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***The Disappointment of the Western Intellectual in the  
Twentieth century***

*(in Saul Bellow's novels **Mr. Sammler's Planet** and **Herzog**)*

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*Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto diplomovou práci vypracovala samostatně s použitím uvedené literatury pod odborným dohledem vedoucí diplomové práce.*

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## **Preface**

The disappointment of the Western intellectual in the twentieth century occurred to me as a relevant theme for my main, final, and most in-depth work, the thesis. My interest in philosophical questions was encouraged by an excellent course in Philosophy at Aquinas High-school in Augusta, GA and continued here, at Philosophical Faculty with the seminars of the late prof.M. Machovec that I attended through my five years of study. At the same time, thanks to the seminar on Jewish American Literature of Dr.Hana Ulmanova, I was introduced to the Works of Saul Bellow. His *Seize the Day* immediately caught my attention and his other Works started to appear on my bedside table. Having read seven of his novels (*Seize the Day*, *Mr. Sammler's Planet*, *Herzog*, *Dean's December*, *The Actual*, *The Bellarosa Connection*, *More die of Heartbreak*), I began to realize the connection between the lectures of prof. M. Machovec and Bellow's literary work: both express the disappointment from the development of the Western society to its present state. Both make us aware that the generally glorified freedom of each individual in the West as the climax of the development of humanity carries inside symptoms of doom. The complexity of the value of freedom became the reason why I came to be interested in analyzing these prophetic insights.

## Introduction

Saul Bellow's main characters are frequently persons who convey their experience with reality in the contemporary Western society. The concrete phenomena - their individual experiences fold up into a more conclusive reflection and lead to the comprehension of reality on a general level. And it is disappointment that best characterizes the resulting knowledge.

The novels I selected for the thorough analysis, *Mr. Sammler's Planet* and *Herzog*, both depict and encounter of man with reality. The reflection of this encounter is presented by scholarly men, Mr. Sammler and Moses E. Herzog. Despite the fact that they are fictitious characters, their knowledge of Western thinkers makes them 'real' intellectual critics of the contemporary time. They connect through their theoretical scholarship and their personal lives, observations and experiences. The outcome is an account of the state of the contemporary Western society in the light of a broader understanding of its development.

The course of that development or transformation can be analyzed with the help of works of influential Western thinkers for their reasoning always arises from the conditions of their present time. Their works containing novel concepts have impact on the future development but also inevitably reflect the past development.

This is the reason why I decide to analyze the novels in the light of three representatives of the Western thought - each rooted at a different period of time in the course of development of the Western culture. I have chosen three philosophers: St. Augustine, F.W. Nietzsche, and J.P. Sartre. My intention is to show that they well represent the changes of concepts that have taken place in the Western society.

Augustine's works mark the dawn of the Western civilization back in the Early Middle Ages. His thought naturally makes up the foundation of the European society. Nietzsche grasps a turn in the course of future development based on irretrievable overall decline of the traditional spiritual supports of the nineteenth century Europe. And Sartre in the twentieth century declares man free, that is to say, independent of the previous Western development. All three together thus roughly cover the major spiritual turning points in the development of the Western society.

From the teachings of St. Augustine, I would like to apply his notion of human knowledge and its stages leading to the recognition of Eternal Truth, and the notion of Love clarifying man's needs and basis of human history.

According to him, the first stage of knowledge is sensation which gives us only some knowledge. The higher stage is judgment based on general truth. The act of attaining knowledge thus contains four elements: (1) the object sensed, (2) the bodily organ upon which sensation depends, (3) the activity of the mind in formulating an image of the object, and (4) the immaterial object, which the mind uses in making a judgment about the sensed object. There are two different kinds of objects that human beings encounter: the objects of the bodily sense and the objects of the mind. These different objects account for different degrees of reliability of intellectual certainty - when directed toward changing physical objects - or when the mind contemplates truths independent of the senses.

The highest stage of knowledge is possible by what he named Illumination: it comes from God just as light comes from the Sun. This light from God is the condition under which we recognize the quality of truth and eternity of our ideas. The Illumination of our judgment means that we are able to discern that certain ideas contain necessary and eternal

truth.

Augustine's own experience of sensuality gave him the proof that the soul cannot find its peace in bodily pleasures. The activity of mind could provide more lasting and profound peace. He concluded that eternal knowledge could not come from his limited and finite mind but has its source in God. He explained that both have the same qualities - both are eternal and true. The Eternal Truth is identical with his notion of God.

Augustine aimed his philosophical notions toward man's condition and goal of his/her life. He is aware that man seeks a road to happiness. That fact testifies to man's incompleteness and finitude. The only full happiness man can find in God since he/she was made by God.

In order to explain the reasons of human condition, Augustine came up with a Doctrine of Love: Man loves since he is incomplete. He/she can love a variety of objects: (1) Physical objects, (2) other persons or (3) himself. All things in the world are good to love for they all come from God and they provide some satisfaction and happiness. The problem arises from the manner man attaches himself to these things and his/her expectations. The answer to unfulfilled outcome of man's love is what Augustine calls disordered love.

The needs of man do not include only finite worldly objects - but mainly infinite - God. Each object of love can give only a certain amount of satisfaction and not more. Disordered love consists in expecting more from an object of love than it is capable of providing. Augustine explains impact on the soul if man loves disorderly - it produces disordered persons who produce disordered community. The disordered persons who love the self and the world only make up the City of the World whereas those who love orderly and first of all God creates the city of God. Human history is a world drama presenting the

conflict of these two cities.

Nietzsche inspired me by his accuracy of the foreseen future. I aim to use the implications of his famous statement that 'God is dead' and his concept of the central drive of human nature which is, according to him, the Will to Power.

He considers nihilism to be the consequence of the fact that European nations stopped to believe in God. The religious faith is replaced with belief in Darwinism which results in the erasing the distinction between man and animal. He expresses worries about the further development seeing a possibility of relentless struggle - wars such as have never happened before. At the same time, he criticizes Christianity and Judaism for its life-denying approach toward life and declares it false, unnatural, not based on true human nature.

As an alternative to the diminishing religious awareness, he starts to glorify the real nature of man which is the Will to Power or the Will to Life. Those who have the capacity to follow the Will to Power determine and create all values and do not need an approval of their acts. He envisioned that the acceptance of the Will to Power in Europe would bring back the truly complete man who would achieve new levels of creative activity. Ideals such as equality among men are non-sensical for men are differentiated into ranks by quanta of power.

I found Sartre's fundamental thought that 'existence precedes essence' and its implied notion that 'man is condemned to be free' useful for my analysis.

His statement about existence preceding essence is a reversal of traditional metaphysics stating that essence precedes existence. The underlying cause of his views is an absolute acceptance of atheism. There is no God and no given human nature but just a universal human condition. Man simply exists and only later defines himself - man is merely

what he makes of himself. That implies that, apart from his existence, there is nothingness.

To say that there is nothing besides the existing individual means that there is no God, no objective system of values, and no determinism. Man is forlorn.

With the help of these philosophical concepts, the thesis attempts to analyze the nature of the contemporary man and society based on the above mentioned novels. It also attempts to answer why the main characters of Saul Bellow are experiencing disappointment.



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# Man

Man is the smallest unit of mankind. This makes him/her a proper object to start with when analyzing the roots of disappointment of the intellectuals in Saul Bellow's *Mr. Sammler's Planet* and *Herzog*. Necessarily, the focus in this first chapter of my interpretation is on the nature of man's inner spiritual world - the anthropological self-reflection of man for that is the essence upon which man then relates to his/her fellow man and society and finally all existence.

## 2.1. From Individualization to Individualism

The culture of Western civilization has been built up on the heritage of the Ancient civilization and Christianity which also partly mediated Judaism. These three sources injected their spiritual substance into the rising civilization of Europe and predetermined its increased dynamic nature of development up to the present.<sup>1</sup> This dynamism in the European civilization is the chief agent of the rise of the process of individualization.<sup>2</sup> The process sprang up from the gradually increasing distinction within the society, through growing division of labor and through members distinguished by their uniqueness in form of remarkable talents, individualities with genius stretching beyond their life-time.<sup>3</sup>

The magnificent heritage in arts, sciences, philosophy, and social

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<sup>1</sup> *Philosophy Face to Face the Doom*, p. 202-3 *Europeanism - Three sources of its dynamism*

<sup>2</sup> *Enemies of Society*, p. 31-42

<sup>3</sup> *Philosophy Face...*, p. 21

and political life coming from the relatively short period of time in Ancient Greece<sup>4</sup> has profoundly influenced the development toward the recognition of the individual in Europe.<sup>5</sup> The Greek genius with the traditional emphasis on the power of human reason<sup>6</sup> and skills<sup>7</sup> lay foundations for the development scientific specializations, the heritage that is, in effect, responsible for the industrial advancement of the Western civilization. The growing consistent application of the principle of reason finally challenges the belief in God and while Thomas Aquinas manages to reconcile faith and reason in the 13th century<sup>8</sup>, Voltaire in 18th century renounces religious belief as groundless, this being an anticipation of Nietzsche stating God's death a hundred years later. The realistic picture of the current condition of man as presented by Bellow, indicates the recovery of the old Greek *Man is the measure of all things* by Protagoras, the leading Sophist from 5th century BC.<sup>9</sup> However, what we have taken from the Ancients makes up just a part of the foundations of the Western civilization...

Judaic tradition was defined by the permanent struggle to survive but not only physically as was the case with other peoples. In Judaism we find an exclusive idea of a meaningful survival - the life lived with a mission.<sup>10</sup> The source of their spiritual strength dwelt on strict monotheism, belief in wholly spiritual God

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<sup>4</sup> 5th and 4th century BC

<sup>5</sup> since Renaissance, and then especially since the 18th century

<sup>6</sup> *ibid.* p.101-183 *episteme* (knowledge in Greek) First Sophists - used logic and eloquence to win the argument, and then the three famous philosophers: Socrates refuted the use of reason for the momentous victory and turned his intelligence toward search for wisdom by questioning; Plato established the category of philosopher as spiritually and rationally elite man who desires to disclose the mystery of being; Aristotle, the founder of sciences and scholarship, underscored the primary importance of man's creative activity

<sup>7</sup> *techne* (skill in Greek)

<sup>8</sup> *Philosophy Face...*, p. 181

<sup>9</sup> *Philosophy*, p. 31-2

<sup>10</sup> *Philosophy Face...*, p. 189

who bound His/Her people [the Jews] by a covenant. The God's covenant was to be met by their own conduct and activity which implies that it also provided a deep significance for all individual acts or pains. The most important element of this spirituality is that its entire nature focused on the effort in time, or in other words, the future becomes a part of the present endeavor. The live idea of future as a state when everything would be restored to peace and harmony,<sup>11</sup> acted as a continuous impulse to meet the commandments of the covenant which in reality meant living while disregarding the horizon of the individual. The individual perceived his/her acting as a part of something 'above-individual'<sup>12</sup>, going beyond his/her mortal being, transient existence, and as a participation in creating the ideal future to come.

Christianity as a variation of Judaism took over the messianic awaiting<sup>13</sup> but recreated it. Its 'good news' lost the exclusive containment to one elected nation [the Jews] and was opened to all nations. Another differentiating aspect was that Jesus was not perceived only as one in the sequence of the prophets but as the Messiah himself. The stirring contents of Jesus' message exemplified by himself address every man in his/her everyday existence with its urgently pronounced tone. What is central to it is the call for an immediate change into a new man - the citizen of the coming God's Kingdom.<sup>14</sup> But the revolutionary moment of Christianity was the call for living with an inward dialogue with Jesus, the constant confrontation of one's life with the one of Jesus. In this sense, the man

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<sup>11</sup> *ibid.* p. 193 (Izajah) s. o. 'messianic state', 'New Jerusalem' The prophets always acted to bring people back to the covenant, to enliven it.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid.* p. 195

<sup>13</sup> *Jesus for A Modern Man*, p.20-38

of the Western civilization was for shaped by a vision of the ideal future, God's Kingdom<sup>15</sup>, and by a spiritual communication with the figure of Jesus.<sup>16</sup>

The process of individualization is connected with the most eminent works of mankind and it is a feature of something highly positive - remarkable human activity. Since the Modern Age, however, as a result of the accelerating division of labor and capitalist enterprise, this process has started to encompass a growing number of people and gradually most Western men, men with no eminence. The former precious capability of maturation into individuality was replaced by individualism. The expression of it is a way of life in which man is the end for himself/herself, the sense for himself/herself and the aim for himself/herself. Everything else is given a minor role, a role of means, becomes marginal, negligible and at last indifferent.<sup>17</sup>

In conclusion, the Greek contribution of reason and skill lead the Western culture to its astonishing scientific and technical advancement but did not invent the means of how to control the adverse effect of man's activity, the growth of parasitic individualism. On the contrary, Christian [Judaic] spirituality hindered the spread of individualism because its focus was the human relation to superior God, [Jesus, the fellow man]. The substance of this relation required a control of oneself which further impeded the growth of individualism.

At first, the Renaissance and Reformation lead to the

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<sup>14</sup> *ibid.* p. 48-55

<sup>15</sup> *Philosophy Face...* p. 206

<sup>16</sup> The 'human' qualities of Christianity flourished in the Celtic inhabitations (Ireland, Scotland). The Iro-scottish missions on the Continent sew in the original message of the Gospels opposing class and institutional loyalty of the formalized Christianity. *ibid.* p. 207-222

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.* p. 21

secularization, then the Enlightenment and the Rationalism of the 18th century<sup>18</sup> contributed to the decline of the belief in God. It has left behind spiritual vacuum but, at the same time, it gave man full freedom to express his/her authenticity. It was believed that the 'freed' man would harbor unthought-of qualities and that through freedom human beings could make a step towards perfection.

## **2.2. Man in *Mr. Sammler's Planet* and *Herzog***

Saul Bellow created his novels to act like mirrors - to provoke thinking, new re-evaluation, and self-reflection of the contemporary man. In the continual haste of the current life-style and under the bombardment of pop-culture, his works really make man, the reader, stop, look back and then look forward as well. Purposely, the main figures of both novels are educated men which enhances the relevance of their reflections. At the same time his characters are 'real', dealing with hardships that are part of the twentieth century man's life, and are set in real places, at a definite time and in the real social context of the day which manages a close identification with their plea. Saul Bellow's desired result is to restate the unity of man, the interconnection of man's spiritual self with attained knowledge and with reality of everyday situations. In this way man can better reflect the processes that are taking place in his/her soul and around him/her. The very same

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<sup>18</sup> *World Civilizations I, II* Renaissance turned attention to man, Reformation in the sense of the major demand of the free interpretation of the Scriptures; Enlightenment and Rationalism: stemmed from three basic premises: the entire universe is fully intelligible and governed by natural rather than supernatural forces; rigorous scientific method can answer fundamental questions in all areas of inquiry; the human race can be educated to achieve nearly infinite improvement. Most thinkers adhered to Deism (God=divine clockmaker)

task - man's self-reflection as a human being, a member of the one species, brought Bellow to the uncompromising mapping of the extent of the individualism-affected man and society.

### *Mr. Sammler's Planet*

#### **2.2.1. Artur Sammler, Elya, and Dr. Lal**

These three characters of *Mr. Sammler's Planet* differ from the other characters by the same self-reflection as man and in relation to being. They perceive themselves as bound by 'higher' principles, constants, that do not come from their own will or any other individual's will. Since they do not perceive themselves as primary determiners, they did not develop into self-centeredness and can still relate - with an appropriate importance of their individual existence - to mankind.

Mr. Sammler, the main figure, the 'disinterested observer' in the novel, is the embodiment of the Western civilization in his identity, knowledge, and experience.

Born in Cracow, he is familiar with the conditions of life in Eastern Europe. Another substantial fact of Sammler is his Jewish origin. He was not reared in Orthodoxy, on the contrary, his mother deliberately gave him the name Artur to demonstrate her wish for him to become a world person, 'cosmopolitan', not bound only by his Jewishness. At the same time, Sammler grew up in the environment where Orthodoxy still lived on. By personality he



inclined to the English character and he naturally acquired the manners of a first-rate gentleman. The deep-felt identification with the British culture, as the most civilized and advanced nation of the time of his maturation<sup>19</sup> testifies to his innate high-intelligence. Through the knowledge of and the years spent among the cultural elites of England, he adopted a high standard of what the civilized mean. On the other hand, his being Jewish establishes him as one of the minority, the minority originating in the non-European part of the world.<sup>20</sup> This fact provides him with the right distance when it comes to evaluate the Western civilization - he is a part of Her, yet not completely belonging to Her, but to the world, the Planet.

The environment of his home can be compared to one of a nobleman's home and in such conditions he could easily pursue his early intellectual interests. Probably not accidentally, he takes interest in philosophical works<sup>21</sup> making inquiries into the most fundamental questions. It could be estimated that through the further study, he developed his anglophilia and maybe his first doubts concerning the Germans. His life-long extraordinarily extensive knowledge of the works of renown thinkers, modern and old, sharpened his critical thinking to the point that he could distinguish what is of any worth and what is non-sensical or foolish.

His life experience includes a wide range of events: from having been personally acquainted with upper-class and the prominent people of the time in the environment nurturing him up to the verge of snobbery - to having been

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<sup>19</sup> Sammler was born 1896 and was growing up before the WWI when England was called 'the shopping window of the world'.

<sup>20</sup> He identifies himself as being Oriental.

<sup>21</sup> He recalls reading Shoppenhaur at sixteen. p. 209

marked to be disposed of like pest. Sammler was at the leading Europe's center at the time of Her accomplishments but he then experienced Her steepest downfall during the World War II. Antisemitism being Her ever-present predicament<sup>22</sup> took on unheard-of extent in the war and though Sammler accidentally escaped, he was to be put to death twice - first as a victim of Nazi antisemitic machinery, then deliberately by his Polish fellow partisans at the end of the war. He survived at the cost of abominable suffering - head injury and eye loss caused by a German soldier, then living on the run half-naked, and then as a hungry and cold guerrilla fighter. Later, when the official architects of the Holocaust withdrew, his only way to keep alive was to stay refuge in a tomb. Sammler who witnessed the death of his mate, did not die but actually 'experienced' his own annihilation - psychological - coming from the hatred toward him for being Jewish and expressed in the attempts to kill him; and physical - coming from the bodily agony bordering on death. Later, when he rises from this acute annihilation, Sammler sees the old self as a different figure - that is how much his experience changed him. The regrets that he feels do not spring from the impossibility to recover the care-free times of his life but they spring from the disappointment with his pre-war self. He renounces his mental as well as physical fleeing from the native Jewish world into Anglophilia connected with his and his wife's snobbish intellectual indulgence.

