

Tribhuvan University

Psychological Alienation in Saul Bellow's *Mr. Sammler's Planet*

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By

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**Letter of Recommendation**

Mr. Narendra Subedi has completed his thesis entitled “Psychological Alienation in Saul Bellow’s *Mr. Sammler’s Planet*” under my supervision. He carried out his research from 2066/02/02 B.S. to 2067/01/26 B.S. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voice.

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**Approval Letter**

This thesis entitled “Psychological Alienation in Saul Bellow’s *Mr. Sammler’s Planet*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Mr. Narendra Subedi has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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## **Abstract**

This work has examined Saul Bellow's *Mr. Sammler's Planet* from the psychoanalytical perspective to deal with the post-Holocaust experience of the protagonist, Mr. Sammler who goes through a severe sense of alienation because of his direct personal experience of the Holocaust atrocities during the Second World War. The wartime memories frequently haunt him as the senses and thoughts of death constantly come to his mind throughout his life. This makes him both mentally as well as physically alienated from family and society, leading him on the verge of insanity and death.

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## I. Psychological Conflict in Saul Bellow's Works

The present research work is a study of Saul Bellow's award winning sixth novel, *Mr. Sammler's Planet* (1970). It studies the psychological alienation that the protagonist, Mr. Sammler undergoes throughout his life because of his personal experiences of the Holocaust atrocities in the Nazi concentration camp during the Second World War.

Mr. Sammler, the protagonist of the novel, and the pet son of a Polish aristocrat, makes an anglophile of himself at an early age and receives his early intellectual acculturation in London. During the Second World War, he accompanies his wife to Europe to help her settle her father's estate when they are cut off by the Nazi invasion. His wife dies, his daughter remains hidden by nuns, and Sammler escapes death by shooting, by crawling out from under a pile of dead Jewish bodies, shoot a soldier in the Zamosht forest and spends the rest of the war hiding in a tomb. He and sixty or seventy others were all stripped naked and made to dig their own grave; they were fired upon and fell in bodies upon his own body. Then he had escaped hiding in a shed for many days.

He and his daughter get reunited after the war when their American relative, Elya Gruner subsequently brings them to America and supports them emotionally and financially. The setting of the novel is New York City during the hippie and student movements of the 1960's. Despite Bellow's great empathy and love for Sammler, Bellow presents him as a dysfunctional, alienated man.

As a survivor of the Holocaust, haunted by memories of his escape from the grave and of the murder he committed to save himself, the protagonist Artur Sammler lives in New York City. An intellectual who once thrived on the great works of western literature and philosophy, he now lectures intermittently at

Columbia university and copes with the daily humiliations and sometimes life-threatening challenges of the city, while the world anticipates the first lunar landing and vision of utopia vie with predictions of imminent apocalypse, Sammler reluctantly recalling the horrors the past while enmeshed in the madness of the present, finds himself intrigued by the possibilities of the future.

Mr. Sammler goes through the severe sense of alienation because of his direct personal experience of the holocaust atrocities in the Nazi concentration camp during the Second World War. Jay Parini very convincingly describes Mr. Sammler as the “king of alienation” (4). More so than Joseph in *Dangling Man*, or Asa Leventhal in *The Victim*, or Augie March, or even Moses Herzog, in *Herzog*, Sammler is alienated by everything that meets his highly focused one eyed gaze, as when he goes to lecture to class of university students at Columbia on H.G. Wells, the subject of his interminably ongoing memoir; he expects and, indeed, deserves some degree of respect, but the audience merely shouts him down with obscenities and crisis of “Hey, Old man!” (42). The whole culture is alien to this doubly foreign, “‘Polish-Oxonian’ with his out rushing white black hair, the wrinkles streaming below the smoked glasses” (44). Nobody really wants to hear about his friendship with H.G. Wells or his theory of human progress.

Mr. Sammler roams the world with the one eye left to him by the Nazis wide open, but wincing; he is “Ulysses” without an island home to yearn for (14). His Penelope is dead, shot in the some horrendous pit in Poland that he managed to escape from by clambering over bruised corpses. The ‘Trojan war’ will never be over in his heart. He seems to dislike most of the women around him, dismissing them as sex-obsessed, as “birds of prey” (45). He might easily



be mistaken for a misanthrope when he scorns his west side neighbors, who seem pushy and ignorant, who do not care a whit for Sammler and his vexed history.

The world, for Artur Sammler, is a despicable and hopes fewer places, and he confronts it with some hauteur, with coldness with contempt. How else should one treat a world that has behaved so badly? Mr. Sammler can not forgive the world, which has thoroughly devastated his life, making him completely lonely and alienated person.

As a Holocaust survivor, he is an intellectual injured both physically and psychologically; he has lost the vision in one eye and suffers from a sense of emotional and intellectual alienation. With his intact eye, he views the world, its people, and their insanities.

Towards the end of the novel, Mr. Sammler is shocked and frustrated by the money-grubbing and the self-centeredness of his relatives, from his own daughter to Elya's own children. All these people can be seen reflecting a time when possibility of riches remade the rules, and the low-down dirty blues of city life was played out across all lines of social distinction. Mr. Sammler, the old man now finally finds himself helpless and thus alienated when his nephew, Dr. Gruner, in whom Sammler had put some trust, dies from complications similar to a stroke. Finally, he seems on the brink of faith to escape from alienation.

This thesis looks at Bellow's *Mr. Sammler's Planet* from the perspective of psychoanalysis. In order to analyze the text, it discusses issues of alienation in psychoanalysis. In order to analyze the text, it discusses the issues of alienation in psychoanalysis.

Moreover, Saul Bellow's fiction typically addresses psychological conflict and the meaning of human existence in an increasingly impersonal and

mechanistic world. Writing in a humorous, anecdotal style, Bellow often depicts introspective individuals sorting out a conflict between Old World and New World values while coping with personal anxieties and aspirations. *The Adventures of Augie March* (1953), *Herzog* (1964), and *Mr. Sammler's Planet* (1970) each won the National Book Award. Bellow won a Pulitzer Prize in 1976 for *Humboldt's Gift* (1975) and has been widely recognized as a highly original contemporary stylist.

There have been many assessments of Bellow's fiction and reviewers note that he is one of the most scrutinized writers in contemporary American literature. Scholars have traced his development from an initially formal, realistic style to a livelier, discursive manner. His cultural and social commentary has also been a topic of critical discussion, and Bellow has been praised for producing insightful and compelling fiction that explores such issues as mortality, memory, family relationships, and friendship. Critics have also examined how his work addresses the gap between private and public experience, the effects of materialism and technological progress, and the role of the artist in society. *Herzog* received praise for its exploration of various Western intellectual traditions, its poignant evocation of events, and its colorful minor characters. Reviewers have applauded Bellow's resiliency and adaptability, his philosophical musings, and his longevity, noting that his career stretches over more than fifty years. *More Die of Heartbreak* has been praised as a witty and compassionate meditation on friendship and mortality. *Humboldt's Gift* has been hailed as a compelling work that treats spiritual matters within the context of a commercial world. Other reviewers have panned this novel, faulting passages they deemed unrealistic. Several critics have asserted that the beliefs of

protagonist Citrine reflect those of Bellow himself. Most reviewers have described Bellow as an artist who affirms Judeo-Christian religious and social values in his work. He has been analyzed as a Jewish writer, and the theme of Jewish assimilation into American society has been a recurring theme in his fictional works.

Bellow is the most important of the Jewish-American novelists. He has drawn attention of the critics in American literature. From his first novel, *Dangling Man* (1944), to his most recent fiction, Saul Bellow has created an almost unbroken series of protagonists doing mental battle with themselves and this world. His main characters waver uneasily between different alternatives. While the outward manifestations of psychic stress are readily observable in Bellow's characters the deeper sources of this conflict prove to be less apparent. Many critics assume that in Mr. *Sammler's Planet* the protagonist is devoid of psychological conflict. They have concluded that Sammler's active consciousness as solely or narrowly intellectual however, Ellen Pilfer argues that

The ceaseless dialectic of Sammler's consciousness, the urgent unfolding of his internal self-argument is profoundly psychological in the root sense of the term. It is his psychic, not just his mind, which is not divided on most issues, nor is these issues mere abstractions. The rift in Sammler's psyche is dramatically manifested in his emotional relationships with others, in the things that happen to him and in the actions he takes. (25)

This shows how Mr. Sammler leads his life with a divided psyche after his direct experience of the violent events in the Second World War.

