CONCLUSION
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Bellow's humanism is not confined to the ordinary level of stressing merely the workaday ideals of grace and dignity, politeness, and sympathy with the suffering living beings. His world view anticipates a humanism which has a spiritual complexion, for according to his perception a human being cannot attain true stature as a human being until he looks within himself, unlocks the imprisoned self, overcomes the temptation of holding on to the self, achieves a sense of freedom, and knows the nature and purpose of his existence.

As the title of Dangling Man indicates the protagonist is himself the dangling man. He is oscillating between the world of daily life and the world of the spirit, between the materialistic world and the spiritual world. After a long struggle to overcome this situation of uncertainty and suspension between the two worlds he plans to resolve this dangling by embracing the world of action and see for himself what his destiny is. However the significance of the novel lies in the revelation of his preoccupation with finding answer to a question central to humanism: What makes a good human being?

Bellow's humanism includes an individual's social and family responsibility. The sense of social responsibility is ingrained in the protagonist as well as in other members of the society. Although Bellow does not focus on anti-Semitism prevailing in his country or abroad as is understandable from Joseph's comments on the war yet he is certainly aware of the plight of the Jews and their pent-up feelings on account of their joblessness, economic adversity, lack of self-confidence, isolation
and unfriendly social environment. *Dangling Man* suggests his awareness of this unfortunate social climate of anti-Semitism.

In Chapter II Bellow presents his protagonist as a sensitive human being who becomes a victim of his conscience when he has the slightest suspicion of having done some moral wrong which he might have thoughtlessly ignored. His Jewish conscience is suddenly alerted though his Christian friend Williston dismisses Joseph’s wrongdoing as obscure suspicion or annoyance. This novel marks a further development in Bellow’s concern with the humanistic projection of his Jewish protagonists. As human beings with a sensitive conscience their unfair and inhuman treatment by their non-Jewish Christian brethren had deeply hurt them, alienated them, and, at times, made them vindictive in their attitude. The central theme of Bellow’s *The Victim* is the role of conscience in a good man whose goodness is suspect which makes him susceptible to the pricks of his conscience when he is accused. The novel’s main interest lies not so much in evoking the protagonist’s awareness of social responsibility which is not lacking in him as in exposing the inner drama of his sensitive conscience which constantly nags him and creates his self-doubt and poses a challenge to his sense of commitment to himself as a human being. He believes that before he can become a good member of the society he should be a good human being. The absence of mutual trust between the Jews and the Gentiles is thus a cardinal theme of the novel. The Jewish feelings had been hurt by their age-old distrust, suspicion, hatred and persecution by the Christians. As they had no fixed state or place of habitation they were scattered far and wide across different continents thereby becoming a wandering lot craving for love, sympathy and dignified recognition by the non-Jewish
society in each country of their settlement. This universal desire of the Jews to show that they are good human beings is thus present in all the Jewish protagonists of Saul Bellow. Being himself a Jew, he understands the Jewish psyche well and so makes their psychic anguish an important theme of his novels. Bellow’s The Victim is thus the representation of a sensitive protagonist who by conceding the accusations of a former friend and supposed victim of his wrongdoing becomes himself a victim of his conscience. The conflict between Asa Leventhal and his former friend Kirby Allbee may have its roots in the age-old friction between the Jews and the Gentiles. Bellow presents in the novel not only a Jewish protagonist but also a view of life of the Jews living in New York. Bellow’s pre-eminent humanistic concern in the novel is to show how the very fundamental or intrinsic nature of a Jew has been misunderstood by the non-Jews, and his image as a human being tarnished for all time. The novel focuses on the conflict between Christianity and Judaism which represent the two — the negative and the positive — approaches to, or modes of human existence and its protagonist’s preference for the latter.

