

Tribhuvan University

Victims of Ideology: Bellow's Characters in *Humboldt's Gift*

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The thesis entitled “Victims of Ideology: Bellow’s characters in *Humboldt’s Gift*” submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Gyanendra Bahadur Thapa, has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research committee. Members of the Research Committee.

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ABSTRACT

The present research is a probe into the ideological predicament of the characters, Humboldt Fleisher and Charles Citrine, in Saul Bellow's *Humboldt's Gift*. They feel alienated because the social ideology limits them to the particular definition of subjects. They are cynical subjects and know what they are doing by getting involved in the socio-economic activity of their society but they still keep on doing it. Their social ideology regulates their behaviors and conduct. They are not conformists on the ideological belief of their society. Rather than losing themselves in the status quo, they take recourse to alternative ways to come out of the crisis of the Western capitalist ideology and live a self-determined life. For this Charlie practices Yoga and meditation, reads Anthrosophy, and goes for erotic relief. Humboldt, as a rebel challenges the society by the way of irrational resistance. He takes shelter in drinks, pills, insanity, book reading, and locks himself in a loony bin. Ironically besides their desperate efforts to free themselves from the social ideology they are enslaved by its ritual practice either knowingly or unknowingly. In the novel they are doomed to live under the ideologies as put forth by the American capitalism via Chicago society. In the eye of their society their vain efforts seem insubstantial illusion and they themselves are proved nothing more than the heroic daydreamers.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Saul Bellow and *Humboldt's Gift*

The present research is an inquiry into the impact of an ideology, as a social construct, upon the characters, Charles Citrine and Humboldt Fleisher. Humboldt and Charlie suffer throughout their lives. They are the subjects living under the ideology set forth by the advanced American capitalism. Since their subject hoods, roles, obligations, and responsibilities are determined by the ideology all pervasive in their society, they feel like puppets and void. So they suffer from a radical sense of alienation. They are two literary writers who feel at odd with the materialist society. Though they know the interests of the ruling class lurking behind the dominant social ideology, they are doomed to practice the same ideological rituals and practices spread through various kinds of Ideological State Apparatuses- government, court, religion, university, and others.

Humboldt takes recourse to pills, addiction, unconscious and madness and Charlie thinks an alternative ways like erotic relief, meditation, and Yoga. But the alternative ways that they hope to be more comfortable turn rather terrible to confront. So at last they are destined to return to the same ideology. Despite their desperate efforts to break out of the compromised system and replace it with an alternative ideal one beyond the existing capitalist system and its dominant ideology, they are compelled to return within its periphery by the ideological state apparatuses.

I have studied the ideological impact upon the characters and their lives in four chapters. The first chapter is an introduction to the present research, and it presents the hypothesis, a general introduction to the author and the novel against the backdrop of different critic's commentaries on the novel. The second chapter elaborates the methodology employed to study the text. The principal theoretical tool employed in this study is ideology.

The third chapter presents a detailed textual analysis with textual citations so as to expose how the novel documents the instances of repercussions of dominant ideology upon the characters living under it. This chapter presents the analysis for showing many mental as well as physical ups and downs undergone by the characters, esp. Charles Citrine and Humboldt Fleisher, because of the effects of their society's dominant ideology. The final chapter concludes the study with a brief recounting observation of the work affirming the hypothesis.

Saul Bellow is the most distinguished novelist of the war period in America. He was born in Canada in 1915 and grew up in Chicago. He attended Chicago Northwestern and Wisconsin Universities and has a B.Sc. in anthropology. He has been a visiting lecturer at Princeton and New York Universities and associated professor at the University of Minnesota, and has also lived in Paris and traveled extensively in Europe. He was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in 1948 and has received a grant from the Ford Foundation; he is a member of the National Institute of Arts and Letters and was elected the third Neil Gunn Fellow by Scottish Arts Council.

He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1976, the first American to win the Prize since John Steinbeck in 1962. In 1977 Saul Bellow won the Gold Medal for the Novel, which is awarded every sixth year by the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, and in 1978 he won the -USA National Arts Club Gold Medal of Honor. In 1984 President Mitterand made him a commander of the legion of the Legion of Honor.

Saul Bellow produced his first novel, *Dangling Man*, in 1944, and his last, *Revelstein*, in 2000. In the time between, he published a steady stream of novels, stories, novellas and essays. He was an astonishing creator and the most enduring writer America has ever known. He has contributed stories and reviews to many leading American magazines and quarterlies.

Besides the *Dangling Man*, his books include *The Victims* –1948 , *The Adventures of Augie March* – 1953 ,which, like *Herzog* –1964 , and *Mr. Sammler's Planet* 1970 , won the National Book Award. His other books are *Seize the Day* (1956), *Henderson the Rain King* (1959), and *The Last Analysis* (1966). He wrote some non-fiction works too.

His Pulitzer Prize winning novel, *Humboldt's Gift*, is narrated in the first person. The narrator protagonist, Charlie Citrine, is a writer, rich and successful. But in his heart he knows that he is a failure. He is ruined by a divorce and finally abandoned by his mistress. He admires his dead friend, Von Humboldt Fleisher. Humboldt, a talent wasted, represents for him all that is important in culture. In this comic novel Bellow portrays the spiritual plight of Charlie Citrine, a Chicagoan with a taste for low pursuits, gangland excitement, pneumatic young women, and a poetic gift he has almost lost. This Chicago condition has already destroyed Humboldt, an avant-garde American poet. The story is a parable of the capitalistic American culture in which the striving for power, dominance, and self-aggrandizement has all but excluded love, the soul, beauty, and poetic states. The novel suggests that this is what destroys the American artist represented by men of feeling such as Poe, Humboldt, and Charlie. Charlie sets himself up against a naturalist sexual ideology, technological rationalism, and materialistic sloth while meditating furiously on Humboldt and American poetry's spectacular failure. The failed modernist ideas of capitalism transformed Humboldt , representative modern poet, from the young Orpheus of the *Harlequin Ballades* , to the manic-depressive pill taker, politician, schemer, paranoiac and blasted tyrant who tried to combine outer America with inner America. The plight of these two artists reflects the plight of artists in the materialistic American society.

Humboldt's Gift has been able to draw attention of many critics since it's publication in 1975. Different critics have interpreted the text differently and have opened many new

avenues of approach commenting on *Humboldt's Gift*. Judie Newman, in his essay, "Bellow's Sixth Sense," concludes:

The novel therefore explores different approaches to history, and different retreats from it –history as nightmare, as tragedy, as farce, as black comedy; the retreat into myth or into the heightened present of the crisis mentality (Charlie's wife, Denise) or into transcendence, the danger of 'pop' or instant history (the film scenario, Thaxter's book about his own kidnapping) or of history governed by stereotyped moral responses. (24)

Here, Newman prefers to show the sense of history in this novel. The novel explores different approaches to history. So Bellow avoids any single mode of approach to time and thereby liberates the events to be judged in its total context. The concern with history reveals Bellow's analytical sense of its dynamics, which allows it to function formally in the text. Bellow's other novels like *The Adventures of Augie March* and *Handerson the Rain King* are also historical.

L.H. Goldman, another critic, in his essay, "Soul Bellow and the Philosophy of Judaism", says, *Humboldt's Gift* concerns contracts –gambling contracts, real-state contracts, literary contracts, blood brother contracts, drama contracts, marriage contracts and their dissolution"(63).

So here Goldman focuses on its concern with the real human activities and their dissolution. Every contract i.e. humanly so temporary dissolves since it is not heavenly and religious. These contracts are in parallel with the Covenant with God in Judaism, which established relationship between God and man.

In his essay, "*Humboldt's Gift* and the Romantic Imagination," the Bellow critic, Allan Chavkin, shows that Bellow's romantic sensibility is largely the result of deliberate borrowing from early nineteenth- century English Romantics. According to him, the novel is

concerned with the theme of the romantic sensibility. He equates this theme with the Wordsworthian faith in the power of imagination. He finds the novel as a meditation on death. Similarly, John Clayton, another Bellow critic, argues: “Humboldt’s Gift concerned transcendence and the flight from death” (Gloria and Goldman 11). So, he emphasizes transcendence from the real history.

Similarly, in his essay, “The Symbolic Function of the Pastoral in Saul Bellow’s novels” the critic, Molly Wieting, writes:

In *Humboldt’s Gift*, Bellow extends the transcendentalism of *Herzog* to even greater lengths and presents his most complex use of the pastoral motif. As with *Herzog* and *Mr. Sammler’s Planet*. Bellow opens the novel with the protagonist’s already having discovered that the journey to the countryside can result in the disintegration of the very peace and harmony that it was supposed to provide. In *Humboldt’s Gift* Bellow sends Charlie Citrine not only on a literal pastoral journey but also on a more direct spiritual quest –a sort of pastoral quest of the soul. (90)

In this remark, Wieting highlights the experience of the character with the pastoral. Charlie’s pastoral journey is symbolic journey of quest for spiritual.

But Ada Aharoni, another critic, sees the novel from a feminist perspective. She writes:

In *Humboldt’s Gift*, we find that the protagonist’s “analytical skepticism” towards women is just as bad as Sammler’s [. . .]; Charlie Citrine is hypocritical and double faced in his dealing with women. On the one hand, he encourages the “passionate hypochondria” of women and presses them to tell him about their tumors and their swollen legs [...]. The women he frequents

can in no way compare to the companionship of his male friends such as Humboldt, Shapiro and Rahv whom he truly respects and esteems. (106)

Here Aharoni accumulates evidences for the unequal treatment meted out towards women by the males in a patriarchal society.

