

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Diasporic Alienation in *Dangling Man*

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The thesis entitled **Diasporic Alienation in *Dangling Man*** by Mr. Toya Nath Lamsal has been submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University. It has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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ABSTRACT

Bellow's novel, *Dangling Man*, can be analyzed as a story of Joseph, the protagonist, who undergoes experience of alienation as a diasporic Jew inhabiting in American society. The novel portrays and projects how difficult and tormenting it is for Joseph to get adjusted and assimilate to new society where he remains as a diasporian subject, feeling culturally marginal and inferior. Joseph feels alienated ever since he knows that he is an alien living in different cultural situation. However, the feelings become more acute and deteriorating than ever during about those four months while he dangles as his enlistment into the Army is postponed repeatedly against his will. Thus, the thesis tries to show that Joseph's alienation results from his awareness of the fact that he is a diasporic and marginal man inhabiting in different cultural milieu. Joseph is at a loss about his identity. He is torn between his Jewish heritage and American culture. All these factors contribute to the evocation of alienation in him. Therefore, he enlists into the Army in an attempt to assimilate to new culture and get rid of alienation.

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1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

The word 'diaspora' comes from a Greek word meaning dispersal. It was originally used to refer to the condition of the Jewish people living outside Palestine. In modern context diaspora is a central historical fact of colonization and imperialism. Colonialism itself was a radically diasporic movement. Slavery and indentured labour produced diasporas all over the world. Millions of African slaves were shipped to the plantation colonies in the Americas. After the slave trade was outlawed in the first decades of the nineteenth century there was the demand for cheap agricultural labour in colonial plantation economies. To meet the need, large populations of poor agricultural labourers from population rich areas were transported to the colonies under indentured agreements. But Jews' migration to America was more than this. They were persecuted wherever they went. To avert political repression and religious persecution, they moved to the places where they thought they would be less subjected to violence.

With the development of post-colonialist theory, the term has been applied to denote different cultural and ethnic groups joined together by shared cultural and religious commitments and having some sense of exile from a place or state of origin. Diaspora involves a movement from familiar place to unfamiliar places. It also deals with the experience of people resulting from migration and enslavement. Diaspora produces a new politics of unhomeliness. Diaspora forces individuals to define themselves anew. Their identity is plunged into crisis. No stable identity prevails. They are torn between what has been lost and what is to be acquired. As a result, they are rendered marginal. Marginality presupposes power relation between two groups.

Diasporas find it very difficult to identify themselves as belonging to a particular cultural group. They are always influenced by the dominant cultural group. As a result, they begin to lose some of their original cultural characteristics. So their attempts to move up to the centre from the periphery results in cultural assimilation.

The term alienation is derived from the verb 'to alienate' meaning "to make somebody feel that they do not belong in a particular group" (Oxford 29). It refers to a condition of being estranged and isolated. The term retains the same meaning in the thesis. The alienated individuals feel that though they share some elements with their cultural group they cannot belong fully to it. They are ambivalent and reside on the borderline between their belongingness and estrangement. Diaspora and marginality are intertwining concepts. The marginal people exhibit uncertainty, distrust, pessimism, aggression psychological dissatisfaction, negative attitude towards life and number of other negative feelings. The diasporic people who show these negative impulses fall prey to alienation. They feel that they are alienated from their cultural communities as well as from the culture they have encountered. Alienation results from this cultural transformation.

Joseph is the protagonist of *Dangling Man (1944)*. He is a diasporian subject. He was born in Canada and brought to America. He grew up to be a youth in America. But he cannot forget his Canadian childhood. He still finds America an alien place. Consequently, he shows a sense of alienation. His bad temper, aggression, fights with different people, quarrels with his wife, brother, sister-in-law and preoccupation with death are all the results of alienation and the alienation is the result of diasporic marginality. The sense of alienation becomes more conspicuous, acute, aggravating and chronic as his draft into the Army is repeatedly postponed. Joseph is well aware of the fact that the postponement is direct result of him being a

Canadian or his birth in Canada. As a diasporian subject, Joseph wants to assimilate to mainstream American culture by enlisting in the Army, however his attempts are delayed. As a result, Joseph, during over four months, goes through an ordeal of alienation. Thus, I have tried to prove that Joseph's inner experience of being marginal and sense of alienation stem from his awareness of being a diasporian subject.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Dangling Man is Saul Bellow's first novel. It has been analyzed, studied, and interpreted from different perspectives. It has received great critical acclaim and wide-ranging responses from numerous critics and commentators since its publication. It was also reviewed by nearly every major journal and newspaper in America immediately after its publication. There seemed to be a general agreement that Bellow had written an important novel with style, mastery, brilliance of thought and sharp, cutting language.

Analyzing the novel some critics have said that it embodies the theme of search for the value of individual freedom, the meaning of moral responsibility and the demands of social contracts, themes Bellow and other American writers continue to explore in the decade up to the present.

Ada Ahorani sees the novel as a discussion of the twin questions "How much freedom do we really have?" and "What should we do with it?" (47-52) He also discusses the deteriorating effects of freedom on Joseph and his ultimate ability to understand not only his own freedom but that of others .

Algis Valiunas discusses the characterization and plot development of several of Bellow's novels, including *Dangling Man*. He observes that Bellow's tender,

unquenchable, and inconsolable love for the singular being may be the reason behind his works' enduring appeal. Commenting on Bellow's style, he observes:

This is not to say that *Dangling Man* and *The Victim* are mere training exercises. If the Bellow style had yet to acquire its racy comic ease, the Bellow mind—the most formidable intelligence since Melville's to turn its attention to writing American novel – was already engaged. From the opening paragraph of *Dangling Man* the reader is in the presence of a voice that claims the authority of impressible feeling and penetrating thought. (51)

Dangling Man has also been described as an autobiographical novel in which Bellow has transformed his personal experiences into that of the protagonist, Joseph. Joseph is an intellectual and a writer-in-the-making who is caught waiting for the draft and who romantically believes that intellectual and spiritual enlightenment can be attained by isolating himself within the confines of a room in a cheap New York boarding house while he studies the great writers of the European Enlightenment.

Similarly, commenting on Joseph's character Barbara R. Gitenstein writes that "Joseph begins to question the value of his friendships, the meaning of his family and finally even the goodness of life" (70).

According to Sanford Pinsker, *Dangling Man* concerns the interior nature of Joseph's problem. He observes:

Joseph, *Dangling Man's* protagonist, lives in an ill-defined middle: he has been classified 1-A but has not yet been drafted; he is unemployed but unable to use his leisure time productively; he is, ironically enough, free from responsibility but denied a context in which the term might be meaningful. (118)

Comparing Joseph with the protagonists of Bellow's other novels, Pinsker Points out that "Joseph is a preview of such coming attraction as Asa Leventhal, Tommy Welhelm and Moses Herzog" (120).

Commenting upon the characteristics of Bellovian novels, Abraham Benzenker in *The Yale Review*, observes that "the novels are all of them, essentially plotless, held together by 'heroes' whose activities are inexplicable, ambiguous or bizzare and sometimes laced with zest and comic sensuality" (359). He is of the opinion that though all the characters of Bellow's fiction are "Jews, or respond to Jews or act like Jews [. . .] Bellow's concern with morality appears to be secular and non Jewish" (359-360). He further adds that Joseph "sinks into overwhelming despair as he waits for his draft call" (361).

Many critics have considered it an existentialist novel. It is said that *Dangling Man* reflects the 1940s pre-occupation of American intellectuals with French existentialism. Richard Lehan has compared *Dangling Man* with two existentialist novels: Sartre's *Nausea* and Camus's *The Stranger*.

Some critics have emphasized the pre-dominance of the theme of search for identity in Bellow's fiction. H.C. Goldman, however, rejects the search for identity on the part of Bellovian heroes and remarks:

The quest for most Bellovian heroes is basically the same. It is not a search for identity, as some critics suggest. It is rather a quest for a significant existence that would embrace their own identity, such as it is. Joseph, in *Dangling Man* grapples with the spirit of Alternatives in an effort to end his status as a "dangling man". His struggle with the darkness of his alter ego, within the confines of his own room, suggests Jacob's nighttime struggles with the angel. Joseph, like Jacob, emerges

victorious. He ends the spurious freedom, that plagues his existence and moves on with his life." (58)

Dangling Man is long on reflection, short on action. It occupies the uneasy ground between the novella proper and the personal essay or confession. Various personages come onstage and exchange words with the protagonist, but beyond Joseph in his sketchy manifestations, there are no characters properly speaking. In *Dangling Man* Bellow suggests that freedom consists in the ability to choose a course of action. Joseph begins to realize that his freedom lies in his choice or responsibility which conforms his relationship with society. He knows that restrictions add dignity to his life. His movement is away from denigration to acceptance of himself as responsible individual.

Bellow's protagonists are heroes—intellectuals, sufferers, strugglers, survivors, believers. They are humanists; they are all concerned with dignity, humanity and community. In *Dangling Man* it seems as if Bellow is testing the saying of Socrates that the unexamined life is not worth living. Apparently, he finds the examined life funny, too. Some like Joseph cannot find the life they are going to examine. The power of public life had become so vast and threatening that private life cannot have a dignity or space of its own. There was no way Joseph could join the mainstream American life except by falling in line with rest of the boys.

