

CHAPTER – I

Introduction

This research work focuses on Post World War II America and the lives of the Jews in Saul Bellow's *Ravelstein*. Saul Bellow's this personal historical novel deals with the theme of Jewish anxiety, pain, suffering, their notion of holocaust, their being aware of their roots that is Jerusalem and understanding of Jewish life being spoiled by the extreme materialism. The Jews are suspicious of destruction even in America where they are in well-to-do condition and can afford any thing they desire. They are intellectually and materially rich but still they fear pain and suffering. Saul Bellow presents a Jewish intellectual and Professor, a famous writer of a theory book, *Ravelstein* who shows that the Jews are obsessed with materialism and so they need to look for hope. The only method he sees to get away from it is friendship. Friendship and love function as the antidote to their pain and suffering.

Saul Bellow and Holocaust

Saul Bellow was born as Solomon Bellows on June 10, 1915 and died on 5th April 2005. He won Nobel Prize in 1976 and was also regarded as an acclaimed brilliant novelist of post war American period. He was born in Lachine, Quebec, a suburb of Montreal to Russian from Jewish parents but has lived most of his life in Chicago, a city which features in many of his novels. He attended the University of Chicago, received his Bachelor's degree from Northwestern University in 1937, with honors in sociology and anthropology and did graduate work at the University of Wisconsin, and served in the Merchant Marine during World War II. Bellow is best known for writing novels that investigate isolation, spiritual dissociation, and the possibilities of human awakening.

Although Bellow is not considered an autobiographical writer, his Canadian birth is dealt with in his most of the books and his Jewish heritage and his several divorces are shared by many of his characters like one in *Ravelstein* (2000) too. He most often writes about Jewish American immigrants or their children but the scope of his fiction is universal. Bellow proved his ability to arouse controversy in his 13th novel, *Ravelstein*. It drew a portrait of Abe Ravelstein, a university professor and a closet homosexual who ultimately dies of AIDS-related illness. Ravelstein's character was based on Allan Bloom, Bellow's colleague at the University of Chicago and the author of *The Closing of the American Mind* (1987), who died in 1992. The cause was officially announced as liver failure. Ravelstein's sexual inclinations were only a small detail but critics found it most interesting.

Saul Bellow made his timid but intrepid statement about German culture. Bellow's novels, from his first *Dangling Man* 1944 to his latest *Ravelstein* 2000, he presents a concerted attack on Nazism and on those ideas which gave rise to the phenomenon of Nazism. Bellow, more than any contemporary writer, recognized that the basis of Nazi philosophy is a misguided Romanticism. His writings reveal the conflict between a moral anomic and the quest for a personal ethic.

Saul Bellow's writings are humanistic and epitomize the moral outlook that is an integral part of the Jewish world view. Through his works, he seeks to re-establish the nexus that binds men, to recreate the bond of humanitarianism found in such words as “good”, “humanity”, “dignity”, “responsibility”. These words constitute what European Jewish culture termed *menschlichkeit*, and comprise much of the ethical optimism of Judaism, a quality inimical to Nazi philosophy.

Bellow is usually considered for his work which impresses one with its diversity of style, the profundity of its content, and its scope. His works exhibit a

mixture of high and low culture, and his fictional characters are also a potent mix of intellectual dreamers and street-smart confidence men. Bellow's prolific career as a novelist spans over half a century. Although he most often writes about Jewish American immigrants or their children and Jewish race and racial identity, the scope of his fiction is universal. Through the central consciousness of a protagonist who is often an intellectual, his novels give voice to the dilemmas and contradictions of 20th century life which can be seen in *Ravelstein* too.

Bellow saw many flaws in modern civilization, and its ability to foster madness, materialism and misleading knowledge. Principal characters in Bellow's fiction have heroic potential, and many times they stand in contrast to the negative forces of society. Often these characters are Jewish and have a sense of alienation or otherness. Jewish life and identity is a major theme in Bellow's work, although he bristled at being called a "Jewish writer." Bellow's work also shows a great appreciation of America, and a fascination with the uniqueness and vibrancy of the American experience. Bellow interspersed autobiographical elements into his fiction, and many of his principal characters were said to bear stark resemblance to their author. Being a Jewish born his novels have a characteristics that of holocaust expression of their pain, suffering and anxiety in Bellow's novels too.

Holocaust is a situation in which many things are destroyed and many people killed, especially because of war or fire. And the meaning of 'Holocaust' is the killing of millions of Jews by the Nazis in 1930s and 1940s. So Holocaust is especially a situation in which many of the Jews are suppressed and are familiar with it. Bellow being a Jews origin writer is not so far from it. The decade of the 1980s witnessed the continued growth of interest in the Holocaust throughout the United States. As according to Franklin H. Littell:

The Holocaust confronts Christianity with a massive credibility crisis that Christian preachers and teachers must work through.

Interdisciplinary cooperation, essential to any aspect of studies in totalitarianism, is a second imperative and Jews are real victim. (qtd. in Goldman 5)

Littell here is with the view that holocaust is an interdisciplinary cooperation which studies the problems and predicaments of Jews who were suffered by Hitler's Nazi force and also by other majority Christians which Christian preachers and teacher also interpretate.

For Jews, recollection of the Holocaust evoked memories of agony and abandonment by the so-called civilized world. For Christians, the Holocaust confronted believers with the guilt of apostasy and a crisis in credibility. In dealing with the Holocaust, the easiest path for Jewish teachers was simply to subsume it under the ample rubric of "gentile persecutions and pogroms of the Jews". The easiest path for Christian or secular humanist teachers was to talk of genocide or "man's inhumanity to man" and to avoid confrontation with the Holocaust as a discrete event.

Bellow's assault on Nazi philosophy and its progenitors, in his novels, is presented in a two-fold manner: First there is an attack on German culture per se, a generally critical, sometimes hostile, attitude towards most people and things that are Germanic in origin. This includes an expose of anti-Semitism and an attack on the expounders of German thought, as well as those ideas that gave rise to Nazism-Romanticism and Christianity. These are linked to the Holocaust by the protagonist's thought patterns, his reveries, his dreams. Then, Bellow's overall humanistic presentation, with its emphasis on the sanctity of life and the brotherhood of peoples,

is an implied attack on those who wanted to eradicate humanism from twentieth-century thought and practice.

The Jewish meaning of the Holocaust is interpreted in terms of the social role which Jews see themselves as taking or assigned throughout human history. Yet, it is insufficient to look only at this ethnocentric role- theory to account for their suffering. As Henry Ebel profoundly argues that “Jews take an unconscious determining role in producing the successive historical disasters that then rationalize a repetition of the role. And this is certainly the case today” (qtd. in Stein 4). Ebel here wants to clarify that Jews’ have historical disasters in their mind which they can never forget because they have rationalized it.

The Holocaust can only be talked about in a stylized manner, as though the lens of historic exceptionalism were necessary to protect us from what we might see. Jewish people see the role of holocaust in their unconscious too. Peter Gabel in his essay “*The meaning of the holocaust*” writes that there is difficulty in questioning the meaning of the holocaust. He writes that

The great problem that we face, and... the question of meaning of the holocaust, is that the aspiration towards the affirmation of mutual recognition that exists within all of us remains subordinated to the legacy of alienation that makes the other appear to us as a threat...
(qtd. in Lerner 254)

Gabel here is positing his difficulty in defining holocaust. He sees holocaust as a legacy of alienation that threatens the Jews in special. He thinks it is more accurate to understand this problem as located in the spiritual evolution of being itself.

Myth and rite, word and deed, are simply two manifestations or facets of the self-same process. The “interpretation” and the “forging” of history, the “living” and

the “writing” of history, are likewise aspects of a unitary process. Memory is a form of action (e.g., remembering), and historical action is a form of recollection (e.g., giving form to memory). Succinctly, history, like religion and folklore, is motivation in time. Just as religion has its immutable verities and unforgivable heresies, there is a “right” way and a “wrong” way for history to unfold. History, no less than religion or mythology, must be emotionally opposite if it is to be believed. And, like religion, a good enough history must provide the homeostasis of projective and introjective object constancy. Equally in our unconscious collusion to make events “happen” and in our tailoring of a useable past, we conform historical time to the group-fantasy of what should have occurred. Events become “history” only when they bear the burden of fantasy.

Holocaust and History

History is the historian’s reconstruction of the past. The principal materials of reconstruction at the disposal of the historian are records of remains that the past has left behind. History is a discipline, which can accurately recover and represent the content of the past, through the form of narrative for it is also find in the works of literature we can view the work of literature as historical writing. Holocaust reading is also a part of historical reading that is the pain and suffering of the Jews’ is also studied as historical text.

