

Chapter I

Introduction

Representation is a common tool to present to the world, generally or particularly, matters or things which seldom find scope for self representation. To represent a person, thing, or an idea, the representative is supposed to have deep and clear knowledge about them, and it presupposes an affinity, awareness, and a close reading than superfluous or abstract conclusions. This thesis attempts a dichotomous representation of the concept, “intellectual,” in the selected novels of Saul Bellow, one of the most celebrated Jewish American writers of the post-World War period, and also in the world, with limited space, and concurrently looks at what the intellectual represents. It explicates the concept from diverse perspectives in the political, economic, anthropological, and social contexts of twentieth century America which stands as an archetype of the entire world. Intellectuals are supposed to be representatives of both the disadvantaged of the society and of the world, and of intellectuals themselves with all their intended functionality in the ever-changing world scenario where they are not exempted from changes. Bellowian heroes are essentially depicted in the thesis as representatives of the diminishing intellectual ethos of America and it also emphasises their eagerness to represent certain groups of people in modern American circumstances.

Ever since the formation of human society, intellectuals used to play a decisive role in the multidimensional aspects of human life with their peculiar pattern of thought and praxis which enabled them to wield influence upon their fellow human beings. Nevertheless, changes and developments in the concept and actions of intellectuals with diverse movements in history, contemporary idea of intellectual was developed only in the 19th century especially that of the public intellectuals, particularly with the Dreyfus

Affair in France under the leadership of Emile Zola. As a result of series of studies on intellectuals, mostly in Europe, multiple dimensions of their functionalities, responsibilities, characteristics, and existence were brought forth to the world, and concomitant assortments of the very concept by different authors and thinkers received a due place. The thesis presents all such developments in the history with substantial evidences and also the very concept's growth, sustenance, and falling down from its importance once it enjoyed.

This thesis ostensibly proposes a simultaneous study of both the concept of "intellectual" and also the protagonists of seven Bellowian novels with an intention to find out the intellectual bents in these protagonists with the help of thoughts developed by Edward Wadie Said (1935-2003), a public intellectual and a literary theoretician, and with partial reference to the famous French philosopher, social theorist, and literary critic, Michel Foucault (1926-1984). Invariably a lot of studies have been done on Bellow from diverse perspectives and a good number of books, researches, and articles are there about intellectuals. However, a research work about the intellectual heroes of Bellow, done mainly with the help of ideas developed by Said, is not found and this research is a pioneering one in this perspective.

Many thinkers are of the opinion that intellectuals are no more, which means, intellectuals with their particular social, cultural, political, economic, humanitarian, anthropological, religious, and even geological commitment are under extinction in the cosmopolitan developments. While thinking about the multilayered possibilities and functionalities of intellectuals as discussed by people like Antonio Gramsci, Noam Chomsky, Said, Foucault, Thomas Sowell, and Romila Thapar, the researcher presents the detouring aspects in the vocation of intellectuals mainly with the emergence of professional intellectuals in the economized and systematized situations of world.

Bellowian protagonists seem to stick on to their purported objectives, objectives developed mainly by Said, among other intellectuals in the novels with their allegiance to power and proximity to changes in favour of them. The thesis emphasises the necessity of intellectuals who can represent truth, peace, justice, and humanitarian aspects among all sorts of adversities that impede them from implementing their policies for humanity as a whole, either as active activists or as writers and speakers. Even when threats pop-up against their very life, these intellectuals are reluctant to conform to the majority to ensure victory and profit, and prefer to remain as trustworthy stewards of responsibilities entrusted with them. The study highlights the importance and inevitability of interruption and involvement by intellectuals in the abrupt changes that engulf humanity where a good number of people are bereft of justice, peace, equality, and many other bare needs that ensure dignified life as human beings.

Even though the situation analysed in the thesis is American, it resembles the entire world with similarities in the happenings that affect humankind as such. It is hard to hear the voice of other intellectuals in the novels that demand justice for people; they often are satiated with their ivory tower existence safeguarded by power and money reciprocated for their favours performed for the powerful. This thesis has also got a social commitment as it gives sufficient attention to intellectuals and the unfortunate silence and nonchalance they practice in a world where their voice seems inevitable. Each country in its own realm needs intellectuals who can speak louder, speak truth to power, and whose voice is heard in public spheres that demand justice and truth for everyone in the society. Unfortunately, new developments in countries like India emphasise, unlike in any other time, the need of intellectuals to be heard to build up a healthy nation and whereby a healthy universe. In her recently published book, *The Public Intellectual in India*, Thapar, an Indian historian warns against the shrinking nature of intellectuals in India and