After long study it became apparent to me that none of the critics has explored the issue I am going to examine. They have talked either about style and structure of the novel or some other issues like existentialism, optimism, or effects of freedom on Joseph. My focal point here is why Joseph feels alienated and how he is torn between Jewishness and a strong wish to go over to the mainstream American life. This will be done with the help of the theories/concepts developed in Cultural Studies.

BELLOW'S LITERARY CAREER

Born in Lachine, Montreal, Canada, Saul Bellow was the fourth child of Abraham Bellow and Lescha (Liza) Bellow, both of whom had immigrated from St. Petersburg, Russia in 1913. Thus Saul Bellow is the first-generation American Jew, offspring of that vast European migration of more than two million people to North America between 1880 and 1925. Saul Bellow was his mother's youngest son, and she wanted him to be a Talmudist. By the age of four he had memorized large passages of the Old Testament and was doing precociously well at Hebrew lessons. In 1923, when only eight years old, he suffered a bout with tuberculosis, during which he spent many months in a hospital ward. In 1924, the family left Lachine, Montreal for the tenements of Humboldt Park, Chicago, the environment that would shape so much of his early fiction.

Saul Bellow attended Lafayette school, Columbus Elementary School, and Sabin Junior High School. However, his rich and interesting neighbourhood life suffered a major blow in 1924 with the death of his mother. Bellow graduated from Tuley High School in 1933, and in the fall of that year entered the university of Chicago. In 1935 he transferred to Northwestern University from where he graduated with his B.A. and Honours in Sociology in 1937. Then he married his first wife, Anita Goshkin. The young couple moved into his mother-in-law's flat in Ravenswood where Bellow began to work on the manuscript of *Dangling Man*. By 1938 he was in Chicago working on the WPA project, while during 1939 he supported himself with teaching and odd jobs. In 1940 he was called up for military service and entered Maritime camp at Sheepshead Bay. In 1944 he published his first novel, *Dangling Man*. By 1945, he was living on Pineapple Street in Brooklyn Heights, writing book reviews and reading manuscripts for the newly-formed Penguin Books. In 1948 he

was awarded Guggenheim Fellowship. From 1948-50 he wrote and worked in Paris and travelled in Europe. In 1950 he returned to the USA and lived in New York, teaching at New York University, reviewing books and writing articles.

In 1952, he received the National Institute of Arts and Letters Award and was made creative writing fellow at Princeton University. In 1959, *Henderson the Rain King* was published and Bellow embarked on a lecture tour of Poland, West Germany and other European countries. He received an Honorary Doctor of Letters from Northwestern University in 1962. He returned to Chicago in fall of 1963. One year later his most ambitious work, *Herzog* was published and he received three Awards, including the National Book Award. His play *The Last Analysis* was not a success. Later in 1967 he accepted a position at the University of Chicago. The following year, 1968, his first short story collection *Mosby's Memoirs and Other Stories* appeared. Bellow again won some more awards. In 1970, *Mr. Sammler's Planet* was published, for which he received the National Book Award.

During the decade of the seventies he published other works, including *Humbolt Gift* in 1975. In the same year Bellow met and read the influential, Owen Barfield whose ideas find their way, in transmuted form, into several of the subsequent novels. In 1976, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature. Bellow continued to publish steadily through the 1980s and 1990s. During this period two collections of short stories and a collection of essays appeared. Bellow died on 5 April 2005.

Thus Bellow was able to establish himself as one of America's prominent literary figures. His rise to prominence as a major American novelist can be viewed as a part of the movement of the Jews from the periphery to the centre of American life. From the very beginning Bellow's novels construct their own picture of their

author, his origins and preoccupations Saul Bellow's status in the post-WWII period of American literature can only be compared to that of Hemingway and Faulkner in the earlier part of the century. Bellow has analyzed completely and humanely the effects of American cultural anxiety with the age of technology and rationalism, existentialism, and the legacy of high modernism. Bellow has affirmed Judeo-Christian religious and social values more strongly perhaps than any other twentieth century writer. From within this space he has tried to restore the integrity of feeling, the meaning of ordinary existence and the primacy of social contract to a society in which he perceives these things to be in eclipse.

Bellow's novels are a form of survivor literature, testimonials to life. Bellow's protagonists opt for life. Hounded by terrifying beasts, either of the soul or of the flesh, either spirit of the Alternative, reality instructors, bitchy women, black thieves, or WASP demons, they nevertheless overcome such traumas and move on with their lives like Joseph in *Dangling Man*, who is in the midst of alienation, but still wants to pursue life.

II. DIASPORA AND ALIENATION: A THEORETICAL MODALITY

DIASPORA

The word 'diaspora' is derived from a Greek word meaning dispersal, and was originally applied to describe the condition of the Jewish people living outside Palestine. With the development of postcolonial theory the term has been extended to cover a range of different cultural and ethnic groups held together by shared cultural or religious commitments and having some sense of exile from a place or state of origin and belonging. The term is applied to describe a dynamic network of communities without the stabilizing allusion to an original homeland or essential identity. Here I have used the term to describe the experiences and condition of the Jews, who had immigrated to America in the first half the twentieth century.

Diaspora involves traveling and border crossing and it has been used to describe a similar range of cultural affiliations connecting other groups who have been dispersed and have migrated across national boundaries. Diaspora refers to territorial dislocation. Commenting upon diaspora, Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin write:

Diaspora, the voluntary or forcible movements of people from their homelands into new regions, is a central historical fact of colonization. Colonialism itself was a radically diasporic movement, involving the temporary or permanent dispersion and settlements of millions of Europeans over the entire world. (Key 68-69)

Diasporas (diasporic peoples) have complex relationship with their host countries and homelands. Modern diasporas are ethnic minority groups of migrant origin residing and acting in host countries but maintaining strong sentimental and material links with their countries of origin—homelands. It is evident that as a result

of waves of labour migration to Europe, the Persian Gulf and North America, diasporas were formed and are constantly being formed. Thus, the number of diasporas is increasing and it seems that ethnic diasporas will not disappear. Mostly, the diasporas were created during the period of the large migrations in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Marxists and liberals predict that diasporas are only a transitory stage of social and political development that will vanish either as a result of cultural, social and political tolerance or due to the emergence of classless societies. However, this view has proven far from correct. In fact, certain ethnic groups which were losing their ethnic identity and their inclination towards continuous and organized existence and action, have begun to revive their activities. In subtle ways, diasporas are also continuously involved in struggles against assimilatory policies of their host countries and attempt to keep contact with their homelands. However, it is very difficult for them to do so in the face of changing global culture due to the influences of the culture of their host country.

The problem of definition arises whenever a new field of academic study is developed. For a number of reasons the need for a clear definition is particularly evident in the case of ethnic diasporas. As Gabriel Sheffer defines:

Ethnic diasporas are created either by voluntary migration (e.g., Turks to West Germany) or as a result of expulsion from the homelands (e.g., the Jews and the Palestinians) and settlement in one or more host countries. In these host countries the diasporas remain minority groups. In their host countries diasporas preserve their ethnic or ethnic religious identity and communal solidarity. (9)

In order to avoid undesirable conflicts with the norms and laws established by the dominant group in their host countries, the diasporas accept certain rules of the

game of these countries. At certain periods, however, real or alleged dual loyalties, which are generated by the dual authority patterns, may create tension between elements in the host country and the diasporas.

Globalization has further complicated the issue of diaspora in recent times by forcing individuals and communities to redefine their relationship to the nation, to ethnicity and language. To the large extent globalization refers to the blurring of the boundaries between nation and weakening of nationalism. Therefore, globalization is instrumental in creating diasporas. Similarly, migration is another factor that has greatly contributed to the emergence of diaspora. Actually, migration is one of the essential and defining characteristics of mankind. In contemporary world it has become an important political issue as well. The subsequent waves of both 'voluntary and unwanted migrations persist in challenging the cultural and demographic stability in the contemporary world. Migration breeds the state of cultural and geographical rootlessness, leading to the feeling of alienation and estrangement, which are the adverse effects of diaspora.

In certain cases it is not entirely clear where or whether there are discrete homelands, or which are the homelands or which are the diasporas. As diasporas may be defined as that segment of a people living outside the homeland in other countries, they are heavily influenced by the ethnographic composition and ethno-political myths of the host society. For them the ethnic homeland is far more than territory. As evidenced by the near universal use of such emotionally charged terms as the motherland, the fatherland, the native land, the ancestral land, the territory so identified becomes imbued with an emotional, almost reverential dimensions. For diasporas the loss of territory remains as a lasting trauma. They are dogged by the feeling of their past So they exhibit an yearning for the return to their cultural past and

their homeland where their culture had grown for centuries, providing them with distinct cultural identity. Therefore, the diasporas are emotionally attached to their cultural past and homelands.

Since diaspora involves the movement of people from culturally known place to the unknown one, it arouses a sense of alienation because the migrant people cannot fit themselves easily in the new environment and culture. Diaspora as one of the consequences of colonialism and voluntary or forced migrations denotes a condition of homelessness. This characteristic feature can be found in the novels by Jewish writers including Saul Bellow.

