CONCLUSION

I am sure if you look back upon your lives you will find that you were always vainly trying to get help from others which never came. All the help that came was from within yourselves.

Self-Discovery

THE SELF

The modern world today is a world of materialism. It is affected by various problems. Man is disappointed and frustrated; people are crushed by the competitions in this modern material world. But it is the privilege of man to achieve greatness. The tragedy of human race can be avoided if each individual knows the art of diligently using their own abilities and efficiencies. An individual exists with infinite potentials. Many great thinkers insist that man ought to realize this potential in him for building up a successful life. This success and power lies in knowing or realizing the real authentic self within. The idea of morality enhances the individual’s power and success. Moral consciousness in its strict sense is the capability of distinguishing between right and wrong. Many religions and great thinkers have recommended the importance of moral values to uplift the disintegrating and deteriorating society. Consciousness is a sort of awareness that channelizes man’s thinking. It enables one to perform
his duty perfectly and act according to the awareness of what is good, right and wrong.

Vedanta uncompromisingly insists that man is essentially perfect. The cry of great men is that man should realize that each one has within himself resources, ability, energy and power for making a supreme life for oneself and others in the world. There exists within one a great and covetable gift which is distinctly ours at all times, and this is one’s profound capacity to discover, develop and usefully employ the infinite Essence existing in all. According to the views of philosophers, a life well spent is considered to be one in which the discovery of the potentialities within every one becomes possible. It is also one in which the individuals behavior is to be nourished and nurtured. Real success is that which brings about the transformation of one’s personality and character.

**Awareness of the Self**

The change of personality and character becomes possible when one realizes the importance of the self. Absolute peace can be attained when one becomes aware of the calm motionless, blissful self within. This self is eternally untroubled and unaffected by the touches of things, has sufficiency, and leads to eternal satisfaction.
Bellow has attempted to unravel the marvels of the self. His novels portray individuals as men who assert their private self and they live with the awareness of the pure self. They also exhibit a great moral concern and show keen interest to change the world into a world of harmony. His main concern is to make clear the existence of the self and simultaneously he has endeavored to highlight the importance of moral values. As a prolific and versatile writer Bellow has depicted the predicaments in the lives of individuals. Bellow portrays his protagonists as those who strive to establish their self and as those who acknowledge their moral consciousness in spite of the predicaments with themselves and the society.

Bellow who gave an interview to W.J. Weatherby, the journalist, in The Guardian after his Nobel Speech regarded himself only as “an apprentice or a journeyman,” and hath stated that he hopes that his books have given off greater reverberations than the ideas found in the pages of his books. He states the message that as a novelist he has not become super ambitious. He further states that his firm conviction is that the writer should impart relevant information to bring about the necessary change in the society.

Bellow is the novelist of the post-war American fiction and a Nobel Laureate. He is considered to be an eminent novelist for his work
is appealing, abiding, enduring and survives the test of time and place by virtue of its intellectual nature, affirmative note and universal tenor. The protagonists of the novels voice the Bellovian idea, the rediscovery of fundamental truth is his endeavor as a novelist.

The modern forces like the world of hostile environment, stifling atmosphere, suffocating milieu and anxiety, decadent culture and de-humanization, Byzantine luxury, abuse of sex, lust for power, deny not only the existence of the self but also the expression of its vision. So Bellow observes in his novels that public life and its pressure have dwarfed the noble nature in an individual and it has crippled his moral tendencies. Spiritual values are at a loss. Hence Bellow portrays his protagonists as individuals who make and raise fundamental questions related to the idea of the self, showing great concern for essential human recovery, the recovery of the self from earthy ties. Thus Bellow can be pictured as a mariner who navigates the contemporary American life towards the knowledge of the authentic self. One can find in him an urge to free the society from its moral decay.