Similarly, Ethan Goffman writes: “By exploring Sammler’s personal history as embedded in a larger Jewish history, gradually unveils a counter narrative of terror inflicted upon marginalized peoples culminating in a moment of identification between Jew and black” (43). Despite debate over Mr. Sammler's validity as a social commentator, critics generally agree that Sammler is one of Bellow's most fully realized protagonists. Some commentators have alleged that Bellow's novels lack convincing plots, while others have viewed Bellow's treatment of women and people of color as inadequate at best. Another major topic of debate has centered on the autobiographical aspects of Bellow's fiction, with some critics bemoaning the similarities between the lives of Bellow's protagonists and the author's own. Overall, critics have favorably assessed Bellow's literary achievement and have celebrated his works as a valuable contribution to American literature.

Edward Alexander describes Bellow’s life-long sense of the inadequacy of Enlightenment principles and categories as a means of interpreting modern experience. Alexander argues that in Bellow's mind the holocaust functions as a “metaphysical refutation of Enlightenment assumptions” (175). He further argues persuasively that the central intent of *Mr Sammler’s Planet* is an examination and denunciation of the Holocaust. Through this novel we as the readers reach the bedrock of Sammler's experience – the death camp sojourn that constantly rises to the surface of his mind and asserts itself as the chief determinant of such life as is left to him.

Jay Parini gives a brief anecdotal account of his 1970s experience of the decade and *Mr Sammler’s Planet*. He provides a detailed account of Mr. Sammler’s views on history as a representative of his age. He calls Mr.

Sammler's the kind of predicament experienced by a Polish-Oxonian fascinated by history and H. G. Wells while his West Side neighbors do not care a whit for Sammler, who seems pushy and arrogant. Parini says: "Even Sammler broods endlessly on cycles of history and on the pessimistic theories of Spengler and Toynbee, and on the patterns of violence which recur in cycles" (66). Bellow would seem to suggest here that existential man has it within his grasp to explore the depths of selfhood and find there, through prayer and the operations of grace, some alternative.

June Sacks studies the novel from the perspective of religion. She argues that all the basic questions of mankind shape *Mr Sammler's Planet* while tentative answers are provided through the thoughts, actions, and moral growth of Sammler himself. He shows how because of his persecuted past, Sammler's perception of fundamental issues has an intensity denied to more fortunate Americans with whom he now associates. He writes that through his Holocaust experiences his former faith in the Enlightenment crystallized in admiration for H. G. Wells but that he has now to reconsider his previous preconceptions about mankind. Points out that these new moral questions are rooted in his combining of the roles of righteous man and wise man until he resembles the Jewish hero of old, the religious sage whose dignity, knowledge, and virtue – not physical valor or material wealth-command universal respect. He concludes that these new questions become centered in an ancient moral response recalling certain tenets of Judaism (23).

Bellow's *Mr Sammler's Planet* unwinds along a long tight rope stretched between the conquest of space and the nightmare of the concentration camps. While America sets out on its great journey to the Moon pushing forward the

frontiers of the continent, Sammler continues to be haunted by his experience of the Holocaust, which exercises a powerful, inescapable hold over his consciousness. The placement of the Genocide at the heart of the novel – a singular event in the work of Bellow – can be seen as a form of tribute to Jewish history. This theme serves as the essential principle for structuring a narrative marked by the notions of deportation, detachment, distance. In this regard Géraldine Chouard describes Sammler as:

A survivor of the death camps, a modern-day Lazarus, a somnambulist in the night of oblivion, Sammler adopts an impassive tone and a deliberate literalness in reciting the austere historical truth, without resorting in his testimony to any form of "effect." Going beyond the mere fact of the trauma itself, MSP examines the movement through which life's empty time slips into the fabric of the living experience and exerts its devitalizing influence. (71)

Hence, the text is centered on the frustration and vainness of mourning. Torn between silence and speech, detachment and engagement, Sammler displays all the characteristic traits of the melancholic temperament, trapped within the chronic incongruities of temporal existence. Eternally suspended between the void and a pallid will to live, he pursues his perilous walk strung along the path of History. With Sammler – a dangling man – tightrope walking becomes a way of being in the world, and ethic of unstable equilibrium.

All of these critics have rightly analyzed the mental imbalance of the protagonist in *Mr. Sammler's Planet*, but this research has examined how this

mental imbalance causes a severe sense of psychological alienation in the protagonist.

In order to deal this issue at hand, the present research work has been divided into four chapters. The first chapter presents a short historical background to the novel, a short introduction to Saul bellow, his situation, a brief outline of *Mr. Sammler's Planet*, an introductory outline of the present study and a short literature review. Moreover, it gives a bird's eye view of the entire work. The second chapter tries to briefly explain the theoretical modality applied in this research work. It discusses the psychoanalysis, neurosis, repression and paranoia with the psychological state that cause alienation. On the basis of the theoretical modality outlined in the second chapter, the third chapter will analyze the text. It will analyze the protagonist's psychological alienation in American society. It will sort out some extracts from the text as evidence to prove the hypothesis of the study- the holocaust experience of the protagonist that causes him psychological alienation. The fourth chapter is the conclusion of this research. On the basis of textual analysis in the third chapter, it will conclude the arguments put forward in the preceding chapter.

## **II. Issue of Alienation in Psychoanalysis**

Generally, psychoanalysis is concerned with the fundamental role of wishes and beliefs in human life. More specifically, it attempts to explain mental or behavioral phenomena that do not appear to make sense as the effects of unconscious wishes and beliefs. Such phenomena include dreams, disturbances in functioning such as slips of the tongue and transient forgetting, and neurotic symptoms. Typically, unconscious wishes and beliefs are constituents of conflicts.

The theory of psychoanalysis originated in the late nineteenth century in the works of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939). This theory proposes a distinctive way of thinking about the human mind and of responding to psychological distress. Psychoanalysis has spread widely from its central European origins, and has evolved into a complex, multi-faceted and internally fractured body of knowledge situated at the interface between the human and natural sciences, and between clinical practice and academic theory. Notwithstanding critiques of its Eurocentric origins, psychoanalysis has been taken up in many different cultural contexts as well.

Along with the more general rise of psychological thinking, psychoanalytic ideas have had a pervasive influence on such areas of life as child-rearing, education and popular culture. Within the academy, psychoanalytic theory has been taken up most extensively in the humanities and more sporadically in the social sciences including human geography, where a distinct sub-discipline of psychoanalytic theory has shown tentative signs of formation since around turn of the twenty-first century.



As psychoanalysis has its base on psychology, psychology deserves some discussion here. The term “psychology” is defined as “the science that systematically studies and attempts to explain observable behavior and its relationship to the unseen mental processes that go on inside the organism and to external events in the environment” (Kagan et al. 13). If we go back to the past to see what psychology meant at the time, we find the famous poet and thinker Alexander Pope who defined psychology as the science that studies psychology of man. The personal traits of man and woman are, no doubt, naturally different from one another but there are some common characteristics too. Most of the people can manage their emotions, frustrations, wild desires, conflicts and hardships of life. Such people represent the normal groups in the society. But there are few people who tend to deviate from normal traits and are marked by limited intelligence, emotional instability, disorganized personality and flawed characters. They often live wretched life. The abnormal groups of the society can be described as mentally retarded people.