Diaspora produces hyphenated identity. It compels people to live double life—the ethnic life and life linked to the country of residence. There is always the tension between the old and new homes that poses the problem of divided allegiances. The diasporic people always experience the anguish over the divided identity. For both the home country and the country of residence could become mere 'ghostly' locations and the result can only be a double de-politicization. Diaspora has created rich possibilities of understanding different histories, and these histories have taught us that identities, selves and traditions do change with travels and that we can achieve such changes in identity intentionally. In this way, diaspora entails the unfulfilled longing for the lost cultural heritage and the anticipation of culturally uncertain and ambivalent future, generating overwhelming sense of alienation.

ETHNICITY

Diasporas remain as ethnic groups. According to Chris Barker, "Ethnicity is a cultural concept centered on the sharing of norms, values, beliefs, cultural symbols and practices" (195). Ethnicity encourages a sense of belonging based in part, on a common mythological ancestry. When we speak about group identities and identity

with the signs and symbols of that group, ethnicity is created. Barker says, "Ethnicity is relational concept concerned with categories of self-identification and social ascription. What we think of as our identities is dependent on what we think we are not" (196) . For Hall, ethnicity is the place of history and culture. He writes:

If the black subject and black experience are not stabilized by Nature or by some other essential guarantee, then it must be the case that they are constructed historically, culturally and politically—the concept which refers to this is identity. The term ethnicity acknowledges the place of history language and culture in the construction of subjectivity and identity, as well as the fact that all discourse is placed, positioned, situated, and all knowledge is contextual. (qtd. in Barker 195)

The question of ethnicity becomes crucial when the identity is in crisis. Ethnicities are not matter of fixed and stable selves but rather the results and products of fortuitous travels and recontextualizations. The phenomenon of diaspora has opened a new way for analysis of ethnicity. Ethnic groups are marginal from the viewpoint of those people who are in power and who don't like to be identified as ethnic groups though they are also the ethnic groups according to the parameters of the definition of ethnicity. When a particular ethnic group becomes diasporic coming into contact with another more dominant ethnic group the issue of preservation of ethnic identity becomes prominent, but the resultant identity is never pure, rather it is hybrid.

HYBRIDITY

Hybridity is customarily used to describe the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization. The term transculturation is employed to denote a process whereby members of subordinated or marginal groups

assimilate into a dominant or metropolitan culture. This process of assimilation to the new, different and dominant culture produces hybrid community, causing the ideas from two cultures to blend.

Hybridity has frequently been used in post-colonial discourse to designate simply cross-cultural exchanges. Hybridization is used to refer to the process whereby the colonized mimic the colonizing people's language, borrow western ideas and practices and reject their own socio-cultural structure. It takes many forms: linguistic, cultural, racial etc. As Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin observe:

Hybridity occurs in post-colonial societies both as a result of conscious moments of cultural suppression as when the colonial power invades to consolidate political and economic control, or when settler-invader disposes indigenous peoples and force them to assimilate to new social pattern. It may also occur in later periods when patterns of immigration from the metropolitan societies and from other imperial areas of influence (e.g., indentured labourers from India and China) continue to produce complex cultural palimpsests with the postcolonized world.

(Reader 183)

Thus hybridity presupposes the power relation between the subjugated culture and the dominant one. When people are displaced from their familiar social and cultural backdrop by forcing them to accommodate to new social pattern, hybridity occurs, producing new kind of people sharing the ideas and beliefs of both culture, but more under the pressure of the powerful culture. Cultures are translocal and involve global flows

Chris Barker in his *Cultural Studies: Theory and Practice* quotes Pieterse as making distinction between two kinds of hybridization: structural and cultural. He says:

The former refers to a variety of social and institutional sites of hybridization for example border zones or cities like Miami or Singapore. The latter distinguishes cultural responses, which range from assimilation through forms of separation, to hybrids that destabilize and blur cultural boundaries. (202)

Cultures are trans-local and involve global flows. Hybridization occurs out of recognition of difference and produces something new. Though hybridity is mostly known as a post-colonial phenomena, it has occurred since the time of cultural mixing hundreds of years ago. However, colonialism increased significantly the frequency of cultural contacts and subjection. Hybridity causes identity crisis, producing the sense of alienation and pessimism on the part of the subjugated cultural group. Hybridity has been taken as part of the tendency of discourse analysis to de-historicize and de-locate cultures from their temporal, spatial, geographical and linguistic content. As colonialism and immigration have produced diaspora, and hybridity is also related to these two concepts, it is self-evident that diasporic identity is hybrid identity. As the diasporian people undergo hybridization, they experience alienation as they are unable both to return to their cultural past and to absorb fully the new cultural environment. As a result, identity becomes more important. Jews also faced the similar kind of situation in an attempt to assimilate.

IDENTITY

Identity is a crucial issue in the contemporary study of culture, ethnicity, class, gender, race, sexuality and other topical issues. Identity becomes an issue when

something previously assumed to be fixed or stable is questioned with the experience of doubt and uncertainty. Globalization and immigration have caused the cultural mixing between East and West, divesting the individuals of their stable cultural identities. This flings them into limbotic position, causing them to lose not only their native place but also their cultural identity. Today's identities are in motion. They are not absolutes of nature or culture. They are "routes rather than roots" (Barker 201).

Commenting upon the factors of changes in the concept of identity, Barker writes:

Identity is hotly debated when it is in crisis. Globalization provides the context for just such a crisis since it has increased the range of sources and resources available for identity construction. Patterns of population movement and settlement established during colonialism and its aftermath, combined with the more recent acceleration of globalization, particularly of electronic communications, have enabled increased cultural juxtaposing, meeting and mixing. (200)

According to Clifford, "Culture and cultural identities can no longer be adequately understood in terms of place, but are better conceptualized in terms of travel" (qtd. in Barker 200). From what has been said above it is apparent that today, due to the emergence of new theories in the contemporary intellectual scenario, identity is seen from different angle than before. Identities are not constant, but changeable and our notion of identity is greatly influenced and moulded by such political, economic and cultural phenomena as globalization, colonialism and immigration. Consequently, identity has been rendered hybrid, not a fixed concept, but rather a marginal and diasporic one.

As said above, globalization, since its inception, has mingled different identities, giving rise to the hybridity of cultural identities. The exponents of the

postcolonial theory contend that cultural hybridity has resulted from the Orientalist project of West. They further agree that the hybridity of cultural identity is one of the vicious consequences of the ambivalent relationship between the colonizers and the colonized, that is, between the dominant group and the marginal group. Once the colonial settler had arrived in the new society, there evolved a binary relationship between the people of two cultures, races and languages and such relationship created a hybrid and cross-cultural society.

The notion of hybridity has relation to racial and ethnic identities. Moreover, in the case of diasporas, these identities are not pure, but are the product of mixing, fusion and creolization- a consequence of mixing and movements of cultures. From the age of colonial slave trade to the global age of mass media, there lies the great shape of modern identities. Modern identity cannot be taken as the product of assimilation of one culture or cultural tradition to another, but globe as a hybrid production of something new due to the mixing and overlapping of cultures. This concept of identity is associated with diasporic identity. Diaspora has created new kind of identity that is not pure, but hybrid. Diasporic identities are shaped by the sense of having been, in Salman Rushdie's phrase "borne across the world" (17). Identity crisis results from such a modern situation.

IDENTITY CRISIS

Identities are the expression of everyday cultural activities. The issues of identity come into debate when it is in crisis. People often ignore the notion of identity when it is not questioned. Stable identities are not doubted; they appear as natural and are taken for granted. But when naturalness dissolves, we are inclined to examine these identities anew. Modern identities are not stable; they are in flux. The changing identities bring about crisis. Crisis in identity is the result of lack of location

to a specific culture or nation. The old identities that gave stability to the social world for so long are waning, leading to the emergence of new identities and fragmenting the subjectivity of modern individuals. The crisis of identity results from the wider processes of change like globalization and immigration, which are subverting the central structures and social process to undermine the frameworks, which has provided the individuals with safe foundation for their social and cultural world. Hall claims, "Modern identities are being de-centered; that is dislocated or fragmented" (The Question 274). The fragmentation of the cultural landscapes of class, gender, sexuality, ethnicity weakens our sense of ourselves as integrated subjects. Thereafter there will be this loss of "stable sense of self" which is also called the dislocation or descentering of the subject, creating a crisis of identity for the individuals (274). He further quotes Kobena Mercer and says that "identity only becomes an issue when it is in crisis, when something assumed to be fixed, coherent and stable, is displaced by the experience of doubt and uncertainty" (275). As Hall says, problem of identities arises from structural and institutional change. In such a situation we are defined not only by one but by multiple identities. He observes:

If we feel we have a unified identity, from birth to death, it is only because we construct a comforting story or 'narrative of the self' about ourselves. The fully unified completed secure and coherent identity is fantasy. Instead, as the systems of meaning and cultural representation multiply, we are confronted by a bewildering, fleeting multiplicities of possible identities-any one of which could identify with—at least temporarily. (228)

The crisis of identity is felt when cultures intermingle with each other and when people are dispersed permanently or temporarily from their homelands. Such people

always wish to maintain strong ties with places of origin and their age-long tradition/culture. Though they feel forced to assimilate to the dominant culture, they seek the traces of the particular culture, tradition, language and history by which their lives were shaped. Thus, they feel torn between two different cultures.

Consequently, the feeling of alienation haunts them. The newly-formed identity never gives them the sense of unity. So, the crisis remains forever at the heart of their ambiguous social and cultural structure. They regard themselves as culturally exiled, with eternal yearning for their original culture. The loss of identity leads them to feel that they are marginal.

