CHAPTER III

FANTASY : THE VISION OF ESCAPE

From the tightly controlled technique in Dangling Man, The Victim and Seize the Day, Bellow moves on to a more expansive style in The Adventures of Augie March, Henderson the Rain King and Mr. Sammler's Planet. In The Adventures of Augie March, it is a leap of the mind in picaresque tradition. Referring to The Adventures of Augie March, D.J. Hughes has wisely placed Bellow's work somewhere between "the traditional picaresque with its demands upon social setting, and symbolic fantasy with its demands upon psychological resonance. This is precisely the area Bellow seeks to depict the area of wish." Roberts Scholes, talking about Fantasy, says that the whole idea of projecting a narrative into the future is a terribly daring one, and is one of the latest narrative possibilities to be discovered and exploited in Western literature. The journey in space, however fantastic, has a pedigree going back to Lucian at least; but the journey forward in time is really a development of the nineteenth century. The possibility has been there ever since the progressive concept of time evolved and the New Jerusalem was established as the future
boundary of human existence, to go with the past boundary of the creation.  

However, the evolution of fantasy is not clear. It seems doubtful that in the beginning there was the word or that it must have come later. It is more likely that before the word there were the mental graphics. And much before that, the stirrings of fantasy. The creator's vision is shaped by his imagination and rooted in his fantasies, however predictable the end result of his labour may finally appear to be. This apparent contradiction is, in fact, the crux of the creative process.

To a person who is trying to visualise a future he is unlikely to live in, the need for a powerful aphrodisiac is very necessary. And fantasy is that aphrodisiac, it is the exciting bed on which the science fiction writer makes love to his apocalyptic mind. Fantasy is a literary mode from which a number of related genres emerge. Fantasy provides a range of possibilities out of which various combinations produce different kinds of fiction in different historical situations. Since the novel is the most protean of literary forms, it is the least amenable to formal definition. As we approach the late nineteenth and early twentieth century novels, we find an increased subjectivity and a new sympathy with abnormal behaviour. Besides the novel also has turned out to be the record of the life of an
individual. In this regard Frank McConnell remarks:

The development of the novel form represented by Barth, Pynchon, and the later Mailer is characterized by a riotous sense of fantasy and a deliberate flaunting of the conventions of naturalistic narrative. Bellow is also allured into this age's fantasy vision of the world and such fantasy is present in his best work. But unlike other writers who continued the trend, Bellow visits only occasionally and when it suits his larger purpose.3

Almost all of Bellow's hero are self made men who nevertheless feel always frustrated at the way the modern world is moving. Augie March's frustration arises from the fact that he is an illegitimate and isolated, so his search for relationship takes him to fantastic world. It is a search for an ideal image of love and ideal parent. Thus the carefree picaro hero Augie at the sametime becomes a familiar victim. This problems is centered on a simultaneous need to preserve and to escape from this world. Bellow begins by shifting his hero's environment permitting a fantasy atmosphere to prevail, to refashion the universe in accordance with his shifting pre-occupation. For Augie, fantasy is a technique through which he can perceive the complexities of life, his vision, hopes, fear, strength.
weakness and infinite possibilities of his potential and latent secrets. Herbert Gold has substantiated this point to a very large extent. He said: "All of Saul Bellow's novels have contained intensely personal visions of desire out of the dark limits of the soul where desire becomes obsession." In this case the economic conditions too have increased Augie's isolation and powerlessness. This leads him to madness.

Madness is an interior escape and to the extent that fantasies are sometimes diametric reversal of perspectives held in the conscious mind. The reality of life is chaos; the fantasy of man is order. The fantastic gives us the chance to try out how unrealistic possibilities, perhaps, change reality. Thus fantasy is the genre in art or literature or film or any other medium that makes the consideration of fantastic reversal, its very heart. The wonderful, exhilarating, therapeutic values of fantasy is that it makes one recognize that belief, even beliefs about reality, are arbitrary. Self reflection, in raising questions about the ontology of the real world, serves to keep our perspectives in order. The fantastic's confusion of the external and internal worlds is the most common device of art, and is found even more frequently in The Adventures of Augie March. Fantasy represents a basic mode of human knowing, its polar opposite is reality and...
reality, is that collection of perspective and expectations that we learn in order to survive. In every area of human thought, civilization has evolved a functioning reality. Marcel Schneider had claimed the fantastic as dramatizing "the anxiety of existence," while Caillois described it as a form which was stranded between a serene mysticism and purely humanistic psychology. Todorov has little time for metaphysics and he opposes impressionistic attempts to define fantasy. He is not interested in the semantic approach of other critics, (looking for clusters of subjects) and for the meaning of the fantastic in these subjects and he turns instead to a structural analysis of fantastic literature, seeking structural features, which different texts have in common and which might provide a more correct definition of the fantastic. Furthermore, writing about the fantastic in literature, Todorov has reminded us that "the concept of genre is borrowed from the natural sciences."6

There are different forms of fantasy--symbols, legend, myth and fantasy are all cousins. All have the same paterfamilias--metaphor. All are attempts to explain the complex nature of reality through varieties of literary analogy. Fantasy implies intimations of meaning which cannot be "logically" grasped--as dreams are never really
understood. But as an artistic device fantasy is that which makes it possible for the novelist to reach the unreachable areas of human experience to explore and expound the psyche of the entire humanity. Human nature, essentially changeable, unstable as the dust, can endure no restraint. If it bends itself it soon begins to tear madly at its bounds, until it renders everything asunder, the wall, the bounds and its very self. Fantasy, in literature and in other art, is an enormous and seductive subject. Its association with imagination and with desire has made "it an area difficult to articulate or to define, and indeed the value of fantasy has seemed to reside in precisely this, resistance to definition in its free-floating and escapist qualities." Literary fantasies have appeared to be free from many of the conventions and restraint of more realistic texts, they have refused to observe unities of time, space and character, doing away with chronology, three dimensionality and with rigid distinction between animate and inanimate objects, self and other, life and death, but this is in fact a narrow categorization. Literature of the fantastic has been claimed as "transcending reality", escaping the human condition and constructing superior alternate secondary worlds. From W.H. Auden, C.S. Lewis and J.R.R. Tolkien, this notion of fantasy literature as fulfilling a desire for a better, more complete, unified
reality has come to dominate readings of the fantastic, defining it as an art form providing vicarious gratification. Hence it is "essentially a literature of desire."  

As a literature of unreality, fantasy has altered in character over the years in accordance with the changing notions of what exactly constitutes "reality." Modern fantasy is rooted in ancient myth, mysticism, folklore, fairy tale and romance. The most obvious starting point for this study was the late eighteenth century—the point at which industrialization transformed Western society. From then onwards those fantasies produced within a capitalist economy express some of the debilitating psychological effects of inhabiting in a materialistic culture. They are peculiarly violent and horrific. The word "fantastic" is derived from the Latin, "pantasticus", which is from a Greek word meaning to make visible or manifest. In this general sense, "all imaginary activity is fantastic, all literary works are fantasies." Given such an infinite scope, it has proved difficult to develop an adequate definition of fantasy as a literary genre. As a critical term, fantasy has been applied rather indiscriminately to any literature which does not give priority to realistic representation—myths, legend, folk and fairy tales, utopian allegories,
dreams visions, surrealist text, science fiction, horror stories, all presenting realms other than the human. "A fantasy is a story based on and controlled by an overt violation of what is generally accepted as possibility; it is the narrative result of transforming the condition contrary to fact into "fact" itself." Such violation of dominant assumptions threatens to subvert, overturn, upset, and undermine rules and conventions taken to be narrative. This is not in itself a socially subversive activity it would be naive to equate fantasy with either an anarchic or revolutionary politics. It does, however, disturb rules of artistic representation and literature's introduction of the "real."

Fantasy, like irony, is used in this study in its broadest possible sense. All fiction is in some sense a fantasy in that it is an imaginative construction, but the pervasive use of fantasy as a plot element, a narrative strategy, or a controlling form in the modern novel suggests an overwhelming need for imaginative release from objective reality. On the simplest level, fantasy may be used as a part of the realistic narrative context. The splitting of the self into several parts, or even duality of gender, suggests conditions of multiple personalities and schizophrenia-mental states in which the psyche constructs alternate realities. If the sense of the divided self is
one reason for the frequent use of dreams, fantasies, and madness in these novels, another is the concept of boundaries to be transgressed, lines to be crossed, if only in imagination. Dreams, fantasy, and madness become ways of transcending boundaries either temporarily or as part of a journey to autonomy and wholeness. Dream and memory are structural elements in the novel. The constraints posed by social reality deepen the need for dreams and fantasies; if actual freedom is difficult to attain, it can still be imagined, and from imagination can come either movement out of the socially constructed self or deeper entrapment. It may have a sense of irony, a double perspective that puts the emerging self against the socially constructed self in creative tension. Freedom is a metaphor for a deeper autonomy.