Thus, this novel has drawn attention of many critics, who have interpreted the novel focusing on different themes like the sense of history, the romantic sensibility, the pastoral, the contracts, the unequal treatment meted out towards women, etc. However, studying the text from the ideological perspective will help the better understanding of the characters and their condition. So this research will focus upon the impact of ideology on the characters, and an endeavor will be made for its discussion in detail.

CHAPTER II

IDEOLOGY

The term ideology has a whole range of meanings. It is a text woven of a whole tissue of different conceptual strands; it is traced through by divergent histories. Some early definitions of it are related with the interest of the dominant social or political class or power as a distorted and illusionary body of ideas. In this regard, it is defined as a body of ideas characteristic of a particular social group or class; ideas or false ideas, which help to legitimate a dominant political power; as forms of thought motivated by social interests; as socially necessary illusion. Some later definitions of ideology see it as a form of discourse related with power, identity, and meaning in social life. It is defined as a process of production of meanings, signs, and values in social life; as that which offers a position for a subject; as identity thinking. Finally, it is defined in terms of its relation with the linguistics and semiotic phenomena on the one hand and with natural reality on the other hand.

There are two dissonant traditions inscribed within the term ideology. One central lineage, from Hegel and Marx to George Lukacs and some later Marxist thinkers, has been much preoccupied with the ideas of true and false cognition, with ideology as illusion, distortion and mystification; whereas an alternative tradition of thought has been less epistemological than sociological, concerned more with the function of ideas within social life than with their reality or unreality. While defining it, Eagleton writes:

To claim in ordinary conversation that someone is speaking ideologically is surely to hold that they are judging a particular issue through some rigid framework of preconceived ideas which distorts their understanding. Viewing things as they really are also involves an oversimplifying view of the world- that is to speak or judge ideologically is to do so schematically, stereotypically, and perhaps with the faintest hint of fanaticism. So the

opposite of ideology, here, then, would be less absolute truth than empirical or pragmatic. (3)

The sociologist Emile Durkheim supports this view. He characterized the “Ideological method” as consisting in the use of notions to govern the collation of facts rather than deriving notions from them. But most people would now concede that without preconceptions of some kind, what Heidegger calls “pre-understandings” we would not even be able to identify an issue or situation, let alone pass judgment upon it.

The rigid and inflexible view of ideology was elevated in the post-war period. For the American political theorist Edward Shils, ideologies are explicit, closed, and resistant to innovation. They require total adherence from their devotees. The ‘end-of-ideology’ ideology tends to view ideology in two contradictory ways: On the one hand it takes ideology as some pseudo-religious faith which the technocratic world of modern capitalism has outgrown, on the other hand it is considered an arid conceptual system which seeks to reconstruct the society. Alvin Gouldner, in his *the Dialectic of Ideology and Technology*, writes, “Ideology is the mind-inflating realm of the doctrinaire, the dogmatic, the impassioned, the dehumanizing, the false, the irrational, and of course the extremist consciousness” (qtd. in Eagleton 4). So he defines ideology as consisting of ambivalences.

There is an objection to this designation of ideology as rigid sets of beliefs. It refers not only to belief systems but also to questions of power. It legitimizes the power of a dominant social group or class. According to John B. Thompson, “To study ideology is to study the ways in which meaning (or significance) serves to sustain relations of domination” (qtd. in Eagleton 4). So he views it in terms of its relation of domination. The process of legitimation seems to involve at least six different strategies. A dominant power may legitimate itself by promoting beliefs and values congenial to it. To render them self evident and apparently inevitable, it tries to universalize and naturalize them. It denigrates the ideas

which challenge it. The dominant power excludes the rival forms of thought and obscures social reality. Such mystification masks or suppresses social conflicts, from which arises the conception of ideology as an imaginary resolution of real contradictions. The political philosopher Seliger defines ideology as sets of ideas by which men posit, explain and justify ends and means of organized social action, specifically political action, irrespective of whether such action aims to preserve, amend, uproot or rebuild a given social order. So the legitimation theory of ideology concerns the nature of power. Michel Foucault replaces ideology with the more spacious “discourse”. Ideology is a matter of discourse rather than language.

Some theorists of ideology drop the notion of epistemological sense of it in favor of a more political or sociological sense as the medium in which social and political battles are fought out at the level of signs, meanings and representation. Ideology denotes the ways in which the power process gets caught up in the realm of signification.

The false consciousness view of ideology seems unconvincing. Aristotle held that there was an element of truth in most beliefs. Ideology must communicate aversion of social reality to its subjects. However, ideologies quite often contain important propositions, which are absolutely false. Many ideological statements may be true in their surface but false in underlying assumptions.

For Althusser, the criteria of truth and falsehood are thus largely irrelevant to ideology. Ideology, he says, represents the way “I live” my relations to society as a whole. Ideology, for him, is a particular organization of signifying practices which goes to constitute human being as social subjects, and which produces the lived relations by which such subjects are connected to the dominant relations of production in the society.

Althusser rejects the notion of ideology as a distorting representation reality. On the contrary, ideology, for him, alludes to our affective and unconscious relations with the world,

and to the ways in which we are pre-reflectively bound up within social reality. He claims that Ideology expresses a will, a hope, nostalgia rather than describing a reality. According to him the ruling ideology is realized in the ideological state apparatuses. He has listed a relatively large number of ideological state Apparatuses in the contemporary capitalist social formation; “the educational apparatuses, the religious apparatuses, the family apparatus, the political apparatus, the trade- union apparatus, the communications apparatus, the cultural apparatus, etc” (115). It is, in J.L. Austin’s terms, “Performative” rather than “Constative” language. Its utterances are the expressive of speakers’ attitudes or lived relations to the world. Ideological statements, then, would seem to be subjective, as close to Kant’s aesthetic judgment, but not private. It constitutes our very identity. It is a set of view points one happens to hold.

For the British sociologist Paul Hirst, it is not illusion but a complex network of empirical and normative elements. Raymond Geuss distinguishes two other forms of falsity highly relevant to ideological consciousness- Functional and genetic. He says, “Consciousness may be false because it functions in a reprehensible way or because it has a tainted origin- Epistemic, functional and genetic forms of false consciousness may go together” (qtd. in Eagleton 21).

Ideology is no baseless illusion, but a solid reality, an active material force which might help organize the practical lives of human beings. Zizek, in his “The spectre of Ideology,” writes: “*Ideology has nothing to do with illusion*, with a mistake, distorted representation of its social content” (7). All ideological language does not necessarily involve falsehood. All commitment to the dominant social order does not involve falsify. The dominant ideology may falsify social reality, suppressing and excluding certain unwelcome features of it. Ideological statements may be true at present but false for blocking off the possibility of transformed state of affairs.

According to Terry Eagleton, Ideology can be defined in six different ways. It can mean the general material process of production of ideas, beliefs, and values in social life. Here, it denotes the whole complex of signifying practices and symbolic process in a particular society. It would allude to the way individuals lived their social practices. It involves the relation between the signifying practices and processes of political power. It symbolizes the conditions and life experiences of a specific socially significant group or class. It refers to the promotion and legitimation of the interests of such social groups in the face of opposing interests. Dominant ideologies help to unify a social formation in ways convenient for the rulers. The false or deceptive belief of ideology arises from the material structure of society as a whole.

In advanced capitalist societies, the communications media are often felt to be potent means by which a dominant ideology is disseminated. N. Abercrombie, S. Hill, and B.S. Tuner, in *The Dominant Ideology*, doubt that dominant ideologies are an important means for lending cohesion to the society. Such ideologies may unify the dominant class but they are usually much less successful in filtering the consciousness of their subordinate. They further say that the dominant ideologies in advanced capitalist societies are internally fissured and contradictory. The everyday discourse of the dominated classes is formed largely outside the control of the ruling class, and embodies significant beliefs and values at odds with it. Abercrombie says that the advanced capitalist order is not a successfully achieved unity, but consists of conflicts and contradictions. The consent of the dominated to their masters is won by economic than by ideological means. So Seyla Benhabib, in his "The Critique of Instrumental Reason," writes, "The Marxian critique of capitalism exposes the internal contradictions and dysfunctionalities of the system in order to show how and why these give to oppositional demands and struggles which cannot be satisfied by the present" (qtd. in Eagleton 70).

The capitalist system survives on account of the social division between various groups it exploits. As Gramsci argues, the consciousness of the oppressed is usually a contradictory amalgam of values imbibed from their rulers, and notions which spring more directly from their practical experiences. Purely technocratic forms of management play central role in the public values to the advanced capitalist societies. The German philosopher Jurgen Habermass, in his *Towards a Rational society* (1970) and *Legitimation crisis* (1975), writes that ideology is synonymous with the attempt to provide rational technological scientific rationale for social domination. The complex systematic operations weld the capitalistic system. So Marx insists on the commodity as automatically supplying its own ideology. The routine material logic of everyday life keeps the system on.

Terry Eagleton, in his *Ideology* (1990), observes the meaningless material life in the advance capitalistic system as:

Ideology is essentially a matter of meaning; but the condition of advanced capitalism is one of pervasive non-meaning. The sway of utility and technology bleach social life of significance, sub-ordinating use-value to the empty formalism of exchange-value. Consumerism by- passes meaning in order to engage the subject subliminally libidinally, at the level of visceral response rather than reflective consciousness. (37)

So, form overwhelms content, signifier lords over signified. This haemorrhaging of meaning triggers pathological symptoms in society: drugs, violence, and mindless revolt. The lack of meaning keeps us in place.