MARGINALITY

Marginality is a term used to refer to the place of repressed or subordinated textual meanings and also to the position of dissident intellectual and social groups like women, lesbians, gays and diasporas like Jews, Blacks and others who see themselves at a remove from the normative assumption and oppressive power structures of mainstream society. Theoretically, the concept comes from the combined influences of psychoanalysis, theories of ideology and deconstruction.

Through much of the recorded history of human civilization, the reader can locate many examples of groups who have been destined to live in a social and cultural location somewhere between one or two more dominant groups. The concept of marginality has reference to the general and all-inclusive condition that exists when a group is culturally and socially situated on the periphery of, has continuous interaction with, has a dependency upon, and deviates in certain socially normative patterns from a more dominant group. Marginality occurs in the relations between two or more groups. In a sense this is a relative matter. A marginal group both defines itself and is defined by outside groups, especially the dominant groups, as

being distinct and occupying such a position. The location of the dominant groups within society may be large or small in size. The importance is the power that it exerts over the marginal group and the subsequent domination that it enjoys.

In his classic work, Everest H. Stonequist has identified the following four types of marginal man: the migrant foreigner, the second generation immigrant, the Jew emancipated from the ghetto and the person of mixed blood. According to Stonequist, "The marginal man is the one who leaves one's social group and culture. He is unable to fully adjust to new group or culture. He always remains on the margins of both and considers himself of not belonging to either of the culture" (18).

There are various types of marginality. Of them, cultural marginality is the widely discussed and studied area. Cultural marginality focuses on those behavioural patterns, systems of beliefs, customs and organizations of the marginal groups as distinguished from cultural patterns of the dominant group. The multitudes of minority groups found throughout today's world sustain various patterns of social behaviour that can usually be isolated, identified, and observed, Paige says:

Cultural marginality describes an experience; one typical of global nomads and others who have been molded by exposure to two or more cultural traditions. Such people do not tend to fit it perfectly into any one of the cultures to which they have been exposed but may fit comfortably or the edge in the marginality is in and of itself neither bad nor good although the experience has the potential to be both. It is characterized by the potential for, on the one hand, feeling at home nowhere and, on the other hand, feeling at home everywhere. (1)

Marginality is concerned with the structural or organizational characteristics of the two groups as well as the interrelationship that exists between them, including

such interaction process as conflict, cooperation, competition, accommodation, and assimilation. The major concern of cultural-psychological marginality is with certain attitudes of the marginal groups, the deviation of these attitudes from those of the dominant group, and the impact of various experiences in the marginal minority which derives directly from membership in that group. As the cultural land and social sphere become more tenuous, the cultural psychology of the community likewise sits on a foundation that is less stable than in the past. Marginal people harbour the attitudes of inferiority, the feelings that cultural demise is inevitable.

The collision between values and norms that regulate the behaviour of people in a stable society and those that are introduced into a reforming society bring forth conflicts at certain stages in the development process. The multitude of the clashing values, uncertainty and the problems connected with possible choices of behaviour create an entirely new social and psychological situation. The marginalization in a transitional society is displayed not only on the level of external social conflicts touching upon consciousness and socio-legal relations, but also at the level of interpersonal and intrapersonal conflicts. The uncertainty, distrust, pessimism, aggression, alarm and fear and the feeling of psychological dissatisfaction become the socio-psychological diseases of the people living in a transitional society. The pessimistic moods, decrease in self-esteem, tension, distrust of the future, unfulfilling nature of expectations, depression, frustrations, stresses and conflicts, nihilistic attitudes towards any idea and realities, reorientation to adventurous profit seeking and time-serving activities form the socio-psychological image of the transitional/marginal society.

Marginality assumes crisis of identity, originality, presence of contradiction between different models of identify. The group that does not have clear or more or

less stable social or ethnic identity is marginal. The group finds itself in a marginal state when contradiction is created between two or more models of its members' identity. The social identity of a marginal group undergoes certain changes as the result of social mobility. Marginality presupposes the presence of breaking off social, cultural, domestic-traditional ties and relations. Ties between an individual and a group, community and society are ruptured in the process of marginalization.

Literary criticism has focused a certain amount of attention on the way in which authors from the earlier period of the twentieth century occupying marginal or ambiguous positions vis-a-vis social or national identity were often able to see beyond the accepted or conventional attitudes and beliefs of their time, as their marginality made it difficult for them to be - or feel - fully incorporated in any dominant system of values. Modernist literature in particular is characterized by its relation not only to authors who occupied various forms of marginal position, but also by its overt concern with marginality as representative of something central to modern existence. Thus we can point to the large number of major early twentieth century authors who were exiles or émigrés caught on the margins between different cultures.

In the light of these pieces of information we can say that Saul Bellow, whose family had migrated from Canada to America, has explored the issues of marginality and the resultant alienation, pessimism and emotional and psychological turmoil and the split identity in most of his novels. Bellow's rise to prominence as a major American novelist can be viewed as a part of the movement of the Jews from the periphery to the centre of American life. Jewish American community of America, accepting American patterns of behaviour as their own, maintains forms that are more characteristic of the American than of indigenous Jewish groups. Because of the geographical and residential location of this minority in a culture that is Western in

orientation, some local patterns do diffuse. Generally people who identify themselves as Jewish Americans attempt to reject those cultural elements that are identified as being Jewish, and want to accept those patterns of behaviour of the people of mainstream American society. As a result, the Jewish American community maintains a marginal cultural position in contemporary American society. The process of accommodation/adaptation has given rise to a new type of Jewish individual. This individual is cultural hybrid who shares in cultures and lifestyles of two distinct cultural groups - the Jewish and the American. However, Joseph of *Dangling Man* has not reached that point. He undergoes the cultural transformation and in this phase he feels alienated from the rest of the world around him.

ALIENATION

Alienation, in common use, refers to the estrangement of individuals from one another or from a specific situation or process. In the Middle Ages, it implied a definitive degree of mystical ecstasy in man's communion with God. Later the Protestants, beginning with Calvin, understood the term as spiritual death: as estrangement of man's spirit from God by virtue of original sin. Rousseau speaks of the alienation of the individual's natural rights in favour of the community as a whole. The Romanticists dwelled on the individual's alienation from others. Hegel employs the term to denote the separation of consciousness from the individual. However, Marx turns to socio-economic analysis regarding the employee's alienation from the means of production as the derivative of private ownership and the social division of labour.

Although the term alienation has incisively been defined and delineated in Marxism, most notably in Karl Marx's writing, it has been frequently applied to refer to the general problematic estrangement under which individuals feel a loss of their

cultural belonging. In this sense the term is applied as the summation of the individual emotions and it incorporates the following aspects: (1) powerlessness, when the individual believes his activity will fail to yield the desired results, (2) meaninglessness, when the individual has no clear understanding of the events in which s/he takes part, (3) normlessness, a situation in which the individual encounters contradictory role expectations and is compelled to behave in a socially approved fashion to achieve his/her purpose, (4) isolation, a situation in which the individual feels estranged from the dominant aims and values of his/her society, (5) self-estrangement, which is the individual's estrangement from the self, the feeling that his own self and its abilities are something strange and alienating. Why does alienation consist of all these then ? What are the causes behind? These questions naturally call our attention to the situation as discussed earlier to be identity crisis. Alienation is inextricably related to such terms as displacement, dislocation, diaspora and exile. Most of the critics now readily agree that all these terms are related to homelessness. Someone who has been abandoned by tradition is a homeless man. People often experience this sense of loss when they are displaced or dislocated. The feelings of displacement and dislocation give them the sense of alienation. This is diasporic experience because the diasporic subjects also realize the loss of origin, and therefore express a feeling of loss of home or homelessness.

Alienation is also inextricably associated with exile. The condition of exile involves the idea of separation and distancing from either a literal homeland or from a cultural ethnic origin. This separation from culture produces a sense of alienation. "Exile is one of the saddest things", Said says, "which is sometime interchangeable with banishment" (Representation 47). It, after all, accounts for the tension involved in constructing a distant place as home, an attempt that may result in the generations

of new social and cultural practices and questioning of the old traditions. It is to be noted that exile necessarily brings the individual to a different place and culture, and thereby gives the victims a sense of cultural alienation. Our age with its modern warfare, imperialism and totalitarian ruler, is indeed the age of the refugee, the displaced persons, and mass immigration. Although the nature and circumstances of exile have varied from one case to another, the sense of "loss of something left" is common to all. Said further writes:

Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between self and its true home its essential sadness can never be surmounted. And while it is true that literature and history contain heroic, romantic, glorious, even triumphant episodes in an exile life, there are no more than efforts meant to overcome the crippling sorrow of estrangement. The achievements of exile are permanently undermined by the loss of something left behind forever. (Reflection 113)

In the light of the quotation from Said we may come to the conclusion that exile is a discontinuous state of being. It generates a sense of dislocation and forces individuals to leave their native places, creating psychological alienation (unhealable rift) in them. Exiles are cut off from their life, their land and their past. They generally don't belong to any state, so they are in search of it. Exiles feel therefore an urgent need to reconstitute their broken lines usually by choosing to see themselves as part of a triumphant ideology or a restored people.

The phenomenon of diaspora is essentially a root cause of alienation in the culturally displaced individuals. Immigration is one way whereby diaspora is created.