Fantasy moves easily in space between this world, an underworld and an upper world. It can conflate with past, present and future, and is allowed to have dialogues with the dead. States of hallucination dream, insanity, eccentric behaviour and speech, personal transformation and extraordinary situations were within its parameters. However the fantastic retains its original function of exerting pressure against dormant hierarchical systems, it is no longer an escapist form, but the only expressive mode. 

"...a fantasy is a story based on and controlled by an overt
violation of what is generally accepted as possibility."\textsuperscript{11} There is a general agreement that this possibility is what defines the fantastic as a narrative. "Fantasy is not an escape from reality but is an investigation of it."\textsuperscript{12} The impact of fantasy rests upon the fact that the world presented seems to be unquestionably ours, yet at the same time, as in a dream, ordinary meanings are suspended. Fantasy in literature depends upon a peculiar, unexpected mingling of internal and external reality. Fantasy teases the mind with the way in which it can surprise and confound itself. For instance Kafka's fantasies are explorations of emotional conditions, their logic is the logic of psychology and their aim is to present a literal account of what is happening subjectively to his character. Nabokov on the other hand uses fantasy to emphasise the fragmentation of normal perception, to deny the sense of order to insist that logic and order are themselves fantasies.\textsuperscript{13}

However, Fantasy in modern literature depends upon realism in literature; it depends upon the reader's ability to recognise a commonly acknowledged, or normal world and to recognise descriptions as pertaining to or failing to pertain to normal conditions. The initial impact of fantasy is its deviation from the norm. A more fascinating impact of fantasy "arises from its connections to the norm, from the way in which it highlights the instability, inconsistency or underlying preposterousness of the normal."\textsuperscript{14}
Fantasy is an element in nearly all kinds of literature, especially the narrative. The fantastic lives "on illusion, on delirium sometimes, always on hope...and above all on the hope of salvation." Fantasy as a natural human activity engages both writer and reader. Fantasy exists in the basic myths, they assert values that cannot be validated scientifically, and the stories they tell are most decidedly not veritable—creation, activities of the Gods, the deeds of semi-divine beings and culture heroes. We find fantasy "upholding morality, we find fantasy serving satiric ends." Much of what we feel in life can easily enough be represented in realistic terms, but some of the experiences that move us most derive from more alien realms of experience, that have been represented in literature through the use of fantasy.

The Adventures of Augie March is Bellow's first major success. It is a kind of first-person Bildungsroman (German term signifying "novels of formation" or "novels of education")." The subject of these novels is the development of the protagonist's mind and character, as he passes from childhood through varied experiences to maturity and the recognition of his identity and role in the world. The narrator thinks back to the picaresque adventures of his youth when as an ostensible protagonist he was "an uncommitted wanderer upon the face of the earth." Augie
seems to have gone through everything but undergone nothing substantial, and emerges a neutral and a different man. This is a pattern characteristic of a number of Bellow's novels, even when the narrative pattern is more complex as in *Herzog*. The complex theme in *The Adventures of Augie March*, could be described as a pentagonal pattern, and could be characterized by an objectification of action, character, and the comments form centres of reflection, upon character's fate, power, money and love. *The Adventures of Augie March* opens upon the narrative perspective moving away from a closed and obsessive point of view. It abandons the tight, limiting structure of the earlier novels, seeking a form that is dictated by the material and accommodates it, rather than one that encloses its material in a preconceived aesthetic mould. It offers a vastly increased range of characters conceived in terms of their comic eccentricity. Most of all "it offers a new literary style, so distinctive that it has been called 'Bellovian', in the wonderful talking machine of Augie's voice that contains also the limitless polyphony of the world he inhabits."¹⁸

The first words of Augie's long narrative invoke and transform the themes of the earlier books with an energy and expansiveness only hinted at before: "I am an American, Chicago born—Chicago that somber city and at things as I have taught myself, free-style, and will make the record
in my own way." The prose manages to move from a deliberate parody of the self-educated prophet into a pre-Socratic philosopher with almost strong metaphors for storytelling. Augie's story is not what happens to him, but rather it is an adventure which is narrated in a style which is both all inclusive American and with a rich linguistic vehicle of myth. In fact, Augie March is a crucial novel for this aspect of Bellow's enterprise, since the language of the book itself strives "so mightily toward just such a reinvention of the mythic level of reality" casting again and again the borders of sheer lyricism.

Augie March grew up in Chicago, with an elder brother Simon, and a younger idiot brother Georgie, their mother abandoned by their father, and a number of Machiavellian characters whose influence Augie, in the end, rejects from the canvas. The first is his grandmother Mrs. Lausch, a fascinating character ruling the home with guile and malice but happy and carefree. It is the Grandma who gets Georgie into a state home, while Simon and Augie drift away from home. Augie becomes a sort of a travelling victim. After his Grandma, it is Willima Einhorn, his employer who harasses him. When he loses his job during the Depression, he goes to work for a third dominant figure--Mrs. Renling whose husband owns a sporting goods store in Evanston. Pushed to the wall, Augie leaves, wanders to Buffalo, upper-
New York, a jail in Detroit, and comes back to Chicago. Meanwhile his brother Simon becomes the fourth harasser when, having married money, he tries to persuade Augie to work for him and eventually to do the same. However Augie escapes to Mexico with Fenchel, after having tried his luck as a labour organizer in Chicago. They try to find love, but she is something of a grotesque, and possessive. As a result he turns towards another woman, Stella. By this time the picareque hero Augie finds the break-up complete. As the War approaches he undergoes a hernia operation so that he can join the merchant marines, marries Stella, although she tries to warn him not to, is wrecked at sea and after the war makes money in the European black market, while he learns of Stella's unfaithfulness. Augie is a good man. But his goodness is biological; he gains understanding, but he is passive.

The change in attitude to write a picaresque novel may be accounted for, at least in part by the historical movements of the time of its writing, a time of high expectations associated with post-war reconstruction and the liberal optimism of the early years of the Eisenhower administration. So many of these novels, written during this period have a liberating quality. Like the conventional picaresque novels, Augie March is structured on the experiences of its central character, the picaro, and is
therefore often presented in the form of an autobiography. Augie travels from the Chicago of the Depression, through Mexico, to post-war Europe, in search of meaning in the world. Working at many odd jobs like a salesman in a department store, as a dog groomer, as coal merchant, as salesman he also helps to manage a prize-fighter, becomes a tramp for a brief time, works as a union organizer, trains an eagle to hunt iguanas, joins the merchant marine and is set adrift in a life-boat. All these experiences help Augie to "turn inward and discover himself-and gain substance as a character." Hence Keith Opdahl, claims that the book is really a Bildungsroman." However, the problematic relationship between the novel's inner and outer worlds raises questions about how the narrative voice is to be understood. Augie March is the narrator of his own story. Yet the voice he speaks with, often sounds as though it might be Bellow's own. Nevertheless, it is difficult to judge the extent to which he has authorial approval. A further complication is that he is telling his story in retrospect, and this although it gives ironic distance, tends to confuse the issue of whether the development that take place in Augie's character during the course of his adventures are caused by his immediate experiences, or whether they are superimposed by the acquired wisdom of the older narrator.
Bellow had faced similar problems with the narrative point of view in his earlier novels; here he tries to open up the perspective by making Augie the object of judgment. Both the character of Augie and the world in which he operates are represented to us through the novel's highly distinctive style, which is inseparable from the narrative voice. The protagonist of a picaresque novel is essentially a device used to present and satirize the external social world, while the protagonist of a Bildungsroman is a fully realized character with a real inner life who must live in relation to his own beliefs. In The Adventures of Augie March the conflicting requirements of the two forms have set up a corresponding conflict in the central figure who is a character who must sometimes function as a device. As a device, Augie is employed to examine the ways in which others survive and triumph in the predatory material world. He and his brothers represent various possible ways of living. Simon March embraces fully the methods of the Machiavellions and their material values, and in so doing becomes a slave to money, his increasing physical and moral grossness makes him almost an emblem of the novel's materialism—a victim of the "American Dream".

However in many picaresque novels, there is no character development, which means that the protagonist ends as he began and the requirements of this novel's rhythmic
form necessitate an optimistic ending. Augie's experience hardly gives him cause for optimism. If there is any lesson to be learned from his experiences, it is that there is no happiness to be found in life. It becomes increasingly clear to Augie in the course of his narration that his distinctive struggle, his special mode of confronting the advent of chaos, is through the legacy of the romantic will. That great invention of the nineteenth century, with its self-confident promise of a natural and cosmic mobility to even the most abortive struggles of the bourgeois intellect, is a myth in which he has no choice but to believe and which turns his whole career "into a frantic voyage of discovery." But the structure of the novel is one that conveys "a dominant pattern of defeat for Augie March."23

The picaresque mode in this novel is an escape from mundane realities and Augie's quixotism a replacement of true by false ideals. That Augie can occasionally admit his weakness more than many of this novel's critics have seemed able to, is a tribute to Bellow's subtle and ironic modification of the picaresque hero. It is an original and witty recommendation of the mode to modern times, allowing "it to express in ironic camouflage, many of the damages and compromises inflicted upon man as spiritual aspirant in this age." Towards the end of the narrative, Augie, in Florence as a tourist, is accosted by an importunate old
lady wishing to peddle her services as a guide. This incident forces home the point that Augie has all but succeeded in eradicating the idea of personality from his life. In the form of the novel Bellow cunningly dramatises its central concern. Two structural patterns govern the novel, each enacting the problematic nature of involvement of time. In the general movement of the novel, Augie March is repeatedly adopted by different characters—Grandma Lausch, Einhorn, Mrs. Renling, and Thea Flenchel—who recruit him to their own version of reality. In each episode Augie assumes a different role, following the direction mapped out by his picturesque narration in his protean changes.