Ideology in its classical sense is superfluous; politics is a matter of technical management and manipulation; form rather than content; Education is absorbed into the technological apparatus which provides certification for one's place with it. The work of

Jean Baudrillard captures this nihilism, “it is no longer a question of a false representation of reality (ideology), but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real [.....]” (qtd. in Eagleton 172). The citizens are expected to be at one level the mere function of this or that act of consumption or media experience and at another level to exercise ethical responsibility as autonomous, self-determining subjects. So, late capitalism requires a self-disciplined subject responsive to ideological rhetoric as father, juror, patriot, employee, etc. engaged in its consumerist and mass-cultural practices. So Althusser in his essay “Ideology Interpellates Individuals as Subjects,” writes:

[. . .] shall then suggest that ideology ‘acts’ or ‘functions’ in such a way that it ‘recruits’ subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or ‘transforms’ the individuals into subjects (it transforms them all by that very precise operation which I have called *interpellation* or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: ‘Hey, you there!’.(131)

According to Nicholas Abercrombie, Stephen Hill and Bryan S. Turner, “Ideology constitutes and patterns the lives of humans in the world. It qualifies them to fulfill their positions in society. They write, “The main burden of ideology is to construct human subjectivity, so that to search for the structure of the ideological universe is to seek the dimensions of human subjectivity’ (153).

So the advanced Capitalism oscillates between meaning and non-meaning. The new kind of ideological subject knows exactly what he is doing. It keeps us in place through material techniques; among them the coercion of economics is far more effective.

Marx and Engels, in the *German Ideology*, comment that the ruling ideas of each epoch are the ideas of the ruling class. Ideologies are often thought to be unifying, action

oriented, rationalizing, legitimating, universalizing, and naturalizing. An important device for achieving legitimacy is universalizing and eternalizing itself. In the *German Ideology* they argue:

Each new class, which puts itself in the place of one ruling before it, is compelled, merely in order to carry through its aim, to represent its interests as the common interests of all the members of society, that is expressed in ideal form: it has not given its ideas the form of universality and represent them as the only rational, universally valid ones. (qtd. in Eagleton 65-6)

They remark that the interests of an emergent revolutionary class really are likely to be connected to the common interests of all other non-ruling classes.

Ideology originally meant the scientific study of human ideas. But soon it came to mean a system of ideas themselves. An ideologist was then someone who expounded them. In fact, the early French ideologues did believe that ideas were at the root of social life. Its roots lie deep in the Enlightenment dream of a world entirely transparent to reason, free of the prejudice, superstition and obscurantism of the ancient regime. The early ideologues of the eighteenth century France drew heavily on John Lock's empiricist philosophy in their war against metaphysics. The aim of the Enlightenment ideologues, as spokesmen for the revolutionary bourgeoisie of eighteenth century Europe, was to reconstruct society from the ground up on a rational basis. They inveighed fearlessly against a social order which fed the people on religious superstition in order to buttress its own brutally absolutist power.

The emergence of the concept of ideology has the most intimate relation to revolutionary struggle and figures from the outset as a theoretical weapon of class warfare. It arrives on the scene inseparable from the material practices of the ideological state apparatuses, and is itself as a notion a theatre of contending ideological interests.

Karl Marx's theory of ideology is probably best seen as part of his more general theory of alienation, expounded in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1844) and elsewhere. The theory of ideology embodied in *The German Ideology* belongs with the general logic of inversion and alienation. Consciousness is in fact bound up with social practice; but for the German idealist philosophers, it becomes separated from these practices fettered to a thing-in-itself, and it can be misunderstood as the very source and ground of historical life. If ideas are grasped as autonomous entities, then they help to naturalize and dehistoricize them; and this for the early Marx is the secret of all ideology.

Marx and Engels were not in fact the first thinker to see consciousness as socially determined: in different ways Rousseau, Montesquieu and Condorcet had arrived at this view before them. For Marx and Engels, social illusions are anchored in real contradictions, so that only by the practical activity of transforming the true ideas can the false ideas be abolished. A materialist theory of ideology is thus inseparable from a revolutionary politics. The young Hegelians, whom they are assailing, regard ideas as the essence of material life.

A particular historical system of beliefs (religious, juridical, political) are called by Marx, 'superstructure' in contrast to the economic 'base'. Such superstructures are indeed estranged from their practical productive 'base'. *The German Ideology* (1844) appears at once to argue that consciousness is indeed always practical consciousness. So that to view it in any other light is in an idealist illusion; and that ideas are secondary to material existence. According to them, "it is not consciousness that determines life, but life that determines consciousness" (32). Marx and Engels famously proclaim in the *German Ideology* (1844) "The idea of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas; the class which is the ruling *material* force of society, is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force" (qtd. in Eagleton 47).

The superstructure is necessary because the material base is self-divided. In a full communist society, there would no longer be any need for a political state which set itself over against civil society. Once the contradictions of class society have been surmounted, they would wither away along with the rest of the superstructure. So, there are contending senses of ideology in Marx. It denotes illusionary or socially disconnected beliefs which are the ground of history and serve to sustain an oppressive political power. Alternatively, ideology can signify those ideas which directly express the material interests of the dominant social classes. Finally, it can be stretched to encompass all of the conceptual forms in which the class struggle as a whole is fought out.

In his *The Fetishism of Commodities* Marx argues that in capitalist society the actual social relations between human beings are governed by the apparently autonomous interactions of the commodities they produce.

Lukacs, in his great work *History and Class Consciousness* (1922), writes, “It is true that reality is the criterion for the correctness of thought. But reality is not, it becomes- and to become the participation of thought is needed” (qtd. in Eagleton 204). All forms of class consciousness are ideological, but some are more ideological than others. The bourgeoisie ideology can’t grasp the social structure as a whole because of the reification effects. Reification fragments and dislocates our social experience, so under its effect we come to see society as an isolated object or institution. Karl Korsch takes ideology as a form of synecdoche. But the capacity to totalize the social order, the proletariat can understand and transform their conditions.

Based on the commodity fetishism, the self-consciousness of the proletariat is the commodity form coming to an awareness of itself. The self knowledge of the exploited class is an emancipatory force. In Lukacs’ view, truth is relative to particular historical situation rather than being metaphysical affair beyond history. But the proletariat can unlock the

secret of capitalism because of his historical positing within it. The proletariat consciousness is universal.

In his *History and Class consciousness*, Lukacs argues that in capitalist society the commodity form permeates every aspect of social life. It takes the form of a pervasive mechanization, quantification and dehumanization of human experience. The wholeness of society is broken up into so many discrete, specialized, and technical operations. Purely formal techniques of calculation suffuse every region of society. The human subject is rendered incapable of recognizing its own creative practice. For Lukacs as well as for Marx, commodity fetishism is an objective material structure of capitalism.

Gramsci normally uses the word hegemony to mean the ways in which a governing power wins consent to its rule from those it subjugates. Since ideology may be forcibly imposed it is different from hegemony. Hegemony is a broader category than ideology. It may be discriminated into various ideological, cultural, political, and economic aspects. Ideology refers, specifically, to the way power-struggles are fought out at the level of significations. It is also carried out in cultural, Political, and economic forms in non-discursive practices as well as in rhetorical utterances. Gramsci associates hegemony with civil society. The dominant power is diffused throughout habitual daily practices, intimately interwoven with culture itself. Capitalism, Gramscic suggests, maintains control not just through violence, and political and economic coercion, but also ideologically, through a hegemonic culture in which the values of the bourgeoisie become the “common sense value” of all. Thus, a consensus culture develops in which people in the working class identify their own good with the good of the capitalist system. Lenin held that “Culture was ancillary to political objectives” but for Gramscic it is fundamental to the attainment of power. Intellectual and moral leadership is necessary for any class to be a dominant class. Gramsci, in his *Prison Notebooks* (1971), writes.

That the supremacy of a social group manifests itself in two ways, as “domination” and as “intellectual and moral leadership.” A social group dominated antagonistic groups, which it tends to “liquidate”, or to subjugate, perhaps even by armed force, it leads kindred and allied groups. A social group can, and indeed must, already exercise “leadership” before winning governmental power; it subsequently becomes dominant when it exercise power, but even if it holds it firmly in its grasp, it must continue to “lead” as well. (58)

Gramsci’s theory of hegemony is tied to his conception of the capitalist state which, he claims, rules through force plus consent. He divides the state between ‘political society’ which is the arena of political institutions and legal constitutional control, and ‘civil society’, which is commonly seen as the ‘private’ or non state sphere, including the economy. The former is the realm of force the latter of consent. The intermediary institutions in the civil society-school, church, family, newspaper, etc count as hegemonic apparatuses binding the individuals to the ruling power by consent. Coercion is reserved for the state for the legitimating of violence.

Gramsci gave much thought to the question of the role of intellectuals in society. Famously, he stated that all men are intellectuals, in that all have intellectual and rational faculties but not all men have the social function of intellectuals. He claimed that modern intellectuals are not simply talkers, but directors and organizers who helped build society and produce hegemony by means of ideological apparatuses such as education and media. Further more he distinguished between ‘traditional’ intellectuals and organic ones. The traditional intellectuals are professional, literary, scientific, intellectuals. The organic intellectuals are distinguished less by their profession than by their function in directing the ideas and

aspirations of the class to which they organically belong. Gramsci, in his *Prison Notebook* (1971), further says:

Every social group coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production, creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields. The capitalist entrepreneur creates alongside himself the industrial technician, the specialist in the political economy, the organizers of new culture, of a new legal system, etc.(5)

For the Frankfurt School Marxist Theodor Adorno the mechanism of abstract exchange is the very secret of ideology itself. Commodity exchange effects an equation between things which are in fact incommensurable and so does ideological thought, Frederic Jameson has suggested that the fundamental gesture of all ideology is exactly such a rigid binary opposition between the self or familiar, which is positively valorized, and the non-self, or alien, which is thrust beyond the boundaries of intelligibility.