The term immigrant assumes a much stronger sense of renunciations, of breaking with the past in the hopes of starting a new life and acquiring a new national identity. The terms 'displacement', 'dislocation', 'exile', 'migration' and 'diaspora' are often linked to cultural, geographical and national problems. Cultural alienation is what can be found in *Dangling Man* on closer analysis. Joseph's feeling of alienation is inexorably related to his being a diasporian and marginal subject and a culturally different person in America. In the subsequent chapter I have tried to show Joseph's diasporic experiences and alienation by means of the concepts discussed above.

III. JOSEPH'S DIASPORIC ALIENATION

INTRODUCTION

Culture shapes the human behaviour and helps people guide their action. It surprisingly gives the individuals their identity. Moreover the change of culture brings about identity crisis in the lives of individuals as they cannot assimilate to new culture. Regarding this, Said says, "Culture with its superior position has the power to authorise, to dominate, to legitimate, denote, interdict and validate" (The World 9). Thus, the superiority of new culture dominates individuals as they feel inferiority of their culture in new culture. When someone nurtured in one culture is placed in another, they face cultural dislocation and alienation and the resultant reactions may be anger, frustration, fear, curiosity, fascination, repulsions, hatred or confusion.

Bellow's novel, *Dangling Man*, explores the effects of cultural change in the life of the protagonist, Joseph. Born in Montreal, Canada, sometime during his childhood, Joseph is brought to America by his parents, where he tries to adapt himself to the American culture, experiencing alienation and frustration. The novel is written in the diary form. This novel covers about 4 months starting from 15 December 1942 and ending on 9 April 1943. It describes the events related to Joseph's past as well as present life, dealing with his anger, pessimism and sense of alienation during those four months before he is drafted into the Army to kill the angst of his culturally isolated existence. The mixing of the two heterogeneous cultures – his Jewish heritage and the American culture of his country of residence, and his attempts at the assimilation into the new culture brings about in his life frustration, confusion, alienation and dislocation. He goes to the point of questioning his own existence. Moreover, it is the delay caused by the American Government to draft him that also produces the sense of alienation in him.

On the one hand, as a diasporian subject he fails to receive safe anchorage both in his own Jewish culture and the alien American culture. On the other hand, Joseph wants to be enlisted into the Army as soon as possible, but his enlistment is delayed, postponed due to various reasons. At this, he feels frustrated and ascribes the delay to his being foreign citizen, a Canadian. He does not get a place where he can culturally locate himself. In order to overcome the cultural alienation, he reads books, since he has given up his job at inter-American solely to get into the Army. He lives off his wife, Eva, who wants her husband to spend the days before his entry into the Army with comfort and pleasure. But he cannot show much interest in books either. He has many friends in Chicago, but he does not like to meet them. He desires to lead a virtually secluded life. He pays occasional visits to his wife's parents, his parents and his own brother Amos. Joseph is unable to get on with his brother's family as well. At his brother's house at Christmas, he quarrels with his brother, sister-in-law and beats his niece Etta harshly as she calls his name. Moreover, while being alone, he remembers the past events and the events in his childhood in Montreal. He seems to have remembered those events with pleasure and sadness.

Joseph also visits Kitty Daumler. But once he is humiliated by her, he stops meeting her. He also quarrels with Eva, who has been supporting him since he left his job. He remembers a quarrel with his former landlord. Similarly, he gets into an argument with another tenant named Vanaker in his house, who drinks heavily and steals things like socks and perfume from Eva and Joseph's room. Besides, he also has a row with his landlord, refuses to go to the bank to cash the cheque. He imagines a situation in which he talks to the Spirit of Alternative. He acutely feels the pressure of his divided/split self. Joseph is weary of his own existence which is described with negative terms as morbid, slothful and so on. Thus, Joseph finds the life unbearable

and at last of his own accord enlists into the Army to seek meaning in his supposedly meaningless life and to acquire stable identity and life from his supposedly unstable and divided identity and life.

During those months while waiting for the call-up, Joseph feels overwhelming sense of alienation, pessimism and loneliness even amongst his friends and relatives. He cannot forget his childhood memories born and nurtured in the different land. Those memories intrude upon his youthful life time and again. The clash of his Jewish heritage with the American culture that values individualism and materialism much make him feel marginal. The marginality combined with the clashes between two distinct cultures leads to identity crisis and a sense of rootlessness and cultural dislocation. If we look at the history of Jews, 'diaspora' is synonymous with the Jews themselves. Joseph's diasporic alienation is caused by his inner experience of marginality and his inability to cope with Jewishness and the mainstream American culture. Joseph is aware of the fact that long delay to accept him into the Army is because of his alien birth (birth in Canada). The alienation felt by Joseph may also be equated with Bellow's own alienation in the early days of his life in America when he was just trying to emerge as a writer in an alien land of different culture. Many critics have emphasized Bellow's presentation of this aspect of his life in the novel.

JEW AS DIASPORAS

As Joseph is a diasporic Jew living in America I have attempted to trace a brief history of Jews migration to America. Jews have been diasporic and marginal people for thousands of years. Jews did not live in one place permanently, and for various reasons such as political repression and others they moved from one place to another in course of time. They dispersed throughout the world creating world-wide diaspora. Jews are still feeling difficulty identifying their country of residence as their

own country, though by now most of them have assimilated into the culture of their host country. Thus, Jews have lived in the world as the greatest number of diasporas.

Jews as diasporas are at the margins/frontiers of two cultures, and are unable to identify themselves as belonging to either of them. Although they try to preserve their cultural identity, it is usually the dominant culture – the culture of their host country that influences them most.

The marginal people always experience uncertainty, distrust, pessimism, aggression and alienation at interpersonal and intrapersonal level. Thus, people are marginalized as a result of diaspora. Joseph also shows these characteristics.

The ancient Jews were forced from their ancestral homeland in 70 AD when the armies of the Roman Empire conquered Palestine. Thus began the diaspora – the long centuries of their dispersion throughout Europe and eventually the world. For centuries Jews were periodically persecuted, massacred, or expelled en masse from various countries in Europe. During hundreds of years of their history, Jews sought whatever unobtrusive safety they could find as an element in different cultures, societies and economies. Jewish resistance by force would have been suicidal as they were hopelessly outnumbered everywhere. The oppressed Irish or Italians were a majority in their respective lands, and could at least conduct sporadic uprisings or underground terrorism against their conquerors. But while oppression bred fighting qualities in the Irish and the Italians, in the very different situation of the Jews it produced an emphasis on the futility of the use of force and violence and reliance instead on their wits, resourcefulness and perseverance in the face of adversity. When Jews were a people living in their own homeland in Palestine, they were a fighting people but not so in the long centuries of their dispersion.

Jews came to America not from one country or culture but from many. The first Jews who arrived in colonial America were Sephardic Jews, who had lived for centuries in Spain and Portugal under very different conditions from those in Germany, Russia or Eastern Europe, from which later generations of Jewish Americans came. The great majority of Jews in America descended from the millions who emigrated from Russia, Poland and other Eastern European countries in the last two decades of the nineteenth century and the first two decades of the twentieth century. In that period one third of all the Jews in Eastern Europe migrated to America. All the Jews shared centuries of history as a minority subjected to varying degrees of hostility wherever they went. Other groups became "minorities" in America. Jews had centuries of experience living a minority in countries throughout Europe.

Much of the area where Jews lived in Europe was taken over by Russia in the eighteenth century. As a result of that Jews were confined to their former place of settlement in the lands newly acquired from Poland. Many of the rights formerly enjoyed by the Jews were taken away by the Russians. Jews were oppressed by the anti-semitic policies of the Czar King . They were looted, destroyed and murdered in large number. With these tragic events began one of the great human migrations in history. Over the next four decades one third of all the Jews in eastern Europe moved to the United States. During those years three quarters of all the people who left Russia for the United States Were Jews and three quarters of the Jews who arrived in the United States were from Russia. In addition to those who emigrated directly from Russia, there were many Jews who escaped to become refugees in other countries and only later moved to America. In this way more than 7,00,000 Jews arrived in the United States from the turn of the 20th century to the beginning of World War I.

Though, many of the Jews today are prosperous, during the time after their immigration to America Jews experienced poverty and slum living. They lived in overcrowded firetraps, and were struck hard by tuberculosis, but alcoholism never became a serious problem among them, and their traditional concern for cleanliness spared them some of the other diseases that struck some other slum dweller. Their own peculiar culture and values enabled them to escape some of the long-run consequences.

Thus, Jews are old diasporas in the United States. They moved to the United States to escape religious persecution and political repression. They came into contact with an alien American culture and underwent the process of assimilation. They have remained on the margins of the two cultures. Their marginality arises from the crisis-cross of the cultures. As Thomas Sowell says in *Ethnic America*:

The sense of identity of American Jews today is not the Old World religious sense of Jewishness. Most American Jews today do not observe the traditional Jewish Sabbath, nor are they active in the temple or synagogue. Their identity as Jews is an ethnic or racial identity even though historically derived from a particular religion.

(98)

Thus, Jews have come to be known as ancient diasporas in the world. Today their identity is not religious, but ethnic and social. Most of them have assimilated to the American culture. In course of assimilation, they feel alienated. Joseph is not exception. His sense of alienation stems from diasporic trauma.

