In Philip Roth's ninth book of fiction, *The Professor of Desire*, young David Kepesh, attending college at Syracuse University, places on the bulletin board in his room two quotes that justly capture the budding scholar's dual nature: Lord Byron's dictum, "Studious by day, dissolute by night," and Thomas B. Macaulay's remarks on Sir Richard Steele, "He was a rake among scholars, and a scholar among rakes." He places these quotes, as he discloses to the reader, "directly above the names of the girls whom I have set my mind to seduce, a word whose deepest resonances come to me, neither from pornography nor pulp magazines, but from my agonized reading in Kierkegaard's *Either/Or*.*

This is just one of a many passages in the novel where Kepesh taps into the wisdom of his literary heroes, those who are presumed to have influence over his life, to justify both his intellectual and lustful passions.

In fact, if one were to look for the one novel that stands as the best indicator of Roth's forebears, at least ostensibly so, it would probably be *The Professor of Desire*. The pages of the book are swarming with direct and subtle references to a variety of literary touchstones, including Sophocles, Dostoevsky, Shakespeare, Strindberg, O'Neill, the Bloomsbury group, Joyce, Maupassant, Twain, Flaubert, Tolstoy, Henry James, Hemingway, Chekhov, Freud, Kafka, Yeats, Faulkner, Genet, Synge, Céline, Hardy, Mann, Brontë (both Emily and Charlotte), Bellow, Kundtza, Melville, Colette, Updike, Henry Miller, Hawthorne, and Gogol. Of course, almost all of these references can be explained by the fact that David Kepesh is a professor of literature, and as such, citations of this magnitude are understandable given his profession, as well as his inflated sense of self. Nonetheless, most of these names are the same ones that come up in almost any discussion of those that Roth admires. Just toss in a few more names, such as Malamud, Beckett, and perhaps a touch of Dos Passos, and the list would be complete. In other words, Kepesh's influences appear to be Roth's influences. But herein lies the problem. Given the fact that Kepesh is obviously a fictional character, and one that Roth has often used as either an agent or subject of satire, might then the very concept of literary influence—at least in terms of trying to delineate an original point of tribute or departure—be "fictional" as well? Assigning literary influences can be a tricky business, and it may not be too much of a stretch to suggest that by portraying Kepesh's textual indulgences and extensive name-dropping as he does, Roth may be suggesting that such efforts to forge links of legacy are inherently problematic.

This is not to suggest that Roth's fiction does not bear the imprint of authors that he admittedly admires. One does not have to look very far to see the Jamesian stamp on *Letting Go* and *The Ghost Writer*, Flaubert's mark on *When She Was Good*, the shadow of Yeats across the pages of *Sabbath's Theater* and *The Dying Animal*, the reflection of Joyce's Stephen Dedalus in the figure of Nathan Zuckerman, or the bearings of Kafka and Roth's Czech experiences in such works as *The Breast*, *The Professor of Desire*, *The Prague Orgy*, and ""I Always Wanted You to Admire My Fasting'; or, Looking at Kafka." However, approaching Roth's fiction through more traditional accounts of literary influence—such as T. S. Eliot's Modernist (and even neoclassical) emphasis on the beneficial necessity of traditional models and Harold Bloom's more Romantic notions of influence as *clima men*, a misprision or misreading of previous writers—can be rather limiting. Readings that highlight the cataloging of sources, usually intentional in nature, see influence as an author-to-author phenomenon and tend to accept uncritically suppositions of authenticity and originality. What is more, they may not actually tell us anything particularly meaningful about the work under discussion, at least nothing beyond a simple assumption of linear progeny.