Alun Munslow in his second edition book “*Deconstructing History*” argues that we must not see history just as the reconstruction of the past only nor merely a writing upstage but history must be viewed as creation. He writes:

I will argue that the genuine nature of history can be understood only when it is viewed not solely and simply as an objectivised empiricist enterprise, but the creation and eventual imposition by historians of a

particular narrative from the past: a process that directly affects the whole project, not merely the writing up stage. (15)

For Munslow history is the narrative from the past and written for the clarification of past. The genuine nature of history is to deal with past which effects the whole project of the present.

Holocaust is a cataclysmic episode in Jewish history within the context of persecution as a recurrent theme throughout Jewish history. It is argued that the function of Jewish historical memory and commemoration of the Holocaust is to preserve the sense of imminent (not merely past) danger and to instill the conviction that the Holocaust is as much a reality now as it was then. The tribal memory of wrong becomes a collective basis for the survival of the Jewish people: hence the paradox of persistence through (not despite) persecution. The doctrine of historic exceptionalism, theologized as 'Chooseness', brings expiatory suffering to the center of the Jewish sense of history. Persecution as sacred martyrdom is experienced by Jews as simultaneously timeless, dreaded, and expected. What "does" happen in history conforms to what unconsciously "should" happen in history. Outer events confirm inner meanings and participate in the psycho-historical process whereby those terrifying outer events are continuously re-experienced. Any social role theory that purports to account for Jewish history is incomplete if it does not subsume the dynamics of projection and externalization in that accounting.

The Holocaust possesses the quality of the uncanny as discussed by Freud: familiar, familial, secret, frightening, alien. Jews focus upon their historic role of suffering and victimization in order to defend (by projection and intellectualization) against looking at the relationship between victims and their own victimization. The "passive" role is in fact a subtly active one. The equation, victim = sacrifice, is

analyzed from within Jewish ethno psychology and theology (e.g. the Abrahamic covenant), and is shown to predispose Jews to seek the role of historic partner in sadomasochistic social systems governed by reciprocal projective identification. It is of course a terrible truism that the Holocaust would have been impossible without the availability of Jews.

However, the availability of the Jews is due to more than a demographic happenstance. The availability of Jews as sacrifice is linked with the need for Nazi Germans to resolve their collective intrapsychic problems projectively through the Jews as the extrojected bad-self. 'The Jews' own "passivity" and "paralysis" are explained as a form of collaboration or complicity with the final solution. In this perspective, Hitler becomes the wrathful Yahweh who will redeem his people through their death (= sacrifice).

Reik writes that:

...every student of the development of Judaism is irresistibly impelled to face the weighty question: What harmonious or discordant psychological forces, acting now as heretofore in their religion as in their national history, invisibly dominate the development of the Jewish people. (22-23)

Reik posed this question in his 1919 volume, *Ritual*, fully two decades prior to the near-destruction of European Jewry. In his introduction to the 1964 edition, he spoke of his ambition as a young analyst "to find the hidden emotional facts behind the historical ones" in religion. Reik's question and goal is as a guide to understanding the Holocaust.

The essential thesis is that each of Bellow's protagonists is polarized between the alternate claims of reason (in the loser's corner) and faith (emerging triumphant),

that Bellow's development reflects a deepening commitment to articulating the reality of the soul, that his opposition to the ruling orthodoxies of the present (secularism, materialism and rational thought) makes him a radical writer.

The present research work attempts to analyze the characters especially Ravelstein, the protagonist, a comic tragic hero and Chick both Jews. It is the study of a self philosophized professor who teaches his colleagues and disciples to be social and come out from their private life but he himself is an antisocial who subverts all rational social experiences, nature and solitude and dies of Aids. It also attempts to study the holocaust effect in the characters especially on the major character that is Ravelstein.

A person normally becomes hero by performing an extraordinary and praiseworthy deed. It needs interpretation, which leads us to the acceptable conclusion. M.H. Abraham defines it as "hero is a person who manifests largeness dignity and heroism in the face of fate" (214). In many myths and folk tales a hero is a man or woman, traditionally the protagonist of the story, commonly possessed of abilities for greater than that of a typical person, such abilities enable him or her to perform some truly extraordinary, beneficial deed for which he or she is famous. The power is sometimes not only of body but also of the mind.

We can see Saul Bellow's hero character, the major character Ravelstein and Chick's both are from Jewish root, what makes them both close to Abe and other characters to their past. This will especially focuses on the novel *Ravelstein* as a journey through love and memory as the novel is written in request of the major character and is a memory novel. This is the total analysis of the personal history of Ravelstein and is political because through the mouth piece of Ravelstein whole Jews Races are dealt here. It's the description and at the same time solution to the Jewish

pain, suffering and friendship as the medicine to cure this. Ravelstein and Chick both realize the importance of Jewish unity and Israel and Jerusalem not America. As Bloom is Bellows friend and this novel is the outcome of his respect to his friendship this is the personal history of Ravelstein made political with clear views about Jews religion, their love to Jerusalem and Israel. It also presents solution that is heal from the suffering and finds friendship and love as the means. So this novel deals with the theme of friendship and love.

Chapter II

Historiography

This chapter as a tool for the textual analysis of Saul Bellow's last memoir-like novel *Ravelstein* mainly discusses the approaches of historiography that is the art of writing history and the Jewish notion of history Holocaust, a situation in which many things are destroyed and many people are killed. History dealt here is not only traditional but also modern where a personal history is also included. We read history as a form of art where a personal history can also represent the racial history.

Historiography literally means the art of writing history. It is the history of history, the history of historical writings. Historiography tells the story of the successive stages of the evolution or development of historical writings. It has come to include the evolution of the ideas and techniques associated with the writing of history, and the changing attitudes towards the nature of history itself. Ultimately it comprises the study of the development of man's sense for the past. There have been differences in the nature and quality as well as quantity of historical literature in the different ages and among different people. These differences have generally reflected changes in social lives and beliefs and the presence or absence of a sense of history.

Historiography has a number of related meanings. Firstly, it can refer to how history has been produced: the story of the development of methodology and practices (for example, the move from short-term biographical narrative towards long-term thematic analysis). Secondly, it can refer to what has been produced: a specific body of historical writing (for example, "medieval historiography during the 1960s" means "Works of medieval history written during the 1960s"). Thirdly, it may refer to why history is produced: the Philosophy of History (Historiosophy). As a meta-level analysis of descriptions of the past, this third conception can relate to the first two in

that the analysis usually focuses on the narratives, interpretations, worldview, use of evidence, or method of presentation of other historians.

Historiography studies the processes by which historical knowledge is obtained and transmitted. Broadly speaking, historiography examines the writing of history and the use of historical methods, drawing upon such elements such as authorship, sourcing, interpretation, style, bias, and audience. The word historiography can also refer to a body of historical work. As the tools of historical investigation have changed over time and space, the term itself bears multiple meanings and is not readily associated with a single all-encompassing definition.

A unique branch of history, the study of historiography, says Markwick, “is a particular value to researchers and professionals, a preliminary to any important historical endeavor, but only remote concern to the general reader” (Shreedharan 2). Historiography by holding up models of how history has been written through the centuries, it guides the research scholars and the professional historian.

The English word ‘history’ is derived from the Greek word *istoria* meaning inquiry, research, explanation or information. In our day to day understanding history is understood as a systematic account of the origin and development of human kind, a record of the unique events and movements in its life. Greeks were first to define history. When lessons drawn from real life are put in order to form a coherent whole, we have history. It includes the growth of human mind in which the unique facts of life are collected, classified and interpreted in a scientific way. Academically, history is the field of research producing a continuous narrative and a systematic analysis of past events of importance to the human race. Those who study history as a profession are called historians.

History is about the process of translating evidence into facts so historical interpretation is the written explanation of the perceived relationship. A historian speculates on the causes of change, the nature of continuity and the endless possibilities in the past. History as given by Dionysius is philosophy, teaching by examples. From this, he puts forth the idea that history provides us with the essence of human experience which has universal value. Aristotle says, History contracts research into the facts, with the logical task of explanation. Things in history are related to one another in a systematic and permanent manner, forming the entire story of man into one integrated whole” (qtd. in Shreedharan5). Aristotle further says history is an account of the unchanging past in the sense that human nature does not change. All the activity that originates with the same intentions and motives differ only in the degree of details and not in their basic nature.

