points to a change in Bok himself.

In an interior monologue--the only one of its kind in the novel--Yakov Bok remembers Raisl as he had first seen her. He also recalls and reviews the ups and downs in their relationship, which was fraught with uncertainties and fears from the very beginning. Bok informs us that he used to be a little scared of her as she was an intelligent and dissatisfied girl and he was never sure whether he could give her what she wanted. One day in the woods they slept together and that, in turn, led to his marrying her in spite of his doubts and fears. Raisl was all the time urging Bok to leave Russia, which he was reluctant to do and that was the first source of disagreement and unpleasantness between the husband and the wife. However, the real trouble started only when after years of marriage they had no children. Raisl was desperate and tried everything in her power to get a child. Bok on his part was full of disappointment and bitterness and held it against Raisl for not being able to bear him a child. He had ultimately stopped sleeping with her and turning from his

shame, had devoted more and more of his time to the reading of books. His love of Spinoza had increased in proportion to his growing indifference to his wife. It was Raisl who finally had put an end to this impossible situation by running away with a stranger. The concluding lines of the monologue make it clear that Bok is now in a better position to understand and forgive his wife's behaviour: "At first I cursed her like somebody in the Bible curses his whorish wife. 'May she keep her miscarrying womb and dry breasts.' But now I look at it like this: She had tied herself to the wrong future."<sup>43</sup>

As S.V. Pradhan points out, Spinoza serves an important function which is central to an adequate understanding of The Fixer. He argues that Bok progresses from an uncomprehending smattering of Spinoza's philosophy to a firm grasp of it, a grasp which is reflected in his passionate commitment to the cause of his people.<sup>44</sup> In the beginning Bok looks upon Spinoza as a prophet of individual freedom and better life. It is Bibikov, the humane Investigating Magistrate--who is also one of the spiritual fathers and guides to Yakov Bok in the novel--who points out that Spinoza's concept of freedom is much broader and wider than Bok had thought: "One might say there is more than one conception of freedom in Spinoza's mind--in Necessity, philosophically speaking; and practically, in the state, that is to say within the realm of politics and political action. . . . He also thought man was freer when he participated in the life of society than when he lived in solitude as he himself did.

He thought that a free man in society had a positive interest in promoting the happiness and intellectual emancipation of his neighbours."<sup>45</sup>

Bok, however, is completely unaware of this aspect of Spinoza's philosophy. In fact, the earlier Bok is treated with irony as the author shows how his actions are consistently opposed to the spirit of Spinoza's teachings. Bok is self-regarding and self-centred and follows the dictum of every man for himself. He calls himself a free-thinker and is even reluctant to admit that he is a Jew. But howsoever Bok may deny his Jewishness, to the reactionary elements in Russia he is a Jew and therefore a good scapegoat for proving their charge of the ritual murder or blood guilt against the Jews. As he is persecuted and made to suffer on account of his being a Jew, Bok comes to see and experience his identity and oneness with his long suffering Nation. He realizes that he is not just a separate island, but an organic member of his community. In the earlier stages of his imprisonment he persuades himself that he suffers for no one and no one suffers for him. In the end he admits that he suffers for the Jews. Indeed, his suffering in the prison has made him so altruistic that he is prepared to die for Shmuel or any other Jew for that matter. Bok also realizes that there is no freedom for the individual unless it is won for all. From being a passive and loyal subject of Nicholas the Second, Bok turns into a bitter foe of the Tsar and of tyranny in any form. On his way to his long-awaited trial



at the end of the novel, Bok is determined to fight for his rights as well as those of the others: "Where there's no fight for it there's no freedom. What is it Spinoza says? If the state acts in ways that are abhorrent to human nature it's the lesser evil to destroy it. Death to the anti-Semites! Long live revolution! Long live liberty!"<sup>46</sup> From being a private and passive man Bok thus has turned into a political activist fighting for the cause of his people. He has truly become "free" in the Spinozan sense of the word.