Indeed, Roth himself complicates any traditional readings of influence in the very novel that seems to endorse most of his idols. *The Professor of Desire* opens, not with some pedantic reference to literary greatness, but with a nine-page tribute to Herbie Bratsky, the social director, bandleader, crooner, and M.C. at Kepesh's Hungarian Royale, the mountainside resort hotel that David's family owns. As a young boy, Kepesh was fascinated with Herbie's comic antics, especially his repertoire of fart sounds. He waxes nostalgically that

not only can [Herbie] simulate the panoply of sounds—ranging from the faintest springtime sigh to the twenty-one-gun salute—with which mankind emits its gases, but he can also "do diarrhea." Not, he is quick to inform me, some poor schlimazel in its throes—that he had already mastered back in high school—but the full Wagnerian strains of fecal Strum and Drang. (6-7)

The unforgettable Herbie Bratsky goes on to hold at least as much influence over the development of Kepesh as do Chekhov and Flaubert, if not more.
In fact, in a profoundly disturbing dream that Kepesh experiences while on a trip to Prague, Bratasky becomes the professor's guide -- the Virgil to Kepesh's Dante, if you will -- into the very depths of Kafkadom, at the very center of which sits Kafka's aged prostitute. Bratasky's usurpation of influence can even be read as synonymous with the role that such figures as Lenny Bruce (another Jewish bad boy) played in determining the course of Roth's career from Portnoy's Complaint onward -- a shift from his earlier forays into Jamesian/Flaubertian realism and, with his increased emphasis on comedy, a literary transgression which didn't rest easy with more Modernist-minded critics such as Irving Howe and Norman Podhoretz.

Perhaps a more useful way of approaching Roth's work, at least in terms of the author's stance vis-à-vis influence, is through a more postmodern lens, one that problematizes more traditional (two-dimensional and linear) notions of literary influence and instead recontextualizes the argument in terms of two different narrative strategies: intertextuality and metafiction. Regarding the former, the work of Julia Kristeva, inspired by M. M. Bakhtin, should stand as a critical starting point. She envisions a three-dimensional textual space whose three "coordinates of dialogue" are the writing subject (or author), the addressee (or ideal reader), and texts exterior to the work in question. This textual space is comprised of intersecting planes that have horizontal and vertical axes. As she describes it,

"The word's status is thus defined horizontally (the word in the text belongs to both writing subject and addressee) as well as vertically (the word in the text is oriented towards an anterior or synchronic literary corpus) ... each word (text) is an intersection of words (texts) where at least one other word (text) can be read ... any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another."

Elsewhere Kristeva defines the "literary word" as an intersection of textual surfaces rather than a point (a fixed meaning), as a dialogue among several writings. Here is a very postmodern understanding of "influence" since the meaning of a text -- or the relationship of the text to its author as well as to other texts, anterior or contemporaneous -- is both contingent (in its dependence upon other texts) and local (in that its specific context, as opposed to any universal referent, determines its significance). As such, intertextuality emphasizes the relationship between one text and any knowledge of other text(s) that the writer or the reader brings to the narrative in question. In other words, an understanding of any one text is necessarily informed by a reader's encounter with previous texts. However, it is not necessary for the reader to be able to accurately pinpoint a specific exterior text, or intertext. According to Michael Riffat, all one needs to do to sufficiently interpret a text is to assume that some intertext is being transformed by the text in question. As he states, "Intertextual reading is the perception of similar comparabilities from text to text; or it is the assumption that such comparing must be done if there is no intertext at hand wherein to find comparabilities. In the latter case, the text holds clues (such as formal and semantic gaps) to a complementary intertext lying in wait somewhere." As Riffat also puts it, intertextuality "is the web of functions that constitutes and regulates the relationship between text and intertext." The interconnectedness of Roth's texts -- one to the other or one to those of other writers -- forms a solid narrative network. As with a spider's web, you touch one part of it and other spaces reverberate.

Such instances of intertextuality occur throughout Roth's fiction. In fact, one cannot thoroughly read Roth without taking issues of intertextuality into account. There are, for instance, the references to Portrait of a Lady that set up the opening pages of Letting Go, the undercurrent of Lewis's Main Street that can be found in When She Was Good, the Freudian intertexts sprinkled throughout Portnoy's Complaint, the allusions to 1950s radio programming that frame the plot of "On the Air," the brief echo of Salinger's Franny and Zooey in My Life as a Man, the presence of Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man in The Ghost Writer, the confessional narratives (e.g., those of St. Augustine and Rousseau) that underlie Operation Shylow, and the great nineteenth-century European novellas -- Kafka's The Metamorphosis, Gogol's The Nose, and Tolstoy's Death of Ivan Ilych -- that serve as intertexts of The Breast. And of course, there is Roth's intertextual tour de force, The Great American Novel, which incorporates into its narrative fabric, among other texts, Melville's Moby-Dick (as well as Typee and Omoo); Hawthorne's The Red Letter; Twain's Adventures of Huckleberry Finn; Conrad's Heart of Darkness; Anderson's Winesburg, Ohio; the book of Exodus; Homer's The Odyssey; the Epic of Gilgamesh; The Song of Roland; Egyptian, Hindu, Norse, and Greek mythologies; diverse popular cultural texts such as the headline format from The Sporting News, the slogan of Wheaties breakfast cereal, the label of Aunt Jemima syrup, the Warren Report, and the film The Pride of the Yankees; and, introducing each of the nine primary chapters of the novel, the narrative précis reminiscent of the nineteenth-century Victorian novel form.