Ideology, for Adorno is thus a form of identity thinking. On this account, the opposite of ideology would be not truth or theory, but difference or heterogeneity. Ideology homogenizes the world, equating distinct phenomena, and to undo it thus demands a negative dialectics. Identity is, in Adorno's views, is the primal form of all ideology. The aim of socialism is to liberate the rich diversity of sensuous use-value from the metaphysical prison-house of exchange-value to emancipate history from the false equivalences imposed upon it by ideology and commodity production. The identity principle strives to suppress all contradictions. This process has been brought to perfection in the reified, bureaucratized and administered world of advanced capitalism.

For the later Frankfurt School philosopher Jürgen Habermas, ideology is a form of communication systematically distorted by power - a discourse which has become a medium of domination, which serves to legitimate relations of organized force. For the hermeneutical philosophers like Hans-Georg Gadamer, misunderstanding and lapses of communication are textual blockages to be rectified by sensitive interpretations. Habermas says extra-discursive forces affect discourse. Ideology marks the point at which language is bent out of communicative shape by the power interests which impinge upon it. Such domination inscribes itself on the inside of our speech. Dominative social institutions are for Habermas some-what akin to neurotic patterns of behaviors since they rigidify human life into compulsive set of norms and thus block the path to critical self-reflection. In both cases, we become dependent on hypnotized powers, subject to constraints which are in fact cultural but which bear in upon us with all the inexorability of natural forces. The gratificatory instincts which such institutions thwart are then either driven underground in the phenomenon Freud dubs 'repression' or sublimated into metaphysical world views, ideal value systems of one kind or another, which help to console and compensate individuals for the real-life restrictions they must endure. These value systems thus serve to legitimize the social order channeling potential dissidence into illusionary forms; and this is the Freudian theory of Ideology.

Habermas regards psychoanalysis as a discourse which seeks to emancipate us from systematically distorted communication, and so as sharing common ground with the critique of ideology. Just as the neurotic may vehemently deny a wish which nevertheless manifests itself in symbolic form on the body, so a ruling class may proclaim its beliefs in liberty while obstructing it in practice. To interpret these deformed discourses means not just translating them into other terms but reconstructing their conditions of possibility and accounting for what Habermas calls the genetic conditions of the unmeaning. We need to explain the causes

of textual distortion itself. As Habermass writes: “The breaks in the text are places where an interpretation has forcibly prevailed that is ego-alien even though it is produced by the self [. . .]. The result is that the ego necessarily deceives itself about its identity in the symbolic structures that it consciously produces” (qtd in Eagleton 277). So, it is necessary to analyze a form of systematically distorted communication whether dream or Ideology. As Marx puts the point in *Theories of Surplus Value*, “Adam Smith’s contradictions are of significance because they contain problems which it is true he does not solve but which he reveals by contradicting himself” (qtd in Eagleton 147). Both psychoanalysis and ‘Ideology Critique’ focus upon the points where meaning and force intersect. Both dream and ideology are in this sense doubled texts, conjunctures of signs and power. If dreams cloak unconscious motivations in symbolic guise, then so do ideological texts.

There is a parallel between ideology and psychical disturbance. For Freud neurosis is the confused glimmerings of a kind of solution to whatever is awry. Neurotic is the confused glimmerings of a kind of solution to whatever is awry. Neurotic behavior is a strategy for tackling, encompassing and resolving genuine conflicts even if it resolves them in an imaginary way. The behavior is not just a passive reflex of this conflict, but an active form of engagement with it. Just the same can be said of ideologies which are no mere inner by-products of social contradictions but resourceful strategies for containing, engaging and imaginarily resolving them. Etienne Balibar and Pierre Machery have argued that works of literature do no simply take ideological contradictions in the raw and set about lending them some factitious symbolic resolution.

After the linguistic revolution of 20th century, there was a shift from thinking of words in terms of concepts to thinking of concepts in terms of words. Instead of holding on empiricist vein that words stand for concepts, we now think to see having a concept as the capacity to use words in particular ways. A concept is thus more of a practice than a state of

mind. But Louis Althusser had tried to reduce concepts to social practices. There is a third way between thinking of ideology as disembodied ideas on the one hand, and as nothing but a matter of certain behavior patterns on the other. This is to regard ideology as discursive or semiotic phenomenon. This emphasizes its materiality and concern with meanings.

Ideology can be viewed less as a particular set of discourses than as a particular set of effects within discourses. What is bourgeois about this mixed bunch of idioms is less a kind of languages they are than the effects they produce: effects, for example, of “closure” whereby certain forms of signification are silently excluded, and certain signifiers are ‘fixed’ in a commanding position. These effects are discursive, not purely formal features of language: what is interpreted as closure will depend on the concrete context of utterance, and is variable from one communicative situation to the next.

The Soviet philosopher V.N. Voloshinov in his *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (1973) developed the first theory of ideology. He proclaims that without signs there is no ideology. In his view, the domain of signs and the realm of ideology are co-extensive. Consciousness can arise only in the material embodiment of signifiers, and since these signifiers are in themselves material, they are not just, reflections of the reality but an integral part of it’. Voloshinov writes: “The logic of consciousness is the logic of ideological communication, of the semiotic interaction of the social group. If we deprive consciousness of its semiotic ideological content, it would have absolutely nothing left” (qtd in Eagleton 9).

The word is the consciousness *par excellence*, and consciousness itself is just the internalization of words, a kind of “inner speech”. So, consciousness is less something ‘within’ us than something around and between us, a network of signifiers which constitute us through and through. If ideology can’t live without sign, then neither can the sign be isolated from concrete forms of social intercourse. The sign and its social situation are

inextricably fused together and this situation determines from within the form and structure of an utterance.

Voloshinov's work yields us a new definition of ideology, as the struggle for antagonistic social interests at the level of sign. He is the father of discourse analysis which studies the play of social power within language itself. The French Althusserian linguist Michel Cépheid, in his *Language, Semantics and Ideology* (1975) tries to go beyond the celebrated Saussurean distinction between *Langue and Parole*. A discursive formation can be seen as a set of rules which determine what can be and must be said from a certain position within social life; and expressions have meanings only by virtue of the discursive formations within which they occur.

Every discursive process is thus inscribed in ideological relations. Language becomes the medium of ideological conflict. Discourse analysis examines how the inscription of social power within language can be traced in lexical, syntactic and grammatical structures.

A quite different style of thought about language and ideology came to characterize avant-garde European thought in the 1970s. It fixes the process of signification around certain dominant signifiers with which the individual can identify. The productivity of language is here arrested to "closure". Signs are hierarchically ordered. As Rosalind Coward and John Ellis, in *Language and Materialism*, put it, "Ideological practice works to fix the subject in certain positions in relation to certain fixities of discourse" (qtd in Eagleton 73).

CHAPTER III

Victims of Ideology: Bellow's Characters in *Humboldt's Gift*

Saul Bellow's *Humboldt's Gift* presents the contemporary life situation of the people living under the capitalist ideology in an advanced capitalist city, Chicago. The victimization of the characters esp. Charles Citrine and Humboldt Fleisher is the main concern of this analysis. Along with this the domination and exploitation of the characters under the capitalist ideology will be the key to such an analysis.

The disintegration of Charlie's and Humboldt's families, their sexual perversion and economic failures and decay of human relationships got momentum in the tragic death of Humboldt Fleisher and the fragmented and alienated condition of Charles Citrine's last fading days.

Bellow's protagonist Charles Citrine is the narrator of the novel. The novel starts from the 1930's and the setting pictured in the novel is an American city, Chicago, where Humboldt and Charlie as well as other characters live throughout their lives. It was also the time when America was vigorously advocating democracy as an ideal form of government and the capitalist ideology as a ruling ideology. So the characters experience the world under capitalist ideology. This world is the replica of the contemporary advanced capitalist world as put forth by the American state via Chicago city. It also reflects the socio-economic conditions of capitalist Chicago city.

(a) Constituting (Human) subject

Ideology constructs subjectivity. The capitalist ideology creates (human) subject, a popular playwright, a *Chevalier* of the *legion o'honneur*, out of a peddler boy who used to sell Fuller Brushes door to door. Humboldt is a person with the fictive bodies of a critic, essayist and a writer of fiction, teacher, prominent literary intellectual, and a salon personality. He has several bodies. Denise invites several subjects in her house—lawyers,

congressman, psychiatrists, sociology professors and clergy. Polly is a teacher; George is a Businessman. All the characters are known by their professional subject hoods. Charlie calls Demmie Vongale as “my trainer, my manager, my lover, my Straw boss” (183).