So, psychoanalysis is a technique of psychological studies of the psycho-sexual development of human personality, the unconscious mental activities and a means of treatment for neurotic patients. Freud comments:

The term ‘psychoanalysis’ has three different meanings. It is, first, a school of Psychology that emphasizes the dynamic, psychic determinants of human behavior and the importance of personality. Secondly psychoanalysis refers to a specialized technique for investigating unconscious mental activities. Finally psychoanalysis is a method of interpreting mental disorders especially the psychoneuroses. (179)

The unconscious is perhaps the most fundamental and defining idea of psychoanalysis, though it has a much longer history. For Freud, only a small proportion of the human mind is knowable through rational thought. The greater part is outside conscious awareness and full of hidden dangers. It makes its presence felt in a variety of ways including dreams, slips of the tongue, the clinical method of “free association”, and other actions the motivations for which are not discernible by, and are often contrary to, conscious intent (qtd. in Sayers 16). The psychoanalytic unconscious acts as the repository for experiences, thoughts and feelings that are unacceptable to, and are repressed by, the conscious mind. The unconscious therefore exemplifies a means by which rational “human agency” is “de-centred” in the sense of not being the driving force of human action, an idea that has been highly influential in human geography (qtd. in Sayers 17).

Freud studied to develop a more reliable method to analyze and investigate the patients’ psychic problems. He tried to let them go back into their past events which he called ‘free association.’ In this technique, he let his patients relax mentally and physically to bring out spontaneous flow of reminiscence of patient. In his ‘free association’ technique sometimes his neurotic patients gave account of dreams that belong to their retrospective agitations and Freud became able to cope with the psychoanalysis of his patients. Through ‘free association,’ Freud accomplished an elaborate theory of dream analysis entitled “The Interpretation of Dream” in 1900. It became really a great landmark in the history of psychoanalytical method. In this regard, Robert S. Woodworth writes:

The forgotten experiences and unadmitted desires and attitudes that came to light in free association were so often of a sexual nature that Freud early came to emphasize the predominant if not exclusive importance of sexual difficulties and conflicts in the causation of any neurosis. Hostility motives and ambivalence (love and hate for the same person) also come to light but were regarded as arising from frustration of sex desires. From dream analysis he came to believe certain types of objects and processes. So there were regular symbols and mother symbols and symbols for secret love or hate. (165)

Thus, Freud perceived psychoanalysis as a method of psychological investigation, a means of treatment and a theoretical psychological system. He made a systematic study of mind dividing it into different levels.

### **Analysis and Division of Human Mind in Psychoanalysis**

Human mind is the aspect of intellect and consciousness experienced as combinations of thought, perception, memory, emotion, will and imagination, including all unconscious cognitive processes. The term is often used to refer, by implication, to the thought processes of reason. Mind manifests itself subjectively as a stream of consciousness.

Theories of mind and its function are numerous. Earliest recorded speculations are from the likes of Zoroaster, the Buddha, Plato, Aristotle, Adi Shankara and other ancient Greek, Indian and, later, Islamic philosophers. Pre-scientific theories grounded in theology concentrated on the supposed relationship between the mind and the soul, our supernatural, divine or god-given essence. Most contemporary theories, informed by scientific study of the brain,

theorize that the mind is an epiphenomenon of the brain which has both conscious and unconscious aspects.

Which attributes make up the mind is much debated. Some argue that only the higher intellectual functions constitute mind, particularly reason and memory. In this view the emotions—love, hate, fear, joy—are more primitive or subjective in nature and should be seen as different from the mind as such. Others argue that various rational and emotional states cannot be so separated, that they are of the same nature and origin, and should therefore be considered all part of what we call the mind.

In popular usage mind is frequently synonymous with thought: the private conversation with ourselves that we carry on inside our heads. Thus we make up our minds, change our minds or are of two minds about something. One of the key attributes of the mind in this sense is that it is a private sphere to which no one but the owner has access. No one else can know our mind. They can only interpret what we consciously or unconsciously communicate.

Freud, the most systematic exponent of a mental theory, divides mind into three levels: the conscious, the preconscious and the unconscious or subconsciousness. The conscious is that part of the mind which provides immediate awareness, perceptions, thought or feelings of the mental events and memories. Consciousness is also a process or sequence of events. William James mentions it as “a stream of consciousness that means continuity of the process” (67). Consciousness constitutes the relationship to the environment. It refers to the experience of an object or event at the present moment. The preconscious mind is the storehouse of memories and wishes which can be recalled into

consciousness. Those memories and desires which are dimly conscious are constituents of preconscious mind. It is a recalling process to consciousness.

He lays emphasis on unconscious mind too. The unconscious mind, according to him is the reservoir of buried thoughts, emotions, feelings, wishes and impulses that can be brought into consciousness. The unconscious is timeless and chaotic in nature, infantile and primitive. It is the dark side of the personality which has no concern with morality, reality, good, evil and norms of the society. The contents of unconscious come from two sources: animalistic feelings and strivings which have never been conscious and repressed wishes and thought.

George Bridges notes:

The nature of the unconscious, according to Freud, is dynamic. It consists of repressed childhood wishes which are never striving to express themselves. It is also as intimated above, sexual energy.

Freud calls it libido. The sexuality of the unconscious is, however, a perverse sexuality. (75)

These repressed desires – sexual and others – always try to come into the surface of the conscious. The unconscious wishes are extremely powerful and dynamic. They are not easily allowed to come into conscious awareness because the unfulfilled desires can damage one's self esteem and they express themselves symbolically in dreams, slip of tongue, mental conflicts and neurotic symptoms. Freud believes that the inhibited feelings and wishes of childhood remain influential as a part of active unconscious. This causes a person mental disturbance and they become schizophrenic and paranoiac.

Finally, the subconscious is the bottom of the 'berg,' the part beneath the surface, which makes up about two thirds of the 'bergs mass. In the modern field

of personal development the terms 'unconscious mind' and 'subconscious mind' are often interchangeable. The main focus in the Psychodynamic school of thought was the subconscious mind and its effects. There are, according to Freud, natural stages of development with any maturing human, these include fascinations and conflicts of interests with the parents (yes this includes the mother and the sexuality of the individual) each of which leads to the maturation of the individual. Freud predicted that if any of these stages aren't resolved satisfactorily, then there will be problems in later on in the individual's life. These problems would have their roots firmly in the subconscious mind, and although they can be resolved through psychoanalysis, could have profound effects on the way the individual behaved with the subconscious mind directly imposing itself upon the conscious mind.

The notion of a subconscious in some branches of psychotherapy is considered to be the deepest level of consciousness, that individuals are not directly aware of, but still affects conscious behavior. They 'sink down' to subconscious. Handling 'all processes' means also that feelings (fear, drifts, passions, weaknesses etc.) where also 'processed within' conscious mind may block many feelings, but the subconscious mind does not. The subconscious mind seems to be comprised of and communicate through feelings and images. Because consciousness operates in short-term memory, and usually has no direct access to information deeply submerged, it becomes necessary to be able to access the subconscious to directly address and understand the nature and origin of some issues. By using a feeling or emotion as a guide, or affect bridge, the subconscious can lead the client and therapist to the origin of the issue in question as it stores and records in the subconscious. The more feelings, or the

greater the emotional charge associated with an event, the easier and more clearly it will be recalled.

In 1927, Freud introduced another important aspect, the structure of human personality into psychoanalytical theory. He makes three major divisions of the functions of mind: the Id, the Ego, and the Superego. Each portion of personality has its own developmental history. But, here, we only concern with their functions and interactions. The Id is the source of all psychic energies and the Ego and Superego develop out of Id.

The Id is a container of unconscious wishes and desires. In Freud's words the Id stands for "untamed passions" and is "cauldron of seething excitement" (5). The Id is the representative of primary-process or mode of thinking. It manifests itself in dreams, jumbled thoughts and intoxication, it has no concern with logic, time sequence, morality and social norm; it has only desire for immediate wish fulfillment. It is entirely guided by the pleasure principle and avoidance of pain. It is a reservoir for libido, unconscious, sexual and aggressive ideas which are originated in Id. Like the unconscious, it is disorganized, timeless and far from reality. In the Id, the contradictory or conflicting impulse may coexist juxtaposed. It lacks ethical judgment and social values. It is the depository of the innate instinctual drives. If unbridled, the Id would always seek immediate gratification of primitive irrational and pleasure-seeking impulses. It is seen at an early stage of development but it becomes dominant in adult personality structure of normal people. Thus, the Id is the underground storeroom of buried thoughts, feelings, desires and experiences that are repressed and prohibited to come into surface of adult normal personality.