The novel points to the humanistic dilemma of the protagonist Asa Leventhal who is himself a largely conscientious type of a human being. Yet the novel stresses the point that within the human being there is an irrational or black element or power within man’s mind which needs to be recognized, brought out, and, if possible, won over. It is this inner irrational element within him that Asa has to grapple with. As a whole, Bellow explores not only the humanistic concern with evil, life, death, marriage, and man’s biological need but also suggests the Jewish brand of humanism which transcends the commonplace Christian viewpoint on these subjects. The Jewish instinct for love and preservation of life is
manifest in no small measure and receive greater emphasis, particularly because of the suffering that the Jewish race had gone through at the hands of the anti-Jewish world. Thus, Bellow's preoccupation with the theme of their hurt psyche finds expression in this novel too.

The focus of Chapter IV, The Adventures Of Augie March, is on his protagonist after whom the novel get its title. Understandably, this novel, unlike the earlier novels, Dangling Man and The Victim, needs to be understood through the eyes of the protagonist. Bellow presents a series of adventures of Augie March. Augie plunges into various situations which bring out not only his humane qualities such as noble nature, loyalty to family, etc., but also show him materialistically as a young man of twenty-two years cheerfully facing difficult times. Due to his bad economic condition he becomes a book lifter. But he has a noble aim of using that money obtained from selling those books to pursue his education. He is gentle, tolerant and generous in showing sympathy to others when they need it. Bellow seems to reject the usual misconception about Jews possessing a money-minded culture. His protagonist is not a money-crazy Jew but a liberal, generous, good-natured man. Augie is like any other Jew in that he takes serious interest in getting himself well educated. Bellow also tries to show the different strata of the society based on their economic disparities.

Like other human beings the Jews too have a tendency to perceive reality in mythical terms, and to employ biblical myths and allusions. A good number of sometimes lucid but often obscure allusions appear in Augie's comments. These allusions clearly suggest the Jewish cultural background employed by Bellow in the delineation of Augie March. As a
result of this Biblical cultural inheritance Augie possesses optimistic, liberal nature and believes in prophetic rebirth. Thus Bellovian humanism includes mythic symbolism since a large number of human beings believe in myths. In the employment of mythic symbolism Bellow no doubt exploits the ancient myth. The significance of using these myths lies in his attempt to find connections between the present day lifestyle of man as a human being and the ancient life pattern when man was close to nature and unaffected by the complexities of modern life. Bellow's attitude towards representation of man is essentially humanistic though he does not have the same traditional attitude towards woman. In this respect he presents a view of women which is not in accord with the traditional Jewish view in which woman is generally regarded as a pleasure-giving and child-bearing companion - and not an equal, intelligent partner of man in daily life. As such, Bellow's women characters appear as individuals who exercise full freedom of choice and take their own decisions whether it is Mary, Ramona, Madeleine or Thea Frenchel.

Augie March is a nice young man, good at heart, with no malice toward anyone and beloved of all the young ladies he falls in love with. He falls in bad company, picks up bad habits, but overcomes all the difficult situations in which he gets involved. He recalls his unhappy childhood experiences when his feelings were hurt. He remembers how a number of times he was marked out in certain places as a Jewish youth and subjected to ill treatment. Bellow tries to depict his protagonist who is not merely a Jew who suppresses his hurt feelings but also a human being possessing both virtues and vices that all real human beings possess. His presentation of his Jewish protagonist is as human as Shakespeare's presentation of the Jew at the initial stage in The Merchant
of Venice. Thus, the novel presents Bellow’s humanistic view of a Jew as a responsible human being who is always anxious about living a good life, who respects his as well as others dignity, upholds an individual’s freedom of choice, sanctifies life, and sees it as a gift of God to man. He considers life as a perpetual struggle for survival and attainment of beatitude that is dear to God, and upholds reason and the quest for self-knowledge.