A second formal structure also directs the reader's response to the novel. Augie March begins with the assertion that "a man's character is his fate" (AM 7), but the phrase is double-edged, for Augie is writing his own autobiography, and, therefore, creating the character of himself. The double form of first person narration emphasises the ambiguity. Looking forward from Augie's birth the reader may entertain the view that Augie defines himself only by his actions assuming and shrugging off roles in a continual process of becoming. Looking backwards, from the stand point of the older Augie who relates events, "the actions are controlled by the character, the essential
narrative voice of Augie March, whose boisterous colloquial larkiness is a constant controlling device.\textsuperscript{25} The training of the eagle suggests the frontier myth. Mr. Renling is cast in the mould of a Westerner, who is keen on fights. His terse clipped speech echoes with Western slang. Augie is to be "schooled" and "broken in" (AM 153). Mrs. Renling is described "as riding fence on her face" (AM 161), she describes Willia as "a little India" (AM 158) who is trying to get Augie "roped" (AM 159). Bellow ironically frames the warring American myths within a larger mythical context. Mrs. Renling praised the male in all things as if "she was working for Athena" (AM 168). The sacred bird of Athena, goddess of skills and warfare, is the owl, and Mr. Renling is described as "a night bird... crude, big, brown-barred shape." (AM 180). It is Mrs. Renling who points out the innate depravity of America, who threw her child from a window to its death. The appearance of New World progress merely conceals the same violent events as the past. Augie rejects any mythological idea of new and innocent beginners, comparing Miss. Zeeland to Medea--"It wasn't Medea, a good, safe long time ago, chasing her pitiful kids, but a woman I saw in the dining-room wearing feathers" (AM 162). Augie's pursuit of Venus, in the shape of Esther Fenchel draws its comedy from the deflation of mythical innocence. Honourably pursuing a pure and perfect love, Augie offers himself to
Esther like a courtly lover. Her rejection, couched in less than courtly terms, is based on the belief that "you service the lady you're with" (AM 170). Aghast, Augie drops the Grail with a clang, feeling "as if I had been carrying something with special sacred devotedness and it had spilled and scalded me" (AM 170). Recovering from his faint he sees Miss. Zeeland in the doorway "in her evening feathers...visionary, oriental with her rich hair swept up in a kind of tower...she glided or fanned away" (AM 168). Miss Zeeland's unbroken roll of body, and her serpentine and bird-like motion--"gilded","fanned"--suggest that living in a state of nature is not altogether Edenic. Athena's other sacred animal is the serpent. Nature appears behind the myth.

History gives way to story and the value-free autobiographical genre is replaced by parable, exemplum and fable, by stories which are narrated entirely to carry forward the narrator's point of view and as a second layer to the narrator Augie who becomes increasingly the listener to the stories of others. The Cossack talks of his uncle to illustrate the horrors of life. Clem describes the children smelling imaginary flowers to argue that all experience is subjective. Basteshow tells his aunt's sleeping sickness, of the death of his cousin Lee, of the German goldsmith whose works were melted down for bullion. Mintouchian
treats Augie to a series of cautionary tales on the general theme of marriage. The entire ship's company of the same Mc Manus, pour out anecdotes, poems and personal histories to Augie, though with one exception only a line or so of these tales is given in the text. Each story is related in skeletal form, with no concessions to realism, setting or character, governed only by fabulative design. As Augie discovers the extent to which other people create their own versions of the world, fabrications to which they attempt to recruit him, so he gives up opposition and the stories grow more and more obviously fictive.

Bellow contends that the novel must remain true to life, which involves construction and narration, thought and culture, but which is lived by human beings who are of paramount importance. While the novel is studded with ideas, with fictions and philosophic discourses, the action of the novel establishes the primacy of the human being, grappling with the changes of time. In time the individual must act. In narrating his actions however he must guard against the illusion that his history is governed by a rationale, a scheme. From formal, time free art Bellow "returns the novel to a renewed concern with the profoundest problems of humanity." In the double quality of the first person narration, in the range of ideas, in the succession of different tales and varied worlds, in the provisional
nature of its closure, the novel appears unformed, a loose and baggy monster in which no authoritative point of view dominates. Bellow likes, for instance to begin his sentences with a preposition, a conjunction or a pronoun. "The fault which lies deeper in the structure of the novel is that the style has to counteract the simplicity inherent in Augie's point of view."27 This is a classic picaresque trait, from Don Quixote to Parson Adams. Bellow's design, however, is ambitious, and his problem is to qualify the enforced simplicities of Augie's view with more of critical and ambiguous vision which encompasses the whole action. "Augie speaks, but as he speaks Bellow perceives and criticizes too. the voice is Augie's, the style Bellow's and it is the disparity between what Augie can see and Bellow must tender that forces the style of the novel so heavily upon our attention."28 Augie represents a dramatic reversal in Bellow's technique, it is an easier achievement than The Victim. The unifying principle of the novel is Augie's search for a worthwhile fate, and though the first-person narrative gives immediacy to that search, it lacks the objective complexity of the narration of The Victim. It may also be referred to as a confessional epic, because it is a narration of an American consciousness, and the ground of that psychic warfare is the stuff of language itself. The central situation of the novel is that of an
American narrator telling his tale in a distinctive, idiosyncratic language. However the richest level of significance is on the mythic scale.

The picaresque tradition in the European novel had achieved one main purpose, it had liberated the protagonists from the rigidity of a static society into being free agent who could to some extent shape his own destiny. Robinson Crusoe (1719), Moll Flanders (1722), Pamela (1740), three early examples of the English novel, show how the central character is in each case an active rather than a passive agent challenging his or her fate. Every age of fiction develops its own representative hero its own human image of the values it acknowledges and the force or power it respects and responds to. In the first generation the hero was usually an artist, or a man of artistic sensibility. Joyce's Stephen Dedalus or Proust's Charles Swann, were men who bespoke their author's conviction that art was the one genuinely redemptive power of the day. In the second generation, no less revealingly, the hero has tended to be an apprentice saint. Dr. Rieux in Camus's The Plague and Bellow's Augie can be safely placed in this second generation of picaresque saints. Combining outrage at the betrayal of human promise and pity for the betrayed humanity, Saul Bellow contains and exploits more of the fertile contradictions of his century than any writer
since the great age of fiction, the nineteenth century, and this is what is meant by naming Saul Bellow, in the present company, as the representative American.

Although the picaresque story of Augie revolved round a single figure; though characterization was then considered the main thing, the narrator remained on the centre of the stage. Perhaps he doubted the ability of his characters to hold the readers' interest and felt that an exciting story made up of wayside adventures, was necessary. All this complex manipulation goes on deftly subordinated to an epic sense of destination, to a sense that epic episodes exist no merely to be entertaining, but also to advance the action towards its rational solution of a problem. The parts are practically all organic. It is in this respect, if not in anything else, that Augie's adventure triumphs over Fielding's Tom Jones of which it reminds us time and again.

Fantasy in Henderson the Rain King is a tool to explore the nature of imperfection in life and to seek deliverance from the vexing tyranny of routine. It helps to sharpen the blunted edge of the spirit of inquiry and contemplate the limitless possibilities beyond logic and accepted realistic perspectives of the world. In short fantasy opens up an entirely new world where realistic comprehension and perception end up in a blind alley due to their
intellectual, and empirical approach. Henderson the Rain
King resembles, "more immediately than any of his other
novels, those fictions of the fantastic which characterize
the sixties." Eugene Henderson is Bellow's non-Jewish
protagonist and the first to have inherited a place at the
centre of American wealth, power and culture. From one
point of view he may seem to be an extreme development of
the figure of aggressive, drunken, self-destructive White
Anglo-Saxon, similar to the version of Kirby Allbee in The
Victim. From another point he has much in common with
Bellow's earlier Jewish heroes, particularly in his sense of
himself as an outsider like Asa Leventhal of The Victim,
since he feels that he occupies a place that belongs to
someone else, and as a clumsy sufferer he has a predecessor
in Tommy Wilhelm of Seize the Day. If Augie March started a
new phase of narratives in Bellow, Henderson the Rain King,
acquires a more expansive and irresistible orchestration of
narratives.