The Ego is our ordinary social self that thinks, decides, feels and wills. It maintains all the worldly functions and makes them as realistic and rational as possible. It creates a balance between inner demands and outer reality. Some classic psychoanalytical theorists say that the Ego developed later out of the Id. But modern theorists note that Ego is as primitive as Id. It is director of personality whose functions are perceptions conscious thought, memory, learning, choice, judgment and action. It is conscious, partly unconscious in contact with Id and the Superego. Page points out four functions of Ego; they are: “i) to satisfy the nutritional needs of the body and protect it against injury; ii) to adjust the wishes of the Id to the demands of reality; iii) to enforce repression; and iv) to co- ordinate the antagonistic strivings of the Id and the Superego” (185).

The Ego deals with sexual and aggressive impulses originating in the Id at the unconscious level. The secondary process is the mode of thinking that takes place consciously or pre-consciously in reality principle and it has great importance in the Ego. The desire for immediate pleasure must be checked and it has to pass a long route to obtain pleasure in a proper manner. In infantile, Id is dominant and in maturity Ego rules the Id but there arises a constant conflict between them and in some occasion the Id always has a control over the Ego that creates some abnormality in individual's behavior. If the Id embraces the pleasure principle for immediate gratification, and the Ego comes to the reality principle to postpone the irrational and anti-social gratification. When a child becomes able to learn something he comes in contact with rules, regulations, morality, standards, values and codes of the society; this develops another aspect of personality called Superego. It is also known as conscience or the moral



principle. Initially a child acquires his notions of right and wrong, dos and don'ts, good and evil from his parents. The punishment given to them on their acts develops negative values and the rewards as the positive. Gradually the peripheral culture and other social authorities enforce to mould the Superego. It is mostly unconscious and partly conscious. It is also known as internalized parental codes. Thus, Superego is a censor which classifies all the functions of the mind. Blum expresses his view:

When the Superego prohibits expression of sexual or aggressive drives, the ego typically joins the Superego in opposition to the Id. Submission to Superego forces enhances a person's self- esteem. Resistance to them usually results in feelings of remorse and unworthiness. It is possible, though rare, for the Superego and the Id to be allied against the ego. In such a case the ego struggles against a feeling of pervasive guilt generated by the super ego. And the personality may be overwhelmed by severe depressive reactions. (6)

It is Superego which prohibits Id and ego to operate wish fulfillment and sometimes it was with both Id and Ego. Thus, Superego is the norms and values oriented judge of the human psychic personality.

As an emotional being, man possesses fear of many dreaded things. He develops different types of phobias as he has to undergo different unpleasant experiences in life. Psychoanalysis tries to address these phobias as well. The psychoanalytic theory of phobia is based largely on the theories of repression and displacement. It is believed that phobias are the product of unresolved conflicts between the id and the superego. Psychoanalysts generally believe that

the conflict is originated in childhood, and is either repressed or displaced onto the feared object. The object of the phobia is not the original source of the anxiety.

### **Analysis of Neurosis and Paranoia in Psychoanalysis**

Neurosis is a class of functional mental disorders involving distress but neither delusions nor hallucinations, whereby behaviour is not outside socially acceptable norms. It is also known as psychoneurosis or neurotic disorder, and thus those suffering from it are said to be neurotic. Once a common psychiatric diagnosis, the term is no longer part of mainstream psychiatric terminology in the United States, though it continues to be employed in psychoanalytic theory and practice, and in various other theoretical disciplines.

As an illness, neurosis represents a variety of mental disorders in which emotional distress or unconscious conflict is expressed through various physical, physiological, and mental disturbances, which may include physical symptoms such as hysteria. The definitive symptom is anxiety. Neurotic tendencies are common and may manifest themselves as depression, acute or chronic anxiety, obsessive-compulsive tendencies, specific phobias, such as social phobia, arachnophobia or any number of other phobias, and even personality disorders, such as borderline personality disorder or obsessive-compulsive personality disorder. It has perhaps been most simply defined as a “poor ability to adapt to one's environment, an inability to change one's life patterns, and the inability to develop a richer, more complex, more satisfying personality” (Boeree 6).

Neurosis should not be mistaken for psychosis, which refers to loss of touch with reality, or neuroticism, a fundamental personality trait according to psychological theory.

According to psychoanalytic theory, neuroses may be rooted in ego defense mechanisms, but the two concepts are not synonymous. Defense mechanisms are a normal way of developing and maintaining a consistent sense of self that is ego, while only those thought and behavior patterns that produce difficulties in living should be termed neuroses.

There are many different specific forms of neurosis: pyromania, obsessive-compulsive disorder, anxiety neurosis, hysteria – in which anxiety may be discharged through a physical symptom – and a nearly endless variety of phobias. According to Dr. George Boeree, effects of neurosis can involve

anxiety, sadness or depression, anger, irritability, mental confusion, low sense of self-worth, etc., behavioral symptoms such as phobic avoidance, vigilance, impulsive and compulsive acts, lethargy, etc., cognitive problems such as unpleasant or disturbing thoughts, repetition of thoughts and obsession, habitual fantasizing, negativity and cynicism, etc. Interpersonally, neurosis involves dependency, aggressiveness, perfectionism, schizoid isolation, socio-culturally inappropriate behaviors, etc. (9)

This shows that there are multiple forms of neuroses, which cause different kinds of problems to the victims.

Paranoia is a particular attitude to the social world, and will inevitably reflect a person's experience of intimate social relationship. So a deep fear of dependency in people who experience paranoia could be due to disappointments in the past. Suspicious about 'hidden scheming going on' can be the result of experiencing relationships that seem pleasant and charming on the surface, but

which carry a hidden layer of anger and aggression underneath. They may have been suppressed and denied, but can still be detected.

People with paranoia have low self-esteem in some aspects of their personality. To protect themselves, they tend to see other people's intentions as negative, rather than risk finding any fault in themselves. They also have a tendency to jump to conclusions, and to be hasty and over confident in their thinking. They will seek out information that confirms their beliefs and, at the same time, ignore evidence that contradicts them. Their view of the world tends to be very narrow and to neglect the broader context. So they very easily get the wrong end of the stick focus on all small details rather than big picture. They can interfere with social relationships and also lead the person to think in a strange way causing further social difficulties, and creating a vicious circle of chaos.

A sudden increase in stress can be very significant. Losing a job as a relationship break up can make someone feel very isolated. A. S. Bellak writes:

It can force them to turn inwards, to feel make insecure and under threat. On occasion, this can develop into paranoia. Getting older can also increase a person's loneliness and vulnerability. If they begin to lose faculties, such as hearing as sight, it can seriously undermine their ability to make accurate judgments about what is going on around them. (12)

Reviewing upon Francois Roustang's, "How do You Make a Paranoiac Laugh?"

Christly L. Burns comments:

Paranoiacs engage in same forms of humour. They will seek to avoid any laughter that doubles back on themselves. Unable to accept the interplay between the ego and super-egoistic functions,

the paranoid subject externalizes fault and or evaluate agency, displacing this sense of an internal split on to same 'other' a persecutor who is located radically outside the self. (195)

They lacked extremes of such an opposition would seem to exclude the possibility of any cure, which would arrive only at the moment when the patient could partially accept the ambivalent nature of any action.

Paranoid disorder, a mental disorder that is characterized by persistent delusions (false beliefs), cannot be explained by psychiatric conditions as J. Ingram Walker defines paranoid as a permanent and unshakable delusional systems:

The signs of paranoia include delusions persecution or grandiosity, unwarranted suspicion, excessive hostility, the blaming of others, and belief that one is the center of attention. The true incidence of paranoia is unknown, because many persons with paranoid disorder function well enough in society so as not to come to the attentions of psychiatrists. (409)

Being paranoid means being suspicious without reason and believing that others are trying to harm in some way or the other. Everything can be mistrustful at times, particularly when life hasn't treated him or her well. The tendency of paranoid people is described as the dread of forthcoming attack. Walker further writes: people who are prone to paranoia always dread some forthcoming that something useful will happen, and trying to second-guess what their adversaries might do. They focus on their fears for the future, and take little account of the majority of times when the past has proved them wrong. (2)

The feeling of being threatened or betrayed can take much focus, people may become irrationally jealous, or believe that their thoughts and actions are being controlled or monitored. Extreme paranoia is one of the symptoms of paranoid schizophrenia. This may also involve people hearing voices, which may comment on their behaviour, echo their thoughts or issue orders. Paranoia is a complex blend of thoughts and feelings. So, it's unlikely to have one simple cause.