JOSEPH'S DIASPORIC FEELINGS

The novel is a diary documenting Joseph's cultural and existential dangling not only during about four months but also during the period before the first entry in the

novel. The novel starts from 15 December 1942. From the very beginning of the novel Joseph begins to muse on his life. Though we are not given explicit information about his early life, we can know from the entries depicting his childhood 'memories that he was born in Canada and spent his childhood there. Later his family immigrated to America where he grew to youth. America is not his birthland/homeland, it is an alien country where he has to struggle to establish his identity as an American Jew. So, by birth he is a Canadian living a diasporic life in America.

At present Joseph stays idle. But, he worked at Inter-American Travel Bureau before. He is waiting for "the Army's call for induction" (8). However, his induction has been delayed. The delay sparks off diasporic feelings in him. He is still a Canadian. He writes:

Nearly seven months have gone by since I resigned my job at the inter-American travel Bureau to answer the Army's call for induction I am still waiting. It is a trivial seeming things, a sort of bureaucratic comedy trimmed out in red tape. At first I took that attitude towards it myself. It began as a holding, a short reprieve, last May, when I was sent home because my papers were not in order. I have lived here eighteen years, but I am still Canadian, a British subject, and although a friendly alien I could not be drafted without an investigation. (8)

Thus, even after eighteen years of his life in America Joseph is unable to identify himself as an American. He is unable to assimilate and assume American identity. consequently he learns to withdraw, to keep things to himself, to be aloof that exacerbates his loneliness which ultimately makes his quest for identity an attempt to give meaning to the meaningless, to grasp the ungraspable. Joseph's

culture and alien birth have made him lose confidence and hope in America. To give vent to the psychological traumas brought about by being an outsider, he keeps diary.

He writes:

In my present state of demoralization, it has become necessary for me to keep a journal - that is to talk to myself and I do not feel guilty of self-indulgence. The hard-boiled are compensated for their silence; they fly planes or fight bulls or catch tarpan, whereas I rarely leave my room. (7)

Joseph again asserts his state of being an alien. His attempt to become an integral part of the American government, and by extension, American culture was also thwarted before:

I made an attempt to enlist in the Navy last time I was reclassified, but induction, it seems is the only channel for aliens. There's nothing to do but wait, or danger or grow more and more dispirited. It is perfectly clear to me that I am deteriorating, storing bitterness and spite which eat like acids at my endowment of generosity and good-will. (10)

It is not the delay alone that has caused the feelings of bitterness and spite. There is more than that. He has nurtured the feeling of being alien and of not belonging to American culture for long or ever since he was brought to America. The seven months' delay only made the feeling acute and pervasive. Joseph's present alienation is the result of his inner experience of marginality. His inability to cope with American culture is evident in his remark. In one instance he writes, "and I think I have carried over from my school days the feeling that there is something unlawful, in being abroad, idle, in the middle of the day" (11).

Joseph is the victim of the exile which uproots him from his native soil and deprives him of his native sky. Joseph's present life is influenced by the individualized and materialistic American culture, while his ancestry belongs to Jewishness in terms of religion, and his family has migrated from Canada. His family's shifting history causes lack of his personal history. History gives the individual identity and the lack of history results in identity crisis. His inner desire for history is to gain his individual identity.

Diasporas are always haunted by their past and image of their homelands. Their yearning for the lost past is their efforts to trace their history—a hidden motive to establish identity and to overcome diasporic feelings. On many occasions Joseph casts his mind back to his childhood spent in Canada. The past becomes for him a source of meaning of his life. He remembers an incident from his fourth year involving his mother and aunt and writes:

Now I recall an incident from my fourth year, a quarrel between my mother and my aunt over the way in which she (my mother) dressed my hair. My aunt, Aunt Dina, claimed it was high time my curls were cut my mother refused to hear of it. Aunt Dina was a self-willed woman's; she had arbitrary ways. She took me to the barber and had him cut my hair after the fashion of the time in what was called a Buster Brown. She brought the curls back in an envelope and gave them to my mother, who there upon began to cry. I bring this up not simply to recall how the importance of my appearance was magnified in my eyes, but also because during adolescence I was to remember this in another connexion. (62)

Joseph also recalls his grandfather, his mother's father. He has been attracted to the portrait of his grandfather made shortly before his death. The portrait is not simply a portrait. It is a symbol. It reminds him of his mortality. In the throes of his memories he writes:

Then studying the picture it occurred to me that this skull of my grandfather's would in time overtake one (and this was no longer an impression but a dogma) that the picture was the proof of my mortality. I was upright on my grandfather's bones and the bones of those before him in a temporary loan. But he himself, not the further past hung over me. (62)

Moments of Joseph's present life remind him of his past homeland and childhood. Montreal comes to his mind as an indelible image. On 5 January, as he polishes shoes, he flings his mind back to the bygone past. Remembering what he used to do then, he writes:

In Montreal, on such afternoon as this, I often asked permission to spread a paper on the sitting room floor and shine all the shoes in the house, including aunt Dina's with their long tongues and scores of eyelets. When I thrust my arms into one of her shoes it reached well above the elbow and I could feel the brush against my arms through the soft leather. The brown fog lay in St. Dominique street; in the sitting room, however, the store shone as the davenport and on the Oilcloth and on my forehead, drawing the skin pleasantly, I did not clean shoes because I was praised for it, but because of the work and sensation of the room, closed off from the wet and fog of the street, with its locked shutters and the faint green of the metal pipes along the

copings of its houses. Nothing could have tempted me out of the house. (70)

Though sometimes Joseph looks back at his past with bitterness and chagrin, it often comes as a motion picture to his mind. He has "never found another street that resembled St. Dominiques" (70). Joseph's description of the street and the activities going on it gives a vivid picture of Jews' experience of slum dwelling. Jews were, for hundreds of years, forced to be confined to the slum life. Despite the hardships and staleness of slum living, Joseph is unable to forget it as it was the formation of his early life. Rather, he does not dither to deem it reality. He says, "I sometimes think that it is the only place where I was ever allowed to encounter reality" (70). He was brought up in poverty. "[His] father blamed himself bitterly for the poverty that forced him to bring [them] up in a slum" (70).

Joseph is a pessimistic man. He is not certain about his future. Past is what has influenced him most. His inner experience of marginal position has induced him to have this state of mind. He is fully aware of his condition. He says:

I, in this room, separate, alienated, distrustful, find in my purpose not an open world, but a closed, hopeless jail. My perspectives end in the walls. Nothing of the future comes to me. Only the past, in its sabbuness and innocence. Some men seem to know exactly where their opportunities lie; they break prisons and cross whole Siberias to pursue them. One room holds me. (75-76)

In this way, Joseph is facing identity crisis with his past pitted against present American culture. Born in Canada and brought to America, Joseph cannot overcome the idea that he is a Canadian. Since he spent his childhood there, Canadian past with its staleness and innocence occupies his mind. He is struggling with himself—with

his childhood and youth. When Canadian childhood and American youth confront with each other, he feels alienated. He has lived in America for eighteen years. Still, he does not get an easy access to the enlistment in the Army. He thinks that being an alien is a curse. Consequently, the sense of alienation overcomes him. He confines himself to a room, away from contact with his friends.

JOSEPH'S SENSE OF ALIENATION

Joseph is divided within himself on his bid to achieve assimilation or acculturation, which is the only option left to him in order to survive among cultural schizophrenia. It is the state of mental illness that causes the sufferer to act irrationally leading him to estrangement from social relationship. This state leads to a state of divided identity—divided by culture, history and circumstances. As cultures cut across and intersect natural frontiers, individual feels dislocated from his homeland.

The hybrid identity resulting from the mixing and moments of two cultures divides Joseph as unified subject. This hybrid situation fosters a sense of ambivalence in him. He looks back to Canada with nostalgia and also tries to absorb America. As a diasporic subject living in America, marginal Joseph feels alienated and estranged. Joseph lacks his ancestral history in America. Crisis in identity and his efforts to go into mainstream American culture rendered him alienated. Alienation breeds frustration, pessimism, bad-temper and negative attitudes towards life. Joseph has become victim of all those psychological states of mind.

The novel, *Dangling Man*, creates a vivid landscape of the alienated condition of Joseph. His draft has been delayed for many months. Melancholy becomes the part of his life and he feels to be lost in it. Thus, he is overwhelmed with the sense of meaninglessness, isolation and self-estrangement. Every immigrant tries to be firmly

anchored in the new culture; but when they know that their attempts have constantly been thwarted they feel alienated, frustrated and isolated from their own self and from the rest of the world.