Fantasy in Henderson the Rain King provides a
fascinating and totally new perspective which dismisses
unquestioned viewpoints, hackneyed idioms and syllogistic
habits of ratiocination and rationalisation. By its
conception and technique of exploration, it administers
cultural shocks to jaded minds and points out the woeful
inadequacies in our understanding of life and of the world,
and the serious limitations our tools of inquiry suffer from, while exploring experiences and sensibilities. It also puts on the mat the values which have been respected and propagated through the ages. Human experiences, mysteries of life and death, human relationship, the inexplicable sentiments and patterns of behaviour, the indomitable spirit of inquiry, the search for a new and effective medium of expression, the basic riddles of existence--all find an alternative vent in fantasy, thus satisfying a very human need for expression and communication.

Structurally, Henderson the Rain King can be divided into three parts that indicate the separate stages of Henderson's struggle towards salvation. The first section, set for the most part in America, presents the signs of Henderson's illness in chaotic fashion. In the second section set in Africa, he encounter a tribe--the Arnewi, and in the Arnewi section, a preliminary diagnosis is made about the patient's leap into disastrous action, compels him to leave before treatment can begin. However at the end of the Wariri (another tribe) section, which takes up two-thirds of the novel, we are shown a radiant Henderson in harmony with himself and with the world around him. The first four chapters of the novel form an extended meditation on the question of an inherited past--a past which Henderson is trying to erase. This is a problem of both individual
psyche and public culture. *Henderson the Rain King*, in many respects appears, as, Judie Newman puts it, "an excursion into fantasy and into transcendental concerns." Here the functions of fantasy are manifold. Briefly stated, they include extension of world view, exploration of depths of mind, creation of a new perspective, rejuvenation of the capacity to experience, affording new experiences restating the unity of mankind on this basis of commonality of human feelings, experiences and dreams; and providing an escape from the tyranny of historical and realistic rigidities.

Communication through fantasy idioms is direct and independent of the ground rules of realistic perception. While the ground rules of realism respect the universal postulates of cause and effect theory and syllogistic method of reasoning, fantasy rejects them and adopts a diametrically opposite stand recognising the inadequacies of the instruments of realistic perception. Our perception of the world is derived by acquisition of knowledge through the sensory organs and these organs have their own limitations. The information acquired through the sensory organs is by itself inadequate and suffer from distortions. Hence the picture constructed in the mind reflects the shortcomings and imperfections dictated by the rigid realistic approach. To concretise and realise in action the meaning encapsulated in a verbal idiomatic or figurative
expression is another effective technique employed in fantasy. Often we hear people say that the heart knows what the eyes miss (representing sensory faculties).

The sensory perceptions are ignited because of intense boredom. It is boredom that he experienced in America that led him to go to Africa—the Africa of the mind like Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Boredom is one of the prisons of the mind. The fantastic offers escape from this prison. When we accept the world in which the make-believe is real, we participate in the fantastic. This participation is a form of escape in literature,—it is a fantastic reversal, and therefore not a surrender to chaos. In its mundane uses, escape may be defined as emerging from restraint; breaking loose from confinement. If boredom is the sign of minds with one track fixity, then its opposite, excitement, is what we need. Escape, then, is neither inherently frivolous nor inherently unrestrained; we need feel no guilt in reading escape literature. In the literature of the fantastic, escape is the means of exploration of an unknown land, a land which is the underside of the mind of man. Each fantastic creature gives us a new perspective on the chain of life. Fantastic landscape, fantastic people, traits etc. However fabulous Henderson's comic quest of Africa is ended when he learns to replace one verb "want"
with two other "imagine" and "love". He cannot tell us what it was he wanted. Saul Bellow can tell us how it was that Henderson moved from one verb to another. The movement is the book. To "want" more is to be as Henderson was before he learned to love and to imagine. Henderson the Rain King, is in effect, "an excursion into the exotic quest novel which has a world of fantasy and myth as its locale." 31

The American myth of escape, in its twentieth-century manifestation, is related to the larger concern of literary modernism with a vision of contemporary Western society as a spiritual desert, a vision that found its quintessential expression in the poetry of T.S. Eliot. Eliot's sterile "Wasteland" is vainly awaiting the arrival of the hero who will have to revive it with healing waters; the would-be hero Henderson is all too successful in his endeavours to bring water to the African tribe. The book, fantastic from the start, becomes increasingly a fabulous series of adventures richly imagined in themselves and doubly effective as ironic parallels to old Testament stories and anthropological data borrowed from The Golden Bough. There are other techniques like exaggeration and stretching a point to the utmost limits, transcending physical laws, extension of an already established realistic possibility besides considering dreams and hallucinations as part of total human experience, and existence, as earnestly
foll owing the whims and fancies of the mind as if testing
t heir impact on real life and vice versa.

Penetrating the depths of the human mind, fantasy
offers an escape to the world of the bizarre, the
mysterious, the enchanting and the adventurous. It is a
kaleidoscope through which we can perceive the complexities
of life—man's state of existence, his vision, hopes, fears,
strength, weakness and the infinite possibilities of his
potentials and latent secrets. For this Henderson does not
move in Bellow's familiar urban landscape of Chicago or New
York, but is placed instead in Africa in the second half.
This is not an Africa that anyone might visit, but one
constructed out of Bellow's fancy. Africa is very much a
place of imagination built on a framework of fertility
myth, and with a wide range of Biblical, literary and
cultural allusion that give it an extraordinary
suggestiveness and resonance. Thus the story has the dream-
like quality of romance, a quality that Henderson himself
brings to the reader's attention on more than one occasion:
"not the least of the difficulties is that it happened as in
a dream."32 Dreams and fantasies come unbidden, as.responses
to the human need to resolve and order both past
and future reality. Madness, too, is a method of copying
with experience by an unwilled act of disassociation from
what most people consider reality. Yet there is a fine line
between what are called "normal" and "abnormal" behaviour and perceptions. The line between dreams and fantasies, on the one hand, and madness on the other may be almost indistinguishable in the contemporary novel. What can be termed madness may be temporary and fleeting. It may be a device or the narrator's abandonment of reality during his search or quest; or it may be a continual, inescapable condition of mankind.

Madness and its variants—dreams, daydreams and fantasies—become subversive ways of overcoming exclusion and silence. What one knows to be true but cannot express because it will not be understood or accepted in the light of one's marginal position in society, emerges in fantasy. The improbability of this narrative is irrelevant, because Bellow is rewriting the modern romantic myth of the individual escaping from civilization to seek fundamental truths through a confrontation with the wilderness. It also reworks a central theme of American Literature, memorably expressed in Huck Finn's decision to eschew "civilization," and "light out for the territory," which emerges in the distinctively American code of romantic heroism associated particularly with Earnest Hemingway, an attitude that seeks to overcome "fear of annihilation by confronting death in its most savage aspects."
Bellow's rich mixture of narrative episodes and stylistic modes is everywhere indicative of his belief in the inadequacy of the words to express the correct feelings. The prose of Henderson echoes the rhythm and idiom of Jewish speech. His life history is a satirical commentary on the ideal American with social ties to the John Adams. With three million in the bank Henderson can love only pigs, and his social role is the desecration of his family estate and his pedigreed heritage. It is a wildly comic conception of the all-American hero, and Henderson's adventures are often hilarious. The ironies involved in the confrontations of the various cultures are endless. The main irony, perhaps, is that Henderson, who appears as a saviour to the primitive cultures, brings salvation only to himself. The frogs, polluting the Arnewi tribe's cistern is destroyed by Henderson but they lose the water too, likewise the Wairi are given rain, but robbed of their god king. Henderson is full of these ironies. It is a looking-glass view of human history, at once totally insane and totally perceptive.

Nancy Walker remarks that there are two types of fantasy. The first is:

- Fantasies of sexuality, freedom, power, alternate worlds in which men are autonomous, self-defining people. The second characteristic or narrative strategy, is ironic mode that springs from a
recognition of the socially constructed self as arbitrary, and that demands revision of values and conventions. Irony and fantasy represent, respectively, intellectual and intuitive challenges to perceived reality that reflect in the form of narrative the socio-political challenges to the status quo that the narrator wants." 34

Just as fantasy may be a way of constructing an unreal world from the specifics of the real, so is irony a way of negating the truth or validity of a received tradition and pointing to its incongruity or absurdity. Both devices allow transcendence of immediate experience even as the main characters tell their lives to the reader. Pervasive use of irony and fantasy as narrative devices in the contemporary novel on the other hand, does call into question assumptions about identity, gender, relationships, potential and achievements. Both devices propose alternatives by pointing to a contrast between conventional surface reality and the possibility of another set of truths, and fantasy by promoting an imaginative recreation of experience. Both devices also suggest and reflect changes in fundamental aspects of novelist's lives during a turbulent period of social and political upheaval. Both irony and fantasy, as narrative devices, are interdependent
with language in specific complex ways. On the simplest level irony is a verbal construction, the reader is invited to question the surface validity of a statement that an author or a character makes. Deeper irony, of circumstances or attitude, requires that the author create a context in which ambiguity is tolerable.