poignantly points out the necessity to question the unwanted and unholy nexus between religious bigotry and political vested interests predominantly based on power. She seeks the attention of all by analysing the issues to which proper attention is required from the part of intellectuals in the nation. Thapar and other contributors to the book give a detailed list of areas that demand urgent attention and involvement by the intellectuals such as poverty, education, religious and social stratification, intellectual elitism, atrocities against the weaker rungs of society, alienation of science from societal interaction, inclination of media towards power than to social commitment, and hidden agendas by governments. Almost all of these are applicable to the Bellowian protagonists in their respective society with cultural and circumstantial changes. And they relentlessly fight against these social and humanitarian evils using different media.

Bellow was born in 1915 in Lachine, Quebec, in Canada on 10th June and along with his family was migrated to Chicago in 1924. He published his first story “Two Morning Monologues” in *Partisan Review* in 1941 and in 1944 *Dangling Man*, Bellow’s first novel came out mainly in the background of Second World War (SWW, hereafter the same abbreviation is followed). Bellow’s other important works are *The Victim* (1947), *The Adventures of Augie March* (1953), *Seize the Day* (1956), *Henderson, the Rain King* (1959), *Herzog* (1964), *The Last Analysis* (1965), *A Wen* (1966), *Mosby’s Memoirs and Other Stories* (1968), *Mr. Sammler’s Planet* (1970), *Humboldt’s Gift* (1975), *To Jerusalem and Back* (1976), *The Dean’s December* (1982), *Him with His Foot in His Mouth and Other Stories* (1984), *More Die of Heartbreak* (1987), *A Theft and The Bellarosa Connection* (1989), *Something to remember Me By* (1992), *All Adds Up: From the Dim Past to the Uncertain Future* (1994), *The Actual* (1997), *Ravelstein* (2000), and *Collected Stories* (2001). He is credited with plenty of awards such as National Book Award (1954, 1965, 1971), Croix de Chevalier des Arts et Lettres (1968), Pulitzer Prize

(1976), Nobel Prize for Literature (1976), Malaparte Award (1984), National Medal of Arts (1988), and National Book Award Foundation Medal (1990). He is the only one with three National Book Awards and was awarded Nobel Prize for Literature for the human understanding and subtle analysis of contemporary culture that were combined in his work, and probably the only one who received Honorary Degree from both Harvard and Yale universities in the same year.

Bellow's first two novels, *DM* and *The Victim* are written mainly in the background of SWW. Joseph and Asa Leventhal, heroes of each novel respectively represent mainly the psychological, ethnical, and existential dilemmas of humanity against the backdrop of SWW. Henderson in *HRK*, a fifty-five year old intellectual protagonist who is deeply dissatisfied with his present life and grand wealth represents the discontent among all sorts of American affluence. He goes to the interior parts of Africa in search of meaning of his self and visits Arnewi firstly and Wariri, where he eventually becomes the Rain King. The haunting sound, "*I want, I want!*" (32), that follows him wherever he goes comes to an end when Henderson realises that love is the panacea that humanity need most in life and that knowledge transforms him.

Bellow's *A Theft* and *The Bellarosa Connection*, two novellas published in 1989 develop mainly through the memories of Clara Velde in the former one and the unnamed narrator in the latter, who tells about Billy Rose, Harry Fonstein and his wife Sorella. Americanism, human emotions and bonds, Jewish immigration, and reactions to human realities are the common themes dealt with in these novellas. *The Actual*, yet another novella by Bellow, presents the life of Harry Trellman, an orphan hero and his friendship with an old billionaire Sigmund Adletsky whose prime intention is to amass money through real estate business, but he tries to join Trellman with Amy Wustrin, Trellman's childhood sweetheart. This act brings love and satisfaction into the life of these Chicago

people. His last novel *Ravelstein* written at the age of eighty-five, narrates the friendship between two university professors, Abe Ravelstein, the title character, and the narrator who is addressed by Ravelstein as “Chick” and otherwise nameless. *Ravelstein* presents mainly the life of Bellow’s friend, Allan Bloom, who is known for his bestselling book *The Closing of the American Mind*, who appears as Ravelstein, a fierce intellectual in the novel who dies of AIDS. Some other characters also represent real life people, such as Nikki, the lover of Ravelstein – Bloom’s real life lover Michael Wu – and Rakhmiel Kogon, a character based on Edward Shils. The novel depicts the two friends’ intellectual and erotic attachment even at the time of one’s looming death. All these novels and novellas are reminiscent of the mastery Bellow enjoys over psychological and existential aspects of human life. Life in its basic and crude forms is unveiled in them.