As through his suffering in the prison Yakov Bok comes to see his identity with the Jews, so also he comes to feel his affinity with Raisl. As S.V. Pradhan remarks, his new attitude towards his wife is informed by the Spinozan virtues of charity, sympathy, love and generosity.<sup>47</sup> And when finally Raisl appears before us, we discover that she does not at all fit into the picture of a bitchy and destructive wife. She is as human and pitiable as Bok is and like him too has suffered a lot in life. "She was as she wept, a frail woman, lanky, small-breasted, worn and sad. Who would have thought so frail? As she wept she moved him. He had learned about tears."<sup>48</sup> For the first time in the novel, Raisl is allowed to plead for herself as she informs us that she had left Bok because at twenty-eight she was too young for the grave which is where his indifference and cruelty to her would surely have led her.

At the beginning of their interview, Bok is of course full of bitterness and accusations against Raisl. But it is soon

enough apparent that he has also come to see his own responsibility for their marital unhappiness. He says to Raisl,

I've thought about our life from beginning to end and I can't blame you for more than I blame myself. . . . I'm also sorry I stopped sleeping with you. I was out to stab myself, so I stabbed you. Who else was so close to me? Still I've suffered in this prison and I'm not the same man I once was. What more can I say, Raisl? If I had my life to live over, you'd have less to cry about, so stop crying.<sup>49</sup>

However, there is still more anguish and misery in store for Bok as Raisl informs him that she has given birth to a child. All along with Yakov Bok the reader had also believed that the biological flaw lay with Raisl. Now it turns out that it was actually Bok who was responsible for Raisl's barrenness. The true measure of Bok's maturity and charity now becomes evident, as, recovering from his shock and humiliation, he accedes to Raisl's request that he adopt her bastard son as his own. As long as he does not do that, Raisl would be treated as a pariah among the Jews. In order that Raisl be accepted back in her community, Bok writes a note to the old rabbi saying the child is his own and that Raisl be given every possible help. This noble gesture on his part signals the birth of a new Yakov Bok.

At the end, before setting out for his trial, when he defies the Deputy Warden and is in danger of being killed for insubordination, Yakov's first thought is for Raisl and not for himself. "My dirty luck. Yakov thought of the way his life had gone. Now Shmuel is dead and Raisl has nothing to eat.

I've never been of use to anybody and I'll never be."<sup>50</sup> Also, on his way to the trial he feels an overwhelming hunger to be back home, to see Raisl and set things straight, to decide what to do. Indeed, he has not only accepted Raisl's child in letter but also in spirit as is evident in his last vision in which he confronts the Tsar. When the Tsar says, "Permit me to ask, Yakov Shepsovitch, are you a father?" Bok touchingly replies, "with all my heart."<sup>51</sup> This is a great transformation in a man, who to begin with, was self-absorbed and cared little for others. He has now assumed the role of a patriarch and accepted his responsibility for his wife as well as the tribe that she represents. This is what his suffering and education in prison have done for him. Bok's consciousness now includes his wife, even her bastard child, Shmuel and other Jews, in fact the ever widening circle of humanity.

In Philip Roth's My Life as a Man, the story is told by the hero, Peter Tarnopol. Tarnopol looks upon himself as the victim of his wife, Maureen, and attributes most of his failures and troubles to his disastrous marriage with her. As in the case of most of the first-person narratives, Tarnopol is not a dependable narrator and he only presents a subjective view of things. Roth suggests that Tarnopol could be wrong by presenting some pages from Maureen's diary. In her writings, Maureen appears as sensible and convincing as Tarnopol does. Besides,

there are other characters in the novel, who not only sympathise with Maureen, but also admire her. Roth presents Tarnopol as a comic figure and through Tarnopol's rendition of the events of his life, brings out the latter's narcissism and destructive obsession with himself and his bad marriage. Filtered through the consciousness of a neurotic personality as Tarnopol, the other characters in the novel also suffer distortion and become caricatures. In his earlier fiction like Letting Go, Roth imitated Henry James and Jamesian structure, and narrated his stories in a serious vein. The women characters in Letting Go, therefore, emerge as human figures. However, very soon Roth discovered that his special gift lay in comedy and satire. Also, for describing the phenomenon of the fractured and neurotic personalities, he found out that the first-person narrative was best-suited to his purpose. Since his Portnoy's Complaint, therefore, he has stuck to the same narrative technique, i.e., first-person narrative. The image of woman is more or less affected by this technique as the hero very often projects his neurosis and shortcomings <sup>on to</sup> the woman.

