INTRODUCTION

There is not a heart
But has its moments of longing
Yearning for something
Better, nobler,
Holier than it knows now.

Henry Ward Beecher.

Life is dynamic and its power is visible in all the works of Man. Man has achieved wonders with his unflagging zeal. His sense of achievement, endowed with perennial optimism, was born out of his will. The unseen human will lies behind all achievements. Material comforts and scientific achievements are all the products crystallized out of man's will. Man measures his achievements in success. The secret of success lies in the joy of experience. Many find the joy to exist in the material objects of the world. Consistent with this belief, man, the individual constantly engages himself in acquiring, possessing and aggrandizing more and more wealth. But man has to understand and admit the truth that material happiness is not the reality. The mere acquisition and possession of wealth is no measure of the quantum of happiness. The
synonym of real happiness has been studied and practiced by many men of wisdom and by philosophers.

Philosophic idealism has unfurled various ideas that enable man to know the path of real happiness. It has shaped the destiny of many men who have worked for the welfare of humanity. These men of philosophy have been the cynosure of all eyes through the ages. They have ventured to propagate their ideas and precepts with unlimited enthusiasm. Their vision is to build up a world community and they advocate humanism. The idea of unflinching humanism has ignited millions of minds. Humanism can prevail only when man realizes his innate goodness and noble nature. The awareness of moral values can motivate the individual to know and identify his noble nature.

The present and future welfare of humanity depends upon the individual in a society. His strength lies within himself. He is the master of his destiny. So he has to regularly encourage and consistently cultivate in his mind qualities that determine his character. The man who rebuilds his character and modifies his personality can create a world of harmony and develop international community.

The building of a harmonious world depends on the individual self. The idea of the self and its problems are various, internal as well as
external, physical as well as metaphysical, historical as well as transcendental. The individual has to know his real self and understand whether it is static or is it ever in a state of flux. However a strong sense of self seems essential today. It may be argued that the claims of the self and the society are not inimical to each other. The individual who has discovered his authentic self may understand himself and his society and promote humanism. The idea of humanism and the individual self is relevant today. If there is no humanism man may retrieve terrorism, barbarism, nihilism, destruction, despair and disintegration.

Moral values and the awareness of these values enable the realization of the authentic self. When this real self is identified one's personality may undergo a great change. The change can promote universal brotherhood. So it can be stated that the concept of the self and moral consciousness can rebuild man's character and shape his destiny.

The concept of the self has been defined and explained by philosophers and transcendentalists who have insisted on the presence of an inner light in humanity. The awareness of this inner light constitutes the knowledge of the self. The real seeker of the self ventures to find answers to, too many queries which are related to life: whether the life he leads is good, right, and whether the actions he performs are perfect. The
answers to these queries and resultant actions enable the individual to modify his personality.

The self exists in association with moral consciousness. These twin aspects, the self and moral consciousness, play a vital role in altering the attitude of the individual. They encourage the individual to establish a healthy social order. Hence the researcher proposes to study the following aspects in relation to the self and moral consciousness:

❖ The authentic self, the real human within (the noble nature in man).
❖ The individual self and the society.
❖ The prevalence of moral consciousness in the protagonists.

Eminent writers have propounded manifold theories regarding the self and moral values. They have insisted on the relevance of these principles to a society and to an individual. Therefore sufficient illustration of the ideas becomes necessary for this study. Hence it is worthy to substantiate observations made about the concept of the self by different scholars. One of the scholars, Emerson, observes in his essay on Self-Reliance:

❖ Every heart is strong within and one is to ‘Trust Thyself’.
❖ All are to accept the place that God has allotted to them.
❖ To believe your own thought, to believe that what is true for you in your private heart is true for all men - that is genius.

❖ **Speak your latent conviction and it shall be the universal**

*(Marudhanayagam 11 - 12).*

Therefore the universal message to be imparted to mankind is necessarily the idea: True knowledge promotes peace, harmony and understanding.

**Nature of the Self**

The researcher has culled out a plethora of definitions regarding the self. Philosophers have made very interesting and thought provoking observations about the self. According to the Bhagavad-Gita, the self is seen to be marvelous and wonderful. Psychologists perceive the concept of the self in its widest acceptance as the empirical self or the “me”. Generally the self is considered to be fundamentally simple or unitary in its aspect. The unity may also incorporate multiplicity. It is also perceived to be multi-dimensional. The self is classified as: Complex, One-many, Permanent-changing, temporal-eternal, active-passive, being - being not, perfect-imperfect, conscious – unconscious. “The self is revealed in its action, it reveals itself and constitutes itself by acting” *(Sharma 2).*

Likewise, many views exist about the presence of the self.

It includes the authentic self, individual self, material self, social and spiritual self. This phenomenon includes psychic faculties, moral
sensibility and conscience of one’s indomitable will. The concept of the self is also the ‘I’ idea represented as awareness or consciousness. The consciousness of the self is a conscious process of progress in which one can realize the self after innumerable struggles and experiences. It is not an activity experienced over night but a gradual step – by – step process. The experience of the self involves something strange, wonderful and complete.

**Occidental View of the Self**

The western concept of the self includes physical, vital and mental capabilities (surface conscious – ego activity in social context). Western thinkers consider the ego to be self and the evolution of it as ego-transcendence: the growth of being, an integral expression of joy. The dynamics of evolution of the self involves unconscious change and movement where some-how reason appears. It also constitutes irrational impulses and instincts prevalent in the personality of an individual. According to Spinoza personality and self-consciousness are mental correlates of limited and finite beings. The mind and the body are but two parts of the immensity of one’s being:

They are not superficial appearances, for they cleave to its center and to the center of Reality. But beyond and about them, radiating from that same centre is the infinity of what we are as modes, also,
of the other Attributes of God. We all of us, then, live and move
and have our being in countless other worlds besides our own,
undreamed of and inconceivable. Our every act and thought
register in terms of extension and consciousness a modification
occurring simultaneously throughout the endless number of all the
other, unknowable forms of our existence.

Like all else, we are, so far as God exhibits himself in us in
terms of Extension and Thought, a correlation of a physical and a
mental event. (Fuller 80; con. 2, ch. 6, sec. 7)

This mental event is also known as the process of consciousness.
This consciousness and the idea of the knowledge of the self and other
attributes in man have been widely discussed by philosophers like Kant.
The compiled edition of Fuller’s Modern Philosophy explains Kant’s
ideas on the self and consciousness. Kant observes in his Transcendental
Analytic:

Self-Consciousness is not consciousness of that which does the
perceiving and knowing. It is consciousness of that which is
known. In the act of self-consciousness the self becomes an object
to itself. Therefore, just as I know external objects, not as they are
in themselves, but as they are presented to me colored and formed
by, the kind of mental apparatus I possess, so I know myself, not
as I really am in myself, but as I am presented to my real or transcendental ego, the knowing subject, after being worked over and reformulated by the machinery of that same apparatus (Fuller 225; con. 2, ch. 14, sec. 6).

Kant further relates his views about the soul. He refers to the paralogisms of pure reason and specifies the Immortal substance of the Soul, “the idea of the soul is derived from the fact that all experience and thinking, whatever it may be of are about, is self-conscious” (Ibid 233; con. 2, ch. 14, sec.12). But the above idea should not give way to the hope and illusion that the self can be disassociated from its internal and external experiences. The self and the soul exist as they appear. An individual can understand himself only through categories and only through experiences that enable him to understand all the other things, including the self and the soul. Similar philosophic ideas have been observed by Spinoza and Hegel. They find a confluence in the existence of mind, truth, happiness and liberation.