In Chapter V, Herzog, the intellectual protagonist is greatly distressed and disillusioned by the world of those people around him who had made human life a matter of commerce. To him human beings ought to preserve the sanctity of life and not reduce it to a business transaction. He is unhappy at seeing de-humanization of the weaker sections of society and hates the corrupt and the fundamentalist people. He believes in humanity, tolerance and peaceful co-existence, earthly life, moral philosophy and dignity. He disapproves of medieval asceticism and monasticism. An important thought that troubles Herzog’s mind is the question of justice — human justice. His own situation throws up the question of his undeserved and unjust betrayal by his wife Madeleine and trusted friend Valentine. Bellow’s preoccupation with the amoral thinking of the modern generation is reflected in Herzog’s apprehension that human beings have lost faith in God altogether. However, Bellow’s protagonist does not subscribe to the modern post-Nietzschean notion of the supremacy and the pervasiveness of death in the world. Even though as a good man he is exposed to evil suffering, he has not lost faith in God. He understands that there is a genuine conflict and contradiction between his notion of humanism in its ideal form and the humanism of daily, practical life as reflected in his family relationship with Madeleine.
Herzog, no doubt, feels disturbed at his betrayal both by his wife and his intimate friend but he accepts the reality without yielding to any violent emotions which he initially betrays when he rushes home to collect his father’s pistol to shoot the lovers. He understands the practical necessities of life. He loses his daughter as well as his wife to his friend but he loves his daughter and never fails in his duty to send money for her maintenance even though she is separated from him.

One more important aspect central to Bellow’s humanism haunts Herzog’s mind is the question of human goodness vis-a-vis the biblical thought that evil in man’s heart is the consequence of the primal (Adam’s) sin. The Bellovian protagonist does not believe in this biblical concept. The humanism of Bellow seems to be more optimistic than the negativistic humanism preached by some contemporary intellectuals usually known as the prophets of doom who believe that the world will soon perish. He does not accept their thought that suffering can show the way to truth. According to Herzog, one ought not to exalt suffering as a positive way to lead one to understand the ultimate truth of life or solve one’s problems. Herzog’s attitude is ethical. His flight nature, his mental letters, his dreams of sadness and sorrow, his thinking over the conflict between desire and reality, between the desire for living an ideal life and the practical need to cope with the reality of human existence, his preoccupation with the question of human justice, his thinking on death and his love of animals — all these point to his noble nature and affirmation of life. Bellow underlines the contradiction within Christian existentialist worldview. His own belief in humanism is based on Judaism which he finds more optimistic and practical. The thought of the Jewish-
Gentile conflict within his psyche once again creates a feeling of insecurity and injustice in his mind and turns it to look deep into his soul.

In Chapter VI, *Mr Sammler's Planet*, the protagonist Artur Sammler is a very private and individualistic person in comparison with the protagonists of Bellow's other novels. Most of the time Sammler talks to himself. He has a divided consciousness because his mind is drawn in two directions — by the polite society outside himself and by the thinking within his mind. He lays stress on the inner voice of the individual which he thinks is suppressed by the polite modern society outside of "received opinions". It is a conflict between the 'rationalist' intellect and the soul which carries the secrets of the spirit. Bellow's Sammler is interested in exploring the hidden secrets in his soul which he believes can be perceived intuitively and not by the intellect. Sammler's knowledge of reality is derived from the experiences he had gone through during World War II. He escaped from the Nazi Germans and the anti-Jewish Poles and hid himself in a mausoleum for several months. During the period of hiding he was cut off from the world and society. He practically experienced the thin dividing line between security and insecurity, between life and death. Thus, concerned with knowing the fate of the humankind in general Sammler tries to probe the mystery of the human fate. Like W.B.Yeats he has an intuitive feeling that mankind is headed toward some catastrophe which he cannot precisely visualize or define because he too belongs to the human race.