Saul Bellow takes the reader to New York City in 1970. Sammler is over seventy and has lived in the United States since 1947 when his nephew Elya arranged for him and his daughter Shula a new life in America. With the time interval of almost thirty years since his war tribulations, his identity, knowledge,

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<sup>22</sup> The records of European antisemitism go back to the tenth century

and experience are differently self-reflected. In addition to all that, he is compelled to interact with the environment - an environment of the late sixties and early seventies when America is going through 'transition'<sup>23</sup>. The process of individualization of the Western society has made a rapid progress. Man of the sixties and seventies is seeking ever new ways to express his/her uniqueness and independence from the past. Hence, in everyday life, Sammler discovers the widening gap between the people he meets and himself.<sup>24</sup>

The reason for Sammler's subjective feeling of disparity is not only his seniority, superior intelligence or unusually cruel fate but the difference originates in the way he apprehends his position as the smallest unit of mankind, man, and in relation to other men and to the world.

Sammler's understanding of the being is based on the belief of the existence of truth that has an objective nature. Since this truth goes beyond man, it is not derived from man, it is not dependent on man, the time of his/her existence, or his/her own points of view, truth is simply immutable. This quality of truth is making it the eternal constant.

This understanding of truth puts Sammler in the position of a learner who has a respect toward something that is above him, something he did not create but in which he has possibility to participate in it but never to 'possess' it.<sup>25</sup> This participation in something that is above men and timeless means a

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<sup>23</sup> *American Tradition*, p. 700 - 713

<sup>24</sup> *Mr. Sammler's Planet*, p. 43 *But the effect was that Mr. Sammler did feel somewhat separated from the rest of his species, if not in some fashion severed - severed not so much by age as by preoccupations too different and remote, disproportionate on the side of the spiritual, Platonic, Augustinian, thirteenth-century.*

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.* p. 136 *Not "Me and the Universe". No, his personal idea was one of the human sub specie aeternitas, the truth, but that one should be satisfied with such truth as one could get by*

connection with eternity. In this sense, Sammler comes to the knowledge of God, who is both eternal and a source of Truth.

The demonstration of Sammler's respect toward the Truth of which no individual can be a possessor, is his ever-present doubts when thinking of or communicating his observations. The uncertainty about his judgments is awareness of the fact that his opinion is founded on his own individual, subjective, thus fallible nature.<sup>26</sup>

The way Sammler was able to attain some knowledge of truth is a result of his recognition of the world originating in God. His complicated identity, an insight acquired through the reading of the renowned thinkers, his London years followed by most horrid experiences, gave him an opportunity to go through a lifetime constantly repeated process described by St. Augustine. From sensation, learning through senses, he has been making judgments trying to sort in his mind phenomena according to their character while comparing them to that which is regarded as standard. The standard has not the source in him, is not 'his own', but arises from his enlarging knowledge of the world and equals the truth.

The way Sammler sees his position toward other men and the world plays an important role in the way he relates himself to both. Since he acknowledges the existence of the objective essence of truth, his role is only in recognizing what exists independently, which makes him realize his own insignificance as a mere individual, the smallest unit of mankind.

Likewise he treats all human scholarship being able to

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*approximation.*

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.* p. 110 *But sometimes Mr. Sammler felt that the way he saw things could not be right. His*

distinguish<sup>27</sup> 'worthy' and 'worthless' works. The crucial principle in this distinction is the author's perception of man in relation toward existence. The works that further foster human self - directly, or indirectly by relativizing the Truth, or even consciously serving the author's magnified self, are dismissed by Sammler. He easily discerns the aim of self-glorification and the strife to come up with 'new' ideas, with more explanations. The 'proper' relation of one's self toward existence should be marked by humility and respectful attitude with to the aim of coming closer to the Truth. This is the reason why Sammler never starts writing the memoir of his talks with H.G. Wells though he can exactly recall his views.<sup>28</sup>

In New York City, 1970, Sammler experiences mental loneliness seeing around and meeting people who lapsed into a 'compulsive' form of individualism. Oppressed by their enlarged ego, he can easily sense those remaining ones who did not join "the Age" - Elya, his younger relative and Dr. Lal, a scientist from India.

At the first sight Elya is enormously different from Sammler and apart from the fact that they both come from Cracow, it seems they have nothing in common. He is not a cultivated intellectual like Sammler, he did not go through the Holocaust, but grew up in a poor Chicago neighborhood, became a wealthy man,

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*experiences had been too peculiar, and he feared that he projected peculiarities onto life.*

<sup>27</sup> *ibid.* p. 64

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.* p. 29 ...Wells had communicated things to Sammler that the world did not know. When finally published, they would astonish everybody. p. 115 *He could make a beautiful culture. Compose a memoir of the highest distinction, so magical that the world would long remember what a superior thing was to be a Sammler. The answer of private folly to public folly (in the age of overkill) was more distinction, more high accomplishments, more dazzling brilliants strewn before*

the owner of a mansion in the most expensive area, and of a Rolls Royce with a personal chauffeur. He exercises a highly socially-respected profession of a surgeon and he made a big fortune by doing stock business and by performing illegal abortions on the orders of his powerful Mafia friends from the youth. Yet Sammler reveres him deeply as man and is most grieved by his loss.

Sammler had an opportunity to get to know Elya over many years from which a different Elya arises. A man who is deeply human, and though he likes to promote 'the good' when communicating with people, he never advertises his own acts of goodness and is even happy when they are never disclosed.<sup>29</sup> Similarly, he does not let anybody know about his sacrifices and disappointments. His inner discipline culminates when he keeps to himself the seriousness of condition of his throat though, as a doctor, he knows that it will be a quick end. Sammler recognizes in Elya the deepness of the heart that drives his acts, the love so disguised, that even Sammler can only but guess Elya's true intention.

The answer to Elya's acting lies in the way he sees his person in relation toward existence. Like Sammler, he sees his own life as a particle dispensable to humankind or the world. More important to him is what is eternal that is going beyond individual's short-sighted and selfish interests. Through the denial of his self and by through the care for his fellow man - and void of desire to reveal it - Elya affirmed his deep-seated belief in God.

The other man whom Sammler finds akin in the novel is Dr. Lal. Sammler's interest in Lal is caught by his scientific work concerning man's

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*admiring mankind.*

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.* p. 283

inhabitation of the Moon. Actually, Sammler is not too much interested in its scientific value but in the consequences for humankind. With a pleasant surprise, he finds out that Lal did not omit to estimate its impact on humanity. It is clear to Sammler that he is dealing with a scientist who is also human and who is not just seeking the self-glorification through his field of study and the popular theme of the day, or who treats his science like a game but to whom the fate of humankind is quite indifferent.<sup>30</sup>

Dr. Lal does not come from the Western civilization, he only works with its scientific methods and research. He is not pervaded by individualism, which is the reason why India did not experience the dynamic development described earlier. He is not drunken by human achievements since having witnessed the Armitsar massacre in 1947, he became aware of the qualities of man. In fact, his main objective is to help his overpopulated country and the Planet, not to ascribe to himself an extraordinary importance. Dr. Lal, with his special scientific skills, deserves natural individuality, the more it is worthy that he did not yield to temptations of self-pride. Sammler only notices his effort to present his science credentials which he dismisses as a minor foible.

### **2.2.2. Margot, Shula, Angela, Wallace, and Feffer**

These characters are different in all aspects - their sex, intelligence, age, interests, or views, however for Sammler they have the most

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ibid. p. 135

fundamental thing in common: they are more or less infected with bad symptoms of individualism. An individualist person believes in himself/herself as the final instance for everything, an individualist always relates all his/her activity to his/her self-interest. Even when an individualist seems to be dedicated to something 'higher', in the critical situation his/her enlarged ego emerges in the center again. The reverse side of such understanding of one's position in the world is that the fact of man's mortality becomes mental anguish for such an individual, who, in an attempt to drown it, runs into more self-indulgence. The adverse signs of individualism form a vicious circle from which it is hard to get out in the society where it became a wide-spread and even a fashionable norm.

The character of Margot serves to illustrate the complexity of the impact of individualism and how confusingly it can affect the individual who becomes partly its victim as well. Although a European and still observing the traditional conduct of a widow, she absorbed individualism in a quite peculiar way. She adhered herself to belief in the goodness and to being on the 'right side' of things. Not abounding in intelligence, household skills, or taste, her emphasis on the good sides, is rendering her at least an impression of being a nice, good woman. She maintains that all wrongs are only seemingly negatives but could be explained and then excused or even seen as positives, the good things. The arbitrariness offered by individualism enables her to find 'the good side' in everything and indulge into endless intellectual 'discussions'.<sup>31</sup>

Sammler bitterly sees that his only child, Shula, fits well in the

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<sup>31</sup> *ibid.* p. 20 *And really she was good, she was boundlessly, achingly, hopelessly on the right side, the best side, of every big human question: for creativity, for the young, for the black, the poor, the*



American individualism even though she grew up in London and went through the Holocaust. Actually he could notice the signs of lunacy when she was little and so, not surprisingly for him, her nature perfectly mingles with the atmosphere of the contemporary society.<sup>32</sup> One of Shula's main features is her intense interest in spiritual and intellectual matters demonstrated by attending different gatherings, but not by reading. Again, the complexity of the issue is presented, because one could estimate that such interests are contrary to individualism since religious movements and intellectual readings usually point to something 'higher' to which man should be subordinate. However, Shula is not deeply devoted to any of it but rather satisfies her desire to lead an interesting and cultural life.<sup>33</sup> With sadness Sammler recognizes the reason of her inclination toward the intellectual or spiritual: as a child with her parents in London, the ties with the cultural elite inculcated in her the superiority of such activities.<sup>34</sup> Since Shula by her individualistic approach averted the original meaning of religion or culture, both are missing from her life.

Elya is also disappointed by his children. Born into wealth, knowing that their father will provide for them, they never need to worry about the way to obtain their livelihood which otherwise would make them somber. The manifestation of their individualism goes to extremities.

Angela, her papa's girl, grew up into a cute woman with sex-

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*oppressed, for victims, for sinners, for the hungry.*

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.* p. 116, 197

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.* p. 23 *She became well acquainted with the rabbi, the rabbi's wives and family - involved in Dadaist discussions about faith, ritual, Zionism, Masada, the Arabs. But she had Christian periods as well. ...the florid lips dark red, skeptical, accusing, affirming something substantive about her life- claim, her right to be whatever - whatever it all came to.*

<sup>34</sup> *ibid.* p. 28

appeal. She had all possible financial means, beauty, youth, and freedom. Her case is interesting - what did she make of all these endowments? Sammler contemptuously evaluates her education in French Literature as poor and her profession is not even mentioned. What remains of her education is her sympathy and support of black criminals who she associates in her imagination with the 'French romantic outlaw'. Angela's principal business of life lies in a consumption of sensuality. Having started early with sexual life, being at present in her thirties, sexual experiences stayed central in her life. All her other activities evolve around her body: ordering designer clothing, fasting alternate with eating like a stevedore or exercising in a fashionable gym, the choice of the current boyfriend based on his body...seeing a psychiatrist to discuss it all.<sup>35</sup> Even old Sammler is made to serve her as a confidant of her sex adventures for she wants to be a medium for him in what kind of life-style is up-to-date.<sup>36</sup> Sammler asks himself a question by thinking of her grandparents who strictly observed the Torah. She came to freedom and wealth, both being common prospect of men for which they were ready to undergo hardships, but Angela was just born in it. Together with the corrupting power of individualism, 'the Age' produced the female of Angela's type signifying the fall back to animalism.

Wallace is also good-looking but he is not a womanizer, his sexuality seems to be a side issue for him which the hypersexual Angela cannot understand and suspects him of homosexuality. Wallace, as Angela was growing

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<sup>35</sup> *ibid.* p. 31

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.* p. 69 *What she intended to be was gay, pleasure-giving, exuberant, free, beautiful, healthy. As young Americans (the Pepsi generation, wasn't it?) saw the thing. And she told uncle Sammler everything...*

up in the certainty of affluence, does not need to have some profession to live by. His life has always been only amusement - a row of interests quickly coming and going or an effort to materialize most crazy ideas.<sup>37</sup> Passing the bar exam, or doing Ph.D. thesis in Math is an evidence of his unusually high-IQ. Yet, the all-disrupting individualism makes his capabilities and accomplishments a part of mere game, his self-entertainment, which, stripped of its meaning, comes to nothing but self-destruction.

Only charming to Sammler, Feffer, a Columbia University professor, lives a highly energetic life broken into different contrasting activities and ready to get involved in more. Seducing young wives is one of his sports. His self-amusement is a constant testing of his own shrewdness: in speech he relies on maneuvers to reach his goal and his behavior is full of interconnected schemes and tricks. The only exception he states is Sammler, for whom he holds a special respect. If he says the truth, it would imply that his behavior comes from deep contempt for the rest of world that is not worth taking seriously.<sup>38</sup> The reason for such an attitude is the omnipresent hollowness of the governing individualism which Feffer confirms.

### **2.2.3. St. Augustine, F.W. Nietzsche, J.P. Sartre and the characters of *Mr. Sammler's Planet***

Sammler, Elya, and Dr. Lal are closest to St. Augustine in their

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<sup>37</sup> *ibid.* p. 240

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.* p. 113 *I have a feeling of veneration toward you. You are the only person in the world with*

comprehension of human knowledge and man's position in the Universe. Despite their extensive education they did not become godly but they know that man cannot be a superior source of, or 'possess' truth. They consider truth an objective and highest value and are aware that their subjectivity is a constant corruptive or disturbing agent. The way truth reveals itself to man is through his/her innate knowledge of truth, the conscience, and through the stages of knowledge based on the knowledge of the world, both having their source in God - The Eternal Truth.

Sammler in his younger years and in the cultivated environment of London, often cherished the company of H.G.Wells who believed strongly in man, in the perfection of man.<sup>39</sup> Another remark to belief in man is in his lecture in Columbia University concerning the organization Cosmopolis.<sup>40</sup> Sammler too was involved in it and most probably shared, to some extent, these views. Some other time Sammler recalls Wells dying in desperation ...<sup>41</sup> What Wells was just informed about, Sammler was to go through himself. Sammler, at the most beastly stage of the war, did not believe in God - by the circumstances he was stripped of humanity. The world lost all sense to him, he could not relate himself to the world for his identity, his self, was completely uprooted, only the body sustained.<sup>42</sup> Not until after ten years after the war, he begins to think again and see through the connections: man's usurpation of Truth... an act of hubris... the adverse side of

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*whom I would use a word like veneration.*

<sup>39</sup> Wells is an author of *Men Like Gods*

<sup>40</sup> *ibid.* p. 41 *...the project was based on the propagation of the sciences...and the effective application of scientific principles to the enlargement of human life...a rational scientific attitude toward life.*

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.* p. 28 *Of course he wrote such things in his final sickness, horribly depressed by World War II.*

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.* p. 117 *For a quite long time he had felt that he was not necessarily human...very little interest in himself. Cold even to the thought of recovery. What was there to recover? Little regard*

man's achievement...on the continent in the North<sup>43</sup>...in the presence taken as a standard...1970.

An expression of Sammler's re-evaluation, a synthesis of his knowledge and experience, is his present traveling to the library to read the manuscript of M. Eckhart<sup>44</sup> on microfilm, a mystic of the 13th century, the time when a painter did not even sign his work. Sammler and M. Eckhart form a spiritual kinship, contemplating the union with God. His traveling to the library becomes trip to another world, the world before man himself assumed to hold the truth.

St. Augustine worked out his philosophy that it not only became the foundation of the Western Christianity for another thousand years<sup>45</sup> but also served as a well of inspiration for all reformers, mystics, and even existentialists.<sup>46</sup> The reason is his human depth presenting his intense inner conflicts, concrete problems, his own or other people's that he most genuinely tries to resolve. Moreover, Augustine's relation toward his environment is void of self-pride, of showing off his mental skills.<sup>47</sup> In the respect of the 13th century mysticism, 'devotio moderna', being a shift from the rational and institutional outward Christianity back to the inward and Biblical, M. Eckhart can be called Augustine's

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*for earlier forms of himself. Disaffected. His judgment almost blank...*

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.* p. 32 *Sammler in his Gymnasium days once translated from Saint Augustine: "The Devil hath established his cities in the North."*

<sup>44</sup> *Philosophy*, p. 199 (ca.1260-1327) His mysticism shifted the medieval emphasis from reason to feeling. He was not a careful systematic philosopher. God is beyond human concepts and categories and the union of man and God is an experience beyond rationality. And this union cannot be reached except by liberating oneself from the objects of world.

<sup>45</sup> *Saint Augustine*, p. 155-6 Thomas Aquinas worked out theological system, using categories similar to Greek philosophy

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.* p. 6-12, 148-185 (Augustine is even called the first Existentialist by the Existentialists. Kirkegard drew from him.)

<sup>47</sup> *ibid.* p. 226

disciple reviving his work in his time.

In this sense, Sammler's spirituality is almost directly connected with St. Augustine, though as stated earlier, Sammler was 'illuminated' with truth through the thousand times repeated process of attaining knowledge described by Augustine. The 'illumination' was possible because Sammler's own self was sincerely seeking truth since his youth - another identification with St. Augustine, the man.

Augustin and Sammler know that even the subjective mind can give man peace if man adheres to God - The Eternal Truth. They also both know that man is innately aware of the obligation 'to do the good' which is the basis of his/her humanity but, at the same time, man has the free will - to turn toward God, The Eternal Truth, or away from God, meaning turning toward finite things, persons, or himself. Sammler found these human qualities in Elya.<sup>48</sup>

The reason why Elya 'met his contract' is his affiliation with God.<sup>49</sup> He has luxuries but not for his indulgence, but, as Sammler suspects, to 'create' work for people. Since his goodness does not also serve to glorify himself, he never makes it known. He did not perform abortions to be richer - he never put the abortion money into his bank account but used it as filling of the upholstery. The deep sense of duty brings Elya to make decisions at the expense of himself. Yet he does not advertise it as his sacrifice - this being the best expression of his respect toward the 'higher' force, which is above-individual, eternal - the Truth.