The frequent use of multiple narrative perspectives by contemporary novelists is closely related to the sense of the divided self that affects contemporary men so directly, as they deal with the simultaneous demands of home and career, family and employment, past and future, myth and reality. Such division is at best disorienting, and at worst calls into question the reality of the self. This confusion between an "I" and "he" through the narrative voice has its cause and effect. There is an uncertainty of vision, or a reluctance or inability to fix things as explicable and known. This problem of the perception, vision, knowledge of the protagonist and narrator makes fantastic narration, squarely, a challenge. Fantastic narratives confound elements of both the marvellous and the mimetic. They assert that what they are telling is real—relying upon all the conventions of realistic fiction to do so and then they proceed to break that assumption of realism by introducing what within those terms is magnificently
unreal. They pull the reader from the apparent familiarity and security of the known and every day world into something more strange, into a world whose improbabilities are closer to the realm normally associated with the marvellous. The narrator is no clearer than the protagonist about what is going on, nor about interpretation the states of what is being seen and recorded as "real" is constantly in question. This instability of narrative is at the centre of the fantastic as a mode.

Our love for uniformity, homogeneity, orderliness, predictability and overwhelming necessity to intellectualise and rationalise, block alternative avenues of exploration and stunt the capacity to experience. As a result, we live in an undersized world and dismiss everything that runs counter to traditional and customary perception. Fantasy delivers us from mental sickness by duly recognising all kinds of beliefs and experiences which do not necessarily depend on realistic proofs for their validity. In fact, it expands the boundaries of realism and breaks the shackles of the mind. We must not forget that though fantasy is the opposite of reality, fantasy springs from reality which is the reference ground. Mythologies, religious allegories, fairytales, science fiction, detective stories, metaphysical mysteries, parapsychological experiences are all forms of fantasy. Whatever may be the form, the subject of fantasy
is always man. Man in fantasy is definitely not the "rational man" he is believed to be. Fantasy recognises man for what he is, with his beliefs, fears, hopes, dreams, confusions, behaviour pattern, prejudices, insights, preferences, irrationalities, responses, reflexes, strengths and weakness. It administers shocks to destabilise the imperfect image of man as a "rational being" by violating the ground-rules of reality and prominently projecting the full play of imagination and other creative faculties. It serves the purpose of enlarging and extending the vision by sharpening, the propensity to experience. The shock that fantasy administers helps us overcome the limitations imposed by the precepts of realism.

How exactly is the shock administered? What are the devices and techniques employed for this purpose? In the first place, the postulates of Nature are suspended and hence the system of reasoning that follows. The belief that every effect has a cause and the same cause produces the same effect under similar conditions is disregarded and the opposite of these rules is applied to events and experiences with amazing and startling results. They are not only unexpected but also dis-expected. Because of the huge conception and scope of Henderson its effect is necessarily more diffuse. In Henderson the real world is only implied, shown only through the looking glass. This conception is
more suggestive, more open-ended, than the double vision, but lacks its inherent strength, in which the real and imaginary worlds actively reinforce each other. Like all of Bellow's novels it is a technical tour de force, a unique achievement. Unlike the others, however, it is acted out in regions entirely removed from the real world. Henderson's America is no more real than his Africa. The strangeness of his experience reflects the strangeness of the human conditions, and the unreality of the novel is a commentary on the unreality of the "real." Critics who have complained of the unreality of Henderson's Africa have not seen through the looking glass. Africa that he finds is a marvellous fantasy land in which "wild asses may be, or zebras (are to be seen) flying around in herds" (HRK 210). In Henderson the Rain King, Bellow's protagonist is on a identity-quest, and thus undertakes "a fabulous journey through the lion-haunted regions of the deep consciousness." Thus he employs a mythic structure for the quest. Posing as a saviour Henderson preaches to the Arnewi tribe, "Do you know why the Jews were defeated by the Romans? Because they wouldn't fight back on Saturday. And that's how it is with your water situation. Should you preserve yourself or your cows, or preserve the custom? I would say, yourself. Live, I said, to make another custom" (HRK 60).
Henderson encounters two tribes in Africa, one a gentle matriarchy which could be a projection of his security fantasies or rather the dependency fantasy; and the other a sadistic, male-dominated tribe, a projection of his aggressive fantasies. The dependency fantasies are enacted and explored in the midst of the Arnewi, a nourishing, breast-offering tribe. Offering a hand in greeting to Willatale, the tribal queen, Henderson recalls, "... I was astonished when she took it and buried it between her breasts. This is the normal form of greeting here..." (HRK 7). The Arnewi are ideally suited to fulfill Henderson's oral security needs. They are milk drinkers exclusively (HRK 61), breasts are everywhere in evidence, the cows are sacred animals, even the roofs of their homes are circular and rise to points "in breast-like fashion" (HRK 47). When Henderson is formally introduced to the assembled Arnewi, he reports "women were tugging nursing infants from the nipple" (HRK 75) and "kids were crying at the loss of the breast" (HRK 76). Laughing with the Arnewi, Henderson reports, "my mouth expanded greatly" (HRK 55). In hope of guaranteeing himself a permanent place at the breast, Henderson resolves to clear the Arnewi's cistern from the infected frogs. His ill-controlled aggressive impulses led him to an over-kill, in which he destroys not only frogs, but the entire cistern as well, leaving the Arnewi in a
hopeless situation. In addition to trying to guarantee himself a permanent supply of oral satisfaction, it is possible to charge him with trying to destroy the father's potential for producing more children who will compete. The frogs are explicitly referred to as "giant sperm" (HRK 88). His clothing Willatale, the parent figure, in a gift of a plastic raincoat hints of contraception. When he actually tries to destroy the source of masculine potency (if one accepts the frog-sperm association), he loses the mother entirely. After having acted out concretely the wish to destroy father and keep mother forever, he has to leave the Arnewi. He creates his own fantasies and in leaving them, teaches himself that his desires are really conflicting and self-defeating.

His aggressive fantasies are then enacted among the sadistic Wariri tribe who lacerate men in public ceremonies, and leave dead bodies hanging for days. He and his guide are first greeted by an ambush which Henderson describes as "a military group with guns aimed at us" (HRK 117). The landscape includes fences of thorn, rocks "about the size of Pacific man-eating clams" (HRK 119), and "fierce flowers of a very red color" (HRK 119). The important animal to this tribe is a lion, not a cow. Waiting and worrying while a captive of the Wariri, he bites so hard into a biscuit that he damages his dental work. The link between biting and
aggression seems clear. The gentle Arnewi queen Willatate has "not many teeth" (HRK 111). His teeth, furthermore, "were made of a material called acrylic that's supposed to be unbreakable but my striving wore them out" (HRK 129). He writes that his wife told him that he always ground his jaws in his sleep. He muses, "maybe I have kissed life too hard and weakened the whole structure" (HRK 129). The Wariri often present buttocks to Henderson's view trying to reach the Wariri King Dahfu, he complains, "But the wives were between us with their naked thighs, and their behinds toward me" (HRK 176). Speaking of some Wariri tribesmen, Henderson notes, "Their behinds were pitted like colanders" (HRK 152). There are references to Henderson sitting "cramped and contracted on a low stool" (HRK 154) as if on a toilet. He often mentions his dirty undershorts and the need for a bath at this point in his travels--"They left me in my jockey underpants which were notably travel-stained (HRK 197). Disparaging himself, he remarks, "I don't even deserve to be chronicled on a toilet paper" (HRK 211). Henderson has arrived at the Wariri camp just in time for a Rain-making ceremony, the core of which is the physical lifting of a group of heavy wooden idols. The Mummah is too heavy for any challenger, but Henderson moves it and thereby becomes Sungo or Rain King. In the context of all the anal references the supreme ceremony of moving the Mummah, that
"huge... overspilling formless, oiled fly-attracting mass" (HRK 192) can have a similarly anal referent. Once he has moved her, Henderson says:

There beside Mummah in her new situation I myself was filled with happiness. I was so gladdened by what I had done that my whole body was filled with soft heat, with soft and sacred light. The sensations of illness I had experienced since morning were all converted into their opposites" (HRK 192).

After lifting Mummah and putting it into its new position, he feels light, as if his violent feelings passed off" (HRK 194). As Rain King, one of his functions is to "cleanse ponds and wells" (HRK 197). In a sense, he expels his violence and learns that aggressive energies can be channeled into service. As soon as he is declared Rain King, he is stripped and thrown into a cow pond of stale mud and "super-heated sour water", a cesspool of sorts. Then, handed a whip, he joins other tribe women in lashing the wooden idols. It would have been different, perhaps, if this had been a token whipping and the gods were merely touched with the thick leather straps. But great violence was loosed on these figures, so that the "smaller ones rocked as they were beaten while the bigger without any change of face bore it defenseless" (HRK 201).
This fantasy novel comes to terms with human realities. Henderson has encountered, projected onto the African landscape, two conflicting aspects of himself, the passive oral dependence and the active anal dependence. He has been reborn, has relinquished the breast, plumbed his aggression (been toilet trained) and even become potent (as Rain King he is also god of fertility). Recovery from his "condition" is well begun. It remains for him to accept his own mortality, "who shall deliver me from the body of this death," (HRK 250) he cries. He wonders, "why is it (sic-death) always near me-why can't I get away from it for a while" (HRK 252). Despairingly, he says, "not even Death knows how many dead there are. These dead should go, They make us think of them. That is their immortality in us. But my back is breaking." (HRK 253) Henderson the narrator continues throughout the novel to allude to his discovery of an "unknown dimension" or perspective that, having altered his vision of reality, permeates his account of life before Africa. Henderson interrupts his narration to give thanks for the very love that, as a protagonist, he is anxious to deny. After describing in the narrative past tense the tumultuous development of their affair, Henderson interjects in the present a prayer of thanks: "Blessed be God for the mercies he continually sends me..." (HRK 215). In this way, Henderson prepares his readers not only for his revelations
as a protagonist but also for the value he places, as a narrator who has made the journey "beyond history and Geography, upon the meaning and mystery of love."  