Bellow advocates his ideas through his protagonists. Through them he raises fundamental questions as to what life is. How should a good man live? What is right and what is wrong. He is supposed to be the
novelist of the modern angst. In relation to Bellow’s fiction, the term modern angst indicates Bellow’s concern for man, for self, for the individual. It stands for the anxiety at the sorry state of human life in post-modern period. He projects this anxiety through his art. He has attempted to show how the whole human society in this modern age has been affected by the process of dehumanization, which in turn has wiped out the individual's name, character, personality and everything related to his person. Hence Bellow is impelled to establish the supremacy of humanity, humanity which is in crisis and disorder.

The works of Bellow enunciate philosophical ideas. He can be considered to be a philosopher, a novelist of the Nietzschean, the sixth sense, he exhibits concern for the noble nature or the true self in man. His interviews are expressions of his ‘far-reaching play-of-mind’ in which he insists that each individual on this earth has an inner conviction and are here on a very strange contingency plan. He further adds that many do not understand the nature and purpose of their existence in this world. The novelist insists that the success of one’s life depends upon the discovery of the truth and reality existing in him. But the feeling to know and realize the absolute reality may appear totally strange to an individual who is distracted by the activities of social life. Therefore the writer
repeatedly states that many are misled by education and fail to believe in the mysteries of life.

In an interview with Jo Brans he has stated that writers have something important to transmit and he has added that there is a place on this earth where a human being can exist with all his spiritual possessions, and human beings have permanent attributes. He observes that there is something extraordinary in every human being. So that man should throw off his pretending soul, and seek true soul in spite of the distractions that impede one's way. His imagination endeavors to comprehend the inner life of man, to discover the essential nature of humanity, to struggle against the discovering forces, to inculcate love and care for all human beings and find wisdom out of confusion. Therefore it can be said that the author reveals a sensibility for the authentic self.

Bellow's novels include everything ascribed to knowledge, love, freedom, death, power, morality, society, all the various joys and applications of being human, in a sophisticated language, all which we grasp heartily and intellectually. Knowledge is given first preference and Bellow appears to carry his epistemological investigations to their imaginative limits in his encounter with social issues. His characters do not live by false values, nor do they evade moral responsibilities and commitments and turn their back on their fellow men or retreat from the
reality of their own fallible self. In contrast, they summon the strength to break out of their illusion and they overcome the demons of inertia and blind conformity. They learn to face the world with their individual standard of good and honest conduct. They also become more mature through the experiences they encounter and finally know that an honest self-examination and communication with others opens up channels of self awareness. His characters strive for the realization of **simple genuine self against the whole world**. Among American ethnic diversity and dilemmas, they show that there is still hope for fundamental humanism to triumph in this weary world.

He is assumed to be a writer who portrays apocalyptic journeys of the American Soul, and as one who explores the various experiences that the individuals have in their society. His roots go deep into the American tradition extending from the transcendentalists to Hawthorne, Melville, Twain, Whitman, Fitzgerald, Faulkner and Hemingway, but his writings reveal a close proximity to the times in which he lived, he had added his own rhythm and colors to American fiction. He had responded to various factors like alienation and his works contain in them an exploration of the nightmarish recesses of the self. In his own works he upholds what is necessary and by the method of omission criticizes what he understands as the errors and excesses of others. He finds exuberant ethical and
aesthetic pleasure in his experiences with and in the society and in doing this he overcomes his ethnic obsession and lives in the universal human context.

The present thesis has dealt with six different novels of Bellow. The first chapter has traced the concept of the self and the idea of moral consciousness inherent in the protagonists of the chosen novels. It has also made a study of the approaches towards it by great men. The chapter has analyzed the biography of Bellow with reference to moments in his life in which he had had similar experiences like that of his protagonists. James Atlas had made a study of Bellow’s biography and he states that Bellow was often conscious of good, bad, right and righteousness.