Bellow’s short stories are published mainly in three collections, viz. *Mosby’s Memories and Other Stories*, *Him with His Foot in His Mouth and Other Stories*, and *Something to Remember Me By: Three Tales*. When the first collection consists of six stories, the second and third collections have five and three stories respectively. “Looking for Mr. Green” (1951), “The Gonzaga Manuscript” (1954), “A Father-to-Be” (1955), “Leaving the Yellow House” (1957), “The Old System” (1967), and “Mosby’s Memories” (1968), are developed through the memories of different people. All of these, except Hattie Waggoner in “Leaving the Yellow House”, have male protagonists. These stories bear similarities with his novels both in themes and characterisation but have unique styles of narration and human emotions and deeper expressions vary one from another. Five stories in the second collection are “Zetland: By a Character Witness” (1974), “A Silver Dish” (1978), “Him with His Foot in His Mouth” (1982), “Cousins” (1984) and “What Kind of Day Did You Have”(1984). Katrina Goliger becomes Bellow’s second female protagonist along with Waggoner. Many of the heroes are presented as

intellectuals in these stories too. The memory is used as the common tool of narration in these stories and Bellow has applied modernism and postmodernism in his style as a storyteller. Each of these stories tells about diverse aspects of human life under different circumstances and human relationship.

Bellow expresses his own style of writing more with a social commitment without sticking on to a single pointed writing technique and even seems so active after winning Nobel Prize, which is something rare about writers who think they are done. He is particular in giving ample attention to human race and its problems in the modern age, especially preceded by the SWW with emergence of all sorts of ideologies and theories that place an entirely different world view and aspects of human life. The thesis discusses a few features of his writing with special emphasis on the prevalent thinking patterns of the age such as Existentialism, modernism, humanism, psychoanalysis etc. Bellow's interest is mainly on urban culture of the twentieth century where predominant changes have affected human life in an unprecedented manner. He sees through his literary works the contemporary cultural, societal, and humanitarian perceptions and comprehensions of American city life with all its challenges and deviations as a result of proliferation of ideologies. His novels and short stories mainly illustrate human life with all its magnificence and dignity irrespective of all types of prevalent apocalyptic and nihilistic tendencies of the era.

Unlike many of his contemporary Jewish American writers like Philip Roth, Norman Mailer, and Bernard Malamud, Bellow has preferred to give importance to the moral and ethical aspects of human life but of course not from a particular religious point of view but rather of secular importance. However, one can easily sort out multi-religious dimensions in his works but mostly unconventional in approach. This unconventionality combined with nonconformist attitude is apparent in the creation of his intellectual heroes

and this is highlighted in the thesis. Though his novels can be read from various perspectives, this thesis aims mainly at the exposition of his intellectual protagonists in the seven selected novels with the help of Said's ideas of intellectuals. From his novels, *The Adventures of Augie March*, *Seize the Day*, *Herzog*, *Mr. Sammler's Planet*, *Humboldt's Gift*, *The Dean's December*, and *More Die of Heartbreak* are selected by the researcher for study mainly due to the protagonists' inclination towards the theoretical aspects of intellectuals developed by Said.

Ellen Pifer in *Saul Bellow: Against the Grain* (1991) describes the relentless battles the protagonists of Bellow undergo in their confrontations with the world around them. Pifer goes into the division that each of these heroes suffers in their psyche, i.e. they are divided against themselves. The tremendous conflict in their mental disposition emerges mainly out of the war between the established notions of the society and the protagonists' own ideals that necessarily counteract the former ones. Pifer emphasises the Bellowian style of unravelling the importance of soul and transcending the conventional and prevalent systems of the society. Bellow's religious approach to different rational practices in the modern society also is stressed in the book by relating his ideas to various religions and at the same time not depending to a particular one. Pifer seeks the help of the model of organic growth as proposed by Stock to develop his ideas. He has followed a random selection of Bellowian works for explicating the religious perspectives of Bellow in the modern times.

Gloria L. Cronin's *A Room of His Own: In Search of the Feminine in the Novels of Saul Bellow* (2001) deals primarily with absence of or the constant search of the heroes of Bellow for mother, lover, female friend, sister etc in his androcentric novels. In other words, she approaches Bellow and his novels from the perspectives of gender studies. Cronin is not ready to taboo Bellow either as a misogynist or a male chauvinist for his

character portrayal. However, this tends to keep themselves from their female counterparts, and that recalls the traditional patriarchal tendencies and the conflict of these protagonists who search for something else. In the book she seeks reasons for the absence of the presence of female characters the heroes seek for. She tries to read the texts by Bellow against themselves by which she can understand the gender operations in them and also in the society.

