THE OEUVRES OF SAUL BELLOW, BERNARD MALAMUD, AND PHILIP ROTH: A CRITICAL, COMPARATIVE STUDY OF IDENTITY, FREEDOM, RACISM, AND AMERICANISM

PREFACE


The significance, relevance, consequence and the contributory character of the key terms involved in the thesis entitled "The Oeuvres of Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth: A Critical, Comparative Study of Identity, Freedom, Racism, and Americanism," are clearly brought out and well established in this Doctoral Dissertation.

The method adopted is one of close and critical analysis. The approaches are sociological, and psychological. There is a sincere and studied attempt to analyze, synthesize, interpret and evaluate the works of Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth, on their thematic importance, relevance, and consequence, and on their form, structure and organization - - the Gestalt.

Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth are subjected to a close, critical, perceptive, and comprehensive study in this Dissertation because they
are quite impressive Jewish American fictionists.

It is an acknowledged fact that their mind set as creative artists is of an outstanding calibre and high artistic maturation. They have the rare capacity to open up a closed world and to make it clearly visible to perceptive and critically oriented readers. Clear thinking and great originality mark their Jewish American fictions. Their literary products are qualified by contextual relevance, structural finesse, and organizational tightness, and verbal brilliance, and artistic control.

At this juncture, it is stressed that this Doctoral Dissertation indisputably identifies Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth as the outstanding and remarkable artistic geniuses, who have contributed immensely to the growth, strength, and relevance of Jewish American Literature, and by extension to World Literature.

Furthermore, the literary products of Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth gain lasting value mainly because they reflect on the problems and issues of life, which are universally experienced by all in all ages in the past and also in the years to come. In fact, life precedes literature as far as Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth is concerned.

By introducing humanistic concerns and universals Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth ensure lasting value and quality to their Jewish American fictions. Moreover, they take all the writing care at their disposal to see to it that the structure is of a balanced and perfect manner and that the organization is tightly well knit, without any lose ends. In their accent on Gestalt Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth merit a close, and critical, and analytical study.
Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth concentrate on the generic form, which is fiction. They realize the importance of balancing the form against the content. In other words, they do not sacrifice content for form. Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth place the accent, in a balanced manner, on the elements of fiction and the rhetorical requirements, which overlap one another. There is the proper description of the milieu, Zeitgeist, and the race, class and gender.

Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth place equal accent on accurate storytelling as well. They value the importance of tight plot construction, and effective narration. There is the right fusion of intellection and intuition. It is not all inspiration, but inspiration channelled through crafted art. It ought to be stressed that Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth are technical virtuosi. They are bestowed with the talent to employ the literary tools and devices with functional valuations and variations.

Furthermore, their Weltanschauung is deeply coloured but not totally obtruded by the stresses and strains - - the Sturm-und-Drang - - the tensions and anxieties - - Angst - - experienced by men and women.

Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth concentrate on the psychic angle of their characters, which experience mental crises and psychic strains and stresses. The familial relationships have touched an unhealthily low because of sexism, or over-sexed or under-sexed condition, and the beastly animalism, and indifference on the part of the men characters.

There is the stress on a life that is rooted in a mechanical and daily dull routine. The tempo of life is one of a fast phase and it is fast living and nothing else. Therefore,
the tragedy of men and women are that they have lost their self-respect, honour, and dignity, and as a consequence they lose their separate and distinct individuality.

In such a context, notwithstanding the phenomenal material gains and high standard of living men and women suffer from mental crises and as a result of the persistent psychic strains and stresses turn into neurotic case studies. It ought to be stressed that the characters in the fictions of Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth are better studied and appreciated from the angle of psychoanalysis.

In fact, the fictions and psychology of Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth stand upon common ground. Both are concerned with human motivations and behaviour. Any examination of their fictions and psychology must concern itself with the direct fertilization of their imaginative writing by psychoanalysis.

Freud classifies instincts on the basis of their functions. The life instinct, *Eros*, contributes to the perpetuation of the individual and the species. The energy by which *Eros* operates is *Libido*. The trend toward death is an inborn instinct, known as *Thamatos*. The *Libido* is that part of the *Id* structure, which seeks its gratification from purely sexual activities.

The essential point to notice is that psychoanalysis shows that the artist is initially by tendency a neurotic, but that in becoming an artist, he escapes the ultimate fate of his tendency and through art he finds his way back to reality.

This is what Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth achieve through their art.
Incidentally, through their effective way of describing the scene of action and time of action, Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth evoke the right responses and correct emotions. But the descriptions do not root themselves at the level of emotions and physicality. On the other hand the powers of evoked emotions strengthen the promotion of the next level of intellect and finally the higher level of moral and spiritual thinking.

The Jewish American fictions of Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth enable the perceptive and critically oriented reader to detect the clarity of her vision, range, depth, scope, and dynamism of their writing. In fact, through their literary products they project themselves as the most distinguished Jewish American fictionists of the post war period.

The First Chapter entitled, Creative Artists, identifies, and distinguishes Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth as endowed with remarkable creative capacities, imaginative bent of mind, verbal brilliance, writing skills and the rich ability to marry inspiration with expression. Undeniably, Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth are extremely outstanding artistic geniuses and they excel in the field of fictional writing.