So the dominant capitalist ideology of their society designates several epithets upon them. So Charlie believes that he is related to nature only through his body but all of his content is not contained in it. He says, “I don’t believe my birth began my first existence” (141). He got his existence by his interaction with the society and by the epithets given to him by the existing ideologies. Charlie says, “History and temperament had put me in a peculiar position, and I was going to turn it to advantage”(108). Bellow writes: “Identity is what they give you socially. Your little dog recognizes you and therefore you have an identity. An entity, by contrast, an impersonal power, can be a frightening thing” (311). Humboldt and Charlie embody different subjects. They are at the intersection of different ideologies too. At the level of subject, different subjectivities compete for dominance upon them. Humboldt is a husband, Jewish devotee, citizen, writer, and jobholder. Charlie is a father, lover and a playwright. He says, “We were tax payers, voters, citizens” (203). He was born in Appleton, Wisconsin in 1918. He says, “I was probably conceived there, too, and directed by divine wisdom to appear in life as so-and-so, such-and-such (C. Citrine, Pulitzer Prize, *legion o’honneur*, father of Lish and Mary, husband of A, lover of B, a serious person, and a card)”(90).

Their society not only confers subject hood upon them but also subjects them as subjects to the particular definition of their roles. Humboldt and Charlie fulfill the duties of the subjects as required upon them by the existing contemporary ideologies. Charlie as a father is responsible for his daughters and their education. As a patriarchal husband, Humboldt is protective to his submissive wife Kathleen. Charlie thinks himself like a Messiah and says, “ I had business on behalf of the entire human race- a responsibility not

only to fulfill my own destiny but to carry on for certain failed friends like Von Humboldt Fleisher who had never been able to struggle through into higher wakefulness” (396).

Both Humboldt and Charlie wrote plays of great significance. As a playwright also they are an economic agents taking part in its socio- economic as well as ideological production. In Schumpeter’s words, which Charlie frequently quotes: “These dramas may appear purely internal but they are perhaps economically determined [. . .] when people think they are being so subtly inventive or creative they merely reflected society’s general need for economic growth” (269). Charlie says that Humboldt started talking about the place of art and culture in the first Stevenson administration. Humboldt is the poetry editor of *Arcturus*; he is the member of the staff of Hildebrand and co. and a paid adviser to the Belisha Foundation, a teacher at Princeton. He has contracted with the publisher for the publication of his books. Humboldt and Charlie both are entangled into different roles and duties in the society in which they live throughout their lives. They themselves can’t easily shift their subjects. Bellow writes, “America under the jurisdiction of the Archai, or spirits of personality, produced autonomous modern individuals with all the giddiness and despair of the free, and infected with a hundred diseases unknown during the long peasant epochs” (292).

Along with constructing the (Human) subject, the ideology (As a system of mass representation) transforms, qualifies and deconstructs the subjects.

Humboldt and Charlie have no fixed unity and consistency as subjects in the Chicago city of the capitalist American world. Their subjectivities are shifting frequently. They are transformed into different subjects during different modes of their lives. Charlie’s subjectivity changes from a popular playwright to a simple jobholder. He experiences the subjectivities of an immigrant’s son, student, husband, father, and a lover. So the judge said to him, “Mr. Citrine you’ve led a more or less bohemian life. Now you’ve had a taste of marriage, the

family, middle-class institutions, and you want to drop out. But we can't allow you to dabble like that" (232). Here, the court as an ideological State Apparatus catches and forces him to respond with his role. Cantabile also says that the real American is a freak like Charlie. According to Charlie, Humboldt had no old friends; he had only ex-friends. Renata also had ex-husband. Charlie himself is entangled into social relations as an individual as well as a public figure, He says,

[. . .] but I was busy just then, fiercely, painfully busy- personally and impersonally busy: personally, with Renata and Denise, and Murra the accountant, and the lawyers and the judge, and a multitude of emotional vexations; impersonally, participating in the life of my country and of Western Civilization and global society (a mixture of reality and figment). As editor of an important magazine, *The Ark*, which would probably never come out, I was always thinking of statements that must be made and truths of which the world must be reminded. (108)

The world is also identified by a series of dates (1789, 1914, 1939) and by key words (Revolution, Technology, Science, and so forth). This was another cause of his business.

So powerless in an overwhelming society, Charlie experiences himself only as socially mediated. The institutions made by people are additionally fetisized. As subjects Humboldt and Charlie have known themselves as exponents of institutions, which have acquired the aspects of something divinely ordained. Theodor W. Adorno, in "Messages in a Bottle" writes, "Not to be a member of anything is to arouse suspicion: when seeking naturalization, you are expressly asked to list your memberships" (34). They are no more than a husband, a member of a family, club, country, religion, etc.

New and different kinds of qualifications are necessary for a subject to exist and comply with in the capitalist bourgeois Chicago society. Humboldt and Charlie are required

to learn the scientific and technical skills to be qualified as a competitive labor power of the capitalist market. As a labor- power they must be competent i.e. suitable to be set to work in the complex system of the process of production. They should be dynamic according to the requirements of the socio-technical division of labor, its different jobs and posts. As a salesman Charlie is destined to obey the rules and orders as established by the capitalist society. The ruling Bourgeois class dominates them by manipulating the capitalist ruling ideology. Humboldt and Charlie got the capitalist university education. As a school children Charlie was taught boy-scout honor and goodness and courtesy. Charlie was “a mass of credentials” (34). He wants to prepare his daughters for the competition in the market. So he follows the piano teacher’s quotation, “The richest child is poor without a musical education” (47). He further says, “And mine were rich man’s daughter’s, and it would be a disaster if they grew up unable to play “Für Elise” (47) and the “Happy Farmer”(47). Humboldt applied for different jobs but in vain. So he was compelled to live like a hand –to-mouth bohemian. His true spirit was that of a writer but the business and technical American market needed technically skilled manpower. So he says:

For after all Humboldt did what poets in crass America are supposed to do. He chased ruin and death even harder than he had chased woman. He blew his talent and his health and reached home, the grave, in dusty Slide. He plowed himself under. Okay. So did Edgar Allan Poe, picked out of the Baltimore gutter. And Hart Crane over the side of a ship. And Jarrell falling in front of a car. And poor John Berryman jumping from a bridge. For some reason this awfulness is peculiarly appreciated by business and technological America. [. . .] the USA is too tough, too big, too big, too big, too much, too rugged, that American reality is overpowering. And to be a poet is a school thing, a skirt

thing, a church thing. The weakness of the spiritual powers is proved in the childishness, madness, drunkenness, and repair of these martyrs.(118)

Charlie also lost his whole wealth and was rendered isolated and poor guy. He considers himself as an unsuccessful person because he couldn't comply with the rules of the mass production methods. He regrets, "Judge, I'm old-fashioned and maybe even obsolete. I never learned mass-production methods" (230).

Different ideologies- religious, cultural, sexual, etc.- overlap, affect, and contaminate one another in this global Chicago city of advanced capitalism. Not only are their subjects changing but also ideology itself is protean. So Charlie comments, "well it's that sort of curious moment in the history of human consciousness when the mind universally awakens and democracy originates an era of turmoil and ideological confusion, and the principal phenomenon of the present age" (59). So in this democratic state there is an ideological confusion because of the existence of many different ideologies simultaneously.

Their social ideology doesn't invariably constitute persons; it also de-constitutes them. Ideology differentiates persons from non-persons. Later on, Humboldt's subject of a poet is de-constituted. "Humboldt had used his credit as a poet when he was a poet no longer, but only crazy with schemes"(222). So he is a non-person when he becomes an outlaw and mad. Charlie says, "As for Humboldt he was not the first man to go down trying to combine worldly success with poetic integrity, blasted with poetic fire, as Swift says, and consequently unfit for Church or Law or State" (351). So he was rendered a comic, misfit, and an oddball in the society.

(b) The Jewish Religious Ideology

Along with ethical, legal, political, and aesthetic ideology the Jewish religious ideology pervades the novel. They follow the Jewish practices, rituals, and ceremonies.

Charlie believes in the existence of God. In Judaism God addresses subjects through his voice in the scripture. As a Jewish devotee, he reads Bible. He follows the Old Testament. He says,

The Old Testament commanded us to have no business with the dead at all and this was, the teachings said, because in its first phase the soul entered a sphere of passionate feeling after death, of something resembling a state of blood and nerves. Base impulses might be mobilized by contact with the dead in this first sphere. (440)

He believes in sin, redemption, soul, and life after death. He says, “ I was thinking that life was a hell of a lot more bounteous than I had ever realized” (331). This religious ideology interpellates him as a subject. Charlie is free to obey or disobey God’s Commandments. He is afraid of breaching the rule of life as commanded by his religion (Judaism). In Judaism people are called by their personal names, Humboldt Fleisher and Charlie Citrine, as designated by the baptism, a Jewish religious ritual. Thus, they recognize that they are always-already interpellated as subjects with a personal identity. Humboldt and Charlie respond to this interpellation. They recognized that they really occupy the place it gives for them as theirs in the world- a fixed residence in Jersey backcountry, near the Pennsylvania Line for Humboldt and in Appleton, Wisconsin for Charlie. They also recognize themselves as writers. They believe in eternal life and immortality. Charlie believes in fate according to the respect or contempt one shows to God’s Commandments. He say, “the thought of the life we are now leading may pain us as greatly later on as the thought of death pains us now”(336). They are the Jewish religious subjects. By recognizing their subject hood, Charlie and Humboldt believe that there is a unique Absolute ‘Other Subject’ i.e. God.

Thus by interpellation of individuals as subjects, Saul Bellow presupposes the existence of a unique and central other Subject, God, in whose name the religious ideology interpellates all individuals as subjects.