The novels discussed in the thesis make clear the protagonist’s predicament in this modern world. Every individual is part of the society in which he lives. The society makes a strong influence on his personality, accordingly the self of the individual gets shaped and affected. Great men have stressed the presence of the “I” or the Self within every individual. This I concept is the divine light existent in every individual. The self gets dimmed and shadowed by acts of the external world. Hence it may be difficult for any individual to perceive a total perception of the self within him. The presence of the self is associated with morality and moral consciousness. These appear as agents that
promote the awareness or and consciousness of the self. Great thinkers have observed that every individual should try to know and realize the divine light existing within him. In this modern world of materialism this pursuit or consciousness is disturbed by external factors like family, society, jealousy, misunderstanding, immorality which shadow the awareness of the self.

The researcher has made a study of the following aspects regarding the self: The authentic self, the real human within or the noble nature in man and the idea of moral consciousness in the protagonists of Bellow. These protagonists show an earnest endeavor to redeem the society from its evils. The noble nature in them makes them show concern for the society. They observe the activities of people around them and attempt and hope that people would alter their attitudes in order to redeem the society from its evils. To a certain extent they find justice, the experiences they undergo changes their attitudes and personality.

The individual self of the protagonists is always seen in struggle with people and society. Joseph of *Dangling Man* has problems from his wife Iva. He has no money and has to live on his wife's earnings. This gives way to their misunderstanding and separation. Hence he is unable to move closely with his society, he keeps himself away from the society and engages himself in introspection to know answers related to the self.
He learns that the conditions in the society which is more inclined towards materialism cannot allow a good conception of the self. Therefore he decides to serve the army. This service according to him is true freedom. He hopes to find some meaning beyond the ordinary life.

The protagonist, Asa Leventhal, in *The Victim* is pursued by Kirby Albee. He appears to be his inner consciousness awakening him to know the nature of the self. He thinks that he has to suffer for the faults that he had committed, and has an interior suffocation. The novel appears to cast off the self imposed burdens by learning to accept oneself and others with an open mind. These attitudes are possible only when one prevails with moral consciousness. The novelist has revealed the truth that every individual exists with the authentic self or the noble nature, and the individual should realize its presence. This identification helps Leventhal to overcome his controversy with Albee. Leventhal who is in struggle with individuals and society, finally alters his ideas and personality. He learns to adjust and live in the existing circumstances.

The protagonist of *Henderson the Rain King* is in quest of the wisdom of life. He attempts to awaken his soul from sleep, and is motivated by an inner voice, I want! I want! Africa is the platform that offers him the knowledge and wisdom of the self. His present city atmosphere does not offer him any message; hence he goes in search of
primitive culture. He meets Willatale, the queen of the Arnewi tribe and finds a kind of power that emanates from her and it softens his hungry soul. She reminds him that he has within him the life force. He feels that “the skies are opening up”, she reminds him that the awareness of the life force can be experienced only when the individual exists with the authentic self, the noble nature and moral consciousness.

He next travels and meets the Wariri tribe. Its king Dahfu is Henderson’s spiritual counselor. Dahfu is seen to be one who is physically and spiritually noble and Henderson sees him as a visionary and a savior. Dahfu counsels him that a noble self-conception is everything. He further adds that, “face and body are the book of the soul”. He also learns through him the truth that death is inevitable. The journey he undertakes gives him a new insight and awakening. He comes to know the truth regarding the presence of the life force in man. Hence, finally, when he lands in Newfoundland he jumps in joy as one who has attained spiritual enlightenment. Henderson’s search is for the identification of the self, the noble nature or the life force. The experiences that he has assert his success. He learns the truth about life and realizes the existence of the authentic self.

The awareness that Herzog undergoes is purely mental. His revelations are mostly psychological. He intimates his desires through
letters to his friends, relations and even to God. He is interested in renewing universal connections. He is a moral survivor. He shows extreme concern for the external world. He insists on leading a moral, useful and active life. His need is to know, “what we are and what we are for”. These considerations of Herzog are the outcome of his moral consciousness and the presence of the authentic self. The novel portrays the protagonist’s essential quest of the self and his moral aspirations to restore equilibrium to reconcile the opposite forces of his being. He believes greatly in the greatness of the human heart. Throughout the novel Herzog endeavors to establish his self-hood and self-development.