In the novel's concluding pages he underscores the point by moans of repetition, emphasizing that his final affirmation is no sudden or tacked on affair but the lasting culmination of his experience. Thus Henderson puts it to the reader, as he says, "Once more whatever gains I ever made were always due to love and nothing close" (HRK 339). In an article "The Fighting Lazarus" Bellow had remarked "every guy has his own Africa." And despite the great brilliance of many of the descriptions of Africa scorchingly authentic, some of them there remains a residual feeling of mirage, of dream. "For me the entire experience has been similar to a dream" (HRK 293). Henderson the Rain King, "is a self-induced fantasy of a titanic child who is half superman and half clown." Henderson the Rain King, is essentially a protagonist dominated novel, from the "I" of the first person narration, to the fact that Henderson is the center of every scene, not only as perceiver and explainer, but as chief experiencer. From the beginning, the reader learns of Henderson's psychic states through physical symptoms. "The facts begin to crown me and soon I get a pressure in the chest "(HRK 23). After a wrestling match he says, "it made my breast ache to win, and
my heart winced when I did it" (HRK 68). He expresses his reaction to a frightening situation, "within my face itself a curious over ripe sensation developed, Fear" (HRK 149). Henderson admits, "I am not good at suppressing my feelings, the whole of them crowds especially the bad ones, and wave to the world from the galleries of my face" (HRK 53). Just one week before Henderson was published Bellow warned the readers through the New York Times, with the title "Deep Readers of the World Beware, that the "Novel should not be read with constant attention to symbols."39 This warning was given by Bellow, inspite of a large number of mythic patterns woven into the text--patterns out of Freud, Jung and Frazer. In which case, these patterns must be parodies. Henderson, of course is the mythic hero who enters the dangerous kingdom, marries the goddess, reconciles himself with the father, and takes a boon back to the tribe, but all the patterns turn parodic. Bellow is making fun of modern literary pretentiousness.

With Bellow's seventh novel, *Mr. Sammler's Planet* which appeared in 1970, the pretentious world still continues. The book seems to be in large part, an attack on a generation of Americans that was trying to stay "alive" in Bellow's own sense of the word, to have a separate destiny, to be marvellous, just as his former heroes. Bellow created a protagonist different from his others, as well as like
them, in appropriate ways, Artur Sammler is a Polish Jew born in Cracow. Spoiled by well-to-do parents as child shaped like earlier Bellow heroes, to expect good things of himself and others. But later there comes a moment when he crawls naked and half blinded out of a mass grave of Nazi victims, leaving there, the corpse of his wife. And soon after this he, in his turn, kills a German soldier. For the rest of his life Sammler struggles against the message then delivered to him, "that reality was a terrible thing, and the final truth about mankind is overwhelming and crushing." Even the title of the book, Mr. Sammler's Planet, suggests that the work will be concerned with universal issues and that in it the individual will be related to the world of which he is a part. It is appropriately narrated in the third person. The action of the novel occupies approximately a week, a week we may associate with the great Week, the seven days of creation or the seven days, the seven tasks, through which the primal intellect moves in forming an ordered, humanized universe.

An essential clue is given in the title of the novel, which focuses on earth as a planet. In the novel earth not only is depicted as the womb and tomb of mankind, but it also provides a macrocosmic analogue to mankind's experience of conflict in life. As it revolves around the sun, the earth rotates on an imaginary axis, the combined motions of
which account for the extremes of the diurnal cycle. Day and night correspond in the novel to the bright and dark sides of the moon as well as to Sammler's good and blind eyes, a correspondence suggesting that Sammler's experience of an apparent dichotomy between light and darkness, in a polyvalent sense, may be better understood in terms of some integrating universal system. Likewise, it is equally significant that, as it rotates, the earth exhibits a centrifugal (outward) and a centripetal (inward) force, providing a macrocosmic analogue for Sammler's simultaneous attraction to and repulsion from human existence on the planet. Sammler, the novel indicates, possesses an imaginary axis comprised of the emotional extremities of attraction and repulsion, around which axis the self, as it were, rotates, experiencing a cycle of affirmation and despair equivalent to the planetary manifestation of day and night. Sammler's self participates in the motions of the planet on which he lives, whereas he, on the verge of sleep, dreamily realizes "all went up and down and round about" (MSP 54).

Time and again macrocosm (universe) and microcosm (mankind) are related in the novel. This analogy is implicit in deftly managed planet imagery, for example, Sammler thinks of individuals as "orbiting" (MSP 289) or as possessing "great orbited eyes" (MSP 167, 180) and when in Sammler's mind "Elya reappeared strangely and continually,
as if his face were orbiting as if he were a satellite" (MSP 223). When V. Govinda Lal remarks that "outer space is an opposite, personally, an emotional pole" (MSP 222), his reflection of mankind's centrifugal attraction to the moon and to the outer space is identified (as his manuscript also indicates) with an imaginary release from mundane conflicts. However, as Sammler knows, the moon's bright and dark sides merely provide a simplified, static version of the numerous bifurcations of earthly life. On the moon, as numerous details in Dr. Lal's manuscript unwittingly imply, man's future (light side) will not escape his past (dark side); all the troubles he has experienced on earth will accompany him to the moon. "The moon, too, is a kind of fossil" (MSP 129), Sammler remarks in a letter to Dr. Lal later thinking in preparation for his meeting with Lal. "New world? Fresh beginnings? Not such a simple matter" (MSP 136). That the human thrust into space (his centrifugal impulse towards the future and the spiritual) will always be countervailed by earthly existence (his centripetal impulse towards the past and the material) proves frustrating, but Sammler tentatively offsets despair by sensing a correspondence between the dialectic features of human existence and the bipolar operations of nature. In man just as in nature, antagonistic forces interrelate, in Hegelian rather than in Manichean fashion each extremity mutually defines and gives
value to its opposite. And so even in the seemingly ultimate matter of life and death, antipodes relate "murder can revive ordinary existence" (MSP 111), just as when Sammler, "himself nearly a corpse, burst into life" (MSP 138). When he of necessity "killed a Polish partisan" (MSP 140); or just as any normally life-supporting beat of the heart in Arnold Gruner also "might open (an) artery and (fatally) spray the brain with blood" (MSP 81). All these ideas like collage in painting is drawn in to this canvas.

Saul Bellow has said "It's my first thoroughly non-apologetic venture into ideas...here baring myself nakedly." 41 Bellow is barring himself nakedly into two areas: it is his most Jewish novel, in that he uses a theme and characters from recent Jewish history, namely the Holocaust; and these Jewish protagonist and dilemmas become vehicle for Bellow's most forceful defense of humanism and denial of what he has repeatedly seems as nihilistic despairing vision union of literary modernism. Throughout the novel, however, Bellow has employed the contemporary language of fiction to distinguish the two different speeches of Sammler's divided psyche. Thus the novel by voicing modern "intellectual man's" conflict, retrieves to some extent, the ancient knowledge of which he has dispossessed himself. However, there are few grounds for arguing that Sammler is intended to be an ironic portrait.
Given that the novel is narrated by a third person voice, it is remarkable that Bellow refused the opportunity to exploit the potential subtleties of point of view afforded by third person narration. The narrator on most occasions is hardly to be differentiated from Sammler in his out-bursts at modern life in general and the novel's cast of other characters. We know, for instance, that Sammler is exasperated by his daughter Shula and her eccentric obsessed personality. But it is Bellow's narrator not Sammler, who provides us with the first extended satire of Shula's character: "She wasn't old, not bad looking, not even too badly dressed, item by item. The full effect would have been no worse than vulgar if she had not been obviously a nut" (MSP 22).