According to Spinoza a change in the mind conditions the physical body and the change occurs in the body with a corresponding registration in the mind. The mind has the following traits like impersonality and impartiality. It conceives thought and is prone to an extension of this thought. ‘Truth’ is an essential comprehension of thought and it is a
whole truth. Moreover the human mind is imbued with an extensive thinking. So it strives for knowledge of the real truth and it is realizing one's true self. It is also the progressive identification of the human mind with the infinite intellect of God. The identification incessantly evolves a greater sense of happiness, “knowledge of the union of the mind with the whole of nature is...man’s only true and unfailing good” (Fuller 83; con. 2, ch.4, sec. 7). Hegel finds a unique link between transcendence, human consciousness and self-realization. Fuller’s book on Modern Philosophy illustrates Hume’s views:

In human consciousness the self-realization of the Spirit reaches higher levels. When we reason and reflect, the Spirit rises above, negates, and transcends its individual enactments, although it still uses the individual as a base. It is, to be sure, we who do the reasoning and the reflecting, but our thinking occupies itself not with the particular but with the universal, and becomes impersonal or super-personal in its interests and its significance. We tend to lose consciousness of ourselves in contemplating the truth. (306, con. 2, ch. 16, sec. 3)

The philosopher observes that, even if the spirit soars in human thought, the spirit can never gain a complete self-realization and self-knowledge in the ordinary existence. In order to reach self-realization and
self-knowledge and to become the Absolute Spirit, the individual has to transcend his ordinary conditions of life. Hume associates the problem of the self with profound metaphysics. He finds a close relation between the self and senses. He observes that the senses can perceive the self, only when the self exists behind the flow of perception and feelings. It is a feature closely connected to the events in the life of an individual. Similar views relating to the self and consciousness have found expression in eastern philosophy.

**Oriental idea of the self**

The Bhagavad-Gita elaborates on the concept of the self as, “The self is never born, nor does it die. It is not having been. It comes into being. It is unborn, eternal, changeless, ever itself, It is not killed when the body is killed” (qtd in yatiswarananda 85). The consciousness of the self motivates an individual to overcome the fear of death. It is observed in the Bhagavad-Gita, “This, the Indweller in the bodies of all, is ever indestructible. Therefore you should not mourn any creature” (ibid 87). Maria E. Badias observes in his work on Self – Discovery that Vedanta suggests many solutions for the individuals who are eager to broaden their sense of identity into a greater experience. To these seekers, Vedanta offers the compelling conviction that by seeking the self, the core of our being, we will discover all that we sought (1). According to
the text a seeker of the higher experience has four qualifications. They are discrimination of the permanent and temporary and dispassion of the same. The seeker has mental qualities with inner purity and finally an everlasting desire for liberation. This discovery of the self and its liberation is also represented by the Upanishads.

The Upanishads distinguish the self from the body. It finds the body to be a chariot in which the self is found to be a charioteer. The Upanishads propound a two-fold theory in relation to the self and suggests differences between the individual self and the supreme self. This supreme self and the Divine soul are identical. It prevails in all human beings and its awareness is possible while transcending the individual self. Highlighting the concept of the self and divinity, Swami Vivekananda observes in his lectures on religion and philosophy:

Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this Divinity within, by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work or worship or psychic control or philosophy by one or more all of these and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines or dogmas or rituals or books or temples or forms are but secondary details. (qtd in Yatiswarananda 25)
The Integral Philosophy of the self

The philosopher defines the concept of the self – in - itself as seen and reflected in the minds of others. It very largely drills us into habit and routine, and fashions and tailors our attitudes, feelings and responses almost for eternity. The self is shaped by the human relations in the society. The aspects of the self include conscious and unconscious aspects, resistance to change and striving for consistency, the search for meaning, purposes and goals. In the scheme of human values, the self is of great importance. The self is seen rather small when viewed against the universe at large.

All experiences, thought, act and deed have an ideality within. The seeking of this ideality enables an individual towards the consciousness of the self which is strewn with the ideas of self-surrender, annihilation of the superficial self, avoidance of the pain of subjectivity, an estrangement from essentiality, an awareness of a being. The idea of the self and its presence demands an inward search. The idea of the ideal self as manifested in the individual, its search, enables one to move from “what is” to “what ought to be” in actuality. It is a generic feature which can be discerned through an intense experience. It is the triumph of one’s thinking to overcome the crude sensations of this world. The
consciousness is an expression of unlimited dynamic freedom that leads to an experience which makes life a dynamic adventure.

The self has been conceived by philosophers as a changing series. The thinkers of Nyaya – Vaiseiska, Buddhists and Ramanuja did not believe in the existence of an eternal consciousness without change (Sharma 125). Henry James associates the self with the stream of consciousness. Philosophers like T.H.Green represent the universal or Absolute mind, one’s consciousness as a “limited mode” of “world consciousness”. The individual mind and other objects are seen to be mere modes of the Absolute. Shankara found it to be fundamental consciousness. Absolutists, the personalists and the theists advocate moral and religious values and maintain the absolute reality of the individual. The knowledge of this absolute reality and the process of attaining this reality have been represented by philosophers like Schopenhauer. He finds the world and its activities integrated with irrational and amoral character. Many external factors conflict with each other and destroy themselves. Living bodies prey upon one another and inflict endless pain. Hence the idea of the Absolute may appear irrational. And the Will in man can find no happiness. But in its insensate striving the Will can find a fixed line of development. Therefore the Will can rise
from its lowest level of blind inanimate events to a higher level. This level can be attained through the conscious life of man. (Fuller 346; con.2)

Vasconcelos, the Mexican philosopher, discovers two opposed currents of energy in the world process, one descending and the other ascending. The upward struggle of the current of energy can be seen at the organic level even in material objects related to science. This liberation, in man becomes more marked and extensive through sensation and through developing consciousness. It may not be continuous and it may be jumps during which a new form of energy suddenly appears. It has many new properties and cannot be explained by its antecedents:

The advent of sensation is another such jump, and still another is the capacity of consciousness to retain images of experience and react to them emotionally. Imagery converts the physical into a mental world and enables it to survive there the constant dissolution of material existence. Experience can now, thanks to imagery, be evaluated and reflected upon, and the physical can thus be transsubstantiated into a spiritual universe.

In ethics, the moral is that which identifies us with the ascending, increasing current of energy. It is aspiration to unite not only ourselves, but through our transformation of the material into
Nietzsche observes that each individual ‘self’ exists like each individual object and has a complex of forces and tensions. It strives hard to exist. It is also interrelated to the complex powers that constitute the universe. He relates that all consciousness and intelligence are the most advance constituents of the mind. The philosopher’s idea is that the human manifestations of the Will, for power, expresses itself in two different ways. The Will aims to fulfill completely, passion, emotion, deep feeling, action and a fighting spirit. In the course of this expression of the Will the man is a spectator and an actor. He is also a dreamer and a warrior. He longs for peace and tranquility in a better world, more beautiful and more orderly than the actual world (Fuller 445; Con.2,Ch.25).

According to Bradley the actual world exists in a higher level. He states that life exists at a higher and lower level. But, the individual has to overcome many hurdles before reaching the higher level. These hurdles exist along with the reality in man. In describing the nature of reality, he observes that reality often attempts to free itself from contradictions. It may include appearances. It may also try to make sense out of nonsense, otherwise it’s consistency would be lost. The thinker also states that the
immediate experience of an individual includes multiplicity in unity, “It is an overcoming of incompleteness-though by methods that involved us in self-contradictions. Our knowledge is a thing of degrees. The moral life lifts us from the lower to the higher” (Fuller 425-426, ch. 23). The knowledge of the higher level unravels the truth about the absolute.

Philosophers observe that the individual can exist with an absolute reality. And to realize this reality, he has to transcend the ego existing in him:

Individual is true and lives even in unity with the universal. Man’s aim is to universalise and impersonalise himself, in order to manifest the Divine. Yet, he is called upon to preserve his individuality, even when he reaches the widest universality of consciousness. It is the ego that has to be uprooted. Individual is an ontological reality, eternal as the Absolute, not co-existent but existent in and through Him. Individual has been often identified with ego and transcendence misunderstood as the extinction of individuality...The multiplicity is real in the Divine. Differentiation is a means to greater unity. God is in man and man is in God. Individual has transcendent within him. He can be one with Divine and yet enjoy Him in the world. We can have mystic union with God and also love and worship Him as an other. (Sharma 130-131)
The Self and the Absolute (Brahman) and the Transcendental Self.