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<sup>48</sup> *ibid.* p. 313 *He was aware that he must meet, and he did meet - through all the confusion and degraded clowning of this life through which we are speeding - he did meet the terms of his contract. The terms which, in his inmost heart, each man knows.*

<sup>49</sup> *ibid.* p. 303 *Anyway, there is Elya's assignment. That's what's in his good face. That's why he has such*

Margot, Shula, Angela, Wallace, and Feffer cannot imagine the world in which the final supremacy is not held by the self, in which human knowledge is wholly man's enterprise. Since the 'truth' is man-based, the term 'truth' then loses the meaning of being objective and is, by its plurality, reduced to a mere set of explanations, a subjective account. These characters' lives are overgrown with such subjective accounts and this only reaffirms them of the absolute sovereignty of the individual.

In this position, man's business is to choose, to be eclectic, to make out of his/her life his/her own 'work of art'. Being this the spirit of society, such individual-sovereign is unable to grasp the Truth again. One reason is that the Truth is leveled to be one of the accounts and it becomes impossible to mediate its objective essence. The other reason is that the individual is not receptive to giving up his/her sovereignty which he/she considers out-dated, surpassed. In this sense not St. Augustine, but F.W. Nietzsche and J.P. Sartre are philosophers who are fully on this ground: their philosophy denies existence of God, the objective truth or anything 'higher' than man or men. They also strongly believe in man, in the further liberation from any spiritual hindrance and in the strengthening of man's independence and freedom - his/her sovereignty.

Nietzsche worked out his philosophy between 1870 and 1889 and Sartre delivered his lecture on existentialism in 1945. 1970, New York City, Bellow recounts the diagnosis of the Western civilization. The necessary time interval can prove validity of their notions of the 'freed' man.

Nietzsche made use of the ancient Greek civilization for the

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*a human look. He's made something of himself...He had an unsure loyalty to certain pure states.*

modern man since he found in it resemblance to the Modern Western civilization and hoped that, as the Greeks flourished, the modern man could too. The fact that 'God is dead' finally makes it possible for the modern man to develop fully and reach the advancement similar to the Ancients. He did not take into consideration the causes of their civilization's downfall.<sup>50</sup>

The above cited characters who 'grew' in their individual 'freedom', however, tend to develop symptoms of the Dionysian nature, showing many elements of unrestrained conduct: Margot, in her tendency for shapeless explanations, time-unlimited discussions but run as her monologue, chaotic running of the household. Her late husband Arkin used to keep her within the brackets.<sup>51</sup> Shula exercises even more 'freedom' in her everyday life, in her most unpredictable combinations through which she makes her 'own' reality, which is however completely senseless from an outside view.<sup>52</sup>

Angela and Wallace with their good looks, youth, health and generous financial support acquired more independence and self-confidence. They were born into favorable conditions and so their humanity could show its potential - the capacity of man to use her/his freedom. With the increased elements constituting their freedom, however, the Dionysian qualities rose as well - as it is apparent from Angela's complete dissolution in boundless sensuality or Wallace's disintegration into a row of fervent but disconnected and quickly passing activities or interests.

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<sup>50</sup> *Philosophy face to face the Doom*, p. 102-104

<sup>51</sup> *Mr. Sammler's Planet*, p. 17 Arkin one said to Uncle Sammler that she was a first-class device as long as someone aimed her in the right direction.

<sup>52</sup> *ibid.* p. 21 She had too many oddities for her father. p. 24 She was cooking for them from



Similarly, Feffer's high energy, totally unrestrained, discharges in hundreds of different activities while Feffer manages to practice his maneuvers and game-playing that is not applied only to one person, Sammler, he is claiming...

In conclusion, Nietzsche's vision of the Dionysian-Apollonian balance in man of future who would be ruled just by his/her own self does not find its reflection in the 'freed' characters of the novel. Man degenerates into the Dionysian being simply because it suits better the nature of an individual, whereas the Apollonian constitutes more elements that are life-giving from the perspective of fellow man, society, or the species which, in the society comprised of such 'singled-out' individuals, is shifted to be on the verge.

Sartre's lecture *Existentialism is Humanism* delivered after the end of the war was awarded with unexpected acclaim. The outlined prospects of man really evoke an enthusiastic mood, for Sartre ardently reassures the Western man in his/her pursuit of freedom. Like Nietzsche, Sartre believes that man who is 'freed' will demonstrate a new quality for everything that 'is given' only bent him/her down or corrupt his/her honesty. The only predicament of Sartre's man is that he/she has to accept a life in a state of anguish and abandonment, a logical outcome of man's departure from God. Sartre presents this as being the reality. The happier part of man's 'destiny' is the finally unveiled pure human responsibility but not the responsibility that leans toward something preceding man's existence.

The characters that are concerned adopted as their individual existence as the determining value refusing any given essence which then derives

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*Mexican cookbook making bitter chocolate sauce, grating coconuts over chicken breast complaining that you could not buy chutney in Haifa.*

from their subjectivity. However, their subjectivity is centered around the self that relates everything by the amount of happiness it can provide to it. The essence which each of them creates by his/her life is then driven by an identical feature which is a satisfaction of their momentous needs as individuals with little regard to what is out of the scope of their individual existence.<sup>53</sup>

Viewed by St. Augustine's stages of attaining knowledge, the man-sovereign in the culture comprised of such individuals becomes unable to make judgment for the necessary 'standard' has become disrupted by the postulate of subjectivity.<sup>54</sup> For the most part then, the characters stay on the level of sensation which becomes the only reliable knowledge for them. However, the sensations they expose themselves to do not represent a natural range of sensations for they seek the ones that are pleasantly exciting from the point of view of their self.<sup>55</sup>

### *Herzog*

In the society pervaded by individualism, the Western man lost the feasibility of a deeper identification with the Western spiritual foundations, Christianity or Judaism. Replaced with workings of human reason, the man-made ideologies cannot be taken as having universal qualities. Scholarship has lost the

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<sup>53</sup> see the Chapter Man to Man

<sup>54</sup> *ibid.* p. 228 [Sammler criticizes it] "*All mapmakers should place the Mississippi in the same location, and avoid originality.*"

<sup>55</sup> *ibid.* p. 229 *An interesting life is the supreme concept of dullards.* also p. 247 *It was the turn again of certain minor things which people insisted on enlarging, magnifying, moving into the center: arms of Puerto Rican ladies on the Bronx Express, odi-et-amo need-and-rejection, emotional self-examination, erotic business in Acapulco, fellatio with friendly strangers.*

sacred origin and became a matter of human enterprise, which gradually undermined the belief in the universal. What used to bear the meaning of 'truth', was turned into the never-ending line of individual interpretations. The former 'truth' that had a universal meaning and was not considered to be derived from man, but apprehended simply as a constant, melted in the diverse streams of human scholarship.

It became the reality that the modern man faces a growing volume of interpretations that are sometimes akin, other times contradicting each other. Their potential validity is equal but, at the same time, they are all merely relatively valid. Nevertheless, individualism with its belief in the human self continues to produce men who repeatedly attempt to unriddle the existence; to find answers to all possible questions. The resulting picture of the modern society dominated by individualism is rather chaotic since it became so overgrown with different angles of view and originalities of viewpoints that it threatens the very sanity of the individuals who are continually exposed to them.

The novel depicts the position of the modern men in the Western society. Each of the characters adopt a different stand toward the definition of human nature when the notion of the universal is lost. The main protagonist is an intellectual whose life and intellectual response reflect the complexity of the condition of human nature in the twentieth century.

#### **2.2.4. Moses Elkanah Herzog, PhD - The Journey toward Self-knowledge of The Modern Man**

Moses Herzog, like Artur Sammler, is not an ordinary man and is also an epitome of the complex cultural identity, knowledge, and experience. His parents were Jews from Russia and, though impoverished, the mother who came from a good family was resolved to give her children education and good up-breeding. Little Moses experienced difficult times with their parents struggling to survive in the cold Montreal and then in Chicago. Herzog is American and wants to be an American aware of his Jewish origin. However since his youth he is thought to be a foreigner and he turns out to be a stranger in the mainstream society who pursues practicality and pragmatism. As a philosopher Herzog gathered a lot of theoretical knowledge of man. He acquired a PhD degree and a good position at the university. His dissertation brought him acknowledgement and the first part of his work on Romanticism and Christianity was being acclaimed. Herzog's ego was thus nourished by his professional success as well as by his physical attraction. However, his private life, the haven of his family, was unbearably unchallenging to the proud Herzog who was on the top of his theoretical knowledge but somewhat behind with experience, the direct knowledge of reality.<sup>56</sup> The life with a quiet, dry, and order-like Daisy was not giving him enough stimulus and he started 'dangling': Sexual flings with women, leaving his position at the university, renting out an apartment in another city, and first peculiar traveling. Yet, Herzog doubted the meaningfulness of his new life-style.<sup>57</sup>

At present Herzog is forty-seven which is an age when man's identity is

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<sup>56</sup> *ibid.* p. 129

<sup>57</sup> *ibid.* p. 130 *This confusion was ugly, and he despised himself for creating it. Was this all the*

normally settled through decades of interaction with the environment. Herzog, however, was crushed down by a range of failures covering all spheres of his life that his personal life collapsed and he begins to question his own sanity. Unable to cope with the disintegration of his second marriage, of his faith in people and philosophy, he is perpetually tormented by his guilt<sup>58</sup> and elemental questions as: who is he, Moses Herzog?, what is reality?, does life have any meaning?, are there any moral certainties anymore? Being a highly intellectual man, he begins to doubt that the rational thought is capable of re-affirming the sense of his life.

His mental state is that of a total alienation from himself. The urging effort to resolve the fundamental questions of his life and mankind throws him into a deep internal turmoil. In a frantic effort to re-assert his identity, Herzog develops a neurotic habit of putting down notes or of writing letters<sup>59</sup> to people he knows, the ones who passed away, the public figures or even dead philosophers.<sup>60</sup> The letters are never actually mailed and delivered to the addressees but they are extremely important for the process of discovering and building his self. They are also late responses to past encounters but they testify to Herzog's awakening from the long period of passivity in which he idly abode.<sup>61</sup> The tone of the letters is gaining in argument and irony - they express Herzog's change of the course of his self which would not be possible without coming to terms with the past.

The strained and painful process of rebirth of his self is reflected in his

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*work a man could find to do? Losing self-respect! Lacking clear ideas!*

<sup>58</sup> *ibid.* p. 10 *Considering his entire life, he realized that he had mismanaged everything - everything. His life was, as the phrase goes, ruined.*

<sup>59</sup> *ibid.* p. 19 *He knew his scribbling, his letter-writing, was ridiculous. It was involuntary. His eccentricities had him in their power.*

<sup>60</sup> *ibid.* p. 7

<sup>61</sup> *ibid.* p. 83 *Dear Moses E. Herzog, Since when you taken such an interest in social questions, in*

restless moving from place to place. As he is struggling to find peace in his soul, he cannot stay in one spot. The traveling thus becomes a journey toward his own self. Yet, Herzog cannot concentrate only on his inner problems for he lost the ability to concentrate. He is continuously being torn between the hasty activity of his mind and the physical part of himself as well as the by the surroundings.

The external traveling is accompanied by 'traveling' in time - Herzog submerges into introspection and visualizes his past. In his search for the identity, he has to recognize what was making up his earlier selves - what he believed in, what he considered to be the primary in his life, what were his previous aims - and the part of other people in his life.<sup>62</sup> In his consciousness he has to reorder his experiences, his feelings, and his thoughts in order to free his concealed and aching heart from its shells and barriers.

The chaotic mind of Herzog is in urge of a serious thought but is, at the same time, distracted by his worries about his physical appearance - the signs of the bodily deterioration and the awareness of the decaying and chaotic environment - ironically of the place where he strived to build 'his happiness', the house in Ludeyville. The reality is so agonizing for Herzog that he often occupies himself with the problem of death of which he is, at the same time, utterly scared.<sup>63</sup>

The first step toward the realization of his own build-up deception occurs at Dr. Emmerich, to whom he comes afraid of being sick. Actually he does not want to be really sick, his reason is rather getting care and compassion from his

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*the external world? Until lately, you led a life of innocent sloth.*

<sup>62</sup> *ibid.* p. 131

<sup>63</sup> *ibid.* p. 46 *To him, perpetual thought of death was a sin. Drive your cart and your plow over the bones of the dead.*

family.<sup>64</sup> Eventually he finds out that his main motivation to see the physician was to learn something of Madeleine.<sup>65</sup> From that moment on, Herzog is careful about further self-deception and fights it. Nevertheless, the physician's examination asserts his bodily health, and this fact enables him to shift his attention to the mental and spiritual self.

At first Herzog tries to convince himself that he was victimized by external forces and admits his own masochism and passivity and further immerses himself in suffering and weakness. At the same time he begins to realize how prone he is to self-deception and starts taking away layers of this deception by clarifying his true aims<sup>66</sup>. He traces back the times when his normalcy began to decline and he finds out that the turning point seems to be leaving his first wife and the child. With them, he lived a stable and respectable life of a successful intellectual who was fully capable of concentration. The first volume of his work on Romanticism and Christianity was well received and brought Herzog the listing in *Who is Who in America*. The second volume had an ambitious objective and he intended to work on it in the newly bought homestead with the new wife. However, what remained is hundreds of pages of chaotic notes, a dilapidating house, and the wife gone with her lover, Herzog's best friend. Although it is undoubtful to the reader that Herzog was mercilessly deceived, in his pursuit of establishing his identity and peace in his soul, Herzog has to become aware his own failings and recognize his 'dangling'.

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<sup>64</sup> *ibid.* p. 20-21

<sup>65</sup> *ibid.* p. 23

<sup>66</sup> *ibid.* p. 26 *Heartsore? Yes, and dressed up, too. But my vanity will no longer give me much mileage and to tell you the truth I'm not even greatly impressed with my own tortured heart. It*

The first repaired part of Herzog is his sexuality, for even in the state of utterly fragmented soul, his body did not lose capability of sexual reflex<sup>67</sup> which seems to be the general human condition.<sup>68</sup> The marital relationship with Madeleine devastated his manhood and when he learnt of her cheating after the divorce, his self-confidence was completely destroyed - he worries that he does not attract women anymore.<sup>69</sup> First, he attempts to reassess himself with Eastern European women on his trip around Europe. In America, he surrenders to the care of Ramona who takes on a role of a passionate mistress as well as the one of a soothing mother in her relationship with Herzog. Her positive acceptance of him, bodily and mentally, gives him a flicker of happier future in store. Nonetheless, he needs Ramona and finds her very sexual, and at the same time he questions if a sexual fulfillment is the chief aim of his life<sup>70</sup>. The relationship is in fact an obstacle for Herzog for he primarily needs to be only with himself and so he runs from her at the same time.

Women have always played a fairly important role in Herzog's life and he drew much of his ego from his appeal to women, but after the crushing defeat of his marriage with Madeleine, he becomes aware of 'typically' female malice - deceit.<sup>71</sup> His feelings toward women fluctuate between affection and contempt<sup>72</sup>

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*begins to seem another waste of time.*

<sup>67</sup> *ibid.* p. 26

<sup>68</sup> *ibid.* p. 34 *Quack! A sexual reflex that had nothing to do with age or subtlety, wisdom, experience, history, Wissenschaft, Bildung, Wahrheit.*

<sup>69</sup> *ibid.* p. 12

<sup>70</sup> *ibid.* p. 26 *But is that the secret goal of my vague pilgrimage? Do I see myself to be after long blundering an unrecognized son of Sodom and Dionysus - an Orphic type?...A petit-bourgeois Dionysian?*

<sup>71</sup> *ibid.* p. 55 *Female deceit, though, is a deep subject. Thrills of guile. Sexual complicity, conspiracy.*

<sup>72</sup> *ibid.* p. 48 *It must be very deep and primitive - the feeling people - women - have against deceived husband, and I know that you helped your niece by having Herman take me away to the*



and he becomes more watchful toward their aims.<sup>73</sup> Many of the letters are addressed to women and express Herzog's maturation in the realization that not all women are like his deep-natured mother and that dependence on them is not a way to a fulfilled life for man.

Even though Herzog is compelled to be preoccupied with his present unhappy lot - his private existence is not the only subject of his thoughts. His identity consists of the Herzog, the citizen of United States, Herzog the inhabitant of the Planet, and Herzog as man - one of the humankind. In the effort of building his identity, Herzog uses his critical thinking abilities in reaction to political, social, and natural condition of man. Writing his letters, he attacks the immense power of deception present in humankind.<sup>74</sup>

The desperate Herzog hopes to find more peace on the seashore. When it turns out that he would be staying with his one time would-be girlfriend and her husband, he travels back home for he is aware that it would not be the right environment to find the truth about himself. This turn demonstrates his firm resolution to discover himself. Peaceful surroundings, diversion, or gestures of understanding would not bring him back to himself and should not be a life aim of man at any time.<sup>75</sup> Paradoxically, the external journey comes to nought but internally, Herzog made a step toward his self-knowledge.

In the predicament of his situation, he becomes a subject of various

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*hockey game*

<sup>73</sup> *ibid.* p. 86 *And thinking that he was binding her [Ramona], he bound himself, and the culmination of this clever goofiness might be to entrap himself.*

<sup>74</sup> *ibid.* p. 88

<sup>75</sup> *ibid.* p. 119 *What was he hanging around for? To follow this career of personal relationships until his strength at last gave out? Only to be a smashing success in the private realm, a king of hearts?...*

instructions. Through his reactions to these instructors Herzog builds his identity with the necessary self-reflection of himself as man. In his meetings with women as Zelda, Tennie<sup>76</sup> or Phoebe Gersbach,<sup>77</sup> in the prospect of finding sympathy, he faces the monstrosity of self-deception and hypocrisy mixed with the aim of comfortable vegetating of these women's selves. As his heart violently resists such behavior, he refuses to admit the alleged egotism (by Zelda), yet, he becomes more and more aware of his own wrong track in life.