The same may be said of Mailer. Women are treated much more sympathetically in The Naked and the Dead and The Executioner's Song--especially in the latter work--where he uses omniscient method--than in the novels where the first-person narrative is used. Mailer's heroes are often psychopaths, or they suffer from psychic impotence and they are most ready to blame it on women. D.J. of Why Are We in Vietnam?, like Rojack

of An American Dream, is a caricature and seen through his cynical genius, other characters also get distorted. He, moreover, is bent upon impressing and confounding his audience and very often gets carried away by his own cleverness. We are not even sure whether he is telling us the truth or making things up.

Malamud generally writes his novels in the form of a third-person narrative which easily shifts to first-person whenever required. He maintains the distance between himself and his characters by the use of irony--either comic irony as in the case of Levin of A New Life or tragic irony as in the case of Yakov Bok of The Fixer. In The Fixer, the earlier Bok is treated with irony as Malamud reveals how Bok's actions are consistently opposed to the spirit of Spinoza's teachings. As S.V. Pradhan points out, "The man who judges his wife, Raisl, his father-in-law and the Jews is himself being judged all the time."<sup>52</sup> However, as Yakov Bok grows and matures through his suffering in the prison, this ironic dimension disappears. As Bok changes and grows, Raisl also appears in a different light than she was presented by Bok in the earlier stages of the novel. This only proves, again, how the image of woman is a projection of the hero himself. Most of Malamud's male protagonists change and grow--in short, they are capable of growth. But Roth and Mailer deal with the arrested growth or development of their men. As their men do not change, their women also remain, more or less, flat and static figures.

As far as the writings of most of the Jewish writers are concerned, the common tendency--especially among the feminists--is to identify the author with his hero and so attribute the views of the latter to his creator. These novelists are also criticized as male chauvinists or misogynists, who try to establish male supremacy and give expression to their hatred for women through their male characters. Some of the parallels or similarities in the lives of the writers and their creations also help to lend credibility to this belief. Roth's heroes have many things in common with Roth himself. They are not only Jewish intellectuals but also, in some cases, professors and writers like him. Also, it is a well-known fact that, like Rojack of An American Dream, Mailer had attempted to stab his own wife. This often leads people to think that the line dividing the writer from his hero is very thin in the writings of the authors under discussion. Kate Millett, for instance, maintains that in An American Dream, Mailer transparently identifies with his hero, who has little motive for the killing beyond the fact that he is unable to master his mate by any means short of murder.<sup>53</sup>

However, it is the confusion about the author's intentions and methods that often leads to such misconceptions. In connection with Mailer's An American Dream, John W. Aldridge observes, "But what the critics failed to comprehend was that it could not be properly judged by standards normally applied to the novel and that, for all its ugliness, it was essentially

a work of humor and self-satire, most humorous in those places where it treated derisively some of its most serious-seeming effects."<sup>54</sup> Philip Roth often exposes the infantilism and narcissism, the self-deception and snobbery of his protagonists. Mailer has devoted his time and energies to studying and analyzing the behaviour of the psychopath. Malamud often criticizes the self-centredness and self-absorption of his male characters. It cannot be said that these novelists approve of these destructive tendencies and characteristics in their heroes. Though it is true that the male protagonist often shares some of the concerns of the author and, to some extent, enjoys his sympathy, it would be a gross mistake to identify the author with his hero. Each writer takes enough care to maintain the distance between himself and his characters in a variety of ways, notably by the use of irony, as in Malamud, or humour and satire, as in Roth and Mailer.

The attitude of these writers towards their protagonists at best can be described as ambivalent or ambiguous. Is Mailer praising Rojack and D.J. or condemning through them some harmful tendencies that he finds in the Americans? Does Roth expose the follies of people like Portnoy and Tarnopol or does he want us to sympathise with them? Are we invited by Malamud to criticize Dubin and his actions or appreciate them? One never finds sure answers to these questions. It is often maintained that the attitude of Jewish writers towards women is ambivalent. But the same may be said with regard to their

male protagonists. Perhaps this ambivalence and uncertainty in the treatment of their characters may be said to be the hallmark of the writings of the authors under consideration.