According to the Scripture, God the Lord (Yahweh) spoke to Moses in the cloud. When the lord cried to Moses, “Moses”! Moses replied, “It is (really) I! I am Moses thy servant, speak and I shall listen!”(qtd in *Mapping Ideology* 134) And the lord spoke to Moses and said to him: “I am that I am”. So God defines himself as the subject Par excellence, he who is through himself and for himself (I am I am). Humboldt and Charlie are subjected to Him by His very interpellation, i.e. the individuals named Humboldt and Charlie. So as Jewish religious subjects, they are subjected to God. They are His reflections. God needs them; Subject needs the subjects, just as they need God.

Charlie believes in marriage and family life. Every family is a ‘Holly family’ (the family in essence is Holly). Thaxter was devoted to his extended family. Despite several failures, Charlie wants to establish a family through marriage. Renata questions Charlie’s unshakeable faith in marital family life. She asks, “If you think you’re on earth for such a very special purpose I don’t know why you cling to the idea of happiness with a woman or a happy family life. This is either dumb innocence or else the last word in kinkiness” (432). Charlie and Humboldt are inserted into practices governed by the rituals of religious ideology. They are obedient to God, to their conscience, to the authority. It is written in the Bible thou shalt “Love thy neighbors as thyself” (qtd in *Mapping Ideology* 134).

Thus, their concrete material behaviors are simply the inscription in life of the admirable words of the prayers.

(c) Cynicism vs. Kynicism

In the early phases of their lives both Humboldt and Charlie seem to be cynical subjects. As cynical subjects they are quite aware of the distance between the ideological

mask and the social reality but they still insist upon it. In Peter Sloterdijk's words: "they know very well what they are doing, but still they are doing it" (*Mapping Ideology* 312).

Humboldt was charming and he was warmly welcomed. He behaved like a gentleman. He had lined up four sinecures. He got himself appointed to replace Professor Martin Sewell at Princeton for a year. Previously, Humboldt had held literary, artistic, erotic, and philosophical exercises till far into the night. Charlie also made good use of his opportunities in the postwar cultural boom reviewing bushels of books for the newspapers. Charlie is the author of many books. He was respected by scholars and intellectuals all over the world. He had lectured at the great Eastern Universities and had grants, fellowships and honors. De Gaulle made him a Knight of the *Legion of Honor* and Kennedy invited him along with Dennise to the Whitehouse. His play *Von Trenck* brought money, recognition, and prizes. He was a success story. Humboldt also wanted to establish a chair in modern literature. Humboldt insisted upon the social ideology. According to Charlie, Humboldt wanted to be magically and cosmically expressive and articulate, able to say anything. He wanted also to be wise and philosophical. He was an eligible candidate for power. Charlie thinks the same himself too. He says, "At that time I was more or less a candidate myself. I, too, saw great opportunities, scenes of ideological victory and personal triumph" (29). He was forever sneaking praises of the American system of government in his books.

But they were anxious about their places in this materialist American Society. They talked about the place of art and culture in the first Stevenson administration-"his role, our role for we were going to make hay together" (30). Charlie says, "We would see where art would go in a liberal society, whether it was compatible with social progress" (30). Charlie knows the social ideology. He says that the US Government had sent Sewell to dazzle and oppress those poor Syrian wogs.

Humboldt is a subject living under the capitalist ideology. In the later phase of his life he rejects the official culture by means of irony and sarcasm. In this regard he stands as a subject for cynicism against cynicism (the dominant ideology). He exposes the egoistical interests, the violence, and the brutal force lurking behind the capitalist ideology omnipresent in his society.

According to Charlie, America is a didactic country. Its people always offer their personal experiences as a helpful lesson to the rest, hoping to hearten themselves and to do them good -an intensive sort of personal public-relation project. There are times when he sees this as idealism. There are other times when it looks to him like pure delirium. He hardly sees any difference between democratic system of government and the dictatorial kind of government. He says, “Well I realize how universal the desire to injure your fellow man is. I guess it’s the same in the democracies as in dictatorships, only here the government of laws and lawyers puts a palisade up. They can injure you a lot, make your life hideous, but they can’t actually do you in”(270).

So Charlie shows this sacrifice of personal for public- relations as a delirium but not as a good one. Humboldt says that Pulitzer Prize is for the birds for the pullets. He says, “it is just a dummy newspaper publicity award given by the crooks and illiterate, one becomes a walking Pulitzer ad and the obituary writes, ‘Pulitzer prizewinner passes’ ” (3). He protests against Charlie and the performance of his play, *Von Trenck*, in the Belasco Theater. He says, “the author of this play is a traitor” (15). Humboldt and Kathleen lived in a country cottage. Their house was in the Jersey back country near the Pennsylvania line. This marginal land was good for nothing but chicken farms. The approaches were unpaved and they drove in dust. But Humboldt calls it a castle and Macbeth’s castle ironically. So he makes fun of bourgeois concept of castle. He subverts the official proposition by confronting it with the situation of its enunciation.

Charlie exposes the cause of Cutting's death. Senator Cutting's plane had crashed while he was flying from his home states after a vote recount. But the plane crash was a conspiracy. May be J Edgar Hoover was involved. He says, "Hoover kept his power by doing the dirty work of presidents. Remember how he tried to damage Burton k. Wheeler of Mountana" (30). So Humboldt unveils the hidden and vile motives of capitalist politics here. Humboldt talks about Roosevelt's sex life. He talks about Roosevelt, J. Edgar Hoover, and Lenin Dzerzhinsky of the Gpu. "He struck off X-rays films of the true facts. Weakness, lies, treason, shameful perversion, crazy lust, the viciousness of certain Billionaires (names were names)" (162). Charlie says, "Blasphemy is aimed at the community of believers" (32). He calls the educated people of modern countries "a thinking rabble" (34). Humboldt generally spoke of Antonin Artaud. Artaud, the playwright, invited the most brilliant intellectuals in Paris to a lecture. When they were assembled, there was no lecture. Artaud came on stage and screamed at them like a wild beast. He opened his mouth and screamed 'Raging screams' (34). Charlie tries to resist the American materialist culture by art. He says, "Now, Naomi, as I was lying stretched out in America, determined to resist its material interests and hoping for redemption by art I fell into a deep snooze that lasted for years and decades"(306).

Charlie goes to the underworld. They play playing cards there and talk. Charlie ironically compares this scene with democracy. He says, "After games, in the nude democracy of the locker- room we socially sipped fruit juice, and chatted about x-rated movies" (67). He confronts democracy and its situation with the underworld environment. Similarly, he takes Chicago, an advanced Capitalist City, as an ideal place to write his master essay, Boredom. He says that he was going to do with boredom what Malthus and Adam Smith and John Stuart mill or Durkheim had done with population, wealth, or the division of labor. He calls Kierkegard and Baudelaire boredom experts. Sewell appointed Humboldt for one-year job. Humboldt says Sewell is taking advantage of them. When Sewell dies, Charlie

says that death is good for some people. He used to make wisecracks with Humboldt. He had bought every kind of protection the insurance Company offered, but somewhere in the small print they were sure to have the usual “fox clauses”. He says “every great prison is now a thriving seminar”. He was reading Hegel’s Phenomenology, the pages on freedom and death. He brings freedom very close to death. He makes fun of the individual’s rights in capitalism. According to him Alienation came as an effect of capitalist condition of labor, as a result of leveling in Mass society, as a consequence of the dwindling of religious faith or the increase of Rationalization and bureaucracy in a technical society.

Corcoran is the protagonist of Humboldt’s play. His journey is parody, desecration and wicked laughter. Humboldt writes, “to the high types of Martyrdom the twentieth century has added the farcical martyr” (345). By wishing to play a great role in the fate of mankind he becomes a bum and a joke. A double punishment is inflicted on him as he would be representative of meaning and beauty. So, behind the concept of martyrdom there is exploitation of the sacrifice of others.

(d) Law is Law

Belief far from being an intimate and purely mental state is always materialized in our effective social activities: belief supports the fantasy, which regulates the social reality.

Charlie and Humboldt’s beliefs are materialized in the social institutions prevalent in their society i.e. court, club, bureaucracy, parliamentary democracy, government, police force, etc.

These social institutions are not all-powerful in themselves. But Humboldt and Charlie’s effective conduct in the presence of these bureaucratic machineries is already regulated by their beliefs in their almightiness. They are the external nonsensical machines, which are called automaton and work as a network in which Charlie and Humboldt are caught.

Charlie knows that the law is not good, just and beneficial but he obeys it because it is law. So he is in the vicious circle of its authority. The court has striped his brother Julius off. Julius fell in love and left his wife for the other woman. In the divorce he was wiped out, losing his Chicago possessions. The ruinous lawsuit has destroyed Charlie himself materially. The judges are corrupt. The court doesn't study the circumstances. He says, "besides, courts kill me, judges, lawyers, bailiffs, stereotypes, the benches, the woodwork, the carpets, even the water glasses I hate like death" (51).

However, Charlie obeys the law. Here he obeys the legal processes as well as rules of law not because it is just, good or even beneficial, but simply because it is the law. Here the real obedience is external one. He doesn't obey the court out of conviction of its justice and fairness. He is only following his judgment, which tells him that the authority deserves to be obeyed. So he says, "you have, like the external world, your own phenomena inside" (49). He further says, "However, the fact that I had no one but myself to turn to was awful" (51). Humboldt started legal actions against Kathleen, against Magnasco, against the police Department, and against Bellevue.