What is more, there are the innumerable examples of intertextuality within Roth's corpus, where characters and events in earlier Roth texts are cited in later volumes. The various series of the Zuckerman works (those constituting Zuckerman Bound as well as in the American Trilogy), the "Philip Roth" books (the autobiographical tetrology of The Facts, Deception, Patrimony, and Operation Shylow), and the Kepesh novels (The Breast, The Professor
of Desire, and The Dying Animal) are perhaps the most obvious examples of this strategy. It is worth noting that such intertextual self-referentiality can be both narratively consistent (as in the case of most of the Zuckerman books) and historically inconsistent (as in the case of the Kepesh works, where the facts surrounding David Kepesh change depending on the text). What distinguishes this intertextual play from more conventional notions of literary inheritance, though, is that Roth integrates both "high" and "low" textual references that not only decenter any notions of authority (as it refers to both political power structures and the writing subject), but draw our attention to the ways in which texts are constructed. So by readjusting our critical lens from a focus on influence to one on intertextuality, we make possible a more expansive reading of Roth's fiction.

Complementing these readings of intertextuality are the many examples of metafiction found throughout Roth's oeuvre. While not solely a postmodern phenomenon, metafiction is a narrative form that is highly self-reflective -- or put another way, a mode of writing wherein texts are aware of and refer to themselves as constructed narratives -- and as such, are usually considered an expression of postmodern writing. Although there are several definitions of metafiction, perhaps one of the most general, and useful, understandings of this concept is that of Patricia Waugh, who defines metafiction as

fictional writing which self-consciously and systematically draws attention to its status as an artifact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality. In providing a critique of their own methods of construction, such writings not only examine the fundamental structures of narrative fiction, they also explore the possible fictionality of the world outside the literary fictional text.

The postmodern implications of metafiction are quite significant and indeed underscore the "fictionality of the world": reader expectations are shattered, traditional narrative modes of understanding (as in genre distinctions) are ruptured, boundaries between reader and text become more fluid, totality and unity (of the text as well as of the narrating subject) are thrown into question, and linguistic contingency displaces metaphysical determinacy as an arbiter of meaning. All of these effects, in one form or another, can be felt throughout most of Roth's writing.

One of Roth's first, and most notable, exercises in metafictional play is My Life as a Man, a novel that introduces for the first time the perennial Nathan Zuckerman. However, Zuckerman isn't the protagonist of this novel. That distinction goes to Peter Tarnopol, a talented young novelist who creates the character of Nathan Zuckerman and uses him in his fiction in order to better understand the responsibilities of manhood. The novel is divided into two sections, "Useful Fictions," comprised of two Zuckerman short stories written by Tarnopol, and "My True Story," the longer memoir-like portion concerning the painful -- and highly comic -- links between Tarnopol's relationships with women and his writing. The two stories that make up the "Useful Fictions" section, "Salad Days" and "Courting Disaster (or, Serious in the Fifties)," are further distinguished by the fact that each presents a slightly different version of Zuckerman's relationship with his family and with women. Not long after the reader gets to "My True Story" -- a tellingly ironic title, given the fictional shifts experienced up to this point -- he or she begins to understand that the first two narratives are in fact Tarnopol's attempts to represent, and thus make sense of, his life in fictional form. In this way, the very structure of the novel underscores its metafictional themes: it is a fiction about the creation of fiction, and how that fiction becomes a way of constructing meaning.