The novel suggests that the source of an individual's humanity lies in accepting moral truths or values which can be intuitively understood but which cannot be analyzed or explained rationally. Sammler loses
contact with human reality following the loss of his one eye and also his wife in the Holocaust. He feels less intensely as a human being. With his right eye he can see the unhappy human condition in the world. Dismayed, his left eye turns in another direction to seek some guidance from his medieval mystic — philosopher Meister Eckhardt. Eckhardt advocates detachment from worldly — earthly, human — matters as a way to finding God. But Sammler does not find this philosophy in accord with life, or congenial to people. It is both anti-life and anti-human. He therefore rejects this philosophy of divestment and instead acknowledges the bond between soul and body. Consistent with the humanistic view, Sammler affirms that “life is sacred” and also that the worst evil is murder. Sammler’s belief is life affirming though he also knows that the nature of man is destructive. Sammler believes that the knowledge that comes to an individual through participation in life is certainly more human than the knowledge that comes from an objective analysis of things. Subjective knowledge, is in his views, is superior to objective knowledge obtained through scientific or intellectual observation. He argues that becoming too objective or scientific makes one too abstract or even ghost like. Sammler who desired to remain away from this earthly planet ultimately reconciles and reenters into this planet. Thus upholding earthly life. He believes that a human being must realize the eternal within his earthly existence. Thus, Bellow creates in Sammler a protagonist who is aware of the cruelty, pain, violence, etc. pervading human life and accepts reconciliation with existence as an essential attribute of a human being and humanism. The human beings possess both the destructive power to create disorder and also the extraordinary constructive power to rise above that condition and restore order. Bellow acknowledges the rightness of the Jewish habit of ratiocination, but in his
view ratiocination must finally be transcended by the radiance of humanity. Thus Bellovian humanism is exhibited in its pure from in Mr Sammler’s Planet laying emphasis on the desirability of reconciliation with earthly existence.

In Chapter VII, The Dean’s December, the protagonist Albert Corde is a journalist who subsequently becomes a professor and dean of students in a Chicago college. As the dean, he had involved himself in a controversy. By writing a series of articles he had accused Chicagoans of racism, clubhouse politics and lack of what he calls “moral initiative”. By defying his society he had risked his professional standing both as journalist and college official. But his attack is based on moral considerations. Though the dean is far away in Rumania attending upon his dying mother-in-law he is mentally preoccupied with thinking of possible solutions to his problems in Chicago.

In this novel, the humanist stress on culture which promotes life and human goodness and other values is manifest. Corde does not have much regard for persons who are against their own culture. He believes that indifference to cultural values makes a society uncivilized. In order to have a decent society believing in humanity, the elite and the intellectuals should come forward and share their ideas for the betterment of the society. The protagonist wants to preserve his old tradition even though the world is changing. In the changing world the middle class people of Chicago are engaged in fighting for their survival, their dignity and liberty. The racial discrimination of the black people by the whites and their inhuman morals evoke his disgust. Likewise, he feels unhappy at the inhuman conditions prevailing in communist Rumania. Corde
seriously believes that the moral values of contemporary society are collapsing and life everywhere becoming directionless and meaningless. Though in the early novels Bellow does not accept the Wasteland situation visualized by T.S. Eliot, yet in The Dean's December it seems that he comes close to accepting it. Bellow's humanism is moralistic. It also postulates the union of spirit and nature. Compared with other protagonists of Bellow's novels Albert Corde is not faced with any personal Jewish problems as such, nor does he seems to suffer from the impact of the hurt psyche. Since he is interested in lecturing on Western humanism, civilized morality, nihilism in East and West, these topics obviously point to his overall concern with the ills that trouble the world around him.

The Dean's December presents the Bellovian emphasis on developing a humanistic rather than a racial approach to all kinds of ills and prejudices that trouble the world. In Albert Corde, Bellow finally presents a practical humanist and an ideal human being who has an affirmative view of life, who is a man of principle, who endeavours to provide solutions and answers to human problems. As a good human being and an enlightened man his outlook and actions suggest to the afflicted world that a good man is a humanist who affirms life, that humanism is his philosophy of life, that being humane and promoting human dignity is his religion and doing justice his noble principle.