Herzog also deals with men, the lawyers, whom he calls 'Reality-Instructors' as the crippled Sandor Himmelstein, or the shrewd Simkin. They tell him that he is wrong and that he does not know 'the facts' (Himmelstein)<sup>78</sup> and mock his search for truth pitying him at the same time (Simkin).<sup>79</sup> By rejecting their utterly pragmatic and practical philosophy of life<sup>80</sup>, Herzog comes to realize the significance of what he simply calls 'the heart'.<sup>81</sup>

Herzog the intellectual learns that ideologies, philosophy, religion cannot give him answers to his problems that he has to work out himself and he cannot succumb to some pre-cut theory. The diversity and abundance of ideological instructions rather confuse individuals who give up their own human responsibility. The theories then either serve as the cover-up of crooked behavior or the purpose of a misleading manipulation. The highly intellectual and Christian psychiatrist Dr. Edvig yields to his infatuation by Madeleine and thus Herzog who

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<sup>76</sup> *ibid.* p. 136

<sup>77</sup> *ibid.* p. 321

<sup>78</sup> *ibid.* p. 106

<sup>79</sup> *ibid.* p. 42 *Moses was irresistible to a man like Simkin who loved to pity and poke fun at the same time. He was a Reality-Instructor. Many such. I bring them out. Himmelstein is another, but cruel.*

<sup>80</sup> *ibid.* p. 110, 115, 117, 118

pays him for help, the treatment, is put into a position of a rival male. The coarse Gersbach who is an epitome of pseudo-emotion instructs Moses as well, as his supposedly best friend, Valentin can scold him and mentor him with the philosophy of Martin Buber<sup>82</sup>. Madeleine herself is the worst example of the theories 'applied' to life. When he first met her, he encountered rigid Catholicism mixed with her secret desire to ignite a combat over her between Herzog and Msgr.Hilton. Herzog is appalled by his boyhood friend Saphiro who writes highly intellectual works and discusses various intellectual problems but at presence of the charming Madeleine he denies his origin.<sup>83</sup> The observed outcomes make Herzog see through his own divide between intended intellectual goals and his personal conduct.<sup>84</sup> He quits corruptive abstract theories but is left in despair for he does not know where to get 'the true ideals', or any unifying meaning of human existence. Nevertheless, he begins to apprehend the value of the ordinary.

His observation of the modern people leads him to see them as ranging from those with theories of Hobbes - pessimism, greed, brutality and power,<sup>85</sup> to those of Rousseau. He himself is inclined toward the ideas of Romanticism - innocence, goodness of human nature, peacefulness of nature. The Reality-

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<sup>81</sup> *ibid.* p. 246

<sup>82</sup> *ibid.* p.76-84 , p. 83 *I'm sure you know the views of Buber. It is wrong to turn a man (a subject) into a thing (an object). By means of spiritual dialogue, the I-It relationship becomes an I-Thou relationship. God comes and goes in man's soul. And men come and go in each other's soul. Sometimes they come and go in each other's beds, too. You have dialogue with a man. You have intercourse with his wife. You hold the poor fellow's hand. You look into his eyes. You give him consolation. All the while, you rearrange his life...And somehow it is mysteriously translated into religious depth. And finally your suffering is greater than his, too, because you are the greater sinner...*

<sup>83</sup> *ibid.* p. 90 ...he said, "How delightful!" And it was himself who knew, betraying the knowledge by affection, that for a Russian Jew from Chicago's West Side that "How delightful!" was inappropriate.

<sup>84</sup> *ibid.* p. 98

<sup>85</sup> *ibid.* p. 100 *Universal concerns were idiocy. Ask nothing better than to prosper in the belly of*

Instructors are those falling into the Hobbesian outlook, for they have to suppose and act as if it was the only and true reality.<sup>86</sup> Yet, when Herzog is flooded with Romantic feelings, they do not provide him with peace for they do not reflect fully in reality; they seem too illusory and ephemeral.<sup>87</sup> He concludes that the most beneficial approach to human nature is to stop defining it.<sup>88</sup>

In rejection of reality-instructors Herzog affirmed his basically positive attitude toward people which he first considered as one of his shortcomings, a branch of weakness.<sup>89</sup> This sentimentalism or what he calls 'potato love' has to be guarded not to become abused by others<sup>90</sup>. However, as soon as he finds streams of positive outlook in himself, he is struck by the letter from Madeleine's babysitter who witnessed mistreatment of his little June. By circumstances, Herzog's heart gradually fills with unhinged hatred and justification in revenge.

As stated earlier, memories are crucial in Herzog's search for identity, namely the ones concerning his childhood. His father struggled to adjust to the demands of materialism in America, and failed. Herzog either cannot accept the pressure from the Reality-Instructors to become hard and pragmatic. His hard-hearted brother Shura, the most opposite extreme of impractical and idealistic Moses, characteristically becomes a multimillionaire.<sup>91</sup> Herzog wishes to be able to return to the simplicity of childhood despite the hardships because he remembers

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*Leviathan and set a hedonistic example to the community.*

<sup>86</sup> *ibid.* p. 109 "...We are all whores in this world, and don't you forget it. I know damn well, I'm a whore. And you're outstanding shnook, I realize...But I bet you a suit of clothes you're a whore, too."(Himmelstein)

<sup>87</sup> *ibid.* p. 116

<sup>88</sup> *ibid.* p. 161

<sup>89</sup> *ibid.* p. 115 *He [Himmelstein] gave Moses a kiss. Moses felt the potato love. Amorphous, swelling, hungry, indiscriminate, cowardly potato love.*

<sup>90</sup> *ibid.* p. 397

the love of his mother and enduring dignity of his father.<sup>92</sup> In the process of asserting his identity, Moses has to accept the fact that the life of an adult is more demanding and complex.

Herzog's daily life is filled with continuous introspection in which he sorts out a conglomerate of different ideas with the aim to establish a coherent meaning of human existence. He was able to affirm his opposition to the cold pessimism and materialism of Reality-Instructors, the emotional excesses of Gersbach and concealment of identity of Madeleine, Tennie, and Zelda. He slowly discovers that he has to accept what he is - not definable whole but an ambiguous mixture of qualities.

The manner in which Herzog spends his present time is split between his introspection and the sexual release with Ramona. Although he enjoys her treats, every time he is with himself again, he is tormented by nihilism and by the fact that moments of pleasure do not solve his search for truth nor his own duties.<sup>93</sup>

With this settlement Herzog resolves for action. His duties are first of all fatherly - he has to deal with the facts of the letter about June. The fear about his daughter, combined with bitter pain from humiliation by cheating, rapidly change Herzog into a man of action. He immediately arranges a meeting with a lawyer. While waiting for Simkin, Herzog witnesses trials in the court from which he gets the idea of justice. In the captivity of impulses of his heart, he can notice that justice is not a set of cold abstract laws. He sees kindness in policeman's face and

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<sup>91</sup> *ibid.* p. 343

<sup>92</sup> *ibid.* p. 174... *Here was a wider range of human feelings than he had ever again been able to find...*

<sup>93</sup> *ibid.* p. 254, 256 *What I seem to do, thought Herzog, is to inflame myself with my drama, with*

is surprised by humanity of the judge in the case of the homosexual intern.<sup>94</sup> This is an evidence that the human heart can endure in the midst of crime, injustice, and perversion. The pressure of existence of evil increases when Herzog witnesses the case of a retarded mother who kills her child but, because she suffers a brain lesion, the act of murder is in question. The terrified Herzog faces evil in its pure form which is beyond his understanding and he feels helpless. The implication from this case is that the powers of explanation can be viewed in such a way as to deny most atrocious acts which instill in Herzog, the father of little Junie, the right for revenge. However, at the same time, there is a question to pose - is he justified in going to kill ? Although he is only in a passive role of viewer at the court, evil is not alien to his own nature. He is 'poisoned' as well.<sup>95</sup>

Herzog gathers all his strength and rushes to Chicago. His first aim is to get the pistol from his father's house. His visit to his father's house is again a journey to the past that proves important in his quest for self-understanding. Although his father is already dead, he comes back like a prodigal son - the fortune he inherited blown up foolishly - now sees through his former wrongs and understands his father's anger. He realizes he is no longer the same person.<sup>96</sup> Nevertheless, Herzog pursues his revenge on Gersbach and Madeleine with the pistol with two bullets.

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*ridicule, failure denunciation, distortion to inflame myself voluptuously, esthetically, until I reach a sexual climax. And that climax looks like a resolution and an answer to many 'higher' problems.*

<sup>94</sup> *ibid.* p. 278

<sup>95</sup> *ibid.* p. 312

<sup>96</sup> *ibid.* p. 300, 301, 306 *A man in years he then was, but in years only, and in his father's eyes stubbornly un-European, that is innocent by deliberate choice. But he could not refuse to experience it. And therefore others were appointed to do it to him, and then to be accused (by him) of wickedness.*

With his heart burning for a justified revengeful action,<sup>97</sup> Herzog gets to their house and peers in. What he sees - Gersbach acting lovingly with his daughter - makes him withdraw with a full conviction that the human soul is an amphibian. In his attempt of taking 'justice' into his own hands he recognizes his own capability of hatred and madness, not just the characteristic of meekness and rationality of a soft scholar.<sup>98</sup> In general Moses has understood that man is a mixture of qualities - the passive and the active, the love and the hatred, the rational and the irrational...

During the visit of Phoebe Gersbach, Herzog appeals to their lasting friendship in Ludeyville in the sense Bergson's duration. In the allusion to this understanding of reality, Herzog is aware that his identity develops in duration - in the fusion of all sensations that become memories. Through the time of his introspection, Herzog managed to build his identity, and his newly fused self separated Madeleine who became only a past mistake but harmless in terms of his present self.<sup>99</sup>

Herzog stays over at his friend's place, Lucas Asphalter, who gives him another viewpoint of reality. In their discussion it is revealed that Herzog has understood the contradictions of the heart and the spirit and the fact that human nature is too complex and cannot be described fully by definitions or ideologies as he has tried to do it.<sup>100</sup> This is why he could not work out his identity by writing letters and notes that could not be really finished for human nature is not liable to

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<sup>97</sup> *ibid* p. 311

<sup>98</sup> *ibid.* p. 315, 316

<sup>99</sup> *ibid.* p. 322 "*All that hysterical stuff is finished. No, I'm glad to be rid of her. I don't even loathe her much any more....Bless the bitch! Good luck and good-bye...*"

any coherence that could be listed.<sup>101</sup> He tells Asphalter of his new understanding of what it is to be human - through employment by other human beings and their employment by us - through brotherhood which is another Herzog's declaration of the importance of heart.<sup>102</sup> Having recognized this truth, Herzog is no longer vexed by aging and death and accepts it as reality.<sup>103</sup>

The life is not only a form of introspection but it requires a full involvement in the ordinary life and Herzog is going to learn this lesson. Due to the inattentive driving he almost injures his daughter whom he came to protect and, moreover, causes a new range of events. His lofty mind is grounded down by the ordinary - he is brought to the Police Station, humiliated in front of his little daughter and shut with criminals.<sup>104</sup> The arrival of Madeleine and his reaction to her presence signifies another turning point in his process of maturation. Herzog grew strong enough to stay unaffected by Madeleine's vicious theatrical performance even though he interprets her acting as her desire for him to be dead.

The restoration of peace in Herzog's soul is reflected in the natural idyll of the environment in Ludeyville. He clearly sees his house as a monument of his folly.<sup>105</sup> The house is freed from the presence of memories of his previous foolish

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<sup>100</sup> *ibid.* p. 332 "But human life is subtler than any of its models, even these ingenious German models."

<sup>101</sup> *ibid.* p. 333

<sup>102</sup> *ibid.* p. 333

<sup>103</sup> *ibid.* p. 333 *With this true employment you never dread death, you cultivate it. And consciousness when it doesn't clearly understand what to live for, what to die for, can only abuse and ridicule itself.*

<sup>104</sup> *ibid.* p. 350 *Is this, by chance, the reality you have been looking for, Herzog, in your earnest Herzog way? Down in the ranks with other people - ordinary life?*

<sup>105</sup> *ibid.* p. 377 *Monument to his sincere and loving idiocy, to the unrecognized evils of his character, symbol of his Jewish struggle for a solid footing in White Anglo-Saxon Protestant America.*



existence therein and Herzog enjoys it.<sup>106</sup> The notes that he puts down mark his new-found stability - he accepted himself being full of awareness of his earlier shortcomings.

In the letter to professor Mammelstein, Herzog contemplates the social condition of the modern man. He criticizes the hunger for excitement and violence of the growing middle-class that changed into a mass mind requiring strong stimuli to wake up from apathy.

Herzog expresses an optimistic view of the modern man and refutes the idea that pain and suffering can be the stimulus of self-consciousness as it is often proclaimed by philosophical theories. Rather he believes that pain and suffering crushes, break people and purge them of humanity. He was attracted to suffering as a means of waking up from illusions but he believes that wishing the pain for mankind would not bring more truthfulness. His heart does not need any more experience of pain in order to open itself.<sup>107</sup>

Herzog discovered that being an intellectual, or philosopher does not exempt one from being chaotic and he ceases to have any need for a total explanation for he becomes aware of the impossibility to possess truth.<sup>108</sup> He has accepted his own limitations<sup>109</sup> and has cured himself of his egotism, self-righteousness, and self-pity. He coped with the burdens of the past failures and his earlier selves.

There is a contrast between Moses and his brother Willie who comes to

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<sup>106</sup> *ibid.* p. 381 *He was surprised to feel such contentment...contentment ? Whom was he kidding, this was joy!...His servitude was ended, and his heart released from its grisly heaviness and encrustation.*

<sup>107</sup> *ibid.* p. 384-5

visit him. Through his success in the materialistic society, Willie lost the ability of passion for he is compelled to be rationalistic. He is very considerate toward Moses but would not be able to understand either his failures or his quest for finding the truth about himself. In the encounter with his brother, Herzog has to put on an appearance of one who is in full self-control. The profound change in Herzog is apparent in his refusal to go to the hospital which Willie suggests. The reasons for seeking a hospital care have ceased to exist, and Herzog knows that it is only him who can solve his problems.

In the last impulse of his letter-writing, he turns to God expressing his faith - the faith with no symbols. In his struggle to make sense, he is aware that he is on the journey to fulfill God's unknowable will, in which his self is an obstacle.<sup>110</sup>

### **2.2.5. The Interconnection of Knowledge and Love - St. Augustine in Moses E. Herzog**

According to St. Augustine, human knowledge is acquired through a number of stages: the first stage of knowledge is acquired through acts of sensation - based on mutable objects. It is the lowest level of knowing for it gives man the least amount of certainty. However, sensation is crucial for it leads man to rational activity - to the higher stage of human knowledge. Man makes synthesis of the

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<sup>108</sup> *ibid.* p. 392, 394

<sup>109</sup> *ibid.* p. 402 ...*My balance comes from instability...Must play the instrument I've got.*

sensed objects and immaterial objects - ideas and his/her mind produce a judgment. Despite man's imperfection and finitude, Augustine noticed that man is aware of the certitude of some of his/her ideas. This leads man to the acknowledgment of the existence of truth. Truth, being eternal and immutable, must have its source in God. Thus the highest stage of knowledge is the knowledge of God who is Truth. For man, acquiring some knowledge of truth is possible through 'illumination'. This light is not so much the source of ideas as it is rather the condition under which man recognizes the quality of truth and eternity in man's ideas.

This implies that it is fundamental for man to be in the condition needed for discerning truth. This condition is bound to self-reflection of man in relation to existence. In St. Augustine's teaching it is described by his Doctrine of Love. If man reflects himself/herself as the center of being and denies existence or superiority of God, then man sees himself/herself as the source of truth or negates the existence of truth. In the relation to existence, man makes self-love the legitimate and highest value of his/her life which is, according to St. Augustine, disordered for man is substituting God who is eternal with the finite and imperfect entity. Such condition excludes the possibility of any attainment of the highest level of knowledge - discerning the truth. The only way to the condition in which man can participate in truth is a personal reconstruction. This means also reordering love by loving proper things properly and by loving God above all.

The journey toward the self-knowledge of Moses Herzog much embodies St. Augustine's theories of knowledge and love and their interconnection. Moreover, Herzog's intense introspection and his search for true self-knowledge as

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<sup>110</sup> *ibid.* p. 396

man is almost identical with Augustine's tormenting quests despite almost sixteen hundred years passed !

The life of Moses Herzog becomes is split by accumulation of discomfort and shortcomings that escalates in Madeleine's performance communicating the end of the marriage. The following information of her and his best friend's cheating finishes off Moses' self - his identity. However, this unfair and cruel knock-down (actually knock-out) is gradually turns out to be a remedy for Moses' wrongs which originate in his own alienation.

The environment of his childhood mediated him the Jewish and European elements of culture and gave his living, despite the hardships of everyday life, a meaningful frame. As he started to get older, he arduously engaged himself in intellectual study. He became so employed by theories that the young Moses did not pay much attention to his mother's dying and death. The further pursuit of philosophy set him up successfully in the scholarly world and so Moses started to aspire to make an all-answering and all-surpassing synthesis that would finally enlighten people. He, Moses, wanted to lead mankind from ignorance to self-knowledge.<sup>111</sup>

From the perspective of St. Augustine's theory of knowledge, Moses' first fatal mistake is to break the connection between stages leading to knowledge. When he was a little boy, his self was curious and open to learn from everything - all reality that surrounded him. As he grew older, he repudiated the everyday

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<sup>111</sup> *ibid.* p. 149 *He was going - he smiled secretly now, admitting it - to wrap the subject up, to pull the carpet from under all other scholars, show them what was what, stun them, expose their triviality once for all. It was not simple vanity, but a sense of responsibility that was the underlying motive.*

reality around him exemplified in his not knowing how to relate himself to his mother's last days.<sup>112</sup> Thus he eliminated the very base of human knowledge - sensation. Instead, he became intoxicated with the whole range of abstract theories and explanations created by thinkers-theorists.<sup>113</sup> His realm became the higher level of knowledge - immaterial ideas and judgments produced by men who, like him have been detached from the reality, by men with underlying belief in man as the final instance for truth. Moses became an expert in abstract reasoning, living on man-made categories produced solely within the second stage of knowledge.

Another fatal mistake, according to St. Augustine's theory, was cutting out God as the source of Truth. Moses believed that man - the individual - is capable of grasping and formulating the final expression of reality - of truth. What remains at stake in such a task is merely the power of human intellect and the vastness of the gathered theoretical knowledge. Fostered by his success as an intellectual, Moses seriously set out to produce the final definition of man and reality. At this stage of his life, his intellectual aims were formidably accompanied by self-pride that,<sup>114</sup> however, seemed to be quite legitimate - taking into account his elitist occupation as well as his belief in man's potential to be the highest instance.