The metafictional nature of the novel is made apparent even before the narrative properly begins. In "A Note to the Reader" that immediately follows the dedication page, Roth asserts that "Useful Fictions" and "My True Story" are taken from the writings of Peter Tarnopol. The effect of this non-diagnostic qualifier is indeed disruptive, for not only does it plunge us directly into Roth's fictional labyrinth -- who is writing about whom? -- it also forces us to consider the generic make-up of the book we are about to read. Is it both a work of fiction and an autobiography, and if so, whose authorial presence -- the fictionist's or the autobiographer's -- should be privileged here? Yet at the same time, we know that what we hold in our hand is none other than a work of fiction, despite the apparently misleading "Note to the Reader." These narrative contortions are given an added twist when we turn the page and see the novel's epigraph, "I could be his Muse, if only he'd let me," a quote from Maureen Tarnopol, Peter's wife, a character in the very fiction we are about to read. One cannot help but to think of John Barth's "funhouse" metaphor from his Lost in the Funhouse, where what we see in the mirror depends not only upon our angle of vision, but the degree of reflexivity as well. In true metafictional form, Roth holds a mirror up to himself as the author of My Life as a Man by showing us a man (Tarnopol) who is attempting to represent himself through his fiction, and whose fictional creation (Zuckerman) will also go on to represent himself through his fictions.

If My Life as a Man is a novel concerned with the constructedness of narrative, then The Counterlife is a work that foregrounds the constructedness of subjects who create those narratives. Much like the earlier novel, The
Counterlife is a fragmented narrative whose "facts" are in the process of being rewritten, but even more so than its predecessor, it is populated by figures who negotiate their subjectivity through their language. As Nathan Zuckerman, the book's protagonist, says at one point, "we are all the inventions of each other, everybody a conjuration conjuring up everyone else." There are, for instance, Nathan's brother, Henry, who visits Israel and commits to the Zionist cause after renaming himself Hanoch; his Zionist leader, Mordecai Lippman, who employs aggressive polemics, as well as the threat of physical violence, as a means to establish his Jewish Kibbutz; left-wing journalist Suki Elchanan, whose rhetoric of liberalism functions as a countercalque to Lippman's diatribes; Maria, Zuckerman's gentle wife (at least in certain sections of the text) who, after being represented in different guises by different characters, takes control of her narrative by writing herself out of the novel; Jimmy Ben-Joseph, an American middle-class Jew who redefines himself as a "prophet" of Israeli salvation through his advocacy of baseball and his authoring of the anti-Holocaust remembrance manifesto, "Forget Remembering"; and standing behind this entire cast of self-constructed subjects is Nathan Zuckerman, the ur-manipulator who uses the pages of The Counterlife to reinvent himself as a writer, an American, and as a Jew. No longer the subject of Peter Tarnopol's fictional machinations, Zuckerman becomes his own author through a realization of the fragmented and contingent nature of subjectivity. As he tells Maria toward the end of the novel,

"...is impersonation — in the absence of a self, one impersonates selves, and after a while impersonates best the self that best gets one through... What I have instead is a variety of impersonations I can do, and not only of myself — a troupe of players that I have internalized, a permanent company of actors that I can call upon when a self is required, an ever-evolving stock of pieces and parts that forms my repertoire... I am a theater, nothing more than a theater."

(The Counterlife, 320-21)