History thus refers to the record of those events which indicates the growth of men’s mind and intelligence and how they used them to discover better ways of living, and to build up orderly societies which we call civilization. Civilization is a complex network which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, customs and only other capabilities acquired by man as a member of societies. So history is a novel subject dealing with the story of the past, should examine, analyze and explain the story in the intelligible and fascinating way. In other words the proper understanding of man by man is the business of history, which does by narrating man’s unique ideas, thought and deeds.

Hard core empiricists believe that history is a practice founded on the objective reconstruction of the facts, through which we get close to what actually happened in the past. While deconstructionist history regard the past as complex narrative discourse, but one, as the French cultural critic and historian Michael

Foucault has pointed out, that representation is not a transparent mode of communication that can adequately carry understanding or generate truthful meaning, so does the history.

As Foucault says that history has no constant human subject which enables us to identify a coherent or constant human condition or nature can't show any rational development that is the gradual triumph of human rationality over human nature; has no over searching purpose or goal and being without any constant, its study can't offer any comfort or consolation either. All these show that man is not a universal category. Foucault tells us what effective history is:

Effective history differs from traditional history in being without constants. Nothing in man - not even his body - is sufficiently stable to serve as a basis for his self-recognition or for understanding other men.... History becomes effective to the degree that it introduces discontinuity into our every being as it divides our emotions, dramatizes our instincts, multiplies our body and sets itself against itself. (qtd. in E. Shreedharan 285)

Foucault sees difference in traditional history and his so called effective history. What Foucault sees in mans' past is not order but haphazard conflicts, not general agreement but incessant struggle so history reflects the main spirit of the age in which it is written.

Writing history requires the emplotment of the past not just as a way of organizing the evidence, but also taking in to account the rhetorical, metaphorical and ideological strategies of explanation employed by historians. Because history is written by historians it is best understood as cultural product existing within society and as a part of the historical process rather than an objective methodology and

commentary outside of society. Just as it is impossible to have a narrative without a narrator, we can not have a history without historian. Every history consists of ideas or theories about the nature of change and continuity as held by historians. Some are overt, others deeply buried and some just poorly formulated.

To the extent history, is a narrative interpretation built in part out of the social theories or ideological positions that historian invent to explain the past, history may be defined essentially as a language based manufacturing process in which the written historical interpretation is assembled or produced by historians. Allun Munslow says: “I will suggest, therefore, that history is best viewed epistemologically as a form of literature producing knowledge as much by its aesthetic or narrative structure as by any other criteria” (34). Munslow here suggest that history is also a kind of literary text which can produce knowledge and history is also a form of literature as history do have narrative structure as like that of a literary text.

The British theorist of history M. C. Lemon considers that the ‘very logic’ of history as a discipline revolves ‘around the rationale of the narrative structure.’ In respect of what peculiarly constitutes historical explanation, Lemon argues that “its essence lies in the manner in which historians account “for occurrences in terms of the reasons individuals have for their conduct” (qtd. in Munslow 5).

Claude Levi Strauss proposed that history, like everything else, can only be known and transmitted through codes of contrasts, that it offers no exclusive access to either truth or freedom (Shreedharan 284). History is a department of knowledge had from time to time been compelled to tackle problems of its study, research and writing. Although history has emerged as an autonomous scientific discipline with its own methodological apparatus, but doubts still lingered as to whether it was to be computed as science or art.

Because history deals with evidence, the material that the past leaves behind as records has to be used with great care for the simple reason that they may not be wholly authentic or genuine. Like history, the other social sciences, whether sociology, anthropology, political science or economics, study man in society and they do deal with the problem of change. But Arthur Markwick writes:

The characteristic which marks history out from these other discipline is a specific concern with the element of change through time... the social scientists looks for the common factors, the regular patterns, discernible in mans activities in society; the historian looks at the way societies differ from each other at different points in time, how through time societies change and develop. (qtd. in Shreedharan 4)

Markwick concludes here that history is a form of discipline which changes as society also change and we call it development.

For St. Augustine, "history is an attempt to explain the events of recorded time on a universal principle" (Shreedharan 47). While Voltaire complained that "history, as written by many, was only a confused mass of minute details without connection and sequence; a mass that overwhelmed the mind without illuminating it" (Shreedharan 138). The speculative philosophy of history is concerned with finding a pattern or meaning or intelligibility of the past itself. Voltaire comes to a sad conclusion that "all history, in short, is little else than a long succession of unles cruelties... a collection of crimes, follies and misfortunes." (qtd. in Shreedharan 56)

While narrating history the historian must have the warmest human sympathy, i.e. the emotional understanding, and the highest imaginative powers, even humor, the sense of comic in human life. The first educative function of history is to nurture in the citizen a capability for understanding great affairs and sympathizing with other

men. Besides removing prejudices, history should breed enthusiasm. History, unlike science, serves as an important source of ideas that inspire many.

The postmodern or deconstructive history challenges the traditional paradigm at every turn – hence its description variously as the deconstructionist, deconstructive or linguistic turn. Deconstructionist history treats the past as a text to be examined for its possibilities of meaning, and above all exposes the spurious methodological aims and assumptions of modernist historians which incline them towards the ultimate viability of correspondence between evidence and interpretation, resulting in enough transparency in representation so as to make possible their aims of moral detachment, disinterestedness, objectivity, authenticity (if not absolute truthfulness) and the objective constitution of historical facts – allowing the sources to speak for themselves.

Along with the overarching theories and grand narratives, Foucault rejects all notion of continuity in history. The notion of continuity in history is based on the belief in the continuity of thought and the conception of time in terms of the totalization of the moments of consciousness. But the reality of the past, present itself in the form of individual, disparate, autonomous events or pieces of happenings – which renders any idea of unity or continuity in history thoroughly meaningless.

Because history is written by historians, it is best understood as a cultural product existing within society, and as a part of the historical process, rather than an objective methodology and commentary outside of society. Historians employ narrative as a vehicle for reports but usually neglect to study it as an important part of what we do. The commonsense version of the general empiricist and reconstructionist position is well described by the philosopher W.B. Gallie: “historical understanding is the exercise of the capacity to follow a story, where the story is

known to be based on evidence and is put forward as a sincere effort to get at the story..." (Shreedharan 135). Gallie is suggesting that the actual events as they really occurred in the story of the past have a striking resemblance to the shape of the narrative eventually produced by the historian.

In the golden age of historiography, in the nineteenth century, historians were the political leaders of the community. They were trusted as knowing the past of mankind and of their own country. Knowledge of the past and leadership for present and future did not seem to be in conflict. The historians represented both the memories and the good conscience of the community. These golden days are gone. The historian is no longer the born political leader and he is no longer completely trusted. The predicament of modern history arises from its no longer being in harmony with the memories and traditions of any clearly defined group. A careful study of the relations between scientific history and group- memory is badly needed.

The history that Foucault wrote is not the history of the usual kind. In its theme, method, treatment and conclusion it was a new way of viewing the past. One of the characteristic marks of the history written by Foucault is the dominance of the present. Foucault was one with Nietzsche in thinking that an objective study of the past was impossible, that its value lay chiefly in being an aid to the diagnosis of the present. Foucault in fact claims to have learnt more from the present than from the past, a view which dethrones the past from its position of hegemony over the present.

Although Foucault doubts about the historian's capacity to represent any version of the past accurately for he believes in the role of 'Power' in any form of history but he is also interested in what he sees in history's dubious quest for the origin of truth which is a part of a great myth of western culture. Ultimately, he says, "the past constructed as history is an endless process of interpretation by the historian

as an act of imagination, and our categories of analysis, assumptions, models and figurative style all themselves become a part of the history we are trying to unravel” (Shreedharan 130).

Foucault’s archaeological dig in to the human sciences especially the discipline of history, lays upon the figurative and narrative strategies. He believes in the role of power in the construction of history is important and may destroy the real history and historian too can be affected by it and let history as an act of imagination because history is the record not of what actually happened, but of what historians tell us happened after they have organized the data according to their own version of social reality.

Foucault claims that historians should examine the linguistic basis (i.e. narrative statement) that constitute history, rather than correspond to, or unproblematically represent, the real world of things – that is, to abandon the search for original meaning. This is the idea of the social construction of reality, and also what Foucault describes as the power/knowledge equation. So far as he is concerned, knowledge, comprised as disciplines, becomes controlling entities in our lives as they suppress and allows, exclude and include that which is not and that which is permissible. So, there cannot be one history but there must be any number of histories of exclusion the marginalized or ‘other’, inclusion those accepted as normal and transgression, normal becoming abnormal.