Overwhelming pride affected Moses in his relation to his nearest, his wife and the child, and so he left them.<sup>115</sup> His life-style of dangling around did not have to be justified for he, his will, was the source all meaning.<sup>116</sup> After a short period of the consummation of free life encircled with ambitious intellectual prospects,

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<sup>112</sup> *ibid.* p. 286-7

<sup>113</sup> *ibid.* p. 133 *No philosopher knows what the ordinary is, has not fallen into it deeply enough.*

<sup>114</sup> *ibid.* p. 301, 303

<sup>115</sup> *ibid.* p. 22

Moses ran into Madeleine. At that moment his life turned into a long line of cross stations. All his former life he was used to dealing with abstractions and lagged behind with experience that can be acquired through the interaction with the ordinary. Moses was proud of his occupation with the abstract theories but, in relation to Madeleine, he became inevitably handicapped by his 'innocence' or from a different stand, childishness. His defensive belief in quid pro quo or in the kid's rhyme<sup>117</sup> was an expression of his passive stand toward reality which beside Madeleine assumed masochistic forms.

In the view of St. Augustine's theory of Love, Moses' love became disordered. Similarly as with knowledge of which Moses considered himself to be a bearer, he started to comprehend his self to be the final instance of meaning which resulted in his egotism. Having pursued the life of freedom, the freedom from the point of view of individual perspective, his life soon showed itself to be void of meaning.<sup>118</sup> Paradoxically the result of his attempt to shape destiny was a fall into the worst slavery. His self-love and pride could not thrive for they were chained by a far more aggressive form of the same.<sup>119</sup>

When the final blow struck him and he was left to himself, the aching Moses had to turn his intellect fully toward his self. Now he had to use the powers of reason for an uncompromising diagnosis of his condition. Through the intense and genuine strife, he discovered the truth, piercing him with agony, but,

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<sup>116</sup> *ibid* p. 207

<sup>117</sup> *ibid*. p. 148

<sup>118</sup> *ibid*. p. 211 *Have all the traditions, passions, renunciations, virtues, gems, and masterpieces of Hebrew discipline and all the rest of it - rhetoric, a lot of it, but containing true facts - brought me to these untidy sheets and the rippled mattress?*

<sup>119</sup> *ibid*. p. 16 *In this confrontation in the untidy parlor, two kinds of egotism were present... - hers in triumph and his egotism in abeyance, all converted into passivity.*

eventually transforming into a joyful state.

Using the theories of Knowledge and Love, the process of a total revision performed by Moses involves the understanding of his fatal mistakes in relation to knowledge and to love. The defeat rid him of his excessive pride and thus created the condition for the recognition of truth. Moses is 'illuminated' to see falseness in his early detachment from the ordinary life. He clearly recognizes the folly of his or any other man's intellectual ambition of such proportions.<sup>120</sup> Now, when his pride has been removed, Moses sees through the fact that his pride dominated his conduct and he begins to see the wrongs he committed. In the effort to find what should be the object of highest affection, Moses, though falling into despair, is aware that his heart refuses to act as if there was nothingness beyond the self. He discovers that his heart is a seat of 'potato love', impulses of love toward all live creatures.<sup>121</sup> Moses comes to the realization that such love springs from God<sup>122</sup> and he happily reorders his love.<sup>123</sup> The evidence of his fully realized interconnection of Knowledge and Love is the end of his restlessness and the spreading of peace in his soul.<sup>124</sup>

Reading Augustine's *Confessions* and Bellow's *Herzog*, one is struck by affinity of these quests for self-knowledge and truth. In both accounts the principle subject is the heart with all clashing impulses which Augustine experiences with

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<sup>120</sup> *ibid.* p. 206 *But can thought wake you from the dream of existence? Not if it becomes a second realm of confusion, another more complicated dream, the dream of intellect, the delusion of total explanation.*

<sup>121</sup> *ibid.* p. 254

<sup>122</sup> *ibid.* p. 283

<sup>123</sup> *ibid.* p. 333 *I really believe that brotherhood is what makes a man human. If I owe God a human life, this is where I fall down.*

<sup>124</sup> *From Socrates to Sartre*, p. 144 "Oh God Thou hast created us for Thyself so that our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee."

the same fierceness as Moses. Both create the vivacious and effective experience of all that is dealt with - and both carry fight with creeping nothingness - Augustine argues with Skeptics as Herzog does with Existentialists. By his personal account, Augustine brought in the structures of theology, the complexity and dynamism of human heart with its peculiar contradictions and polarity. *Herzog* has the same objective only with the difference that the modern man is overgrown with the masses of categories and structures which makes its path to a concrete human more difficult. Augustine is calling: "I long to know God and the soul ! Nothing else ? Nothing !"<sup>125</sup> Augustine replies to himself. What is interesting that he does not mean two different objects of knowledge. This knowledge of God is fulfilled through self-knowledge of the heart. "Don't long to go out but go back inward for in the heart of man that is where truth has its seat."<sup>126</sup> Augustine is saying that God is alien to man mainly because man is alienated from himself and cannot grasp the closeness of God if he is not himself. The identical message was illustrated by Bellow in the character of Moses E. Herzog.

#### **2.2.6. Moses E. Herzog vs. Friedrich W. Nietzsche & Jean P. Sartre**

On the way to the reconstruction of his self, Herzog, being a fervent intellectual, involved not only the persons who were a part of his troublesome situation but also philosophers. As he was trying to build his identity, parallel he was trying to find out the truth about man - who is man - in general as well as in

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<sup>125</sup> *Saint Augustine*, p. 69 (T. M.)

<sup>126</sup> *ibid.* p. 69 (T. M.)



his/her peculiar modern condition.<sup>127</sup> He grasped that one cannot fully describe man's qualities<sup>128</sup> and, on this basis, Herzog argues with philosophers who make complete statements as regards human nature and existence.<sup>129</sup> Moreover, Herzog, who is assured of his own impulses of goodness and love, is at odds with those who maintain negative accounts of human nature denying any goodness.

However, like with ambiguity of human nature, goodness and love are not always what they appear to be. Herzog affirms himself with existence of the true and genuine goodness but at the same time, he is aware that man is highly motivated by his/her own needs. In this sense, love is dubious and only the man free of self-deception can discern the quality of his/her love.<sup>130</sup> Herzog truly takes pains to get to his self-knowledge. Through each discovered feature of his self, he at the same time arrives at the knowledge of man. The complexity of his heart, again and again, stuns him which makes him aware of the inconceivable variety of qualities that has to be present in the whole mankind.

From Herzog's perspective, Nietzsche's assertion that the world is the Will to Power and nothing else is daringly absolute and negative of human nature though Herzog is aware of the existence of individuals who are dominated by the Will to Power. One can find them especially in high politics or in trade for they are

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<sup>127</sup> **Herzog**, p. 247

<sup>128</sup> *ibid.* p. 315 *The human soul is an amphibian, and I have touched its sides. Amphibian! It lives in more elements than I will ever know...*

<sup>129</sup> *ibid.* p. 96 *...the cheap mental stimulants of Alienation, the cant and rant of pipsqueaks about Inauthenticity and Forlornness. I can't accept this foolish dreariness. We are talking about the whole life of mankind.*

<sup>130</sup> *ibid.* p. 73 *Charity, as if it didn't have enough trouble in this day and age, will always be suspected of morbidity - sado-masochism, perversity of some sort. All higher or moral tendencies lie under suspicion of being rackets. Things we simply honor with old words, but betray or deny in our very nerves.*

attracted to places where most power is concentrated.<sup>131</sup> Once Herzog sees through hideousness of his passivity, he takes a firm stand toward opinions and decisions of those in power. The letters that he addresses concrete officials often reveal their incompetence in the matters of their department but more importantly show that people seeking power lack the most precious quality of the heart - love.<sup>132</sup> The structures of private life provide space for exertion of the Will to Power as well. Herzog observes abuse and cynical exploitation among the couples in his environment but he has only understood the workings of power in the relationship with the tyrannical Madeleine.<sup>133</sup>

The features of Nietzsche's theory of slave morality and master morality are clearly distributed in the relationship between Herzog and Madeleine. Herzog, the weak one, is subdued by the strong Madeleine having a role of arbiter of values and the ruler of his life. However, Herzog's heart carries potato love that is independent of Madeleine or of any exponent of power - it is a moral constant. In this sense, Herzog refuses Nietzsche's classification of the value of love as an expression of weakness or infirmness in opposition to the Will to Power of the 'strong'.<sup>134</sup>

At the same time Herzog shares Nietzsche's standpoint of social status

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<sup>131</sup> *ibid.* p. 67 *In every community there is a class of people profoundly dangerous to the rest. I don't mean the criminals. For them we have punitive sanctions. I mean the leaders. Invariably the most dangerous people seek the power.*

<sup>132</sup> *ibid.* p. 66 *Dr. Strawforth* [a government scientist in U.S. Public Health Service] *says we must adopt his Philosophy of Risk with regard to radioactivity. Since Hiroshima (and Mr. Truman calls people Bleeding Hearts when they question his Hiroshima decision) life in civilized countries (because they survive through a balance of terror) stands upon a foundation of risk. ...But then he compares human life to Risk Capital in business. What an idea!...*

<sup>133</sup> *ibid.* p. 157 *...she had the hauteur of the female child who knows it won't be long before she is nubile and has the power to hurt. This is mental politics. The strength to do evil is sovereignty.*

<sup>134</sup> *ibid.* p. 71

inherently interconnected with specific values. Nietzsche warns against the ideals of low elements of society and Herzog maps desecration caused by the emancipated low class. However, this desecration was not caused by those ideals that Nietzsche with contempt discards. Herzog often associates the low class with brutality, greed, envy, and cultural barbarism that cannot be easily overcome by e.g. received education as proved by the historical development.<sup>135</sup>

The patricians were the creators of the culture that was traditionally passed down from generation to generation almost intact. The plebeians were for centuries on the margin of the patrician culture which only exceptional individualities could permeate. This conserved culture became open to the former plebeians through the emancipation processes which did not bring along adoption of the culture of patricians but its dissolution.<sup>136</sup> Nietzsche knew of the immense undermining power of the quest for liberty, equality, and brotherhood - ideals, that he considered first of all unnatural, but also a stealthy psychological scheme of those who do not have any other means for their elevation. Herzog himself comes from an impoverished family but with the preserved patrician spirit that he inherited.<sup>137</sup> On this basis he distinguishes between his daughter and Himmelstein's stock. In Gersbach's usurpation of all human emotions resulting into their

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<sup>135</sup> *ibid.* p. 141 *The Dignities continually replenished from below. Where would any distinguished person come from, if not the masses? With the devotion and fire of transcendent resentment.*

<sup>136</sup> *ibid.* p. 97 *...Emergent plebian classes fought for food, power, sexual privileges, of course. But they fought also to inherit the aristocratic dignity of the old regimes, which in the modern age might have claimed the right to speak of decline. In the sphere of culture the newly risen educated masses caused confusion between aesthetic and moral judgments...reaching at last the point of denying the humanity of the industrialized, "banalized" masses...*

<sup>137</sup> *ibid.* p. 175 *No life so barren and subordinate that it didn't have imaginary dignities, honors to come, freedom to advance.*

devaluation<sup>138</sup> Herzog sees an analogy with mobs breaking into Versailles and violently appropriating its treasures. These treasures are incomprehensible to the mobs for they do not originate in their culture and so they orgiastically destroy them.<sup>139</sup>

Another negative bias that Herzog finds in Nietzsche's teachings concerns the Dionysian principle in man. In the letter to Nietzsche Herzog cites the philosopher praising the powers of this principle, that is identified with the powers of Life, by expressions inducing Death.<sup>140</sup> Herzog refuses Nietzsche's glorification of destructive impulses and his language in which he sees the Germanic heritage of the cult of death. For Herzog the Dionysian - the life-affirming principle - is connected with features that preserve and celebrate Life. Upon his return to Ludeyville he experiences a spontaneous flow of cheerfulness and unity with the surrounding nature - with Life. In Herzog's view Nietzsche's philosophy of exultation of power and of contempt for mankind is anti-Life, therefore perverted.

Herzog contemplates the indication of Nietzsche's statement of God's death. What Nietzsche announced as a noticeable phenomenon taking up in the nineteenth century Europe, Herzog's alternated statement 'Death is God' conveys the consequence of the disappearance of faith - nihilism. Nihilism was the underlying cause of both big wars that even further confirmed it by the reality of their atrocities. The fact of the Wars provide enough supportive argument for the

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<sup>138</sup> *ibid.* p. 239

<sup>139</sup> *ibid.* p. 264 ... "Emancipation resulting in madness. Unlimited freedom to choose and play a tremendous variety of roles with a lot of coarse energy."

<sup>140</sup> *ibid.* p. 389 *You speak of the power of the Dionysian spirit to endure the sight of the Terrible, the Questionable, to allow itself the luxury of Destruction, to witness Decomposition, Hideousness, Evil.*

nihilism of the day that is no longer perceived as nihilism but as realism.<sup>141</sup> The essence of such approach to life is a denial of the values that did not prove to last, a measure that disqualifies most precious qualities and leaves man with hollow practicality.<sup>142</sup>

However, quivers of nihilism are natural to human condition. On the way to self-knowledge and finding the truth about human nature, Herzog is often tormented by such quivers and his quest for identity is accompanied by a desperate desire to confirm meaningfulness of existence.<sup>143</sup> He stands, by all means, against an open proclamation of nihilism<sup>144</sup> - in the spiritual as well as moral sense of the word. From this perspective, Sartre's premise upon which he built his philosophy - that apart from existence there is nothingness - is unacceptable to Herzog. Similarly, Sartre's eulogistic treatment of freedom cannot meet with a positive response in Herzog who does not see any value in freedom if connected with nothingness naturally breeding emptiness.<sup>145</sup>

Even in his most crushing moments when he becomes a subject to different instructions, Herzog manages to dissociate himself from these instructions for he is aware that they grow up from the Void. And Herzog can sense its hidden

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<sup>141</sup> *ibid.* p. 118 *And truth is true only as it brings down more disgrace and dreariness upon human beings, so that if it shows anything except evil it is illusion, and not truth.*

<sup>142</sup> *ibid.* p. 353 *This generation thinks - and this is its thought of thoughts - that nothing faithful, vulnerable, fragile can be durable or have any true power. Death waits for these things as a cement floor waits for a dropping light bulb. The brittle shell of glass loses its tiny vacuum with a burst, and that is that.*

<sup>143</sup> *ibid.* p. 46 *All children have cheeks and all mothers spittle to wipe them tenderly. These things either matter or they do not matter. It depends upon the universe, what it is.* also *ibid.* p. 297 *And thus humanized, this planet in its galaxy of stars and worlds goes from the void to void, infinitesimal, aching with its unrelated significance. Unrelated?*

<sup>144</sup> *ibid.* p. 118 *The very Himmelsteins, who had never even read a book of metaphysics, were touting the Void as if it were so much salable real estate. This little demon was impregnated with modern ideas...*

<sup>145</sup> *ibid.* p. 53 *..."But that was one of the problems I was working on, you see, that people can be*

creepy nature. The awareness of the Void as the principle of existence injects more despair into man than his/her consciousness can bear which is often a cause of intrinsic hatred toward existence. The reason of this despair is that the consistently understood Void gives man only one certainty - his own death. Death is left to man to be his/her only metaphysics, his/her God. On the other hand, the professed Void can be a tool to numb and get off one's conscience and to confidently pursue selfish goals. Herzog sees that the so-called realists are well-to-do persons, yet give evidence of their inner suffering by attacks of the idealistic Herzog.<sup>146</sup> The truth is, however, that Herzog himself experiences fits of despair but refuses to turn to religion for remedy.

The main reason of Herzog's skepticism toward religions is in their dogmatic nature that paralyzes man's active part in the search for truth and self-knowledge. Faith in God has become structured into an elaborate system of abstractions and rituals in which man has to make himself/herself fit. Herzog sees that formalized and institutionalized faith can alienate man from his/her heart which he considers the purest source of moral impulses, a source that can never be eradicated in full.<sup>147</sup> Joining religious belief can also be an easy way to escape the fear from the fact of mortality or even one's conscience as he observed in the

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*free now but the freedom doesn't have any content. It's like a howling emptiness."*...

<sup>146</sup> *ibid.* p. 117 *But this was becoming the up-to-date and almost conventional way of looking at any single life. In this view the body itself, with its two arms and vertical length, was compared to the Cross, on which you knew the agony of consciousness and separate being. For that matter, he had been taking this primitive cure, administered by Madeleine, Sandor, et cetera; so that his recent misfortunes might be seen as a collective project, himself participating, to destroy his vanity and his pretensions to a personal life so that he might disintegrate and suffer and hate, like so many others, not on anything so distinguished as a cross, but down in the mire of post-Renaissance, post-humanistic, post-Cartesian dissolution, next door to the Void.*

<sup>147</sup> *ibid.* p. 161 *But I do not see what we can answer when he says "je sens mon coeur et je connais les hommes." Bottled religion, on conservative principles - does that intend to deprive the heart of such powers - do you think? Hulme's followers made sterility their truth, confessing their*

abhorrent cases of Madeleine and Valentin Gersbach.

At first sight, Sartre and Herzog share the view of man's self-deception to be the main obstacle in full realization of humanity. Both believe that man does not need to look outside for moral values: Sartre timidly mentions the metaphysical word 'conscience' in his otherwise atheist-varnished lecture and Herzog confirms himself with the only ever-renewing source of love, that is the heart of man. However, the norm for classifying self-deception differs in them: while Sartre requires man to accept freedom derived from the fact of nothingness and then to make his/her decisions with deep sense of anguish for the sake of mankind, Herzog opposes calling out nothingness but maintains that man has free will in relation to his/her responsibility to moral constants seated in every man's heart that he/she should follow in the name of the 'spell of existence'.

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*impotence. This was their passion.*

## Man to Man

Man's self-reflection as man constitutes those invisible foundations, his/her spirituality that demonstrates in the man-acting - man in interactions with other men and environment - and reflect his/her morality.