The self experiences the Absolute, the fullness of reality, through spiritual experience. The Absolute is known to be rather a plentitude of presence. It is a pure indeterminable unity whose abysmal depth is realized only in experience. The Self, the Absolute and the existence of the Brahman which lies untouched in the deepest recesses of the individual is also known as the true self. It is the essence of all being which may be known only when the many-sided ignorance of the individual ceases. This realization of the self deserves an inward search.

The search leads to the true knowledge of the self. The mind withdraws itself from the fields of agitation and becomes calm when this knowledge of the higher is attained. The calmer the mind the greater is the happiness experienced by the individual. The experience of the joy of the self within gives peace, this peace forms the essential nature of the self in man. This finally results in everlasting bliss which emerges while knowing the Brahman. The individual looks at everything in the world with an equal eye when the realization is achieved. The world appears totally different in its plurality of good and bad, merit and demerit, happiness and sorrow. While the state of pure consciousness is known, the mind and intellect transcend their accompanying disturbances. The impermanence of what was formally experienced by the mind and
intellect is understood, "having experienced the Absolute in which the entire pluralistic world has emerged, when he looks at the world he naturally becomes a man of equal visions in all situations" (Badias 73). This equality can be attained when the self co-exists with moral consciousness.

**Ethics: Eastern and Western**

The awareness of the self becomes more intense and easy when it is associated with moral consciousness. Indian concept of morality is related to religion, whereas Western thinkers perceive it to be a series of reasonable acts. The Indian view of morality is linked to philosophy and religion. It derives from a socio-philosophic tradition with roots deep in the deep past. The idea of moral consciousness was not only the means of satisfying intellectual doubts, but a more spiritual endeavor to know the right way and to attain spiritual liberation. The liberation was liberation not only from the limitation of the empirical self, like pleasure and pain but also from the very notions of right and wrong, good and bad, of a highest order. The idea of morality is linked to Dharma, a concept closest to Western notion of *right*. It refers to virtuous action, an intrinsic good, a regulatory principle (Seshadri 297). Indian thinkers perceive the idea of consciousness to be purely humanistic and relate it to religion. They also
link the idea to goodness and being good which helps one to realize the purpose of his life.

Maharishi Aurobindo imparted the fact that morality is only a station on an evolutionary plane, "Beyond morality, beyond religion is the path of yoga; beyond the moral and the religious life is the spiritual life" (Seshadri 297). According to Tagore man begins to be conscious of his moral nature when he begins to have an extended vision of his true self.

The Western concept of morality is autonomous in the sense that it does not necessarily depend on religion. A moral act as perceived by western thinkers is considered to be essentially a rational act. The concept has been discussed by thinkers like R.M. Hare, J.P. Satre and K.R. Popper. They insist that one's actions are in no way constrained by inclinations and customary social practices. The individual acts independently, following his own will. Israel Scheffler explains in his work on Reason and Teaching that acting for the right reasons constitutes the essence of morality and that right action is

To convey that the judgement is backed by reasons and it is further to invite discussions of such reasons. It finally suggests that these reasons will be found compelling when looked at impartially and
objectively, that is to say, taking all relevant facts and interests into account and judging the matter as fairly as possible. (qtd in Seshadri 298)

Professor Peters a very influential moral philosopher has argued in Ethics and Education Part II that morality is primarily a matter concerning all that is related to reasons for actions. John Wilson observes that moral thinking is consideration of other people’s interest. The central concern today in western moral philosophy is the search for an ultimate moral criterion and an adequate justification for rational morality. Professor Peters has also justified his principles by ‘transcendental deduction’. He has further argued that the idea of reasoning is fairness, truth telling, freedom, consideration of interests and respect for persons.

David Hume has observed in The Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals that his moral system aims at the happiness of others (without any such formula as the greatest happiness of the greatest numbers) and at the happiness of the self. He considers the regard for others, to be the greater part of morality. His emphasis is on the importance of altruism. He further adds that it is man’s nature to seek the good of others as well as his own. (ency 1193)
Jewish philosophers have expressed varied views regarding ethics and morality. Sa'adia has distinguished four sources of knowledge in man. He observes in *Beliefs and Opinions* that, "the intellect is characterised as having immediate ethical cognitions - that is, discerning what is good and what is evil" (ency 209). Many interesting ideas about morals have been formulated by the philosophers of the same order.

Hegel observes in his *Phenomenology of the Mind* that the human mind rises from mere consciousness, through self-consciousness, reason, spirit, and religion, to absolute knowledge. Man relies more on the senses and he is much influenced by intellectual conceptions. The mind has in it the consciousness of morality which helps man to become more cultured. This culture emancipates the mind from conventions and prepares the way for the rule of conscience. (ibid 730)

The idea of moral values can further be elaborated defining it as the activity of man towards man in various situations in which human beings come together. Human relationship is a very important part of morality. Mutual understanding and unity are also important moral codes. The consciousness of morality includes socialization of behavior, the spirit of tolerance, insight into self and equality. Western thinker Wilson states that moral thinking is concern for people, awareness of feelings, facts and know-how, rational formulation and translation into action, these thinkers
associated it with logical thinking (Seshadri 300). The study of the self and moral consciousness has formed a branch of knowledge in philosophy and literature. It has also been widely discussed by American writers.

**Moral values and the ideatum of the self in American Literature**

A number of young Americans of the nineteenth century, Ralf Waldo Emerson, Henry David Thoreau, Theodore Dreiser and others have represented the concept of the self and have stressed on the idea of a divine light existing in an individual. Emerson has highlighted the importance of the self in his essays, *American scholar Self-Reliance* and *Over-soul*. Thoreau’s *Walden* deals with the idea of enlightenment through nature. The novels of Dreiser express similar philosophical ideas. Likewise many American writers have attempted to study the quest of the self and moral consciousness in their literature. Saul Bellow, a pioneer among them, has imparted varied ideas regarding moral values. He observes in *The Writer as a Moralist*, “what form shall life be justified? We call a writer moral to the degree that his imagination indicates to us how we may answer naturally...with a spontaneous mysterious proof that has no need to argue with despair” (qtd in Bhalla 138). The definition and elaboration regarding morals had been an interesting subject for many twentieth century American novelists. They have highlighted the same subject in different works. An expression of these values in their writings
form part of their uncompromising dedication to truth. Amidst the psychedelic variety of American life and literature the writers sometime appear more burdened with morality.

The different moral tones in American Literature correspond to the variety and vitality of their sources. They are both religious and secular. In contemporary American literature the concept of morality has been an expansive and adaptable one. The limits of morality have extended to include the idea of individualistic realization that finds expression in Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible man*. Throughout the change and development in American Literature an acute sensitivity to the moral implications of situations in America has shaped the art of writing. It has provided the platform for the writer to give him a sense, that touches standards of behavior, as it reaches new depths of understanding, a morality that aims at informing one’s knowledge of right and wrong, to provide a basis for one’s decisions to act one way or another.

One continuing moral concern in the twentieth century American novels relate to the problems of the individual existence that is caught in the difficulties of extricating itself from the surrounding images, myths and stereotypes, and values in order to learn to see itself – and to be seen-clearly and unflinchingly as it exists. Similar to the views of the psychologist Carl Rogers, many American novelists seem to suggest that
an individual runs the risk of creating problems and tensions within himself, when his self concept is tied not to his own experiences but to others’ perspectives on his personality.