Historical evidence is to be understood not only for that to which it refers, but as a vehicle by which we can grasp the more fundamental organization of the linguistic mechanism underpinning the creation and constitution of historical knowledge. History must recast itself as a literary and ideologically self-conscious process of thought. In one of Foucault’s important essay ‘*Nietzsche, Genealogy,*

History' published in 1971, he is particularly scornful of the efforts of naïve empiricists to locate the historical truth which they believe to be 'timeless and essential'. He argues instead that because history is fabricated and we are implicated in it, we are wrong to conclude that somehow we can stand outside history, or, what is worse, that it is essential requirement of our discipline.

According to Benny Morris, historical truth is a 'truth about a historical event that exists independently of, and can be detached from, the subjectivities of scholars.' Hence, is Morris implying that historical truths are objective? If they are indeed objective, why are historians constantly rewriting history books? Although the objectivity of some historical truths is indisputable, one must realize that most truths in history are influenced by the historian's biases, limitations and his subjection to external influences. In other words, subjective elements (as mentioned above) undermine the objective interpretations of historical events. Thus, using Morris's definition of historical truth, aims to marshal the argument that to a large extent, most historical truths (or historical understandings) are not objective but subjective in nature (Lambert and Schofield 196).

History may, or may not, be merely a story we tell ourselves for various social or power purposes, but equally it is possible to conceive of it as a retelling of the emplotment of the lived past itself – history constructed by people at the time through the dominant epistemic figurative trope. Foucault's version of history depends on it being understood as a language system of arbitrary socially constructed relationships between words and things, and through this process we create and live out our own narratives.

Historians within the two main tendencies believe in recoverable author intentionality, truth, causes, origins, an adequate correspondence between words and

the world, and insist that history emerges from the ultimate freedom of people in the past to act, think and make rational choices not absolutely constrained by material conditions like class. Marxist and feminist in particular led a 'return to history' in 1970s and 1980s, but their focus' lay more on politics of form rather than the earlier concern with the determining factors of economic and social history. Raymond Williams defined history as 'an account of real past events' and 'the organized knowledge of the past'. Yet this sits somewhat awkwardly with more contemporary understanding of 'history':

It is necessary to distinguish an important sense of history which is more than, although it includes, organized knowledge of the past. ... One way of expressing this new sense is to say that past events are seen not as specific histories but as continuous and connected process. Various systematizations and interpretations of this continuous and connected process then become history in a new general and eventually abstract sense. Moreover ... history in many of this uses loses its exclusive association with the past and becomes connected not only to the present but also to the future. (qtd. in Lambert and Schofield 163)

History is no longer defined by the established categories of analysis like; economic structures, competing nationalism, political and cultural revolutions and opposition of ideas, but, instead by how societies interpret, imagine, create, control, regulate and dispose of knowledge especially through the claims of disciplines to truth, authority and certainty. Events do not dictate history: history dictates events. The essential proviso is that histories facts are understood primarily as the epistemic discursive creations both of people in the past and historian.

The affairs of human beings are constantly in progress and there is great change in the nature and scope of history. In the past, history was just regarded as a mere record of events in a descriptive manner but now the notion is changed and critical and scientific study of history has begun which is proved to be a best step for the progress of history and its being believable to all those who reads it and wants to understand the past. Since history is concerned with analyzing, explaining and describing the events of the past, it is important for the historian to remember the nature of historical facts as historian can not escape from facts. A historian may attempt to be objective but he can not remain free from bias because the motives and the consciousness he has are sure to have an impact on to the events of past and he or she is affected by what Foucault calls power because the standard of values which the historian applies to his study of past is determined by social, political, religious, philosophical and economic ideas' of his age.

Historical events do not occur in the same order, and in the same place, but they have a basic unity and conform to a pattern which is easily perceived on close study. In the absence of these basic unities, historical laws could not have been drawn. As history is related to the life of mankind, and as man is helpless at the hands of his own nature, the actions that follow history have a common pattern.

Historians, who normally reject the idea that the form in which their research is written up creates historical meaning, do so, on the assumption that the language used to write about the past can correspond to the past as a narrative. But this view is rejected by Hayden White, in White's view because the past is invented or imagined rather than found history the first time does not conform or correspond to a preexisting narrative or story but reconstructionist are particularly upset with White's argument that history cannot correspond to a given or pre-existing story of the past,

much less one that is knowable for what it really means. For White, there is no meaning in the past. The historians provide this. What is significant in this is the historians own existence.

White rejects the idea of historians' discovery of the past. Like Foucault, he places his emphasis in the writing of history upon discursive practices and determining tropes, offering a formal model which, when then with Foucault's vision, allows historians to relate the structure of narrative representation of the nature of historical change. White's historical method works from the general assumption that written history is unarguably a literary enterprise and we cannot gain access to what the past was about other than through it. History at every level, therefore, is a text possessing an imposed or invented meaning (Munslow 152).

According to the formalism of White's tropic model, "history is a process of continuous inter-textual reinscription composed and conducted by the historians." (qtd. in Munslow 173). White insists that the past as a history is not the story – it is the fictional invention of historians as we try to recount what the past was about. As he says:

Historical situation are not inherently tragic, comic, or romantic. They may all be inherently ironic, but they need not be employed that way. ... any way we only think of situations as tragic or comic ...how a given historical situation is to be configured depends on the historian's subtly in matching up ... historical events that he wishes to endow with a meaning of a particular kind. (qtd. in Munslow 154)

Here, White is of the view that all historian needs to do to transform a tragic into a comic situation is to shift his point of view or change the scope of his perception.

Comic, tragic or romantic ironic all situations are historians mind construction.

History viewed as an essentially literary endeavor may not preclude the possibility that people living in the past did indeed explain their lives to themselves as narratives as constructed within their particular episteme.

White concludes that historians are at liberty to exercise their imaginations and view Foucault's four episteme as essentially sequential periods in which dominant tropes serve to organize knowledge, and we may choose to argue that the structure of narrative at any time or in any place provides the cognitive conditions influencing how people narrated the meaning of their lives to themselves. Although White insists that the historians has a choice and he also accepts that certain kinds of modernist events in all probability do not morally allow a variety of choices and the holocaust is also a horrifying event. He declared that if we imagine we only bring the past alive as we write a narrative about it, then we are in danger of doing a substantial disservice to the victims of the holocaust.

Most historians accepts that even if we could revisit and reproduce the past as it actually was, we would still be interpreting it in our own time and place, and most likely for our own ideological purposes. The important point that White makes here is that:

‘historical writing must be analyzed primarily as a kind of prose discourse before its claims to objectivity and truthfulness can be tested. This means subjecting any historical discourse to a rhetorical analysis, so as to disclose the poetical understructure of what it meant to pass for a modest prose representation of reality. (qtd. in Munslow 164)

White says here that written history should be categorized and analyzed to derive the explanatory mechanisms of analysis it applies to the evidence. Historical writing explains because of the way it is put together – the content of the form.

History and historical writing both are the form of Historiography where Jews and other race are also included. Jews find history as pain, suffering, and anxiety and is the issue of holocaust after Post World War II too they are not feeling safe and sound.

It is a terrible truism that the Holocaust would have been impossible without the availability of Jews. However, that availability is due to more than demographic happenstance and their unconscious compact with history that has made the Jews available as sacrifice. The Jews' own "passivity" and "paralysis" are explained as forms of unconscious collaboration or complicity with the Final Solution. Now, it will be argued that Jews surely do not persecute themselves, that others - Gentiles- are the ones who make Jews' lives so miserable. However, by examining the subtle symbiosis between victims and persecutors which constitutes a veritable Mahlerian "dual unity," we come to recognize the moralistic positions of "blaming the oppressor," "exonerating the oppressor," "blaming the victim," and "exonerating the victim" to be the superego-distortions, and family romance variants they are. Human motivation and the systems of social roles that implement the unconscious are far more subtly shaded than our public party lines would make us believe. The issue is not to decide which side of the conflict one should identify and align oneself with, but to withstand the inner temptation of choice itself.

It is proposed that the Biblical the covenant between Abraham, Isaac, and God-is not only a key to the psychology of Jewish monotheism but also a key to the Jewish meaning of the Holocaust. Kren and Rappoport write that:

Among more conservative, tradition-bound elements, the normative reaction [to Nazi persecution] was transcendental endurance. Orthodox Jewish teachings emphasized that as God's chosen people, they might

expect to suffer persecution and they might properly construe this to be a test of their faith or their worthiness of the covenant with God. (qtd. in F. Stein 85)

This attitude lives out and reaffirms in the dangerous act. Here, the Jews assume the (passive but collusive) role of Isaac, who has not only willingly but also eagerly submitted to his father's hand (though be that of God the Father). Historically the Jews have assumed the role of a collective Isaac in relation to a personified "History" through which God's hand does its wrathful work in punishing the Jews. One might say that the Jews constantly reaffirm their mythic "charter" by virtue of which they become Jews. "Transcendental endurance" is fateful gambling with the successors of Abraham at whose hands one can never be certain of benevolence. For Abraham, after all, stands ready to offer his beloved son up if his Father so desires.