Paranoia is not entirely inside the head but is a response to the world around. Peter Barham comments:

A person's thoughts, bizarre though they may be, can often be a reaction to very real stress in life, and sometimes a sensitive comment on the world. On occasion, paranoid delusion can even be true! It's important to consider this possibility before dismissing them. (5)

In this way, paranoia results from a combination of factors and the most important ones may well have been totally beyond anyone's control: the essential feature of paranoia is a permanent and unshakable system.

Paranoia designates a psychological delusion, a persecution complex in which a subject perceives a web of maleficent meanings behind the visible. In practice, paranoia is linked to a variety of manifestation: erotomania, delusions of grandeur, a compulsion to control and reduce language, texts, and any variety of forms in which meaning can occur. Paranoiacs resist ambiguity in language, repressing puns and other forms of causally associative wordplays and are unable to open themselves up to chance.

## **Repression as a Balancer in Psychoanalysis**

Among the many others, repression is considered the key defense mechanism that the normal and the neurotic both use. Freud defines repression as “the process by which a mental act capable of becoming conscious is made unconscious and forced back into unconscious system” (qtd in Maugans 17).

Repression can also be described as “reversion to an earlier and lower stage in the development of mental act” (*Introductory Lecture on Psychoanalysis* 163). Repression begins since the very childhood as it is the age from when growth of superego ensues more or less strong according to the familial environment one lives. Therefore, when a person experiences an instinctual impulse to behave in a manner which superego deems reprehensible (e. g. strong erotic impulse on the part of the child towards the parent of opposite sex), then it is possible for the mind to push into unconscious. As the product of the psychic struggle between holy and unholy spirit within us, repression is the control mechanism that ego uses with an aim to avoid inner conflict and pain, to reconcile reality with the demands of both id and superego.

The function of this mechanism is, however, the tentative solution of the mental conflict and anxiety. Because the repressed instinctual drives as an energy form is not and can not be destroyed when it is repressed. So Freud says, “[T]he essence of repression lies in pushing something away and keeping it at a distance, from conscious mind (437). For it continues to exist in unconscious from where it exerts a determining force upon conscious mind. If a person continues to repress the sexual urges for long within giving them vent either through sublimation, dream or direct sex falling victim of the social taboo, those repressed wishes have pathogenic manifestation in his behaviour that either they

outburst even temporarily or take the path of symptom formation or both may happen. The latter case may happen if temporarily lifted repression without proper outlet to the long repressed instinctual desire is promptly reinstated by the ego. Therefore the difference between the 'normal' repression and the kind of repression which results in the 'neurotic' illness is one of the degrees not of the kind.

Then what is the stage of life of repression which exerts a decisive influence in causing neurotic illness? Freud positioned the key repressions for a both normal individual and the neurotic, in the first five years of childhood. These repressions, which are essentially sexual in nature, disrupt the process of infantile sexual development, lead to strong tendency to later neurosis in adult life. The obsessional behaviour of neurotic is itself a behavioural manifestation of an instinctual drive repressed in childhood. Such behavioural symptom are highly irrational (and may even be perceived as such by neurotic), but are completely beyond the control of subject, because they are driven by the now unconscious repressed impulses. Therefore, for Freud: "repression was the fundamental problems from which the study of the neurotic process took its whole start; the theory of repression became the cornerstone of our understanding of neurosis" (393).

In this way, repression, a fundamental, usually unconscious function of the ego, maintains equilibrium in the individual by repressing inappropriate, unfeasible, or guilt-causing urges, memories and wishes of the id to the level of the unconscious, where they will be out of sight, if not out of mind. The ability to repress dangerous or unsettling thoughts turns out to be vital to the individual's ability to negotiate his way through life. If a child had never learned



to repress the urge to steal his sister's ice cream cone, for example, he would have spent years in punishment. If the boss at work cannot repress her sexual desire for her secretary, she will be unable to function, her mind consumed by illicit, inappropriate and impossible urges. Only the timely repression of harmful impulses and urges gives the individual the capacity to move on and meet the demands of an ever-changing world.

### **Analysis of Alienation in Psychoanalysis**

As alienation is a powerful feeling of isolation and loneliness, and stems from a variety of causes, its workings and effects function at a psychological level. Thus, it becomes psychological alienation as it often used to mean an individual's feeling of alienation towards society, nature, other people or oneself. Alienation may occur in response to certain events or situations in society or in one's personal life. Alienation is self-alienation or self-estrangement, the process, or the result of the "process, by which a self-God or man through himself (through his own action) becomes alien (strange) to itself (to its own nature)" (Nettler 76). Examples of events that may lead to an individual's feeling of alienation include the loss of a charismatic group leader, or the discovery that a person who served as a role model has serious shortcomings. Examples of personal events are a death in the family, a job change, divorce, or leaving home for the first time. Although most people may find that such occurrences trigger temporary feelings of disillusionment or loneliness, a small percentage will be unable to overcome these events, and will feel hopelessly adrift and alone.

Alienation as an estrangement bears the constant notion of having the feeling of being a stranger or an outsider to himself, home, family, society and country. So, alienation is to live in exile from the milieu one lives in or familiar

with. Gwynne Nettler defines alienation as an “act, or result of the act, through which something or somebody becomes or has become alien or strange to something or somebody else” (76). This shows that alienation is the deviation from normal life, which can also be regarded as insanity.

Many sociologists have observed and commented upon an increase in this feeling of alienation among young people since the 1960s. They attribute this alienation to a variety of societal conditions: the rapid changes in society during this period, the increase in alcohol and drug abuse, violence in the media, or the lack of communal values in the culture at large. Some sociologists observe that individuals become alienated when they perceive government, employment, or educational institutions as cold and impersonal, unresponsive to those who need their services. Entire groups may experience alienation—for example, ethnic minorities or residents of inner city neighborhoods who feel the opportunities and advantages of mainstream society are beyond their reach.

Feeling separated from society is not the only way a person experiences alienation: sometimes the individual feels alienation as disharmony with his or her true self. This condition develops when a person accepts societal expectations (to take over a family business, for example) that are counter to the person's true goals, feelings, or desires (perhaps to be a teacher). He may appear to be successful in the role others expect him to assume, but his true wish is hidden, leaving him feeling deeply conflicted and alone.

In the workplace, jobs have become increasingly specialized since the 1700s and the Industrial Revolution. Workers may see little connection between the tasks they perform and the final product or service, and may thus feel intense loneliness while in the midst of a busy work environment. In the 1840s,

American writer and philosopher Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862) observed that “the mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation. What is called resignation is confirmed desperation” (23). Thoreau dealt with his own feelings of alienation by retreating to a solitary, simple life on the banks of Walden Pond in rural Massachusetts. He felt less isolated there even though he lived in solitude-than when he lived in a town, surrounded by people. When living in town, his feelings of alienation confronted him daily, since his activities did not reflect his true feelings and desires.

Alienation is expressed differently by different people. Some become withdrawn and lethargic; others may react with hostility and violence; still others may become disoriented, rejecting traditional values and behavior by adopting an outlandish appearance and erratic behavior patterns. As society undergoes rapid changes, and traditional values and behavioral standards are challenged, some people find little they can believe in and so have difficulty constructing a reality in which they can find a place for themselves. It is for this reason that social and cultural beliefs play such an important role in bringing about or averting a feeling of alienation.

Psychologists help people cope with feelings of alienation by developing exercises or designing specific tasks to help the person become more engaged in society. For example, by identifying the alienated individual's true feelings, the psychologist may suggest a volunteer activity or a job change to bring the individual into contact with society in a way that has meaning for him or her.