In *Saul Bellow and American Transcendentalism* (2004), Mohammad A. Quayum brings out the American Transcendental influences in the writings of Bellow and depicts him as neo-transcendentalist who received inspiration from Emerson, Thoreau, and Whitman. Quayum has selected five novels of Bellow to expound his arguments and substantiate his findings. He portrays how these heroes become redeemers of the world along with their own personal redemption in a multi-divided world. He tells how the Bellowian protagonists try to keep the balance amidst so much dichotomies and compartmentalisations on different aspects in the twentieth century. They, according to Quayum, relentlessly attempt to live on with a combination of faith and spiritual aspects in a world engulfed by too much theories and abstractions devoid of human spirit. The protagonists prove to be extraordinary in dealing with conventionalities and go for a union of spirit and nature, life and death, and many other opposite laws, and whereby seek equilibrium. Quayum argues that Bellow has adopted the nineteenth century views of Transcendentalism developed by Emerson and Whitman in his twentieth century living situations.

Thesis titled “The Emergence of Protagonists as Intellectual Survivors in Saul Bellow’s Novels” by M. Kannambal is “a close study of the multi-layered consciousness of Saul Bellow’s intellectual protagonists and of the subtle transformation they undergo in the course of their lives to emerge as intellectual survivors” (np). It stresses the rejection

of nihilistic and apocalyptic views of humanity and Bellow's all embracing social aspects. Here the researcher has taken seven novels of Bellow to substantiate her arguments that support the heroes of the author as supporters of faith in humanity and with a strong vision, faith in God, and as propagators of morality despite their human weakness and helplessness. Kannambal has given attention to the importance of the emergence of his intellectual protagonist in the twentieth century world especially in the western world. She has stressed alienating nature of the protagonists, their love for freedom, and brooding nature.

Anu Shukla in her *The Novels of Saul Bellow: A Study in the Problematics of Self and Society* (2009) predominantly attempts to discuss how Bellow has portrayed human self from different perspectives such as sociological, philosophical, and psychological. The book explains Bellow's reluctance to assimilate the leading philosophical and existential theories of the period and sees how he scorns the superficial attempts by ideologists to confine human realities to ideas. Shukla exposes Bellow's eagerness to expound human self as it is. Some other topics discussed in the book are the protagonists' problems and conflicts with society that often hinders their self and transcendental inclinations in Bellow as a writer. She sees how Bellow has emphasised the demerits of unnecessary and over-involvement of society in individuals' life. Some other aspects that draw one's attention in the book are harmonious existence of all in the society, human self's free engagement with the society, and the usual conflicts emerge between individual self and conventional human society. Shukla also recognises the unique Bellowian style of writing that sets him apart from other writers of his period.

In *The Fictional World of Saul Bellow* (2012), Ishteyaque Shams deals mainly with Bellow's novels and two short stories. By analysing Bellow's works, especially his novels, Shams exposes the multidimensional aspects in his writing as a Jewish American

writer who wrote much amidst chaos and restlessness. Still, Bellow, according to him proves to be optimistic in dealing with humanity. The author tries to prove realism, naturalism, and unavoidable traces of romanticism in Bellow's fictional writings which stresses the aspects of individualism, i.e., emergence of knowledge mainly from intuition than from scientific interference. More than a popular writer, Bellow proved to be writer with a clear social vision and a goal and is inspired by Great Russian masters who proved immense possibilities of storytelling. Bellow, according to Shams, has owned deep knowledge about the contemporary theories and philosophies of Europe and has made use of them in his fictions as well. The book brings out mainly the humanism in Bellow's writings and justifies the alienation of his heroes with positive attitude than as the outcome of Bellow's masochist inclination.