Bellow’s heroes also exist in a similar situation. They struggle with the society in order to establish their individual self and strive hard to assert their moral strength. They make constant references to the goodness in man and express interest in the substance of the soul. The protagonists fear the great evil around them for it would drown the soul into material life. They fight to assert their individual self in a society affected by war, pride, and money and material success. These aspects that affected the protagonists of Bellow also affected the society and made a great impact on other American writers and writing. The changes in society influenced the novels of American Literature like the Renaissance which made a great impact on European Literature. Likewise technological revolution and literary changes proceeded hand in hand in America.

**Thematic expression in American novel**

The changes in society and the changes in literature developed new ideas which found expression in American novels. There appeared a great change in this genre and the novelists showed eagerness for remarkable transformation. The process of this transformation from the old to the
new “Self” is marked by acute self consciousness. Henry James saw the need for a transmutation of the American self, and he went on to explore this possibility through his works. The big three of the twentieth century, Hemingway, Fitzgerald and Faulkner took for their material the theme of war and terror and considered its reality and examined its effects outside and in the human psyche. The era of the sixties and seventies was affected by the voices of liberation, mood of exhaustion, war – resisters, red power and retreat. This unreal existence led the third phase of American artist to search for the authentic voice, “the individual self of the artist always struggles to find its own authentic voice...the quest for the authenticity is ultimately linguistic” (Bhalla 6). The urge for a quest of transformation and the search for an authentic voice was simultaneously expressed in this literature.

Many movements and thoughts influenced the literature of America. There developed a special movement known as the American Enlightenment. The men of this movement saw the philosophy behind the national existence and directed their nation to its heritage. The outcome was enlightened ideas that formed the heart and core of the American mind. According to them the important development of ethics of secular benevolence was to study and represent man in his natural and political environment. They showed great faith in the perfect nature of man. These
Americans were influenced by the ideas of the eighteenth century deistic writers. These writers in Britain developed an ethical position in which humanitarian behavior by men coincided with God's design in the creation of the universe. They believed that all universal plan and design of God was for the good of man. The universe with its design has been formed to give man happiness. Therefore moral standards are implicit in the nature of things. The same idea of the deistic writers was imparted through literature by Americans to give them the American Enlightenment. The ideas about the American Enlightenment were incorporated into the art of writing.

The intellectual movements in various fields of enquiry and the three quests of contemporary American writers, the quest for survival, identity and authenticity, existed in agreement with each other. Critics interpreted a general drift in western culture. Kermode pointed out that writers like T.S. Eliot, James Joyce, W.B.Yeats, Earnest Hemingway and Fitzgerald felt the debacle of the First World War which led them to find an antidote to universal decay in visions, myth and traditional faith. This idea of Kermode is supported by enthusiastic critics like Susan Sontog, George Steiner and Richard Poirier who designate it as the art of "performing self". They "think that new fiction is moving toward a radical redefinition and man will be liberated into a free, guiltless
celebration of the life of the senses, of unself-conscious delight” (Bhalla 7). The second generation of writers like Jean Genet, France, William Burroughs represent “joyful acceptance of the fact of apocalypse” (ibid). The four post-war American novelists; Bellow, Mailer, Barth and Pynchon have given way to positive thoughts; they present a rationalistic ordering of the contemporary confusion. Bellow has dealt in particular with the idea of an identity or the presence of an *I, a light within*, existing in his protagonists. This has been considered a global experience and has been much discussed and referred to by great thinkers and philosophers.

**Bellow as a Novelist**

Most of Bellow’s novels are based on Chicago. The novelist’s life in the city of Chicago enabled him to develop the themes of his novels. James Atlas states that Bellow felt Chicago to be “an ideal laboratory for a novelist” (26). His career began in Chicago and he had an unquenchable thirst and eagerness to write. He was obsessed by the innate longing to put his thoughts into writing. He had many favorable opportunities that motivated him to gather information and material for his works. The city of Chicago, a land of “indigenous literature” stimulated Bellow to emerge as a writer, “In his hands the city, the world become a character in its own right, the centre of both his life and his work” (Atlas 6). The novelist
translated life into art. He gathered sources, for this transmutation from the experiences in the city of Chicago and from his family members. But Bellow’s family and personal experiences were not totally favorable for the development of his art, yet the writer, who nourished warm memories, acquired ample ideas for his art from his family members and personal experiences. His brothers were aggressive and practical. He idealized them in his novels, for they proved to be his instructors shaping his themes and guiding his confused soul:

The wealthy, satisfied Amos in “Dangling Man”; Simon in “The Adventures of Augie March”, the Cadillac driving, capable Will in Herzog; the rich brutish entrepreneur Ulick in “Humboldt’s Gift”. Likewise, the heroes of these books were all versions of Bellow—variously depicted as a dreamer, a bookish, head-in-the-clouds intellectual, a confused soul in need of guidance from his fraternal “reality instructors.” (Atlas 12)

The author’s experiences in life gave him the opportunity to know and realize the truths about higher realities of life. His family suffered from poverty and it took a long time for the author to overcome this irksome experience in life. More than his family, the city of Chicago proved to be the source that shaped his novels. James Atlas writes of
Bellow in his biography:

Chicago life offered abundance of experience to Bellow. Bellow recorded the physical details of Chicago with a preternaturally observant eye in his work. The things that he saw and recorded were the rubbery urban foliage, the rows of burgundy-brick three-flats, the tiny yards and cracked sidewalls. All this fell under his keen scrutiny. It was the emotional dynamics that tended to elude him – or that he chose to gloss over with a sentimental patina. (22)

The novelist derived his philosophy and themes not only from his family and Chicago experiences but also from his friends, education, visit to many cities and his meeting with well-known writers. He developed friendship with many writers. Isaac Rosenfield was his closest friend. Bellow’s friendship with Isaac provided him the energy to shape his ideas. The author and his friend made excursions at twilight through the city of Chicago, and the city offered a platform to trace out and identify his themes. The great things that the author wanted to attain are recorded in his works. They include his deep driving desire to shape the society and free it of its darker nature. Hence the protagonists of his novels voice the author’s thoughts. They express great moral concern and longing for a disciplined society.
Education unfolded vistas of knowledge, experience and opportunity for shaping his themes. He met many learned men. They observe him to be one, “who writes extraordinary well and literature was Bellow’s primary calling” (Atlas 30). He often longed to visit the city of Mexico ever since he read D.H.Lawrence’s Mornings in Mexico. He visited Mexico after the death of Trotsky. During the visit, he happened to witness the corpse of Trotsky, which was streaked with blood. He remembered Trotsky who had often stated that Stalin would murder him. Such exposures were only moments that inspired the writer to identify his inner thoughts. He wrote later, “how easy it was for a despot to order a death, how little it took to kill us, how slight a hold we, with our ideas, programs, purposes, wills, had on the matter we were made of” (Atlas 69). These reflections reveal the philosopher in him.

He was extremely interested in reading books. He began reading Tolstoy’s War and Peace and continued to read different sets of books by great men. His wide reading widened his knowledge. He read Geza Roheim who was a pioneer in the field of psychoanalytic anthropology. This work was a revelation; it enabled him to know more about man. The book encouraged him to cultivate innovative ideas. James Atlas writes in
Bellow's biography that Roheim's work revealed innumerable ideas:

His real education was formed by a different set of books. In the deserted second-floor library of the psychology building on Ellis Avenue, he was boning up on the works of Geza Roheim. A trained psychologist, Roheim was a pioneer of psychoanalytic anthropology. He was convinced that it was possible to discover within the rituals and customs of any human group the structure of its collective unconscious—a structure. Roheim's work was a revelation. It supplemented the lessons about supposedly primitive cultures that Bellow had learned from his undergraduate work in anthropology (and from Dostoyevsky), positing the existence of a more spontaneous and robust human nature...what Lawrence in his book of Mexico called “the great origin-power of life”. Bellow was a great believer in the quest for the essential self. (73)

Later he visited many countries. During the visit he had opportunities to meet well-known writers. He went through Italy, sailed from Naples to Haifa, returned to Rome and then visited Paris, Edinburgh and Manchester in London, where he spent hours with writers like Louis MacNeice, Karl Miller, Anthony Powel, Stephen Spender and J.B. Priestly and it was a productive trip. The visit and meeting altered the author's attitude towards life. He never made complains about the life he
led. Hence he was able to live with limited living arrangements and with the same quality of non-attachment, even at the age of forty-five. He had no job and he traveled to many places. The Nomadic existence of the author reflects his unwillingness, or inability, to make commitments, whether to a person or a place. The painful, floating condition never dampened his natural exuberance. A Ford foundation expressed distress over the nomadic life of Bellow and stated that travel would not help him in writing. But he objected to this view stating that only travel motivated him to write and shape his themes, if he had remained in the same place, he would have been affected by various problems.