Abraham (read: father) is thought of having any "counter-oedipal" impulses, since he was only commanded by God to offer Isaac as a test of his own faith in the first place; and he never applied his hand to Isaac in the second place. First totems then more rarefied theology and replaced and disingenuously rationalized in-fanticidal motives. Powerful counter-oedipal motives became divine edicts. The source of Jewish history is thereby displaced from within to without.

In a recent article, Leon Wieseltier invokes an ancient Jewish argument to explain how anti-Semitism is exclusively the responsibility of non-Jews. He condemns "blurring the distinction between guilt and innocence, between the villain and the victim" (qtd. in Shreedharan 30). Jewish history is something of a morality play in which good and evil are clearly distinguishable. Wieseltier first quotes Hannah Arendt, then takes her to task:

Arendt blames the victim. “Jews... do not wish under any circumstances to discuss their share of responsibility, “whereas” the sources of modern anti-Semitism must be found in certain aspects of Jewish history and specifically Jewish functions during the last centuries”. No. It is to be found in certain aspects of German history, and French history, and Russian history. (qtd. in Howard F. Stein 27)

Here what Hannah sees in Jews history is not the share of responsibility of Jews people, not in Jewish money, but in German industry, not in the stratification of the Jewish community, but in all the unlucky classes beneath the Kaisers and the Czars; not in Jewish achievement, but in the pitiful inability of certain political cultures to tolerate it; not in the Jewish insistence upon difference, but in the non-Jewish insistence upon sameness. Study the goyim, in short, not the Jews-and the whites, not the blacks. And the secret police, not the informer.

Finally, “Anti-Semitism may be defined as an attitude about the Jews that they can not influence.” Anti-Semitism, in short, is always someone else’s problem for which the Jews must bear the unfortunate, even tragic, brunt. This analysis of anti-Semitism is as prejudicially closed as is the prejudice it accounts for.

Jews are able to maintain their identity and cohesion in large part because the Oedipus complex is so fully denied, repressed, and externalized. The price of this integrity is the wrath of the nations, nations appointed by God (projectively) to punish Jews for their backsliding from the Law. Obsession with the Law is a reaction formation to a forbidden wish to violate if not renounce the Law (St. Paul's apostasy). Sadly, Abraham and Isaac are both paralyzed before the Law, for Abraham can only hear God's voice (his own victims of others' self-righteousness and self-indulgence so long as they continue to deny the wish to rise up against the father, the wish to slay

the son, and the guilt for both. (This is a neglected point hallucinated), and Isaac cannot question his father's obedience to God's authority. Jews will remain which Freud made in his *Moses and Monotheism*, and Theodor Reik in his *Ritual*. La Barre poignantly summarizes what might be called the Jewish relation to history:

Judaism is... not so much the consequence of a single ghost dance of Moses and the Children of Israel in the Wilderness, nor of the Babylonian Captivity, not even of the Diaspora, as it is the reinscribed palimpsest scroll recording a fantastic series of historic vicissitudes, each one of which has reinforced the same response to tribulation of eternal minority people: the reexamination of conscience before the wrath of a punitive and patriarchal righteous God. (qtd. in Howard F. Stein 25)

La Barre here is summarizing that Judaism wants to clear that Jews history and Judaism is not a single ghost, only an Israel and diasporic history but a sum totle of what Jews call it a pinching and alienating holocaust history.

The burden of guilt is the burden of atonement: together they constitute the sacred duty of memory and the obligation of history. While, in psychoanalysis, the lifting of repression (or, more primitively, the integration of splitting) occurs as the unconscious becomes memory, in Judaism repression (and splitting) is sustained by devotion to a highly intellectualized historic memory. One remembers in order to forget and Jews too remember holocaust and history to forget those pain and sufferings.

The Holocaust in particular and persecution in general constitute the point of reference and mainstay of Jewish identity. Survivorship is more than mere fact; it is a recurrent subject of defiant pride. In recent years, survivorship of the Holocaust has

come to be woven into the fabric of recurrent Jewish history as a fact seared into memory. Memory of the Holocaust is to become a charter for Jewish persistence. Jews have likewise adopted the Holocaust as the basis for Jewish identity.

As historiography refers to the art of writing history, it tells the story of the successive stages of the evolution of the ideas and techniques associated with the writing of history. It comprises the study of the development of man's sense for the past. Historiography demands records, critical method and historical sense and its preconditions while history deals with evidence so the materials left behind as records has to be used with great care.

Chapter – III

Personal as Political: Love and Memory in Saul Bellow's *Ravelstein*

Ravelstein (2000), is studied here as a historic, humanistic Jewish work written in the memoir of a best friend by another friend, a co-intellectual and a Professor. It is an auto ethnographic fiction and furthermore a memorial to late Allan Bloom. Bloom here is a site upon which Chick, a thinly disguised persona for Bellow, a historian, a biographer, novelist provides account and personal recovery of understanding about what it means to be the son of Russian Jewish immigrants in America. It is the description of Jewish voice, Jewish humor, Jewish anxiety, and Jewish life in the twentieth century American academy. Through the reference of *Ravelstein's* personal history, it is the description of Jews history with a solution to their pain and suffering.

As the novel presents account of a very special brotherhood of two famous first generation male Jewish American intellectuals, this book is a memory play of Jewish voice. This book is a result of repeated urge of Bloom to Bellow so we can say it is a memoir and biography written to re-identify Bloom as a Jew figure made suffer. *Ravelstein* is full of jokes, one liners and comedies and is able to capture the voice, wit and set of neuroses, manners, affections, cultural collisions, ethical humanism with intellectual passion.

Bellow has written this novel as a memoir of and tribute to his best friend Allan Bloom in the form of historic writing especially so this novel can be read as a journey through love and memory entitled as “Personal as Political: Love and Memory in Saul Bellow's *Ravelstein*”. History as a study of past and past shaping the present of an individual and a group is a field where it shows how it haunts *Ravelstein* and other Jewish character as a whole. The analysis also focuses on the description of

major incidents as like that of history. It also deals with how a text book history differs from the literary piece of work that is the novel which mainly focuses on the description of individual's feelings, emotions and individual history. Allan Bloom is a Jewish type character and is connected to Jerusalem, the origin place of Jewish. The following lines suggest it that for Bloom Jerusalem has some worthy view about as Jerusalem is their place of origin and birth place of Jesus.

For him Jerusalem and Athens were the twin source of civilization.

Jerusalem and Athens are not my dish. I wish you to well with them.

But I was too old to become Ravelstein's disciple. All I need to say now is that he was taken very seriously even in the White House and on Downing Street. (Bellow 15)

Here it is clear that these two Jewish figures are taken seriously by both U.S. and U.K and are Jewish Civilized fellow. Bellow also clears his interest to be the disciple of Bloom whom he admires much and is his best intellectual friend. Jerusalem and Athens are not my dish means Ravelstein is not only a Jewish intellectual favoring Jerusalem and Athens only but also an intellectual who is counted for his own philosophy and book named *The Closing of American Mind*. This is the personal history of Bellow himself. It also shows that they are materialistically rich in US but are not satisfied with their lifestyle where there is no love but only suspect, pain suffering, so they found out that too much materialism is not good so they found Jerusalem as the place of their racial identity and love and friendship as remedy against pain and suffering.

This book is a death-haunted book, a novel, a memoir and the epiphany of a Chicago winter landscape inhabited by tropical parrots, the heightened moment of revelation rich in the miracle of Jewish survival and evanescent in the beauty and

mystery of human existence. The novel is also suggestion on how Bellow portrays Ravelstein as a larger-than-life character, a devotee of gourmet food and fine wine, a political conservative who enjoys a homosexual lifestyle with multiple partners, and who dies of AIDS and Allan Bloom's personal history and career. The following lines are for the clear picture of the novel.

There were sexual friendship and intimate confidences as well. Beside the wide black leather sofa back home where he took the calls was an electronic panel of which he made expert use. I could not have operated it. I had no high tech skills. But Ravelstein, though his hands were unsteady, controlled his instruments like a Prospero. (Bellow 12)

So from the lines above what we can prove is that Chick being the narrator and writer is not making himself as hero in real sense and but he is in favor of Ravelstein who could operate machine a modern equipment very easily and also is hero like character in its description.