Some have proposed treating the epidemic of alienation among America's young people by fostering social solutions rather than individual solutions. One such social solution is the idea of communitarianism, a movement begun early in

the 1990s by Amitai Etzioni, a sociology professor from George Washington University in Washington, D.C. Etzioni became a popular speaker and writer in the mid-1990s with the publication of his book, *The Spirit of Community*.

Etzioni advocates a return to community values to replace the rampant alienation of contemporary culture, education to reinforce shared societal morals focusing on family values, and strictly enforcing anti-crime measures. This movement has met serious criticism, however; civil libertarian groups are concerned about communitarian beliefs that certain rights can and should be restricted for the good of the community.

In this way, psychoanalysis is primarily devoted to the study of human psychological functioning and behavior, although it can also be applied to societies. Psychoanalysis studies unconscious mind which causes repression, alienation, neurosis, and anxiety. The following chapter explores this in the text *Mr. Sammler's Planet*.

### **III. Psychological Alienation in *Mr. Sammler's Planet***

Saul Bellow's *Mr. Sammler's Planet* is about a holocaust survivor, Mr. Sammler, who now lives in the New York City. He is a European Jew living a traumatic and alienated life because of his war experience. However hard he tries to overcome the traumatic experience of the holocaust atrocities of the Nazi concentration camp during the Second World War, the death camp sojourn constantly rises to the surface of his mind asserting itself as the chief determinant of his life. This causes him a severe sense of psychological alienation and frustration as past memories frequently haunt him. Although he is an alienated person, Mr. Sammler is unable to convey his holocaust experience to anyone else. He feels he must bear his memories and their consequences alone. He considers himself defeated by history and makes every effort not to make others sense that he is suffering from alienation in the family, neighborhood and in the New York City. So, Mr. Sammler is a psychologically alienated person.

The war caught Sammler, with his daughter Shula and his wife, in Poland. They had gone there to liquidate his father-in-law's estate. His wife was killed in 1940, and her father's optical-instruments factory was "dismantled" and sent to Austria (15). His wife dies, his daughter remains hidden by nuns, and Sammler escapes death by shooting an enemy soldier, by crawling out from under a pile of dead Jewish bodies:

When he and sixty or seventy others, all stripped naked and having dug their own grave, were fired upon and fell in. Body upon his own body. Crushing. His dead wife near by somewhere. Struggling out much later from the weight of corpses, crawling out of the

loose soil. Scraping on his belly. Hiding in a shed. Finding a rag to wear. Lying in the woods many days. (92)

Bellow again mentions of Sammler's experience of Nazi atrocities, which leave an indelible marks in his mind throughout his life. In reality, it had happened that Sammler, with his wife and others, in a perfectly clear day, had to strip naked in front of the enemy soldiers in order to be shot in the mass grave. Sammler had already that day been struck in the eye by a gun butt and blinded. In contraction from life, when naked, he already felt himself dead. But somehow he had failed.

War memories have possessed his mind so powerfully that, Mr. Sammler cannot resist the thoughts about his experience of the death scenes at the death camp and in the Zamosht forest in Poland. There the fighting had erupted as there had been efforts to "reconstruct a Jewless Poland" (140). There had been a great massacre of which Sammler had been a witness and a victim. Sammler remembers:

The Poles at dawn came shooting. As soon as it was light enough for murder. There was fog, smoke. The sun tried to rise. Men began to drop, and Sammler ran. There were two other survivors. Hiding in the swamp, Sammler lay under a tree trunk, in the mud, under scum. At night he left the forest. He took a chance with Cieslakiewicz next day. He spent those summer weeks in the cemetery. Then he appeared in Zamosht, in the town itself, wild gaunt, decaying, and the dead eye bulging like a whelk. One of the doomed who had lasted it all out. (140)

These memories always occupy his mind and he even sees the Zamosht forest scenes in his dream. As Bellow writes, "[I]n the privacy of his bed he turned

very briefly to that rage. And when he himself was nearly beaten to death, he had to lift dead bodies from himself. Desperate! Crawling out. Oh heart-bursting! Oh! Vile” (135). In retrospect, Sammler recognizes how it feels to take a life. He always sees death scenes in his dreams. When he wakes up, these things keep fizzing in his brain. His act of “smoothing back the bedding, the coverlet and drawing on clean socks up to the knee” (137) symbolically shows how he tries to bury up his traumatized past. This leaves him with bitter experience of the past war period, making him alienated at present.

Once when Sammler and his nephew, Gruner’s daughter, Angela are talking about Gruner’s health on the New York Street, Miss Angela has a leather cap on. It reminds him of war in Israel where he had seen the six day war. There Italian cameramen who had brought with them three girls in mod dress and they were wearing a similar cap that Angela was wearing:

Bombs were spilling from planes as remote as insects. You saw the wings when they spun into the light, and then heard detonations, and suburbs of smoke rose briefly. Remotely, you heard machinery-distant tank treads. You heard tiny war sounds. They were Italians, paparazzi, someone in mod dress, and had brought with them three girls sort of little cap that Angela wore, of hound-stooth check. (165)

As this “cap” is associated with the wartime, the cap reminds Sammler of the horrible past, making him alienated. This event also brings an image in the mind of Sammler of a Jesuit correspondent, father Newell with whom Sammler had shared some time during the war. He had even borrowed ten dollars from father Newell. Sammler remembers:

Father Newell wore the full battle dress of the Vietnam jungles - yellow, black and green daubs and strips of camouflage. Sammler still owed him ten dollars; his share of the taxi they had hired in Tel Aviv to drive to the Syrian front . . . father Newell sweated in his green battle clothes. His hair cropped Marines Lyle, his eyes also green and the cheeks splendid meat- red. Down below the tanks raced and the smoke puffed yellow from the ground few sounds rose. (166)

This is what leads Mr. Sammler to psychological alienation. He has now been brought to America by a generous nephew, Dr. Arnold Elya Gruner in the wake of the Second World War, lives an alienated life in New York City's upper west side. He was rescued from the ruins of Poland. Now he has lost all the meaning of his life because he does not have any definite aim and job as he is mentally a war displaced person. This makes him lonely and alienated:

He thought, since he had no job to wake up to, that he might sleep a second chance to resolve certain difficulties imaginatively for himself, and pulled the disconnected electric blanket with its internal sinews and lumps. The satin binding was nice to the singer tips. He was still drowsy, but not really inclined to sleep time to be conscious. (4)

As an intellectual person, Mr. Sammler tries to direct his alienation towards the observation of other things around him. AS a result, he becomes a minute observer of the chaos and decay of civilization in the New York City of America. Although he is blind in "one eye" owing to Nazi brutality during the holocaust he is a perfect observer:



He liked to watch the changes of the ashen wires. They came to life with fury, throwing tiny sparks and sinking into red rigidity under the pyres laboratory flask. Deeper. Blenching. He had only one good eye. The left distinguished only light and shade. But the good eye was dark-bright, full of observation through the overhanging hairs of the brow as in some breeds of dog. The combination made him conspicuous. (4)

Although he is an alienated person, Sammler tries to divert his attention to other worldly things. But his conspicuousness seems to be on his mind, which worries him a lot, making him psychologically alienated.

In connection with the day-to day observation of things, he comes across a “Negro pickpocket at work” while returning on the customary bus late afternoons (5). As Mr. Sammler is deeply affected and haunted by morally shocking things like war, killing, crimes, he is drawn towards the activity of the Negro pickpocket. He associates the pickpocket with wartime criminal soldiers, and robbers. So, he keeps an eye on him almost on daily basis, which irritated the pickpocket. One day the Negro corners Sammler in the lobby and shows his penis:

The black man had opened his opened his fly and taken out his penis. It was displayed to Sammler with great oval testicles, a large tan-and –purple uncircumcised thing-a-tube, a snake; metallic hairs bristled at the thick and the tip curled beyond the supporting, demonstrating hand, suggesting the fleshy mobility of an elephant’s trunk. (49)

This activity of the Negro is the manifestation of the degradation of moral value in American society. The Negro is totally disrespectful towards Sammler who is an old man. Moreover, he forcibly pushes Sammler into the corner beside the long blackish carved table. This incident leaves him with a bitter experience of living in the New York City because even during the peaceful time he has to undergo inhuman acts and undue pressure.