Bellow longed to travel through the city of Israel. His trip around the place offered spiritual enlightenment. He just wanted to visit thirty gardens and churches and extend his power of observation. He had a lot of engagement there, like listening to debates, reading policy papers, interviewing politicians, lunch with the prime minister, interview with scholars and he felt like confetti in a wind tunnel.

The experiences he had and the condition outside matched the ideas of his inner self. James Atlas observes:

The state of Israel matched Bellow's inner state: a rapid alternation between hunger for argument, debate, activity and an equally avid
hunger for spiritual enlightenment, which satisfied “a very different part of the mind” with its biblical history, its population of Holocaust survivors and refugees from eastern Europe, its civilized Old World customs – the fruit in bowls, the flowers on table, the high minded talk of books and music and art...the Light Jerusalem, he wrote movingly, had “purifying powers and filters the blood and the thoughts; I don’t forbid myself the reflection that light may be the outer garment of God”. In his sun-filled apartment, he practiced the “I Am It Thinks” meditation exercise outlined in one of Rudolf Steiner’s pamphlets. (448)

Travel, life and its experiences shaped the man into a writer. He was able to publish many books. Slowly his literary achievements grew. His literary achievement earned him name and fame. He was awarded the Nobel Prize which gave him opportunity to address an appreciative audience in Grand Hall in Stockholm’s old town. In his speech he revealed his mission as a writer. His biographer opines:

What was striking about Bellow’s seventy-minute address was its sense of mission-that writers themselves could awaken from the intellectual torpor that had descended upon civilization and reacquaint that civilization with the higher values it had forsaken. There was something heroic about this impulse to assume
responsibility, not to be passive. "Writers are greatly respected", Bellow admitted finally...The intelligent public is wonderfully patient with them...waiting to hear from art what it does not hear from theology, philosophy, social theory...Out of the struggle at the center has come an immense, painful longing for a broader, more flexible, fuller, more coherent, more comprehensive account of what we human beings are, who we are, and what this life is for...the individual struggles with dehumanization for the possession of his soul. (Atlas 461-462)

The serious experiences in his life made him more philosophic in outlook. Once he had to attend a funeral, but he refused to attend it, the attitude of the author towards the ceremony being that, "Funerals were superfluous; the dead were always with him, he said" (ibid 504). In the end of the year 1981, John Cheever whom he knew intimately was dying of cancer, and he wrote a valedictory letter to him. The letter was not only moving and touching but evident of the transcendental tendencies in the author.

The writer found a significant attachment with John Cheever, for both had the same mental attitude. They found themselves to be disciples of the same school of thought. He could trace in the works of John
Cheever ideas about the soul and its transformation:

Since we spoke on the phone I've been thinking incessantly about you...I suppose...we practiced the same self-taught trade. Let me try to say it better, we put our souls to the same kind of schooling...you were engaged, as a writer should be, in transforming yourself. When I read your collected stories I was moved to see the transformation taking place on the printed page. There's nothing that counts really except this transforming action of the soul. I loved you for this. I loved you anyway, but for this especially. (qtd in Atlas 504-505)

In January 1986 Bellow went to New York to take part in a huge gathering of writers who had gathered to discuss his imagination. This forum, he used to communicate his internal ideas and he expressed the writers aim in the gathering. Several hundred writers from all over the world gossiped, drank and debated their role in today's world. This was Pen congress gathering in New York where he delivered his conservative political views. He shared his ideas on art with the writers and said that, art occupies a high place in the spectrum of human activity, and literature exists because writers believe in spiritual powers of personality and individuality and these artists must turn to the sources of their permanent strengths, to the stronghold of the purest human consciousness, can see us
through this time of nihilism (Ibid 526). He also revealed the reader’s aim in reading a book. The books he widely read offered him more ideas in order to announce his aim. He often quoted ideas from the *The Art of Reading Books* by Johann Adam Bergk. He insisted that instead of responding passively to the text, one should throw themselves into it and should seize its meaning and apply it to their own life.

At the University of Haifa on April 1987 more than one hundred scholars gathered. They attempted: A study of the author’s philosophical affinity with Emerson in *Humboldt’s Gift* and *The End of Enlightenment*. They also studied: the universal view of the Holocaust in *Mr. Sammler’s planet* and the hero’s experiences in *Herzog*, which are based on anecdotes from the author’s life. The scholars also made a study of the conferences that he attended, on topics like *Transcending National Boundaries* and his meeting with eminent writers like Joseph Brodsky, Czeslaw Milosz, Hungarian novelist and essayist Gyorgy Konrad; Norman Manea, Rominian Writer (Who was forced into exile) Ralph Ellison and Susan Sontag. His meeting with these writers made him a remarkable man. The reputation he gained made many remark that: “Literature was over because Saul Bellow was over” (Atlas 570). He provided philosophical enlightenment through his novels. Through them he was able to impart his long cherished ideas and dreams.
Fiction to Bellow was a vehicle, an outlet to express his inner dreams, ideologies and a mode to intimate his thoughts to others. His biographer writes: “The heroes of his novels aren’t renderings of Bellow the man; they’re idealized versions of himself... by altering the details to suit him, Bellow could become, in his books, the person he wanted to be” (189). His novels portray the life of individuals who struggle to establish their self in the modern world of materialism. These individuals are portrayed as men who are unable to seek an identity with the society, hence they remain aloof and alienated. But they endeavor to understand the society and other characters in their life. These men, the protagonists, of Bellow’s novels exist with intense consciousness and show a great cosmic concern. They try to affirm the importance of morals in the mass society.

He had lived through the effects of the First World War. He had witnessed terrible and strange things. The experience he gained during war made him throw off his prejudices and disappointing ideologies. Hence he expresses in his works “an immense desire for certain durable human goods – truth for instance or freedom or wisdom” (Bradbury 23). Thus the novelist was not only a humanitarian in outlook but also a man who showed immense interest in men of wisdom. One can trace in his novels crammed references to writers and philosophers. The gravity of
influence of these writers on Bellow was perhaps intoxicating. The novelist showed familiarity with Kant, Goethe, Nietzsche and Max Weber. He derived his best ideas from them. It can be stated that the following ideas of Goethe would have made an irresistible influence on Bellow. Goethe saw women to be man’s energizer and civilizer. She was the source of creative life and focus of the highest endeavors of mind and spirit. It can be said that Bellow shaped Romana in *Herzog*, based on the views of Goethe. Goethe saw opposite tendencies and forces existing in man and his life. He did not believe in the segmentalization of religion, but he accepted other views on religion. He had a sympathetic understanding to all religions. His belief in divinity was that it was immanent and transcendent.