Joseph keeps a diary. As he is jobless and has nothing to do, he writes and reads. He wants to express his feelings. However, he cannot share them with his friends, so he keeps diary to talk to himself. Thus, from the very beginning, the novel is replete with the protagonist's sense of isolation. Joseph is confused. Though "[he is] well supplied with books" he finds himself "unable to read" (8). Books cannot engage his attention. "After two or three pages or, as it sometime happens, paragraphs, [he] simply cannot go on" (8). Joseph is unable to enjoy his liberty, leisure time, despite his wife's persistent support in all respects. The sense of alienation is further complicated by his inability to read. He says:

Meanwhile, Iva, my wife has been supporting me. She claims that it is no burden and that she wants use to enjoy this liberty, to read and to do all the delightful things I will be unable to do in the Army. About a year ago, I ambitiously began several essays, mainly biographical, on the philosophers of the Enlightenment. I was in the midst of one on Diderot I stopped. But I was vaguely understood, when I began to dangle, that I was to continue with them. (9)

Joseph's failure to cope with his Jewishness is one of the sources of his alienation. Here Jewishness does not hold religious significance. It has been defined from social or ethnic perspectives. Despite poverty and slum dwelling, Jews valued learning and knowledge. They were very intellectual persons. They placed scholarship ahead of any other thing. In *The Course of Modern Jewish History*, Howard Morley Sacher writes:

The proliferation of Jews in all fields of intellectual endeavour, the purely humanistic as well as the practical, found further explanation in the Jewish intellectual tradition. Historically, the Jews valued intellect perhaps more than any other people since the ancient Athenians. As a "This-worldly" religion Judaism has produced a sacred literature which was largely legalistic, and which required, for its comprehension and observance, the most diligent kind of mental concentration. Throughout Jewish history, therefore, with the exception of the Hasidic movement in eastern Europe - piety and scholarship were virtually synonymous terms. (395)

Joseph is also fond of reading books, especially by the great philosophers of Enlightenment and others. His wife has besieged him with books. He says, "I was forever buying new books, faster admittedly, than I could read them" (8). For him books are the guarantors of an extended life. Joseph himself writes about his scholastic inclination and says:

Joseph, since leaving school, has not stopped thinking of himself as scholars. Before he interested himself in the Enlightenment, he made a study of the early ascetics and, earlier, of Romanticism and the child prodigy. Of course he has to earn his living, but he tries to strike a balance between what he wants and what he is compelled to do, between the necessity and the wish. (23)

Nevertheless, Joseph cannot proceed with reading. Here arises irony. After two or three pages he simply cannot go on. He seems to negate his Jewishness defined by intellectualism. There is no solid reason to which negation of Jewishness

can be ascribed. Anyway, it can be traced back to the impact of American culture on Jewish life accompanied by fragmentation of traditional identity.

Similarly, Jewishness can also be defined, to some extent by socialism. Politically, Jews have historically tended to adopt, or "at least to be responsive to the view point of the "underdog" (Sowell 95). "Socialism and liberalism have been dominant political themes among American Jews" (Sowell 95). Due to socialism's internationalism, its pacifism, its Revisionism, its repudiation of anti-semitism, Jews became in growing numbers socialists. Especially when the individuals feel suppressed by another powerful group and become marginal, they become Communists and revolutionaries. Like many other Jews, Joseph, when he was seventeen, was a Communist. This shows that Joseph also wanted to rebel against all kinds of forms of suppression meted out by the dominant culture. Joseph had a hidden rebellious sense, but later he ceases to be Communist. About this he remarks:

On his first visit to the Almstadts, he had smoked a cigar and talked loudly and fairly expertly (he was then a Communist) about the German social democracy and the slogan 'United Front from Below'. He further had taken him for twenty-five and had angrily ordered here not to invite grown men to the house. It amuses Mr. Almstadt to tell this story, now a family joke. He says, 'I though the was going to carry her away to Russia'. (22)

However, sometime later, Joseph rejected Communist beliefs. He stopped to be Communist. Thus he tries to identify himself politically and intellectually, as one of the members of the Jewish community. But he fails to do so. The failure produces sense of alienation in him. In this way, Joseph bears split identity, unable to cope with his communities' ideals and desire to join mainstream social life.

An alienated person tries to avoid social contacts and remains aloof. Joseph is no exception. He likes to confine himself within the four walls of his room. He has many friends, but does not want to see them. He is not quite open even with his wife. The lack of proper communication shows the magnitude of his alienation. Describing the social relationship he says:

Iva is a quiet girl. She has way about her that discourages talk. We no longer confide in each other; in fact there are many things I could not mention to her. We have friends, but we no longer see them. A few live in distant part of the city. Some are in Washington, and some in the Army; one is abroad. My Chicago friends and I have been growing steadily apart. I have not been too eager to meet them. possibly some of our differences could be mended. But as I see it, the main bolt that held us together has given way, and so far I have had no incentive to replace it and so I am very much alone. (9)

Decrease in the frequency of contact with his friends has raised the level of his alienation. He considers his life to be so absurd that he is interested in the insignificant events of a day like maid's knock, the appearance of the post-man and programmes on the radio. While his friends travel to different countries, he grows rooted to his chair. He is in the wont of hallucinating and imagining things. This is the result of his alienation from his friends. He manifests the symptoms of insanity:

I have always been subject to such hallucinations. In the middle of winter, isolating a wall with sunlight on it, I have been able to persuade myself, despite the surrounding ice, that the month was July, not February. Similarly, I have reversed the summer and made myself shiver in the heat. And so, also, with the time of the day. It is

common trick, I suppose. It can be carried too far perhaps, and damage the sense of reality. (10)

Joseph is so much steeped in alienation that he reads only pessimistic books. He says, "There are times when I am not even aware that there is anything wrong with this existence [. . .] I rouse myself in bewilderment and vexation" (14). He mentions Goethe's *Poetry and Life* and refers to a phrase in the book: "'This loathing' of life has both physical and moral causes. . . ." (14). He refers to another chapter in the same book called 'weariness of life'. He feels deeply disappointed and puts the book down. Reading the pessimistic books and feeling disappointed have two-way reactions. Joseph reads pessimistic books because he is deeply isolated and the ideas about pessimism in the books increase his feeling of isolation.

Joseph is well aware of his deteriorating states. Split in Joseph's self is evident in the writing of his diary. He talks about himself in third person. He is not himself, rather he is another self—other. He says:

But for all that Joseph suffers from a feeling of strangeness, of not quite belonging to the world, of lying under a cloud and looking up at it [. . .] Joseph's feelings of strangeness take the form almost of a conspiracy [. . .] Living for day to day under such conspiracy is trying. If it makes for wonder, it makes even more for uneasiness [. . .]. (24)

Joseph's attitude towards life is thoroughly negative. He justifies why he supports the war. The extent of alienation manifests itself in his affirmation of death and repulsion for life. He is ready to go to the Army any time. When he is called he will go and make no protest. He says, "Yes I shall show, I shall take lives; I shall be shot at and my life may be taken" (69).

Death is what haunts Joseph most; his mind is pre-occupied with the feeling of death. He talks about the death of a Jefferson Forman who, he thinks, may be his friend. He writes, "A Jefferson Foreman is listed as having crashed in the pacific" (67). Sometime later Joseph talks about dreams. He criticizes civilization, too. He says, "There are then, these two preparations: One for life and the other for death" (98). "But I must know what I myself am" is a succinct expression that underlines his purpose in life (99). Commenting on the dreams, he says:

But now my dreams are more bare and ominous. Some of them are fearful. A few nights ago I found myself in a low chamber with rows of large cribs or wicker bassnets in which the dead of a massacre were lying. I am sure they are victims of a massacre, because my mission was to reclaim one for a particular family. (99)

Likewise, he again describes another dream, in which premonition of death is predominant:

Some of the other dreams have been only slightly less dreadful. In one I was a sapper with the Army in North Africa. We had arrived in a town and my task was to render harmless the grenade traps in one of the houses. I crawled through the window, dropped from the clay sill and saw a grenade wired to the door, ridged and ugly, but I did not know where to begin [. . .]. I realized that if I had hit the mark I would have killed myself. (100)

Joseph's obsession with death and pessimism results from his alienation. He sees life from different perspective. Joseph shows how alienated he is from his conversation with the Spirit of Alternatives. The Spirit of Alternatives is his own split self. In course of their conversation, the spirit asks, "I'm sorry I came empty-handed. If you

are not alienated, why do you quarrel with so many people ? I know you are not a misanthrope. Is it because they force you to recognize that you belong to their world ?" (114).

Joseph replies, "I was wrong, or else put it badly. I didn't say there was no feeling of alienation, but that we should not make doctrine of our feeling" (114).

In still another conversation with the Spirit, Joseph expounds ever more pessimistic views of his life. He says, "But I want to say I'm a chopped and shredded man" (137). Again he remarks, "You know how it is. I'm harried, pushed, badgered, worried, nagged heckled . . ." (137).

Extremity and violence of Joseph's alienation can be seen in his assertion:

I feel I'm a sort of human grenade whose pin has been withdrawn. I know I am going to explode and I am continually anticipating the time, with a prayerful despair crying 'Boom !' but always prematurely.

The sense in which Goethe was right: continued fine means expectation. Death is the abolition of choice. The more choice is limited, the closer we are to death. The greatest cruelty is to curtail expectations. Without taking away life completely. A life-term in prison is like that. So is citizenship in some countries. (122)

Joseph's alienation is given free rein when he feels alienated from his own wife. But this alienation is covert, not manifest. It seems that he is sexually dissatisfied with his wife. Joseph narrates his meetings with a woman named Kitty Daumler several times. He is liked by Kitty. He goes to Kitty to relieve the feeling of alienation, to some extent; but, in the end, when one evening he quarrels with his wife and goes to meet Kitty, he is, contrary to his expectations, rejected by her, so he feels insulted. This also increases his sense of alienation.