Ruchi Verma in the thesis "Anxiety in the Selected Novels of Saul Bellow" presents Bellow's concern over the problematic existence of human being in an age of anxiety, i.e. the mid-twentieth century. She deals with Bellowian presentation of different modes of anxieties influenced mainly by Existentialism, Judaism, and Transcendentalism and how his characters have faced problems of anxiety. The researcher has presented the influence of Existentialism that brought out the issue of anxiety unlike in any other periods in history, especially in the formation of his characters in the earlier novels. The work analyses the predicament of human existence from different perspectives as they are depicted in Bellow's novels. Male anxieties and uncertainties in a patriarchal society due to women empowerment are also discussed in the thesis. Yet another form of anxiety that binds all is that of death. Instead of developing the pessimistic and murky sides of anxieties, Verma has come up with the idea that anxiety is something to be addressed and confronted as a means of self realisation. Detailed study is being done on the influence of Judaism and Transcendentalism on Bellow in dealing with anxiety. According to her,

Bellow's characters' peculiar style of looking at life enables them to confront anxiety in their respective age of existence.

“Vision of Saul Bellow as Reflected in His Novels” by Pallavi Agarwal, “The Art of Saul Bellow” by Nilima Pimpalure, “Stillness in the Midst of Chaos: A Critical Study of the Select Novels of Saul Bellow” by Nagarathinm are some other research works on Bellow among tens of Ph. D theses done on him. The researcher has gone through many other articles and secondary materials that speak about multiple aspects of Bellowian writing. Again, as the thesis gives equal importance to “intellectual”, books, essays, and articles on intellectuals, especially books and articles by Said, are also widely read to substantiate the arguments about intellectuals in the thesis. Thapar's *The Public Intellectual in India* (2015), a collection of essays by different authors that has come up as a result of responses to her third Nikhil Chakravarty Memorial Lecture delivered on 26th October 2014 can be considered as the latest in this genre. She vigorously exhorts intellectuals in the country to come forward leaving behind their carapaces of fear, security, and alienation to question fearlessly the inhuman, unjust, intolerant, prejudiced, and unintelligent political, social, and religious developments in India. Thapar and other essayists illustrate the lethargy and disinterestedness crept into the very heart of public intellectuals in India like any other parts of the world. Their withdrawal due to many reasons is highlighted in the book.

Thus, after meaningful search by the researcher for works on Bellowian protagonists as intellectuals from this particular perspective, it is concluded that no other work has been done on it and it emphasises the genuine nature of this thesis. Simultaneous importance is given to both the concept of intellectual and also to Bellow as a master craftsman. The first two chapters prepare the ground for a meaningful and

comprehensive analysis of the Bellowian protagonists of the selected seven novels with the help of Said's arguments on intellectuals.

The second chapter of the thesis titled "Trajectory and Ramification" introduces the development of the term "intellectual" in the human history and the existence of intellectuals in diverse civilisations and cultures even from earlier centuries onwards. The researcher has taken Greek, Indian, Chinese, Japanese, African, European, and American civilisations to substantiate the historical presence and development of intellectuals in these cultural centres in different continents and which by no means exclude intellectuals' influence and importance in other cultures. Along with trail of the intellectuals, a rather detailed categorisation of them by different writers and thinkers are also dealt with in the second chapter.

In the third chapter, "Said, Foucault and Responsibility of the 'Intellectual'", the researcher explores the ideas developed by Said and Foucault on intellectuals and their functions in the society and special emphasis is given to the thoughts developed by Said as they help more to expound Bellowian protagonists. With the help of books and articles written by Said and works done on him, his ideas regarding the functionality and responsibility of the intellectuals are exposed. Foucaultian ideas are also discussed with ample importance and are included in the development of the thesis. This chapter analyses the responsibility of the intellectuals, a particular topic discussed by many well-known people in the world especially in the context of changes in the world.

Fourth chapter, "The Counterculture" mainly discusses Jewish writers in America who are descended mainly from their immigrant ancestors and sees how Jewishness has influenced their literary works mainly fictions. Bellow, as a prominent Jewish American writer is discussed here with special importance, and attention is given to his protagonists

as representatives of a counterculture envisaged by the author himself in a world divided on many grounds. Bellow's ideas about intellectuals are given a due place in this chapter. Although he cannot be attached to a single theory or ideology as fiction writer, multiple aspects of his writing as a result of influence of Existentialism, Modernism, Psychoanalysis, and Humanism can be found in his works. This chapter deals also with such factors as they contribute to the formation of the characteristics of his protagonists.

In the fifth chapter, "Representations", the central idea of the thesis is discussed, that is, the analysis of Bellowian heroes in the selected seven novels mostly from the point of view of Said. It attempts a justification of the title of the thesis and sees the intellectual protagonists as representatives of themselves and also of a certain groups of people in the society. A chronological order of the novels is followed here. The thesis ends with the sixth chapter, i.e. the Summing up, where the researcher concludes the argument and the hypothesis is also discussed proven.