Such an awareness is unquestionably postmodern, and it stands in direct opposition — or as a countertext — to an understanding of identity, individual and well as textual, as a unified agent of influence. This is quite a departure from a reading of Roth that privileges traditional models of literary inheritance. Here the textual self does not so much build upon previous influences as it does imitate, or even parody, them through performance. The Counterlife is not only a space of subjective invention. Perhaps more importantly, it is a novel that is highly aware of itself as such a textual space. In fact, The Counterlife stands as Roth's most outstanding example of metafiction writing. It is comprised of five sections: "Basel," "Judea," "Aloft," "Glouchestershire," and "Christendom" — each of which revises, however slightly, the events in the chapter that precedes it. Episodes concerning a character in one chapter, such as the bypass surgery that Henry undergoes in "Basel," are rewritten to involve someone else in a later chapter (in this case, it is Nathan who undergoes the surgery in "Glouchestershire"). Events that occur in one part, such as the hijacking of the EL Al flight in the "Aloft" section, seem later never to have happened once we get to the final section, "Christendom." And perhaps more significantly, there are even places in the novel where passages from certain parts of the text are referenced — in a highly metafictional manner — in other sections, and sometimes with exact page numbers. For instance, Nathan's imagined comments on the EL AL flight in "Aloft" (235-36) are read in manuscript form by Henry in "Glouchestershire" (240). Words from Nathan's first-person account of his troubled relationship with Maria are repeated verbatim in the opening sentences of her letter to him (312). Passages from Nathan's eulogy in the first part of "Glouchestershire" (208-11) are repeated word for word in one of the documents that Henry finds while rummaging through Nathan's brownstone later in the chapter (231). Henry also discovers among Nathan's papers three of the chapters — "Basel," "Judea," and "Christendom" — that make up the actual text of The Counterlife, and even refers to the exact page number on which the last section begins (229). What is more, Maria's letter in "Christendom" (314) refers to an event that takes place earlier in "Judea," again, down to the exact page number (73).

In the final pages of The Counterlife, Roth, through the voice of Nathan Zuckerman, foregrounds his metafictional agenda, drawing attention to the artifice of his project, and he does so in the very text that the reader holds in his or her hands:

"The burden [of subjectivity] isn't either/or, consciously choosing from possibilities equally difficult and regrettable — it's and/or and/or and/or and/or and/or and/or and/or and/or... Life is... the accidental and the immutable, the elusive and the graspable, the bizarre and the predictable, the actual and the potential, all the multiplying realities, entangled, overlapping, colliding, conjoined — plus the multiplying illusions! This times this times this times this times this..."

(The Counterlife, 320-21)

Each of the five "ands" in this passage correspond to one of the five sections of the novel, suggesting that any attempt to wrap up the text's many unanswered questions — Did Henry really survive his heart operation? Was Maria the English wife of Nathan or the Swiss mistress of Henry? Did Jimmy Ben-Joseph really attempt to hijack the EL AL flight? Was Nathan really the one who suffered from impotence, and not Henry? — are ultimately futile. What is important in this novel isn't so much the believability of the events
themselves as it is how those events are represented within the text. As the concluding ellipsis in the above passage suggests, constructing the self is an open-ended and always ongoing process.

Similar postmodern modes of narration are also apparent in Roth’s autobiographical tetralogy, *The Facts, Deception, Patrimony, and Operation Shylock*. If, as Waugh argues, one of the functions of metafiction is to draw “attention to its status as an artefact in order to pose questions about the relationship between fiction and reality” (*Metafiction*, 2), then one will not find clearer examples of this strategy than in these four texts. In contrast to all of Roth’s other works, each text within the autobiographical tetralogy possesses a subtitle that should ideally serve as a directive for interpretation. This being the case, *The Facts* should be read as “A Novelist’s Autobiography,” *Deception* was written as “A Novel,” *Patrimony* is unquestionably “A True Story,” and *Operation Shylock* is nothing more than “A Confession.” Taken at face value, then, only *Deception* should be read as fiction while the others stand apart as nonfictional forms of “life writing.” However, this distinction among genres—and more importantly, the differentiation between “fiction” and “reality”—is undermined in the very book where Roth supposedly sheds his fictionalizing masks. The “novelist’s autobiography” is framed by two letters, one from Philip to Zuckerman and the other from Zuckerman to Philip, and together these “fictions” make up approximately a quarter of *The Facts*. It is amazing how few pages in this book are devoted to the “facts” of the novelist’s life, an irony that Roth—who has done more than his share of deconstructing the notion of “author”—must surely savor. Traditional conceptions of the totalized self, as well as the unified text, are ruptured from the very beginning. In his letter, Philip (the narrating subject, as opposed to “Roth,” the living author) confides to Zuckerman that he has recently suffered a Halcion-induced depression and as a result feels himself “coming undone.” In order to put himself back together, he feels that he must “go back to the moment of origins,” the facts prior to fiction, despite the naïveté of such a movement.13 In his reply to Philip, Zuckerman, demonstrating a narrative savvy apparently lacking in his creator, resists such facile measures. He clearly sees the futility of trying to recover any factual origins for the purposes of understanding himself (or at least in helping Philip’s readership understand him). Zuckerman claims that what Philip has been engaged in all along, from the creation of Neil Klugman in “Goodbye, Columbus” to that of Nathan Zuckerman, is nothing more than the reinvention of the self: “You’ve written metamorphoses of yourself so many times, you no longer have any idea what you are or ever were. By now what you are is a walking text” (*The Facts*, 162). And we may rightly assume, in light of the ironic distance set up between Roth (the living author) and Philip, that such an allegation can certainly be leveled again Roth himself, although with this caveat: in contrast with Philip’s narrative innocence, Roth is fully conscious of the “walking text” he is creating. In this manner, Roth throws down the textual gauntlet and more or less dares us to establish any incontrovertible distinctions between “fiction” and “reality.”