It is the portrait of the artist and the intellectual, two great team teachers. It is a book which captures Ravelstein's charisma, his hates, his eccentricities and his capability for forcing Chick to re-open what he had closed.

This morning he was again urging me to go more public, to get away from the private life, to take an interest in “public life, in politics,” to use his own words. He wanted me to try hand at biography, and I had agreed to do it. At his request I had written a short recount of J. M. Keynes’s description of the arguments over German reparations and the lifting of the Allied blockade in 1919. (Bellow 6-7)

Ravelstein wants Chick here to be a public figure but he himself was not so open to society and not much recognized before the publication of his book. He wants every

Jews to go public and love and respect the racial identity, so suggesting Chick to go public he shows his love for Jews race.

The novel is divided in to three parts and the first part begins with the word 'odd' which is quite decisive word as the novel is a memoir and gift of love but this odd is the suggestive of oddity in the behavior of the major characters and makes us think that Abe Ravelstein is an example of this oddity but a page later the narrator of this novel, Chick, says of the man he is memorializing, "Ravelstein was one of those large men-large, not stout" (Bellow 3). Like the narrator writer Chick Ravelstein is a Jewish figure "This large Jewish man from Dayton" (Bellow 94) was "a much larger and graver person" than Rameau's nephew. "Ravelstein's extended body was very large, he was nearly six and a half feet tall and his gown, which reached to the ankles of ordinary panties, ended just above his knees" (Bellow 178). So Ravelstein is larger than life and larger than Chick. The word "Odd" is also suggestive of Jewish oddness in American land and society. All these odd details are the result of the Jewish oddity in seeing life and all other not in favor of them.

Ravelstein was a bigger man than me. He was able to make a striking statement. Because of his larger size, he could wear clothes with more dramatic effect. I wouldn't have dreamed of disputing this. To be really handsome a man should be tall. A tragic hero has to be above the average in height. I hadn't read Aristotle in age but I remembered this much from *Poetics*. (Bellow 30)

Chick believes Ravelstein knows every thing about critical writer and has also compared him with Aristotle and Plato means he wants his friend to be immortal through this writing.

As Ravelstein himself had asked him to write his biography “Of course I understood his motive. He wanted me to write his biography and at the same time he wanted to rescue me from my pernicious habits” (Bellow 9), Chick channels Ravelstein in this memoir novel. But Bellow wrote and fulfilled his promise to write about Ravelstein only after 8 years of his death. It is a novel spiced with Western Civilization's greatest hits—long views from Athens to Jerusalem as seen through the eyes of the noble dead (Plato, Rousseau, and Nietzsche), compulsive scribblers like Xenophon, Joyce and Celine, or prophets like Job and Tolstoy. It is an oriental novel as if it were told like an obelisk with a folding fan. It is a story of two deaths—the philosopher and then the novelist. It is these differences in how to live and how to die that prevent this from becoming merely a tacky *roman a clef*. Sifts the novel for real-life candidates for the various characters and makes several comparisons with previous novels concluding that as male friendships go, Chick and Abe may not be in a league with Huck and Jim, but they share a sense of what was funny and what mattered. We are finally won over by these cranky, horny men discussing Greeks, Jews, death and sex in their own parrot-filled agora.

The novel neither has given up on the relationship between life's pains and eros but also has concluded that the only one who really knows Rousseau's romantic love and Platonic Eros is Rosamund, to whom the book gives the most admiration. Rosamund is a former student of Ravelstein and wife of Chick and she is the guide to write this novel letting information about Ravelstein and his philosophy. Ravelstein prefers Nikki and has no family of his own which is an odd point for the then society. According to the homosexual theory, male/female sexual desire is described through a model of gender inversion. In this conception, male inverts men who desired other men and is appropriated in the female gender cultural mode.

But Ravelstein knew the value of set. He had a set of his own. Its members were students he had trained in political philosophy and longtime friends. Most of them were trained as Ravelstein himself had been trained, under Professor Davarr and used his esoteric vocabulary. (Bellow 10)

Although Ravelstein never married and had no one to inherit his state but he had got small family like friend circle and students circle where he had set his value of his life and his position as a father like role. Nikki was there to inherit his state and students to support him any way. This is the reality with Jews that they were famous for their unnatural sex and were rich but had no family of their own.

Ravelstein is a man who is devoted to his friends and to the idea of friendship but the society could not accept that a male has closeness with another male and at the time we can note no harmonious relationship in the family. Chick even leaves his first wife for the friendship with Ravelstein which Vela never liked and for that Ravelstein also evoked Chick to leave Vela. We can guess some hidden reality in the character and behavior of Ravelstein who always wanted his friend Chick to be in close and far from his wife. Vela even accuses Chick being unaware about family and only cling with Ravelstein a crippled, homosexual odd fellow. Vela's this anger can be the result of her being a Jewish hater. Vela seems to accept and cling with the social history of America not to the Jewish love and affection. But because Chick is in touch with Ravelstein and knew the hidden reality he better continued his relation and wrote an eulogy type novel in the memory of his respected friend.

Ravelstein is most memorably a novel about love in the form of a Platonic friendship and closeness. All the risks, vulnerabilities, fears and jealousies inherent in close male friendship are all delicately on display here. It is an unhurriedly frank and

brotherly conversation full of verbal escapades, revelations, explorations, and subversions. The richness of the tale is underscored by the precise austerity of the language. It is full of clarity, grace, delicacy, economy and weight. It is also an epitaph, a passing tribute to a generation of Eastern European Americans whose grandparents and uncles died in pogroms. Ravelstein personifies a fierce engagement with the world, which to him, unlike the vast majority of Americans, was a minefield of horrible memories. In the end, there is a tie between love and death.

Ravelstein transcends all of these previous failures in what is a most perfectly achieved intellectual male love relationship. At once tender, intellectually stimulating, occasionally wicked, and always full of brilliant and often wicked conversation, this friendship encompasses everything from the sublime. Chick comments: “it was our sense of what was funny that brought us together, but that would have been a thin, anemic way to put” (Bellow 118). At the age of 64 and for several years thereafter, Bellow clearly found in Alan Bloom the adoring and approving older Jewish male father figure he always lacked, the Jewish soul mate and brother he never had, and the nearly perfect intellectual boon companion he had searched for most of his adult life. As we observe of Chick and *Ravelstein*: “They [are] such friends because they are each other’s best audience. They listen closely to one another and are not squeamish or ashamed when it comes to talking about their secrets and fears” (Bellow 16).

Allan Bloom, a Platonist, literally believed that the highest purpose and potential of male friendship was the formation of an elite community of potentials who seek truth. It is this intellectually elitist Platonic model for male friendship Bloom bequeathed to Bellow. In Plato’s *Symposium* it will be remembered, humans are originally two people sealed back to back and each in possession of two sets of sexual organs, one male and one female. In some cases both sets were male. The Gods

finally punish them for being proud and self-sufficient by splitting them in half.

Hence the human romantic and sexual quest in which we have all been driven to find our other half—male or female. For this reason may result him to be a homo who hate females and who never got married and never loved his family.

The Ravelstein's were a Dayton, Ohio, family. His mother, a powerhouse, had put herself through Johns Hopkins. His father, not a successful man, was the local representative of a large national organization, banished to Dayton. A fat neurotic man, a hysterical parent, a disciplinarian. [...] Abe admired his mother, hated his father, despised his sister. (Bellow 17)

From these above lines we can conclude that Ravelstein is not happy with his family and especially hated his father who was not a successful businessman and was not responsible for his family. He lived his unmarried life for, he hates family. Allan Bloom, it would seem, literally believed this, and in fact constantly looked for signs of it in everyone he knew. Ravelstein was hungry of familial love and at the same time fears for the same he experienced in his early life. He never married because he has no good experience. He just accepted Nikki as his heir to his empire but never was interested in married life.

What Bellow also received from Ravelstein in the command to write the memoir is the “subject of subjects” (Bellow 164), death combined with friendship. Chick knows that Ravelstein himself obeyed the wisdom of two great cultures, Jerusalem and Athens. His erotic teachings come from Aristophanes, Socrates, and the Bible, though Plato is his most powerful prophet. But as he is dying it is the injunctions of Moses, the facts of the near Jewish annihilation in the 20th century, and the wisdom of Jerusalem that preoccupies him. He tells Chick that half of the Jews

have been killed and that he and Chick belong to the other half. Encoded in this statement is an injunction to Chick to assume responsibility for the fact that he is a Jew still living, and to cherish and act upon his Jewish heritage, and to keep talking.