The novels of Saul Bellow emphasize the relation between man's spirituality and morality, and pay attention to a generation gap arising from their shifts. The peculiarity of the portrayed gap lies in the several aspects: first, there is always the older generation who is not American-born but European and who believe in moral constants, the 'old system'. Secondly, those people, having suffered in Europe, then had to go through the hardships of newcomers - namely fighting poverty (the old Herzogs). The other case is a somber exile from lurking death in Europe who is isolated by incommunicable experience (Artur Sammler, Harry Fonstein)<sup>148</sup> Thirdly, the second generation that is American-born is growing up in a totally different environment from their parents. The critical Sammler points out that America was more susceptible to 'certain European importations' - psychoanalysis, existentialism<sup>149</sup> - both strengthening the supremacy of subjectivity thus supportive of individualism reaching its raging form in the sixties and the seventies. In conclusion, the older generation, usually European-born, lived up to seeing their American offspring caught up in the whirl of 'freedom' and thus, despite having gradually overcome hardships, they now faced deep disappointment and found themselves helpless.



In Bellow's generational gap we find a self-reflection of the Western civilization that inexorably problematizes the 'values' of the contemporary civilization. The 'old system' (traditional values) is dying out but is not replaced by a 'new system'<sup>150</sup> which signifies a turning point in the historical development of morality. This is not merely a clash of the going and coming generation but an all-permeating event. Inevitably, the individual creating his/her own 'values' affect all 'traditional' primary structures of relations.

### 3.1. The individual to the Whole

The relation of man to the whole (society, humankind, environment, the Planet of the habitat...) is indisputably important for the survival of the species.<sup>151</sup> The continuous strengthening of man's individuality through the history of the Western civilization brought man his/her long-longed-for 'freedom' and he/she became 'autonomous'. The application of the postulate of individual, being the pride of the West<sup>152</sup>, gradually loosened his/her bonds with the whole or even turned into the primacy of the individual. However, the individual harbors self-love expressed outwardly as self-interest.

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<sup>148</sup> the character from *Bellarosa Connection*

<sup>149</sup> *Mr. Sammler's Planet*, p. 68

<sup>150</sup> *ibid.* p. 302 *One might ask, where is the new system?*

<sup>151</sup> M. Machovec: the central idea of his seminars - with the diminishing bond of man to his species, man becomes indifferent to the future, the fate of the next generations, and continues to exploit and pollute the Earth basically expressing his indifference to the survival of mankind.

The historical spirituality of the West always submitted self-love to control, thus self-interest was curbed as well. With the overall process of the emancipation of the individual, the principle of self-interest came necessarily to the fore to become a quite legitimate value of the contemporary Western civilization. Within the reign of self-interest, the individual disintegrates himself/herself from any whole for being incapable of relation.<sup>153</sup> The above-cited instances of the whole lose meaning and turn into the empty, abstract, or even archaic phrases - flatus vocis.<sup>154</sup>

### *Mr. Sammler's Planet*

#### **3.1.1. Man integrated and man disintegrated from the whole**

Bellow deliberately created the main figure of the novel as man who is fully integrated in the whole to demonstrate in detail such man's thinking and stance. However, Sammler had to mature into this full humanity through two highly distinct stages of his life.

The pre-war Artur Sammler prided himself on his ties with the elite and identified himself with the upper class. He recalls himself as a child using their servant or his 'idiotic pain from losing class privileges'. But now he reflects his old self as useless for mankind - his theoretical interest in man (e.g. his

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<sup>152</sup> Preface by Michael Zantovsky to *The Clash of Civilizations*

<sup>153</sup> the meaning of relation implies plural poles

discussions with H.G.Wells) interlaced with his snobbery. Similarly, he is negative about social thinkers who came from poor background, gained fame through the social theme - and became wealthy men living in luxury among the like. What he reads as being in common with his earlier self and with these thinkers is the primary importance of the self to the matter of mankind: Sammler's complacency from the class distinction that is in fact a barrier, or the apparent identification with man's plight of the social thinkers.

However, as a human being, Sammler went through total disintegration from the whole to subsequently the disintegration within himself during the war. The horror of the circumstances that were imposed on him, stripped him of humanity.<sup>155</sup> Hence, he, Sammler the beast kills at a close range a disarmed German soldier offering his assets and asking for sparing his life. Sammler gets his items but takes his life as well.<sup>156</sup> The evidence of erased humanity in Sammler is his being overpowered by joyous feeling from the killing.

The present Sammler postulates full integration of man in mankind as a condition of humanity,<sup>157</sup> however in his daily encounter with the New Yorkers, he runs into obstacles which are a result of the wide-spread individualism. When he sees a black pickpocket robbing people on the bus, he rushes to report it to the police. However, the public phones on Manhattan are out of order and he has to run all the way home to call the police. On the top of everything, police is not interested in catching the criminal but only gives evasive answers

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<sup>154</sup> *Philosophy Face to...*, p. 282

<sup>155</sup> *ibid.* p. 139

<sup>156</sup> *ibid.* p. 141 *To kill man and to kill him without pity, for he was dispensed from pity.*

<sup>157</sup> *ibid.* p. 45 *A human being, valuing himself for the right reasons, has and restores order, authority. When the*

to the determined Sammler.<sup>158</sup>

This situation serves as classical illustration of the man-integrated running against the brick wall of individualism. Sammler notices a crime and urgently takes a civilized action out of his deep-felt humanity but his endeavor fails. First he fails due to anti-social activity having the public phones as one of the commonest targets, and in the second, a more alarming instance, the police - the institution set up for the very purpose of keeping public order - refuses to intervene. The common underlying reason of Sammler's checkmate is indifference - the indifference to everything beyond the self. The phones are not fixed - indicating that working of public phones passes the individual's interest since it is not of his/her immediate life-concern. The company that is in charge is, after all, an institution like the police. The police is making excuses of the shortage of personnel that is preferentially employed at VIPs which suggests enough the motivation of self-interest. Smashing the phones, messing up the phone booths is an expression of not passive but rather violent disintegration - activity directed toward senseless destruction. It is a gesture of meaninglessness turning against the achievements of the civilization, achievements made possible by the exceptional, painstaking activity of the long row of predecessors.

Sammler is haunted by the extreme instance of the disintegration of man from the whole: the case of the mad Jewish King Rumkovski. In the atmosphere of death and despair of the closed-in Lodz ghetto, Rumkowski uses

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*internal parts are in order. They must be in order.*

<sup>158</sup> *ibid.* p. 14 "This man is going to rob more people, but you aren't going to do anything about it."

the established inhuman conditions to the 'orgies' of the self.<sup>159</sup> While he is theatrically<sup>160</sup> celebrating himself with satisfaction in exertion of the perverse power, his neighbors - in his 'kingdom' - see approaching death. The total disintegration of man<sup>161</sup> from the whole demonstrated by Rumkowski equals madness.

### 3.2. The Individual to the Individual

In the previous chapter the resulting stance of the atomized individual to the whole was defined as prevailing indifference. It is a logical outcome of the growing self-cult and loosening integration in nature, in alternating generations or in any whole. However, it is not only the whole that is affected because of its quality of non-immediate imposition on the individual. From the state of self-infatuation one can hardly set up a relationship that would be balanced and life-giving. Same as with truth, relationship can exist only on the premise of capability of relating to something/someone which, in the case of an individual coiled into his/her own self becomes non-feasible. The overgrown self thwarts the channels through which a relationship is nourished as communication<sup>162</sup> or the intimate relationship.

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<sup>159</sup> *ibid.* p. 230-2

<sup>160</sup> *ibid.* p. 231 ...*A man with a bit to play, like so many modern individuals.*

<sup>161</sup> *ibid.* p. 231 *The most monstrous kind of exaggeration. We see the disintegration of the worst ego ideas*

<sup>162</sup> *Philosophy Face to...*, p. 86 The loss of dialogue as a consequence of individualization and individualism

### 3.2.1. Communication

The capability of dialogue becomes the first sign of preserved humanity in man. By the dialogue it is understood the living in dialogue - to be open and have an inherent need of sharing - the sharing playing a more important role than the very information that is shared. In this sense the dialogue encompasses all parts of humanity.<sup>163</sup> The individualism-affected 'dialogue' bears features of grave distortions. The first one is of the disciplinary nature in the early split into the role of a listener and a speaker who soon is assuming the control of the dialogue. Secondly, it relates to self-centeredness - an effort to make others involved in one's plight while dismissing concerns of others. Thirdly, the contents tend to entertainment - providing the individuals living by a mere horizon of their lives with immediate pleasure.<sup>164</sup>

The theme of the loss of dialogue is ever-present in the whole novel. Sammler himself seldom attempts to say his mind since he has found it futile. Firstly, there is a mechanical problem: there is no space for him to talk since the discussion partner does not observe the balance of the dialogue. Secondly, the people around him are basically not interested in another person,<sup>165</sup> unless they can be tickled by

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<sup>163</sup> *ibid.* p. 261 *And compassionate utterance was a mortal necessity. Utterance, sounds of hope and desire, exclamation of grief. Such things were suppressed, as if illicit.*

<sup>164</sup> *ibid.* p. 264 *Let us divert each other while we live!*

<sup>165</sup> *ibid.* p. 15 *For one thing, she seldom stopped to listen. For another, he doubted that he*

some sensation.<sup>166</sup> Lastly, but most importantly, Sammler cannot communicate his mind because his ideas run contrary to the governing individualism. Sammler cannot reach the man-individualist who would at best seize his view and rank it into the range of explanations.

Sammler desperately longs to see Elya, knowing his inner need for their meeting. Their communication does not even need many words as it is happening on a spiritual level - they are both aware of their spiritual affinity.<sup>167</sup> Sammler strives with his whole being to arrive to the hospital in time but fails. Again, he is obstructed by the individualistic conduct of others: Shula's multi-purposeful stealing of Lal's manuscript and Margot's lack of consideration for others.<sup>168</sup>

The gravity of the loss of dialogue is apparent from absence of Angela and Wallace at their father's deathbed. The fact that their father is dying is well known to them but it does not occur to them to be there, they do not have a need to share his last moments of life with him. To them his death means only possible shifts of their income. Angela actually cries and is in the hospital but she cries for herself as she is now uncertain of continuation of her luxurious life. Wallace expresses excitement that he could find abortion money in Elya's home. Being sure that his father will not leave the hospital alive, he rushes to search the house even before the statement of his death is made. Sammler, out of the

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*could make himself clear.*

<sup>166</sup> e.g. Sammler's mention of the black pick-pocket on the bus spread quickly

<sup>167</sup> *ibid.* p. 260-1 *But he did not feel uncommunicative toward Elya. On the contrary, he wanted to say everything possible. He wanted to go to the hospital and say something!*

<sup>168</sup> *ibid.* p. 271 *She had her own female vital aims. No sense of the vital aims of others.*

deep sympathy toward Elya, dares to propose reconciliation to Angela who reacts as being insulted. Sammler realizes that he is facing a loss of humanity.<sup>169</sup>

One of the postulates of individualism is to be real - the right to set the self free. The demonstration of this 'freedom' leads to the deliberate reversal of traditionally established manners. The dialogue, as an old human asset, is also eroded. This is pictured by the scene at the famed Columbia University where Sammler comes to lecture. He manages to forbear considerable noise in the large room but decides to leave when attacked with crudity by one of the students. Again he is faced with the absence of humanity.<sup>170</sup>

### **3.2.2. Man and Woman in Transition**

The plot of the novel is set at the time when the so-called sexual revolution was sweeping the United States. Through the mind of Mr. Sammler, Bellow manages to rank this revolution into the frame of adverse effects of individualism. Why did individualism swirl up sex so profusely ?

Individualism has above all declared a war on traditions. The underlying sense of traditions is to bind which is contrary to freeing proclaimed by individualism. Individualism is generally considered to be a social progress, a higher stage of the social development of man. Traditions with their rootedness in the past automatically come out as having been surpassed. As a

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<sup>169</sup> *ibid.* p. 304 : " Well everybody's human only in some degree .Some more than others." "Some very little?" "That's the way it seems. Very little. Faulty. Scanty. Dangerous." "I thought everybody was born human." "It's not a natural gift at all. Only the capacity is natural."

<sup>170</sup> *ibid.* p. 43 And he was not so much personally offended by the event as struck by



result, the treatment of sex went through an abrupt turn through the last hundred years: from the severe suppression of its existence in the 19th century to the radical disposal of inhibitions and stripping it off all intimacy in the latter half of the 20th century.

The loss of the continuity with the past by the negation of traditions reduced the importance of the present. The time becomes solely a 'capital' of the individual. Future, like the past, is out of the scope of the individual for the time of his/her existence is unsure.<sup>171</sup> The present moment is the only reality which moves pleasure and diversion into the center of individual's life. Both meet the requirement of an immediate sensation. Therefore, sex with its pleasure-giving qualities fits perfectly into the individual's idea of time-spending. In this way, sex was seized by the individual from the Western tradition of its life-time integration. Having been disconnected from the Western tradition, the new culture of sex becomes close to Africanism.<sup>172</sup>

The main herald of the sexual revolution in the novel is the character of Angela. In a typical individualistic stand, she makes sex subservient to her needs. Such disintegrated sex falls apart into sets of short-lived experiences. The celebration of unrestricted sex, as was the case in the seventies, changed sexual life into an endless line of possibly original experiences of individuals striving for ever newer and ever more original states of sensual gratification. The relationship factor in sex becomes so eliminated that Angela is said to have

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*the will to offend. What a passion to be real. But real was also brutal. And the acceptance of excrement as a standard?*

<sup>171</sup> *Philosophy Face to...* p. 45

<sup>172</sup> *Mr. Sammler's Planet*, p. 162 *Millions of civilized people wanted oceanic,*

anonymous sex.<sup>173</sup> That too reflects the earlier stated reasons of the u-turn in sex matters. The anti-traditional component along with the stress on the absolute authority of the individual is communicated by the individual's capability to consume his/her freedom. Being deeply involved in a relationship becomes a sign of adhesion to the tradition and of 'unfit self-hood'. In addition, a transient relationship based on sex is most convenient for the individual seeking to please himself/herself. Love, connected with a demand of faithfulness means limitations in 'freedom'. In this way, sexual practices with strangers best meet the individual's needs.

Sammler cannot grasp the feasibility of such a breakaway from the Jewish traditional life<sup>174</sup> and understands Wharton's withdrawal from the relationship with Angela after the sex party. Angela cannot comprehend it, from her point of view, it was a fair deal, and moreover, Wharton was positive to join in. It is suggestive that Wharton later reflects on his dissolute experimentation as stepping out of humanity, out of the frame of his ancient store of culture.

Having been stripped off its intimacy,<sup>175</sup> the freed sex assumes highly profane and vulgar forms of expression.<sup>176</sup> Sammler resists the constant bringing up of sex business from almost all of his visitors but vainly for sex became an

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*boundless, primitive, neckfree nobility...and acquired the peculiar aim of sexual niggerhood for everyone.*

<sup>173</sup> *ibid.* p. 178 ...*When you take a close look...you see a woman who has done it in too many ways with too many men. By now she probably doesn't know the name of the man between her legs.*

<sup>174</sup> *ibid.* p. 73 *Somewhere he doubted the fitness of these Jews for this erotic Roman voodoo primitivism. He questioned whether release from long Jewish mental discipline, hereditary training in lawful control, was obtainable upon individual application.*

<sup>175</sup> *ibid.* p. 158 *Saw the woman (by her own erotic account), as if in the actual bedroom. By invitation he was there, a perplexed bystander.*

<sup>176</sup> *ibid.* p. 153 *"Just a front, Uncle. I was a dirty little bitch, really."*

ever-present and respected value in the whole society reflected in cultural events of the time.<sup>177</sup> The culture of free sex is not only in the center of people's attention but it, above all, establishes sexual potency and the size of a penis a socially acceptable measure of authority.<sup>178</sup>

In accordance with this fact, Sammler is verbally attacked by one of the audience at Columbia University. The assailant's logic mixes competence of Sammler's lecturing with his sexual potency.<sup>179</sup> The student declares Sammler's inferiority based on sex and rouses the audience to refuse to be lectured by such man. Before Sammler gets home, the black pickpocket as well literally demonstrates his supreme authority coming from the big size of his genital organ.<sup>180</sup> Since that is the highest possible affirmation of the black man's supremacy, he does not utter a word. His sexual equipment makes him 'nobility' and justifies him to robbing people who are more or less inferior to him.

### **3.3. Morality in *Mr. Sammler's Planet* in the light of St. Augustine, F. W. Nietzsche, and J. P. Sartre**

Morality has its source in man's spirituality and outwardly is reflected

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<sup>177</sup> *ibid.* p. 31 ...thus Sammler knew... *the Living Theater, the outbursts of nude display more and more revolutionary, Dionysus '69, copulation on the stage...*

<sup>178</sup> *ibid.* p 55 *At any rate, there was the man's organ, a huge piece of flesh, half-tumescent in its pride and shown in its own right, a prominent and separate object intended to communicate authority. As, within the sex ideology of these days, it well might. It was a symbol of superlegitimacy or sovereignty.*

<sup>179</sup> *ibid.* p. 42 "...what he got to tell you?...He's dead. He can't come."

<sup>180</sup> *ibid.* p. 50 *The thing was shown with mystifying certitude. Lordliness.*

in human conduct. Any act that man chooses to perform, comes from his/her decision that is based on a certain abstract notion of man - in relation to himself and to being.

### **3.3.1. The characters in the light of St. Augustine's Doctrine of Love**

Not surprisingly then, the character of Sammler who was spiritually identified with St Augustine in the previous chapter, is equivalent to him in terms of morality as well. It was also stated that Sammler arrived at the highest knowledge, the knowledge

of God who is Eternal Truth, through the merging of his knowledge and experience of the world and men. Similarly, Sammler's morality went through a development derived from the circumstances of his life.

The pre-war Sammler cherished the privileges of the upper class and his intellectual distinction which made him at home with the cultural best of the time. As a Polish Jew, he perceived his life in London as successful. Having been born in a distinguished family and having set up himself in the high circles, Sammler developed a degree of self-pride expressing itself in snobbery. The theoretical views of man received from H.G. Wells further affirmed his self-pride and nourished the belief in man in general. In those years, Sammler professed Man, in his own self, as well as in general - Man of unthought-of

horizons awaiting in future. Through his faith, Sammler sanctioned man's self-sufficiency.