Mr. Sammler is a man in his seventies, a polish Jew who came to America after World War II. His early history is only vaguely represented—he has been brought up in an apparently wealthy and certainly intellectually cultivated household, and lived in London for some years before the war, serving as a correspondent for certain polish journals. In London he developed connections with the Bloomsbury Group and became an associate of H.G.Wells and this English influence affected him profoundly. He was however, affected much more profoundly by his wartime experiences in Poland, where he had gone immediately prior to the war. Arrested by
the Nazis, he and his wife were forced, along with many other Jews, to dig a mass grave for themselves, and were then shot. Mr. Sammler alone survived, struggling through a heap of bodies to climb from the grave, his sightless eye is a souvenir of this experience. Driven to hide in the Zamosht Forest he joined the polish partisans, it was during this time that he killed a German prisoner, but at the end of the war the poles too turned on the Jews, and Sammler once again survived a massacre and once again experienced the grave, hiding in a mausoleum. These holocaust images haunt Mr. Sammler as well as the novel's narration. His sensations as he struggles through the pressure of bodies in a crowded bus and his fear of going underground to take the train are revivals of memories of the grave. After the War Mr. Sammler and his daughter Shula were brought from displaced person's camp to New York by Sammler's nephew Dr. Elya Gruner and niece Margotte up to the time of the events of the novel end, have lived on Gruner's hospitality. However the actual events recounted in the novel take place over a period of about three days of April 1969 in New York city, just before the Apollo lunar landing when everybody was talking of life on some other planet during which Mr. Sammler is concerned about Dr. Elya Gruner's impending death, for Gruner is the person Sammler values most in the world, and Sammler wants to think of some word of consolation that he can talk to the dying man.
Mr. Sammler, has endured his physical impairment but mentally he is alert and an intellectual like all Bellow heroes. He is also a displaced person as Bellow protagonists usually are. He makes a poor show as a guest lecturer because of mental disturbance at Columbia University talking about George Orwell at the invitation of a graduate student, Lionel Feffer "who is less student than promoter" (MSP 122). On his return after the talk, he is dogged and threatened by a Negro pickpocket on the way. Back in his room he finds an unpublished manuscript on "The Future of the Moon" written by Dr. Govinda Lal, a scientist working with NASA, missing, probably stolen by his daughter Shula to get her father to use it for research on a memoir of H.G.Wells. Next, he visit his cousin Dr. Elya Gruner, who is nearing death with aneurism. He talks to Dr. Gruner about his spoiled children--Angela who is in her thirties, is loose in her sexual life and Wallace who is a friend of Lionel Feffer is a daredevil and more accident prone. Meanwhile, he hunts for Shula who is now hiding in Dr. Gruner's Westchester home after divorcing her husband the half made Israeli, Eisen. He finds her but she has hidden the manuscript in a Grand Central locker. At this time, his niece and Dr. Lal appear for the supper and for an oration following it on the prospect of human existence on the moon. Mr. Sammler and Dr. Lal, begin a defense of the
human condition on this planet:

It has only been in the last two centuries that the majority of people in civilized countries have claimed the privilege of being individuals. Formerly they were slave, peasant, laborer, even artisan, but not person. It is clear that this revolution... has also introduced new kinds of grief and misery... We have fallen into much ugliness. It is bewildering to see how these new individuals suffer with their new leisure and liberty.... The idea of the uniqueness of the soul. An excellent idea. A true idea. But in these forms?... Dear God: With hair, with clothes, with drugs and cosmetics, with genitalia, with round trips through evil, monstrosity, and orgy, with even God approached through obscenities? Time will help but we have to learn (MSP 114).

After the discussion Mr. Sammler leaves for the hospital again the next day (the action takes place on a day, a night and the next day). Mr. Sammler is not just a commentator but "judge and a priest"(MSP 77) to his family, to advice, mediate, guide, impart and uphold ethical standards, to meet with rejection and scorn. His second visit to the hospital is delayed by a street fight between Lionel Fiffer and the negro pickpocket and Eisen, his son-in-law almost kills the
At the hospital he stops to lecture Angela on promiscuity, with no success. Meanwhile Dr. Elya Gruner has been dead for two hours. Mr. Sammler speaks his words of eulogy over the body of a man who was kind and met his contract.

The mental transactions taking place in Mr. Sammler's mind is akin to a surrealistic painting. To most people, surrealism—the style that splashed the contents of the subconscious on the canvas—is inherently exotic and complicated. But the painter, who paints surrealistic work knows that all the weirdness anyone would want is available in everyday life. All that is needed to depict it is a few simple juxtaposition of ordinary things, reversals of transparent opaque and may be a switch in scale. Surrealism has so much in common with fantasy, especially in its use of similar themes, such as the disintegration of objects and the fluidity of discrete forms that there are crucial differences also. These are best understood in terms of narrative structure and the relation of the text to the reader. The surrealistic theme is closer to the marvellous—it is super-real and its etymology implies that it is presenting a world above this one rather than fracturing it from inside or below. Unlike the marvellous or the mimetic, the fantastic is a mode of unity which enters a dialogue with the "real" and incorporates that
dialogue as part of its essential structure. The text has not yet become non-referential as it is in modernist fiction and recent linguistic fantasies such as some of Borges' stories which do not question the crucial relation between language and the "real" world outside the text which the text constructs, so much as move towards another kind of fictional autonomy. In fiction and in painting the artist is inspired by dream and memory. Dadaism also comes closer to surrealism painting and fantastic fiction. Dada then becomes Surrealism. The two movements, usually distinguished from one another, are actually two phases in the development of a new creative consciousness two manifestation of revolt against dead values, two steps in the search for a new world of the mind. Together they created a unique imagery of the incongruous and a new source of imagery in the unconscious. But if their images deny the validity of traditional interpretation and superficially logical relationships, these same images process the logic of poetry, the logic that allows one to say--Her cheeks were like apples, his neck like a swains.

However Tzvatan Todorov doesn't consider the social and political implications of literary forms. To him Fantasy is not necessarily the "unconscious" material Some reference to psychoanalysis and psychoanalytic readings of text is required,--but at the same time Todorov repudiates Freudian
theory as inadequate or irrelevant for it is in the unconscious that social structures and "norms" are reproduced and sustained within, and only by redirecting attention to this area can we begin to perceive the ways in which the relation between society and the individual are fixed. As Juliet Mitchell writes:

The way we live as "ideas" the necessary laws of human society is not so much conscious as unconscious—the particular task of psychoanalysis is to decipher how we acquire our heritage of the ideas and laws of human society within the unconscious mind, or to put it another way, the unconscious mind is the way in which we acquire these laws.

Psychoanalysis directs itself towards an unravelling of these laws, trying to comprehend how social structures are represented and sustained within and through us in our unconscious literary fantasies, expressing unconscious desires. These are particularly open to psychoanalytic study and frequently show the existence of tension between the laws of human society and the resistance of the unconscious mind to those laws. In expressing desires, fantasy can operate in two ways: it can tell of, manifest or show desire (expression in the sense of portrayal, representation, manifestation, linguistic utterance,
mention, description), or it can expel desire, when this desire is a disturbing element which threatens cultural order and continuity (expression in the sense of pressing out and, squeezing, expulsion getting rid of something by force). The power of fantasy penetrates into every corner of the universe, but not into the forces that govern it. The stars that are the brain of heaven, the army of unalterable law, remain untouched and novels of this type have an improvised air, which is the secret of this force and charm. A fantastic book asks us to accept the supernatural. A super theme for a fantasy, but all will depend on the handling. It is treated with a mixture of realism, witness, charm and mythology, and the mythology is most important.

In Mr. Sammler's Planet the central concept of the story is the moon, around which the entire fantasy is built. The image of the moon functions in the novel in a highly complex manner. The moon has a long history as a symbol of the ideal. Pure white, distant, an unattainable object of desire, most notable in this respect is its classical association with chastity. Considering the novel's preoccupation with sexual liberation, the frequent reference to the moon provides a wry comment on modern practices. But Mr. Sammler's moon is about to be drained of
its mystical meanings, for the implication of the Apollo moonshoot is that this impossibly remote object will soon be attained, will become, indeed, of no more significance than any other tourist attraction that people like Wallace Gruner can visit on charter flight. So while the possibilities of positive illusion that the moon once offered are lost, its connections with more sinister delusions remain: madness, monomania, moon-driven obsession. Lunacy is, at least according to Mr. Sammler, the perennial state of most of the characters in the novel. Perhaps all men need what the moon offers, however, whether it be illusion or delusion, Sammler has his own moon in the figure of Elya Gruner. Dr. V. Govinda Lal who brings in the concept of moon, is an Indian scientist with a Utopian plan for colonizing the moon and thereby alleviating the earth's overcrowding and consequent tendency to war. Dr. Lal is in fact a true child of H.G. Wells, a creator of Science Fiction which emphasizes its scientific rather than its fictional character. Dr. Lal is a Punjabi who witnessed the terrible fighting between Hindu and Muslims in the India-Pakistan war in Calcutta in 1947. Bellow is playing yet another familiar stereotype, the Indian guru whose mystical philosophies were sought after by students rejecting technology for self-awareness and spiritual quest. This coincidence of Dr. Lal, who had faced the ethnic conflicts is juxtaposed with Mr. Sammler's
experience of Jewish massacres. Coincidence is itself fantastic. Such coincidence is, after all, an integral part of all narrative, no matter how well that coincidence seems naturalized by the exposition of motivation. The universe around us is chaos, art is ordered, to that extent, all art is fantastic. The frequent use of fantasy including the Utopia and the dystopia in the novel constitutes both a response to the perceived absurdity of contemporary patriarchy and an impulse to envision an alternate reality that either corrects or intensifies the ill of the present.