It is Sammler's repeated observations of the African-American pickpocket viewed and filtered through his experiences as a Holocaust survivor that sets in motion the events leading to his renewed and enlarged vision of the relationship of their mutual and historically constructed alienations. This victimizer is also a victim and is also human. But he is an emblem rather than a whole human being.

In his bid to put things right, decides to report it to the public. When he phones the police station, the police do not take this case seriously as they tell him that they have other "priorities and they have a waiting list" (13-14). This makes Sammler disappointed at not being able to stop the pickpocket from his criminal activity. He comes out of the police station and sits "tensely" forward in bright lamplight, like a "motorcyclist who has been struck in the forehead by a pebble from the road, trivially stung, smiled with long lips. 'America!' (he was speaking to himself)" (14). Such treatment that is meted out to a respectful senior citizen even during normal times makes Sammler dejected and alienated.

The memories of war have shattered his life in such a way that he seems to be oblivious of himself and his situation. This happens especially when he is alone, be it at home, or the streets etc. For example:

He did not in fact appear to know his age or at what point of life he stood. You could see that in his way of walking. On the streets, he was tense, quick, erratically light and reckless, the elderly hair stirring on the back of the head. Crossing, he lifted the rolled umbrella high and pointed to show cars, buses, speeding trucks, and cabs bearing down on him the way he intended to go. They might run him over, but he could not help his style of striding blind. (6)

This passage reveals how Sammler has become a neurotic personality as the wartime memories have occupied his mind. He is now a very disturbed person; he does not even bother to take necessary precaution while walking on the street.

Later, when one of his friends, Feffer and Sammler talk about the Negro pickpocket, Sammler does not tell everything that had happened to him. He asks Feffer, “who told you about him?” then Feffer asks Sammler if the negro pickpocket had threatened him with a gun. When Sammler hears the word ‘gun,’ he finds himself in mental imbalance because the death scenes of the Nazi concentration camp emerge in his mind. Bellow writes: “‘no gun.’ ‘Had Sammler been in good balance he would have been able to resist better. But his balance is not good. Descending to the subway was a trail. The grave, Elya, death, entombment, the Mezvinski: vault’” (120). Apparently, Sammler suffers from neurosis as a Holocaust survivor.

The somber and gloomy thoughts of suffering, torture and death surface in Sammler’s mind all the time. He never seems to be in joyful and jocular mood because the war experiences frequently haunt him. As Bellow mentions, “Different matters, far from playful, preoccupy Sammler” (136). Feffer, wishing

to divert him tells him the tale of the insurance adjuster who pulled out the pistol. Feffer says that with that rotten gun one has to shoot a man at close range, and in the head, killing point blank. This shooting in the head is what Sammler had been attempting to “shut out, screen off, hopeless” (137). Feffer’s method of diversion makes Sammler more troubled. This diversion shrivels up. These things are not the subject to control for Sammler. They become the things to be endured. They became a power within him which do not care whether he can bear them or not. This reminds him of the day when in Zamosht forest in Poland Sammler had shot a man at close range in order to save himself: “there at very close range he shot a man he had disarmed. He made him fling away his carbine” (138). Bellow remarks: “These become visions or nightmares for others, but for him daylight events, in full consciousness” (137). The death scenes that Sammler has witnessed and his own act of killing a soldier to save his life frequently come to his mind making him troubled personality.

Mr. Sammler lives now at Margotte’s house with his daughter, Shula who is an absent-minded person. Margotte, who is his niece, also shares joys and sorrows of her life with Sammler. Margotte’s husband was killed in a plane crash. Both Sammler and Margotte get along well as they always discuss things about the past. Moreover, most of her family had been destroyed by “the Nazis like his own” though she had “gotten out” in 1937 (15). Sammler and Margotte share their personal problems as they both are the Holocaust survivors.

Not only his direct personal experiences of war, but the loss of Sammler’s relatives and friends in the war tremendously traumatizes him. Margotte’s husband, Arkin is one of them whom Sammler misses very much. He often goes to Margotte’s room and has a talk with her to relieve himself of the trauma and

alienation; the war memories draw him to her as she is also the victim of the holocaust. When he invited by the widow to occupy a bedroom in the large apartment, Sammler asks to have “Arkin’s humidior” in the room (8). Sentimental herself, Margotte said, “Of course, uncle. What a nice thought. You did love usher.” Whenever they have a serious talk, the subject automatically moves towards the “holocaust”. Sammler finds solace in the company of Margotte, who is the only close family member in his life. Although he has a daughter, she is not a worth companion for Sammler. Bellow comments: “but when it came to clutter, his daughter, Shula was much worse. He had lived with Shula for several years, just east of Broadway. She had too many oddities for her old father” (21). As a dejected person, Sammler expects close companionship from his daughter, but her inability to live up to his expectation makes the old man psychologically alienated person in his old age.

Shula’s cousin Gruner, the doctor, who has this work invented for her, employs Shula as a type writer. Gruner had saved her from her equally “crazy husband,” Eisen, in Israel, sending Sammler ten years ago to bring Shula to New York. Eisen is also the victim of the holocaust, which makes his life hell. Bellow writes, “With other mutilated veterans in Rumania, later, he had been thrown from a moving train. Apparently because he was a Jew. Eisen had frozen his feet; his toes were amputated” (24). This shows that Sammler has nothing but wartime reminders everywhere that he is forced to live with, which makes him a neurotic person.

Since everyone in his close relation has been the victim of the holocaust, Sammler faces existential crisis in his life. Though he is suffering from alienation and frustration, he struggles hard for his existence. In order to escape

from the alienation, he turns to the writings of great western philosophers and writers. He is greatly impressed by H.G. Wells, whose memoir he wants to write. Wells attracts Sammler's attention because he wrote advocating the alternative world for mankind. He wrote about such things in his final sickness, horribly depressed by World War II. Shula says, "Wells had said to papa about Lenin, Stalin, Mussolini, Hitler, world peace, atomic energy, the open conspiracy, and the colonization of the planets. Whole passage came back to Papa" (29). Wells had communicated things to Sammler that the world didn't know.

As a direct observer and witness to the war atrocities, Sammler has seen everything such as moral values, norms, and civilization devastated before his own eyes. Like many people who had seen the world collapse once, Mr. Sammler entertains the possibility that it might "collapse twice" (33). So, he immerses himself in the study of the great historians, Thinkers and philosophers in order to probe what went wrong. Bellow writes that

labouring in the room with hard words and thoughts that had to be explained, stumbling through Toynbee, Freud, Burckhardt, Spengler. For he had been reading historians of civilization-Karl Marx, Max Weber, Max Scheler, Franz Oppenheimer. Side excursions into Adorno, Marcuse, Norman O. Brown, whom he found to be worthless fellows. But after four or five years of this diet, he wishes to read only certain religious writers of the thirteenth century-Suso, Tauler, and Meister Eckhart. (37)

As an intellectual, Mr. Sammler is intermittently invited to give lectures on the subject of war at Columbia University. But he cannot get much acclaim from

students as he is suffering from alienation, frustration and depression. Although he tries to assume students, there is no interest in them, in the class:

He tried to begin humorously by recalling the lecture who had addressed incurable alcoholics under the impression that they were the Browning Society. But there was no laughter. A microphone was hung on his chest. He began to speak of the mental atmosphere of England before the Second World War. The Musolini adventure in East Africa. Spain in 1936. the Great purges in Russia. Stalinism in France and Britain. Blum, Daladier, the people's Front, Oswald Mosley. The mood of English intellectuals. For this he needed no notes, he could easily recall what people had said or written (40).

In fact, Sammler becomes unsuccessful to create any humour as his mind is possessed by serious matters such as holocaust, killings, death camps, gunfire and bombs.