The World War II which had surpassed the World War I in terms of its overall destruction ended both men's self-pride as well as their hopes laid upon Man. Wells faced his irretrievably declining vitality<sup>181</sup> and Sammler's world of scholarship and high-connections vanished as if never being real. Both lived up to see the utopian nature of their faith in man with the difference that Sammler physically survived, lasted, as he puts it, and in the course of decades recovered his purged soul to being able of retrospective re-evaluation of his life.

In the present Sammler all his knowledge has fused and he sees through the erroneous assumptions as regards man and his own part in it. His previous life was affected by what Augustine calls the disordered Love in substituting self and man for God. Moreover, Sammler took this disorder for truth. This belief which had its source in the staggering success of modern man in technology and in the creation of the civilization blinded him to the point of self-pride, hubris, as well as the satisfaction from his exceptional privileged status. From nihilism of the aftermath years, Sammler develops to a new identity with his new self no longer supreme or seeking truth in man but subordinated to God who is Eternal Truth and Eternal Love. He retains normal self-love expressed for instance in eating yeast but strictly denies himself any growth of the self over the highest instance that is God.<sup>182</sup> His acts are not

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<sup>181</sup> + 1946 *ibid.* p. 28 *And in the agony of parting with the breasts, the mouths, and precious sexual fluids of women, poor Wells, the natural teacher, the sex emancipator, the explainer, the humane blesser of mankind, could in the end only blast and curse everyone.*

<sup>182</sup> *ibid.* p. 236 *"The best, I have found, is to be disinterested. Not as misanthropes*

governed by self-love but by 'love' or 'order' expressing what Augustine stated in his Doctrine of Love.<sup>183</sup> His participation in Eternal Love is best demonstrated in the acts of his integration in mankind that are not motivated by his self-love but by love union with God.

The reason why Sammler opposes the modern individualism is that it turned into the religion of the self. The self became the highest instance in man's spirituality which entitled self-love to be the final principle in morality. As explained earlier, self-love alienates man from anything that is not directly associated with his/her individual existence. What follows is that all actions are determined by the individual's self-interest so that even public institutions are alienated from their original purpose as in the case of the police that Sammler was urging in vain. The overgrown self is an obstacle for a true dialogue that is gradually spared since from the point of view of the self, diversion and sensation are more convenient and catching.<sup>184</sup> He is not sought after for his extensive knowledge and experience but rather as a polite listener. Therefore he, surprised by himself, enlivens when meeting Dr. Lal who is genuinely interested in his thoughts.<sup>185</sup> So Sammler makes an effort to speak his mind as he senses that Lal, who is not engulfed by the self-religion, could understand his thoughts. The family affected by the individual self-pride ceases to be a mutually loving unit and its close emotional bonds fall apart through indifference. The conduct

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*dissociate themselves by judging. By willing as God wills."*

<sup>183</sup> *ibid.* p. 228 "Perhaps the best is to have some order within oneself. Better what many call love. Perhaps it is love."

<sup>184</sup> M. Machovec, *Notes 1994 - 1999*: the Czech word for talk, 'hovorit o necem', is replaced by 'bavit se o necem'

<sup>185</sup> *ibid.* p. 211 *Sammler thought that Govinda was about to speak. When he paused, several waves of silence passed, containing tacit questions: You? No, you, sir: You speak. Lal*

expressing deep involvement and respect is not allowed by self-pride of the individual. Asking one's loving and dying father for forgiveness, as Sammler suggested, is flung back by Angela. The relationship between man and woman becomes light<sup>186</sup> and is frequently reduced to sex affairs, consummation and experimentation with pleasure, defying any limitations that would oppose one's self-pride. An example of the inventive service of sex to the individual is hygiene, as Sammler heard, for the sake of a good skin.

The modern individualism evaluated by St. Augustine's Doctrine of Love emerges as the widespread disordered love. The man's spiritual need is for God, the infinite, which can only give him/her ultimate satisfaction. However, in the modern individualism, God was substituted by Man. The individual who loves man - the self for the sake of the ultimate happiness - seeks to fulfill his desire for the infinite with the finite and expects more than this can provide. The consequences arisen described by Augustine closely resemble human conduct pictured in the novel. The self-pride of the characters sets them on the course to overindulgence. Yet, not being able to find enough satisfaction, they make ever new attempts to fulfill their desire for the infinite by engaging in the finite activities.

The result is sinking deeper into finitude, transience of the pursued pleasures followed by an increased suffering<sup>187</sup> of the self that finds the existence

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*was listening.*

<sup>186</sup> *ibid.* p. 299 *Human attachments being so light, there were probably lists of alternates, preconscious reserves...*

<sup>187</sup> *ibid.* p. 66 *Old Picasso was wildly obsessed by sexual fissures, by phalluses. In the frantic and funny pain of his farewell, creating organs by the thousands, perhaps tens of thousands.*

meaningless and runs into tabooization<sup>188</sup>, disguise<sup>189</sup>, or another reality<sup>190</sup>. The final remaining - 'not-tried-out' desire - is for non-being.<sup>191</sup> Sammler is sensitive to all these signs and is most stirred by them as symptoms of the doom closing in on the Western civilization.<sup>192</sup>

### 3.3.2. Will to Power in Sammler's mind

Nietzsche by postulating atheism made his philosophy entirely secular, counting only with the man-realm. Having cut out God, his philosophy is based on the premise of supremacy of Man whom he defines by the inherent Will to Power. From that perspective, faith in God, as the highest, above-man instance, or any ideals containing the idea of equality is schemed out by the Will to Power that cannot exert itself by the subdued or the weak.

The character of Sammler, who was 'illuminated' to recognize Eternal Truth, opposes Nietzsche's premise of the godless existence. However, as for the knowledge of man, Nietzsche's stress on the Power as the fundamental drive in man, Sammler is painfully aware of as well. The way they look upon this Will to Power differs flatly: while Nietzsche adores the concentration of power in man, sees the future man freed from the schemes of the weak, freed from

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<sup>188</sup> *ibid.* p. 306 "...And can't you think of anything but death?" "But that's what we have before us."

<sup>189</sup> *ibid.* p. 230, 233 "...I am always talking about play-acting, originality, dramatic individuality, theatricality in people, the forms taken by spiritual striving. ...Perhaps when people are so desperately impotent, they play that instrument, the personality, louder and wilder."

<sup>190</sup> *ibid.* p. 181 "Whole? What 'whole'? A childish notion. It led to all this madness, mad religions, LSD, suicide, to crime."

<sup>191</sup> *ibid.* p. 235 "...the pain of heart it makes many people feel is incalculable, that most forms of personal existence seem to be discredited, and that there is a peculiar longing for non-being."

<sup>192</sup> *ibid.* p. 158 "But always a certain despair underlining pleasure, death seated inside the health-capsule, steering it, and darkness winking at you from the golden utopian sun."



accountability to any 'higher' values or laws, or conscience - man who determines values himself, Sammler is terrified by this concentration of power for its supreme triumph is killing - total disintegration of humanity - which is madness.<sup>193</sup> Nietzsche as well as Sammler do not believe in ideals that were the banners of revolutions. Sammler sadly realizes that, as soon as the revolution starts winning, it sucks in power which immediately destroys the former ideal. Sammler is sadly contemplating that the ideal may be just a sublimed longing to belong to the elite and that a revolution is only about a sway of power.<sup>194</sup> Nietzsche is fully aware of the falseness of such ideals as schemes of redistribution of power. He warns out those who hold the power, the nobility of men who managed to keep power in their hands through generations, against any undermining attempts of the herd. Nietzsche sanctions killing if it is needed for actions done for the sake of Power though he does not advocate killing for killing, a mere demonstration of power. He believes that an exceptional man of the accumulated power, the superman, would retain rationality and sanity. Sammler sees power as opium that inevitably destroys sanity and requires its assertion through killing.

Although Sammler never entitles himself to state truth, one thing he precisely knows to be truth: that human life is sacred and that every man knows it.<sup>195</sup> Hence to murder with impunity is the highest assertion of power, an

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<sup>193</sup> *ibid.* p. 218 ...*"Besides, if the power is great enough, it will make its own madmen by its own pressure. ...It allows their irrationalities to leave the sphere of dreams and come into the real world."*

<sup>194</sup> *ibid.* p. 144 *In a revolution you took away the privileges of an aristocracy and redistributed them. What did equality mean? Did it mean all men were friends and brothers? No, it meant that all belonged to the elite.*

<sup>195</sup> *ibid.* p. 18 " ...*The best and purest human beings, from the beginning of time,*

expression of arbitrariness against truth - God. Sammler knows that behind this highest assertion of the Will to power there is always uncontrolled growth of ego that disintegrates itself from humanity, a most hideous self-love that degrades all other existence to mere means. At that point, man cannot be counted as sane for this premise is a sign of irrationality.

Judged by St. Augustine's Doctrine of Love, it is clear that the activated Will to Power is evidence of the disordered love, love that placed the self on the highest post disregarding truth, God, and reducing the rest of existence to a subservient position. The killing would be a ravenous strife against the finitude - the fact most abhorrent to self-love - an utmost attempt in the hope of satisfying desire for the infinite.

### **3.3.3. Sartre's visionary Freedom**

Sartre, like Nietzsche, operated his philosophical reasoning on the atheist ground and approached any admitting of objective truth or morality as detrimental to man. Sartre's man, that is the contemporary man of the twentieth century, is fully free because he/she has the privilege of being freed from any prescribed essence and he/she is conscious of it. This new freedom, however imposes on man the responsibility for what values to choose. Man invents values and thus the choice concerns the whole humanity. His man should make an act of choice with deep sense of anguish. Sartre argues that, when choosing, man knows whether he/she would want others act as he/she does. If he/she

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*have understood that life is sacred."*

suppresses the awareness of freedom or evades this responsibility for each other, he/she is 'guilty' of self-deception and will not be at ease in his/her conscience.

Sammler openly resents Existentialism and finds its relation to the sexual revolution. The new upholding of sex by masses of the freed individuals resulted into general dissoluteness. The 'invented' value that majority affirmed in their lives is the stressed sex and sex as an experience. From the perspective of humanity, this invented value of sex is a setback that has been discussed earlier. The people who evolve their lives around experimentation with sensual pleasure cannot even be charged with self-deception for their acts are feasible only under the condition of others acting so as well. Existentialism thus can be linked with the sexual revolution.

There is a scene in the novel where Shula takes Dr. Lal's manuscript and brings it to her father to read it. Later on, she takes the manuscript from her father and evaporates. Lal is upset and Sammler makes his best to locate her, hopefully with the manuscript, to return it to the owner. Sammler labels her behavior as stealing but she justifies herself by having a 'higher' aim on mind and disclaims to be associated with theft. The later seizing of the manuscript is a scheme motivated by the desire to be chased by the desperate Dr. Lal whom she wants to attract. However, Lal is most perplexed by her final theatrical appearance in sari, for he lacks the knowledge of unpredictable turns of individualism in the everyday life.

When Shula chooses to take Lal's manuscript, she might have honestly had on her mind the benefit of mankind through Sammler's memoirs which is

contained in her defense.<sup>196</sup> In this way, she is conscious of her freedom and invents a value of absolute supremacy when creativity is at stake. Then she is being authentic to her self and her act is not self-deception. Another possibility is that Shula, out of cultural snobbishness, seeks to be the daughter of man who publishes smashing memoirs.<sup>197</sup> Then she is aware of pushing her individual goal of fame at the cost of Lal's indignation of several days. She knows that her act was not fair - is not recommendable to mankind - and her act is a case of self-deception. Lastly, that Shula's aim may have been to get Lal as a man.<sup>198</sup> One then cannot state whether her conduct is self-deception or not. She may have had no objection to such behavior to become a 'value' since her desire for him is genuine. Or, she is conscious of the fact that the means of her scheming - painful for the object - is not the value humankind should adopt.

It has been shown that the individual's possibilities of explanation are vast. Even if an individual admits a mild case of self-deception in his/her soul, it can be easily dispersed by the chameleonic capabilities of consciousness. The individualist self found a mighty ally in psychiatry which offers a countless sea of 'scientific' explanations for every human act.<sup>199</sup> The contemporary man in the novel does not yearn for that much freedom to which Sartre condemns him/her.

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<sup>196</sup> *ibid.* p. 198 ... "For the creative there are no crimes. And aren't you a creative person?"

<sup>197</sup> *ibid.* p. 198 ... She would back him, and he would accomplish great things in the world of culture... "Very well, my photograph in bookshops. A fine idea. Excellent. But stealing?"

<sup>198</sup> *ibid.* p. 207 For Sammler now suspected that she had run away with *The Future of the Moon* in order to create this very opportunity, this meeting. Were he and Wells really secondary, then?... To him, Sammler remembered, women used sometimes act insolent to get his attention and say stinging things imagining that it made them fascinating.

<sup>199</sup> *ibid.* p. 39 And of course he was in psychiatric treatment. They all were. They could always say that they were sick. Nothing was omitted. p.174 *Change Sin to Sickness, a change of words ...*, and then enlightened doctors would stamp the sickness out.

Sartre's warning of the state of self-deception either out of a refusal of freedom or of responsibility proved to have no meaning in the conduct of the characters in the novel. As a secular-based idea, it cannot replace graveness connected to guilt that is derived from breaking laws that go beyond the individual.

## Conclusion

Saul Bellow managed to accurately illustrate through his key novels the complex condition of the contemporary Western society.<sup>200</sup> The main protagonists are intellectuals with strong background in philosophy and social sciences. However, in everyday life they are compelled to experience interactions with their environment and society through which Bellow achieves a confrontation of philosophy with the ordinary. His intellectuals therefore fulfill the role that prof. Machovec assigns them to: they make an inquiry into the self-reflection of man and mankind and thus help toward wise orientation of man in the world.

The most relevant question in this context appears to be the re-evaluation of the view of the considerable changes occurring in spirituality and morality of the Western man that were launched by the Modern Age. The fundamental change in the self-reflection of man is his/her comprehension of himself/herself primarily as an individual and the waning spiritual identification with Judaism and Christianity. This revolutionary change but slower in effect gained momentum in the latter half of the twentieth century, particularly in America, the land of opportunity that has been built on the rights of an individual since the very beginning.

The predicament of the endowment of freedom for every individual come out to be the necessity of individual orientation that offers the potential of individuality, in reality, however the individual is governed by a narrow horizon of self-interest.

Herzog sees the results of the legitimate pursuit of happiness in passive stand of the masses - the middle-class - toward national and global issues. Passive in effect, equals indifference toward the public matters of anything overreaching individual's scope of

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<sup>200</sup> Bellow calls art „*true impression*“ in his Nobel prize speech

existence. The hard-fought-for democracy as the political system that enables every citizen to participate in the public matters, cannot function properly for citizens have lost their interest in what concerns the whole. Herzog is too frequently struck by the stupidity, manipulation, or outrageous pragmatism coming out of official places. Such behavior is possible only in the atmosphere of general indifference.

The middle-class masses have thrown themselves into hedonistic living and can be waken up from their apathy only by sensations - almost always experiences in which violence rules supreme. Herzog is disappointed with the reality of the individual existence or the private life. He realizes that the potentially highest accomplishments of the civilization - liberty and leisure time accessible to everyone - are filled with nothing but emptiness. As a result, life loses its value and is treated as a trifle which, he thinks, threatens the continuation of the Western civilization.

Sammler, as European with distinguished up-breeding and education from the early twentieth century, raises more criticism than Herzog against the direction which the Western civilization, particularly America, is taking. In contemplating the nature of man his perspective tends to be global and universal and the standard of his evaluation is truth. Sammler is torn between the acknowledgment and the condemnation of individualism. He sees this process as the highest triumph for justice since it ended treatment of people as sole means and primarily recognized a person in man. This part of the revolutionary process extends truth and Sammler never disclaims it. The endowment of liberty and leisure introduced new kinds of grief and misery according to Sammler. The vast opportunities changed man's life into one big experimentation with no limits which looks interesting from the perspective of the individual but is disastrous from the perspective of the continuation of

the Western civilization.

Sammler continually sees the horror of struggling selves behind the advanced and successful civilization of America. The most apparent example of a complete disorientation is the counter-culture movement of the young generation. What starts as a protest against the materialized and pragmatic attitudes of the middle-class, soon turns into the iconoclastic rage and advanced experimentation with life reaching over to death.

Both main protagonists of the two novels engage themselves in self-reflection - they simultaneously reflect upon man, mankind, and themselves as men. The final impression one gets from their analysis is disappointment which is, however, not identical.

American-born Herzog is a generation younger than Sammler, is aware of the Holocaust but his consciousness stays remote from this different reality. Once he sees through the folly in his acts, Herzog is disappointed by his own disorientation in liberty the passivity of people for whom he uses the word 'masses' that indicates amorphousness. However, his disappointment fluctuates with optimism stemming from the knowledge of the human heart. He relies on the nature of the heart - that it will always harbor spontaneous goodness and love - the qualities he finds in himself. On this basis, Herzog assures himself that reality, as well as history, is distorted by human consciousness that tends to remember horrors but the history of goodness of the human heart must be veiled for real love does not advertise itself.

Sammler is more poignant in his criticism for his consciousness amply experienced the capability of evil in man in the war atrocities. Moreover, the story takes place about a decade after Herzog's introspection, at the time when the social turmoil has just culminated. Sammler arrives in America already irretrievably cured of any expectations from man, and



the events in the sixties only re-affirm his profound skepticism. He was compelled to face pure evil, the evil that was, to minutest detail worked out by man, which makes him distrustful of any elevation of the self. Sammler sees utopia in the American society based on the belief in the individual and identifies its symptomatic signs of doom.

The three chosen philosophers are into the confrontation with Bellow's two intellectuals. Both Bellow's intellectuals refrain from the belief that an individual has capability to describe faithfully the whole and refuse the premise of atheism that is arbitrary reduction of reality to them. These attitudes make of them opponents to Nietzsche's and Sartre's philosophies.

Nietzsche's philosophy is very naturalistic in describing and stressing the negative nature of man that he claims to be inherent of man by which he neutralizes the negative, turning it into the most natural conduct. Sammler, as well as Herzog, acknowledge a part of his philosophy in his analysis of the Will to Power - especially in relation to revolutions. However, they differ from him in the approach to the Will of Power - while Nietzsche glorifies its accumulation, they dread it as a danger to humanity. Nietzsche's faith in a complete man - superman - was proven to be a delusion by the historical development that followed after his death, which confirmed man's innate imperfection.