Joseph's sense of alienation is further aggravated by the bank staff. Joseph recounts two previous incidents involving him and bank staff in which he was not allowed to cash his wife's cheque. He was returned empty-handed twice. Therefore, he refuses to go to the bank when his wife asks him to. He is treated like an alien and identityless person. But he does not tell his wife these incidents. Joseph says below how he felt at the bank staff's question, "Now where do you work, Joseph ?" (145):

In such cases I generally answer that I am working at Inter-American; it is an impressive reference and not a wholly false one; Mr. Mallender would stand behind me, I am sure. But because he addressed me by my first name, as though I were an immigrant, or a young boy or a Negro, I said, dismissing diplomacy without a second thought—'I'm not working anywhere now. I am waiting for my draft call.' (145)

Thus, Joseph feels that even after eighteen years of his living in America, he is not an American. He cannot stand on his own. He hopes to enlist help from Mr. Mallender to prove his identification. Moreover, he thinks he has been treated roughly like an immigrant. This is Joseph's pain at the failure to assimilate into the mainstream American life. Joseph still harbours the inner sense of being marginal, an alien. This disturbing experience evokes alienation in him.

Similarly, Joseph is suffering the loss of self-worth and self-esteem. He talks about the demeanor of the housemaid, Mary. He senses that she does not count him. He makes clear his thoughts about her and says, "She has a cigarette in her mouth. I think I am the only one before whom she dares smoke. She recognizes that I am of no importance" (12). In this way, Joseph considers himself worthless and insignificant.

He recounts another story of his high school life involving himself and a German family. In high school he had become friendly with a boy named Will

Harscha, a German. One day, he had visited his friend's house. There his friend's mother called him 'Mephistopheles', a devil in *Dr. Faustus*. Describing the subsequent experience, Joseph says:

I never saw them again. I avoided Will at school. And I spent sleepless hours thinking of what Mrs. Harscha had said. She had seen through one-by some instinct, I thought then-and, where others saw nothing wrong, she had discovered evil. For a long time I believed there was a diabolic part to me [. . .]. But meanwhile I had the confirmation of people like Mrs. Harscha for my suspicion that I was not like others but [. . .] I concealed something rotten. (63)

Joseph's sense of loss of self-worth has perpetuated alienation. He has carried this sense from his high school days till now, causing to reduce himself to a cipher. His lack of self-confidence has rendered him a failed man.

Joseph proves himself a bad-tempered person. Frequent instances of bad-temper are the proofs of alienation. Joseph is involved in several quarrels and fights with his friends like Jimmy Burns, Vanakar, his landlords, his brother's family and even with his wife. On 22 December he happens to see Jimmy Burns, his ex-comrade, but Jimmy pretends not to see him. Due to the ignorance he is convulsed with "an unusual explosion of temper" (25). He is on the verge of starting a row with Jimmy. Despite his another friend Mike's objection, he approaches Jimmy and makes himself known. For months he has been angry with his friends and he has thought of them as failing him.

Likewise, he narrates another incident in which he had a fight with his former landlord in last winter. About the strife he says:

[. . .] I took him by the shoulder and, forcing him round, pushed aside the pipe and struck him. He fell, the pipe clattering under him on the cement. But instantly he was up again, brandishing his fists, shouting, 'If that's what you want !' he could not reach me. I carried him to the wall, hitting repeated into his chest and belly and cutting my knuckles on his open, panting, mouth. (121)

Joseph quarrels with his wife twice, who supports him. The first quarrel is about the book he has lent Kitty without Eva's knowledge. The second row occurs when he refuses to go to the bank. The second row is immediately followed by another violent confrontation with Vanaker, who has rented a room in the same house. Joseph thinks that Vanaker has stolen his socks and Iva's perfume. Joseph empties up his suppressed anger over Vanaker's misconduct, shouting:

'It's about time I told him off. I'm fed up. Completely. Do you think you can get away with it forever ?' I shouted at him. 'Kicking up a racket in the middle of the night, hocking, forcing us to listen when you make your business, you crowbait ? Didn't you ever learn to shut the door when you went to the toilet ? By God, you kept it shut tight enough the night you see the house or fire !' (149)

Hearing the commotion, his landlord appears. He also has a quarrel with him, who, in his turn, threatens Joseph to leave the house.

Another quarrel is bound by subtle causes. Joseph beats his niece Etta severely and also shouts at his brother and sister-in-law. Joseph's brother Amos is a wealthy man and his wife, Dolly, also comes from a well-to-do family. Joseph is completely unable to get reconciled with gross materialism represented by Amos. Amos embodies American culture with its excessive materialism and individualism.

Joseph is still facing difficulties adopting to American culture as opposed to his brother Amos. His forefather's more spiritual existence and relative poverty and his brother's insistent emphasis on material achievements has divided him in two. He has been catapulted into the whirlwind of confusion. His brother offers to help him by giving money, but he denies taking it. Though Jews have a strong sense of family bond, Joseph seems to reject the notion. The rift between the brothers is caused by changing perspectives on culture. Amos has easily accommodated himself to the American materialistic culture embodied in American dream of becoming rich and successful, while Joseph still wavers between two cultures, allowing himself to be overtaken by alienation. As a result, Joseph has lost the sense of who he is.

Reaching the far end of alienation, Joseph utterly rejects the idea of personal future. When Amos raises the point of the future, to counter him Joseph says:

'Well you are in luck. I'd think about it a little if I were you. There are many people hundreds of thousands, who have had to give up all thought of future. There is no personal future any more. That is why I can only laugh at you when you tell me to look out for my future in the Army, in that tragedy. I wouldn't stake a pin on my future. And maybe I wouldn't have yours [. . .]. (54)

Joseph, on the one hand, regards the Army as a tragedy. On the other hand, he is anxious to enlist into it. He is in dilemma, torn by two streams of thought. He is whipped by two different cultural currents, two ways of life. As a result, he falls in the crisis-inability to define himself. The lack of definition results in alienation. Joseph's ultimate, voluntary and hasty entry into the Army, indicates his willingness to assimilate to the mainstream American culture symbolized by the Army in the novel.

IV. CONCLUSION

The rhetoric of diasporic alienation has been given a powerful expression in Bellow's *Dangling Man*. Our identity is inexorably bound with culture we belong to as this substantially shapes our development and life history. Because of migration, mass media, and other elements, notably globalization, stable cultural identities are fading up. Cultural values have been transferred to other cultural groups, and loss of cultural heritage emerges as a dominant problem among modern people. Culture as a source of identity assumes paramount importance throughout history, providing a sense of belonging to the people. The role of culture is considerably important in defining the behaviours of people. The culture in which they grow up shapes them. When they find themselves in new culture, geography and among culturally different people, their identity becomes more important. The cultural mixing gives rise to new hybrid identity, fragmenting modern subjects. A sense of nostalgia always haunts them as they find a division between the past and present. Whenever we find ourselves detached from our culture we feel alienation as does Joseph in *Dangling Man*.

Today, people do not belong to one culture and identity only. They are defined by multiple and unstable identities. Globalization has caused the movement and transference of people from one place to another, giving rise to cultural hybridity. diaspora is one of the prominent results of globalization. It is a state of being in cultural limbo. Diasporic people go to the new places and endeavour to absorb the culture of that place at the same time preserving their own to fit into the new and unknown social structure. It is in that assimilation process that they find that they have lost something valuable and are attempting to gain something that will be a reliable recourse to their future life. The process is not always smooth and positive.

The sense of alienation and rootlessness comes between the people and the new culture.

Diasporic identity is hybrid, unstable, fluid and split between two kinds of social life. Diasporic people face identity crisis, though they are always in the process of acquiring fixed identity. It is not a short-term process. It takes many years. During those years they undergo various cultural and psychological changes, producing hybrid identities. Preservation of their ethnicity and need for a stable defining culture becomes a burning issue for them. As diasporic people, they find past to be a fertile ground from where they can guide their present. But most often both the past and the present collide, resulting in a sense of alienation. This is what Joseph feels in the novel. The inability to reconcile past with present poses psychological trauma, frustration and pessimism.

Marginal status is another factor that brings about alienation. Marginality and diasporic identity are complementary to each other. Marginality posits power relation representing the suppression of one weak culture by another dominant one. The confrontation between the cultural forces the relatively weaker cultural community to adapt to the relatively stronger one. The concomitant consequence is that the former identity will be called into question. As a result, there arises the need to be defined by new cultural parameters. The weakening of the old way of life by the efforts of the new way of life incites alienation in culturally marginal people.

Joseph has nurtured the inner experience of being marginal as a result of diaspora. He experiences deeply a need to define himself anew. His draft into the Army is a positive step towards the direction. His desire to read books is his effort to overcome alienation. But it proves futile; moreover, he tries to do and become what other Jews had done like becoming a Communist. However, he is not successful at it

as well. He feels alienated not only from the cultures which he does not belong to, but also from his own Jewish community. Joseph happens to be a culturally marginal man through his personal inner experience. He is more bent on embracing American culture than affirming Jewish heritage. His voluntary enlistment in the Army indicates it. In this way, *Dangling Man* is a story of Joseph's progress from the labyrinth of cultural turmoil to the assimilation into the mainstream American culture. The novel has portrayed a landscape of Joseph's alienated existence in the face of severe cultural confrontation. Bellow has skillfully and with mastery used flashback technique whereby he describes Joseph's memories of his childhood in Canada and other past events at different times as well as the split present in America.

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