Charlie finds reason attesting his belief in the social reality because he already believes, so Renata writes to Charlie, "But you've got justice in your heart, Charlie" (428). Here Charlie's belief in law has not emerged from the point that he has found sufficient good reason to believe. His external obedience to the law is thus no submission to external pressure, to so-called non-ideological brute force. So he accepts the law not as true but only as necessary. He goes to the court. He climbs an elevator "to see what the court, with its specters of equity and justice, wants of" (218) him. He doesn't believe that he can get justice from this court. Justice and equity are like specters for this particular court. But he already believes that law's foundation is in justice and equity. This supposition of a truth, of a meaning behind the stupid traumatic inconsistent faith of the law is called "transference". So

he obeys it and says, “The more so since society claims more and more and more of your inner self and infects you with its restlessness. It trains you in distraction colonizes consciousness as fast as consciousness advances. The true poise, that of contemplation or imagination sits right on the border of sleep and dreaming” (306).

What Humboldt and Charlie call social reality is an ethical construction. They believe upon the democratically elected president, parliaments, democracy and the government. Stevenson is the president. They believe as though Stevenson as an elected president incarnates their wills within himself. Charlie says, “thought in my head is also thought in the external world. Consciousness in the self creates a false distinction between object and subject” (261). He further says,

The physical body is an agent of the spirit and its mirror. It is an engine and a reflection of the spirit. It is the spirit’s ingenious memorandum to itself and the spirit sees itself in my body, just as I see my own face in a looking glass. My nerves reflect this. The earth is literally a mirror of thought. Objects themselves are embodied thoughts. (262)

Even more than for their relation to ‘external’ social authority, this inversion applies to their obedience to the internal authority of belief. Charlie and Humboldt believe in God. They are Jewish devotees. They believe in God but it is not that they believe because god is wise and good. It is only the act of their belief itself which gives them insight into his goodness and wisdom.

Charlie did the Yoga exercise seeking stability. He took the small change; he removed his shoes and the keys out of his pockets. He took a position on the floor, advancing his toes, and with a flip, he stood. Here his Belief is radically exterior, embodied in the practical, effective procedure. So he believes and practices Yoga and meditation, and reads Anthrosophy.

He stands on his head. But then he starts thinking about the car. He had arthritic neck. George prescribed him standing on his head. He threw up his palms and shrieked with laughter looking like one of Goya's frog caricatures. He did as he was advised. He practiced and learned the headstand. He was cured of the neck pains. In the next turn George again says him to stand on his head, tighten his buttocks and suck them in as if he was trying to bring the cheeks together. Charlie has doubt and says why we must do this as we stand on our head. He already feels like old father William. This method worked. The stricture went away. Others may see in George a solid high-colored good-humored building-contractor. But Charlie sees a hermetical personage. So Charlie looks him from a different perspective. Whenever he was on his head he used to invoke George. Whenever he was in despair, he used to telephone George. George taught him this upside-down position. He practiced and learned the headstand, and he was cured of the neck pains.

Here in these two processes of Yoga and headstand, Charlie leaves the rational argumentation and submits himself simply to ideological ritual of these processes. He does Yoga with all the physical procedures as if he had already believed and the belief came by itself.

He does some meditative exercises recommended by Rudolf Steiner. He remembers the advices given by Valery and Picasso. He believes such meditation strengthens the will and then, gradually strengthened by such exercises, the will may become an organ of perception.

Charlie believes this Yoga makes him calm and stable, and headstand cures his stricture. But he believes without knowing them. So these are merely formal acts by means of which he recognizes which he has already believed. Here the external custom of Yoga and headstand are merely a material support for his unconscious. Charlie thinks about his elegant car when he is doing Yoga. His posture is affecting his mind not the concentration.

Thus the externality of the symbolic machine (automaton) is therefore not simply external; It is at the same time the place where the fate of Charlie and Humboldt's internal, most sincere, and intimate beliefs are in advance staged and decided. Charlie and Humboldt, subject themselves to the bureaucratic machine of religion, justice politics, etc.

(e) Ideological Fantasy

Charlie and Humboldt know very well how things are but still they are doing it, as if they don't know it. So they over look the illusion, which is structuring their reality, their social activity. This over looked unconscious illusion is called ideological fantasy.

Humboldt and Charlie know that, in their activity, they are following an illusion but still they are doing it. So they are cynical subjects. When Charlie has doubt about Thaxter, he tells, "did he or did he not know what he was doing" (246). Cantabile also had a doubt about Charlie's cynicism and tells, "You didn't have to be cheated, Charlie. You didn't know what you were doing"(105). But Charlie confirms his cynicism and asks Cantabile, "You don't think I know what I'm doing, Mr. Cantabile?"(86).

Money is in reality just an embodiment, a condensation, and a materialization of a network of social relations. It functions as an equivalent of all commodities. In the Chicago City, where Charlie and Humboldt are living, the everyday spontaneous ideology reduces money to a simple sign giving them, when they possess it, a right to certain parts of the social product. So Charlie, in his early periods of life, says, "and money wasn't what I had in mind oh god, no. What I wanted was to do good. I was dying to do something good" (230). So he knows there is nothing magical about money. But the problem is that in his social activity itself, in what he is doing, he is acting as if money, in its material reality, is the immediate embodiment of wealth as such. He is fetishist in practice.

In his social activity money always inspired Humboldt. He adored talking about the rich. He often mentioned the golden scandals of yesteryear, peaches and Daddy Browning. Harry Haw and Evelyn Nesbit, plays, the jazz. Scott Fitzgerald and the super-rich. Humboldt says, “Oh! The might of money and the entanglement of art with it-dollar as the soul’s husband: a marriage nobody has had the curiosity to study” (340). He doesn’t know that his social reality itself, his activity, is guided by an illusion, by a fetishistic inversion. So what he overlooks, what he misrecognizes is not the reality but the illusion, which is structuring his reality, his social activity. Kathleen says,

Hanging on money is hard, of course. It’s like clutching an ice cube. And you can’t just make it and then live easy. There’s no such thing that is what Humboldt probably didn’t understand. I wonder, did he think money made the difference between success and failure? Then he didn’t understand. When you get money you go through a metamorphosis and you have to contend with terrific powers inside and out. There’s almost nothing personal in success. Success is always money’s own success. (375)

Charlie also thinks too much about money and he says, “It’s no good trying to conceal it. It is there and it’s a vital substance” (740). According to him money is necessary for the protection of the sleeping. Spending drives one into wakefulness. He can’t think his brother without money. So he comments, “It was impossible to think of him without his wealth. It was necessary for him to be in the money [. . .]” (355). Charlie thinks himself of being at the “primal level of” understanding money. Humboldt also thinks lack of money is the cause of hindrance in writing poetry. Human relations in their societies are also motivated by money. Charlie has lent money to Humboldt, zathmar, and Thaxter. He himself owed the publishers seventy thousand dollars in advance. But what they do not know is that in their social reality, in their social activity, in the act of commodity exchange, they are guided by the fetishistic

illusion. So Humboldt says that he never touched a fig leaf that didn't turn into a price tag. However the illusion is not on the side of knowledge for him. He knows there is nothing magical about money. So, he thinks if we purge the inner film from the eye and rise into higher consciousness, less money should be required.

Charlie is a victim of commodity fetishism. He bought the Mercedes 280-SL because of his friend Renata. Renata was not satisfied with his previous old-fashioned car. So she complained "what kind of car is this for a famous man? There's some kind of mistake" (36). She said that he didn't know how to spend money that he neglected himself and he shirked the potentialities of his success and was afraid of it. He says, "I had allowed the car to become an extension of my own self (on the folly and vanity side). So that an attack on it was an attack on myself" (36). Denise also identified the automobile with Renata. Charlie keeps cars, jeeps and a wife and little children together. He wanted to buy a secondhand 250-C. But he says, "the touch of her palm was sensual. Even what she did to the car I felt in my own person" (44).

Charlie thinks prestige is inherent in a Mercedes Car. He calls it an "elite machine". It cost eighteen thousand dollars three years ago. He says to Renata that he might be knifed or stomped in an Illinois central platform but his car would never be hurt. He addresses it as an elegant car, and as shimmering silver motor tureen. As a bourgeois individual Charlie thinks that luxury and prestige are properties of this car.

Here, Charlie thinks as if its concrete content (use value) is an express of an abstract universality (exchange value) – prestige, luxury. The abstract prestige and luxury seem as a real Substance, which are successfully incarnated in a series of cars (concrete objects). Marx calls it "commodity metaphysics".

So Charlie in his practice, in his real activity acts as if the car is an embodiment of the universal prestige. But he doesn't conceive the car as resulting from an autonomous

movement of the underlying abstract universal (prestige). His illusion is not on the side of knowledge but on the side of his practice. Charlie knows it is a simple sign. He thinks in the end most of the money will go for legal fees. But he can't give up all his money and says,

I have asked myself sometimes why not give up and take a vow of poverty but this idle theorizing. Yes I might surrender my small fortune and live and die in a hotel room like Humboldt. I was better equipped to lead a mental life as I was not a manic depressive and it might suit me well enough. For then there would be no more Renata, no more erotic life and no more of the exciting anxieties associated with the erotic life which were perhaps even more important to me than sex itself. A vow of poverty was not the vow Renata was looking for. (235-6)

So here he is not a naïve believer of the monetary and materialist ideology prevalent in his society. But in his practice, in his social activity, he follows the same ideology. So Peter Sloterdijk, in his book, *Critique of Cynical Reason*, writes “they know very well what they are doing, but still they are doing it” (qtd in *Mapping ideology* 312).

(f) Confronting the Real

According to Slavoj Žižek, Ideology is not a dreamlike illusion that we build to escape insupportable reality; In its basic dimension it is a fantasy construction which serves as a support for our ‘reality’ itself an illusion which structures our effective, real social relations and thereby masks some insupportable, real, impossible Kernel (conceptualized by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe as antagonism: a traumatic social division which can not be symbolized).