The novels Humboldt's Gift and The Dean's December are more transcendental in their outlook. Humboldt's Gift has two protagonists, Citrine and Humboldt, the latter seems to be the former’s antagonist. Humboldt is also portrayed as a force awakening Citrine to gain the knowledge about the human spirit. He relieves Citrine of his repressive fears and instructs that, the real beauty is that of the soul. Hence Citrine becomes interested to know the inner voice of his soul. So he retires to a room in a hotel at Madrid to involve in meditation to know intensely the voice of his soul. Humboldt appears the higher consciousness of Citrine. Humboldt is the motivating force which attempts and frees Citrine from all that is false. He also awakens Citrine’s noble nature. The individual
self of Citrine is affected by the activities of the society. But his self is strengthened and shaped by Humboldt. Finally Citrine realizes the importance of selfhood.

Corde of *The Dean’s December* exists with an intense cosmic concern. He is more humanistic in his outlook. He is caught in what he calls the Chicago conditions which is a state of violence, death, fury and institutionalized life. His individual self is seen in struggle with the conditions of his society. The power elite corrupt the society. He exposes these evils through articles in the *Harper’s*, magazine. He hopes that by exposing these evils he could bring about a change in the society. His strong self works for the welfare of humanity and is not ready to step down from his fixed conviction. But the power elite oppose his ideas and suppress his attempts. He is unable to cope with his hostile society. Therefore he goes to in the Palomer observatory, where his wife Minna Corde works. He goes up the observatory above the darkling plain of Chicago. He hopes to hear the mysterious voices of those who are eager to sustain mankind with a moral message. The novel is a study of Corde’s strong individual self. He attempts to establish his self in the society; he is only able to survive in it. His cosmic concern is the outcome of his moral consciousness.
The protagonists of Bellow are portrayed as men who struggle to assert not only their individual self but also their inner, authentic self. They exist with strong awareness of the self and moral consciousness. The heroes despite the isolation, nausea, anxiety, and despair which they experience, end not on a note of cynical despair but regeneration and hope. They accept the world as it is and act, acts asserting their individual self. They exhibit cosmic concern. They show eagerness to redeem the world of its faults. But finally they conclude that it is very difficult to bring about a great change in the society. So they accept the world as it appears. But their personality gets modified and shaped by various characters and various experiences that serve as reality instructors.

The second chapter Awareness has dealt with two novels written in the forties known as victim novels, Dangling Man and The Victim. It has made a study of the encounters, experiences and struggles of the heroes who attempt to assert their position in the society. Throughout their life the heroes are occasionally attacked by awareness or moral consciousness. The heroes question themselves, who am I? what is good? I heard a knock at the door, a bell ringing outside. They search and try to know the meaning of being good.

The third chapter titled Efflorescence has studied the two adventure novels, Henderson the Rain King and Herzog. It has discussed the
protagonists’ attempt to probe into ideas beyond their existence, but when they become aware of reality, they seem matured and return to their native place and conservative society. Henderson is a quest novel in which the hero undertakes an exotic journey. It unravels many truths to Henderson. He learns that before gaining the knowledge of the authentic self one has to shed off all false hopes and fears. Having known this truth, he returns home and accepts the society with its existing conditions. Herzog is the protagonist who undergoes the process of self-examination in a conscious manner. He turns inward for his mental sustenance. Herzog reflects on his own self. And he exclaims that only on earth can man find joy and harmony.

The fourth chapter entitled Enlightenment has analysed the transcendental outlook in the protagonists of Humboldt’s Gift and The Deans December. It narrates how the heroes, who are intellectuals and keen observers of men and manners of their society, survive amidst tortures and tensions. It highlights how the heroes imbibe in them a sense of transcendence without relinquishing their social surroundings in which they breathe and sustain.