In this First Chapter, there is the identification of Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth as the equipped, talented, and ingenious artists, capable of expressing their feelings, thoughts and experiences in apt language, choice diction, and through convincing descriptions, persuasive narration, remarkable story telling, brilliant plot construction, striking dialogue writing and purposive argumentation. In fact, they are extraordinarily brilliant Jewish American artists capable of handling American English effectually and persuasively.
In fact, Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth are endowed with immense creative powers and heightened sensibility, and clarity of vision and rich imaginative capacity and writing talents and language power.

It ought to be recorded that Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth are undoubtedly one of the greatest storytellers of all times. They have great inventive capacities and supreme technical mastery and as such they could alter the very conception and execution of the literary form, which is fiction.

Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth, possesses the rare ability to enclose the old and new. They strongly demonstrate through their Jewish American fictions that nothing is better than simplicity. They see to it that in their works there is unity, cohesion, coherence, completeness, harmony, balance, symmetry, and above all order. All these and more receive critical attention in the First Chapter of this Dissertation, entitled, Creative Artist.

The Second Chapter entitled, Identity Crises, examines the major themes of the present century. Several factors impinge on the freedom and identity of the individual. Societal impositions, constraints thrust on every individual by the Establishment, dailiness, routineness, mechanicalness, money spinning spree, materialism, and militarism make inroads into the individuality of the individual and reduce him to mere ciphers -- squarerootofminusone -- mere nothing.

As such a man or woman loses his or her freedom and identity. This results in a feverish search for identity.
In the case of the women characters of Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth the biological determinism, patriarchal domination, and the oppressive standards set by the male chauvinists make them lose their identity and freedom, and force them to turn into neurotic case studies. All these merit consideration in the second chapter.

The Third Chapter entitled, Racial Predicaments, examines all aspects of ethnicity, racism, Diaspora, and the cultural divide experienced by the Jewish Americans.

In this Third Chapter the significance, relevance, and consequence of the accent on individualism, individual's integrity, honour, self-respect, and candour, non-conformism, and self-reliance and identity, the loss of identity, and the consequent search for identity are carefully examined.

The Fourth Chapter closely and analytically examines the major theme of alienation in the postmodern world. This Chapter, entitled, Alienation, identifies the male and female characters in the fictions of Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip as alienates.

Alienation is multiform. There are five distinguishable variants of alienation and they are powerlessness, meaninglessness, normlessness, isolation, and self-estrangement. These variants are applied to judge the characters of Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth as alienates.

The Fifth Chapter, entitled, Existential Sufferers, refers to the suffering selves in the Jewish American fictions of Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth.
In this context the two Schools of Existentialists, one headed by Jean Paul Sartre and the other by Soren Abaye Kierkegaard are listed and the existential situations are defined and elaborated. Of the existential perils, the two that grip the attention of the Researcher here are suffering and struggle.


It is in the precise sense that American Experience is based on equality, candour, self-reliance, individualism, liberty, freedom, democratic processes, readiness to confront all hardships all odds and all challenges of life. The corresponding learning experiences will be mutually beneficial.

The glorious definition of Abraham Lincoln that American Democracy is the pragmatic form of government of the people, by the people, for the people. In letter and spirit this is put into effectual practice. *The Holy Bible* to the Americans is sacred, supreme, and sovereign. Their faith in the American Constitution is supreme and sovereign. It is next to that of their faith in *The Holy Bible*. In fact, all Americans are Constructionists.

Another significant feature of America is that America is a nation of bursting contrarieties in the face of the larger unity. Even a cursory view of America will enable the perceptive outsider to detect the several levels of contradictions surfacing in Americans and in America.

American Democracy balances individualism against the safety, security, prosperity, territorial integrity and the unity in America. In other words, Thomas
Jefferson's stress on the individualism of the individual is matched by Abraham Lincoln's accent on qualified liberty and the essential unity of America. In fine, the best interests of the individual and the best interests of the nation are well balanced.

All Americans immortalize America as the land of freedom. American Experience argues for independence of mind and deed. American Experience upholds capitalism, savings, free enterprise, and privatization. There is the sustained focus on the equality of opportunities and the equality before law. American Experience underscores the fact that diplomacy is the first line of defence and militarism is the second line of approach to solve problems. It places the stress on candour, self-reliance, progress, affirmation, pragmatism and dynamism and distinct individualistic identity, and at the same time places the emphasis on American mainstream culture.

The Seventh Chapter entitled, *Crafted Art and Argumentation*, studies Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth as technical virtuosi. This Chapter highlights how Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth deal with the form - fiction - and how they construct the plot structure of their fictions, and how effectively and tightly they link all the units of the novel into a well organized whole.

The Seventh Chapter highlights how Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth deal with the form - fiction - and how they construct the plot structure of their fictions, and how effectively and tightly they link all the units of the novel into a well organized whole.

There is the concentration on narratology. The narrative techniques are elaborately defined, discussed and illustrated. There is the reference to the characterization, the language skills, language maximization, verbal brilliance, imagery,
choice diction, descriptive excellence, narrative techniques, and dialogue writing. The techniques and the devices and the functional valuations and variations of the tools employed by Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth are carefully examined.

This Seventh Chapter examines the Argumentation of Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth in the form of summation and documentation to establish the relevance, significance and consequence of the thesis. It highlights the argumentation that lies concealed in the fictions of Saul Bellow, Bernard Malamud, and Philip Roth.

There is an updated bibliography appended at the end of the thesis.