The remainder of the autobiographical tetralogy similarly challenges our understanding of genre distinctions. *Deception*, which is purportedly a novel, is structured more like a series of dramatic dialogues. The book possesses almost no exposition—to call it “minimalist” would be to stretch its bulk. *Patrimony*, although the most personal of the four texts, nonetheless betrays much of the novelist’s imaginary flair in several passages that appear almost too fictional to be real.14 And *Operation Shylock*, despite the author’s protestations of verisimilitude—“The book is true,” Roth claimed to a reporter at the time of publication—is nothing more than a false confession.15 In it, Roth claims to have met an exact double of himself in Israel during the John Demjanjuk trials of the 1980s. What is more, he also claims to have gone on undercover operations for the Mossad. To say the least, such a yarn is difficult for most readers to accept, and in fact, the very structure of the book betrays Roth’s mischievous efforts at textual duplicity. Bracketing the novel proper are two narrative qualifiers, each of which stands in stark contrast to the other. In the “Preface,” Roth states outright that “I’ve drawn *Operation Shylock* from notebook journals. The book is as accurate an account as I am able to give of actual occurrences that I lived through during my middle fifties and that culminated, early in 1988, in my agreeing to undertake an intelligence-gathering operation for Israel’s foreign intelligence service, the Mossad.”16 As he does in *The Facts*, Roth claims that he is pulling his story straight from his notebooks and without the varnish of fiction. The only “facts” altered are for legal reasons, and “these are minor changes that mainly involve details of identification and locale and are of little significance to the overall story and its verisimilitude” (*Operation Shylock*, 13). In stark contrast to this is his “Note to the Reader,” a disclosure which ends the book.16 The Note includes the standard disclaimer that Simon and Schuster, his publisher at the time, inserted in all of their fiction: “This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are either products of the author’s imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events or locales or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.” However, Roth qualifies this disclaimer by noting two nonfictional exceptions to the “fiction” — the interview with Appelfeld and minutes from the Demjanjuk trial—and then ends his “Note to the Reader” with the words, “This confession is false” (*1991*).
In addition to the obvious discrepancy between Operation Shylock's framing paratexts—the Preface's claims to truth and the Note's assertion of fiction—these two qualifying statements raise other questions that are difficult to ignore. For instance, the wording in the Preface should raise suspicion in the astute reader: "The book is as accurate an account as I am able to give of actual occurrences" (emphasis added). Coming from a writer who generates metafictional fictions, these words suggest more of a creative predisposition than a limitation of style. If we read between the lines, we may see this as a backhanded admission to narrative equivocation, and coupled with the "minor changes" that are of "little significance," they should leave us guarded. Furthermore, there is the ambiguous meaning behind the final admission, "This confession is false." Is it the "confession" of fiction as expressed in the Note that is false, or is the entire text itself, one that professes verisimilitude and whose subtitle bears the word "confession," that is false? Roth gives the reader no indication of which reading to take. With Operation Shylock, as with all the other works within the autobiographical tetralogy, Roth does not require that we ultimately distinguish fact from fiction. In fact, he seems to be arguing against any comfortable differentiation between the two. Instead of trying to determine what is "fabricated" and what is "true," readers should approach the text as part of a larger metatextual project: Roth's ambitious attempt to write in the crossroads of autobiography and fiction.