The present chapter which is the fifth and concluding chapter has recapitulated the major ideas discussed in the preceding chapters in a nutshell. In all these novels, selected for the study, the digression from
the main theme is very rare. All the novels of Bellow are treated without any narrative lapse. Nothing extraneous is allowed in them. It concludes with a note of promise to the readers of Bellow that his works offer plausible remarks related to the concept of the self and moral consciousness. It also suggests some topics for further research.

Findings

A reader of Saul Bellow can find in his works a deep concern for unflinching humanism and innate urge to change American social disturbances or chaos into traditional morality and value based society. Most of his novels express his idealism and faith in humanism which can solve all sorts of moral, ethical and spiritual problems. One can find the novelist critical of the prevalent American society of his times but at the same time he appears to be optimistic in relation to the transformation and regeneration of individuals in general and also the nation in particular. He expresses great concern for human regeneration, resulting from the disarray of morals, and shows interest in the betterment of society and individuals. Bellow attempts to draw a balance between the individuals past and the present, a balance between his inner world and outer world.

Bellow belonged to the age of material prosperity, scientific progress and the age that had a strong feeling of nationalism. This made
most of the Americans happy and confident, but only outwardly. In each individual there was a deep negativity, spiritual hunger, despair and dissatisfaction. Skepticism prevailed everywhere, in the society and in the individual. They were in search of a balanced diet of moral idealism and material opportunity. A group of writers who could pulse the need of the individuals and the nation and those who had largely recovered from their merely negative stage of moral outrage responded to this need. Consequently new ideas and thoughts were imparted to men and society. This was done through the work of eminent writers like Bellow. The author has expressed his ideas for nearly four decades and he has been with time as well as ahead of it. Bellow has honestly voiced the agonies of an individual and has also been trying to fill up the vacuum created by the absence of any moral, ethical and religious values. He has often stressed the idea that the utmost need of a modern is to know him, and he is to find out sustaining values in his own being. Bellow has minutely observed, closely examined and rapturously expressed the longing of the individual to trace the presence of one’s noble nature or self. This search is linked with the idea of moral consciousness in his novels for both are complimentary and complementary to each other; both virtues simultaneously support and enhance the ethical qualities of an individual. The novelist writes with a purpose and they contain a search, a meaning beyond the ordinary life of man.
Scope of Further Research

The novels of Bellow offer extensive subject matter for deep study. They seem to be the inexhaustible treasure house for further research. The novels also call for a closer reading every time and when it is taken for the purpose of research or rereading suggests innovative ideas. This study, it is believed could offer some guidance to humanity. The novels of Bellow have been exhaustively researched. Yet newer interpretations and future studies may be conducted on various other aspects in the novels in response to twenty-first century’s challenges. A psychological study can be made on the protagonist as individuals representing the modern mass society. The philosophical ideas in the novels can also be much discussed and reviewed. They can also be perceived to be a record of anthropology and history. Bellow’s novels seem to be the treasure house of varied ideas that offer scope for further research.

In conclusion it can be stated that Bellow is a great craftsman and his literary output, as a whole, entitles Bellow to a place of eminence among the contemporary American novelists. He can be acknowledged as the novelist who has truly delineated a galaxy of immortal characters in his novels like Joseph, Asa Leventhal, Henderson, Herzog, Humboldt, Citrine and Corde. He has embodied the true concept of the self and the highest principle of morality in his novels. The novels have been
developed with contemporary American life as their background. All incidents, characters and happenings are shaped out of this material. Therefore the real uniqueness of the novels depends mostly on the moral power and insight they show into contemporary society. One can trace in his novels the urge to represent reality and the desire for morality and consciousness of the true self and the importance of the individual self. It can be said that Bellow has made a major contribution to the mainstream of American fiction.