In the last Chapter, Ravelstein, Bellow is most Jewish in the sense that he throws light on the history of the Jewish experience of suffering and the hurt psyche of the Jews in a much greater measure than done ever before in order to throw light on their situation in the twentieth century.
He points out that Hitler’s mind was obsessed with the ridiculous thought that the downfall of Germany had come about because of the Jews. All the anti-Semitic groups supported Hitler’s policy of persecution of the Jews depriving them of their citizenship and other rights. Their synagogues were destroyed and thousands of them put in concentration camps. They were ordered to live in ghettos. Anti-Semitism existed in all Christian and Muslim countries. Thus arose “the Jewish Question”, a human problem that always seems to have haunted Saul Bellow and so figures even in his latest novel Ravelstein. Ravelstein is at least clear about his view on these matters. As a brilliant professor and intellectual he focuses on that anti-Semitic brutality and sadly recalls the demoralizing and dreadful history. He points his accusing finger at the entire world that silently watched the mass executions of Jews in Germany, Russia and elsewhere and had no courage to protest the barbaric actions in Palestine. Through Ravelestein, Bellow reminds that the painful history of the inhumanity done to the Jews cannot be forgotten by anybody. In his last days of life Ravelstein is heavily obsessed with the history of German nihilism. He underlines the distinction between natural nihilists and intellectual nihilists and prefers the former to the latter. He prefers the former because they were frank and openly hostile in their stand while the latter were manipulators and hence more dangerous. Even though he is himself on his death-bed Ravelstein cannot overcome his psychic anguish. He laments the brutal torture and massacre of the Jews by the German Nazis. He is deeply obsessed with the thought of the Jewish suffering and their human right to justice which they had been repeatedly denied. Bellow also shows the Jewish way of life and the Jewish belief in Judaism. In his view the root of the problem of the universal hatred of the Jewish race lay in the mythical conspiracy. And
since it was not humanly possible for the Jews to erase their identity as Jews, the only possible way for them to redeem themselves is to know their history and their principles of justice. The humanist with emphasis on the principles of justice in this novel is then not merely Ravelstein’s but also Bellow’s own to suggest a way to overcome the hurt psyche of the Jewish race. It is also important to note that Ravelstein is an important landmark in the growth and development of Bellow’s concern with the need for humanism in the world and marks a significant progression of his literary or naturalistic humanism into political humanism. By repeatedly recalling the past suffering of the Jews he too suffers the psychic pangs and shares it with them. Nevertheless, with his absolute command over his literary genre, he is able to transcend the Jewish perspective of his novels and present a comprehensive picture of his protagonists aspiring to achieve the goodness and nobility that characterize a good human being.

Clearly, this sense of suffering behind his strong humanistic belief has been present in the mind of Saul Bellow’s throughout his intellectual development as a writer. He has been deeply affected by this awareness. Besides, personally living in and through nearly the whole of the twentieth century, he could not have remained unaffected by the traumatic experience of the Nazi massacre of his own community. He must surely have gone through the intellectual and emotional trauma caused by the harsh inhuman and prejudicial treatment meted out to the Jews in Europe. The awareness of this historical experience of the Jews of being treated as almost a hated race in many countries has deeply influenced the man and the writer in Saul Bellow. There seems to be, as I have argued, a hurt psyche in the background of all of his major novels.
Saul Bellow has, therefore, been, in my view, trying in all his novels to present the Jews as human beings who are essentially good and not vindictive as bad as they have been mischievously projected by the anti-Jewish world. Like all other human beings they have no doubt their failings and weaknesses, but on the whole they possesses a great deal of humanity which is desired to be present in all good human beings. They stand for a positive, humanistic approach to life and stand as testimony to Saul Bellow’s humanism in his novels.