The sense of alienation that Bellow portrays in his victim novels may be based on Kafka’s sense of alienation. Kafka rejected the entire sensory world as a sinful aberration from True Being. This idea has been incorporated in the *Dangling Man* and *Herzog*. Herzog intimates all the evils prevailing around him through his letters and his ideas are revelations of the mind. But Kafka believed that God is true and indestructible. These philosophers encouraged Bellow to develop thoughts on durable human values.
The novels of Bellow have been classified in terms of chronology, theme, form and style and those written in 1940s have been classified as the victim novels. *Dangling Man* The Victim and *Seize the Day* fall into this category. *Dangling Man* follows a journal in its form and is written in the first person. Joseph the protagonist lives in Chicago and is waiting for an induction in the army. The call for this comes only after a year. He has ample leisure time. This period (one year) is characterized by bitter personal relationship and worklessness. During these moments he turns inwards and asks certain questions to himself, “How should a good man live; what he ought to do?” The answers to these queries are also sought by him. Therefore he thinks deeply about the behavior and attitude of the people around him and contemplates on the experiences of his life. Due to this interrogative nature and non-acceptance of others’ behavior Joseph is unable to accept his father-in-law’s over fondness for his wife. He has an affair with Kitty, his mistress. He asks himself, whether his act is just, and concludes that the affair with his mistress is immoral code of behavior. So he changes his attitude towards his mistress, he visits her on friendly terms. The change in the nature of Joseph is the outcome of the noble nature. His nature gets modified by the existence of moral consciousness. The novel thus signifies Joseph’s individual self in development, finally he chooses army service. It is according to Joseph, noble service, pure freedom.
The Victim his second novel is set in New York. Asa Leventhal the protagonist works as an editor in a trade magazine board, his friend is Kirby Albee who loses his job due to Leventhal’s slackness. Hence Albee haunts the house of Leventhal asking for compensation. Leventhal does not owe Albee any responsibility, yet he fears him. He shows his disgust towards him. But Albee is too practical and appeals to Leventhal’s spiritual timidity, “You keep your spirit under lock and key. It is safe and tame and never leads you toward anything risky nothing dangerous and nothing glorious nothing ever tempts you to dissolve yourself” (qtd in Yadav 12). Albee continuously haunts Levanthal. This haunt makes Leventhal modify his personality. He is portrayed as an agency attempting to awaken Levanthal’s noble nature and moral consciousness. Often Levanthal senses somebody watching him. Once he feels somebody knocking at the door of his apartment. He opens it but finds nobody. He often feels an alarm threatening him. These experiences make Leventhal alter his ego and he sheds it (ego). Finally he accepts Albee and overcomes the controversy with him. He also decides to accept the society in which he lives. His individual self is shaped and transformed by the experiences in his life.

Bellow’s third novel Seize the Day is a record of the intense mental and emotional tension experienced in the mind of the protagonist. It is the
story of Tommy Wilhelm who meets failure after failure. He meets Dr. Tamkims who becomes his reality instructor. He teaches him the truth that the past is no good to us and the future is full of anxiety, only the present is real and here-and-now Seize the day.

Tommy depends on Tamkim for his unrealised fantasies. He has seven hundred dollars as his last savings which he gives to Tamkim for investment into the stock market in the hope of transcending himself from the return on this investment. Tamkim loses this money on the commodity market and disappears. So Tommy is cheated and defeated, materially destroyed. He strikes out after Tamkim through the crowds of New York and jostles himself in a funeral parlour, where an unknown corpse lies in the coffin...his ultimate double. Tommy drowns himself in his tears and buries himself in the watery grave of these circumstances. It is his final spiritual release, his self discovery, his atonement. He weeps for the other, for death which has a meaning, for life which struggles with lifelessness, for mortality which unites the living and the dead into one community. He is a comic mourner at the wrong funeral, mistakenly assumed by other mourners as a close relative, perhaps the brother, of the dead man. The scene brings out human absurdity which has a moral significance, a human outcome, a social potential.
The novel is significant, for it brings out the difference between the true soul and the pretender soul, both of which are at war with each other. "The true loves the Truth," whereas the pretender soul is seen as Egotism and vanity. The pretender soul takes away the energy of the true soul and makes it feeble, like a parasite. The real soul is the one that suffers. It suffers and gets sick, and it realizes that the pretender can't be loved because the pretender is a lie. And when the true soul feels like this, it wants to kill the pretender. This concept provides an understanding that there is something more than man himself to weep for. Tommy Wilhelm's whole existence is a rare example of the struggle he is waging between his selfhood and the post-war angst.

Bellow's second group of novels is those that Leonel Trilling calls The Liberal Imagination. They are the record of human experience of the 1950s. These novels portray scenes of dehumanization allied with dark realities and despair. Hence they belong to that class of fiction that portray the struggle against the evils of humanism and rising materialism. The novels depict the necessity and the need of some sort of relationship between the self and the society. The heroes of these novels are sufferers of insight and discovery, only questing seekers after truth. In his work on
Bellow Yadav states:

Bellow's heroes of these novels are "large mental travellers in quest through large social, psychic and neomythic landscapes to find the measure of their being, the nature of their human tenure". Hence these novels are great opening out in respect of form and the nature of hero-persons who command their own fate and move through expensive landscapes to venture into the growth of their spirit. Besides, they abound in social content and metaphysical meaning. (14)

The first novel of this group is *The Adventures of Augie March*. It differs in form, tone, style and ideas from the earlier novels and is written in picaresque tradition. The hero of the novel Augie March is always in quest of some new experience, ever adventuring in the hope of knowing his fate. His idea is that, a man's character is his fate. But before knowing his fate he passes through several experiences. He appears to be always high-spirited, boisterous and optimistic even in the teeth of death and danger. He feels he has opposition in him and he always aligns himself to "axial lines of existence" which is the quest after truth, love, peace bounty, usefulness and harmony.
It is a record of the hero’s modern experience. Augie lives with his mother, brothers, and Grandma Lausch. The grandma influences Augie and his brothers with her Machiavellian ideas and she is his first instructor. She sets for him a single goal, it is that he should be bold enough to rise above the laboring class even through stratagems. But Augie does not succeed. He gives up the lesson of his grandma. He goes in search of an inner order which may define his life and give him content. Augie passes through several encumbrances and influences. Sometimes he is a salesman, a lover, a husband, a petty thief, a tramp and a shop-lifter. The role he plays offers him some experience but he never knows when his fate will show itself. He realizes at last that he has no fate. He is circumscribed by his city, his society, his history which determines the fate of everyone.

The novel portrays the world of abundance in which Augie learns as much from men and women as from nature. He battles between determinism and independence. He confronts things like too much of history and culture to keep track of too many details. And also to keep track of too much news, too much example, too much influence too many guys. These ideas remind Augie that they would be as they are with all their hugeness, abundance, turbulence and Niagara Falls, torrent. The main thrust of the novel is the hero’s access to life’s “axial lines.” Those
angles of guidance and revelation where "life can come together again and man be regenerated." Finally he concludes that mortality is inevitable without any special destiny to anyone, "that the historical amassing of the world and the anxiety it generates is real and cannot be refused." The novel looks into the dark weighty claims of modern historical experience and human passions which man expends, against it. It clearly presents the well-known existential concepts of meaninglessness, alienation and subjectivity through Augie.

Henderson the Rain King is another novel of the same period. The events and scenes of the story is set in Africa and it's observed to be a quest romance. The protagonist of the novel is Henderson, an American millionaire, affected by his disorderly life and harvested by an inner voice that cries frequently "I want, I want, I want". This drives him into interior areas of Africa where he has different experiences that offers him a platform to seek the wisdom of life. The novel is said to manifest in it the quest for reality and truth for which the protagonist undertakes the journey and engages himself in tasks to awaken his soul from sleep.

Henderson travels into the interior parts of Africa. Before his travel he wishes to become a doctor but he is displaced, and is unable to adjust with his society. So he attempts to make terms with it. He cries, "Society is what beats me along. I can be pretty good, but let me go among people
and there’s the devil to pay” (qtd in Yadav 60). His social existence does not satisfy his wants and desires. Hence he is driven to Africa in a quest for essentials. His basic questions are metaphysical. He is eager to overcome his base nature like the violent, impatient, intolerant and brutal nature. He expresses rage at a life, which he is eager to change.