Obviously a study of fantasy as an imaginative mode brought in a comprehensive and exhaustive focus of these fictional imagination. This knowledge of fantasy clarified, in the most significant way, the basic approach to an analysis of fiction. After thus discovering the fantastic mode as providing the basic imaginative focus of Bellow's fiction one would feel that there is an immanent personal dimension to his fiction. This personal dimension is again related to his concept of timelessness, which in any case roots him in his fantastic mode. Sammler's "Planet" however, unlike Lal's, is Earth itself, "because he is also known as uncle Sammler (MSP 41), it is really America that we are talking about, and Bellow is concerned about "human survival in this century."

It has obvious similarities
with Mailer's *An American Dream*. In fact, *An American Dream* is "extremely well made as the fantasia it is, but nothing could be further from the deliberately high style of a writer like Bellow." What is most striking is that, despite their utter distinctness in style, *An American Dream* and *Mr. Sammler's Planet* have very similar narrative strategies, and very similar thematic concerns. Both books "modulate constantly between naturalistic narrative, social satire, wild fantasy, and intensely private meditation." *Sammler* compares the old myths to Dr. Lal's new utopian fantasy of an "ascetic lunar colony" (*MSP*, 180). The moon serves in the novel as the central symbol for both the goal of advanced technology and the future of man. But, in *Sammler's* view, "the technological advances appear to be occurring in a moral void and thus the future of man is uncertain." Ironically enough, Mr. *Sammler* makes it clear that he does not wish to be treated as a symbol, and yet that is what Bellow ultimately makes of him. Like Shula and Dr. Gruner, the author finally asks the old man to assume a burden of meaning which he cannot sustain and in the fifth chapter of the novel Bellow's manipulations of his hero bodily strain the imaginative fabric of his work.

Bellow allows himself the symbolic irony of Mr. *Sammler's* blind eye, and in suggesting his hero's
limitations as well as his wisdom and compassion, he succeeds in creating a character who is humanly believable in his weaknesses and strengths—"His friends and family, had made him judge and a priest" (MSP 95), but Sammler wishes to be only a man, and as such he emerges from the novel which bears his name, with all his prejudices his blindness, his obsessions as well as his pride and his dignity intact. It is a satire on the modern life too. Satire is inherently fantastic. Not only does it depend on narrative worlds that reverse the perspectives of the world outside the narrative, but the style usually depends on irony; stating the reversal of the truth as though it were dear truth. Such structural reversal is at the heart of Science Fiction as a genre and at heart of Utopian Literature as a genre—these three overlap. Since fiction writers feel that man is ultimately subject to powers beyond his control, satirist feel that men are always responsible for their actions. If one cannot exaggerate content, then one must exaggerate form. All the facts of the novel fit together perfectly if the narrative world is controlled by a myth; but a world controlled by a myth is a direct reversal of a world controlled by the rational application of knowledge by a great detective serving justice. In this regard the whole story of Mr. Sammler's Planet turns out to be like a Science Fiction, but considering the fact that it
is an art form and all art forms have the power to terrify and exult, in direct proportion to our nearness to the creator's vision, it can in turn be considered as a fantastic novel. In *Mr. Sammler's Planet* Scientific fantasy about the moon is a kind of dream embedded in every individual in a capitalistic set-up. Fantasy is in fact an escape from the mundane realities. The leap of the symbolic imagination helps an alienated individual to get some of those unresolved desires resolved at least temporarily. He learns to resolve the predicaments, penetrating through fantasy to the inner core of meaning.

Fantasy can operate in two ways, it can tell of desire through portrayal, representation, manifestation, linguistic utterance and description, and it can also expel desire when this desire is a disturbing element which threatens cultural order and continuity. The fantastic traces the unsaid and the unseen of a culture, that which has been silenced, made invisible, covered over, and made 'absent.' Furthermore, Marce Scheider views the fantastic as a dramatization of "the anxiety of existence." Fantasy invents "another non-human world, rearranging them in new combinations and relations to produce something strange, unfamiliar and apparently "new"..." as Freud says. In short, "fantasy is the literature of subversion, subverting not merely the events, but the language as well."
Bellow's use of fantasy and other subversive devices of fulfillment erupts probably because he believes that Jews are disowned by the culture they were born into and remains disinherited, on account of historical compulsions by the culture to which their remote ancestors belonged. Through Jews particular manifestations of desire, they can be associated together. As Freud writes, "The creative imagination indeed, is quite incapable of inventing anything; it can only combine components that are strange to one another." Again, in the psychic life, there is nothing arbitrary, nothing undetermined. In fact fantasy has nothing to do with inventing another non-human world, it is not transcendental. It has to do with inverting the elements of this world, re-combining its constitutive features in new relations to produce something strange, unfamiliar and apparently new, absolutely 'other' and different. In this regard perhaps what is demonstrated in the one eyed Mr. Sammler is that even the wisest of men are only partially-sighted, for he has his own blind spots. He ignores, for example, the implications of the possibility that Dr. Elya, a man whose profession was to give life, had performed abortions for the wealthy and well-connected. He also fails to note Gruner's spectacular parental failure to communicate his own values to his children. Sammler's general contempt for women makes it impossible for him to
take seriously even the generous Margotte, who is boundlessly, achingly, hopelessly on the right side, the best side, of every big human question. It is in such ambiguities as these that we see the distance between Mr. Sammler and Bellow. Though much of what Sammler thinks about the modern world is what Bellow thinks, he is not Bellow's mouthpiece. He is an independent creation, a serious figure whose experiences and sensibility give him the authority to judge the world, while also disabling him from a totally impartial judgment. Mr. Sammler's good eye observes the external world, but his other eye is the inward eye that looks on more urgent matters. Even in Mr. Sammler's Planet, the very confrontation with chaos which we have traced throughout Bellow's books, also does not stop short of it. Confrontation which the decade of the sixties made the daily bread of thinking Americans impossible. The age of the Kennedy assassination, the Martin Luther King assassination, the war in Vietnam, and the explosion of the inner city, raised serious imaginative questions which Bellow had been raising for twenty years. Bellow assimilated the data of contemporary news, recasting it into an allegory of the soul in search of civilization—an allegory which finds its fullest, if also its grimmest, articulation in the story of Artur Sammler. The ironic distance apparent not only in the characterization but also
in the omniscient narration is worth noting:

He personally stood apart from all developments. From a sense of deference, from age, from good manners, he sometimes affirmed himself to be out of it, hors d'usage, not a man of the times. No force of nature, nothing paradoxical or demonic, he had no drive for smashing through the masks of appearances. (MSP 125)

Characteristically the rhetoric of the book is captured here. Moreover Sammler's personal syntax points to his pretentious pride and his self-deception. Emphasis is given to both the popular American slang and the familiar French expression to remind us that, just as their meanings are identical, so there is nothing new in the apocalyptic pretensions of the sixties generation.

The role of the black man is also significant here. They embody anarchic elements appearing in society as a whole and within the personalities of the White protagonist. The black man becomes a convenient metaphor for "the disturbing elements in white society and is in the last analysis, not an image of black culture, but a mirror image of the prevailing white culture."52 However most distressing to him is the theft by his daughter Shula of manuscript belonging to an Indian professor, Dr. Govinda Lal. Sammler's attempt to recover the manuscript and return
it to Dr. Lal leads to a near-farcical journey round New York and a meeting with the professors which develops into a very lengthy dialogue about the future of mankind. When finally he is on his way to the dying Elya he intervenes in a confrontation between Feffer and the black pickpocketeer and, by involving Eisen, becomes responsible for an act of horrifying violence. With all this he fails to reach Elya in time and is left to say a prayer over his dead nephew's body. "The politics of salvation is dramatized in an exaggerated form in the novel. The secular intellectual, bogged down in authentic social roles, undergoes an redemption by fantasy and instinct."

53
Notes

1 D.J. Hughes, "Reality and the Hero," Modern Fiction Studies VI (Winter 1960-61) : 363.
9 Jackson 3.
11 Jackson 14.
12 Irwin IX.


Newman 64.
27 Hassan 310.
28 McConnel 31.
29 Newman 70.
30 Newman 72.
33 Hyland 49.
34 Nancy A. Walker, Feminist Alternatives and Fantasy in the Contemporary Novel by Women (Mississippi U P of Mississippi, 1990) 8.
37 Robert Cole, "The Fighting Lazarus," Modern Fiction Studies 59 (1975): 72,

40 Saul Bellow, Mr. Sammler's Planet (New Delhi : India Offset Press, 1972) 214. Subsequent references incorporated in the parentheses is to this edition. An abbreviation MSP for the title is used.


44 M. Gilbert Porter, Whence the Power The Artistry and Humanity of Saul Bellow (Columbia : U of Missouri P. 1974) 172.

45 Russell 211.

46 Porter 180.

47 Scheider 41.


49 Rosemary 38.

50 Freud 104.

51 Hyland 77.

52 Russell 201-202.

53 Goldman, 216.