The Holocaust has strongly gripped his mind. He remembers exactly what happened there during the war. He further addresses, “‘I assume, he said, You are acquainted with the background, the event of nineteen seventeen. You know of the mutinous armies, the February Revolutionary in Russia, the disasters that befell authority’” (40). Finally, when Sammler mentions Orwell to say that British radicals were all protected by the Royal Navy, the students object, calling it ‘shit’. And they humiliate him shouting at him, “Hey! Old Man!” (40). As he is a paranoiac person, Sammler cannot perform well in his classes, so he gets nothing but humiliation and disrespect from everybody.

After this incident no one really tries to defend him. Most of the young people seem to be against him. The shouting sounds hostile. Then Sammler, feeling alienated and disappointed, turns from the lectern, finds his umbrella and hat and leaves. He finds himself “abruptly out of the university. Back in the city” (40). Even if “insulted, pained, some where bleeding, not with sadness, but translating heartache into delicate, even piercing observation, “Sammler thus returns home. He does not let this pain affects others. He carries it within himself in a lonely and alienated way, and he is greatly shocked to find disintegration everywhere. At one time during his stay in New York, Sammler suffers severely from the sense of alienation. He even begins to feel that he lacks human characteristics. Bellow writes

For a long time he had felt that he was not necessarily human. Had no great use, during that time, for most creatures. Very little interest in himself. Cold even to the thought of recovery. What was there to recover? Little regard for earlier forms of himself. Disaffected his judgment almost blank . . . . So that now, really, Sammler didn't know how to take himself. He wanted, with God, to be free from the bondage of the ordinary and the finite. (177)

Another escape from the present alienation of Sammler is the thesis of Dr. Lal, the Indian Biophysicist, on “The future of the Moon” which becomes another aspect of Mr. Sammler's intellectual pursuit. Unlike other Bellovian heroes, Mr. Sammler is more intellectual and more composed. Post-War degradation has made Sammler's planet a doomed one and New York in which the novel is set is simply a wasteland. So, Sammler wants to make Dr. Lal's thesis, “human settlements in the moon in the future” his own ambition, his own planet.



During his discussion with Dr. Lal, Sammler regrets the lack of order and insists on “order” over “love” to create his own planet (63). This implies that as Sammler has been suffering from disorder, he advocates order.

Dr. Lal who has come to New York to present his optimistic paper, “The Future of the Moon” at the seminar of the great scientists is harassed by Sammler’s daughter, Shula. She steals the optimistic manuscript is his escapist attitude because he has been feeling alienated due to war memories.

Sammler’s alienation reaches its climax when his only trusting person, Gruner, his nephew lies on his death bed. It was Gruner who had brought Sammler and his daughter from Poland. So, Sammler is deeply affected by the condition of Gruner. When Sammler and Margotte talk about Gruner’s death, Sammler again becomes preoccupied with the subject of death, recollecting his past memories:

By coming back, by preoccupation with the subject, the dying, the mystery of dying, and the state of death. Also, by having been inside death. By having been given the shovel and told to dig. By digging beside his digging wife. When she faltered he tried to help her. By this digging, not speaking, he tried to convey something to her and fortify her. But as it had turned out, he had prepared her for death without sharing it. She was killed, not he. She had been blinded, he had a stunned face, and he was unaware that blood was coming from him till they stripped and he saw it con his clothes.

(273)

Ultimately, Gruner dies and Sammler is shattered and alienated than ever before. So far he has been relying on great Western writings, and philosophies. But

when these things fail to satisfy him he seems on the brink of faith in order to escape from this alienation. This becomes his existential choice. Bellow's affinity for writing illuminates Sammler's situation but Sammler is also shown to be conscious of such analogies; "Able to carry the jewel of faith making the motions of the infinite, and the usual." To arrive at a true sense of the internal within real prodigy" of contemporary culture (315). Rather than seek release from the bondage of his faith by participating fully in the most mundane duties and tasks of finite existence.

In *Mr Sammler's Planet*, Sammler moves from a state of alienation and separation, in which he is unable to connect and communicate with members of his community, through to a remarkable rhetorical transformation and healing stage in which he is able to escape from his role as an object of discourse. But before meriting his rhetorical redemption, Sammler must overcome an acute fear of public discourse and learn to speak and write himself into subjective existence. Mr. Sammler, unlike most of the Bellow protagonists, does not write. Despite his trained verbal ability he has suffered a thirty-year-long case of writer's block, as well as a silence in all forms of discourse and public or interpersonal communication.

Mr. Sammler stands out as comically impressive and tragically significant of the suffering tribe of Bellow heroes who are all condemned to inwardness and alienation. Bellow's characters are all sick and morbid with the virus of the sick society in which they live. But Mr. Sammler is far less morbid than his fictional cousins. The New York City he moves through is a disorderly mess for a man neurotically self-absorbed, a metaphysician witnessing the sexual madness of the 1960s.

Towards the very end of the novel, Sammler says, “Remember God, the soul of Elya Gruner, who as . . . the terms which, in his inmost heart, each man know. As I know mine. As all know. For that the truth of it – that we all know, God, that we know, that we know, we know” (313). Eventually, Sammler invokes God to help him out of the dejected and traumatized situation he is in. This shows his utter sense of alienation in his life.

In this way, the holocaust memories trouble Mr. Sammler’s life making him alienated from his family and society. The scenes of death at the hands of Nazi soldier and his escape from there are the bitterest experiences leave an adverse effect on his later life in New York City because he cannot concentrate on any creative work. He becomes lonely and alienated and finally he resorts to faith as his kind nephew, Gruner dies.

#### IV. Conclusion

Saul Bellow's *Mr. Sammler's Planet* deals with the post-holocaust experience of the protagonist, Mr. Sammler goes through a severe sense of psychological alienation because of his personal experience of the Holocaust atrocities during the Second World War. The memories of the war frequently haunt him as the senses of death constantly come to his mind throughout his life. It makes him both physically and mentally alienated from family and society.

Artur Sammler possesses memories of the war as he has literally spent part of the war inside a grave. Mr. Sammler goes through the bitter experience of the Holocaust atrocities perpetrated by the Nazis. During the war period, Sammler was taken to Zamosht forest where he had a narrow escape from death. There he, along with his wife is shot dead before his own eyes there, and his daughter is rescued by nun. As for himself, Sammler escapes by shooting a soldier guard him. But he loses one eye as another soldier hit him with the butt of the rifle. So, Sammler has lost the vision in one eye and suffers from a severe sense of emotional and intellectual alienation.

As an intellectual and academic, Sammler lectures occasionally at Columbia university but spends most of his time drifting about the city, trying to make sense of an utterly foreign world, a world he despises and despairs of. Sammler's strange encounter with a black pickpocket who follows Sammler back to his apartment building and exposes himself his disastrous attempt to speak to a group of Columbia students, his relationship with his friends daughter aggravate his already alienated state.

Mr. Sammler's bitter war experiences haunt him frequently and trouble his life in New York City. As a result, he becomes a minute observer of the

modern world, its people and their moral decay and insanities. He cannot engage himself in positive creative and humorous activities. Thus, he becomes a lonely and alienated person. What ever he thinks and does, can be related to his war experiences which force him to focus on negative aspects.

Sammler is a 'registrar of madness' a refined and civilized being caught among people crazy with the promise of future. His cyclopean gaze reflects on the degradation of city life while looking deep into the sufferings of humankind. "sorry for all and sore at heart," he observes how greater luxury and leisure have only led to more human suffering. Thus he becomes the most alienated person in life.

In course of leading his meaningless and alienated life, Sammler starts to study the writings of great western writers and philosophers like H.G. Wells, Karl Marx, and Franz Oppeheimer etc. as he seeks alternative world for mankind, wells draws his attention and wants to write a memoir on him. He is impressed by his science fiction. But these studies also cannot give any meaning to his alienated life

Eventually, when his nephew Dr. Gruner lies on his death bed, Sammler's past experience of death sense trouble him. After Gruner dies, Sammler becomes lonely and thus alienated from the close relationship of his family member. So, in order to escape from alienation he tries to embrace faith. He chooses this as his existential choice in an attempt to give comfort to his alienated life.

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