First Charlie constructs a dream, a story that enables him to prolong his sleep to avoid awakening into reality. He dreamed of Humboldt so often. It was one infallible sign of love. Once he dreamed that they met at Whelan's Drug Store on the corner of sixth and eighth in

Greenwich Village. He was not the Stricken Leaden swollen man Charlie had seen on Forty-Sixth Street. But he was still the stout normal Humboldt of middle life. He was sitting beside Charlie at soda fountain with a coke. He was very mild, quiet, and he seemed extremely well pleased. He answers Charlie's query also.

Humboldt also tried to escape from everyday reality into unconscious in his insanity and drunkenness. Charlie says, "Humboldt tried to think himself clear away from this American World (I did that, too). I could see that Humboldt was pondering what to do between then and now, between birth and death, to satisfy certain great questions"(6). So Humboldt also wanted to avoid the social reality. He took help of drinks, pills, writing, etc. For avoiding the social reality, in the small hours he read thick books- Marx and Sombart, Yoynbee, Rostavizeft, Freud. He read many thousands of books. He had long list of sacred words-poetry, beauty, love, wasteland, alienation, politics, history, and the unconscious. He was manic and depressive. Mania and Depression drove him to the loony bin. He lived a solitary life. He was meant to be in active life, a social creature. He was a poet, thinker, problem drinker, and pill taker, man of genius, manic depressive, intricate schemer, and success story. He was masochist also. He owned set of Freud's works and read psychiatric journals. But it was impossible to escape from reality. Charlie says, "that we couldn't evade History, and that this was what History was doing to everybody" (210).

Ideology offers them the social reality as an escape from some traumatic real kernel. In the dream, Charlie encounters the Real of his desire. He has conversation with Humboldt and he asks, "Where have you been? I thought you were dead". Humboldt replies, " now I understand everything" (10). He says only 'everything' Charlie weeps with happiness. Every time Charlie sees Humboldt in his dream he is terribly moved and cries in his sleep. Charlie can't confront the truth and suddenly wakes up. He escapes into the so-called reality to be able to continue his sleep, to maintain his blindness, to elude awakening into the real of

his desire- Humboldt's saying, "I understand everything". In his dream He confronts Humboldt, who understands everything. After waking Charlie says, "that it was only a dream" (10). But in consciousness, in reality, he is merely the consciousness of this unconscious dream. Demmie also dreaded sleep and preferred horror movies to bad dreams. She always grew restless toward bedtime. Once she has confronted the real in her dream she is afraid to face it because it is more terrible than the reality. So she escapes into reality-watching movies. So was the hippie motto of the 1960s: "reality is a fantasy construction which enables us to mask the real of our desire" (qtd in *Mapping ideology* 132).

Humboldt's brooding also didn't make him any saner. He tried drugs and drink. Finally many shock treatments had to be administered to him. It was as he said it- Humboldt vs. madness. Madness was a whole lot stronger. He also sometimes feared sleep and then dreams consequently. He either didn't go to sleep or went being drunk. He was attached to the World Historical Individual, the interpreter of the spirit, the mysterious leader who imposed on mankind the task of understanding him. Humboldt at first deliberately tries to face the Real of his desire by dosing himself with pills, lots of pills. Charlie says, "why did the crazy son of a bitch make things so hard for himself? He must have bought this joint in a blaze of mania" (24). In normal condition Humboldt would have been unable to confront the Real. Charlie says that insomnia made Humboldt more learned. According to Humboldt, America's great Manic Depressive was Lincoln. And Churchill with what he called his Black dog moods was a classic case of Manic Depressive. He used to say,

If Energy is Delight and if Exuberance is Beauty, the Manic Depressive knows more about Delight and Beauty than anyone else who else has so much Energy and Exuberance? Maybe it's the strategy of the Psyche to increase Depression. Didn't Freud say that Happiness was nothing but the remission of pain? So the more pain the intenser the happiness. But there is a prior origin to this, and the

psyche makes pain on purpose. Any way, Mankind is stunned by the Exuberance of Beauty of certain individuals. When a Manic Depressive escapes from his Furies he's irresistible. He captures history. I think that aggravation is a secret technique of the unconscious. As for great men and kings being History's slaves, I think Tolstoyi was off the track. Don't kid yourself. Kings are the most sublime sick. Manic Depressive heroes pull Mankind into their cycles and carry everybody away. (7)

So, ideology is a fantasy construction, which serves as a support for their reality itself. Charlie thinks that he couldn't be serious, becoming involved in "this sort of grotesque comic Mercedes and-underworld thing" (43). Sometimes in his meditation also he procures glimpses of the real. He says,

As I stood on my head, I knew (I would know!) that there was a sort of theoretical impulse behind this grotesqueness too, one of the powerful theories of the modern world being that for self-realization it's necessary to embrace the deformity and absurdity of the inmost being (we know it's there!). Be healed by the humiliating truth the unconscious contains. I didn't buy this theory, but that didn't mean that I was free from it. I had a talent for absurdity, and you don't throw away any of your talents". (48)

In this regard Lacan says that it is only in the dream that we come close to the real awakening that is the Real of our desire.

Thus Charlie and Humboldt suffer a lot throughout their lives. They are ruined physically as well as mentally. In the later phases of their lives they are in an existential crisis. They live in a world in which they feel at odd with. devoid of meaning. Charles Citrine feels alienation, frustration; he suffers from boredom, isolation, and anxiety; he sees the ideological degradation of the society into materialism. Loss of familial and social ties,

further aggravates the situation. Charles tries to escape from the predicament but the prevailing capitalist ideology brings him time and again in the dark cave of exploitation, domination and submission prevalent in the capitalist ideology. They choose alternative methods to escape from their predicament. Humboldt imprisons and locks himself up in a loony bin. Charlie reads Anthrosopy, goes for erotic relief and tries to publish article but to no avail.

Charlie shares his feelings and experiences with Cantabile an underground gangster leader. But his choice of life fails to exist in the society, culture and state. Humboldt and Charlie's dream of an ideal world is shattered time and again. It becomes difficult for them to survive in a world but they struggle hard with the materialist ideology, to create a social unity in their last days. To get emancipation from this capitalist ideology, Bellow shows the need of socialistic revolution against the capitalist system.

(IV) CONCLUSION

The dominant capitalist ideology of the society confers several epithets upon Charles Citrine and Humboldt Fleisher. Different subjectivities compete for domination upon them so they are fragmented. They frequently feel that as subjects they are reduced to a void, to an empty place in which their whole content is procured by others, by the symbolic network of inter subjective relations. Charlie feels that he is in himself nothing; his positive content seems what he is for others. So he expresses his anguish as, "I have a sense of being the instrument of external powers. They are using me either as an example of human error or as the mere shadow of desirable things to come"(66). So sometimes he feels a radical sense of alienation of the subject. Humboldt also felt the severe sense of alienation, isolation and frustration because of his personal experiences of the encounters with the various ideologies prevalent in his society. Charlie's and Humboldt's content what they are individually would be determined by an exterior signifying network offering them points of symbolic identification conferring on them certain symbolic mandates. Their society subjects them to the responsibilities and duties, required to be fulfilled for being particular subject. They have to face the pain of disintegration of the familial and social ties. They are humiliated and estranged. Humboldt is rendered manic, depressive, pill taker, and drunkard. They don't feel free in the society they are living.

Rather than losing themselves in the status quo and its dominant ruling ideologies, Charlie and Humboldt were prepared to risk everything in order to destroy the compromised system and its ideologies and replace them with their own utopian artistic and imaginative and dreamy, and unconscious worlds beyond capitalist social reality. But their sincere beliefs and insistence that they were not working for the restoration of western capitalism of course proved to be nothing but an insubstantial illusion. And they are, in the eyes of their society proved nothing but a bunch of heroic daydreamers. Charlie's hope of writing an article and

Humboldt's hope of confronting the Real of his desire as the opening up of a way of inventing some new forms of social unity that would reach beyond the confines of capitalism change into doubtless illusory.

They are not conformist on the ideological belief in the unproblematic non-antagonistic functioning of the American capitalist social state. Charlie and Humboldt harbored hope in the revolutionary outcome to come out of the crisis of the capitalist ideology until the last hours of their lives. For this Charlie practices Yoga, mediation, reads Anthrosophy, and goes for an erotic relief and Humboldt takes recourse to pills, drinks, insanity, unconscious, book reading, locking himself in a loony bin, etc. He was manic and depressive. But instead of the concrete analysis of the external actual social condition the society lobotomized him for resolving his psychic change. He is a rebel who challenges the society by way of irrational resistance.

But the paradox in the novel is that besides their continuous efforts to step out of their social ideology they are enslaved by it. They are destined to practice the same ideological practices, which are disguised as a composite of ideas beliefs, conception for serving some unavowed power. They are overtaxed by the social reality on all sides. The everyday consciousness proceeds from the assumption that social reality is an objective, low-governed natured like sphere. They are at odd with the materialist ideology and find the outside world too hard. Charlie, therefore, concludes, "Fellow Americans listen if you abandon materialism and the normal pursuits of life you wind up at Bellevue like this poor kook"(156). The materialist concept of a free and self-determining society tries to include them in the society only on condition that they are the constitutive subjects of their social world. So instead of being a poet Humboldt was merely a figure of a poet. He was enacting, in Charlie's words, the agony of the American Artist.

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