“As a Jew you are also an American, but somehow you are not” (Bellow 23).

Ravelstein doubts that like Hitler and the Nazis one day Americans too will chase Jewish people so he doubts for the identity and will also forget their identity as a Jew figure in America. This is very painful act for Ravelstein because they are living in America, a land not of their origin.

Ravelstein has been called a biographical essay, a eulogy, a memoir, athrenody, a roman a clef, the chronicle of a friendship, a valediction and a Kaddish, a biography conflated inside a barely disguised fiction, and auto ethnography. The book is very much his career endgame and final word on all the major Bellovian philosophical themes. It is evident that *Ravelstein* is also Bellow’s most recent attempt to make amends for sins of omission in his treatment Jewish themes in previous works. While *Ravelstein* is not about the Holocaust, it is scattered with numerous accounts of Nazi atrocities, as well many direct emotional responses to the horror. Ravelstein repeatedly chastises Chick for becoming friendly with Griescu, a Balkan Nazi sympathizer and Rumanian fascist Iron Guardist who represents, “sadists who hung living Jews on meat hooks” (Bellow 16).

Just as Bellow memorialized Demore Schwartz and others like him, so he now memorializes Allan Bloom, and himself. *Ravelstein* celebrates this friendship. Though Bellow “outs” his homosexual friend, that Bellow loved Allan Bloom is never in doubt. At the end, after almost losing his own life and after struggling for over six years to fulfill his promise to write Bloom’s life, Chick/Bellow finally completes the task. In the final pages, as easily as if he had literally summoned his dead friend back

before his eyes, he recalls one final time the energy, wit, clumsiness, largeness of spirit, the eccentricities, the grossnesses, and hilarities of Bloom. The final summary picture he gives of them is an intimate one. They are situated in Ravelstein's great master bedroom, Ravelstein is dressing and Chick is watching him in the mirror as he magnificently garbs himself before the pier glass, sublime, baroque music recorded with original instruments blaring forth from the hi-fi, buttoning up his Jermyn Street "Kisser and Asser" striped shirt, tying a luxurious knot in his tie, sitting down on the bed on his beautifully cured fleeces while putting on his Pulsen and Skone tan Wellington boots—smoking of course, constantly answering the ringing telephone, polishing the top of his head, and finally striding out into the cold Chicago air in his \$5,000 dollar Italian wool and silk suit. "You don't easily give up a creature like Ravelstein to death," laments Chick in one of Bellow's greater understatements (Bellow 233). These are the details of Ravelstein's materialistic thrust and proof of being rich which later Ravelstein himself rejects.

Ravelstein is a book about ideas and it is also a very political book. There is no doubt that when Chick recounts that during the Civil War people complained about Abraham Lincoln's funny stories and accused him of being frivolous, he reminds us of Ravelstein's critics and their failure to appreciate,

In America at least this is often the case. Anyone who wants to govern the country has to entertain it. During the Civil War people complained about Lincoln's funny stories. Perhaps he sensed that strict seriousness was far more dangerous than any joke. But critics said that he was frivolous and his own secretary of war referred to him as an ape.
(Bellow 1)

Like Abraham Ravelstein too was seen and criticized by contemporary lecturers and friend circle but the difference is that here Ravelstein is criticized for being a Jewish intellectual in New England but Lincoln then was criticized for his view about war. Chick mentioned what Ravelstein tells us a great deal about what he as an author is about to do. Chick as an author mentioned each and every positive and even negative sides of the protagonist Ravelstein and at the same time is mean and protects Ravelstein from all the accuses for he is Ravelstein's friend and this novel itself is example of a journey through love and memory.

Chick also draws out the Lincoln analogy further when he explains that Ravelstein admired Lincoln because he was willing to take the extraordinary measure of suspending habeas corpus to successfully prosecute the Civil War. Ravelstein also sympathized with Lincoln because he had to endure the mobs of people who wanted to see him on one pretty matter or another in the midst of that horrible crisis. Chick the narrator appears to partly company with both Ravelstein and Lincoln with regard to the question of due process. He argues that because he is a writer, he is not as willing to write people off as Ravelstein was. He even borrows Lincoln's language of a "humanity bath" to describe his desire to expose himself to human variety (Bellow 9).

Chick knows that his book may be taken as a light and gossipy portrait of a friend, a portrait too kind to satisfy Ravelstein's critics and to satisfy his friends, but from the very beginning of the novel Chick puts the reader on notice that frivolous stories may capture an important political teaching for the readers. The model for Chicks book is the funny and often crude stories of Abe Lincoln, the man whose secretary of war described as an ape but in hidden level it is Ravelstein and his stories about struggle, behavior, physical description etc.

I could see that he was following a trail of Jewish ideas or Jewish essence. It was unusual for him these days, in any conversation, to mention even Plato or Thucydides. He was full of scripture now. He talked about religion and the difficult project of being man in the fullest sense, of becoming man and nothing but man. Sometimes he was coherent. Most of the time he lost me. (Bellow 178)

In the death bed, Ravelstein now is only a Jewish figure, waiting for death. Now he could no more talk about Plato or Thucydides. He is now full of scripture and could only talk about religion. From the death bed Ravelstein draw a conclusion that a Jew should take a deep interest in the history of the Jews – in their principles of Justice. But not every problem can be solved the medicine can be friendship and love.

Whenever novels are based on real life persons and events we see the writers transforming the materials to meet the very different demands of novelistic writing. The title character named Abraham Ravelstein not Allan Bloom Bellow's contemporary. Among other things, this is a much more Jewish name; its bearer is announced from the outset as an heir to Abraham, the "Father" of the Jewish people. And that is just the way Bellow presents Ravelstein.

H[e] was a teacher, you see. That was his vocation – he taught. We are a people of teachers. For millennia, Jews have taught and been taught without teaching. Jewry was an impossibility. Ravelstein had been a pupil or, if you prefer, a disciple of Davarr. (Bellow 101)

In giving Jewish name, Bellow acts the novelistic turning something internal, essential, and hidden into something visible and surface. Bellow depicts Ravelstein as a much more deeply Jewish then he knew or thought himself and thus prepares Ravelstein return to his Jewishness at the very end of his life, a return much criticized

by these who Bloom as very unlike him. This is only because this is a piece of literary text and more accurately a novel so things are twisted for the best smooth plot too.

If Ravelstein is a novel and not a biography it does not matter what the historical individual Allan Bloom said at the end, it matters only that Ravelstein displays a truth about himself that coheres with what he is. At the end, he is not Socratic, that is, what he had aspired to be throughout his life and that is the historic figure still remembered and Ravelstein although he is not Socratic but he through this novel is able to portray as a historic figure, never forgotten for his philosophy and his friendship with Bellow, as a Jewish writer and Abraham a Jewish father.

Chick shares in many known facts about Bellow's life, but he is not presented in Ravelstein as identical to Bellow. Chick being a 'writer', called at times by Ravelstein as 'an artist'. But he is not a writer of novels; he seems to specialize in biography or historical sketches, perhaps in the manner of Lytton Strachey. We first hear of him writing about John Maynard Keynes at the Versailles peace conference. Later we hear of 'pieces' has written "about Khrushcher at the U N pulling off his shoes and banging it on the table" and of a sketch of Bobby Kennedy as a senator from New York for which Chick followed RFK "on his Washington rounds" (Bellow 130). Versailles peace conference, UN, New York all are places and truth historically and this is not the c.v. of Bellow but the career of a man who could write *Ravelstein* as a memoir, that is as nonfiction. Thus we can claim that Ravelstein is a memoir written in the memory of his best friend and a Jewish colleague Allan Bloom, in the novel Ravelstein.

Although both Ravelstein and Chick are Jews intellectual and Chick beside being senior Professor and the narrator of the novel, has presented himself as a minor intellectual in front of Ravelstein. There is no hint that Chick is thought by many to

be4 'the greatest Living American author' or that won the Nobel Prize. Accordingly the relationship between Chick and Ravelstein also cannot be quite what the relationship between Bellow and Bloom was. The evidence is strong that Chick is a more fictionalized version of Bellow than Ravelstein is of Bloom. From the points we can claim that Ravelstein is a novel written on about Ravelstein a university Professor and a Jewish intellectual in America.