During the last part of the 1990s, and into the next century, Roth has continued to foreground the fragmented, and highly contingent, nature of narrative production. All three works in the American Trilogy—American Pastoral, I Married a Communist, and The Human Stain—reveal the narrative uses of memory and show how the text of the self is inextricably linked to its cultural times. And in The Plot Against America, Roth uses an uncharacteristic generic model, the science fiction form of alternate history, to problematize any formal distinctions between fiction and history. So given the author's tendencies to create these kinds of narrative conundrums, questions surrounding Roth's literary influences become suspect, at best. A more productive way of approaching Roth's work would be to account for the different ways he incorporates a variety of texts into the fabric of his own fiction, specifically through means of metafiction and intertextuality. Many of these texts make up the core of our traditional Western canon, others are part of the "common" cultural air we all breathe, and still others are the very works of fiction that have established Roth as one of America's most important living authors. However, he may use these texts, and whatever legacy he may inherit in the process, one thing should be unambiguously clear: Philip Roth has spent the better part of his career helping to show us how we structure our texts, how we construct our truths, and how we formulate our identities. Such concerns, postmodern as they are, seem considerably more vital than any question of literary patrimony.

NOTES

2 See Conversations with Philip Roth, ed. George J. Searles (Jackson University Press of Mississippi, 1992) and Philip Roth, Reading Myself and Others (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2001). As for his Czechoslovakian experiences, Roth visited the Soviet-dominated country during the 1970s, and while there befriended such repressed authors as Milan Kundera and Ludvik Vaculik. This exposure led to the Penguin book series "Writers from the Other Europe," for which Roth served as General Editor until 1989.
4 At the risk of overgeneralizing, it might be useful to differentiate between modern understandings of literary influence and postmodern concerns of textual interplay. Modern approaches would see no problem with—and indeed, may even promote—such concepts as originality, universality, self-contained authority, unity, and "genius." Postmodern readings, on the other hand, tend to problematize both originality and authenticity, emphasize indeterminacy and contingency, present subjective experience as fragmented, and subvert distinctions between "high" and "low" culture.
13 See, for instance, the section where Philip unconsciously drives to his mother's cemetery (pp. 19–21), the bathroom scene where he cleans up after his father's uncontrollable bowel movement (pp. 171–76), and the account of Walter
Hermann's sexually tinged Holocaust experience (pp. 208–18). Such events may have occurred, but they are narrated in such a way that they resonate with novelist's significance.

16 It is significant to note that much as he does in My Life as a Man, Roth uses this "Note" to complicate any straightforward readings of his text. He even does something similar in the "Note" that he includes at the end of his more recent novel, The Plot Against America.

3

DONALD M. KARTIGANER

Zuckerman Bound: the celebrant of silence

Zuckerman Bound is one of the major achievements of post-World War II American fiction. A full-scale portrait of the artist, the trilogy invokes several of its most illustrious precursors— the "wonderful and famous stories and novels by Henry James and Thomas Mann and James Joyce about the life of the artist"— and effects a transformation, inserting between the lines of these lives and works the novelist Nathan Zuckerman and "the comedy that an artistic vocation can turn out to be in the U.S.A.".

While all three novels of Zuckerman Bound and its epilogue comment on the full range of the artistic process, each of them emphasizes a different phase. The Ghost Writer deals with shifting conceptions of the writer at work: from the high modernist heroic figure redeeming the real, at times appearing to abandon it for the sake of some imaginary coherence, to the postmodern comedian eager to violate clear-cut divisions of life and art, particularly if that means offending the self-appointed arbiters of both. Zuckerman Unbound describes the engagement of writer with reader through the published book, an act of cultural exchange in which the production of the writer is born anew as the possession of the reader. The Anatomy Lesson moves beyond literary creation and reception to the crisis of the renunciation of language itself: the supreme challenge to writing and reading by the body in pain. The Prague Orgy encapsulates the whole, extending the range of the major concerns of the trilogy: writing, reading, the cycles of process and possession, and the human suffering that limits utterance to the evocation of silence.

The Ghost Writer

Nathan Zuckerman, the novice in quest of a mentor as well as a father to replace the one with whom he has quarreled, and E. I. Lonoff, the chosen "Maestro," are, for all their mutual admiration for each other's