During his travel he meets the tribal people. The travel is powerful enough to depict Henderson’s inner life. He meets the Wariri tribe and Arnewi tribe and tries to solve their problems. Later King Dahfu becomes Henderson’s spirited counselor with his control over nature and knowledge of psychic analysis.

He sees King Dahfu to be a man who is utterly calm and beaming with life. He hopes to learn from him the secret of Being. He takes part in a rain ceremony. He faces the lion, faces death, transcends his fear and removes his ego. His individual self is shaped through these experiences. King Dahfu counsels him that Nature is a deep imitator and it is the prince of organism. It is the master of adaptations, and the artist of suggestions. It is also a principal work of art, in the body, working in the flesh, and indeed a Miracle! A triumph and a disaster. Henderson learns the concept of human mobility and dignity through Dahfu. He realizes and becomes consciousness that he is an individual. He has tricked life many times and now it has trapped him. His inner voice declares: “he
want, she wants, they want". He is eager to perform some useful deed for he has imbibed the lesson that service to a community is truly valid only by the identification with the community. Henderson’s African education helps him to throw off his ego and fear of turbulence. His individual self is shaped by the African experience.

The novels written during 1960s, of the third period, provide a paranoid view of all the social turmoil of the period. They are entirely new in their form and narrative technique. They seem to attack the new radicalism of America. The protagonists of these novels survive the immediate pressures of the environment and ask fundamental questions related to the nature of humanity. The first novel of this period is *Herzog* and it is an exploration of the mind of a Jewish American scholar. He engages himself in questions like that of Joseph in *Dangling Man* as to ‘How should a good man live?’ *Herzog* is a novel about the adventures of the mind. Herzog is constrained in his mind which is in interaction with the social world at odds. He is portrayed as a man of thinking and reflection who often thinks about the past and becomes remote from reality. Herzog is also “more alive, more imbued with reality, more vividly present than the people with whom he has actual contact, like his brother Will or his friend Ramona” (qtd in Yadav 77). The protagonist has innumerable ideas and knowledge and attempts to correct the fallacies
and misconceptions he encounters. The Wasteland outlook, alienation and authenticity in human life is totally rejected by him. The necessity for man, according to him, is a new attitude towards the reality of human life which should be based on the law of the heart, and how life could be lived by renewing universal connections. He realizes that only the change of heart may improve life. The same thought is expressed by the novelist in *Seize the Day* through the phrase “the heart’s ultimate need” which means a turning toward meaningful relationship devoid of self-centeredness. Herzog draws conclusions about life. He observes that life is not a business, it is not a continual crisis, not a meaningless prelude to death and not an engagement in ideas. And he learns that experience is deeper than idea, and that chance events are greater than synthesis. He recognizes the necessity of cultivating ethical and religious values relevant to an age of extremity and crisis.

The problem of Herzog is to confront a situation arising out of a condition which he cannot immediately alter. It requires him to move beyond despair and self-pity to the determination which teaches him how to keep a living soul in a living body. There is no physical danger to him but a threat to his moral essence. So he asks questions like Joseph in the novel *Dangling Man*, “what we are and what we are for”. He seeks poise and balance through his letters, and affirms that life is free from all
intellectual categories, all definitions and theories. His main concern is to attain human qualities. As a moral survivor he prefers joy to suffering, humility to pride, and togetherness to alienation.

Another novel of the same period, *Mr. Sammler's Planet* is said to unfold the life of the whole of mankind. It presents the modern crisis of culture and ends with a note of hopefulness and exhortation. The human-kind appears to the novelist to be knotted and tangled. The novel is firmly anchored in these oddities. It presents the modern crisis of culture affected by family disintegration, violence, crime and loss of manners. The protagonist, Mr. Sammler, a Jew, once worked as a journalist in London. He lived among intellectuals and artists. The Nazis murdered his wife and left him for dead. He escaped from them and walked the streets ever musing the loss of noble words like honor, duty, order, decency and compassion. The main concern of Sammler in this novel is how to remain human in a world that appears determined to shed its humanity.

*Mr. Sammler’s Planet* is about the anxious angst and apocalyptic conditions. It shows how a dark history is in process on the planet. These traits exist in the form of the privileges and the freeways of barbarism. The same prevails under the protection of civilized order, property rights, refined technological organization. New York city, with its setting is pictured as the place, wasted, crime-ridden, populous, and sexually
notorious. Here human consciousness is ruled by force and anarchy. The protagonist, Sammler, is a survivor of the last World War. He looks at the historical present from a distance. What strikes his gaze is pickpockets, student’s revolts, violent mobs, ego-assertive sexual affairs. His voice is a post-holocaust voice. He is far more displaced than Herzog. He is a Polish Jew in his seventies and he had spent his youth in London as a journalist in the company of intellectuals and artists. Around him swirls big city violence, sex, money, variety and initiation to commit to follies. He is an old acquaintance of H.G. Wells and the Bloomsbury. He wonders about the future of the earth, of human race, viewing the spectacle from the place of honor. He rejects the decade’s proliferating lunatics, immoral politics, his styles and obsessions. Hence this novel is entitled after him because he is the compulsory witness of the moral anarchy and madness of this earth, this planet.

Sammler is worried about mankind but he knows his limits. He believes that to achieve goodness, one is not only to heed the inmost heart, but also to look into one’s own inner-self because good and evil reside in man. The philosophy that Bellow stresses here is that of liberation, to set the protagonist’s authentic self free from the shackles of unauthentic self.
The novels of the fourth period present the historical scenario of the 1970s. *The Dean’s December* and *Humboldt’s Gift* fall into this category. They may be regarded as the meditative commentaries on the earlier works and as documents for the development of human consciousness with the passage of time and as advance of history. The protagonist of the novel *Humboldt’s Gift* is Citrine. He has an antagonist, Humboldt who is pictured as the distorted image of the former, an exaggeration of his personality, a reminder of his youthful ideals and the failure to realize these ideals. In the beginning of the novel Citrine is shown in crisis. His financial condition is in deterioration. His wife spends all his money and drags him to the law court. The Mafioso cantabile damages his Mercedes. Though at a loss, he finds opposition in friendship. And Cantabile is depicted as a force that awakens Citrine’s sleeping spirit. All loss of Citrine is set right by Humboldt who is Citrine’s old friend and mentor.

Citrine becomes the richest person, but Humboldt’s finance deteriorates. Humboldt a boisterous leader of the avant-grade faces poverty and death. Instead of helping Humboldt, Citrine fears him and runs away, thinking that his presence will only embarrass him. Humboldt always represented to Citrine irrepressible life. Critics like Howard Eiland find Humboldt to be the glorified and ideal representation of an
individual. He has been modelled on Whitman's views on man. Hence the deterioration of Humboldt is not of a single individual but of youthful ambition, of beauty, of truth about the whole of mankind.

Citrine cannot easily dismiss his earlier encounter with Humboldt, his senior who is responsible for his prosperous carrier. The meeting of Citrine and Humboldt is depicted with great importance the past meeting is brought into the present. Citrine had a chance to meet Humboldt, they become close friends and show interest in awakening the human spirit. Humboldt is pictured as Citrine's higher consciousness. He acts as a means to free Citrine from all that is false, and he makes him realize the importance of selfhood. He also awakens the noble nature in Citrine who wants to transcend the dark conditions of a dark world. His effort is partially fulfilled.

Corde of The Dean's December is a man of intense emotions. He fears what he calls the Chicago conditions, a state of violence, death, fury and institutionalized life. He wants to redeem his soul from these conditions and expose the happenings about the power elite in an article in the Harper's magazine, hoping that he could bring about a change in the society. But the powerful people oppose his ideas. The opposition he has from his society evolves a feeling of dissatisfaction towards the same. He ventures to transcend the world of materialism. Corde's predicament
at the end of the novel is how to face his hostile society and how to exist in an oppressive environment. So finally he decides to rise above the darkling plain of Chicago and follows Minna to reach Palomer observatory far away from human decay.