## Notes

- 1 Katharine M. Rogers, The Troublesome Helpmate : A History of Misogyny in Literature (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1966), p.263.
- 2 Norman Mailer, An American Dream (1964; rpt. New York: The Dial Press, 1965), p.9.
- 3 Philip Roth, When She Was Good (1967; rpt. New York: Bantam Books, 1970), p.271.
- 4 John Sirjamaki, The American Family in the Twentieth Century (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), p.194.
- 5 Page Smith, Daughters of the Promised Land : Women in American History (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1970), p.339.
- 6 Denis de Rougemont, Love in the Western World, trans. Montgomery Belgion, revised and augmented ed. (1940; rpt. Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett, 1969), p.307.
- 7 Ibid., p.306.
- 8 Victoria Sullivan, "The Battle of the Sexes in Three Bellow Novels," in Saul Bellow : A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Earl Rovit (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1975), pp.109-10.
- 9 Philip Roth, My Life as a Man (1970; rpt. New York: Holt, 1974), pp.194-95.
- 10 Ibid., p.310.
- 11 Ibid., p.99.
- 12 Ibid., p.115.
- 13 Patricia Meyer Spacks, "Only Personal: Some Functions of Fiction," The Yale Review, 65 (Summer 1976), 541.
- 14 Mark Shechner, "Philip Roth," Partisan Review, 41, (1974), 425.
- 15 Roth, My Life as a Man, p.136.
- 16 Ibid., p.164.
- 17 Ibid., p.327.

- 18 Norman Mailer, Why Are We in Vietnam? (1967; rpt. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1969), p.12.
- 19 Ibid., p.20.
- 20 Ibid., p.22.
- 21 Ibid., p.31.
- 22 Ibid., p.41.
- 23 Ibid., p.107.
- 24 Andrew Gordon, "The Naked and the Dead : The Triumph of Impotence," Literature and Psychology, 19 (1969), 19.
- 25 Barry H. Leeds, The Structured Vision of Norman Mailer (New York: New York University Press, 1969), pp.184-85.
- 26 Richard Pearce, "Norman Mailer's Why Are We in Vietnam?: A Radical Critique of Frontier Values," in Norman Mailer: Modern Fiction Studies, 17 (Autumn 1971), 410.
- 27 Mailer, Why Are We in Vietnam?, p.147.
- 28 Ibid., p.208.
- 29 Roger Ramsey, "Current and Recurrent : The Vietnam Novel," in Norman Mailer : Modern Fiction Studies, pp.429-30.
- 30 S.V. Pradhan, "Spinoza and Malamud's The Fixer," Indian Journal of American Studies, 5 (January and July 1975), 40.
- 31 Bernard Malamud, The Fixer (1966; rpt. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1977), p.9.
- 32 Ibid., p.16.
- 33 Ibid., p.21.
- 34 Robert Alter, "Jewishness as Metaphor," in Bernard Malamud and the Critics, ed. Leslie A. Field and Joyce W. Field (New York: New York University Press, 1970), p.33.
- 35 Alan Warren Friedman, "The Hero as Schnook," in Bernard Malamud and the Critics, p.295.
- 36 Malamud, The Fixer, p.58.
- 37 Ibid., p.69.

- 38 James M. Mellard, "Four Versions of Pastoral," in Bernard Malamud and the Critics, p.70.
- 39 Malamud, The Fixer, p.218.
- 40 Edwin M. Eigner, "The Loathly Ladies," in Bernard Malamud and the Critics, p.103.
- 41 Malamud, The Fixer, p.180.
- 42 Ibid., p.170.
- 43 Ibid., p.193.
- 44 Pradhan, p.37.
- 45 Malamud, The Fixer, pp.72-73.
- 46 Ibid., p.299.
- 47 Pradhan, p.48.
- 48 Malamud, The Fixer, p.258.
- 49 Ibid., p.259.
- 50 Ibid., p.291.
- 51 Ibid., p.297.
- 52 Pradhan, p.38.
- 53 Kate Millett, Sexual Politics (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1970), p.10.
- 54 John W. Aldridge, "The Energy of New Success," in Norman Mailer : A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. Leo Braudy (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972), p.118.