Chick actually presents little evidence of Ravelstein's rage and it is at most a sub text. Ravelstein the cultural warrior is also the lover of luxury. The love of luxury is something that appeals to some democratic tastes, if not those of Ravelstein's bourgeois neighbors and colleagues, at least to the south side blacks who admire Ravelstein's wardrobe. Chick also sees this love of luxury at last as an accessible metaphor for his quest for greatness. Knowing that audience are not likely to laugh or cry at Ravelstein's philosophic discussion or his role in the culture wars Chick tries to make it more a literary piece of writing by creating some situation not whole truth about Ravelstein but also bringing some allusions.

Early in the book Chick reports that Ravelstein had told him he should be more like the writer Louis Ferdinand Celine, whose nihilistic character Robinson refuses to tell a woman that he loves her.

“Robinson the nihilist is high principled about one thing only, not to lie about the very few things that really matter. He'll try any kind of obscenity but he draws the line at last, and this tramp woman, deeply insulted, shoots him dead because he won't say I love you.”(Bellow 13)

Here Ravelstein's critics thought that he was all to draw lines or to take moral stands, but Chick saw a different man, one who was high principled only about “a very, very

few things that really matter” (Bellow 13). When Chick asks Ravelstein the meaning of Celine’s story Ravelstein replies, “It means that writers are to make you laugh and cry. That is what mankind is looking for” (Bellow 13). So Chick learns many from Ravelstein and wrote this book actually according to what and how he was taught by Ravelstein.

In this book, we see Ravelstein the warrior primarily in the battle with Vela, Chick’s ex wife for Chick’s soul and with all others then the Jews in origin. This is all because of their own believe that other then Jews could not understand their problems and so a Jew intellectual like Chick only can understand another Jew that is Ravelstein and portray him in a very good and historically famous order making him a subject to learn for the study of Jews.

We are also faced with a new character named Radu Grielescu, the then prominent scholar, “not exactly the follower of Jung – but not exactly the follower of Jungian” (Bellow 105). Vela is in favor of this character, who is against Jews. Vela had hoped to substitute Grielescu for Ravelstein as Chick’s friend and Chick even admits that he enjoyed Grielescu’s company, but Ravelstein warned him for his questionable past and the danger against the political implication of his ideas. Grielescu is a “Jew hater” who had written of the “Jew syphilis” that infected the Balkans.

It was assumed that you had come to listen or to learn from Radu. Mme. Grielescu had even arranged the parlor furniture with this in mind. “This was how he steered the conversation away from his fascist record,” said Ravelstein. “But the record nevertheless shows what he wrote about the Jew-syphilis that infected the high civilization of Balkans.”(Bellow 126)

Here it is clear that Jews like Ravelstein hate their enemy those who are Jews haters. For Griesescu hates Jews he warns Chick for not to be so close with him. Ravelstein informs Chick that Griesescu had been a member of Iron Guard and only wanted to use chick for cover, to rehabilitate his reputation. The Iron Guard “hung people alive on meat hooks in the slaughterhouse and butchered them – skinned them alive” (Bellow 124). Because of the idea of slaughterhouse a house where Hitler killed many Jews Ravelstein a Jew hates Griesescu and his Iron Guard.

For Ravelstein love and friendship are fundamentally different. Love is based on incompleteness, a longing for the other that will complete us but is somehow alien to us and will always remain so, except perhaps briefly in sex. Friendship is based on a shared understanding, an appreciation for an intellectual tradition and an ability to engage that tradition and if this intellectual sharing had its limits, they were less restrictive than those of love. He is in practical too with the view. Ravelstein loves Nikki, but they do not share in an intellectual friendship. Chick tells us that Nikki was not a part of the conversations between Ravelstein and his friends or students. We can see the relationship between Ravelstein and Nikki based on inequality. Ravelstein himself describes it as a father son relationship. Although Ravelstein may say this to play down its erotic character is heightened for him by the incommensurability of the relationship. When Ravelstein buys Nikki an expensive BMW as a token of his love, his action reminds us of the way a father might show his affection for a son, a son with particularly demanding standards. Ravelstein feels for Nikki the kind of appreciation and love that his own father never felt or showed for him.

Ravelstein doubts for the smooth friendship and family relation with woman. Firstly he believes young women's are interested in family what he could not fulfill this desire of a woman so he is unmarried.

Young women, he said, were burdened by what he called “glamour maintenance.” Nature, furthermore, gave them a longing for children, and therefore marriage, for the stability requisite for family life. And together with a mass of other things, disabled them for philosophy.

(Bellow 140)

There are also young woman who think they can keep a husband alive forever. This statement is particularly focused for Rosamund for she is Ravelstein’s student and is very keen to her husband. Rosamund is “earnest and hardworking”; she may even have a “good mind,” but like most women, she would not be capable of a philosophic friendship (Bellow 140). With particularly Chick she shares philosophy about life and philosophy of her teacher Ravelstein. Ravelstein had begun to teach a lesson about love to Chick as he tried to rescue him from Vela. But it is Rosamund who Chick concludes knows more about love than either he or Ravelstein. So its not only the love to Ravelstein presented here but also the love of Rosamund to Chick as a husband and Ravelstein as a teacher is clear here.

Ravelstein is also a book about faith, and by the end of the story both Chick and Ravelstein are closer to Jerusalem than they were at the beginning. Chick has come to see the possibility of goodness in the world, first through the friendship with Ravelstein and later through the love and friendship of Rosamund. But in Nikolas claims in *Perspective on Political Science* that: “Chick may not have had as far to go as Ravelstein, because Chick’s relationship to his origins was never as problematic as Ravelstein’s” (qtd. in Nikolas 20). So we can say that this novel is a love for Jew and Jerusalem and it’s also the love story between Ravelstein and Chick, Chick and Rosamund and Rosamund and Ravelstein and with each other. We see this from the little description given to us by Chick about the Ravelstein’s childhood which reflects

the bitterness that Ravelstein feels towards his family. He “had hated and shaken off his own family” (Bellow 26). He never liked his Father and other members so he prefers to be alone and feels his students as his family members. His root or his childhood is responsible for him being a Jew without heir to overthrow his state.

Ravelstein argued that philosophers are necessarily atheist and at the same time he was said to have great love and respect for Jerusalem and ultimately choose Athens over Jerusalem.

At the deepest level this novel as a whole is an intervention in the quarrel between Athens and Jerusalem, between faith and philosophy [I would add, poetry and philosophy] – meant to show the ultimate, inner, not fully self conscious capitulation or integration of philosophy. (qtd. in Michael Zuckert 25)

So we can prove that this novel in its deepest level is the quarrel between Jewish and other religion and furthermore its description of their plight and predicaments and their description of history as detail of their sufferings.

By the all analysis over here we can conclude that Ravelstein is a novel more like a memory play and biography written by a friend about a friend. Furthermore it is the Jewish description of another Jew. It is a journey a historic journey of Jews from Germany to New England that is America. It is a book of politics where history has a clever presentation. In the death bed Ravelstein understood the value of Jewish racial identity and love between Jews.

IV Conclusion

This study of *Ravelstein* by the novel prize winner Saul Bellow is a description of personal as political history and the journey through love and memory. Through this novel, Bellow is able to show the personal history characters and overall history of Jewish people in the so called New Land. The Jews see themselves oppressed by history, with pain, suffering, plight and anxiety and holocaust everywhere and every time. Economy, sexuality, intellectual life in America too might threaten them.

Saul Bellow wrote this novel in the memory of his late friend and a university professor Allan Bloom. Allan Bloom, Ravelstein in this novel, is a real character who is a Jewish born intellectual and it is his biography and philosophy presented in the novel as his personal history. Bellow wrote this novel in 2000 when Allan Bloom was no more with him so death and life of Bloom is mainly presented in the novel. Ravelstein is a Jew who like other Jews is haunted by his past experiences. He is not satisfied with his family especially hates his father who used to punish him naked. In a sense he hates family and love but it is the human instinct that he too cannot run from it. He loves Nikki very much and loves his students too. Even though he forbids students to get married but he himself finds them as his family members and cannot live without them.

The fiction giving primary importance to the friendship between Chick, the narrator, and Ravelstein, the major character, exposes the evidence of his awareness of the condition of the Jewish characters, their notion of the pain, suffering, their predicaments and their being haunted by past. This novel also is the detail picture of the journey of their friendship and Chick's love for Ravelstein. It is the memory of their friendship as like teacher and student relation or the Abraham, the god father.

This is a memory play mainly because it is written after the death of Ravelstein and is love memoir because Bellow represented by Chick praises their friendship and their love with each other. So Saul Bellow's this last novel is a novel which details the journey through love and memory of their friendship.

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