Sartre's philosophy is highly idealistic in the conjecture of ability of man to full realization of his/her freedom, and even more in making decisions with deep sense of anguish out of overflowing responsibility. Where would this responsibility beating one's self-interest emerge from, is not clear. Sartre's humanism presupposes a better man than he/she is in reality. Sammler and Herzog are turned off by the outcome from releasing the self from the former submission but, at the same time, they realize that what they observe

might be just an early stage of human consciousness. In this sense, Sartre's theoretical humanism might come true one day. At the moment, mankind continues to live in self-deception and is guilty of inauthenticity, according to Sartre's philosophy.

St. Augustine does not believe in man for he/she is finite and imperfect. He sees human existence as valuable only in relation to God. The main constituents of man - knowledge and love - must be submitted to God and not to the self or other man otherwise they lead to disorder. Both Sammler and Herzog had to cure themselves of the belief in sovereignty of man and accept the fact of man's finitude and imperfection. This made them sensitive to the signs of usurpation of knowledge and improper pride, which they started to perceive as folly or madness. They came to understand the limitations of freedom and became satisfied with recognizing their free will. They realized the barrier built up by the set that prevented them from arriving at the knowledge of God. The teachings of St. Augustine thus explain and offer a clue to the problems of the 'freed' contemporary man.

The three philosophers outlined their concepts of an ideal self: Nietzsche saw it in the concentration of power - over the self as well as others. Such individuality would become a leader of the herd. Sartre saw the ideal self fully conscious of freedom and responsibility. Only Augustine saw through the corruptibility of the self when it is made the supreme authority. He claimed that the self must submit to God as would to something 'higher' which would moderate pride and tame self-love. From Augustine's account, it becomes clear why individualism leads to disappointment.

The objective of this thesis is an analysis of the disappointment of the Western intellectual as seen in the selected novels by Saul Bellow. The philosophical concepts of the

three philosophers serve only as comparative means for the clearer and broader understanding of the issue. For that purpose, the concepts are simplified as well as the parallels drawn with the scenes and thoughts of the protagonists. This mode of analysis is original among the accessible materials of the Department of American Studies<sup>201</sup>; however, having considered the heavy philosophical orientation of Bellow's novels, I found the above-mentioned approach the most plausible.

The tone of the thesis is quite critical toward the prevailing concept of the Western individualism owing to the highly critical contents of the whole *Mr. Sammler's Planet* and the lectures of prof. M. Machovec. However, it has to be pointed out, that the chief motive is the opposite of indifference and the underlying emotion of the criticism of Sammler and Machovec is love and sympathy with mankind.

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<sup>201</sup> see **Literature**

## Resume

Tato diplomová práce si klade za cíl rozebrat důvody zklamání západního intelektuála ve 20. Století. Tato analýza je založena na dvou románech amerického intelektuála ve 20. Století. Tato analýza je založena na dvou románech amerického autora židovského původu, Saula Bellowa - *Planeta pana Sammlera* a *Herzog*. Jako relevantní sekundární literaturu jsem zvolila práce a zápisy ze seminářů prof. M. Machovce, který se důkladně věnoval vývoji antropologické sebereflexe až do současnosti: snaží se co nejvíce upozornit na problematiku vítězství individualismu v dějinách západní civilizace a jeho možnou osudovost pro její budoucnost. Dále jsem se opírala o filosofické teorie tří známých filosofů - Sv. Augustina jako představitele základů západní civilizace a od současnosti vzdáleného chápání podstaty člověka; F. W. Nietzscheho reagujícího na patrnou změnu duchovního života západní civilizace svými převratnými koncepty člověka; a J. P. Sartra, který se pokusil vytvořit z důsledného ateismu opravdový humanismus.

Nejdříve jsem se pokusila stručně nastínit vývoj západní civilizace od individualizace k individualismu. Západ dostal do kolébky tři druhy dědictví - z řeckého génia základy všech věd a dovedností s důvěrou ve vlastní rozum, dále z judaismu a křesťanství získal Evropan chápání přítomnosti začleněné do budoucnosti, což duchovně zajistilo smysluplnost životních útrap a usilovné práce. Evropa se těšila rozvoji a začala umožňovat některým obyvatelům rozvinout svou jedinečnost. Tyto první přirozené individuality předznamenaly vývoj k vytvoření podmínek pro možnost individuálního pojetí existence pro široké vrstvy. Když toto privilegium bylo vybojováno a uzákoněno, začíná individualizace nabývat

podoby individualismu - pokleslého chápání vytvořených možností. Lidské individuum se redukovalo na promítnutí jeho primitivních interesů do bezprostředního okolí a na snahu naplnit svůj život co nejvíce epikurejskými slastmi a co nejdéle přežít. Ústup náboženské víry a její nahrazení řeckým dědictvím rozumu ještě více upevnil individualismus.

Dále jsem analyzovala postavy obou románů z pohledu duchovních základů jejich existence. Artur Sammler ztělesňuje svou identitou, znalostmi a zkušenostmi západní civilizaci. Židovský původ ve východní Evropě se u něj snoubí se vštěpovaným kosmopolismem a osobně preferovaným anglofilstvím. Jeho znalosti významných myslitelů dosahují objemu pansofie. Ve svém životě se ocitl v intelektuální elitě Londýna dvacátých a třicátých let, ale na návštěvě v Polsku ho smetl Holocaust. Zraněný Sammler se dokázal vyhrabat z hromadného hrobu, bojovat po boku polských partyzánů, před kterými se momentu konce války byl nucen skrývat v hrobce. Do Ameriky se dostal díky svému láskyplnému synovci Elyovi, jenž procházel seznamy osob ve sběrných táborech.

V New Yorku se Sammler stále cítí cize, čehož je důvodem nejen jeho výjimečnost osobnosti a osudu, ale především odlišné chápání duchovní podstaty člověka a jeho vztahu ke světu. Sammler zakládá svou existenci na víře v pravdu, která je objektivní, nezávislá, věčná a neměnná hodnota - taková pravda je Bůh. Poznání pravdy je možno pro jedince skrze přiblížení se k ní, ale jedinec nikdy nemůže být zdrojem pravdy. Sammler si neustále uvědomuje, že jako jedinec je obětí své subjektivity, která pravdu zatemňuje. Ve vztahu ke světu si Sammler přiznává svou zanedbatelnost jakožto jeho pouhá jedna jednotlivina. Poznání pravdy u Sammlera je výsledkem tisíckrát opakovaného procesu teorie cesty k poznání sv. Augustina. Rozličnost smyslových zážitků je propojována s ideami, přičemž hledání pravdy zůstává nejvyšším cílem. Měřítko vztahu k pravdě Sammler užívá při

hodnocení děl myslitelů: těm, co místo právě slouží lidskému já, ať už relativizováním pravdy nebo přímo vzhlížením se ve vlastní myslitelské výjimečnosti, Sammler nevěnuje pozornost. Zajímá se pouze, pokud vycítí úctu k pravdě. Ze svého okolí vyhledává pouze synovce Elyu, jehož si hluboce váží pro jeho nenápadně projevovanou lásku a obětavost k lidem. Souhrou náhod se Sammler setká s indickým vědcem tvořícím projekt osídlení Měsíce. Sammlera zaujme svým ohleduplným vystupováním a zájmem o osud lidstva - obě se vytratil ze společnosti zasažené individualismem. Z velké většiny je tak Sammler obklopen lidmi zmámenými experimentováním se svobodou, včetně své vlastní dcery Shuly.

Individualismus se projevuje v různých obměnách, jež Saul Bellow mistrně vykreslil. Margot, u které Sammler bydlí, je nápadně hodná žena, ale ve své snaze porozumět a najít dobro v každé skutečnosti se projevuje jedna z tváří volného chápání jevů - liberalismu. Shula, Sammlerova dcera, se zaměstnává intelektuálními a náboženskými zájmy, jež se právě pro svou mnohotvárnost míjejí svým posláním vést člověka k vyšším hodnotám než je on sám. Všim zaopatřené Elyovy děti propadly ještě hlouběji zhoubným jevům individualismu. Angela je krásná a bohatá dospělá žena, ale její životní obzor vyplňují pouze starosti o své tělo a hlavně jeho sexuální vyžití. Wallace je také krásný a mladý muž, jenž projevuje nadání všeho druhu, ale protože je svým individualismem vyčleněn ze společnosti, jeho činnosti mu slouží pouze pro vlastní zábavu a tak se rychle střídají. Feffer je mladý živorodý universitní profesor, jenž kdysi jako student předčítal Sammlerovi. I on je ve víru individualismu především svým manévrovacím chováním, sledujícím všemožné cíle a vlastní pobavení, čímž potvrzuje pokleslost společnosti, kterou nemůže brát vážně.

Při srovnání učení tří jmenovaných filosofů s životními postoji postav románu jsem došla k následujícím závěrům: Sammler, Elya a Dr. Lal chápáním své existence jako

zanedbatelné a poddané nadindividuálním hodnotám jako pravda a láska, naplňují Augustinovu teorii lidského poznání vedoucího k nejvyšší Pravdě - k Bohu. Naopak Margot, Shula, Angela, Wallace a Feffer nemohou dosáhnout poznání nejvyšší Pravdy, protože považují pravdu za vlastnictví člověka coby absolutního suveréna, a tak je pro ně pravdivé totožné se subjektivním. Nietzscheho vize člověka budoucnosti, kdy nebude poplatný objektivně chápaným morálním hodnotám, se neuskutečnila. Postavy, jež řídí sebe sama nevykazují vyváženost nespoutaných elementů přírodních se sebeovládajícími hodnotami kulturními, ale propadají více nespoutanosti. Dle učení Sartra tytéž postavy přijaly svou existenci za prvořadou, ale esence, kterou vytváří svými životy, je u všech výrazně poznamenána jejich monumentálními individuálně chápanými potřebami. Z pohledu Augustinovy teorie poznání, společnost vyznávající individualismus žije převážně na úrovni nejnižšího stupně poznání, a to smyslového.

Hlavní postava druhého románu Moses E. Herzog je až chorobně introspektivní intelektuál židovského původu, jenž se právě dostal do hluboké životní krize způsobené ztroskotáním jeho už druhého manželství a ztrátou důvěry ve většinu lidí, jež ho dosud obklopovali. Přes všechnu spáchanou křivdu od druhých, Herzog poznává vlastní životní omyly a postupně reviduje celý svůj život. Během tohoto procesu vlastního sebenalézání a sebepřijetí, je posedlý jednak psaním dopisů oslovujících nejrůznější osoby, živé i mrtvé, potom také cestováním z místa na místo, a občasným sexuálním uvolněním u smyslné přítelkyně. Při tomto hledání sebe sama si Herzog nejdříve začíná uvědomovat obludnost sebeklamu u druhých, ale vzápětí i u sebe sama. Dokáže nepodlehnout nátlaku tzv. instruktorů reality, kteří vidí za jeho neúspěchy naivní idealismus a snaží se mu vštípit, že pravda je buď ohyzdná, nebo jinak to není pravda, ale hloupý sebeklam. Herzog si postupně

uvědomuje své mylné opojení intelektualismem, jenž ho vzdálil od všední existence, a i přes všechnu moudrost nenahradil realitu. Protagonista se utvrzuje, že nejcennějším vodítkem v lidském životě je srdce, jež odnepaměti a ž do skonání bude znovu a znovu spontánně vyřazovat lásku ke všemu živému.

Cesta Mosese Herzoga k pravému duševnímu pokoji může být popsána a vysvětlena pomocí Augustinových teorií poznání a lásky. Oddáním se čirému intelektualismu Moses ztratil propojení se základnou lidského poznání, tj. se smyslovým poznáním a uzavřel se v říši abstrakt, tj. v druhé úrovni poznání. Úspěch na poli filosofie živil jeho pýchu, jež mu poskytla ospravedlnění k volnému životu. Krásná, ale paranoidní Madeleine zničila jeho pýchu a obrátila jeho život vzhůru nohama. Sražený a opuštěný Herzog prohlédl a poznal vinu své sebelásky. Vzdal se přehnaných filosofických ambicí a svévolného života, čímž urovnal poznání a lásku do Augustinových mezí.

Ve vztahu k filosofům Nietzschemu a Sartrovi Herzog odmítá jejich společný základ, tj. ateismus. Nietzschemu přímo adresuje pár svých dopisů, kde odmítá jeho oslavu Vůle k moci odkazem na světové války, jež světu žádného nadčlověka nedaly. Výčet vlastností dionýského ducha se Herzogovi jeví jako oslava smrti a nikoliv přírody a života, a označuje Nietzscheho a všechny, kdo podobné teorie vyznávají, za perverzní. Vůči filosofii Sartra lze vysledovat Herzogovo opakované pobouření z proklamací nicoty, které se podle Herzoga rovnají prohlášení smrti coby jediné životní jistoty člověka. Hodnoty, které potom člověk vyznává, degradují individuální existenci tak, že lidský život ani nestojí za to žít.

V poslední kapitole jsem se pokusila načrtnout mravní jednání vyrůstající z duchovních základů člověka, jež bylo tématem předchozí kapitoly. Důsledky individualismu se projevily především ve vztahu jedince k celku; atomizovaný člověk posílil svůj egoismus



na takovou míru, že ztratil smysl pro začleněnost v lidském rodě. Jednotlivé etapy života postavy Artura Sammlera jsou výbornou ilustrací rozdílu člověka začleněného, částečně začleněného nebo nezačleněného vůbec. Sammler si v předválečném období zakládal na své intelektuální výši, která ho vynesla do renomovaných kruhů vyšší londýnské společnosti. I přes svůj teoretický zájem o člověka byl tedy jen částečně začleněn v lidském rodě. Ve válce byl zbaven krutým zacházením a okolnostmi své lidské podstaty a změnil se v lidskou bestii radující se z usmrcení člověka. Radost ze smrti druhého svědčí o jeho totální vyčleněnosti z lidství. V současnosti Sammler jedná jako úplně začleněný v celek, což pro něj dokonce znamená celek největší - Planetu Zemi.

Individualismus je zodpovědný nejen za lhostejnost týkající se celku, ale také se podepisuje na rozkladu tradičních struktur soukromého života. Jedním ze základů mezilidských vztahů je vzájemná komunikace. Dialog jako životní princip byl individualismem zatlačen prvořadým zájmem jednotlivců se bavit.

Další významná složka lidství - intimní vztah mezi mužem a ženou - se dostal sexuální revolucí do víru převratných změn. Sex přestal být součástí vztahu a nabyl významu krátkodobého anonymního zážitku extáze.

Postavy filosoficky vzdělaných intelektuálů Saula Bellowa jsou nuceny propojovat své teoretické znalosti s žitou skutečností, čímž Bellow dosahuje kritiky nejen filosofických teorií, ale především současného stavu západní společnosti. Stále aktuální zůstává přehodnocení vývoje započatého v osvícenství, jenž výrazně zasáhl duchovní a mravní základy člověka. Dar svobody, jenž člověk těmito změnami získal, nese úskalí nutnosti, aby si člověk sám zvolil, jak s touto hodnotou naloží. Skutečnost ukazuje, že si často volí jako

řídící krédo své svobody svůj egoistický interes.

Herzog je především zklamaný pasivním postojem většiny amerického národa - střední třídy - k národním a globálním otázkám. Těžce vybojovaná demokracie nemůže opravdu fungovat pro nezájem na věcech veřejných. Jediným prostředkem jak vzbudit zájem těchto mas jsou bohužel vzrušující zážitky a násilí. Dar svobody a volného času, jenž vývoj umožnil, současný západní člověk naplnil zející prázdnotou. Život tedy paradoxně ztratil na ceně a do popředí se dostávají otázky, zda vůbec má nějakou hodnotu.

Sammlerův postoj k současnému vývoji západní společnosti v Americe je ostřejší, což vyplývá z jeho evropského původu a z konfrontace s bouřlivými šedesátými lety. Jeho měřítkem pohledu je Pravda. Individualismus je z pohledu pravdy triumf spravedlnosti, protože uznal především v každém jedinci člověka. Člověk se ale vrhl do konzumace své svobody tak divoce, že pozapomněl na prvořadou hodnotu - své lidství.

Zklamání obou protagonistů nejsou shodná: Herzog je Američan a hrůzy Holocaustu mu zůstaly vzdálené. Je zklamaný z obrazu soukromého života v Americe, ale zároveň se dívá na svět optimisticky, protože věří v přetrvávající lásku, jež je vlastní lidskému srdci. Sammler je hořce poznamenán vlastní zkušeností s lidským zlem během 2.světové války. Jako oběť Holocaustu se dívá skepticky na vývoj společnosti v Americe založené na víře v individuum.

V konfrontaci s vybranými filozofy stojí tyto intelektuálové v opozici vůči Nietzschemu a Sartrovi dané především jejich atheismem a ambicí vyčerpitelně zachytit lidskou přirozenost. U Nietzscheho odmítají oslavování Vůle k moci, ale nepopírají její úlohu v revolucích. Sartrův humanismus se jeví z pohledu reálného života západní společnosti jako vizionářská představa, ale oba protagonisté připouštějí, že dnešní

společnost se nachází v raném stadiu svého uvědomění, a tak není vyloučeno, že tento humanismus bude její další etapou vývoje.

Sv. Augustin jako jediný z těchto filosofů si byl vědom omezenosti člověka a vidí jeho život plnohodnotný pouze ve vztahu k Bohu. Opak má za následek chaos. Oba protagonisté nakonec prohlédli zhoubnost stavu, kdy absolutní autorita spočívá na člověku, a vidí v takovém stavu pošetilost nebo dokonce šílenství. Učení sv. Augustina nejlépe osvětluje problematičnost svobody současného člověka a jeho zklamání, jež mu zároveň přinesla.

Tato práce měla za úkol rozebrat zklamání západního intelektuála ve vybraných románech Saula Bellowa. Pro tento cíl jsem zjednodušila vybrané filosofické koncepty i vytvořené paralely s epizodami a myšlenkami z vybraných románů. Toto uchopení je zatím originální mezi pracemi v semináři Ústavu anglofonních literatur a kultur. Oba romány jsou nejen cele prostoupené filosofií, ale také sociální kritikou, a tak moje práce je pouhou výšečí možností, jež tato díla skýtají.

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