His wife Minna is a scholar and a researcher in Astro-physics. Corde visits her at work and goes up the observatory with his wife, Minna, rising above the world. This descent towards a higher plane makes him think that he can overcome all problems related to this earth. It appears to him that heaven is opening before him. He hopes that he could realize the mysterious voices of those who are eager to sustain mankind with a moral message. Thus the novel is an exploration of reality. It illuminates the strong self in Corde, who shows immense cosmic concern.

Ravelstein is another memorable record. Abe Ravelstein is a brilliant professor who is working in the prominent Midwestern University. He is a man who glories in training the political world into a system. He has lived in grandeur, much beyond his means. He has a close friend, Chick, who advises him to bring forth a book. He wanted the book to be about ideas which can sustain humankind. Ravelstein is successful in writing the book, to his surprise he becomes a millionaire. Ravelstein in turn suggests to Chick to write a memoir or the life of him. They
undertake a celebratory trip to Paris. The journey is a record of their thoughts on mortality, philosophy, history on love and friends. They finally return to their own land and spend their time in their place until their death. The book abounds in philosophy through which the novelist exhibits concern for man and the cosmos.

It can be stated that in the novels of Saul Bellow one can find a deep study of the ideas related to the self. In this context, Yadav observes:

Bellow laments the loss of the self in the modern angst, His thrust in his works is to know the self, the inner self, the real human within. He is after the search for authentic life. He insists that man should throw off his pretending soul and seek true soul, although there are many distractions to impede his way. His observation notes all the complexities, but his imagination endeavors to comprehend the inner life of man, to discover humanity in the public figures, to struggle against the discovering forces, to inculcate love and care for all others, to seek wisdom out of confusion. His novels are the testimony of the liberal imagination. These days he is the most sought - after American novelists, who can deliver the goods with a reflection of joy and love, as Goethe
did during his Age. And it is all because of his awareness of the modern angst and his sensibility for the authentic self. (26)

The present thesis is an attempt to study the importance of the self and moral consciousness in the novels of Saul Bellow. The protagonists of these novels have different experiences in their life. They are the victims of their society and time. Their self is affected by the dominant forces of the political and social conditions in American society. They exist with moral consciousness, these factors that affect them alters their personality. They contemplate deeply on the factors and experiences they encounter and refine their personality. Finally they dawn upon the truth that they have to accept the world as they find it and intend to lead their life in this society as it appears. Their self is transformed and shaped through various incidents.

This chapter further focuses on the concept of the self which has been interpreted variously and discussed widely by great thinkers. It enumerates on the different concepts related to the self and elaborates on the Indian and western attitude towards moral concern and consciousness. It discusses briefly the novels by Bellow that are mostly autobiographical. The author has shaped his experiences into incidents in his novels. Hence the protagonists serve as representatives of the author’s thoughts. Most occurrences in the novels are based on Chicago Life, where the author
had spent the most part of his life. The chapter throws light on the growth of the author as a writer and elaborates on the development of his themes and ideas related to the idea of the self and moral consciousness.

The present study is confined to six out of twelve novels of Saul Bellow namely Dangling Man The Victim Henderson the Rain King Herzog Humboldt’s Gift and The Dean’s December. These novels facilitate a concerted approach to substantiate the chosen topic and are sufficient for a study of this length and purpose. The present dissertation is divided into five chapters including the introductory chapter. The second chapter captioned Awareness deals with the novels Dangling Man and The Victim. The third chapter titled Efflorescence deals with the novels Henderson the Rain King and Herzog. The fourth chapter, Enlightenment makes an analytical study of Humboldt’s Gift and The Dean’s December. The last and final chapter sums up the findings of this thesis.

The second chapter entitled Awareness has attempted to study the idea of the self and moral consciousness in the protagonists of the novel, the Dangling Man and The Victim. The protagonist Joseph of Dangling Man exists with a moral vision. He has plenty of time at his disposal for he is waiting to take up a job in the army. He makes use of his leisure time searching for the identity of the self and often ponders
whether one can have an inner life. He feels that many a time he is asleep and should enter a "Waking Life" and have "Purity" to "Pollution". He observes that the present is not the one that he should live, his world is elsewhere. He struggles to establish himself in a trouble torn society. He proposes introspection in order to know his "inward transactions" and to know and answer boldly the questions related to the self. The ordinary existence gives him only disgust and he is interested to know the life that a good man should live and what a man should do, if he is to be good. He expresses the idea that if one keeps oneself aloof from the material life, one can attain a good conception of the self. He shows great interest in the ideas put forth by philosophers like Sartre and Kafka. His main concern is to lead a life that would be useful for himself and others. Hence he joins the army. He learns that the reality of life cannot be avoided and he has to encounter the difficulties in it. Yet he reveals a great moral concern. This concern and consciousness in Joseph can be equated to the consciousness of the self. Today's world is torn by material prospects and money-mongers. Hence it needs great effort to establish one's self.

Asa Leventhal of The Victim has a friend by name Kirby Albee, who haunts him and awakens his spirit. He mentions to Leventhal that Lenventhal had kept his spirit under lock and key. The novel can be
considered to be an expression of the inner thoughts of Leventhal. He relates light in the outside world to the light in every human being. He often feels that he is not only looked at by somebody but he is being watched and that one can see at the bottom of one’s soul. These ideas of Leventhal reveal his moral consciousness. He is troubled by the society which lacks moral awareness and knowledge of doing good. Hence he muses that one cannot expect people to do what is right. He who yearns for the identity of the self has a feeling that he is singled out and that he has become the object of some freakish and insane process. He is eager to know what constitutes life and its meaning, for he is burdened by materialistic prospects and has internal suffocation which reveal his eagerness to have more moral strength. Gradually, he learns what is to be human and realizes his moral and social duty.

The third chapter entitled Efflorescence examines the idea of the self and moral consciousness prevalent in the protagonists of the novels Henderson the Rain King and Herzog. Henderson of Henderson the Rain King is after a quest for a higher truth. The modern scenario of America does not offer anything to Henderson. He perceives it to be a wasteland and haunts the interior areas of Africa. Henderson’s encounter with Romilayu, a reality instructor offers an experience of a nobler kind. The experience motivates Henderson to realize the higher realities of life. The
novel *Herzog* examines and brings out the hero's intent search for knowledge of one's own self. His letters bring out his deep sensibilities which reflect his great moral concern and consciousness. There are many reality instructors who create awareness of the self in *Herzog*. He realizes that death is inevitable. He exclaims that he wants to lead a useful and moral life. He continuously confesses his drawbacks and mistakes.

The fourth chapter *Enlightenment* explains the ideas of self and moral consciousness in the protagonists Humboldt, Citrine and Corde of Humboldt's *Gift* and The Dean’s *December*. These men who live amidst modern turmoils show extreme concern for a higher reality. They put forth questions related to the soul and seek its enlightenment to a transcendental level. They also exhibit a great concern for the improvement of the society and they voice the author’s innate intention.

The concluding chapter briefly recapitulates the findings of this study as presented in the previous chapters. In the course of the thesis it has been traced that Bellow is first and foremost a novelist who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature at the age of sixty-one. He has for his record many major novels, one novella, a good number of short stories, several plays and essays written over thirty-five years. He carries the reputation in many quarters of being the leading American novelist of the post-war generation. The award came in recognition of the novelist’s
contribution to the development of the genre and for upholding humanistic purposes. He felt the effects of the world war and saw the world in crisis and ventured to specify the importance of certain everlasting human values like truth, wisdom and true freedom. Bradbury observes, “He is always a man...a writer or intellectual; he is anxious about the self, concerned with exploring its inward claim and about mind, which may be our salvation or the real source of our suffering” (29). The novelist can also be seen as a philosopher who shows a great concern for the individual self and man’s authentic self, insisting the need for moral consciousness. The thesis concludes with a note of optimism that his works contain within them more values that may be probed and highlighted to educate and improve the inner quality of man of the twenty-first century.